



AGRICULTURE



If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species

Crops

Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator

An informational article for forage growers, dairy producers and agriculture consultants where guidance surrounding optimum corn silage management practices were shared along with an update on the new corn silage data visualization tool. Through this article, stakeholders can learn more about optimum corn silage management and how this new Extension tool can help create a harvest plan to maximize corn silage forage quality.

- The University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension has a long history of partnering with cooperatives, feed dealers, growers, forage councils and consultants to offer a network of silage dry down events across the state to help growers monitor whole plant moisture.
- Efforts were made during the 2024 growing season to find a way to allow growers to use the data in real time, resulting in the Corn Silage Harvest Management Tool. Creation of the tool was one step in the data visualization process.
- The next step was to make growers and consultants more aware of the tool and how it can fit into their corn silage harvest plan. This article shared some of the key management steps when harvesting corn silage and outlined how growers can use the tool to dig into the data from their region of the state. The Wisconsin State Farmer has a broad reach across Wisconsin in print as well as online.

A presentation during the scheduled Badger Crop Connect series where I provided basic corn silage management recommendations from our UW Madison specialists and shared our new Corn Silage Harvest Management Tool. Through this presentation, I demonstrated how stakeholders can effectively use the tool to help plan their individual corn silage harvest to ensure appropriate whole plant moisture to meet forage quality goals.

- Our Extension research and data collection efforts are a key part of our job, but just as important is the outreach to share how stakeholders can use this work on their farms everyday.
- As part of the Badger Crop Connect Corn Silage episode, there was room to share the work we have done on the new Corn Silage Harvest management tool.
- As a response to the opportunity to share, I created a presentation that outlined important corn silage harvest metrics that growers should employ to ensure harvest timing that allows for proper forage



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fermentation, along with the methods used to develop our Corn Silage Harvest Management tool, and how to use the tool to plan their harvest.

Dairy

Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator

An article for farmers and farm workers, where we explained the different types of fiber in a dairy diet and how they affect milk production, to help them better understand fiber as a key nutrient, interpret lab reports, and identify nutrition-related issues at the feed bunk, leading to improved overall farm performance.

We created this bilingual article in response to a common knowledge gap observed on dairy farms regarding the nutrients in cow diets and their impact on milk production. Many farmers and workers lacked access to clear, practical information on how to interpret fiber values from lab reports and apply that knowledge on the farm. This effort aimed to improve understanding of fiber as a key nutrient, helping farm teams make more informed decisions to support cow health and feed efficiency. We developed a bilingual educational article tailored to both farmers and farm workers, focusing on the role of fiber in dairy cow diets. We ensure technical accuracy and present the information in an accessible format for a wide range of readers. The article explains types of fiber, their impact on milk production, how to read fiber values in lab reports, and simple ways to assess fiber on-farm. Since it is an article its outcome cannot be determined yet but our goal was to bridge the communication gap and provide practical tools that could be immediately applied in daily feeding management.

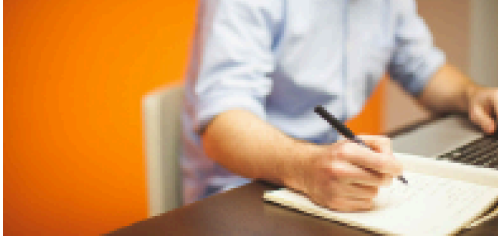


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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Community Development provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.

Paul Roback, Community Development Educator

A 3-hour staff development workshop (Real Colors) where Ozaukee County staff increased their ability to recognize their strengths and the strengths of others, build rapport quickly with others, understand how others process information, and modify their communication to connect with others. The workshop is intended to help workplace teams work together more effectively.

Since 2014, Community Development Educator Paul Roback has facilitated Real Colors workshops in response to organizations and local governments expressing a need for staff development in effective communication and team building. These goals align with the outcomes for Real Colors, which is an interactive three-hour workshop that teaches skills to understand human behavior and improve communication with others. A representative from Ozaukee County's Human Resources Department contacted Paul requesting he provide a Real Colors workshop for Ozaukee County staff. In response, Paul taught a three-hour Real Colors workshop for 17 participants. All participants completed end of session evaluations. From attending the workshop, 94% increased their ability to recognize their strengths and 100% increased their ability to recognize the strengths of others. Additionally, 94% increased their ability to build rapport quickly with others, 94% increased their ability to understand how others process information, and 88% increased their ability to modify their communication to connect with others. Overall, participants evaluated Paul's facilitation of the workshop as a 4.9 on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=poor and 5=excellent). One participant commented they would use workshop information to "Take time to listen as to being able to figure out a person's strengths." Commenting on the workshop overall, one participant stated "Great session. Learned a lot about people's personalities." Another commented "Paul was personable, knowledgeable, and made a very fun, positive view of the training."



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4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

Abi Quinlan, 4-H Program Educator

Work is underway to develop countywide Cloverbud programming that will introduce our youngest 4-H members to a wide variety of projects and help them begin identifying their sparks.

Ozaukee County 4-H has seen continued growth in Cloverbud enrollment, and families have expressed interest in more opportunities for this age group outside of traditional club activities. As the entry point into 4-H, Cloverbuds need engaging, age-appropriate experiences that highlight the breadth of 4-H projects while fostering curiosity, confidence, and a sense of belonging. To meet this need, Abi Quinlan, 4-H Educator, is creating a Cloverbud curriculum that blends hands-on exploration with intentional skill-building. The curriculum is being shaped through a local needs assessment and informed by resources from fellow 4-H Educators and Wisconsin 4-H. The design emphasizes short, interactive lessons that allow Cloverbuds to sample a range of project areas—introducing them to new possibilities and helping them begin to discover sparks that may lead to lifelong interests. While still in the planning stages, this effort positions Ozaukee County 4-H to launch a consistent, countywide Cloverbud program in 2025. Expected outcomes include increased access for families seeking structured opportunities for Cloverbud-aged youth, early exposure to multiple 4-H project areas, sparking new interests and building excitement for continued participation, and a stronger pipeline for long-term 4-H involvement by engaging youth early with positive, hands-on experiences.

We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

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