



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

Planning for a four-session, 2026 Focus on Forage webinar series for livestock producers, forage growers and agriculture consultants. The goal of the series is to provide timely forage management guidance to improve forage quality and meet farm productivity goals.

Dairy and livestock producers require high quality forages to meet the animal production goals on their farms. Using a quality forage base reduces feed inputs and leads to improved animal health, milk production and growth. There are many opportunities for forage growers to increase forage dry matter production and quality while optimizing input costs, and this series aims to provide research based solutions to these producers. The Focus on Forage planning team identified topics and speakers that address the key management challenges and opportunities that exist for forage growers. Ongoing planning will result in four scheduled webinars in February 2026 that will each address a specific topic area related to forage production.

Dairy

Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator

A statewide program promoting humane dairy cow-handling practices for dairy cow handlers where the participants will learn to be aware of their own beliefs about working with cows, which affect how they interact with them. They will also learn how to form or maintain good habits, which will make the cows easier to handle and their job smoother. This program will be available in English and Spanish.

A growing number of people worldwide are expressing concern about the treatment of farm animals, particularly dairy cattle. Ozaukee County is no stranger to that situation. Emphasizing that the actions and attitudes of dairy handlers have significant implications both within and beyond the farm environment is key. Recognizing this need, we are developing a bilingual learning program aimed at improving dairy handlers' understanding, attitudes, and interactions with the cows under their care. The program seeks to promote evidence-based handling practices that enhance animal welfare, worker safety, and overall farm productivity. The initiative will begin with a pilot phase designed to gather feedback through observation and participant input, allowing for systematic refinement of the training materials. Once finalized, the program will be implemented on selected farms and rigorously evaluated to assess its effectiveness in fostering positive behavioral change and improving animal well-being outcomes.



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

Three strategic planning sessions for the board and staff of the Port Washington Center for the Arts, a local nonprofit, where we worked on updating the organization's mission and vision statements, created an identity statement, discussed organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges, identified goals, and developed action plans. The intent of the planning process is to clarify the organization's purpose and develop achievable steps to realize their vision.

The Interim Chair of the Port Washington Center for the Arts (PWCA), a local nonprofit, contacted Paul to facilitate a process that would create a strategic plan for their organization. This aligns with Paul's position description, which includes "building the capacity of nonprofits, community organizations, local governments, and coalitions." The PWCA's programming includes a gallery space, an artist residency, and a collaborative studio space. To achieve the planning objectives, Paul first engaged the organization's staff and board with an online survey to solicit feedback on updating the organization's mission and vision statements. Then, Paul facilitated three strategic planning sessions attended by eight board and staff members. Through facilitated conversation, participants updated the organization's mission and vision statements and changed the name of the organization to better reflect their purpose. Additionally, participants identified organizational values; evaluated programs; created an identity statement; brainstormed organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges; identified goals; and created an action plan. From session evaluations (N=8), 88% of participants agreed that updating the mission statement helped clarify their role as an organization, 100% agreed that updating the vision statement assisted them in understanding the general direction of the organization, and 100% agreed that conducting a SWOC Analysis assisted in the identification of internal strengths & weaknesses and external opportunities & challenges. Additionally, 100% agreed that discussing core values clarified the guiding principles for their organization, identifying goals increased their ability to set priorities, and discussing action plans increased their ability to identify our next steps for future implementation. Participants evaluated Paul's facilitation as a 4.97 on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=poor and 5=excellent). One participant commented "I think we are at the next step that the board needs to take before we keep going. We have grown a lot since starting this process." Another commented "We are so grateful for the time to brainstorm and agree on these important identity issues."



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

An adult leader training for approved Ozaukee County 4-H volunteers, where participants learned about updated program policies, new countywide initiatives, and best practices for youth-adult partnership and empowerment. Through this training, the goal is for volunteers to strengthen their ability to create inclusive, youth-driven learning environments that align with current 4-H goals and policies.

This program was developed in response to updates in Wisconsin 4-H policies, the launch of new countywide youth leadership opportunities, and feedback from volunteers seeking clearer guidance and consistency across clubs and projects. Needs assessment data and educator observations revealed that volunteers required more support understanding policy expectations, navigating youth-adult partnerships, and managing program changes effectively. To address these needs, Abi designed and facilitated an in-person adult leader training that combined policy education with hands-on learning around youth empowerment and partnership. The training used real Ozaukee County examples to help leaders apply updated policies in practical ways and introduced tools for communication, decision-making, and youth engagement. Content was tailored to areas where leaders expressed uncertainty, such as risk management, inclusion, and aligning club activities with county goals. This effort established a foundation for consistent, research-informed leadership across projects and set the stage for continued support throughout the 4-H year. The training is expected to increase leaders' confidence in interpreting policies, engaging youth as partners, and creating environments that prioritize belonging, safety, and youth voice. By equipping adult volunteers with the knowledge and tools to strengthen youth-adult partnerships, this program enhances the quality and consistency of Ozaukee County 4-H programming. Ultimately, these outcomes will expand equitable opportunities for youth to develop leadership, communication, and civic engagement skills—preparing them to contribute meaningfully to their schools, communities, and future workplaces.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OZAUKEE COUNTY

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

UW-Madison Division of
Extension Ozaukee
County Office

121 W. Main St.
Port Washington, WI
53074

P: 262-284-8288
F: 262-284-8100
711 Wisconsin Relay

Cindy Sarkady
Area Extension Director

Abi Quinlan
4-H Program Educator

Paul Roback
Community Development Educator

Liz Gartman
Regional Crops Educator

Manuel Peña
Regional Dairy Educator

Claudia Breitengross
Kaitlin Felton
Support Staff