



## Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
TAYLOR COUNTY

*Connecting people with the University of Wisconsin.  
Strengthening each other through experience and research statewide.*

2021

# Agent/Educator Annual Report Extension Taylor County

2021 marked the return of in-person programming, mixed with some virtual sessions when it made the most sense, for the Taylor County, University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension office. County-based educators in Agriculture, 4-H, and Community Development offered a wide range of outcomes – based programming that helped create positive community change. Their efforts were supplemented by the distribution of nutrition information from the Extension administered FoodWise Nutrition Education program. Programming continued to receive a high degree of support from the Extension office program assistant. **Over 4,500 educational contacts were made by Taylor County staff in 2021.**

Extension statewide continues to develop and conduct programs in 71 Wisconsin counties. In Taylor County, Extension has existed for over a century. It continues to be a successful partnership between county government and the university, with both making investments in support of Taylor communities. Working with other community partners and volunteers, the programming Extension offers also provides access to a vast University of Wisconsin knowledge and information base.

We continue to appreciate the ongoing support of the Taylor County Board of Supervisors, its Agriculture and Extension Education Committee, and the public. Collaboration with other county departments and not – for – profit organizations in Taylor communities strengthens Extension’s effectiveness and helps to direct programming efforts.

We look forward to serving Taylor County in 2022 and beyond. If you have any questions about our programs or suggestions for improving them, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please see the contact information in this annual report.

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# 4-H Program Educator

## IMPACT IN 2021

- 138 youth and 48 adults were enrolled in the 2020-2021 4-H year.
- Youth members enrolled in 676 projects including such topics as art, photography, dog training, raising livestock, training horses, woodworking, and much, much more.
- Partnerships were formed: Huey's Hideaway, Culver's and Tractor Supply Company
- Taught or hosted 38 different sessions of learning opportunities for youth.
- Julie had 317 office contacts (emails, phone calls, in person visits) with Taylor County residents during the year. directly related to 4-H.

4-H Program Educator, Julie Diepenbrock, has been at Taylor County Extension since July 2020. Julie previously taught Family Consumer Sciences for several years and prior to that was a 4-H Agent/Home Economist for Kansas Extension. She was a 9 year 4-H member in Oklahoma 4-H.

### Camps

Julie worked with two other 4-H educators to develop and lead a five county in-person summer camp experience at Camp Susan in Langlade County. 47 youth and adults were involved in a STEM activity based on the theme Journey to Mars, had multiple opportunities to build relationships with other positive youth and adults, and participated in activities such as archery, swimming, and paddling which contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Summer 4-H intern, Amannda Szomi, and Julie also organized and taught a series of day camps presented in four Taylor County communities that included 24 youth for eight hours each representing approximately 192 hours of programming contact hours. Youth were involved in hands-on activities in STEM, Pets, Entomology, Photography, Foods, Citizenship, and Arts projects as an introduction to these 4-H programs.

*"I'm having so much fun. I want to come back and do this again."*  
A young boy referring to one of the 4-H county Day Camps.

### Taylor County Fair

An important aspect of 4-H for many members is the opportunity to showcase their projects they have worked on throughout the year at the Taylor County Fair. Members were able to select from 113 projects. Most 4-H members enroll in and exhibit multiple projects. Many of the 4-H members taking livestock to the fair also participate in the Market Animal Show and Sale (MASS) which has great support from businesses and family members and friends throughout the county.

### Harvest Days

Saturday of Harvest Days weekend, Taylor County 4-H partnered with Huey's Hideaway to provide some activities for youth through 4-H Discovery Days. On Sunday, a group of 4-H members and volunteers promoted Taylor County 4-H at the Harvest Days Parade by carrying the Taylor County 4-H banner, handing out candy, 4-H pencils and brochures.





Afterwards, the 4-H Youth Leaders had a Trick or Treat for the Hungry event where they collected canned goods and other non-perishables to donate over 210 pounds of food to the Indianhead Food Pantry.

### 4-H Marketing

Taylor County 4-H was promoted throughout the year in various ways. One example was attending the Gilman school enrollment with a display and visiting with families about 4-H. The Federation encouraged 4-H clubs to create window displays in businesses during National 4-H Week. We increased our 4-H Facebook posts to reach 759 people, an increase of 179%, and 106 engagements, an increase of 221%, between September 13 and October 10. 4-H distributed informational flyers to Taylor County public and private elementary and middle schools as well as the Medford Administration for Child Development Days. 4-H yard signs were distributed to club leaders to give to 4-H families to post in their yards. We also recorded radio spots to be aired during National 4-H Week. 4-H displays were in Public Libraries for 4 weeks in various communities.



4-H held a 'meet-n-greet' at Culver's to promote 4-H to the general public.

### Charters and Annual Enrollment

4-H is well-known nationwide for excellent youth programs. In order to maintain that standard of excellence, each club, the Horse Project, and the

Federation of Taylor County 4-H complete a chartering and auditing process to ensure program quality. Leaders submit the reports to the county office so Taylor County 4-H staff can file the reports with the state 4-H office and a form with the IRS.

Members, both youth and adult, must re-enroll each year, using 4-H Online, an online software program that is used throughout the country. The 4-H enrollment period starts at the beginning of September and the 4-H year begins October 1. Members are encouraged to enroll by November 1 for planning purposes. As part of the enrollment process, members update basic information and select the projects that they would like to work on during the upcoming year. They can add additional projects later, but if they want to take a project to the Taylor County Fair, they need to sign up no later than March 1.

New adult volunteers must have a background check completed by the state, attend a Volunteer in Preparation (VIP) training, and take a Mandated Reporter training before their enrollment can be approved. VIP trainings were held on Zoom the past couple of years as well as the Annual Leader Training required for each club.

### 4-H Partnerships



Taylor County 4-H partnered with Huey's Hideaway and the Francis Simek Memorial Library in Medford to develop and present summer youth programs. We had 51 youth contact hours through Huey's and reached 30 youth and parents through the library.

These programs promoted 4-H to youth that are not typically a part of our 4-H program. Youth were introduced to various 4-H projects and activities.



Tractor Supply Company has traditionally been a strong 4-H supporter so six 4-H members and three adult volunteers helped with Tractor Supply Company Grand Opening in Medford. They handed out hot dogs and sodas to customers over the lunch hour to build 4-H awareness.

### Fun with Forensics

In partnership with the WI State Crime Laboratory in Wausau, Taylor and Price County 4-H presented a five session Fun with Forensic Science Zoom series including hands-on activities to youth K-12. The expected outcome included: Youth will gain knowledge about the field of forensic science. Youth will be more aware of the differences between tv shows and reality. Youth will understand the background checks and need to make good decisions as a teen to not limit career choices. Youth will learn daily tasks and educational requirements for a career choice. In 2021, 93 youth across the state of Wisconsin spent a total of approximately 220 hours involved in this innovative program.

### Looking Forward

Taylor County 4-H is looking forward to partnering with each of the five Taylor County Public Libraries beginning with presentations at each of their summer reading programs.



# Agriculture

## *Sandy Stuttgen*



## IMPACT IN 2021

88 direct contacts:

- Individual consultations
- Phone consultations
- Working with community groups

To meet identified county priorities, in 2021, Extension Taylor County Agriculture Educator Sandy Stuttgen programmed in Beef Management and Farm Financial Management.

### BEEF MANAGEMENT

#### *WI Beef Special Edition Series*

Because of COVID, what I would have otherwise hosted as in-person cow-calf and cattle feeder workshops, these separate workshops were combined as a series of ZOOM presentations held from Dec 2020 – March 2021 covering six topics for both audiences. With excellent camaraderie, my Extension Livestock colleagues and I learned how to facilitate, host and record, transcribe the ZOOM recordings and create YouTube videos. My leadership included creating individual session ‘workflows’ where I tracked our individual tasks, including my emailing reminders, follow-up links and BQA CE to the attendees on a regular basis.

Over 850 Wisconsin beef producers attended the series and/or reviewed the recorded content to learn more about weaned calf management, nutrition strategies, and health strategies.

Respondents predicted management changes made due to attending the series would result in increased profits:

66% anticipated profits of \$1–5 per head. To estimate the impact this programming has for beef producers, consider that Wisconsin’s beef inventory as of January 21, 2022, includes 295,000 beef cows, 90,000 beef replacement heifers and 250,000 head of cattle on feed. (United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service Wisconsin Ag News – Cattle & Calves Report, inventory counted in 2021).

#### *Beef Quality Assurance*

Using a national research-based curriculum, BQA demonstrates commitment to food safety and quality while safeguarding the public image of the beef industry and upholding consumer confidence in beef products. BQA certification improves marketed beef cattle value and enhances herd profitability through better management. Wisconsin BQA co-coordinators William Halfman and I modify the national curriculum to match the needs of Wisconsin



#### *Helping Producers Maximize Crossbred Growth:*

##### *Predicting Growth by Phenotype*

Sandy collaborated with three area dairies to collect on-farm data for the Innovation Grant funded research project led by UW-Madison, Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences Colleagues Dr. Joao Dorea, Precision Agriculture Assistant Professor; Dr. Dan Schaefer, Retired Beef Nutritionist Professor; Ron Russell, Retired Senior Lecturer. This involved 12 farm visits, each lasting a couple of hours, where she and her colleagues worked with the owner and employees to video and measure beef x dairy calves’ growth to determine at what age they express their phenotypic characteristics. This research will help farmers plan nutritional and other management tasks to enable these calves grow to reach their genetic potential.



producers and we developed and managed BQA continuing education (CE) opportunities for certified producers. Our work is in collaboration with the Wisconsin Beef Council.

Twenty-nine trainings were successful as 571 producers certified using the WI BQA curriculum taught by me and three other Extension educators from June 2021 – February 2022. The locations were a mix of in-person and facilitated ZOOM sessions (in-person with a local agent sharing a ZOOM presentation from another training location).

### **Planning Emergency Livestock Transport Response (PELTR)**

I helped develop the UW-Madison Canvas course for emergency response personnel planning their response to local emergencies involving roadside livestock trailer incidents using factsheets and videos prepared by the Extension PELTR Workgroup members.

The pilot PELTR course included five emergency response personnel from three Wisconsin counties who worked through the Canvas modules and attended a half-day in-person session on November 3, 2021. Seven individuals participated in the in-person session with two tabletop roadside incident exercises, and a walk-through and discussion of a multi-deck livestock trailer pulled by a semi-tractor. I and my colleagues provided in-person instruction.

Take home messages from the participants include,

- *the implications there are with this type of accident versus general motor vehicle accidents*
- *the type of precautions that are necessary in handling livestock for the safety of the animals and the public as well as responders'*
- *I did not realize how complicated trailers were inside in order to cut and*

*extricate animals.*

Written comments about the training include,

- *Good job, hands on were great*
- *Excellent class, instructors were extremely knowledgeable*
- *I will recommend this course to first responders in my region*

### **Heart of the Farm Coffee Chats**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, churches stopped in-person services, restaurants and schools closed, and industry meetings were not held, all of which increased female farmers' feelings of isolation. UW-Division of Extension and the Heart of the Farm (HOF) Program were uniquely positioned to virtually provide facilitation and space for community connectedness and coach them as they answer the question, "Can we weather the COVID-19 storm?"

The online Coffee Chat series that were held November 2020-March 2021, June-August 2021, and November 2021-March 2022 helped our Wisconsin women involved in Agriculture mitigate social isolation and helped empower them to focus on what they could control in these challenging and stressful times and connect them with resources, friends, and neighbors. Average age of farmers is upper 50's. Women account for 1/3 of the farmers in the state. Accessible videos were made from the recorded sessions and are available at <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/heartofthefarm/conferences/coffee-chats/>

Sixty-six participants joined the January 11, 2021, session I moderated with Gary Siporski discussing farm tax preparation and concerns. Farm women benefit by learning about issues specific to farm tax returns so they may gain a better understanding of farm tax preparation and are able to ask better questions with their tax

### **Published in the Journal of Extension**

Authored by Schlessner, H., S. Stuttgen, L. Binversie, J. Kirkpatrick, *Insight into Barriers and Educational Needs for Farm Succession Programming* summarizes the Wisconsin statewide focus group research I and other agriculture educators conducted in 2018-2019. My colleagues and I summarized and submitted the information obtained for the Journal of Extension while other colleagues used the information to create a workbook that provides practical assistance when working with families planning a farm succession.

Established in 1963, the Journal of Extension (JOE) is the flagship journal for Extension professionals. As a refereed journal, JOE expands and updates the research and knowledge base for U.S. Extension professionals and other outreach educators to improve their effectiveness and serves as a forum for emerging and contemporary issues affecting U.S. Extension education. JOE is a fully open-access, quarterly journal. It is included in the Web of Science Core Collection's Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), in the abstract and citation database Scopus, in the full-text database Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and on Cabell's Journalytics.

advisor.

Our evaluation poll responses confirmed previous evaluation data collected, which indicate 90% of farm's female partners do most of the farm financial record keeping (preparing for the accountant).



# Community Development

## Michelle Grimm



## IMPACT IN 2021

### StrongBodies™

- StrongBodies averaged 80 participants for each 9-week session. Resumed in-person class that was halted due to the Pandemic.
- Sessions were held at four locations—Goodrich, Medford, Rib Lake, and Rib On-line.
- Numbers below reflect classes that began in September 2021
  - Goodrich: 1 class, 11 participants
  - Medford: 2 classes, 17 participants
  - Rib Lake: 1 class, 16 participants
  - Online: 1 class, 39 participants

I held StrongBodies online during the Pandemic. Numerous people have sent me little notes of thanks. Here is one I would like to share with you:

*Hello Michelle. My friend Nancy might be interested in signing up in January. Could I share the Monday sign-on with her so she can get an idea of what we do at Strong Bodies? And I want to take a minute to thank you. I have to admit that there are some Sunday and Tuesday nights that I go to bed thinking "oh crap I have to be moving and organized by 8:00 am tomorrow morning". But every Monday and Wednesday morning after I exercise, I feel energized. What a great way to start my day. So thanks for being there. Thank you!!!! Thank you!!!!*

## ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

*Broadband, Business Development, and Tourism.*

### Broadband

The importance of electronic communications has been increasing exponentially for businesses, organizations, and individuals. For Taylor County to thrive economically and socially, it is important for all citizens to have access to high speed internet. Michelle continued to be a resource to the Taylor County Broadband Committee.

- Support the Taylor County Broadband committee to assist them in making decisions to create the middle mile network. The goal of this project is to build a network to connect fiber to the home provider to the residence.
- Help the Taylor County Broadband Committee with information to apply for Wisconsin PSC grants.
- Help the Engineers identify and map the locations of the Middle Mile Network.

## COUNTY REDISTRICTING PROJECT

Working with the Taylor county Redistricting Committee. The team used the most current census data to

redistrict the Taylor County Board of Supervisors and coordinate with the other municipalities to create the new map.



## CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Michelle offered an 8 week childcare program geared towards starting a child care business. She worked closely with trainers to coordinate programming, facilitated discussions and begun conducting evaluation of skills and knowledge gained. 20 participants attended the program and were provided resources that will support and sustain their business.

## LEARNING FOR LIFE

Michelle offered an educational program in Taylor County: *Learning for Life*, covered a range of topics including mental health, square foot gardening, recreation, and civility. Evaluation of these programs indicated that the participants found the information, helpful.



Farmers Market Vegetables

## AGRIBUSINESS AND AGRICULTURE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES

*Community Garden and Farmer's Market*

### Community Garden

Michelle partnered with the gardeners, the Alternative High School, and a 4-H Club in the Community Garden to increase healthy options at the local food pantry. Working with these groups in the Community Garden provided fresh produce to food pantries. As a result, we have food pantries that are able to offer fresh produce to their clients. Though the amount of food was difficult to tabulate, more than 200 pounds of food was donated.

### Partnering to Support the Agribusiness

Coordinated a series of virtual workshops (*Food Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development "FEED"*) for starting and expanding small-scale food businesses, where participants learned how to start a farm or home-based food business, how to start or expand a commercial food business, best practices for operating a food business out of a shared space, and how to start or join a food business cooperative.

## NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION ISSUES

*Including Recycling and Clean Sweep*

Michelle worked with the Taylor County recycling authority to inform their audience about recycling opportunities. She co-organized, advertised, and educated the public about Clean Sweeps and tire collections in Taylor County.

### Clean Sweeps

Michelle worked with the Taylor County Recycling & Solid Waste Department to host the Taylor County Clean Sweep. Due to changes with the hazardous waste vendor, who no longer would attend the Saturday event, Taylor County held two events. Both events were well attended and removed hazardous waste and other unwanted items from the environment.

- 431 participants at the electronics and appliance pick up in Medford and Gilman. This was down about 100 people from recent years.
- 390 TVs or monitor, about the same as last year.
- 31,773 pounds of miscellaneous electronics, about the same as last year.
- 25 participants brought in pharmaceuticals.
- 150 people participated at the hazardous waste collection.

## STRONGBODIES™

LIFTING PEOPLE TO BETTER HEALTH



STRONG BODIES

Restarted the *Strong Bodies* program in-person and online (A series of virtual strength training sessions for older adults where they improve strength, balance, and flexibility, so they can stay healthy and socially connected). I worked with all the instructors so they were current with training requirements. The training requirements for a Strong Bodies Volunteer:

- Strong Bodies Position Description
- Volunteer Behavior Expectations
- Conditions of Volunteer Services
- Mandated Reporter Video
- CPR: Have a current CPR certification or watch this video
- Infectious Disease Video
- Permission for Background Check (Background checks are redone every 4 years per UW Madison's policy)





# FoodWise

**Brenda Fierke, Coordinator**



**FOOD  
WISE**

Healthy choices, healthy lives.

## IMPACT IN 2021

In response to the ongoing challenges in reaching SNAP-Ed audiences with direct education during the pandemic, FoodWise increased the delivery of indirect education. During the period of October 2020 to September 2021, **3605** indirect educational contacts were made in Taylor County at locations such as Indianhead Community Action Agency food pantry, and Medford Head Start. Indirect educational contacts were made through local print resources, electronic materials and handouts, and pre-recorded videos.

### Indianhead Agency

Researched and arranged for the distribution of a fact sheet for food pantry participants to learn about selecting, preparing, and storing fresh vegetables. The goal of the fact sheet is to help pantry participants and their families eat a healthier diet by eating more vegetables.

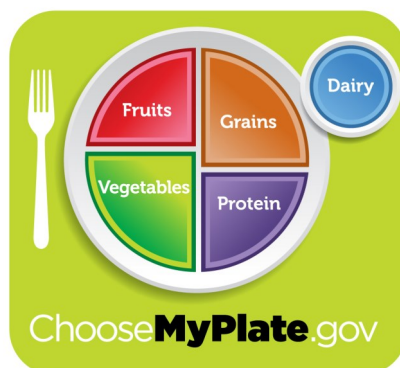
150 families participating in the Indianhead Community Action Agency food pantry drive-up distribution received healthy seasonal produce fact sheets. The handouts highlighted storage, preparation and

key nutrients of asparagus, berries, rhubarb, and spinach. Taylor County Commission On Aging seniors also received information on seasonal produce during the month of July.

### Nutrition in a Box

Researched and arranged for distribution of a fact sheet for Head Start parents to learn about the importance of offering a variety of healthy foods to their child. A goal of the fact sheet is to support parents in guiding their child to make good food choices by serving a variety of foods for meals and snacks.

Nutrition lessons in a box were provided to 20 Head Start students last spring. Students learned about growing foods and MyPlate food groups. Teacher comments after the lessons were *“Students planted seeds and watched them grow. They learned what grows above the ground and what grows below the ground.”* *“They made their own MyPlate and picked foods to put on their plate. The children really became aware of foods and what is healthy.”*



### Fact Sheets for Seniors

A series of fruit and vegetable publications for seniors were researched, created and distributed. These fact sheets promote buying fresh produce at farmers markets and grocery stores. The goal of the publication is to help community members better understand how to select, prepare, and store specific produce items. The 8 fact sheets were provided to 270 seniors participating at the 7 Commission On Aging meal sites.

### Food Pantry Fact Sheets

Researched and arranged for distribution of a fact sheet for mobile food pantry participants to learn about protein foods. The effort was intended to educate participants about healthier ways to consume protein foods. The handouts were provided to 50 community members participating at the St. Paul's Mobile Food Pantry food distribution.

Researched and arranged for the distribution of fact sheets for food pantry participants to learn about how to fit low-cost vegetables and fruits into their diet, and how to choose healthy foods for meals. The fact sheets help pantry participants and their families make healthier food selections at the pantry and eat healthier meals at home. The handouts were provided to 10 community members participating at the Rib Lake Community Pantry.