



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
TAYLOR COUNTY

# Taylor County Mar/Apr 2024 Highlight Report

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

## Community Development/Strong Bodies

PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO ASSIST  
LEADERS, COMMUNITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS REALIZE  
THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

MICHELLE GRIMM, EDUCATOR



Michelle Grimm

**Taylor County Broadband Committee presenting at the 175 Years of Partnering with Wisconsin Communities (this event occurred May 7)**

### **Building Broadband Capacity through Partnerships**

Three communities who partnered with Extension on broadband projects will share their experiences. Taylor County will discuss their journey to address the lack of broadband service. Tribal members from Lac du Flambeau will explain multiple steps which ultimately led to receiving funding to become an independent Internet Service Provider. Forest County will lay out the elements of their groundbreaking digital navigator program to support rural community members. UW Madison Division of Extension's Broadband Team will highlight expanding broadband resources available to communities. Participants will have an opportunity to identify local and regional broadband needs, as well as help shape future Extension programming.

**Taylor County Strategic Plan**- Michelle facilitated meetings of the county Strategic Plan Committee where it recommended versions of county government mission and vision statements to the County Board. The following two statements were approved during recent County Board meetings.

**Mission: *Provide efficient, professional, and fiscally responsible necessary public services to create a healthy and safe community for Taylor County residents.***

**Vision: *To deliver quality services with compassion and respect for the people of Taylor County.***



## Agriculture

PROVIDING RESEARCH-BASED LIVESTOCK AND FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND DECISION-MAKING TOOLS TO FARMERS AND AGRIBUSINESSES.

SANDY STUTTGEN, EDUCATOR



Sandy Stuttgen

### Who does the Taylor County Extension Agriculture Educator work with? What does she focus on?

The recently released 2022 US Census of Agriculture counted 745 farms utilizing 216,000 acres in Taylor County and selling \$172 M in agricultural market value with the average net farm income at \$64,537.

- Livestock production occurred on 412 (55%) of the farms in Taylor County (dairy, beef, hog, sheep, and poultry).
- Dairy accounts for 154 (37%) of the farms and 227 (55%) raise beef cows.
- 43% of the beef farms (97, the largest category) raise less than 10 cows, 0.8% (2 farms) raise 100-199 beef cows.

The 2022 Ag Census notes that 2,707 Taylor County individuals reside on farms. Census.gov/quick facts notes Taylor County's population was 19,941 in 2022; 14% of Taylor County's population is directly involved in farming. The average age of Taylor County's 1,386 farmers was 56 years with, on average, 26 years on the farm.

- 60% are white males, 40% white females.
- 87% live on the farm they operate.
- 53% list farming as their primary occupation. The primary occupation for 47% is not farming.

These are the men and women Sandy programs with. **Her primary area of focus is providing research-based information to help beef producers maintain sustainability.** Her programming (teaching activities/topics) focuses on biosecurity, beef health and reproduction, and beef quality assurance. She shares her programming throughout the state and brings statewide programming efforts and University resources to Taylor County farmers.

As an Associate Professor with the UW-Madison Division of Extension, her faculty and academic staff appointments serve Taylor County with a 0.8 FTE position (32 hours a week) dividing her time into 65% Teaching, 25% Research (currently beef x dairy calf health), and 10% Service (to Taylor County's agriculture, and Extension/University).



### **WI Beef Cow-Calf School for Beginners**

The virtual series of **five ZOOM meetings for beginning beef producers and dairy producers new to beef production about starting a beef operation, marketing, and beef animal health, nutrition, and reproduction was completed at the end of April to early May**. This series aimed to increase the economic sustainability of new beef producers. 130 registered participants from WI (the majority), IA, IL, IN, MT, CA, AZ, AR, KS, ND, SD, and TX joined in the live presentations (70, 54%) or received access to the recorded videos (60, 46%).

- 65% of the participants have <5 years of experience with beef production.
- 28% have experience with dairy production.
- 19% have > 5 years' experience with beef production.
- 19% have > 5 years' experience with other livestock production.
- 14% have < 5 years' experience with other livestock production.

**Sandy and her team created this new curriculum and presented it.** All session discussions were provided to the students along with resources to the session's content provided as online links to existing documents and new factsheets. A follow-up beef field day is planned for September 2024 and her team will host this school again in January 2025.

The student's immediate post-series evaluation results indicated:

- 62% of those responding were very satisfied with this workshop series.
- 35% of those responding were satisfied, the information was good, but wished a few other topics were covered.
- **Over 91% of those responding stated they would recommend this school to a friend.**

A follow-up evaluation survey was emailed to the students during the first week of May. A six-month follow-up evaluation will be conducted in October 2024 to gauge how the students are using what they learned and its impact on their cow-calf operations.





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## Wisconsin 4-H



Julie Diepenbrock

TAYLOR COUNTY 4-H HAS OVER 200 YOUTH AND ADULTS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN LEADERSHIP AND LIFE SKILLS.

### **CLC - After School programs at MAMS, Gilman Library**

In March, Julie taught 10 youth at the Medford Area Middle School (MAMS) afterschool program to make Mini Pizzas and Oven Baked French Fries. In April I taught 12 youth how to make Fruit pizza.

**Food preparation involves measurements, following instructions and encourages hands-on creative thinking skills.**



January - March, I worked with youth at the Gilman library **on LEGO robotics which helps expand youth's interest in STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

### **YQCA (Youth for the Quality Care of Animals)**

Sunday, March 10, Julie **taught 19 youth (along with 6 adults)** the Instructor-Led Training that is required by the Market Animal Show and Sale (MASS) for showing livestock at the Taylor County Fair. **"YQCA is a national multi-species quality assurance program for youth ages 8 to 21 with a focus on three core pillars: Food Safety, Animal Well-being, and Character Development.** For the past several years Taylor County youth have completed the training online, but several youths wanted an in-person option.

### **Plat Books 2024**

The Taylor County Plat Book is one of the major fundraisers for the Federation of Taylor County 4-H. All proceeds from plat book sales stay local to benefit the 4-H program. Funds are used to provide 4-H programs as well as scholarships for graduating seniors who are 4-H members and scholarships to help youth. **The 2024 Plat Books should be available for purchase from the Extension office in May.**

### Club Updates

A few of the activities of our 4-H Clubs recently include: Countrysiders 4-H Club making tie blankets and delivering them to Taylor House, Liberty 4-H Club - made cards and delivered to nursing home, Poplar Grove - I taught them how to use 3Doodler pens and YLO (Youth Leaders Organization) made 13 developmental hearts for the NICU unit at Marshfield and four ice pack covers for the pediatric unit. These activities encourage community service and learning new skills.





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## FoodWise

ADVANCES HEALTHY EATING HABITS, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES, AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS FOR COUNTY RESIDENTS WITH LIMITED INCOMES.

SHARA ALLEN, FOODWISE NUTRITION EDUCATOR



**FOOD WISE**  
Healthy choices, healthy lives.

UW-MADISON EXTENSION



Shara Allen

FoodWise attended the **Latino Community Health Resource Fair on March 20th at the Taylor County Education Center in Medford**. The event was organized by the Taylor County Health Department. Families appreciated the free children's book, in Spanish or English, about trying new food. Stickers with healthy eating sayings in Spanish were given out to children. Informational and children's activity flyers, both in Spanish and English, from the USDA MyPlate website were available for adults and children. The Taylor County Resource Guide was distributed as a source of information for families. **FoodWise Educator, Shara Allen, was available to answer questions and promote the provided materials.**



FoodWise table at the Latino Community Health Resource Fair on March 20, 2024



Materials in Spanish and English were distributed to guests

FoodWise Educator, Shara Allen, **attended the Gilman Senior Center luncheon on March 27th**. She introduced herself to the guests as they ate their lunch and helped with the clean-up. After lunch **Shara presented nutrition information on the sweet potatoes that the guests had eaten as part of their meal. Many residents asked questions or had stories to share about their own experience growing or eating sweet potatoes.** After the presentation Shara stayed to help with BINGO. She is planning to return quarterly with more nutrition information and social interaction with the dining guests.



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FoodWise display with sweet potato information at Gilman Senior Center, March 27th, 2024

FoodWise Educator, Shara Allen, **started teaching nutrition education to the Medford Head Start classroom in early April. She will be teaching 6 lessons that include hands-on activities, reading a book, and providing a taste test of nutritious food.** The 13 children are interested in the lessons and the staff have been incredibly supportive. Shara also attended the Head Start parent night on April 24th with a fellow FoodWise Educator from Price County. Together the **educators presented on how to provide nutritious food on a budget and tricks to get picky eaters to try new food.** The event was well attended with **8 of the 13 families attending.**

FoodWise Educator, Shara Allen, attended the Food Resource Group meeting on April 24th at the USDA building in Medford. Attending were 4 representatives from local pantries/food access providers. Participants share statistics, stories, and concerns and provide support to one another. **Information from this meeting will be shared by Shara to the Taylor County Coalition and Supporting Healthy Aging Coalition.**

**FoodWise is an active member of the Taylor County Coalition and Supporting Healthy Aging Coalition and attend meetings regularly.** This serves as a great opportunity to develop and strengthen partnerships for current and future programming opportunities with other agencies and organizations.

Shara Allen finished the Systems Approaches for Healthy Communities course she was taking through University of Minnesota as part of her UW-Extension onboarding. **The course provides toolkits with activities that can be used to promote Policy, Systems, and Environment changes within the community and a list of resources to access data on a variety of community assessment measures.**



## Extension Taylor County's Primary Partnering Organizations

- Huey's Hideaway
- Northcentral WI Cattleman's Association
- Taylor County 4-H Federation
- Medford Farmer's Market
- Taylor County Tourism
- Taylor County Department of Health
- WI Beef Council
- DATCP
- WI Animal Healthy ER Mgmt Working Group
- Athens School District
- Farm WI Discovery Center
- Northwest WI Head Start
- Lutheran Social Services
- ICAA Taylor County Food Pantry
- CDI Medford Head Start
- Prentice School District
- Taylor County Public Libraries
- Gilman School District
- Rib Lake School District
- Market Animal Show & Sale
- Taylor County Fair Board
- Medford Area Public Schools
- Taylor County Solid Waste & Recycling Committee
- Taylor County Fair Board
- Taylor County Unit of WI Towns Association

**Julie Diepenbrock:** *4-H Educator* (Shared with Price County)

**Shara Allen:** *FoodWise Nutrition Educator* (Shared with Lincoln County)

**Terri Kolb:** *FoodWise Administrator* (Multi-county)

**Michelle Grimm:** *Community Development Educator/Health & Well Being Educator* (*Strong Bodies Coordinator*)

**Sandra Stuttgen:** *Agriculture Educator*

**Kelly Phillips:** *Program Assistant*

**Art Lersch:** *Area Extension Director, Langlade, Lincoln, Price, Taylor* (715-218-5360)

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**Kelly Phillips**