



**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 –  
.8 FTE CDI  
.2 FTE StrongBodies  
Coordinator

### Statewide Mini-Course Leadership and Facilitation

Michelle has been instrumental in leading and teaching two statewide learning series that address the needs and interests of communities, including Taylor County. Her role is pivotal in leading, teaching, sharing, and connecting individuals and groups within Taylor County. By leveraging statewide resources and utilizing the specific expertise of Extension educators across Wisconsin, Michelle plays a significant role in promoting community learning and development through a variety of platforms. There are two upcoming series that Michelle will be helping lead and facilitate and has promoted in Taylor County via radio, Facebook and direct contact.

**Wisconsin Nonprofits Connect to Learn;** is a program that supports learning and growing together to boost nonprofit changemakers ability to make an impact.

Wisconsin Nonprofits Connect to Learn provides participants with opportunities to advance their skills while connecting and learning from peers. The program covers content that is important to nonprofit leaders while centering the formation of a peer network for ongoing support, mentorship, resource sharing, and collaboration. The following topics will be covered in 2025.

- March - Action Planning
- April - Scenario Planning
- July - Fund Development
- September - Communicate what Matters





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**FEED, Virtual Workshops for New and Growing Food and Farming Businesses;** is a series designed to provide tips for running and growing a successful food business from specialists and entrepreneurs! It is a no-cost series of online trainings for food entrepreneurs and farm-based food businesses and supports all of Wisconsin's inspiring food and farming entrepreneurs.

The sessions are as follows:

- February 10 – Food Safety in Wisconsin: Mobile and Transient Retail Food Establishment Licenses and Guidelines for Sampling
- February 17 – Starting a Shared Use Kitchen: Finding a Kitchen for Your Value-Added Food Processing
- February 25 – Demo of The Food Corridor Kitchen Management Software for FEED Participants
- March 3 – Navigating Wisconsin Free Business Resources
- March 10 – How Can a Cooperative Business Structure Make Farmland More Accessible in Wisconsin
- March 17 – Developing Marketing Strategies for Sustainable Business Growth: The Case of Maple Producers



### **Taylor County Towns Association Broadband Update**

Taylor County CDI educator attended the Towns Association Meeting with Grant Bub, Taylor County Broadband Coordinator, to provide a Broadband Update and answer any questions from Town Supervisors.

### **Taylor County StrongBodies Volunteer Leader Training**

Michelle worked with the Statewide StrongBodies Coordinator to host a Volunteer Training for the Taylor County StrongBodies Volunteers. Because it is an evidence-based program, it is imperative that there are fidelity checks for all volunteers. It was also a great chance to connect with the volunteers and talk through any challenges and possible upcoming local opportunities.



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## Agriculture

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

SANDY STUTTGEN, EDUCATOR



Sandy Stuttgen – Faculty  
.8 FTE

### Record-Keeping Practices and Educational Needs

**At the 2025 North Central Wisconsin Cattlemen Association (NCWCA) Winter Event**, members filled out a survey that Ag Educator Sandy Stuttgen created regarding their record-keeping habits and how they use the NCWCA Herd Record Book. The survey also aimed to find out what kind of record-keeping education members might need. **Members representing 26 operations responded, which is an 80% response rate.**

We learned that just over half of the respondents prefer using a different paper record-keeping system instead of the NCWCA Herd Record Book. To encourage more people to use the NCWCA Herd Record Book we are considering the following:

- Hold workshops or info sessions to show members the benefits and features of the NCWCA Herd Record Book.
- Add more functionalities or templates to make the record book more comprehensive and user-friendly.
- Set up a feedback system where members can suggest improvements or report on any challenges they face with the record book.

The survey also found that the least maintained records included pregnancy test results, breeding costs, calf vigor, genomics results, frame scores, and phenotype evaluations. **Only 58% of the members kept treatment records for their adult cattle, and only 29% tracked feed quantities and costs. Interestingly, 64% of members want more information on keeping feeding records.**



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To improve understanding, we need to focus more on these educational topics:

- Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)
- Calving Distribution
- Secure Beef Supply
- Enterprise Budgeting
- Daily Biosecurity
- Balanced Rations



*Photo: 2025 NCWCA Board of Directors and their advisor, Sandy, pose for a picture at the Annual Meeting held on Jan 11, 2025.*

## Noontime Beef Roundups

The 2025 Noontime Beef Roundup Webinar Series brings essential insights for thriving in the beef industry. This free, virtual series features expert speakers and interactive sessions, all aimed at helping keep beef operations economically viable.

Sandy and the team identified biosecurity as a crucial area in beef production. If not practiced properly, it poses a significant economic risk for producers. **An industry expert shared valuable research-based information about biosecurity on January 9th, and we had thirty participants join the session.** Our next Roundup on February 13th will focus on seller reputation and how it influences buyers.



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## Wisconsin 4-H

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

JULIE DIEPENBROCK, EDUCATOR



UW-MADISON EXTENSION



Julie Diepenbrock -  
.5 FTE

### 4-H Summer Intern

Management, recruitment, leadership and oversight of a 4-H summer intern to work in both Price and Taylor Counties to increase 4-H programs offered to youth throughout the summer.

- Summer is an extremely busy time in 4-H. In order to offer the programs that Taylor County 4-H offers throughout the summer; we need more capacity. Hiring a summer intern who can help lead 4-H programs during the Summer increases our reach to youth who may not be involved with 4-H as well as supporting youth who are already members of a 4-H Community club. **The summer intern will help at Summer Camp, 4-H Day Camps, 4-H Library programs, and supporting 4-H at the Taylor County Fair.** The summer intern will also work on creating materials to promote 4-H throughout the coming year.

### 4-H Project Fun Day

A morning of hands-on projects for youth where they learned about the Photography, Rabbit, and Cat 4-H projects. **The goal of this effort was to provide positive experiences for youth and help them learn more about their projects.**

- We had 6 youth, and 4 adults attend the Taylor County 4-H Project Fun Day for youth K5-5th grade at the Extension Office. There were 4 presenters for 3 different sessions.



*Photo: Project Fun Day – youth with the cat toys they made while learning more about cats.*



## After School Programs

An interactive session at Medford Area Public Schools (MAPS) **After School program to introduce youth to 4-H through a STEM activity.**

- Medford Area Public Schools offer a Community Learning Center (CLC) for their after-school program to provide a safe place for youth to be after school and provide enrichment activities. 3Doodler Start pens are a way to provide opportunities for youth to engage in a STEM activity that develops their skills and their imagination. Medford Area Elementary School (MAES), Medford Area Middle School (MAMS) and Stetsonville Elementary School (SES) have been open to 4-H providing opportunities to teach youth how to use the 3Doodler pens.



*Photo: 36 youth attending after school programming from the MAPS.*

## 4-H Club Meetings

4-H Community Club meeting where youth discussed current projects, planned community service projects, and completed recreational activity. **The goal of this effort is to provide youth educational opportunities and grow interpersonal skills of youth.**

- Young people throughout Taylor County are among the next generation of community leaders and workforce. Young people in every community need experiences where they are engaged in learning activities that are meaningful to them and where they find the support of caring adults and peers. Monthly Community 4-H club meetings help youth develop positive relationships with peers and adults. Youth experience a sense of belonging in 4-H. **Taylor County 4-H youth experience a sense of belonging that supports positive mental health.**



*Photo: Members of Countrysiders 4-H Club at their last meeting of making Valentine's Day cards and tie blankets for Country Gardens residents and some of the club dropping off their goodies for the residents.*



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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



Shara Allen - .5 FTE

### FOODWise Highlights for Taylor County-January & February 2025

In January, SOAR, Raider Academy, and FoodWise met for their third lesson. **This lesson focused on food safety.** Students participated in a skit that demonstrated various poor food safety choices. An excellent discussion was held afterwards about if different food safety choices could have been made and why they would be preferable. When students prepared their lunch of chicken tacos these food safety guidelines were reinforced.

**In February, SOAR, Raider Academy, and FoodWise met to discuss proper knife skills.** The students watched a video on how to hold a knife and how to safely cut food. These skills were practiced during meal prep when the students cut up a variety of vegetables to make homemade chili and apples for dessert. For the majority of students this was the first time they had used a chef's knife or any sharp knife. A few students commented on how tasty and easy the chili was to make and how they were going to go home and make it for their families. A highlight of the lesson was when we played a game of Jeopardy to review our past lesson objectives. Everyone had a blast, and their answers demonstrated the vast amount of knowledge they have retained.

In January and February, FoodWise finished a series of 4 nutrition classes at the Gilman Senior Center. **Thanks to the Social Isolation Grant Taylor County was awarded, 15 seniors were given air fryers on the last day of class.** The feedback from the class was very positive. Comments such as "Was informative-got my brain working again!" and "More classes please!" were given. Topics included using MyPlate to eat healthy, eating on a budget, reading nutrition labels, and food safety. The post-series survey showed that 11/15 seniors learned how to use MyPlate to eat healthy meals, 10/15 seniors learned a new cost saving tip to use at the grocery store, 12/15 seniors will use the nutrition facts to determine how healthy a food is before buying it, and 14/15 seniors learned or were reminded of how important food safety is. Future plans to offer a class in Jump River and Medford are being discussed.



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TAYLOR COUNTY



*Photo: Gilman Senior Center series and their awarded air fryers.*

## **Extension Taylor County's Primary Partnering Organizations**

- Huey's Hideaway Children's Museum
- Northcentral WI Cattleman's Association
- Federation of Taylor County 4-H
- Medford Farmer's Market
- Taylor County Tourism
- Taylor County Department of Health
- WI Beef Council
- Equity Livestock Marketing Association
- FFA Colby High School
- Northwest WI Head Start
- Lutheran Social Services
- ICAA Taylor County Food Pantry
- Taylor County Public Libraries
- Gilman School District
- Rib Lake School District
- The Taylor House
- 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
- Taylor County Commission on Aging
- Taylor County Broadband Committee





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TAYLOR COUNTY

## Office Administration



OFFICE MANAGER – KELLY PHILLIPS

### Support

Beyond administrative duties, Phillips provides support to the educators at the Taylor County Extension Office. She assists with the coordination and execution of various programs, ensuring they are delivered effectively. Moreover, she administers a range of services offered through the office, including program registrations, insect identification, horticulture and agriculture inquiries and research, PAT Exams and general questions that may or may not be related to the services of Extension.

### Relations

Phillips also serves as the crucial link between the UW-Madison Division of Extension resources and the individuals living within Taylor County. Her role as an intermediary ensures that the needs and concerns of the community are communicated effectively to the university, fostering a strong and supportive relationship between the two.

### Professional Development

Phillips continues to stay abreast on technology changes within Zoom, AI, and Block Editor. Phillips plays an integral role as one of the coordinators and administrators for the WI Extension Administration Staff by offering monthly hour-long focused workshops on topics such as: WordPress/Block Editor, Civil Rights – Digital Accessibility, Plain Language, Excel Tips, Canva, 4-H Online, SharePoint, and Emma. Phillips will be attending the annual Administrative Conference in Madison in April where she will learn more professional development skills and tools.



AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – AMBER REHBERG

*(Taylor, Price, Lincoln, Florence, Forest, Oneida, & Vilas)*

### Purpose/Role of the Area Extension Director

As the Taylor County Area Extension Director, Amber Rehberg is committed to coordinating and providing overall leadership for Taylor County Extension Programs to enhance community engagement and address local issues and concerns. Amber is currently focusing on learning from Extension staff and community partners about the needs of Taylor County and its communities. She will continue to support educators and staff, finding ways to connect University resources to Taylor County. Please reach out with any questions or concerns regarding Taylor County Extension and/or possible future programming and/or collaboration needs or ideas at: [amber.rehbera@wisc.edu](mailto:amber.rehbera@wisc.edu) or 715.784.1540