



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
TAYLOR COUNTY

Taylor County Mar/Apr 2025 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 –
.8 FTE CDI
.2 FTE StrongBodies
Coordinator



When: May 29th 1-2:30pm
Where: Taylor County Community Center
Why: Proactive planning for future renewable energy development in Taylor County



Discover the new RESET program by UW-Extension, designed to empower Wisconsin communities through large-scale renewable energy projects. Facilitated by Michelle Grimm, Taylor County can participate and have free community engagement and visioning sessions in advance of development.

What can RESET do for Taylor County?

- Learn about the Public Service Commission's siting process for major projects.
- Identify community priorities and create a shared vision.
- Participate effectively in public hearings and comment periods.
- Understand solar leasing contracts and negotiation tips.
- Explore adopting solar ordinances or community benefit agreements.
- Economic Benefits: Plan for guaranteed tax revenue streams and ensure fair allocation to maximize community wealth-building.

2025 Webinars for Nonprofit Teams

From grant writing and fundraising to communication and action planning, these workshops provide relevant guidance, customized for small to mid-sized nonprofits. Michelle continues to help lead and facilitate and promote community learning and development within Taylor County.



Simplified Scenario Planning: Webinar

April 16, 2025

Participants will learn a simple scenario planning tool that they can use to think strategically about how their organization can move forward when multiple external or internal factors are affecting the organization's success. Using the scenario planning tool, nonprofit leaders can help their teams identify what has the greatest impact on the organization, the scenarios they should be prepared for, and strategies for pivoting from one scenario to another.

Simplified Action Planning: Webinar

May 21, 2025

Participants will learn a simple action planning tool that they can use to think strategically about their organization's priorities. Using the action planning tool nonprofit leaders can reach consensus on what their organization needs to focus on, explore what will help and could impede their progress, and identify the most important and actionable activities to reach their goal. Once you know how to use the action planning tool you can use it repeatedly to help your organization be nimble during times of uncertainty and change. You can also use it when your organization is stuck and feeling overwhelmed.



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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

Sandy and Extension State Beef Specialist Bill Halfman researched, created, and presented **Defend Your Empire - Biosecurity & Secure Beef Supply Planning** for the WI Cattlemen's Association Winter Event held on February 22, 2025. This presentation is intended to be included in upcoming statewide workshops.

Eighty individuals attended the event. The post-session evaluation response rate was approximately 25%, with responses ranging from 9 to 29 as not all participants answered every question. The purpose of the evaluation was to obtain feedback for revising the presentation and meeting materials to better serve the audience's needs.

- 22 responses indicated key takeaways from the presentation: "start planning now," better understanding of biosecurity, and helpful information found in the presentation folder.
- Nine participants noted missing topics such as current disease outbreaks, diseases other than FMD, weather impacts on disease pressures, and equipment cleaning and disinfection. No one suggested removing any topics from the presentation.
- 23 participants listed take home messages including good planning will save in the long run; have a chore order, be prepared so you don't panic when something happens; must always keep biosecurity in mind and know your risks; write things down.
- 19 responses on activity usefulness:
 - Candy Game: 42% enjoyed it most, calling it 'simple but effective'.
 - Perimeter Mapping: 32% found it 'thought-provoking' with useful visuals.
 - Movement Risk Exercise: 16% found it useful.
 - Inputs/Outputs: 11% found it useful.
 - Comments suggested starting with the Map Activity and walking through a real biosecurity plan. They recommended talking more about BVD and BRD, and less about FMD.



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From Feb 19 – April 18, Sandy answered seven questions from Taylor County residents, mainly about land rental rates and leases, by **providing verbal, written or emailed research-backed information**. During this time, she also prepared for her April 25 Parasite Patrol (deworming) Workshop at Abbotsford City Hall and secured free lab testing for local dairy and beef producers through Merck Animal Health. She learned about Merck's program at the National Association of County Agriculture Agents Texas Meeting in July 2024 – bringing this resource to local farmers.

Limiting Access



Control/exclude
rodents, birds, wildlife

Limit people's access

- cattle pens, feed bunks
- feeding mixing and storage areas
- treatment areas
- farm deliveries

Visitor Log



Bioexclusion to Defend Your Empire



- Step 1: Identify what and who routinely enters your operation
Movement Risks/Inputs & Outputs
- Step 2: Identify where access points in, around, and out are located

Perimeter Mapping





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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

Federation of Taylor County 4-H

Julie continues to provide support and leadership for the Federation of Taylor County 4-H where she has been facilitating discussions about 2025 activities and summer planning. **The goal is to ensure sustained youth programming in accordance with state policies.** The Taylor County 4-H Federation provides direct funding to youth to explore their SPARKS and increase their sense of BELONGING in the local 4-H program through scholarships for educational experiences, awards and recognition efforts.

- 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 Taylor County 4-H Federation meetings help plan events and activities to help promote 4-H and help 4-H youth to develop positive relationships with peers and adults. The Federation provides funding to help 4-H members attend travel experiences, camp and post-secondary schooling along with supplementing the cost for other activities. Youth experience a sense of belonging in 4-H. **Taylor County 4-H youth experience a sense of belonging that supports positive mental health.**

YQCA (Youth for Quality Care of Animals) Training

Training where youth learn about quality care for animals. **Total Reached: 23 youth and 8 adults attended the In-Person YQCA Trainings led by the 4-H Educator.**

- Youth in our 4-H program and other youth organizations show and sell animals at the Taylor County Fair. In order to sell their animals in the Livestock Auction, youth are required to complete the YQCA Training either in person or online. Some youth prefer to take the training in person. **Julie taught 2 in-person YQCA Trainings this spring.** Most of the youth attending were 4-H members, but there were also FFA members, and some Farmers Union Junior members present. Youth learned about quality care for animals including care of livestock, life skills, and food safety.

Julie represented Taylor County Extension at the Area Career Fair where high school students had an opportunity to engage with educators and learn more about Extension and careers available in Extension. **Approximately 250 students were exposed to UW-Extension Taylor County as they browsed through the booths available at the Career Fair.** 62 students engaged with us in learning more about UW-Extension Taylor County.

- High School students are often unaware of many of the careers that are available in their communities. Similarly, many people (especially youth) are unaware of UW-Extension Taylor County and don't realize the work we do or the careers available. Julie and Amber Rehberg (Area Extension Director) spent the day at the Homegrown Success - Career Fair at the Simek Center visiting with high school students. Several students interviewed one of us and others we engaged by educating them about Extension, what Extension does, and opportunities that are available.



A 4-H Family Activity was held in February where youth experienced a sense of belonging and had an opportunity to develop positive relationships with their peers and adults while involved in an outdoor activity. Winter can be long in Wisconsin and some youth and their families may not get out as much as during the summer months. The Federation of Taylor County 4-H sponsored a Family Fun Night at Perkinstown for 4-H youth and their families to enjoy tubing at no cost to the youth. 28 youth and 37 adults attended the Family Fun night and had a great time connecting and getting exercise with peers and adults. A total of 65 people engaged in this positive outdoor winter activity for approximately 2 hours.

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-March & April 2025

FoodWise attended the Supporting Healthy Aging Coalition's Protecting Your Gold event in Stetsonville on March 18th. Shara had a table with resources on how to save money when grocery shopping and how to eat on a budget. **Over 50 Taylor County residents attended this event and were eager to learn new ways to save money and waste less food.**



Photo: Shara at Protecting Your Gold Event in Stetsonville on March 18, 2025

In April, **SOAR, the Raider Academy, and FoodWise met for their fifth lesson.** This lesson focused on liquid and dry measuring techniques, cooking terms, and food safety. The lessons were introduced through five stations with hands-on activities for the students. The students' favorite station was when they utilized their measuring skills to make oatmeal in a mug. Some students had never had oatmeal before, and an excellent discussion followed on what a cost-effective, nutritious, and filling meal this can be with endless options for healthy toppings.



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On April 8th, Shara taught the first of **four nutrition education classes in Jump River**. This is Shara's third nutrition education series for older adults that she has taught in Taylor County through the Social Isolation Grant. **Currently 9 individuals are signed up**. Topics include MyPlate, budgeting, nutrition labels, and food safety. Classes will meet weekly for 4 weeks with participants receiving an air fryer during their last class.

Thank you to Cathy Lemke for attending **the Supporting Healthy Aging Coalition Thank You Event** on March 28th in Stetsonville. This event highlighted the projects the Social Isolation Grant was responsible for in Taylor County. Because of our partnership with the Taylor County Health Department, FoodWise was able to use \$2,200 of the grant money to **offer older adult nutrition classes in Rib Lake, Gilman, and Jump River**. The money provided the classes with food that highlighted the topic of the day and an air fryer for each participant at the end of the 4-class series.

Extension Taylor County's Primary Partnering Organizations

- Huey's Hideaway Children's Museum
- Northcentral WI Cattleman's Association (NCWCA)
- 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
- ICAA Head Start
- 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
- Aging Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Taylor County Broadband Committee



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Office Administration



OFFICE MANAGER – KELLY PHILLIPS

Support

Beyond administrative duties, Phillips provides on-going support to the educators at the Taylor County Extension Office. During the months of March and April Kelly provided coordination and support for the following programs: Career Fair, 4-H Newsletter, StrongBodies, Community Gardens, Parasite Patrol Workshop, CDI Reset Program, Ag Informational Emails, and 4-H Email Blast. Moreover, she administered a range of services offered, 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. Since the start of 2025, Phillips has assisted over 120 Taylor County Residents via the phone, e-mail, and office drop-ins. She plays an important role connecting community members with UW resources and research.

Professional Development

As Phillips provides strong administrative support, she strives to continue building and developing the needed skills to utilize best practices and resources. She is also committed to supporting other administrative professionals and serves on a statewide committee that organizes professional development opportunities for administrative professionals around the state. Phillips recently attended, via Zoom, trainings on 4-H Reporting Capabilities, IT -WordPress Updates for the website; and How to Use CoPilot (AI) in your everyday tasks. April 16th, Phillips attended an Admin Professionals Conference in Madison. The Keynote Speaker talked about “Happiness” discussing three key elements of 1) taking care of mind & body; 2) focus on life vs self; 3) matter of mindfulness. Within several of the breakout sessions, Phillips enjoyed “Thriving Through Transition” to gain and understanding of personal dynamics of organizational change and the 3-phase transition processes. Phillips also was able to connect with fellow colleagues and identify future speakers for the monthly state admin meetings.



AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – AMBER REHBERG

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

The Area 3 and Area 4 AED continues to learn more about Taylor County; connecting with staff and community partners. Amber had the opportunity to participate in the career fair, engaging with young leaders and community leaders. 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.rehberg@wisc.edu or 715.784.1540.