



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
TAYLOR COUNTY

## Taylor County May/June 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 Strong Bodies  
Coordinator

### Wisconsin Extension RESET Program

The RESET (Renewable Energy Siting & Engagement for Tomorrow) Program, led by the UW–Madison Division of Extension, is a strategic initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Energy through the R-STEP (Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning) Grant. Wisconsin is one of six states selected to participate in this national effort.

RESET aims to empower local governments, tribal nations, and community members to actively shape the future of renewable energy development in Wisconsin. The program focuses on large-scale renewable energy and energy storage projects, ensuring that communities are not only prepared but also meaningfully involved in the planning and siting processes.

#### Key Objectives:

- *Build local capacity for decision-making around renewable energy siting, permitting, and planning.*
- *Develop educational resources, including workshops, community engagement sessions, and site tours.*
- *Foster community engagement to ensure that renewable energy projects reflect local values, equity, and environmental justice.*
- *Collaborate with stakeholders across Wisconsin and other R-STEP states to inform federal research and policy.*
- *Address environmental impacts related to land, water, wildlife, and people during the lifecycle of renewable energy projects.*

A resolution supporting the **RESET Program** has been forwarded to the Taylor County Board. The County Board will decide if it would like to be involved in this project. Michelle Grimm has been providing education and facilitation for the project.



## Taylor County Clean Sweep

Michelle Grimm, partnered with the Taylor County Recycling Authority and the Taylor County Solid Waste Department to organize the Taylor County Electronics and Appliance Collection and Hazardous Waste Clean Sweep. **2025 Clean Sweep** collected a total of 45,440 lbs. of electronics this year from 717 participants. Also collected were 393 appliances from 259 vehicles, and 23 batteries from 39 vehicles.

### Key Outcomes:

- Lead Acid Batteries Collected: 23 units
- Old Appliances Recycled: 393 units
- TVs and Monitors Recycled: 700 units
- Miscellaneous Electronics: 45,440 units
- Participants: 458 for electronics, 259 for appliances
- Participants: 110 for Clean Sweep

### Summary of Taylor County 2025 Appliance & Electronic Collection

Conducted on:

May 3 in Medford & Gilman

#### MEDFORD SITE

BATTERIES (lead acid)	16
WASTE OIL (gallons)	N/A
OLD APPLIANCES	306
TVs/MONITORS	549
MISC. ELECTRONICS	Unknown
PARTICIPANTS {Elec/Appl}	374 + 205

#### GILMAN SITE

BATTERIES (lead acid)	7
WASTE OIL (gallons)	N/A
OLD APPLIANCES	87
TVs/MONITORS	151
MISC. ELECTRONICS	Unknown
PARTICIPANTS {Elec/Appl}	84 + 54

#### BOTH SITES COMBINED

BATTERIES (lead acid)	23
WASTE OIL (gallons)	N/A
OLD APPLIANCES	393
TVs/MONITORS	700
MISC. ELECTRONICS	45,440
PARTICIPANTS {Elec/Appl}	458 + 259



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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

### Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Professional Development

In June, Sandy attended the BQA State Coordinators in-service in Denver, CO where she participated in discussions and demonstrations on a working ranch about handling facilities and stockmanship. These sessions provided in-depth considerations for designs, worker and cattle safety, load out areas and trailering, which improved her knowledge for sharing with Wisconsin producers. She also received updates regarding new materials for certification and continuing education including new manuals and field guides in English and Spanish. Time was taken to discuss how to reach those producers who don't participate in industry or educational events and how to increase veterinary outreach by training veterinary students in BQA objectives.

Discussions also included maintaining the integrity of BQA Certification with oversight by state coordinators to ensure compliance with BQA Objectives so that the program's outcomes are verifiable. Anecdotally, heard a national policy update from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Washington DC office about beef trade negotiations with the United Kingdom (UK). The UK is amazed that our beef producers voluntarily certify in BQA, as their producers are legislatively mandated to follow an animal welfare program. In the past, the UK believed the US could not match their welfare standards and this was one reason why they would not import beef from us. As they review the outcomes of our transparent BQA program, they are realizing that our beef exceeds their industry standards.

Sandy will incorporate these updates in her upcoming programming. She will be offering both BQA certification and BQA continuing education events for beef producers in the Taylor County area.

## Planning Fall Events

Farmers don't typically take time to attend programs when they are busy planting, fencing, harvesting and otherwise working outdoors. This means that now Sandy has time for planning upcoming fall and winter programs. September calendar is shaping up to include:

- **Save a Calf, Save a Cow** for beef and dairy producers, and Hispanic dairy workers taught as virtual classrooms and hands-on training in close-up cow care, obstetrics and newborn calf care at the Johnson Townhall near Athens and the Eau Claire Extension office in Altoona.
- **Cow-Calf Fall Forage Twilight Meeting** on a cow-calf operation near Stanley, near the Chippewa/Taylor County border. During this meeting, Sandy will lead the discussion about deworming decisions while her Extension colleagues discuss fall forage production, forage inventory, and heifer and cow reproductive decision making.
- **Planning Emergency Livestock Transport Response** with the WI Emergency Management Association in Stevens Point for county emergency response coordinators and other first responders. Sandy and her colleagues will discuss how to safely respond to traffic incidents involving livestock trailers.





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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

### Afterschool Programming

An interactive session at an After Summer School program to introduce youth to 4-H through a STEM activity. 20 youth were able to engage in the LEGO Robotics activities.

- Medford Area Elementary School (MAES) has been excited to have 4-H providing opportunities to teach youth how to build and program the LEGO Robotics. LEGO Robotics are a way to **provide opportunities for youth to engage in a STEM activity that develops their skills through constructing LEGO creations** and learning to do some basic coding to make their creation move and make sound. This program also helps youth develop positive relationships with peers and the 4-H Educator.

### 4-H Summer Staff

Management, recruitment, leadership and oversight of a **4-H AmeriCorps Member** and a **4-H Summer Intern** to work in both Price and Taylor Counties in an effort to increase 4-H Programs offered to youth throughout the Summer.

- Summer is the prime time to offer new and different 4-H activities. In order to offer more 4-H programs that reach more youth in Taylor County throughout the summer, we needed more capacity. The AmeriCorps program is adding capacity to our 4-H programs this Summer and increases our reach to new and different youth who are not typically involved with 4-H. **Katelyn Schult, our 4-H AmeriCorps member**, has helped prepare for and attend Summer Camp, planned and implemented some of the Huey's Summer 4-H Club and Rib Lake Library 4-H Activities programs, and has helped plan Lego Robotics for the Rec Center. Katelyn's help in these areas allows Taylor County 4-H to offer more summer opportunities for our youth.



- 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 needed more capacity. Working with a Summer intern helps promote the 4-H programs and 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. **Samantha Budtke, the summer intern**, has helped prepare for and attend Summer Camp, planned and implemented some of the Huey's Summer 4-H Club and Rib Lake Library 4-H Activities programs, helped plan and conduct 4-H Day Camps, and helped implement 4-H Library programs. Samantha's help in these areas allows Taylor County 4-H to offer more summer opportunities for our youth.

### Summer Camp

Youth need opportunities during the Summer to spend time outdoors, engage in positive activities, and build relationships with peers and adults. Youth who had completed grades 3-7 in Langlade, Lincoln, Price, and Taylor Counties had the opportunity to attend the North Central 4-H Camp at Northern Lakes Impact Center. The camp provided a unique opportunity for youth to develop life skills, build confidence, and meet new people in a safe, supportive outdoor environment. The camp utilized a research-based delivery model focused on empowering youth to gain skills that will last for a lifetime, helping youth to become true leaders in their lives, careers, and communities, to become more independent and better able to plan and reach their long-term goals. **The camp included 51 youth representing close to 500 hours of educational programming contact hours and another 600 contact hours of activities that helped youth develop positive relationships.** Youth were provided with the opportunity to learn about skills related to outdoor survival, forensic science, archery, arts and crafts, swimming, canoeing, and rock climbing.



*Taylor County 4-H Summer Camp Attendees*





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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.

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Shara Allen - .5 FTE

## SOAR and Radar Academy

FoodWise finished the year-long session with SOAR and the Raider Academy the first week of May. We discussed how our food choices are individual and can be motivated by moral, social, sacred, aesthetic and health reasons. The evaluations for the class showed students **increased their confidence with meal prep and have become more aware and mindful of their food choices.**

## Head-Start

Shara finished the five-class series for Head-Start in May. One teacher commented; "As visits and time progressed the children's willingness to try new things increased." "I think you should come back more often! **The children love your lessons as well as trying new food.**" One parent commented that because of the FoodWise Lessons the household is trying more of a variety of fruits and vegetables.

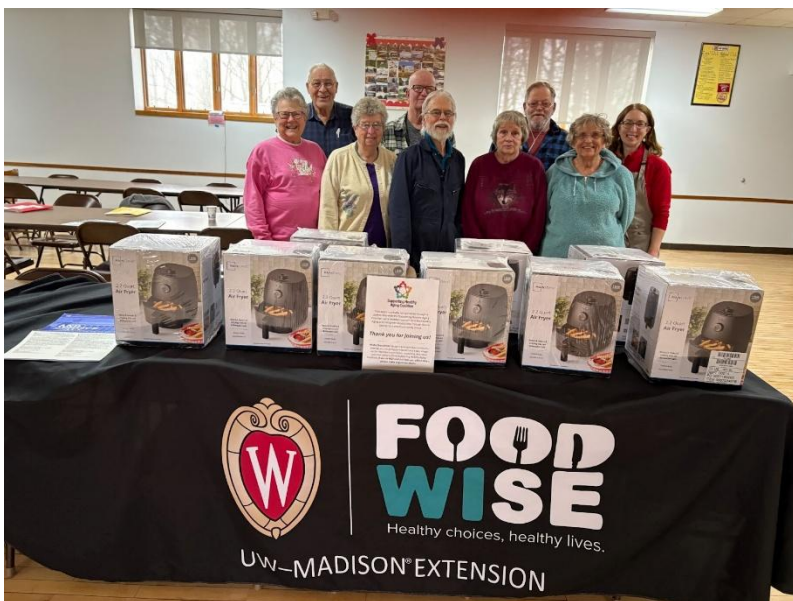
## Nutrition Education for Seniors

Shara finished the nutrition education series in Jump River the last week of April, **with 9 individuals receiving an air fryer thanks to the Social Isolation Grant.** Overwhelmingly, the participants said they learned how to eat healthy meals, how to use an air fryer to cook vegetables, learned a cost saving tip to use at the grocery store, how to read a nutrition label, and were reminded how important food safety is.

## Taylor House

Shara started programming at the Taylor House in early June. She will continue every other week through July. Classes will focus on how to make nutritious meals with food available at the shelter. Classes will incorporate food safety, nutrition, and budgeting into meal prep.

FoodWise is in communication with the Medford Community Food Pantry and the Medford farmers market to try and establish a program to bring more fresh produce to the pantry.



*Shara and the Jump River participants who received an air fryer.*

### **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 May and June Kelly provided coordination and support for the following programs: 4-H Newsletter, 4-H Scholarship Certificates, letters, postcards, Summer Strong Bodies, Community Gardens, upcoming Fall Ag workshop, 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, and general questions that may or may not be related to the services of Extension. Just in the months of May & June, Phillips has assisted over 60 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 a UW-Extension Admin Staff conference in Marathon County on May 13<sup>th</sup> in which Phillips was an integral part of creating and securing the topics/speakers for the conference. Among the topics discussed were a new 4-H online reporting tool, website digital accessibility for the hearing impaired and PDF usage on the web. Most recently, Phillips has updated the entire Extension website to make it more appealing, readable, accessible and friendly to navigate. Phillips continues to seek the latest and greatest tools to assist in her daily job responsibilities.



AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – AMBER REHBERG

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

The Area 3 and Area 4 AED is starting to work on FY2026 Budgets and continues to look for ways that Extension can partner and collaborate in each county she is serving, but also across Area 3 and Area 4. She is also providing leadership for an Extension youth program this summer, WI 4-H American Spirit. She will be traveling with 44 youth leaders from across the states to explore history, leadership and civic engagement. There are a total of 90 youth participating this summer. 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](mailto:amber.rehberg@wisc.edu) or 715.784.1540.