



**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

### Central Wisconsin Housing Summit

Michelle attended the Central Wisconsin Housing Summit on April 15 at the Dreyfus University Center in Stevens Point alongside a local county board member to deepen her understanding of regional housing challenges and emerging solutions. The summit convened regional leaders, housing professionals, employers, developers, lenders, educators, and community members to explore strategies addressing housing supply, affordability, workforce development, and neighborhood reinvestment across Central Wisconsin. **The event emphasized practical, implementation-focused approaches grounded in current data and regional collaboration.**

The summit featured a keynote address by Kurt Paulsen, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, who provided data-driven insights into Central Wisconsin’s housing market, including trends affecting workforce housing, rehabilitation needs, and reinvestment opportunities. Additional sessions included an overview of regional housing initiatives and new findings from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission’s Regional Housing Study. Panel discussions and breakout sessions covered a wide range of topics, including tools for small-scale development, financing options, employer-supported and creative housing models, strategies to expand the contractor workforce, and the development of local housing incentive programs. **Overall, the summit strengthened my understanding of both the scale of housing challenges in the region, and the practical strategies communities can pursue to improve housing availability and affordability.**

As a result, a meeting will be held in Taylor County to discuss local concerns and determine what programs may work for Taylor County and then work together to educate the community on those options and explore those 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

### Holding the Line: Premises Biosecurity Mapping Workshops

In March 2026, Sandy and her Extension colleagues along with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection delivered four free, in-person “Holding the Line” premises biosecurity mapping workshops for livestock producers and veterinarians in Dodgeville, Jefferson, Medford, and Green Bay. The workshops provided hands-on instruction in developing farm premises maps to establish lines of separation and manage the movement of people, equipment, and vehicles to reduce disease spread. **Fourteen attended and 13 completed evaluations, and reported a substantial increase in knowledge, with self-rated understanding rising from a pre-workshop weighted average of 2.62 to 4.38 on a 1–5 scale.** Participants rated the workshops highly (4.31 out of 5, or 86%) and identified specific actions they intend to implement, including creating or refining premises maps, restricting access points, improving traffic control, and establishing visitor logs and parking plans. This effort strengthened on-farm biosecurity awareness and preparedness, supporting continuity of business and helping protect animal health and Wisconsin’s livestock industry during a potential serious disease outbreak.



*Participants at the Medford Holding the Line workshop learn from the WI Extension Beef Specialist, Bill Halfman. Photo Credit Sandy Stuttgen.*



Sandy and her Beef Workgroup provide resources for beef producers, which are available from <https://livestock.extension.wisc.edu/> Recent additions include recordings about emerging tick diseases, rebuilding the cow herd, and handling facilities.

*She is not impressed by the recent ice storm. Photo Credit Sandy Stuttgen.*



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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

### After School Programming

After-School Programs give young people extra time and space to explore skills they may not learn during the regular school day. Many families want their children to feel confident making healthy food choices, but youth often have limited chances to practice these skills in a hands-on way.

Julie was able to address this need by offering practical nutrition and food preparation experiences in a safe, supportive setting by partnering with After-School Programs at MAMS, MAES, SES, and Rib Lake to teach youth how to make quick, nutritious snacks. Activities included preparing foods like omelets in a bag and fruit kabobs—recipes chosen because they are fun, affordable, and easy for youth to recreate at home. **Each session encouraged youth to try new foods, practice basic kitchen skills, and learn how simple choices can support their overall well-being.** A total of 27 youth and 3 adults took part in these hands-on nutrition activities.

Another interactive after-school session introduced youth to 4-H through a hands-on LEGO Robotics activity, where they learned how to construct their robots, program basic movements and sounds, and test their ideas through trial and error. **The activities were designed to be welcoming, interactive, and paced so every participant could experience success.**

Youth responded enthusiastically to the LEGO Robotics experience, with nearly all participants expressing enjoyment and a desire to keep learning. A total of 21 youth engaged in the activity. Through building and coding together, they practiced teamwork, communication, and creative problem-solving.



*Gilman Library (After School Program)  
making fruit kabobs and yogurt dip.*



*LEGO Robotics in Rib Lake.*



*LEGO Robotics at SES.*

## **YQCA (Youth for the Quality Care of Animals) In-Person Training**

Youth in the Taylor County Market Animal Show & Sale (MASS) raise, show, and sell animals at the Taylor County Fair each year. To participate in the Livestock Auction, they must complete the YQCA Training, either online or in person. Many youth prefer learning in a hands-on, face-to-face setting where they can ask questions and talk through real-life scenarios. To support these youth, the 4-H Educator taught an in-person YQCA Training this spring in Medford. The session focused on practical, easy-to-apply information about animal well-being, food safety, and ethical decision-making. Youth had the chance to talk through examples, check their understanding, and connect what they learned to their own project animals. **This format helped create a comfortable learning space where participants could engage fully and build the knowledge they need for a successful fair experience.**



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

- Equity Livestock Marketing Association
- Federation of Taylor County 4-H
- FFA Colby High School
- Gilman School District
- Huey's Hideaway Children's Museum
- ICAA Taylor County Food Pantry
- Medford Area Public Schools
- Medford Farmer's Market
- Northcentral WI Cattleman's Association (NCWCA)
- Rib Lake School District
- Taylor County Broadband Committee
- Taylor County Department of Health
- Taylor County Fair Board
- Taylor County Food Resource Group
- Taylor County Public Libraries
- Taylor County Solid Waste & Recycling Committee
- Taylor County Tourism
- Taylor County Unit of WI Towns Association
- WI Beef Council



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## Office Administration



PROGRAM SPECIALIST – 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: 4-H Email Blast, 4-H Newsletter, Ag Workshop set up and registrations, continuous AG informational emails and social media posts, Spring StrongBodies updates and registrations, Community Garden communications and advertisements, Finance Meeting, and Career Fair Display coordination. Moreover, she administered a range of services offered, statewide administrative informational zoom sessions, 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 March and April, Phillips has assisted over 45 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 co-lead a statewide Zoom focusing on Crops and Soil Connections in Madison for community support. Phillips also attended a Zoom re: SNAP efforts and communications via Zoom. Phillips continues to seek the latest and greatest tools to assist in her daily job responsibilities.



AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – AMBER REHBERG

*(Taylor, Price, Lincoln, Langlade, Oneida and Florence, Forest, Vilas, Lac du Flambeau and FCP)*

During the months of March and April, I continued to serve in a dual-role capacity, covering responsibilities across two areas while maintaining a focus on leadership, staffing, and stakeholder engagement. A significant portion of this time was dedicated to completing key hiring efforts. Successfully finished the interview process for both the Area 4 Area Extension Director position and the Forest County Community Development Educator position, helping to move these vacancies toward resolution and strengthen local staffing capacity. Also facilitated two professional development sessions for Lincoln County employees, supporting staff growth and organizational effectiveness through targeted training and engagement. In Area 3, continue to explore strategies to better utilize available resources in ways that increase public interaction and community engagement. Volunteer engagement remains a priority. I attended the Taylor County 4-H Federation Meeting in March to connect directly with volunteers, listen to local perspectives, and strengthen relationships that support county-level programming. Additionally, I have continued working closely with statewide 4-H volunteers to finalize plans and prepare for 4-H American Spirit.