



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
TAYLOR COUNTY

Taylor County May/June 2026 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

Extension Community Garden

The Extension Community Garden serves as a collaborative, educational, and service-oriented initiative that brings together youth, volunteers, and community organizations to promote gardening skills, healthy lifestyles, and food security. The garden provides meaningful hands-on learning opportunities while also producing fresh food for local distribution.

Students from the Alternative High School play a vital role in maintaining the garden through service hours, including physically demanding tasks such as moving and managing compost. **Their involvement not only supports garden operations but also builds responsibility, teamwork, and work-readiness skills.**

Summer school participants engage directly in gardening by planting, weeding, and caring for their own plot. Through this experience, students gain practical knowledge about food production, environmental stewardship, and nutrition. **The produce grown in these plots is harvested and distributed through SOAR, reinforcing the importance of community contribution and reducing food insecurity.**

Additional partnerships strengthen the garden's educational and community impact. Huey's and Stepping Stones maintain dedicated plots where members learn gardening techniques and grow food to support their own programs. **These spaces provide both skill-building and access to fresh produce for participants.**

Master Gardeners and other volunteers are essential to the garden's success, contributing expertise and labor to plant, maintain, and harvest crops. Much of the food produced is donated to the local food pantry and Stepping Stones, directly benefiting individuals and families in need.

The garden also supports older adult participants, many of whom value the opportunity to remain active and engaged. Their involvement promotes physical health, social connection, and overall well-being, demonstrating the garden's role as a multigenerational community asset.

Overall, the Extension Community Garden exemplifies a successful partnership model that integrates education, volunteerism, and food access while fostering stronger community connections and healthier lives.

Learning For Life

Extension hosted a ***Learning for Life series*** at Kuse Nature Preserve, featuring educational programs that connected community members with Wisconsin's natural resources and heritage.

- **May 27 – Endangered Turtles in Wisconsin:**

Dr. Rebecca A. Christoffel, reptile and amphibian conservationist and co-director of *Turtles for Tomorrow*, shared insights on Wisconsin's rare turtle species. The program highlighted conservation challenges and ongoing efforts to protect these vulnerable populations, increasing awareness of their ecological importance.

- **June 17 – Wisconsin's Geoheritage (Badger Talk Event):**

Ken Bradbury, former Director of the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and State Geologist, presented on how Wisconsin's unique geologic history has shaped its landscapes, culture, and industries. The talk provided valuable context for understanding the state's natural foundations and their influence on development.

Together, these programs fostered community engagement, environmental stewardship, and a deeper appreciation of Wisconsin's natural and geologic heritage.



*Badger Talk, Wisconsin's Geoheritage
June 17th – Over 20 Community Members
Attended*



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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

Livestock Program Plans

Sandy has been busy drafting her plan of work for the upcoming academic year (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027). Goals are to provide education for beef producers on herd health, biosecurity and reproductive challenges in Taylor County and Wisconsin. **The expected outcomes include increased adoption of biosecurity practices, implementation of practices to improve animal welfare and herd health, and improved reproductive efficiency and genetic development.** Sandy will achieve these through in-person and virtual workshops, Beef Quality Assurance Certification and continuing education trainings, writing articles for Extension websites and agricultural news outlets and research projects. Contact Sandy if you would like a copy of her plan.

Sandy has taken the lead in the Dairy and Livestock Biosecurity Project; planning along with her colleagues for the upcoming academic year. This project includes creating and sustaining a new Biosecurity webpage on the UW-Madison Extension Agriculture website, creating biosecurity lesson plans for dairy and livestock programs and surveying state producers to determine their biosecurity needs.

Along with the Livestock Program Team, **Sandy will have an interactive display in the Beef Tent at Farm Technology Days, July 14-15, near Stratford.** Come on over and say 'Hi!' The display features meat quality grading and challenges, safe handling of animal health products, facility design and biosecurity. One of Sandy's biosecurity tabletop poster boards is pictured below. For more information about the show visit <https://www.wifarmtechdays.org/>

Redetzke's No Joke Dairy
216601 Wescott Ave., Stratford WI





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BIOSECURITY: Plan it, Map it, Use it—every day



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Extension Livestock
go.wisc.edu/Biosecurity

What does “biosecurity” mean?

Biosecurity means helping keep livestock secure from biological threats, viruses, bacteria and parasites that can make animals sick and/or reduce productivity. Some of these microorganisms can make caretakers sick.

Daily biosecurity measures help keep animals and their caretakers healthy.

Practical biosecurity plans are easy to use every day. They describe action steps to prevent disease introduction and spread.

Daily biosecurity actions include:

- Limiting entry to the farm
- Animal health and disease monitoring
- Feed and water management
- Vehicle and equipment use and management
- Cleaning and disinfection (C & D)
- Managing people movement: family, employees, visitors
- Managing animal and animal product movement
- Carcass disposal
- Manure management
- Rodent, wildlife, and other animal control

Biosecurity Resources

available at WI DATCP
Secure Food Supply



Livestock Biosecurity Toolbox

*Articles, News, Videos, Webinars
from UW-Madison Extension*

go.wisc.edu/Biosecurity



SCAN ME

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.



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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



Julie Diepenbrock -
.5 FTE

Summer Camp

Summer is off to a great start with 4-H activities for Taylor County youth.

June 10-12 was our 4-H Summer Camp at Northern Lakes Impact Center. **Our group from Taylor, Price, and Lincoln Counties had 34 campers (grades 3-7), 12 youth counselors (grades 8-11) and 10 adults participating this year.** Participants had the opportunity to learn about orienteering, boating safety, canoeing, 3 Doodler pens, rock climbing, and build a birdhouse to take home during their Main Events. They also had time to swim, pedal boat, play miniature golf or gaga ball during some free time.

4-H Summer Camp is a great chance for youth to develop new skills, gain independence, make new friends, connect with positive adults, all while getting outdoors and enjoying a variety of activities.



Summer Intern and AmeriCorps Members

We are so blessed this year to have our Summer Intern, **Katelyn Schult** who was with us last year serving as an AmeriCorps Member. Katelyn has returned with a solid understanding of the 4-H programs we offer in the Summer for youth and the ability to lead and interact with young people in a very positive way.

We also have **Trinity Wesle**, a long-time Taylor County 4-H member serving this year as an AmeriCorps Member primarily in Taylor County but also serving sometimes in Price County. Likewise, **Chloe Cummings**, a long time Price County 4-H member is serving this year as an AmeriCorps Member primarily in Price County but also serving sometimes in Taylor County.

The Summer Intern and AmeriCorps members are providing increased capacity to reach more youth through positive summer programming opportunities. Serving in these roles also helps them develop valuable leadership and career-readiness skills as they plan, promote, facilitate, and evaluate programs in partnership with community organizations and for youth across all age groups.

Library Programs, Huey's, and Summer School

Thanks to our added capacity from our Summer Intern and AmeriCorps Members, we have been able to involve youth in 4-H activities at a variety of locations across the county including each of the county public libraries, Huey's Hideaway and Rib Lake Summer School. **Gilman Library has hosted our largest activity to date with 56 youth engaging in activities learning about geology, microscopes, and a snapshot of 4-H projects.** Youth at Rib Lake Summer School learned how to code with Ozobots, create and code LEGO Robotics, make a no bake pie, deviled eggs, use 3Doodler pens, art projects, and some outdoor activities during our 3 sessions with them. Weekly programs at Huey's and Rib Lake or Westboro libraries also offer additional activities for youth. We love collaborating with other groups and organizations to introduce them to 4-H by providing positive summer activities to explore their Sparks.





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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

During the months of May and June, Kelly provided coordination and support for the following programs: 4-H Email Blast, 4-H Newsletter, 4-H workshop advertisements as well as library program ads, Ag Workshop communications via EMMA email blasts and over 500 postcards as well as social media and web postings, continuous horticulture, community development and agriculture social media posts, prep for StrongBodies 2026-2027 program updates and registrations, RESET website additions, and Community Garden communications and advertisements. 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 May and June, Phillips has assisted over 40 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 Connections in Madison for admin support. Phillips also attended a Zoom re: Marketing Mix. Phillips continues to seek the latest and greatest tools to assist in her daily job responsibilities.



AREA 3 EXTENSION DIRECTOR – AMBER REHBERG

(Taylor, Price, Lincoln, Langlade, and Oneida)

At the end of May, I had the opportunity to participate in the 5th Grade Taylor County Sportsman's Club Youth Expo, where I provided a station highlighting summer 4-H programming opportunities and engaged youth in learning about available Extension and 4-H experiences.

Working closely with Nicole, Tracy, Michelle, and Karl Green, Extension Specialist, to develop a plan for reviewing and addressing carryover accounts, including identifying next steps and establishing a path forward for account management and oversight.

As of June 29, the new Area 4 Extension Director has officially started, allowing me to transition to focusing solely on Area 3. I am looking forward to dedicating more time to Taylor County, building relationships, learning more about community needs, and providing increased support to educators and Extension programming in Taylor County.