

Agriculture & Extension Committee Minutes
Thursday, November 17th, 2022 5:00pm
Health & Human Services Center & Zoom
303 W. Chapel Street

Dan Nankee called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Roll call: Dan, Ricky, Kevin, Darrell, and Roger attended the meeting in person. Barry, Kathy, Jackie, Sarah, and Tom were at the meeting.

Motion to approve agenda by Ricky, seconded by Kevin. Motion passed.

Motion to approve minutes of the September 15th, 2022 meeting by Roger, seconded by Darrell. The motion passed.

Report from Committee Members – The Extension Board of Commissioners met with the chancellor last month. Ricky will report on that at the next meeting.

Kevin gave updates regarding the Iowa County Fair. Gate revenue and food revenue were up, and there were no real vendor complaints. There were nothing but good comments. The Junior Fair had 3,831 total entries, and the Open Class had 809 total entries, both up from 2021 (total entries – not what was actually brought). There are plans in the works to replace the Poultry Barn. To aid with this, there is a possible \$25k matching grant (they will have to raise \$25k in order to receive the \$25k grant from the county).

Dan pointed out one of the articles in the recent 4-H newsletter that highlights a new way people can support Iowa County 4-H. There is a link on the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation website to donate, and people can select Iowa County.

AED Update – Lynn was unable to attend the meeting due to last-minute personal matters, but Barry gave updates from Lynn in her absence. The 2023 educator contract was distributed and briefly reviewed. It was pointed out that Iowa County currently pays a higher percentage of the 4-H Educator costs compared to the other educator positions...this is due to a situation a number of years ago when there was discussion about sharing the 4-H Educator position with another county. In order to keep a dedicated 4-H Educator for Iowa County, the county agreed to pay more of the cost. In the coming years, we are going to try to get that back down to match the other educator cost percentages.

Staffing update – An offer has been extended for the FoodWise Coordinator position. Maggie Milcarek is from Mount Horeb and will be starting with us on November 28th. She will be housed here in Iowa County, but will serve our four-county region. The only cost to the county will be her office space, as her position is covered by state and federal dollars. She will attend the January AEE meeting to introduce herself.

In another staffing note, Sarah Weier has announced her retirement. Sarah's last day will be on January 6th. The search for a new 4-H Educator will begin in the coming months. Stay tuned for information on a celebration for Sarah!

Highlights from Educator Reports

Health and Well-Being Institute

Kathy – Kathy brought some visuals to show some of the things that she does when she works with children in schools. The first was a MyPlate tray diagram, and kids are asked to use a dry erase marker to plan a lunch for that day. The class then votes on the best lunches. This teaches children that they can help to plan their families' meals, and it gets them to think about the different food groups and why they are important.

Next, she uses a series of riddles/questions. She divides the class into the different food groups, and each group has a question to answer or riddle to solve. In addition to learning fun facts about the different food groups, this activity promotes teamwork.

The final display was regarding nutrition labels, especially for drinks that kids consume. They look at the sugar content of different drinks, and then they count out the spoonfuls of sugar that they contain. Most people should have around 5-6 per day, but most drinks have enough for several days' worth. Sports drinks are often pretty bad, having even more sugar than soda.

Kathy has visited schools in Blackhawk, Brodhead, and River Ridge, and she's received a tremendous response. Iowa Grant is on the list to start soon. Schools need to have 50% of the students receiving free or reduced lunches in order for FoodWise to go in, which tends to be a number more easily met in smaller schools.

Positive Youth Development

Sarah – Sarah shared a PowerPoint presentation that covered several topics. First, she highlighted the Thrive Survey that Wisconsin 4-H is using to track 4-H members' experiences and attitudes. This began last year, and they had a 21% response rate state-wide. The survey asks a series of questions, then each year the survey is repeated. Each 4-H'er has their own link so that they can track the results throughout the youth's 4-H journey as they get older. A "7" is a top score, and Iowa County 4-H scored from 5.8 to 6.0 in Youth Belonging, Caring Adults, Challenging Growth, and Youth-Adult Partnerships. Youth Sparks, which involves the opportunities for youth to explore the topics they are interested in, received a score of 5.3, but it needs to be taken into account that this was during COVID, when most in-person 4-H programming, including Project Learning Days, was cancelled.

Sarah presented enrollment figures from 2022. Out of the 479 youth members, 95 of them were first year members! For this year, they are tracking first generation members. So far, there 33 first generation 4-H members signed up for this coming year. Interestingly, 57% of kids enrolled in 4-H do not live on farms, and 4th grade is the grade with the highest enrollment. The top projects by enrollment are Art, Photography, Cloverbuds, Shooting Sports, and Swine. Beef and Dairy are around 10 or 11 on the list. As a side note, the projects that the adult volunteers are most interested in helping with are Horse, Dairy, and Swine.

The Ambassadors are a terrific bunch – they all want to be involved and to participate in meaningful projects. Sarah likes to stress to them that every young person is different, but they are not less.

Sarah also mentioned the new trainings that all 4-H adult volunteers must complete; trainings meant to ensure safe spaces for the youth. She also talked showed a Gratitude Pumpkin that the Ambassadors signed, listing things that they are thankful for.

Regional Ag Educators

Jackie – Jackie represented that three Regional Ag Educators at the meeting, and she spoke about the Dairy Margin Coverage regarding insurance. She hosted a webinar about this last week: they had 40 people sign up to attend the webinar, and the video of it that was posted on YouTube has received 49 views. 99% of the people who watched the video/webinar said that they learned something from it.

She also talked about the e-newsletter that she is involved with. The first editions was sent in late September, and they intend to send one out every 4-6 weeks. Their email distribution list has grown to over 1,200 addresses, and for their last one they had a 38% open rate, which is very encouraging. Each newsletter will include a “hot topic of the month” as well as a “meet the specialist” article.

Jackie will be part of a “Women in Agriculture” programming in March (called “I’m a Farm-her”). It will be centered on “Planning for the Unknown”, with topics including farm biosecurity, farm safety, and marketing your farm. There will also be a craft project that attendees can participate with.

Jackie also briefly touched upon items from the other Ag Educator reports, including the recent calf-cow meeting that Amanda held at the Yager farm, which had 25 people sign up from Iowa, Lafayette, and Grant counties. Amanda has also been hosting Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) trainings. Potential producers learn about things like ensuring food safety, animal well-being, worker safety, and environmental stewardship.

Human Development and Relationships Institute

Ruth – Ruth was also not able to attend the meeting, but Barry gave some highlights of her recent programming regarding gratitude. Having good gratitude can lead to many improved life experiences, including giving more time and money to charity, building stronger bonds with the local community, experiencing reduced stress related illnesses and lower blood pressure, earning higher income, and building more satisfying relationships with others. Grateful teens are 10x less likely to start smoking. The most grateful countries are South Africa, United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, and India.

Community Development Institute

Barry – Barry briefly touched on a number of topics covered in his written report, including just how exciting and essential all of the money that is being made available by the government (federal and state) for expanding broadband service for families who are currently unable to access or afford broadband service is. It is going to make a huge difference in so many people’s lives. There is also money being allocated by the federal government to implement some critical infrastructure for electric vehicles. Money should be available beginning in quarter 1 or quarter 2 of next year. Right now they are working on finding suitable locations for charging stations, etc.

Ricky commented on the help that Barry has provided in the plans for Grandview to build a new building on-site. As a result of Barry’s work and recommendations, they applied for a grant, and have just recently been awarded \$75k to be used toward the new building. So far, they have raised \$170k without hosting any fundraisers yet!

National Resources Institute

Joe – Joe was not able to attend the meeting, but his written reports highlighted the recently completed Clean Sweep program held in late September and early October. A total of 6,683 pounds of household hazardous waste was collected!

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19th at 5:00 pm. Ricky made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Darrell. Motion passed.