

Agriculture & Extension Committee Minutes
Thursday, March 20th, 2025 4:00pm
Health & Human Services Center & Zoom
303 W. Chapel Street, Dodgeville, WI 53533

Dan Nankee called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Roll call: Dan, Ricky, Brad, Darrell, and Kevin attended the meeting in person. Lynn, Dan, Maggie, Jackie, and Tom were at the meeting. Also in attendance was Jeremy Solin, Assistant Dean for UW-Madison Division of Extension. Larry Bierke joined Zoom.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Brad, seconded by Ricky. The motion passed.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 16th, 2025, meeting was made by Kevin, seconded by Darrell. The motion passed.

Report from Committee Members – Dan Nankee commented on farm succession information that was provided through the “Cultivating your Farm’s Future” program. There’s a lot of good information in the supplied booklet.

Dan also discussed Wisconsin state statute Chapter 59.56.c (Cultural affairs; education; recreation) that helped provide direction for the University of Wisconsin Division of Extension. Function #3 of the statute specifies eight separate actions that the extension program may take in the scope of its work; going through the list, they are all things that the Extension program in Iowa County is doing.

AED Update – Lynn provided Area 17 updates: Bob Wiegel has started in Green/Lafayette County as the Human Development and Relationships Educator, where he will focus on finance education, and family engagement. The Grant County Community Development Educator has submitted his resignation, so the search will begin to fill that position.

Federal funding updates: we are currently in a wait-and-see mode. As we all know, there are lots of cuts happening at federal level, and we don’t know what may or may not be cut at this point. Extension is being conservative with expenditures. Moving forward, we will continue to do our work as normal until we are told otherwise.

Lynn raised the idea of hosting community conversations to discuss opportunities, ideas, and challenges for Extension in Iowa County. These conversations do not have to be open to the public, instead we would invite partners Extension works with and others that could work with us, including county board members. Conversations would center around topics that the county educators specialize in: youth development, community development, and Agriculture. The committee encouraged Lynn to conduct a session something towards early fall or late summer.

Funding Discussion – Jeremy Solin, Assistant Dean for southern Wisconsin participated in a conversation earlier today exploring ideas for Extension funding. He distributed a handout regarding Extension funding; in general, funding has been fairly steady over the past decade, but costs and expenses keep rising. Brad asked if funds could be taken from other areas to help pay for educator expenses? The state has absorbed some costs that previously primarily fell on the counties, such as pay increases for educators and professional development. They are also exploring the idea of trying to bring in additional funds through grants and gifts.

Highlights from Educator Reports

Agriculture

Jackie – The Ag Educators have run into weather difficulties with some of their recent programming: the forage workshop in February was cancelled due to icy conditions (they are looking to try it again at a later date), and the Producing Quality Beef workshop was snowed out. Jackie has been holding YQCA classes (training for youth who will be showing animals at fairs) across the four counties; 52 youth attended the first workshop. Jordyn and

Kim have also been holding Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT) sessions (approximately 45 producers have attended) and Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) classes (approximately 18 producers have attended); PAT is required for handling pesticides, and BQA helps to ensure a better price on product if producer certified. The “I’m a Farmer, Too” workshop was today...Jackie will provide details about that at the next meeting. Tuesday’s Badger Dairy Insight focused on fertility success with Wisconsin dairy farmers, featuring a producer panel with 4 farms that had good reproductive success. 150 people registered for the webinar. They may try to do hold more interactive sessions like this one to increase participation.

Darrell asked Jackie if she has heard any updates on the status of bird flu? It seems to be subsiding just a bit, but there seems to be some mixed messages going around about it. She and some colleagues are looking to set up a meeting with the state vet to learn the latest information about the bird flu situation. Once they have some definitive information, they will be able to update information on websites, resources, etc. There doesn’t seem to be as many new cases recently, and the ones that have been reported appear more in chickens than dairy cattle.

Health and Well-Being Institute

Maggie – Julia recently finished two teaching series at Riverdale and Boscobel elementary schools. She received wonderful feedback from both the students and the teachers, who shared that the students were very engaged with her lessons. She just started a class at Head Start in Darlington, and she is scheduled to also teach at Head Start in Dodgeville. Julia will be at two more schools before the end of the school year.

Maggie is wrapping up the Strong Bodies class in Cuba City and will then be transitioning to Tai Chi in both Cuba City and Darlington. This will be her first time teaching the class, so this will be a new experience for her. Maggie just learned that all five garden grants she applied for were funded; this will include Meridian Housing in Dodgeville as well as locations throughout the other three counties. She will be providing direct education in conjunction with getting the gardens going.

Positive Youth Development

Dan – Dan passed around Thrive survey results from 2024 and highlighted some of the results. 34 youth filled out the survey (16.5%), which was sent out to all 4-H youth to take. Iowa county has some of the higher scores in the state. 54 youth attended the 4-H Exploration Day on March 1st. There has been an increase in coverage of the 4-H program and its activities in the local newspapers – a great way to keep the program in the public’s eye.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 15th at 4:00 pm. Ricky made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Brad. Motion passed.

Posted by County Clerk's Office on 3/28/2025, Barbara Weinbrenner