



GREEN LAKE COUNTY

571 County Road A, Green Lake, WI 54941

February 3, 2016

The following documents are included in the packet for the Ag/Extension Education & Fair Committee Meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2016:

- 1) Cover Sheet
- 2) Agenda
- 3) Draft minutes from the January 12, 2016 meeting
- 4) County Library Reports
- 5) Educator Reports for: Jay Dampier (Community Resource & Economic Development), John de Montmollin (4-H Youth Development), Katie Gellings (Family Living), and Nav Ghimire (Ag Agent).



**AGRICULTURE, EXTENSION EDUCATION & FAIR
MEETING NOTICE**

**Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.
Green Lake County Government Center, Training Room
571 County Road A, Green Lake, Wisconsin**

AGENDA

Committee Members:

Maureen Schweder,
Chairperson
Joanne Guden, Vice-
Chairperson
Patti Garro
David Richter
Michael Stoddard

Mailing Address:

**Green Lake County
UW-Extension
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1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
2. Certification of Open Meeting Notice
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of the January 12, 2016 Minutes
5. Public Comments – 3 Minute Limit
6. Public Appearances
7. County Library Services Report
 - a. Submitted Monthly Report
8. Correspondence
9. **FAIR – 2016**
 - a. Truck/Tractor Pull Update – Discussion/Approval
 - b. Entertainment Contracts – Discussion/Approval
 - c. Fair Updates – Discussion
 - d. WAF Convention - Discussion
10. **UW-EXTENSION**
 - a. Educator Report – Katie Gellings, Family Living Educator
 - b. Educators' Summary of Monthly Reports & Relevant Trainings, Meetings & Programs
 - c. Introduction of UW-Extension North Central Regional Director by Google hangout
 - d. Approval of Educator Out of County Days – Discussion/Approval
 - e. Committee Discussion
 - f. Vouchers: Agriculture, Extension Education & Fair – Discussion/Approval
11. Future Agenda Items
12. Next Regular Meeting Date – Tuesday, March 8, 2016
13. Adjournment

Kindly arrange to be present; if unable to attend, please notify our office.

Sincerely,



Nav Ghimire
Green Lake County UW-Extension
Agricultural Agent/Department Head

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in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.*

Please note: Meeting area is accessible to the physically disabled. Anyone planning to attend who needs visual or audio assistance should contact the UW-Extension Office at 294-4032 no later than Noon on the day preceding the meeting.



The meeting of the Green Lake County Agriculture, Extension Education and Fair Committee was called to order by Chairperson Maureen Schweder at 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 in the Training Room of the Green Lake County Government Center in Green Lake, WI. The requirements of the open meeting law were certified as being met. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Maureen Schweder, Chair
Joanne Guden, Vice-Chair
Patti Garro
David Richter
Michael Stoddard

Staff Present: Nav Ghimire
Jay Dampier
John de Montmollin
Katie Gellings
Kathy Ninneman

Staff Absent: Kim Zills and Amanda Miller

Others Present: Linda DeNell, Caesecker Public Librarian and Harley Reabe, floater.

AGENDA

Motion/second (Stoddard/Richter) to approve the amended agenda as presented. Motion carried.

MINUTES

Motion/second (Guden/Garro) to approve the December 8, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES – None.

COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

Submitted monthly reports on file. DeNell gave a brief report of events going on at the area county libraries.

CORRESPONDENCE – None.

TRUCK/TRACTOR PULL UPDATE

Nothing to report.

ENTERTAINMENT CONTRACTS

No contracts for this month.

INFORMATIONAL HANDOUTS

No handouts for this month.

EDUCATOR REPORT

Ghimire, Ag Agent, presented to the Committee, 2015 Programs “Vegetable Programs with Amish.”

Q&A OF EDUCATORS' SUMMARY OF MONTHLY REPORTS & RELEVANT TRAININGS, MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

Written monthly reports on file for Dampier, de Montmollin, Gellings, Ghimire, and Miller were reviewed. Dampier handed brochures to the Committee about the "Community Builders Series" and gave a brief report.

UW-EX KITCHEN STOVE

Gellings reported there was a stove purchased by the previous department head and Family Living Educator. That stove was wired for 120 watts and is not sufficient for Educators' use. We have purchased a two burner hot plate wired for 220 watts which is sufficient. Approval is needed to sell the stove.

Motion/second (Guden/Garro) to sell the stove. Approved. Ghimire will check with Marge Bostelmann to see what next steps need to be taken to get this done.

NAV GHIMIRE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL APPROVAL

Ghimire explained to the Committee about these conferences. **Motion/second (Garro/Richter)**. Approved.

UWEX HONORS MIKE STODDARD FOR HIS LONG SERVICE AS COMMITTEE MEMBER

Ghimire accredited Stoddard for his years of service on the Ag/Extension Education & Fair Committee where he was honored at a recent WACEC (Wisconsin Associated County Extension Committees) meeting. Stoddard will be presented with an award at the February 16th County Board meeting.

UW-EXTENSION REORGANIZATION AND RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Ghimire handed the Committee a "UW-Extension Reorganization Recommendations" report that was presented to UW-EX Chancellor, Cathy Sandeen, on December 21, 2015, which she shared with the entire UW-Extension and County partners on Thursday, January 7, 2016. He suggested to the Committee to take their time and read it over. If anyone would like to give feedback to the Chancellor, they may via phone or email. Tom Schmitz, UW-EX North Central Regional Director, will be attending the April 12, 2016 Committee meeting. Reabe attended the WACEC annual meeting on Friday, January 8th, and commented that everyone is concerned from there, that any input or comments will hopefully not fall on deaf ears.

APPROVAL OF EDUCATOR OUT OF COUNTY DAYS

Motion/second (Guden/Stoddard). Approved.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Nothing.

VOUCHERS

Motion/second (Guden/Garro) to approve the vouchers for Ag/Extension Education and Fair as presented: 2015 claims totaling \$2,024.51; 2016 claims totaling \$230.00. Motion carried.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Next regular meeting date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016 in the Training Room at 10:00 a.m.
- Garro will not be at the February 9, 2016 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second (Stoddard/Guden) to adjourn at 10:45 a.m. Motion carried.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Ninneman, Program Specialist*

Green Lake County Library Report

February 2016

Berlin Public Library has plenty of programs to offer during the month of February. Young children and parents can enjoy Pajama Storytime on Tuesday, February 2, at 6:30pm. On February 11, from 4-5, we are offering a family program titled "Love and Kisses" to celebrate Valentine's Day. The very next day we have open craft time for the children to make a Valentine's Day craft. For the month of February, each Wednesday will offer teens the chance to enjoy Unwind Nights at the library featuring coloring and other relaxing activities. Our adult programs for the month feature a program on Saturday, February 6, at 2pm titled "Introduction to Artist Trading Cards Workshop", which promises to be fun. Also for adults in February is the chance to enter the Oscar Ballot Contest from Monday, February 22, through Saturday, February 27, with prizes awarded to the three entries with the most correct answers.

Caestecker Public Library-Green Lake—I don't know about you, but I'm getting tired of winter. Fortunately, the library is here with programs and materials to warm folks right up. From travel books to warm weather destinations to a seed swap to set you planning your gardens, Oscar-nominated movies to soup – we've got it covered. Here are the details:

Saturday, February 6th brings Katie Gellings of UW-Extension back to the library. This time we're making soup. Three different varieties will be on the menu – veggie, potato-cheddar, and chicken noodle – and attendees will be involved in their creation. Soup-er Saturday begins at 11:00 a.m. That same morning Town Square is having a Mardi Gras program for kids that will end up with participants parading to the library for sweet treats from Sassafras and a New Orleans-themed story or two. It will be a hot morning in more ways than one! The following Saturday, February 13th, will also be busy. The Friends will be having their winter "Library Lovers" Book Sale from 8:00 – 4:00 with more than the usual amount of great deals. The adult coloring "club" will meet at 10:00 in front of the fireplace to get their art on, and the seed library will jump start the gardening season by hosting a seed swap. (There will be another seed and plant swap in March if this date doesn't work for you.) Scheduling Thursday Morning Conversations has been a bit challenging this winter, but there are a few to look forward to – Lisa Reas will stop by on February 18th to talk about native plants. Even when there isn't a speaker we've decided to have coffee, so Thursday mornings are a great time to stop in.

Kingston Mill Pond Public Library—February will be a busy month for the Kingston library. Our Road to the Oscars will start on Thursday evenings. We will be watching movies that have been nominated for the award. Monday, Feb. 8th we will be holding an adult coloring class and starting on the 22nd we will be running an adult coloring contest through the end of the month. Our photo club will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 9th and they are getting pictures ready for an exhibit which will be held in June in the library. Our American Girl club resumes on Saturday, Feb. 20th. The group picks a different girl each month to study. Our Loosely Bound book club has changed it's time to 4:30pm on the last Thursday of each month and this month they are reading *Founding Mothers* by Cokie Roberts. We are also happy to say we have finished our annual report.

Princeton Public Library has jumped into the new year running. With book discussions, coloring clubs, craft nights, a Victorian Fashion program, people have been excited to get into library programming. We have also made sure to be on top of our book buying. These cold winter days are excellent reading days, plus we just had the announcement of the children's book awards a couple of weeks ago. Additionally, I personally have been hard at work, organizing grant opportunities to aid our library expansion project plus writing up the library's annual report. I have also taken the time, with my staff, to weed our teen collection and our picture books. I hope to have children's book sale sometime next month. For February we are getting ready for Library Legislative Day, Valentine's Cards, and Oscar Movie Showings. But most exciting the Friends of the Library's sponsored fundraiser, a Paint Nite at Christiano's Restaurant. The Paint Nite, which is one Wednesday February 24 at 7pm, is set to raise funds for our library expansion. Tickets are available until February 10th and we invite all Princeton Library lovers to attend.

The Markesan Public Library is busy finishing the details on several upcoming programs. New programs include an open time for the hottest activity -- coloring. We also hope to expand and bring in artists to help create original art. February means Valentine's day and will have our popular Valentine Card Making workshop where people will learn how to make pop up cards. We will be starting our Monday Matinée showing select movies nominated for awards. We continue with book discussions, book delivery to local senior centers, nursing homes, and assisted living centers. We continue to have local teachers checking out huge stacks of books they will use in their class rooms. Coming up in May is our Annual Spring Fling with an FFA plant sale, music, and a silent auction. We are in the planning stage of adding some new exciting events to coincide on that day. Also, we are researching options for some much needed capital building projects as well as general building maintenance. Finally, the board will be reviewing all of the job descriptions and updating as necessary.

This report briefly describes work completed during January 2016 within the Community Natural Resources and Economic Development (CNRED) Program. During the reporting period, the Educator made 34 direct educational / professional contacts and wrote a column for Berlin Journal Newspapers (circulation 7255 indirect educational / professional contacts (circulation)).

Educational Programming, Outreach and Promotion

Community Builders Educational Programming Finalization and Promotion During the reporting period, the program was finalized and promotion efforts are currently underway, with the first session scheduled for the upcoming reporting period.

Green Lake Area Young Professionals The Educator has closed the young professionals educational needs survey and is now is qualitatively analyzing the survey results and upon analysis completion, will be present generalizations and insights.

Organizational Development and Capacity Building

Green Lake Summit Facilitation Follow Up In December the Educator was granted the opportunity to jointly educate three organizations in mission clarification and development – with the ultimate goal to reduce missional redundancy and to help them identify where their missional mandates could be synergized. During the reporting period, the Educator conducted follow up work for this facilitation which included reporting and analysis. Participant evaluation responses suggest that the facilitation met the group’s stated needs and are presented the table here.

Before Participating in Summit					Knowledge	After Participating in Summit				
Very Low 1	Low 2	Moderate 3	High 4	Very High 5		Very Low 1	Low 2	Moderate 3	High 4	Very High 5
			55%	45%	Your own organization's mission, vision and values				36%	64%
9%		82%	9%		Other organizations' mission, vision and values				73%	27%
	45%	55%			Opportunities where your organization can complement other organizations			18%	55%	27%
	9%	18%	45%	27%	Your organizations unique role in the community			18%	45%	36%
	18%	82%			Duplication of work between your organization and at least one other organization		9%	36%	45%	9%

Economic knowledge and capacity

First Impressions Report Finalization The Educator completed the Cuba City First Impressions report and has scheduled a First Impressions Team Summit (during the next reporting period) where the Cuba City team and the Princeton team will meet and share findings.

In-service training on Downtown Market Analysis and Use of Surveys and ESRI Business Analyst The Educator was recognized as being knowledgeable trade area analysis and skilled in using ESRI Business Analyst among his peers. Together, along with other state wide colleagues the Educator co-taught a half-day session educating colleagues in the areas of downtown market analysis, business survey development, and survey results analysis.



Patrick Nehring, Jay Dampier, Bill Ryan, Christian Schmieder teaching at the North Central Community Resource Development In-service and Retreat.

Natural Resource Stewardship

Lawn Care / Water Quality The Educator reached out to a former colleague, Dr. Frank Rossi from Cornell University who's a Turfgrass Specialist. Dr. Rossi developed the Lawn Care and Water Quality Almanac, which also has a teaching curriculum which promotes lawn care that protects water quality. The Educator has been granted permission to use the materials in Wisconsin, and is looking for opportunities to provide in-class seminar teaching, and to partner with organizations interested in preserving water quality in Green Lake County.

Professional development

Tenure Advisory Group The Educator is participating on a colleague's Tenure Advisory Group. This experience is providing insight into the promotion and tenure process, as the Educator is preparing for promotion and rank change to Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Resource Development.

Newspaper articles

- "How cheap is your gas, really?" Berlin Journal Newspapers. January 7, 2016 by Jay Dampier

Out of County Days

- 0.5 Standards, Rank and Promotion Meeting for Kirking, participating as committee member, Stevens Point
- 0.5 Tenure Advisory Group Meeting for Kirking, Mauston
- 0.25 TREDC in Neskoro
- 0.5 Downtown, economic assessment meeting, Madison
- 2.0 North Central Region CNRED In-service, UWSP Treehaven

Planned out-of-county days for next month.

- 0.5 Tenure Advisory Group Meeting for promotion consideration for the Educator, Stevens Point
- 0.5 CNRED Area Meeting, Location TBA
- 0.5 First Impressions “Summit” meeting between Princeton and Cuba City Teams.
- 0.5 Intercounty Coordinating Committee Meeting, Jefferson, County
- 1.0 Community Builders Series, Multi-county sessions
- 0.5 Grant Writing Workshop in Juneau.



Contacts

Phone	E-mail	Face to Face
24	39	212

Green Lake County 4-H Ambassadors

The Green Lake County 4-H Ambassadors are a group of older 4-H members who promote 4-H throughout Green Lake County. I attended the Green Lake County 4-H Ambassador meeting on Sunday, January 10, 2016 where the group held their elections and planned two programs... the Lock-in and Super Saturday.

Lock-in

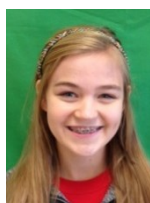
The Green Lake County 4-H Lock-in was held on Friday, January 15, 2016 through Saturday, January 16, 2016. The 4-H Ambassadors took leadership roles in planning implementing and evaluating all aspects of the program including social and educational sessions. Over thirty youth participated in the event which was held at Green Lake Schools.



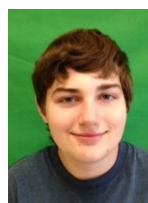
Elections Results



Sami Becker
President



Kennedy Hoch
Vice President



Mason Prindle
Secretary



Calob Congdon
Treasurer

Green Lake County 4-H Leaders' Association

Organized at the county level, the 4-H Leader Organization works closely with the 4-H Youth Development Educator. The organization brings together volunteers to serve as a venue for volunteer leader training and an organizing mechanism in providing volunteer and financial support for county level educational opportunities for 4-H members and 4-H volunteers. I attended the Green Lake County 4-H Leader's Association on Thursday, January 7, 2016. The meeting covered a variety of topics including passing a new policy on funding youth participation in 4-H programs and activities.

Green Lake County 4-H Horse Council Meeting

I attended the Green Lake County 4-H Horse Council meeting which was held on Monday, January 5, 2016 at the Green Lake County Government Center. At this meeting the video "Every Ride... Every Time..." that focuses on the importance of wearing an approved helmet was show to members.

Archery Orientation

I assisted in the coordination of the Green Lake County 4-H Archery Orientation that took place on Saturday, January 23, 2016 at the Green Lake County Government Center. During the orientation members viewed the safety video, completed all the necessary forms and reviewed the 2015-16 calendar of events.

Green Lake County Livestock Committee

I attended the Green Lake County Livestock meeting which was held on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 in the Green Lake County Government Center Training Room. The Board of Directors distributed the 2015-16 handbook and discussed changes for this year including the addition of more educational programming for youth members.



Did you know... Wisconsin 4-H Volunteer Expectations

4-H youth development volunteers are expected to abide by the following behavior standards established by UW-Extension/4-H, and to conduct themselves as positive role models for youth. All 4-H youth development volunteers are ultimately accountable to UW-Extension for their 4-H-related activities. Specific expectations include:

As a 4-H Youth Development Volunteer, I will:

- Conduct myself with courteous manners and language, exhibiting good sportsmanship, serving as a positive role model, treating others with respect, and demonstrating reasonable conflict resolution skills.
- Abide by all local, state and federal laws and UW-Extension and U.S.D.A. rules, policies and guidelines.
- Accept supervision and support from Extension staff or designated management volunteers.
- Make all reasonable efforts to ensure that programs are accessible to all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status.
- Not consume alcohol or illegal substances while responsible for youth in 4-H activities, nor allow 4-H youth participants under my supervision to do so.
- When transporting youth, operate motor vehicles and other equipment in a safe and reliable manner and only with a valid operator's license and the legally required insurance. I will comply with all motor vehicle-related state regulations and laws. All transported youth will be secured by a properly operating seat belt.
- Conduct myself in a manner that is in the best interest of youth and University of Wisconsin-Extension/4-H Youth Development and will not use the volunteer position for purposes of private or personal gain.
- Report suspected verbal, sexual, physical abuse and/or neglect of youth to local authorities.
- Treat animals in a humane manner and teach program participants to provide appropriate animal care and management.
- Will not conceal carry while acting in a volunteer role. I understand that if I am a shooting sports volunteer, I am expected to openly carry/transport 4-H shooting sports equipment in designated areas.
- Immediately notify my county 4-H Youth Development Educator of any changes with my status (eg. Contact information, criminal arrest, charge or conviction history, driving privileges, etc.)

Days Outside Green Lake County

February 10, 2016	4-H Regional Meeting	Wausau
February 12, 2016	4-H Evaluation Meeting	Madison



University of Wisconsin-Extension

Katie Gellings
Green Lake County
Family Living Educator
January 2016

This report briefly describes the work that was completed within the Family Living Program in January of 2016. During the reporting period, the educator made 213 direct educational and professional contacts.

Educational Programming, Networking and Outreach in the Local Community

Wellness Works Steering Committee – Green Lake County Government Center

I have accepted an invitation to join the Wellness Works Steering Committee started by the Department of Health and Human Services in Green Lake. The committee focuses on improving the current employee wellness program called Wellness Works. Our first meeting was held in the beginning of January. We discussed flaws in the current employee program, how we can improve the program, and possible programming ideas for 2016. We are looking to increase the number of employees participating in the current Wellness Works programs.

Financial Literacy Workshop – Green Lake County Correctional Facility

On the evening of January 6, I co-taught an hour-long financial literacy workshop to 8 male inmates at the Green Lake County Correctional Facility with Maureen Betz, MPTC Instructor. This month’s topic was Get Checking in which participants learned about the positives and negatives of financial institutions, the costs of using payday loan or check cashing services instead of a bank, how to write out a check and use a check register, the way to balance a bank account using a bank statement, and the common mistakes made in managing a bank account. The financial literacy workshops will continue to be offered monthly, alternating males and females (on a monthly basis), with a new topic bi-monthly. The topic for March and April will be employment forms, such as W4 forms, in time for tax season. Statistics from the program evaluation I conducted include:

N = 8 of 8 (January 2016) Get Checking	% Reporting [only] 1 Unit of Change	% Reporting [at least] 2 or > Units of Change
I understand why I should use a financial institution for my banking needs.	25.0%	75.0%
I understand how much “not banking” can cost me.	37.5%	62.5%
I am confident in my ability to write out a check and check register.	37.5%	50.0%
I am confident in my ability to balance/reconcile a bank account.	37.5%	62.5%
I understand the common mistakes made in managing my own bank account.	12.5%	62.5%

Family Fun Night – Prairie View Head Start

On the evening of January 12, I partnered with Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) Educator, Pam Nelson, to offer an educational piece on physical activity for families at Head Start in Markesan. We had four families (13 individuals) attend the event. We are working on offering a family fun night two more times in 2016, with a new educational topic each time.

Healthy Eating for a New Year – Berlin Public Library

There were 22 participants who came to a healthy eating educational presentation at the Berlin Public Library on January 19. Participants learned about the food groups through MyPlate, nutrient density, sugar, fat, and salt intake, how to read food labels, and ways to keep healthy eating resolutions. I had several great comments on the evaluation form, and I heard from a few library employees that participants were very happy they attended the presentation and had learned a lot. I am looking forward this newly formed partnership with the Berlin Public Library.

Wellness Night – Clay Lamberton Elementary

In partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, I organized the promotion of The Real Happy Hour at Clay Lamberton Elementary. The Real Happy Hour is a campaign that promotes quality family time together for a healthier community. Spending quality family time together is an important step to prevent the problems that kids and teens face. Teens who have infrequent family meals are:



Talk. Listen. Connect.

- 4 times likelier to use tobacco
- Twice as likely to use alcohol
- 2 ½ times likelier to use marijuana
- 4 times likelier to say they expect to try drugs in the near future

Children and teens who eat frequent family meals are:

- 12% less likely to be overweight
- 20% reduction in odds of eating unhealthy foods
- 24% increased odds of eating healthy foods

We hope to promote and/or implement The Real Happy Hour with each of the schools in Green Lake County. I also met with the staff at the Boys & Girls Club and they would like to partner to offer a family mealtime to promote The Real Happy Hour.

Networking within UW Extension and Professional Development Opportunities

I made 96 contacts within the UW Extension system during the month of January. I continue to have a number of professional meetings scheduled with colleagues and mentors to continue to network and learn from my fellow Extension educators. I expect these meetings to assist my growth in my role in Green Lake County.

Active Communities Workgroup

The Healthy Living State Team contains several workgroups. I co-lead the Active Communities Workgroup and we held our first face-to-face meeting in Wisconsin Dells in mid-January. We were able to conduct a needs assessment with colleagues who need physical activity programming within their counties. We will be working on reviewing a curriculum called Little Steps Big Changes, creating a physical activity newsletter series, and providing professional development opportunities for Extension colleagues.

Dollars During Development Workgroup

I am a member of the Dollars During Development Workgroup under the Financial Security State Team. We are working on updating the Money on the Bookshelf curriculum, which emphasizes teaching children about money through reading storybooks. UW-Extension now has the rights to the curriculum and our workgroup has made several updates to it including the addition of new storybooks and rewriting the parent facilitation guides for each book. Over the next several months, we will be implementing these parent facilitation guides for the curriculum into local libraries.

Newspaper Articles

“Don’t Hibernate this Winter Season.” Berlin Journal Newspapers. January 11, 2016. By Katie Gellings, Family Living Educator

Out of County Days

- 2 Out of county days for this month (Active Communities Workgroup Meeting, Wisconsin Dells – 1, Dollars During Development Workgroup Meeting, Stevens Point – 1)
- 0 Out of county days scheduled for February

Nav Ghimire, Green Lake County, Agriculture Agent, January 2016.

Educational Contacts

In the month of January, a total of 77 educational contacts were made with extension clients. Of the total contacts, face to face contacts were 71 (meetings, walk-in, farm visits). Remaining contacts were phone calls, emails, and mailings. Of the total contacts, females were 18. The main areas of concern during that period were food safety training with Amish growers, pesticide application certification training, and nutrient management training.

Tri-County Produce Auction – Food Safety Training Program

Around 76 million cases of foodborne illness occur annually in the United States and it is estimated that there are 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths annually owing to foodborne diseases (Centers for Disease Control, 2007). To protect consumers from foodborne illnesses, the U.S. government regulates food safety policy. Therefore, people are increasingly demanding higher-quality produce in the market. The Tri-County Produce Auction buyers are asking Amish farmers to grow their produce with good agricultural practices (GAP) and display the certification sticker in their produce.

I conducted a food safety meeting for Amish growers in coordination with UWEX state specialist Dr. Erin Silva's 'Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Program'. There were 55 growers along with some of their spouses (16 females) attending the meeting. The good agricultural practices on the farm and GAP auditing were taught by the food safety expert Chris Blanchard of Wisconsin. There was an hour of question and answer session after the presentation. To respect the Amish culture and tradition, the PowerPoint slides were not used but printed paper materials were used to teach.

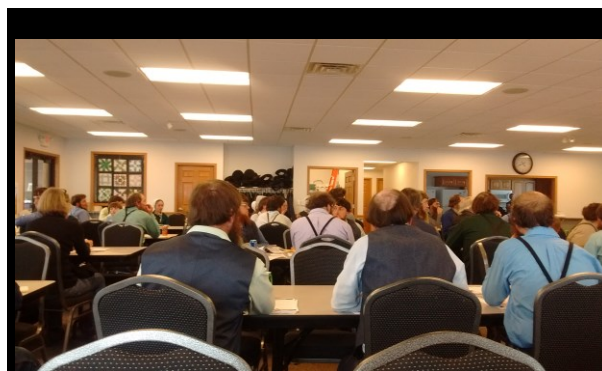


Fig 1: Growers participating in food safety training program in Dalton Town Hall on January 28.

Pesticide Application Training

The pesticide application training was conducted in January in which 14 farmers participated. The training was started with video teaching followed by a certification exam. The tests have been sent to the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection for grading. The DATCP will inform all participants of their grade with pass or fail results.

Agency-Farmer Interface Coalition Meeting

The Spring "Agency-Farmer Interface Coalition" (AFIC) meeting has been scheduled for Thursday March 10. This meeting will focus on the following agenda: building trust between agencies and farmers, increasing communication, changing culture for policy planning and implementation, and educating

farmers to consider adopting best practices to meet the water quality needs in Fox River Watershed. The farmers and agencies that include UWEX, USDA, DATCP, DNR and Land Conservation have been invited to participate in this meeting.

Out of County Days

February 1-3 – Soil Heath Conference, Ames, Iowa.

February 12- Farm Transfer Training, West Field.

Planned Out of County Days = 4 day