



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – May 2015

Dairy modernization is a long term commitment.

- [Elements of Positive Youth Development](#)
- [Dairy Modernization – Building Our Dairy Future](#)
- [Parenting in a Digital Age](#)

Can You Name the Four Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development?

Young people grow into competent contributing adults when their environment includes **belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity**. The combination of these elements creates a setting that is vital to the growth and development of young people.

Belonging – children have a positive relationship with a caring adult; there is an inclusive environment that encourages and supports the child; and the environment is free of physical or emotional harm

Mastery – building knowledge and skills; demonstrating proficiency

Independence – seeing oneself as an active participant in the future; making choices and exercising potential

Generosity – the opportunity to value and practice service to others

In Fond du Lac County 4-H we find each of these elements present in a variety of ways. Here are just a few:

- Over 200 adult volunteers advise, coach and mentor members. The volunteers complete required training to increase their knowledge, and also have a background check when working with young people.
- Over 600 4-H members enroll in projects and activities of their choice learning about music, electricity, animals, the arts and much more.
Young people serve as club officers, chairs of committees, camp counselors and teen leaders who make decisions, lead, organize, and solve problems.
- 4-H youth are involved in numerous service efforts with food pantries, road side clean-up, supporting veterans, donations to those in need, and giving back to their communities.
- As 4-H events, activities and programs are developed and planned, the essential elements of youth development are included.

Source: Kress, C. (2004) Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development, National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES USDA

Dairy Modernization – Building our Dairy Future

Thirty years ago, what was considered “dairy modernization” often was adding stalls at the end of the barn. Today, it typically describes major capital investments involving not just construction and cows, but permits, licenses, finances and planning for the farm family’s future.

Dairy modernization is a long term commitment, both personally and financially. To address this topic and provide resources to farm families’ growing operations, UW-Extension hosted a “Modernization: Building Our Dairy Future” educational meeting for nearly 60 dairymen, consultants and builders this past winter. Topics included basic financials, waste storage facilities and welfare-friendly dairy cattle housing. Fourteen farm visits have been made since January 2015 regarding dairy modernization and farmstead planning.

As part of the dairy modernization process, many dairy operations must also look at a farm business succession plan where they are bringing in the next generation to take over the business. Tina Kohlman is currently working with 2 farm families on the process of farm transition which includes 5 key components: estate planning, transition planning, business planning, land use and retirement planning. Both the modernization process, as well as the farm transition process, are being achieved through the use of facilitated dairy management teams for each farm.

Parenting in a Digital Age

Parentetical: An educational website for parents of teens

Traditional face-to-face classes and parent groups have served as important sources of parent education and support for decades, providing opportunities to learn about child rearing, meet other parents and discuss common experiences. Digital technology—computers, smart phones and tablets—have created powerful and accessible new ways to educate and support parents. While 85% of parents use online resources, very few evidence-based interventions use digital media and none incorporate the active participation and user interaction of today's technology.

UW-Extension Family Living created a learner-centered, interactive, online learning community for parents called [Parentetical](#). *Parentetical* provides weekly posts with age-specific, research-based parenting and child development information and incorporates multimedia, such as videos and polls. Unlike most online parenting resources, *Parentetical* provides opportunities for parents to actively process the information they received through interaction with the site's facilitators and other parents. Over the past year, (2/23/14 – 2/23/15) Fond du Lac County was #5 in the state for total site sessions, higher than #9 spot in 2013 and over the last year (2014) Fond du Lac County was #3 with the most new users of Parentetical as a source of parent education.

Parenting the First Year Newsletter Series

Twenty-two years of partnership between Agnesian Health Care, Fond du Lac and Ripon Kiwanis groups and Fond du Lac County UW-Extension have provided the age-paced newsletter to parents of children born at Agnesian hospitals. In 2014, Fond du Lac leads the state with electronic subscriptions, as we have 592 of the 2,771 electronic subscriptions statewide. For new births receiving the newsletter, the numbers for mailed or electronic delivery for the year 2014 were 411 mailed and 347 electronic.

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