



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – October 2014

Feed is the highest cost in producing milk.

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Dairy Margin Protection Program

Milk price is not the only factor impacting when producers will be profitable or not profitable. With feed being the highest cost in producing milk, the cost of feed has a high impact on margins. With a high feed cost, income over feed cost may not be enough to cover all other expenses (variable and fixed) associated with producing milk.

The 2014 Farm Bill announced earlier this year offers a “safety-net” for dairy farms called Dairy Margin Protection Program (DMPP). This voluntary program is designed to the purpose of DMPP to allow producers to protect (insure) the margin they need to cover expenses.

This past month UW-Extension Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Calumet Counties hosted a **Dairy Margin Protection Program meeting**. With over 125 individuals in attendance, information was shared on what the program is, the mechanics of how it works, and deadlines for sign-up.

Based on a pre- and post-meeting evaluation (n=52), producers gained 2 points (on a scale of 1 to 5) in knowledge on how DMPP works, 2.3 points in knowledge on participation and premium fees, and 2.4 points on available resources and decision aid tools. Seventy-nine percent rated the meeting “Excellent” or “Good.” Based on information gained at the meeting, 23 of the respondents indicated they would sign-up for DMPP. Producers shared “Very informative! Great cross-section of attendance” and “Excellent program today! Thank you!”

Keeping It About the Kids

UW Extension Family Living and Fond du Lac County Family Court cooperatively teach Parenting Together-Living Apart parent education on a monthly basis on how to co-parent when there is a case of divorce in the family. In response to Parenting Together-Living Apart evaluations, individuals taking the course, but not involved in a divorce case noted the current course on co-parenting did not fully fit their needs, thus Keeping It About the Kids curriculum was developed by Fond du Lac County Family Court, Fond du lac County UW Extension Family Living and Fond du Lac County Birth to 3 program. All paternity cases that come to court are potential class attendees and their attendance is determined by the Family Courts.

Keeping it About the Kids is focused on paternity cases and the specific needs these parents have in co-parenting their children. Participants receive information on the importance of the early years of child development with brain development emphasized, coupled with communication skills development to help them be more effective parents when parenting apart, and they learn about the courts co-parenting plan to aid in effective parenting in a paternity case.

Keeping It About the Kids began in March 2014 and to date, 72 individuals have attended. Follow up evaluations are sent two months after the session to all attendees for additional evaluation on use of program materials and additional co-parenting needs.

The Relationship between Hunger and Obesity

The picture of hunger in the United States is changing. Although hunger often brings up images of extreme thinness in one's mind, researchers are now finding that hunger and obesity often occur within the same populations.

According to the Food Action and Research Center, "while all segments of the population are affected by obesity, low-income and food insecure people are especially vulnerable due to the additional risk factors associated with poverty."

- **Limited resources and lack of access to healthy, affordable foods.** The USDA defines a food desert as an urban area or rural town (low income communities) without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or a higher number of fast food restaurants and convenience stores. Often times, families living in food deserts also lack transportation. The lack of access contributes to poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity. When healthy foods are accessible, they are often more expensive than highly processed foods.
- **Cycles of food deprivation and overeating.** It's considered "feast or famine" and means that those not eating for a period of time may overeat when food is available. This can contribute to weight gain.
- **Limited access to healthcare.** Obesity and chronic health problems caused by obesity are less likely to be diagnosed and treated without access to healthcare. Ten percent of Fond du Lac County residents are uninsured.
- **Fewer opportunities for physical activity.** Low income neighborhoods, including both urban and rural areas, have fewer options for physical activity. For example, the walkability of community is a measure of how friendly an area is to walking (foot paths, sidewalks, traffic signs, and lighting). Low income children are also less likely to be involved in organized sports. 25% of Fond du Lac County residents report being physically inactive.
- **High levels of stress.** Stress is a concern for many Americans, but particularly low-income populations. It may be caused by many factors, including food insecurity itself. Research has linked stress to obesity in both youth and adults.

The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) provides nutrition education to low income populations. As of 2010, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) established WNEP as a Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program.

In Fond du Lac County, WNEP has addressed limited resources and lack of access to healthy, affordable foods by helping establish a mobile farmers market that reaches food desert areas. WNEP addresses cycles of food deprivation and overeating by teaching participants how to balance their food intake. These are just a few examples, among many, of how WNEP strives to decrease the risk factors associated with obesity among low income populations.

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