



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – March 2015

*Junior Master Gardeners
learn about gardening,
cooking & nutrition.*

- [Junior Master Gardener Program](#)
- [Will Local Residents Be Affected by the Proposed State Budget?](#)
- [Managing Dairy Employees Effectively](#)

Junior Master Gardener Program

The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program will have its first session on Thursday, April 9th. This is a summer-long gardening and cooking/nutrition program for youth, ages 8-12 years old. A partnership between the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, Family Living and the Community Gardens Coordinator, Amanda Miller and Patty Percy will co-teach the program. The University of Missouri Extension's "Eating from the Garden" curriculum will be used to teach youth about planning and caring for a vegetable garden, harvesting and cooking produce from the garden and healthy eating choices. This year will include guest speakers from UW-Extension, field trips to farms in the local community and team building exercises to help youth successfully work on the garden together. The first session will be held on April 9th from 4-5:30 pm at the Garden of Eatin' gardens, located at the Fond du Lac County UW-Extension office.

Will Local Residents Be Affected by the Proposed State Budget?

As Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development Educator with the University of Wisconsin-Extension in Fond du Lac County, Diana Hammer Tscheschlok has collaborated with other UW and public entities that bring results to Fond du Lac County residents.

- **UW-Extension Solid and Hazardous Waste Educator Center (SHWEC):** a center of specialists defined in state statute to provide no-cost, direct technical assistance on pollution prevention and reducing waste. SHWEC provided supervision and training to an intern who designed a system of tracking natural gas and electricity use for the City of Waupun and Fond du Lac County. County department heads and energy team members are still using this data system to inform employees about energy use, to reduce municipal energy costs, and to make facility and equipment decisions. While the intern's time cost \$2000, she found \$2202 in energy savings opportunities in just one county department.
- **UW-Extension Natural Resources Educators funded by WI Department of Natural Resources contracts with the UW-Extension Environmental Resources Center.** Natural Resource Educators work regionally to educate, facilitate decision-making processes, and provide technical support on water, forestry, and other natural resources issues. Fond du Lac County has benefited from the work of Chad Cook through the public discussions on aquatic plants in Lake Winnebago, the Dip into Lakes workshop series (<http://fonddulac.uwex.edu/dip-into-lakes-videos/>), the formation of the Lake Winnebago Quality Improvement Association, Winnebago Aquatic invasive species prevention, and the Winnebago Waterways needs assessment and cooperative strategy formation. No Fond du Lac County municipality funds the work or salary of the Natural Resources Educator though the position focuses entirely on water and forestry issues that directly affect Fond du Lac County.
- **Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB):** Fond du Lac County received a WEEB grant of \$4008 in 2011 to fund the establishment of an Energy Team to learn about county energy use and reduce it by 10% over five years. The grant also paid for the time of the SHWEC intern mentioned above. Fond du Lac County just submitted another

proposal to WEEB for \$5835 to fund the “Fond du Lac County Well Water User Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior Change Study.”

The proposed state budget includes cuts to the UW-System as a whole and specifically removes funding for SHWEC, Natural Resources Educators, and WEEB. The cuts would reduce or eliminate the capacity of these entities to work with UW-Extension in improving the resilience of our local environment and strengthening the economy.

Managing Dairy Employees Effectively

“The key to success in any business is to help other people be successful in their jobs.” Effective employee management is a critical aspect of any successful agri-business. Developing the necessary management skills doesn’t happen overnight, and they are difficult to achieve without some guidance. The challenge of training good managers is important to the profitability of any business.

The transition from employee to manager can be a tough road to navigate. In a recent two-day workshop, UW-Extension agents shared “people skills” with participants to help them be successful in their jobs: communication, conflict management, trust and respect, and leadership. Over 50 individuals attended, with 13 Spanish speaking and 10 English speaking middle managers attending the Fond du Lac site. Post-meeting evaluation comments regarding the session include:

- *I hope you repeat trainings like this.*
- *Thank you to all that made this conference possible. It was very useful. I personally feel very grateful and leaving with more knowledge. Thank you.*
- *I hope to continue to have this type of trainings to continue learning and prepared to be better each day.*
- *After talking to my employees that attended your employee management meetings last week, they were really impressed with the personality test...I was wondering if that was something we could give on the farm...*
- *I have received very positive feedback from our Middle Managers and Lead Milkers that assisted to the training. Please, continue offering this kind of training in the future!*

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