



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – February 2013

4-H club officers join in a get acquainted activity at the annual club officer workshop.

- [Heart Health](#)
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Heart Health

Family Living Educator Amanda Miller focused on heart health during the month of February by presenting “The Heart Truth” at the Oakfield Public Library on February 14th from 4:00 – 5:30 pm. Participants learned about the risks of heart disease, heart disease prevention, heart healthy recipes and tips on living a healthy life. The UW-Extension Family Living website also has more information on where to go to learn about heart health.

Head Start Parents Program

Advocap Head Start parents had the opportunity to participate in an interactive, parent only Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) event on February 12th from 5:00 – 6:30 pm to discuss feeding preschool children, including issues with picky eating, parent/child feeding responsibilities and positive mealtimes.

Addressing Dairy Reproduction

Reproduction performance is quickly becoming the biggest challenge in a dairy herd’s profitability. Based on the 2007 National Animal Health Monitoring System Survey, reproductive inefficiency is second when it comes to involuntary culling. Cows that become pregnant faster will spend on average more time in the early part of lactation (higher milk sales) and are less at risk to be culled for reproductive failure.

In January, UW-Extension Fond du Lac County hosted a “**Reproducing Profitability**” Dairy Reproductive Management Seminar for 28 dairy producers and consultants. The purpose of the meeting was to share with producers the newest university based research on reproduction and the impact milk quality, nutrition and herd health may have. Based on post-meeting evaluations, (n=19) increased their understanding of related topics 0.75 points (on a scale of one to five) as compared to prior to the meeting (2.25 versus 3.00).

Based on the information learned, producers indicated on the post-meeting survey they plan to:

- Revisit dairy reproductive protocols to improve herd efficiency
- Adopt a heifer management program which includes more efficiently managing heifer inventories and to focus on heifer reproductive program

As a result of this meeting, two **“ReproMoney” teams** will be implemented. “ReproMoney” is a team-based program to help dairy producers improve the reproductive performance of dairy herds. UW-Extension Dairy & Livestock Agent Tina Kohlman will serve as team facilitator for these producer-directed teams.

4-H Promotes a Sense of Belonging

According to the Essential Elements of Youth Development, one of the most important developmental needs of all youth is a sense of belonging or fitting in. We know that one of the reasons new 4-H members don't become involved or drop out in their first year is that they don't feel welcomed, valued and included in a group. In 2012 VISTA Camryn Krause surveyed 4-H club leaders and new 4-H families discovering what clubs were already doing or might consider doing to create an environment of belonging.

This information was used to develop a training that was led by 9 youth leaders for the annual countywide 4-H club officer workshop. 35 people attended. It was also shared at the Leaders Around the Lake Conference where 4 youth taught a breakout session to 14 participants from four counties. Additionally, the youth leaders will share the information at the spring 4-H Association meeting in March. A sense of belonging will be increased with the following:

- Know and use people's names
- Use symbols of inclusiveness – t-shirts, buttons, pledges (make sure everyone has access to them or knows them)
- Use icebreakers/get acquainted activities
- Have food at meetings
- Foster positive adult/youth interaction
- Incorporate fun
- Engage and involve youth at all ages in multiple roles
- Help youth build friendships with new people
- Promote and provide opportunities for teamwork
- Provide new and varied opportunities annually

Through applying these concepts, members will stay involved longer and gain more from their 4-H experience.

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