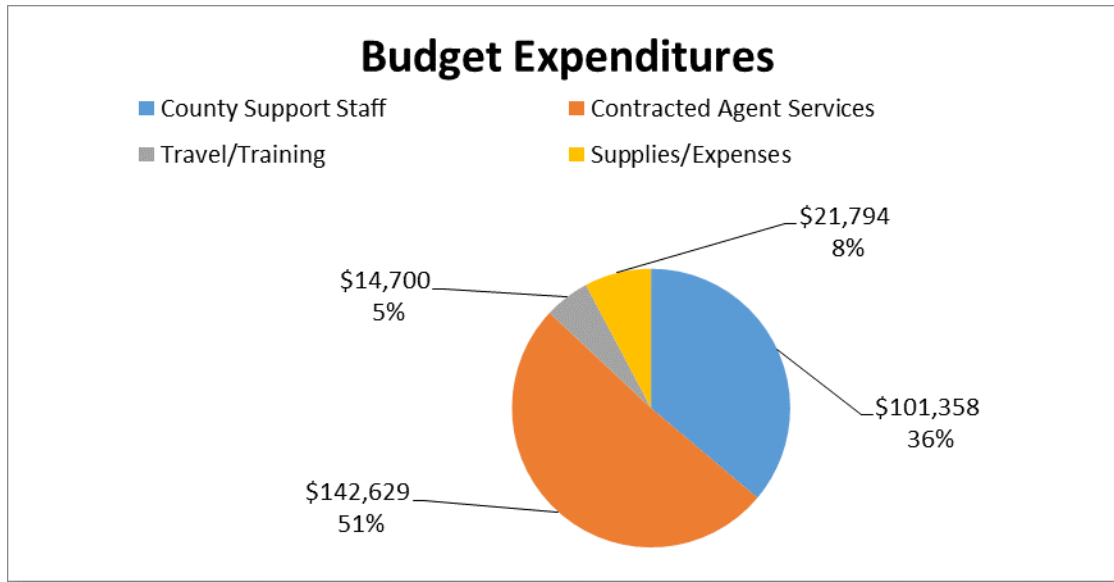


# 2016 Annual Report Oconto County Board of Supervisors

## *UW-Extension Department*



<i>Budgeted --</i>	<i>\$280,481</i>
<i>Expenditures, Actual --</i>	<i>\$255,744</i>
<i>Budgeted, Unspent --</i>	<i>\$ 24,737</i>

**Thank you** to the Oconto County Board of Supervisors and the Extension Committee for your continued support of the Oconto County UW-Extension Office during 2016. We appreciate the opportunity to serve Oconto County residents and local efforts to strengthen our people, our communities and our economy.

The University of Wisconsin Extension offices are located in all 72 counties of Wisconsin. UW-Extension's funding is derived through an investment of County, State, Federal and program/research funding.

Oconto County provides **40%** of educator salaries plus support staff and operation costs. The State provides **60%** of salaries and fringes of agents plus provides many forms of support, including state specialists who can be called upon to provide research, local education or programming in our county.

Dale Mohr, Department Head

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is a key component of the Oconto County economy. It provides 4,193 jobs, \$1.3 billion in business sales and \$126.4 million to the county's income. The dairy industry makes up the vast majority of this economic impact. In 2012, there were 154 dairy farms and 20,100 dairy cows, "on farm" milk production accounted for \$97.3 million in business sales, and dairy processing produced another \$1.06 billion. Main programming for the Oconto County Agriculture Agent focuses on dairy, with additional programming pertaining to other livestock production and animal health needs.

Oconto and Marinette County UW-Extension have an informal specialization agreement allowing dairy, livestock, agronomy, and horticulture programming to be provided to all clientele. Both offices handle calls on all subject matter, but issues which require specific expertise are diverted to the appropriate agent. When appropriate, the county agents collaborate on agriculture programs. Future agriculture programming being developed by the Agriculture Agent focuses on addressing educational priorities of Oconto County residents.

### **Stronger Economies**

Due to the low milk price of 2016, most dairy farms were not able to perform large capital investment projects. However, the Oconto County Agriculture Agent was able to assist multiple farms with the design of facility positive pressure tube ventilation plans through on-farm consultation and the assistance of UW-Extension state specialists. The changes implemented through the design of these ventilation systems leads to improved cow comfort which enhances profitability of farms by increasing milk overall production especially during the hot summer months. Through the existing framework of local UW-Extension county agents, the Wisconsin Idea of bringing technical advice and research leads to increased farm profitability for Oconto County dairy producers.

### **Importance of Agriculture in Oconto County**

- ♦ Agriculture provides **jobs for 4,193 residents**.
- ♦ Agriculture accounts for **\$1.3 billion in economic activity**.
- ♦ Agriculture contributes **\$264 million** to the county's total income.
- ♦ Agriculture pays **\$11.6 million in taxes**. (Figure does not include all property taxes paid to local schools.)

Source: Steven Deller, Professor, Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics, UW-Madison

Nestlé selected UW-Madison as an academic partner to lead their Dairy Farming Institute (DFI) education program located in Shuangcheng in the Heilongjiang Province of northeast China. The University of Wisconsin was tasked to work on all elements of curriculum including design, program planning, the establishment of learning objectives and core competencies along with the evaluation of training programs and trainers. The Oconto County Agriculture Agent was asked to participate as a subject area expert in this project representing UW-Extension-- the only county-based UW-Extension agriculture agent who participated in the Nestlé DFI training. She designed, developed and presented the material on health management of calves and youngstock.

*"You are an excellent teacher who connects with the students. I can see you are very passionate about your subject matter."*

*-Bayer Animal Health*

The curriculum was specifically designed and developed for Chinese animal health

workers and veterinarians and taught in two separate sessions. Both sessions occurred the fall of 2016 with 36 participants and three major allied veterinary business partners (GEA, Boehringer Ingelheim, and Bayer Animal Health). The entire curriculum will be used for further educational applications, such as a UW-Extension heifer health and management module.

### **Food Safety, Security & Health**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave dairy and livestock producers 2016 as an implementation year for the veterinary feed directive. Starting January 1, 2017, livestock producers need a written order from a licensed veterinarian for the purchase of feed based antibiotics. This change has affected how veterinarians, farmers, and feed mills conduct business.

Because of the regulation change, information was developed to educate producers, feed mill/distributors and veterinarians regarding the regulatory FDA changes. The information developed by the Oconto County Agriculture Agent to educate on the regulatory changes were PowerPoint presentations to local and statewide groups, newspaper articles for local and statewide dissemination including WisContext, and video podcasts.

Understanding government regulations in the agriculture industry, especially for dairy and livestock producers, can be very confusing. These regulations can lead to longstanding industry changes which may have further implications. In an effort to help producers, it requires a concerted effort of a UW-Extension agriculture agent to reach audiences who are affected by the change through multiple educational platforms.

UW-Extension is an invaluable resource for producers and residents in Oconto County. UW-Extension provides timely education and applied unbiased research to help farmers use resources for productivity and efficiently to remain competitive and profitable.



*Nestle Dairy Farming Institute veterinary participants in Shuangcheng, China.*

## COMMUNITY, NATURAL RESOURCE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CNRED)

**Dale Mohr** is the CNRED Agent and his PURPOSE is to strengthen people's ability to identify and solve community problems through education, citizen participation, group process, and unbiased information – allowing the people of Oconto County to make informed decisions, resulting in better communities.

**Strong Local Governments and Communities** are critical to Oconto County. Dale offers educational resources for civic engagement and partnerships in local government decision-making to the more than 300 local officials while providing training tools to local non-profit organizations.

- Dale provided training to local Plan Commissioners on current Land Use Laws.
- Strategic Planning services were provided to three non-profits including the Suring Area Library Board of Directors and to the County Board of Supervisors.
- Dale has supported the Mayor of Oconto on his goal of bringing together the Harbor Council, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Tourism Department to work jointly on key community issues identified by Dale's asset 'evaluation making' programs.
- The Marinette & Oconto Literacy Council has relied upon Dale for guiding their Board of Directors' goal setting, strategies, and other trainings in order to meet a critical need within the county – ending adult illiteracy.



**Economic Development** is more than bringing businesses into the County, it is about enhancing local quality of life. Dale teams up with the public, the community, local governments and private sectors to build strong communities. He provides research, education and facilitation to meet community economic development challenges to help people understand community change and identify opportunities.

- Dale helped to create the Oconto County Broadband Team. Increasing Broadband access will make Oconto County a more attractive place to live, work and play. The Team's efforts led to developing a county-wide survey, attending State conferences on the issue, identifying low service areas and hosting a local training event for local businesses and community leaders which in turn led to a local service provider successfully receiving a \$100,000 grant to expand Broadband in Oconto County.
- Dale worked alongside the City of Oconto Tourism Committee to market the area for hosting fishing tournaments resulting in tens of thousands of tourist dollars being spent locally, in 2016.
- Dale has also worked monthly with the City of Oconto to build upon its historic and natural assets to attract tourists and people wanting to visit and live within the area.
- Dale has assisted the City of Oconto Parks Department in enhancing public spaces for those with physical disabilities leading to the modification of local piers, boardwalks and observation platforms throughout the city.
- Our CNRED office assisted 17 entrepreneurs looking to begin a business.



**Natural Resources** are vital to our county's tax base and quality of life. Dale promotes informed decision making on natural resource issues working in partnership with individuals, community leaders, and resource professionals to develop and deliver research-based educational programs and materials.

- Dale worked to create and organize the first **Citizen Advisory Committee on Waterways** in Oconto County who together with the Land Conservationist and Oconto Lakes and Waterways Association successfully wrote and are implementing \$200,000 grants providing Lake Management Tools and research findings. This effort will save local lakes groups and taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars over the next 3 years.
- Our CNRED office assisted and trained 35 homeowners on the testing of their private groundwater wells helping them ensure clean water to their homes.



## FAMILY LIVING PROGRAMS

The Oconto County UW-Extension Family Living Program is building knowledge and skills that people can use to make informed decisions about their health, resources and relationships. In working with county partners, the Family Living team (Family Living Agent, FoodWise, and Parenting Resource Center) strives to prioritize programs that create the most impact and meet the needs of residents in Oconto County. In 2016, the following programs helped people manage financial resources, make healthy informed choices, and develop skills in parenting and family relationships.

### Healthy Living

- Healthy aging of older adult populations is a national concern. Over 94% of older adults in Oconto County live in rural communities; these individuals live independently providing freedom from economic, emotional and physical hardships. Family Living healthy aging programs such as Strong Bones and Brain Health Fitness reached over 180 Oconto County residents in 2016.
- To promote healthy food choices, the Oconto County Family Living Agent encouraged six grocers and convenient stores to participate in a Healthy Food Retail Project. The project involved making healthy foods more accessible, attractive and easy-to use- by looking at product placement, signage, recipe ideas, and marketing with focused education. The Healthy Food Retail Project presented increases in healthy product sales, showing that the program has economic advantages as well as the obvious health benefits for Oconto County residents.
- As a result of the county's investment in UW-Extension's Family Living Program, the federally funded **Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (FoodWise)** educators reached 2,167 low income Oconto County residents in 2016 (unduplicated count), conducted education on stretching limited food dollars, food preparation and choosing healthy foods. Nutrition education took place in Oconto, Suring and Gillett Elementary Schools, New View Industries in Gillett, Kingdom Come Food Pantry in Oconto Falls, OKATO Manor, and other locations throughout the county.



### Financial Resources

- Through a partnership between the Oconto County libraries and Family Living Agent, Money Management workshops and Financial Coaching education was provided to 16 families in 2016. When individuals or families strengthen their financial security, communities also benefit as families add economic growth to our local communities.
- To make financial information more accessible to families with young children, monthly Money Smart newsletters are a cost-effective way the Family Living Agent was able to provide relevant and timely financial information to Oconto County families. Each newsletter covers different topics, such as, handling bills, record keeping, banking, credit, paying down debt, preparing for tax time and other household financial organization tips.
- The Oconto County Family Living Agent introduced Small Savings Builds Big Dreams initiative as part of financial education. This program promotes the benefits of starting early to save for education costs. Research suggests students with even small amounts of designated college savings are more likely to engage in school, have higher reading and math scores, and graduate from high school more often. Small Savings Builds Big Dreams workshops and events reached over 30 parents throughout the county.

### Family Relationships

- UW-Extension Family Living plays an important role in helping families strengthen relationships. More than 140 families participated in **Parenting Resource Center** events and parenting education classes in 2016, including weekly Play Group sessions hosted at four county partner locations in Oconto County.
- Research has found that benefits of a strong parent-child relationship in the early years carries over to the next generation. Therefore, skills such as critical thinking, impulse control, problem-solving and conflict resolution can be taught early in life by a child's most influential teacher – their parents. Raising a Thinking Child is one such evidence-based parenting education program facilitated by the parenting resource center educator that trains parents to teach their children how –not what– to think.

By means of improving people's lives, Family Living Programs reduce the economic and social service demands on local government and makes Oconto County communities stronger. Therefore, UW-Extension Oconto County Family Living education programs are an excellent public investment.

#### 2016 Family Living Programs

*Small Savings Builds Big Dreams*  
*Money Smart Newsletters*  
*Health Insurance Literacy*  
*Family Caregiver Tools*  
*FoodWise Nutrition*  
*Strengthening Families*  
*Raising a Thinking Child*  
*Parenting Play Groups*  
*Financial Coaching*  
*Rent Smart Workshops*  
*Healthy Food Retail Project*  
*Brain Health Fitness*  
*Strong Bones Program*



## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Oconto County 4-H Youth Development's mission works to empower adult and youth leaders as they work together through their clubs and communities to create a program that is open and committed to learning, living and leading in 4-H. It provides resources, mentoring and a welcoming community for youth and adult participants, focusing on the positive contributions of youth.



### Project Events

Our Project Development Committee, which consists of a dozen 4-H youth and adult volunteers, organizes three project events for our youth members throughout the year. These events serve several purposes. The first is to connect our 4-H families with the project areas our program offers. This purpose begins at an open house event in fall. The open house is organized with booths that are created by project leaders to represent a specific project area. Families are encouraged to browse the booths, speak with project leaders and youth members are encouraged to collect project challenges for the project areas they are interested in. A second purpose is to generate more interest in exhibiting projects at the Oconto County Youth Fair. Two all-day events are organized in January and spring. 4-H members register for up to five different project sessions from the 20-30 different project areas offered. Members bring in their completed challenges from the open house event, get feedback from the project leader and are issued an additional challenge. When both challenges are completed the 4-H member should have a nearly completed project which can be exhibited at the fair. Between the three events over 100 4-H members, almost one-third of our membership, attended.

A final purpose is to engage those 4-H youth with experience in project areas in leadership. Last year we had six 4-H youth take the lead in several project sessions. These youth created the challenge and content and taught the sessions to 4-H members. Along with engaging our youth we also engaged 13 community members as project leaders. Some of these individuals had never been involved in 4-H and have volunteered to return for next year's events.

### Summer Camp

4-H Summer Camp is held at Camp Bird in Crivitz each year. The camp program is more than just a four day vacation for campers. It is a path to leadership paved with education, camaraderie and fun. Our camp program is open to 3<sup>rd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades, 4-H and non-4-H members. Last year we had 40 4-H members and 23 non-4-H members attend. Of the 23 non-4-H members, 20 were connected to 4-H members. Of those 20, three families enrolled in the 4-H program.

When campers turn 14, they become eligible to apply as a camp dishwashers. At 15 they can apply as camp counselors. Oconto County camp counselors go through a three year training curriculum developed by former 4-H Educator, Paula Huff that includes 8 hours of training each year. At 18 interested campers can apply to be a camp liaison. We currently have three camp liaisons who develop, direct and manage Oconto County's camp session.



### Our Clubs

Last year Oconto County 4-H consisted of 16 4-H clubs made up of 378 members. Those members were 237 youth, 63 youth leaders and 78 adult volunteers.

# Oconto County UW-Extension 2016 Staff



## **Agriculture**

Sarah Mills-Lloyd, Agent

## **Community, Natural Resource & Economic Development**

Dale Mohr, Agent / Department Head

## **Family Living**

Jill Cholewa, Agent

- Barb Truttman, Parent Resource Center Educator

## **4-H Youth Development**

Paula Huff, Agent (RETIRED January 2017)

## **FoodWise**

John Pinkart, Coordinator Oconto and Marinette Counties

- Dawn Schroeffer, Nutrition Educator

## **Support Staff**

Karen Behnke, County Program Assistant – (Retired)

Becky Dolata, County Program Assistant—

Community, Natural Resource & Economic Development / Family Living /  
Administrative

Arvilla Rusnak, County Program Assistant –

4-H Youth Development / Agriculture

***Oconto County UW-Extension Staff teamed up to beautify  
the Courthouse landscape with donated flowers and their time in 2015 & 2016.***

