



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OCONTO COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Table of Contents

Extension	3
Agriculture	4
Community Development	6
Human Development & Relationships	8
Positive Youth Development	10
FoodWise	12
Area Extension Director	14

University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Oconto County

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UW-MADISON EXTENSION

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES *with* THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

As a statewide engagement arm of UW–Madison, the Division of Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea to extend university knowledge to every corner of the state. That mission started in 1912 with Extension’s first agent making farm visits and continues today along with community and business development, youth engagement, and well-being programming. Our statewide network of educators and specialists with the UW–Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences and on UW campuses across Wisconsin is responding every day to emerging and longstanding hurdles residents are overcoming to compete and prosper. We’ve identified key opportunities to leverage local resources and leading research to affect change and improve lives through:

Supporting Wisconsin’s Agriculture Industry »

We use applied research from UW-Madison’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in addition to other Campuses along with educational outreach to support an economically viable agricultural industry that produces safe food in an environmentally responsible manner.

Fostering Leadership and Civic Engagement»

We work with communities across the state to support individuals, groups, and organizations to enhance quality of life and improve overall well-being, leading to stronger communities today and for generations to come.

Creating Positive, Healthy Change »

We catalyze positive change in Wisconsin families through evidence-based programs focused on nutrition, food security, food safety, chronic disease prevention, mental health, and substance misuse.

Empowering Families and Communities »

We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding, enhance aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents, and help families put technology, mindfulness, and financial awareness to use.

Enhancing Resilient Natural Resource Systems»

We help individuals and communities make informed decisions that support the state’s rich land, water, and mineral resources. We’re working to ensure that our resources remain at the heart of our communities, economies, and state identity.

Furthering Positive Youth Development»

We prepare the youth of today to become effective, empathetic leaders of tomorrow. From teens advising local government to Wisconsin 4-H clubs, we offer diverse educational opportunities that put youth on the path to success in Wisconsin and beyond..



Agriculture

Agriculture & Horticulture Programming

2021 Agricultural & Horticultural Extension programming in Oconto County encompassed a wide array of opportunities. Farm owners and managers, as well as agricultural service providers, had the chance to take part in dozens of state-wide offered webinar events, contact Agriculture Agent Reuss directly, or attend numerous local field days and workshops. Home gardeners also had the same array of opportunities within horticultural topics. In total, Reuss provided:

- Approximately 900 direct agricultural education contacts
- Approximately 1,100 direct horticultural education contacts;
- Information via displays and demonstrations at both counties' Breakfast on the Farms and County Fairs to another 3,000 plus individuals
- Coordination/management of a four-part poultry management webinar series, and a webinar regarding farm bill program decision-making. These webinars directly reached over 200 WI residents and there have been over 400 views of the poultry webinars on the Extension YouTube channel.
- Alfalfa and corn silage harvest management projects, which help forage producers in the two counties achieve optimal forage quality and production on their alfalfa and corn silage acres.



Producers and agronomists at Waterhemp Management Field Day, Chase, July 15, 2021. Example of UW-Madison resources at work in Oconto County, with UW Weed Science research plots used as basis of field day, and involvement of regional Nutrient & Pest Management staff.

Ag Research

Research data drives Extension educational information. Reuss adds to the data for both local and state-wide programming by conducting or coordinating many different on-farm research projects.

2021 projects included:

- 3 sites of the corn Adaptive Nitrogen Management rate plots;
- Waterhemp control in soybean;
- Completion of a grant-funded study in alfalfa regarding potassium, sulfur, and boron interaction effects on yield and forage quality;
- Two sites of nitrogen enhancement product effects on corn yield and nitrogen needs;
- And the establishment of a study on nitrogen rates/sources effect on winter triticale yield.



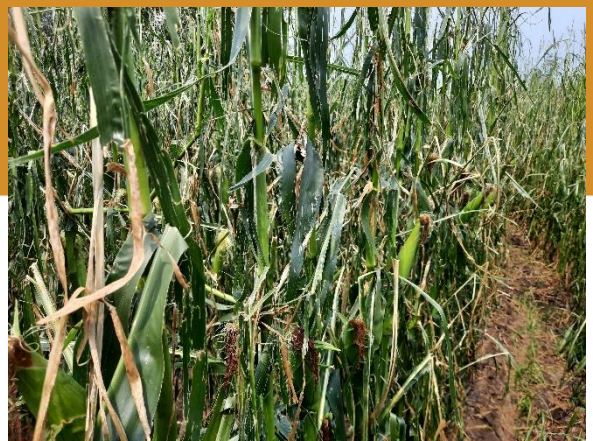
Agriculture

Regional Ag Staffing Model

2022 will feature another transition, as Oconto County Agricultural Extension programming moves into a regional programming model. Reuss will continue to provide Crops/Soils education and research to Oconto County farms and professionals, as part of his regional duties including Marinette, Shawano, Langlade, and Lincoln Counties. Dairy Programming will be delivered locally by Kimberly Schmidt, as part of a three-county sharing arrangement with Shawano and Marinette Counties. Reuss and Schmidt will work together to provide Oconto County farms with necessary information to navigate the extremely expensive production situation being faced in 2022 and the uncertainty of supply chain issues, significant commodity price swings, and normal weather pattern variation.

Local workshops and field days, as well as newsletter articles, will form the basis of their delivery methods, but will also feature state-wide webinar opportunities. Reuss' in-field research and demonstration will again focus on nutrient management topics. Expected research plots include multiple sites in corn (both grain and silage) regarding the use of nitrogen enhancement products and various nitrogen application rates; multiple sites testing the optimum application rates/methods of sulfur in various field crops; and nitrogen rate research on winter wheat.

Contact:
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Crops and Soils Extension Educator
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Shawano Counties
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715-732-7510



*Corn hit by hail near County Line,
Summer 2021*

Program Area Goals for 2022

The overall goal of 2022 programming is to maximize on-farm profitability this year and in subsequent years. More specific goals include:

- Maximizing crop income return to fertilizer investment
- Minimizing opportunity for nitrates to enter ground water from crop fertilization practices.
- Improving agronomic practices (planting date, rate, selection) in all crops
- Document economics of nontraditional cropping practices (crops, cover crops, tillage changes)
- Begin development of on-farm demonstration sites of non-traditional crops, serving as opportunities to gather production and economic data.





Community Development



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

BRINGING COLLABORATION & COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO OCONTO COUNTY THROUGH...

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,

ORGANIZATIONAL & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT,

& LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

My Mission: To work alongside you to identify critical local needs, strategize doable solutions, organize responses, create actionable steps, and roll up my sleeves to make positive things happen and to positively transform your local organization, business or community."

My Purpose:

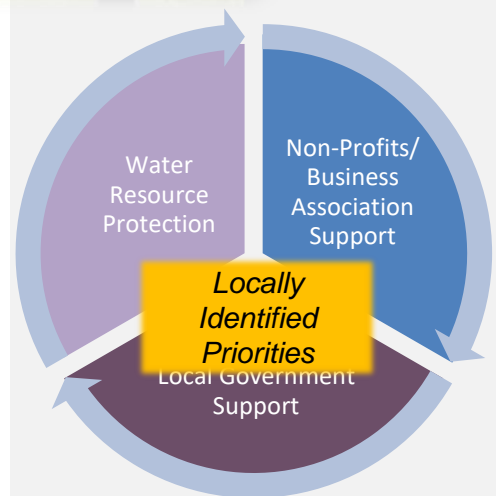
- ☐ Cutting local costs to mandated services;
- ☐ Training Local Officials to maximize their community resources;
- ☐ Collaborating with County Depts. to lower their project costs;
- ☐ Supporting non-profits to lower costs and save resources.

KEY PROJECTS IN 2021:

1. **Village of Lena**, a 20 Year Community Plan, Adopted 2021;
2. **'Leadership Oconto County, Inc.'** a Strategic 5 Year Plan;
3. **Working with Local Municipal Courts** to offer a Restorative Justice Program reaching from City of Oconto to Suring;
4. **Collaboration with Land & Water Conservation Dept.** in studying local lakes and cost sharing resources teaming up to bring in \$100,000 for the study;
5. **Collaborating with Forestry, Parks & Recreation Dept.** in creating a 5 year plan for County and Town parks;
6. **Local Government Education** – 'One-on-One' Plan Commission Trainings/workshops for Local Government Officials dealing with controversial land use issues;
7. **Working with local officials & the Mountain Historical Society** to preserve and rehab the historic 'Green Lake National Forest Park' site.



Dale Mohr,
Harvesting the newly discovered European Frogbit. An Invasive Aquatic Plant within the county.



PEOPLE SERVED:

435 Riparian Owners
and 12 Lake Groups;
45 Local Government Officials;
20 Non-Profit Members;
12 Youth Jurors, 14 Court Cases;
10 Local entrepreneurs;
Along with... Multiple Media publications

PARTNERED WITH:

- Local Municipal Judges & Law Enforcement;
- County Staff/Department Heads;
- Wis. Department of Natural Resources;
- UW-Stevens Point;
- OCEDC/Tourism;
- Oconto County Lakes & Waterways Assoc.

GRANTS PARTNERED

ON:

WDNR Grant \$100,000;
County Healthy Waters Grants



Community Development

PRESERVING SURFACE WATERS THROUGH THE COLLABORATION OF MULTIPLE AGENCIES ...

- FUNDED IN LARGE PART BY WDNR GRANTS \$700,000

In the seventh year since our concerned group of residents identified the need ***"to have the healthiest waters in Wisconsin"*** our team of UW-Extension, County Departments, non-profits, lake Associations & Districts, UW – Stevens Point, WI Department of Natural Resources, and Oconto County Lakes and Waterways Assoc., have pooled our limited resources and at no actual costs to the county have studied more than 42 lakes regarding their respective ecosystems while gathering information about the hopes and concerns of property owners and lake users.

Due to Covid-19 protocols, we designed an approach to contact folks using **Zoom**, the media and also mailings reaching more than 2,000 people. Everything we are gathering is being archived on our county website and drafted into usable plans and resource documents in order to benefit the county for decades. The WI DNR has funded our efforts for years because we are successful in reaching out, in collaborating in our efforts, able to minimize costs and provide a valuable service to the county's residents.



Bailey and Makenna trying their hand at catching pan fish

TEEN COURT COMPLETES ANOTHER YEAR!



Teen Court is established within the Wisc. State Statutes, affording local Judiciaries the option to defer a judgment in lieu of sanctions completed. In short, this is a second chance for youth. **Dale Mohr** provides this County service which promotes volunteerism, leadership opportunities, team building, and community healing.

"The Teen Court Program is very beneficial to our county for both the offender and the panelists." - **Edward Burke, Jr.**
Oconto County District Attorney

"I rely on this program to encourage kids to become future law abiding citizens. Over the years, of all the juveniles I have referred to Teen Court, very few are repeat offenders."
- **Michael Bake**, Judge, Oconto Municipal Court

"Whichever programs are out there designed to keep juveniles out of the court system is something I can stand behind. Teen court does this and I wholeheartedly support it."
- **Todd Skarban** – Sheriff, Oconto County

"I've learned how kids can change for the better when they truly put their minds to it." - **Teen Panel**

"I've learned the value of listening to others. These skills I will carry for the rest of my life." - **Teen Panel**

Our goal remains the same... to be able to take **Teen Court** beyond the County Courthouse and into the local communities, promoting safer neighborhoods while growing future leaders.





Human Development & Relationships

From Research to Practice to People

Human Development & Relationships (HDR) Program

Source of well-researched information on aging, parenting, housing and financial security, we provide powerful training and tools that improve outcomes for children, families and communities in Oconto County.

Highlight: Supporting Caregivers through Education

As people in our communities age, their family members, friends and neighbors often take on caregiver roles with little to no compensation or support. Caregivers may often experience physical strain, financial strain, and emotional stress. The more hours a caregiver puts in, the higher their risk of feeling negative health impacts of their own.

In 2021, our Extension programs provided caregivers with research-based information on self-care techniques and connected them to local/state resources including other caregivers within the community. We led education on managing grief, preparing for end-of life decisions and building financial preparedness. Scheduling monthly caregiver education and support meetings provided a strong connection between caregiver participants.

"I'm so grateful to have connected with other caregivers like me. We all can help each other in some way - no matter what age."

~ Caregiver Program Participant

We also adapted programming to meet the needs of county residents during the COVID-pandemic, including virtual and call-in options, as well as setting up in-person access at our county libraries. These efforts increased the resources and support for family caregivers throughout Oconto County.

In 2021



over 70%

Caregivers practice self-care more often due to programs.



96%

Caregivers tried new ways to manage stress.



Jill Cholewa
Extension Educator

48

Programs / Workshops

> 4100

Learners

2021 HDR PROGRAMS

Caregiver Education

Financial Coaching

Grandparenting/Kinship Families

Intergenerational Program

Money Matters Workshops

'Just In Time' Parent Newsletters

Brain Health Workshops

Strong Bodies – Physical Activity

'Rent Smart' Tenant Education



Human Development & Relationships

Financial Coaching

Our Financial Coaching program empowers learners to set and achieve financial goals pertaining to their personal finances. Such goals may include; creating and following a spending plan, saving money, building an emergency fund, managing credit, effectively paying down debt, or protecting their financial resources from fraud, scams and identity theft.

Changing any developed behavior takes time and perseverance, but successes can be reached one step at a time and one goal at a time. These financial coaching efforts can lead to assist our learners in building financial independence and a greater ability to invest in their children, their future, and their communities.



Credit Report Education

This was our 7th year promoting the 'check your credit report campaign' alongside Money Smart Week education events held in April. During 2021, we had 116 participants enroll and complete our credit report workshops.

Results from participants surveyed showed:

- ✓ 87% reported accessing credit reports online
- ✓ 73% reported when reviewing credit report everything looked accurate
- ✓ 57% knew how information gets onto credit reports and how it affects their credit score

Next steps in 2022, continue holding credit report education workshops, sharing displays and fact sheets with county libraries and banks, as well as share media postings with local banking institutions, public schools and Newcap Inc. Primary program goal is to raise awareness about accessing and reading credit reports along with providing instruction on how to correct errors that our learners may discover.

Food Preservation Education

Food Preservation program had a full agenda during 2021 that included canner lid testing, steam canner demo presentations, and five hands-on workshops were held in the Fall.

➤ Fig. 1: 'Apple Day' canning workshop had high attendance as usual ; participant removing Apple Pie Filling jars.



➤ Fig. 2: Strong food preservation participation at 2021 Oconto County Fair – with 36 entries that included jams, jellies, meat, salsas, relishes, pickles and dehydrated fruits and beef jerky.



Community Connections

Following 2020's successful Community Kindness theme, we branched out with 'Neighbors Helping Neighbors' during the Holidays.

An amazing amount of donations were received again this year including; grocery and fuel gift cards, winter jackets, snow boots, gently-used books, puzzles and games and unwrapped children's toys. The gifts of sharing and caring for each other is truly the heart of our communities.

Young learners asking questions at UW-Extension booth during 2021 National Night Out event.



Kent Tempus/USA Today Network-Wisconsin



Positive Youth Development

4-H involves youth in project based education. Through project learning, youth can explore their interests (“sparks”) and master new skills. 4-H projects are meant to be hands on in order to create a memorable learning experience. Since 4-H started in the early 1900s, youth have learned by doing. This hands-on process allows youth to understand not only how to do something but also why they are doing it.

The four H’s stand for head, heart, hands and health. That means we are committed to providing opportunities for youth to learn life skills like decision-making, problem solving, caring for others, generosity, making healthy choices, and more.

4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.

4-H Grows

A Promise to America’s Kids In 2025, 4-H will reflect the population demographics, vulnerable populations, diverse needs and social conditions of the country.

4-H Mission

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

WI 4-H is committed to providing quality programming that is informed by it’s participants. Assessing our program through the use of the 4-H Youth Thriving Model has given us valuable information about our state and local programs alike. The 4-H Thriving Model predicts that youth who participate in 4-H programs that provide a high-quality developmental context will thrive, and thriving youth achieve key developmental outcomes.

To determine scores for Program Quality, youth members age 13 and up were invited to take an online survey asking them questions about their 4-H experience. After analyzing data, the scores are provided which assess each component of the model on a scale of 1-7, 7 meaning outstanding program quality. A score of 5 or higher is an indicator of high-quality programming. A snapshot of the data for Oconto County can be found to the right.



205

Youth Club Members

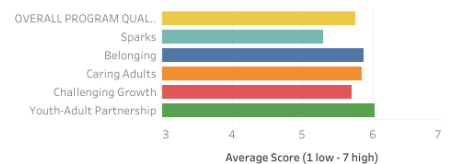
34

Dedicated Adult Volunteers

12

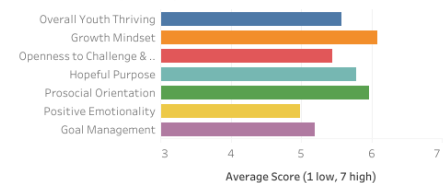
Active Clubs

Program Quality (Developmental Context)

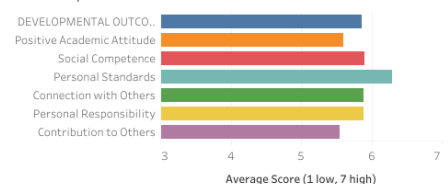


County2
Oconto

Thriving Trajectory



Developmental Outcomes





Positive Youth Development

The Oconto County 4-H Program has proven to be strong and resilient despite challenges arising from the continued presence of COVID-19. A list of program highlights can be found below:

- In Person Summer School (OES)
- New Club- City of Oconto
- Pollinator and Sunflower Plots (Meadowbrook Farm)
- State-wide Virtual Learning Community
- Return of Oconto County Youth Fair
- New Club Developing- Breed
- Summer Camp Planning- August
- *Winter Teen Leadership Camp
- *County Wide Family Picnic
- *Take and Learn Kits
- *County Promotion Apparel
- *Monthly Project Opportunities
- *Camp Counselor Training
- *Community Open House



Left: Oconto Co. Representatives at Teen Leadership Camp Center: Morgan Badgers Club showing County Pride Right: Oconto River Rockstars Completing Make and Take Kits

In addition to providing support and programming to my local 4-H programs I have been able to participate on several teams and workgroups to support 4-H at the state and National levels, which have led to several professional opportunities including:

- Planning and Facilitating a long term Youth Thriving Series to support peers
- Planning and Facilitating an Annual Leader Training focused on Youth-Adult Partnerships
- Planning a presentation for the National Extension Conference on Volunteerism- Youth Thriving Model
- Submitting poster presentation and session proposals for JCEP and the National 4-H Conference
- Chosen to mentor new Educator for 3 years, currently assisting in hiring process



Contact:

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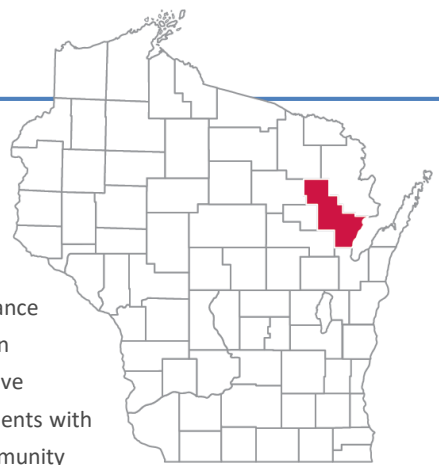


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Extension

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OCONTO COUNTY



Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives



FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). We advance healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

The Challenge

In response to the ongoing challenges in reaching SNAP-Ed audiences with direct education during the pandemic, FoodWise increased the delivery of indirect education. This included an expanded social media and website presence, local online and print resources, electronic materials and handouts, and pre-recorded videos; all with the overall goal to continue to reach audiences with helpful nutrition information and resources empowering participants to live healthier lives.

Oconto County continued to deliver nutrition education reaching 1407 participants through the use of asynchronous videos, interactive Bitmoji classrooms and hardcopy materials.



Community IMPACTS



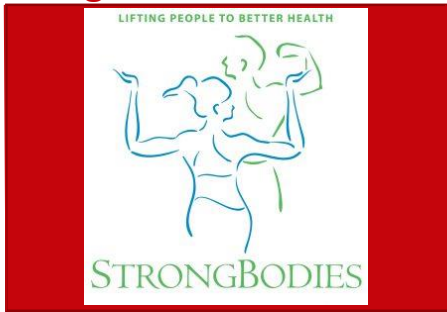
- A series of Strong Bodies classes for older adults was implemented at the Bond Community Center.
- Harvest of the Month efforts were piloted in Oconto County Schools.
- A series of nutrition lessons were taught in 16 classrooms in 3 school districts in Oconto County.

ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER



UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work – on the farm, in schools and throughout urban and rural communities. In Oconto County, FoodWise partners with schools, Head Start, food pantries and other agencies to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

Strong Bodies Classes Offered



Strong Bodies is a strength training program designed for older adults with a focus on:

- Increasing muscle strength
- Increasing flexibility
- Reducing injury/falls

Classes take place all over Wisconsin. In summer 2021 classes were offered at the Bond Community Center in Oconto.



Participants positive feedback included...

- "I didn't realize how bad I had become. It made me realize I have to do more. I'll be trying other exercises now."
- "I learned a lot during the nutrition lesson portion and will be making a few changes to what I eat."
- "I was worried that I wouldn't be able to do the class but they made it work for me. It really loosened up my body."

Virtual School Nutrition Lessons

Nutrition lessons in 2021 brought the new challenge of needing to be done virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a huge undertaking for us, the schools and students. We quickly learned new methods for teaching online including Google classroom, bitmoji classroom, and even pre-recorded lessons.



Students participate with the lesson as it is projected onto the classroom SMART board.

Bitmoji classrooms allow for interactive learning to take place.



Students are able to interact with us and students in other classrooms as they learn.

A total of 19 classrooms in 3 school districts in Oconto County participated in these virtual nutrition lessons, reaching a total of 360 students.



Sarah Ferdon
Nutrition
Coordinator
Marinette &
Oconto Counties



Sarah Schindel
Nutrition
Educator
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**FOOD
WISE**
Healthy choices, healthy lives.

UW-MADISON EXTENSION



Extension

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OCONTO COUNTY**



Nancy Crevier,
Area Extension Director –
Marinette, Menominee,
Oconto and Shawano
Counties

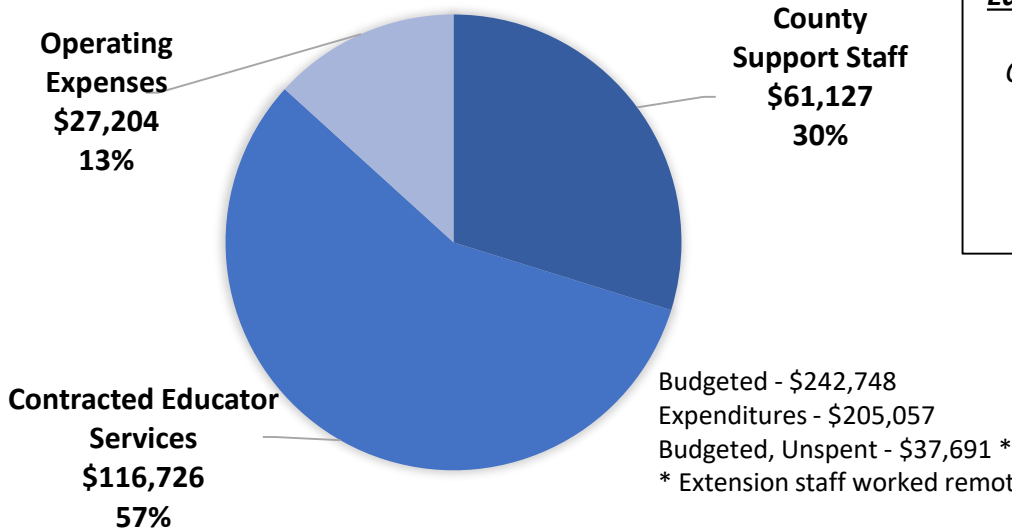
Through UW-Madison Division of Extension, the people of the state and beyond can access university resources and engage in learning, wherever they live and work. Even during a global pandemic, that work continued here in Oconto County and around the state. Extension educators quickly adapted to virtual programming and strengthened social media outreach efforts. In-person programming returned later in the year, as well as offering both in-person and virtual options allowing participants to engage in a variety of formats. We are proud to say Extension continued to provide educational resources to families, farms, businesses and communities during this challenging year.

Extension's funding includes a combination of county, state, federal, as well as research/programming funds. During 2021, Oconto County entered a contract with Extension agreeing to co-fund faculty and staff through a flat fee for services. This flat fee covers a portion of each educator's salary and benefits. In addition, Extension also provides resources such as the area director, state specialists, professional development, human resources, onboarding support, as well as technical and programming support to assist our educators in meeting the educational needs of this county.

Extension - Oconto County is proud to share our work with you through this annual report. Once again, we thank you for your support and we look forward to continuing the strong partnership we have with Oconto County in the future.

Nancy Crevier

EXTENSION OCONTO COUNTY 2021 EXPENDITURES



Educational Program Areas

*Agriculture
Community Development
Human Development &
Relationships
4-H Youth Development
FoodWise*



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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