

Ashland & Bayfield Counties

AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

*Brought to you by the University of Wisconsin - Madison Division of
Extension*



Greetings,

UW Extension is pleased to bring you this third edition of the Ashland/Bayfield Counties Agricultural Newsletter to the farmers, gardeners, and homesteaders of the Chequamegon Bay region of northern Wisconsin.

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BAYFIELD COUNTY

With our fall edition of the quarterly Extension newsletter for Ashland and Bayfield counties, new opportunities abound. Scroll down to learn how you can plug in and even contribute your own working knowledge to local and statewide causes.

In this current issue, we feature our area's own expert Naturalist and her native seed restoration projects. We delve into UW Extension programs like disaster preparedness and introduce our FoodWise Educators. We also cover current and upcoming conferences on launching a food business in Wisconsin and a new statewide, week-long conference on all things water. Read on to gain updates and insight on the new and exciting opportunities and educational resources here in Northern Wisconsin!

Ashland/Bayfield Ag Extension Staff



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Jason has been in the Agriculture Agent position since 2007 with a focus on fruit crops, nutrient management, commercial horticulture, and recently hazelnuts. He is currently Co-Leader of the Upper Midwest Hazelnut Development Initiative, and in 2020, 80% of his time will be dedicated to helping develop the emerging hazelnut industry in Wisconsin.



Sarah DeGraff
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Sarah DeGraff is the Agricultural Extension Educator, for Ashland and Bayfield County. Sarah hails from Grand Rapids, MI and has experience working on and managing vegetable farms as well as running vegetable variety trials through UW-Madison on the Spooner Agricultural Research Station in 2019.



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Rooting In

CULTIVATING LONG-TERM RESTORATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES



You may have seen her hard at work at the entrance to the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (NGLVC) at the intersection of Highway 2 and County Highway G, sometimes with groups of volunteers, though oftentimes she's out there alone: Susan Nelson, Interpretive Services Specialist with the US Forest Service in the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Unit and longtime UW-Madison Extension Master Gardener Association (MGA) volunteer has been working on three prairie restoration areas on the property for the past six years. "People always stop to say hi and ask what I'm doing – some even stay to help me! People are so nice!" Susan exclaims.

These areas were seeded with hundreds of species of flowers, grasses, sedges, and rushes to restore habitat on the NGLVC property for native plants and pollinators with funding provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and USDA Forest Service. Since that time, Susan and her fellow Ashland/Bayfield MGA volunteers have been harvesting seeds annually at the Aldo Leopold Seed Orchard to propagate them at the old farmhouse on the NGLVC property.

Since that time, Susan and her fellow MGA volunteers have been



Susan Nelson explains the details of her cold sowing process on a balmy November afternoon

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harvesting seeds annually at the Aldo Leopold Seed Orchard to propagate them near the old farmhouse on NGLVC land.

Native plants range from purple cone flower and cardinal flower to great blue lobelia and turtlehead. These and other plants play key roles as forage and shelter for local wildlife; many are also used in traditional Native American (Ojibwe) medicinal practices and ceremonies. Alum root, for example, is used in a wash to clean sores, and chewing the root dried root can help quell an aching stomach.

A long stretch of black plastic at the entrance to Visitor Center is a restoration area project for Susan this year and into 2021. On National Public Lands Day, September 26, she worked with volunteers to seed these restoration areas, and also had up to 9 (COVID restrictions dictate 10 or fewer at a time – following Northland and UW guidelines) volunteer students from Northland College also helped plant native perennial grasses, flowers, and plants on various days throughout the growing season.

In addition to her hard work at the Visitor Center, Susan's project donates seeds and transplants to the Washburn school district for the students to plant in restoration areas at the elementary, middle, and high school properties.

Vicki Alldritt (pictured below) spearheaded the restoration projects with the school district and students for many years, though she has recently retired. As a testament to her persistence and her contagious enthusiasm, Susan already has volunteers committed to the project for spring of 2021.

But more volunteers are always welcome, and Susan is a ready and dedicated teacher to any who wish to learn restorative sowing and transplanting practices. **To learn more about how you can contribute to restoration projects near you, contact Susan via phone or email: p: 715-685-2644; susan.nelson@usda.gov**



The interior of the NGLVC remains closed until further notice, but you can still take full advantage of all the hiking trails and Whittlesey Creek Wildlife Refuge and nature preserve!

**Northern Great Lakes
Visitor Center Website**

**NEW: Online Store
Website**



A Virtual Feast



for the aspiring entrepreneur

What does it take to start a new food business in Wisconsin?

Prospective and new entrepreneurs from around the state gathered – virtually – at the fifth annual statewide Edible Startup Summit on November 9 and 10, 2020 to learn best practices of the multi-faceted, complex process of creating a food business from accomplished business professionals and educators.

The two-day conference offerings included:

- Plenaries on food business trends and innovation during the time of coronavirus by Tera Johnson of the [\(LINK\)](#)Food Finance Institute
- Concurrent sessions led by experts in food product development
- Sessions with seasoned entrepreneurs and food business owners
- Regional breakout sessions to address topics on a local level
- One-on-one consulting
- Opportunities for participants to network and connect with experts and other business prospectives in their region

Topics ranged from business planning, product pricing and marketing, food safety, and business licensing to online sales, online payment systems, and social media marketing, and all sessions included time for questions from participants, generating even more helpful information geared toward specific issues and concerns of the participants.

The conference also featured breakout sessions unique to specific regions within Wisconsin; business experts were recruited by UW Extension in Ashland and Bayfield counties to address topics specifically geared toward the business climate of the northern region of the state.



Regional breakout sessions included “Ask an Entrepreneur” with local farmer and professor Todd Rothe of River Road Farm in Marengo and Jody Hipsher of Siskowit Galloways Farm in Cornucopia; “Opening a New Market in a Digital Age” with Erin Hutchinson of Authentic Superior; and “Farmer’s Market Adaptation: Shifting Policies and Procedures in the Time of COVID-19” with farmer’s market managers from Port Wing (Judie Moyer), Cornucopia (Tim Duis), and Bayfield (Erika Wolf) local open-air markets.

Conversations with the speakers during the Q & A portion addressed additional topics such as low-cost local, organic product sourcing and food access for small business owners as well as possibility and potential of linking local farms and business via online networks, with one possible solution as the [Feast by the Bay website](#) for local food resources in Ashland and Bayfield counties.

All session presentations were recorded and will be made available to the general public this month. **Check out the [Edible Startup Summit webpage](#) for more information on this year and previous years’ topics.**

Missed the conference but still interested in learning about how to start or expand your own food business? There are upcoming food business webinar sessions via the UW Food Finance Institute. Click [HERE](#) for dates and details!

This year's Summit is organized by Extension Dane County and the UW-Madison Extension Food Systems Institute and county Extension agents from across the state and from all fields of work. Local sessions were hosted by Kellie Pederson, Community Development Extension Educator for Bayfield County, Lissa Radke, Community Development Extension Educator for Ashland County, and Sarah DeGraff, Agricultural Extension Educator for both counties.



Erika Wolf
Bayfield Market



Tim Duis
Cornucopia Market



Judie Moyer
Port Wing Market

A WEALTH OF WATER

WISCONSIN WATER WEEK

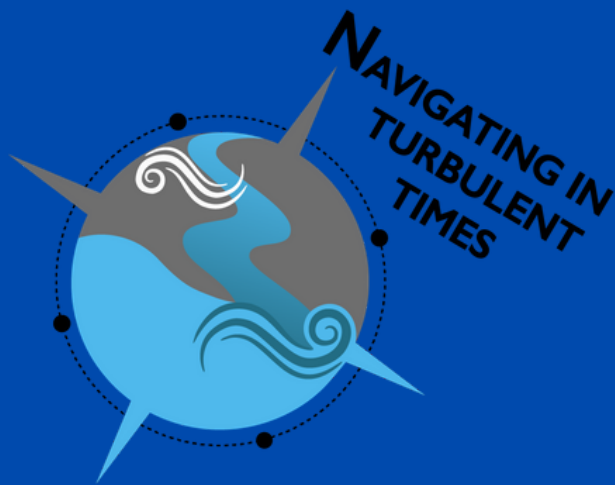
*Join the
Wave!*



2021

**Wisconsin
Water Week**

March 8-12



You may know that we live in the Lake Superior Watershed here in Ashland and Bayfield counties. You certainly experience the local effects of Lake Superior on the weather and water bodies in the area. Now, for the first time, you can participate in a multi-day conference that addresses the multifaceted and complex aspects of water including the science behind lake management and how Wisconsinites and communities live with and on the water.

The Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention is expanding in 2021 – it is now part of the **first annual Wisconsin Water Conference**, which will take place virtually during the week of March 8 – 12, 2021. The theme this year is Navigating in Turbulent Times, and each day of the week will have an environmental theme around which presentations led by both experts in the field and local citizen initiatives and knowledge-building will occur:

Monday: Water Cycles – Groundwater and climate emphasized

Tuesday: Water Bodies – Lakes, rivers, watersheds, and wetland management

Wednesday: Water Actions – Stories of community action and resiliency

Thursday: Individual Major Watershed Conferences – Focus on regional watershed topics & concerns

Friday: Local Events – Outlining action plans for individual communities and locales for 2021

The conference will be a time for Wisconsin residents who are interested in their local water resources and the Great Lakes system to meet with and learn from non-profit organizations, state and university restoration and management initiative leaders, and community-led activists with the goal of increasing knowledge and propelling water protection projects into the next decade. The sessions will include virtual field trips, live online presentations, and virtual collaborative spaces for planning, connecting, and networking around shared knowledge and actionable plans.

Two Northern Wisconsin organizations are leading the planning efforts for the Lake Superior basin events on Thursday, March 11 and Friday, March 12. Superior Rivers Watershed Association (SRWA) (Website [HERE](#)) based in Ashland, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and protecting clean water resources in Wisconsin's Lake Superior basin. The Lake Superior Collaborative (LSC) is a partnership of numerous organizations working to coordinate conservation and restoration efforts in Wisconsin's portion of the Lake Superior Basin.

Based out of the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland, the LSC partners with non-profit organizations like the Wisconsin Wetlands Association and Superior Rivers Watershed Association, Northland College, agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Bad River Band's Mashkiziibii Natural Resources Department, and US Forest Service, among others, to implement on-the-ground collaborative projects on public and private lands that reduce nonpoint source pollution, improve land use, preserve fish and wildlife habitat, and increase climate change resiliency. Erin Burkett, the new LSC Coordinator who began her position in March of this year, and Alex Faber, Executive Director of SRWA, are key organizers for the Water Week conference.

But the Lake Superior Collaborative is not the only partnership represented at the conference

As the website states: "The event is a collaboration of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Extension Lakes, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, and Wisconsin Lakes. We are a partnership of people caring for our legacy of lakes, rivers and streams through science, education, and citizen involvement.

For 2021, the conference will take a closer look at how Wisconsinites can continue to protect and enhance their wonderful water resources in the face of unprecedented challenges. Presenters are invited to share research and experience focusing on:

- Addressing fish and wildlife habitat loss through restoration and other efforts
- Tackling non-point source pollution through producer-led coalitions
- Managing invasive species through citizen monitoring and education
- Monitoring and protecting groundwater resources
- Mitigating climate consequences through improved landscape design."

Interested in contributing your story, volunteer experience, or water expertise to the cause? Click on the link below to learn how you can present your relevant topic at the Wisconsin Water Week Conference! Click [HERE](#)

Don't have a topic to discuss but still interested in contributing? Conference organizers are also seeking volunteers! Link [HERE](#)

For additional conference details, click [HERE](#).

To learn about local water management and protection initiatives in Ashland and Bayfield counties, click [HERE](#).

To sign up for the Lake Superior Collaborative newsletter and stay in touch with local watershed topics, click [HERE](#)

All quoted text is from the Wisconsin Water Week 2021 Call for Presentations online document and used with permission

Disasters

Don't Wait

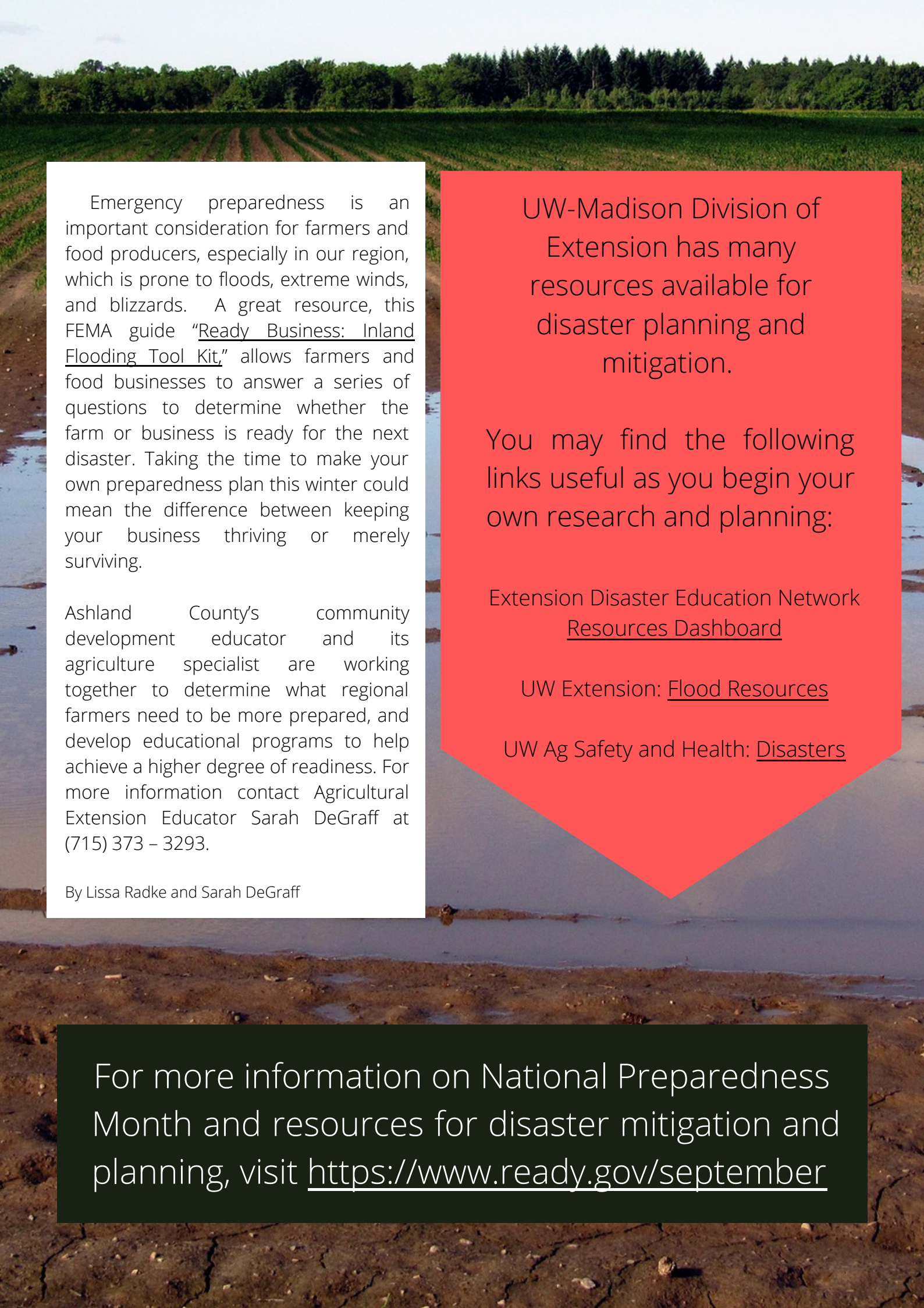
It's there in the back of your mind, shoved under a rug somewhere in a cobwebbed, cluttered attic of memory: disaster planning and mitigation for the farm business. While insurance policies like crop insurance and property insurance can serve to create peace of mind should the unexpected strike, these services are called upon only after calamity has arisen.

Fortunately, September 2020 was National Preparedness Month, a time when Elected officials and community members from three towns in Ashland and Bayfield counties met together to talk about their newly developed Emergency Operations Plans. The annual month of outreach and programs, sponsored by FEMA, highlights the importance of being prepared before a disaster strikes through planning, mitigation, and training. The 2020 theme was "Disasters Don't Wait. Make Your Plan Today!"

Participants included officials from the towns of Ashland, Bell, and Mellen, as well as county emergency management department employees. The UW-Madison's Division of Extension-Ashland County community development office organized and facilitated the meeting. The participants discussed the successes and challenges they experienced while developing their localized plans, which detail how community members can prepare for and survive natural disasters.

The plans outline community assets that can be shared by town residents during emergencies, vulnerabilities that need attention, and educational materials that inform residents what to do and where to go for help. The towns are looking at ways to expand their preparedness, such as by subscribing to mass alert information systems, developing a block captain outreach network of neighbors, and tabletop practice exercises





Emergency preparedness is an important consideration for farmers and food producers, especially in our region, which is prone to floods, extreme winds, and blizzards. A great resource, this FEMA guide [“Ready Business: Inland Flooding Tool Kit,”](#) allows farmers and food businesses to answer a series of questions to determine whether the farm or business is ready for the next disaster. Taking the time to make your own preparedness plan this winter could mean the difference between keeping your business thriving or merely surviving.

Ashland County's community development educator and its agriculture specialist are working together to determine what regional farmers need to be more prepared, and develop educational programs to help achieve a higher degree of readiness. For more information contact Agricultural Extension Educator Sarah DeGraff at (715) 373 – 3293.

By Lissa Radke and Sarah DeGraff

UW-Madison Division of Extension has many resources available for disaster planning and mitigation.

You may find the following links useful as you begin your own research and planning:

Extension Disaster Education Network
[Resources Dashboard](#)

UW Extension: [Flood Resources](#)

UW Ag Safety and Health: [Disasters](#)

For more information on National Preparedness Month and resources for disaster mitigation and planning, visit <https://www.ready.gov/september>

IT'S CRUNCH TIME!

G R E A T L A K E S



October was National Farm-to-School Month! To celebrate here in the Great Lakes region, FoodWise partnered with local schools ...

...to promote healthy eating habits and local food consumption through the Great Lakes Great Apple CRUNCH. Last year, over 1.8 million school kids, educators, and local food supporters nationwide joined in the CRUNCH, purchasing apples from apple orchards and farmers in their local communities and biting down together across the region at the appointed date and time. This year, the goal is over 2 million Crunch participants, despite COVID restrictions.

To celebrate locally, on October 14, FoodWise staff (get to know Stephanie, Deb on page 12) facilitated a live zoom session with 80 School District of Bayfield K-5 students and staff in collaboration with the School District of Bayfield's AmeriCorps Farm to School, Katherine Rakowski.

The virtual event included information on local foods and local apple production and the FoodWise team led a nutrition lesson and activity. All participants CRUNCHED their donated Bayfield apples together over Zoom, and observed their apples with a virtual word cloud. Additionally, Weber Orchards in Bayfield generously donated delicious local Cortland apples for local school meal distribution in collaboration with the School District of Bayfield Food Service Manager Karen Boutin. As an accompaniment to the Bayfield apples, all students receiving meals from the district - up to five breakfasts and five lunches per week - also received nutrition information, healthy recipes and fun activities for students and families to explore at home...



The FoodWise team also collaborated with the Hurley Head Start classes in Iron County, hosting virtual CRUNCHES with them on October 13th & 15th. The two Head Start classes enjoyed songs, games, nutrition lessons and apple crunching fun led by the FoodWise team.

While this is one great example of collaboration between FoodWise and Farm-to-School programming efforts to support children's nutrition and our local food economy, there are many more ways in which FoodWise staff contribute to our communities here in theNorthwoods.

So, What IS FoodWise?

FoodWise advances healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for families with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels. FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The program has a statewide reach.

Each year, FoodWise delivers nutrition education to more than 50,000 participants statewide. They partner with community-based organizations to make the healthy choice, the easy choice at schools, food pantries, community gardens, and farmers' markets. In Ashland and Bayfield counties, this includesThe BRICK, Bayfield Head Start, Bayfield School, Red Cliff Food Distribution, Red Cliff Early Childhood Center, and Mashkisibi Boys and Girls Club,, among many other local community organizations.

To learn more about the specific programs FoodWise supports, or find ways to contribute to local food access in your community, visit the FoodWise website:
<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/foodwise/>

Co-authored by Stephanie Bakker, Sarah Tarkington, and Sarah DeGraff

Get to Know Your FoodWise Facilitators!

Serving Ashland, Bayfield, and Iron Counties



Stephanie Baker
FoodWise Coordinator



Sarah Tarkington
NEW FoodWise Educator



Deb Leonard
FoodWise Educator



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NEW: Midwest Graziers Exchange



[https://
www.midwestgrazing
exchange.com/](https://www.midwestgrazingexchange.com/)



The Midwest Grazing Exchange

is a free service that aims to connect graziers and landowners who live in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. Graziers can search for forage to graze and landowners can search for livestock to graze their land. Create your free account today and get connected to farmers who have what you need, or list your own forage or grazing opportunities!





Information & Resources

Local Farm & Food Resources

- Ashland County Extension [Website](#)
- Bayfield County Extension [Website](#)
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education [Grant Programs](#)
- USDA Ag Services: Farm Business Marketing [Resources and Assistance](#)
- UW Extension [Horticulture](#)
- FEAST by the Bay: [local farms & food](#)
- SFA local, in-season [recipes](#)
- [SFA Webinars](#) on premium crop production, silvopasture, resources for beginning farmers, applying for grants and financial assistance
- The Cutting Edge: in Search of New Crops for Wisconsin [PODCAST](#)

Events

November

23 Iowa Organic Agriculture Conference [virtual](#). Learn and Register [Here](#)

February 2021

13: Sustainable Farming Association Annual Conference [INFO & Registration](#)

March 2021

8 - 12: WI Water Week
More information [here](#)

Resources for Farmers/Grants:

- SFA How to apply for grants [webinar](#)
- SFA How to apply for an AGRI grant [webinar](#)



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