

FoodWise Nutrition

December 2025 Newsletter



*****Important update:** This is the last Ashland/Bayfield/Iron County newsletter we will be sending. We want to give a heartfelt appreciation to our partners, community, and participants for your support over the years. Best wishes and we hope you can use the information we have provided through these newsletters to continue to lead a happy and healthy life.

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CELEBRATING DEB LEONARD'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY WITH FOODWISE

As we turn the page toward December, we honor someone whose impact on Iron County has been nothing short of extraordinary: Deb Leonard. After more than 20 years of dedicated service with the FoodWise program, Deb will be retiring on December 1st.

Throughout her time with FoodWise, Deb touched countless lives—whether in classrooms, gardens, senior meal sites, or out in nature. Her presence has been a constant source of warmth, knowledge, and encouragement for learners of all ages. From nutrition lessons to hands-on gardening, Deb brought passion, energy, and light to everything she did.



A few words from Deb as she reflects on her time, "I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the community partners and participants who have supported the FoodWise program over the years. Your enthusiasm for making food and nutrition a priority in your lives has truly inspired me. The passion you brought to our shared mission gives me hope that the importance of food will continue to be passed down for generations to come."

As Deb enters retirement, she looks forward to staying engaged with the community, spending more time outdoors, and continuing to enjoy the activities that bring joy and fulfillment to others and herself.

We extend our deepest thanks to Deb for her years of service and the joy she brought to so many. May your retirement be filled with adventure, peace, and continued learning.

Thank you, Deb!

If you would like to send well wishes to Deb, please email Deborah.leonard@wisc.edu or stephanie.bakker@wisc.edu.



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FINDING LOCAL FOOD RECOURSES

For residents needing immediate and reliable assistance finding food, there are three key resources available.

Start by dialing **211**, which connects you directly to local services and programs in your area.

For a broader search, the **Food Finder** map (<https://foodfinder.us/>) offers a national directory of food pantries across the U.S., which can be a valuable starting point for identifying potential resources. Additionally, the federal **TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)** provides contacts for regional partners who administer this program across the state, ensuring access to federally-provided food items.

Please utilize these essential contacts to connect with food assistance today.

IRON COUNTY MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

The next Iron County Mobile Food Pantry takes place on Monday, December 29 from 12:00-1:00 pm. For more information about this program, contact Extension Iron County office manager, Rebecca Holm at:

Phone: 715-561-2695

Email: rebecca.holm@wisc.edu

You can also visit the Extension Iron County website for more details, including income eligibility and other food resources available to Iron County residents.

<https://iron.extension.wisc.edu/>



SECOND HARVEST
NORTHLAND

STRONGBODIES VIRTUAL STRENGTH TRAINING UPDATE

While we wrapped up our last local virtual StrongBodies program, there is still a statewide virtual StrongBodies that community members can join starting Jan 6th, 2026.

You can find information on signing up for this series here: <https://health.extension.wisc.edu/strongbodies/participate-in-strongbodies/#virtualprograms>

ATTENTION SCHOOLS!

With the wind-down of the FoodWise program, schools are encouraged to utilize the state's existing resources to ensure nutrition education continues in the classroom.

The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Database (part of the DPI's Farm to School initiative) is the key resource, providing a centralized collection of high-quality, reliable nutrition curricula. Lessons are designed to seamlessly integrate into everyday classroom activities and core subjects, making it simple for educators to incorporate food and health concepts. This database features vetted resources for all grade levels, including the *Grow It, Try it, Like it Toolkit* for preschool and Harvest of the Month activities, ensuring students continue developing lifelong healthy habits.

<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/farm-to-school/in-the-classroom>

2026 Mobile Food Pantry Calendar

January 26
February 23
March 30
April 27
May 18 (one week early)
June 29
July 27
August 31
September 28
October 26
November 30
December 28



Select – Choose dark colored kale bunches.

Store – Store kale in a plastic bag in the coldest part of the fridge for 3-5 days.

Prepare – Rinse leaves under cool running water.

Kale is The Harvest of the Month!

Add kale to your favorite family meals:

- Add fresh kale to smoothies or salads.
- Steam fresh kale and season with lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and pepper.
- Mix chopped kale into the pot with pasta 5 minutes before it is done. Strain and add your favorite sauce.

Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson kids will use for life.

Did you know?

Lacinato kale is also called Dinosaur kale because of its bumpy leaves. Ask kids to pretend to be dinosaurs when they are eating it!



Nutritious, Delicious, Wisconsin!
#WIHarvestoftheMonth



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Harvest of the Month

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DECEMBER

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