

# NEWS FROM EXTENSION

Wood County | June 2024



## Another Successful School Year of Nutrition Education!

*by Hannah Wendels Scott, FoodWise Nutrition Educator*

FoodWise Nutrition Educator, Hannah Wendels Scott, finished another successful school year of nutrition education in the WRPS district! Hannah leads programming efforts in four schools throughout the WRPS district. These schools include Howe, Grove, Mead, and River Cities High School.

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Hannah reached 25 classrooms with direct education centered around topics that included making healthy choices, focusing on the five food groups and how they help your overall health and wellness, cooking skills, and trying new foods. The grade levels that receive nutrition education are kindergarten, third grade, fifth grade, and all grade levels at the alternative high school (9-12). For 5 weeks, Hannah focuses each lesson on a different food group and ways to make healthy choices when it comes to each group. As students get older, she incorporates skills to help make the healthy choice the easy choice such as learning to read a nutrition facts label and the ingredient lists on food packages.

One of Hannah's favorite parts of each lesson, however, is trying a new food with all the students! A major part of the lesson is exposing students to new foods or foods they might not always reach for when given the choice. Creating a safe space for students to feel comfortable trying the food is vital! Every lesson Hannah sets the tone for trying new foods by sharing two simple tasting rules - everyone tries the food together and no one will "yuck my yum". Often met with confused looks and a few laughs, Hannah shares that don't "yuck my yum" is a way to be respectful about foods people like and dislike. It is normal not to like every food and that is OK - but when the students try foods together it is important to make sure no one will be disrespectful to someone else for liking, or not liking, a certain food. This simple phrase and trying foods together at the same time allows all the students to feel comfortable and even empowered to try the new food! Using all their senses, Hannah leads the students through the tasting activity by starting off with what they notice about the food sample, how it feels, how it smells, do they think it will make a noise when we bite into it, and finally...how does it taste!

Bringing in a variety of foods that are new to the students that they might not try before is incredibly fun and hearing the students say that they love bok choy and want their parent(s) to buy bok choy at the grocery store next week is one of the best things to hear.

Foods that we have tried that are generally new to students include bok choy, rutabaga, hummus (pictured right), frozen mango, Asian pear, and longan fruit.



# 2024 AgriVenture Farm Camp

by Anna Mitchell, Natural Resources Educator

*Anna guiding campers in their exploration for pollinators and habitat.*

AgriVenture Farm Camp has been held at Memory Lane Farm in Marshfield, WI since 2017. The camp inspires, supports, and encourages youth to explore the wonders of nature, agriculture, and animals. Camp is hosted over 6-sessions where youth rotate between program areas focused on gardening, environmental science, farm animals, woodworking, and arts and crafts. Memory Lane Farm, which has been

recognized as a Wisconsin Century Farm, provides a space for youth to “get off the grid” for several hours a night, using their hands, heads, and hearts to problem solve, learn, and grow.



Natural Resources Educator, Anna Mitchell, led the charge at the environmental science station by utilizing an outdoor classroom space to teach campers about the importance of pollination. Campers learned about the intricate relationship pollinator species have with specific plants, and how Wisconsin’s agricultural and food systems rely on pollinator species. Campers also explored the physical attributes of pollinators and plant species which allow pollen to be spread successfully. The “Pollination Game” was a camper favorite as it combined a relay race with friendly competition to demonstrate pollination. During group’s second trip to the environmental science station, Anna guided a “Make Your Own Pollinator” activity where each camper selected a flower and were tasked with creating their own pollinator species with a variety of craft supplies. Each camper then had to demonstrate how and why their species would be a good pollinator for the plant.



*Anna guiding campers through a “Make Your Own Pollinator” activity.*

The last evening of camp is reserved as Family Night, where campers and their families come to the farm to enjoy a meal with each other and volunteers. This evening also provides an opportunity for families to learn about each station while campers show off their creations, new skills, and what they’ve learned. Parents were surprised by how well their children grasped the concept of pollination, and were impressed by the creativity campers put into the “Make Your Own Pollinator” activity. The environmental science station was a highlight of the evening as camp directors organized a speaker to talk about monarch butterflies.

The 2024 AgriVenture Farm Camp was a success with 35 campers and almost as many volunteers – it truly does take a village! Anna enjoyed leading the environmental science station and is excited to return to camp next year.