

NEWS FROM EXTENSION

Wood County | March 2025



Warming Up + Lots of Education

by Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist

Cranberry growers wrap up their winter activities of sanding, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements as the weather warms up. And as preparations turn to the growing season, Extension provides targeted opportunities for agronomic and business management education.

December's Virtual Brown Bag welcomed a grower panel from New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Washington State to share their sanding strategy and logistics with lower ice formation, to help Wisconsin growers be prepared in case of milder winters.

Cranberry School in January featured two days of presentations on the year's research, a trade show, and pesticide applicator safety training.

The February Brown Bag featured on and off-road fuel differentiation as well as fuel quality testing, coupled with how to ace a Worker Protection & Safety audit with DATCP.

March's Brown Bag will feature farm and non-farm trucking guidelines as well as chemistry updates for the 2025 growing season.

In April, the annual Mini-Clinic hosted live simultaneously in all four cranberry regions will return our focus to agronomy for the year. A grower panel for nematodes to control cranberry flea beetle, a grower panel for the application of sulfur for soil pH, and researcher presentations on weed control timing, through bloom progression, and frost protection as vines progress out of dormancy are among the highlights.



Keeping Wood County Healthy and Strong!

by Hannah Wendels Scott, FoodWise Nutrition Educator

StrongBodies, a weight training and healthy eating program, has expanded into 4 different locations throughout Wood County! StrongBodies has seen tremendous growth since in-person classes started back up in October 2022 at the Nekoosa Area Community Center. Originally led by FoodWise Nutrition Educator, Hannah, StrongBodies has now grown to have 3 trained Extension volunteer leaders, along with Extension Community Health Worker, Ka Zoua.

The class focuses on low-impact exercises for adults of any age to help increase muscle strength, improve balance, reduce the risk for osteoporosis, diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis, and improve one's self-confidence, social health, and overall well-being.

In Nekoosa, two community volunteers were trained in StrongBodies and have been leading the class there since October 2024. This was the first ever Extension volunteer-led StrongBodies class in Wood County and the series saw an increase in participation as well as an increase in new participants! Averaging about 30 participants registered, this class has brought a low-cost physical activity opportunity to their community. The class is currently in a 15-week series lasting until mid-May!

In Wisconsin Rapids, Community Health Worker, Ka Zoua, led two series of StrongBodies in partnership with the Hmong American Center. Averaging around 10 participants per series, Ka Zoua worked directly with the Hmong American Center to bring the elders together. The motivation the participants gave each other each lesson helped them get stronger and feel more socially connected. Taking a break from StrongBodies, Ka Zoua will begin another exercise class - Tai Chi will be offered in Wisconsin Rapids at the Lowell Center in a few weeks!

Additionally in Wisconsin Rapids, FoodWise Nutrition Educator, Hannah, will start a StrongBodies class in June at the Lowell Center as well. The benefit to leading a class with a FoodWise Educator is the inclusion of nutrition education with each StrongBodies lesson as well. This will be a 12-week series throughout the summer!

Finally, the most recent addition to Wood County's StrongBodies program is another Extension volunteer led series in Pittsville! Kicking off on March 11 at the Pittsville Community Center, this 12-week series will be the first StrongBodies class ever offered in Pittsville! After a strong partnership with the Pittsville Community Library, the idea to start a series here seemed like the perfect fit. After just one week of promotion of the program, the class reached 15 participants registered! Coming in at a grand total of 20 participants with a waitlist created, this class will find great success!

If you have never joined a StrongBodies class, we highly encourage you to join us at one of our locations!

Reach out to Hannah Wendels Scott for more information!

