Winnebago County Dairy Breakfast Returns to the Farm  
(2013 Success Story) 
Nick Schneider, Winnebago County

Situation:
Dairy farmers are increasingly concerned about maintaining good will in our communities. Bad press about issues from manure run-off, to contaminated wells, to implements of husbandry on roads, to animal mistreatment has inaccurately represented dairy farming today. The Winnebago County Farm Bureau, Winnebago County Dairy Promotion Committee, and Winnebago County Holstein Breeder Association teamed up with many local sponsors, volunteers, FFA chapters, and Winnebago County UW-Extension to bring an on-farm dairy breakfast back to Winnebago County. UW-Extension was strongly involved with the planning and organizing of the dairy breakfast. Nick Schneider, Winnebago County Agriculture Agent served as the breakfast planning committee executive secretary. Leonard Polzin, Winnebago County Youth and Science Educator served as the lead of the education committee.

Response:
In the time honored tradition of June Dairy Month breakfasts, the Winnebago County Dairy Promotion Committee and the Winnebago County Farm Bureau brought the Winnebago County Dairy Breakfast back to the farm on June 8, 2013. The host farm had a unique local food connection because it is the home of cows that produce the milk to make local Union Star Cheese. Union Star Cheese of Zittau and Willow Creek Cheese of Auroraville purchase milk from just three local dairy farms. The goal of the Breakfast Committee was to help urban people understand that agriculture is still about neighbors feeding neighbors. There were many educational activities for all ages including touring the farm, butter making, a petting zoo, and a local foods connection corner. In addition to locally crafted cheese from milk produced at the host farm, the sausage was local, too. Beck’s Meat Processing of Oshkosh and Kaukauna donated breakfast sausage. Even the ice cream was local. Through the support of Badgerland Financial and Colonial Cheese House of Omro, everyone enjoyed Wisconsin ice cream. The flavored ice cream was created by Sassy Cow Creamery for dairy breakfasts around the state. The cooks were from a local restaurant with help from many volunteers. Dirk and Ellen Binnema, owners of Planeview Travel Plaza in Oshkosh prepared the Winnebago County Dairy Breakfast.

Results:
The breakfast committee convened meetings starting the year before the breakfast to make the event a success. The committee followed a format similar to the design used for the planning committee of Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. The committees that were formed were: grounds, education, financial, foods, promotions, and volunteers. Different volunteers took leadership of each committee and procured the materials needed to make the event successful. The goal of the committee has to reach 2,000 people visiting the farm at the breakfast. 1,340 adults attended, 541 kids attended, and 132 people volunteers helping the event surpass the 2,000 contacts goal. Considering the last two hours of the event had rainfall, the event ran smoothly. People took a considerable amount of time to tour the calf, heifer, freestall, and milking facilities. Educational displays like butter making, ice cream making, and feeding cows were popular.
Evidence:
Based on the success of the 2013 dairy breakfast on the farm, Winnebago County dairy farmers plan to continue with this event. With $4,000 profit raised from the breakfast, the money is being used to rejuvenate the Ag in the Classroom program in Winnebago County by funding the purchase of supplies, mileage, and stipends. UW Extension staff is working with Farm Bureau members to create more urban youth education contacts about agriculture.