

The Meeker County Extension Committee met on September 9 2025, at 1:30 p.m. at the Meeker County Extension Office in Litchfield, MN.

Members Present: Cheryl VanOrt, Steve Schmitt, Tim Erickson, Jennifer Welling, Matt Johnson, LeAnne Lund, Corey Cervin and Holly Nelson. Also present: Cassidy Martin, Karen Johnson, Emily Lindenfelser, Taylor Herbert, Kayla Huhn, Lori Vicich, and Katie Johnson. Absent: Greg Nelson

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chair Corey Cervin.

Welcome and introductions.

Motion by Tim, second by Jennifer, approving the agenda as printed. Motion carried.

Motion by Matt, second by LeAnne, approving minutes from June 17, 2025. Motion carried.

Lori Vicich, Regional Director

The 2025-year spending is on target; the only thing left out is summer interns. Budget for 2026 is looking at a possible increase in the property tax for the locals. Looked at the upcoming terms and openings. Looking for a possible replacement for Greg in District 4.

Taylor Herbert, Farm Family of the Year

Ahlgren Dairy was selected as Farm Family of the Year and will be presented at the July 1, 2025, County Board Meeting. They were recognized at the 4-H livestock auctions and a banner was displayed in the show arena. Ahlgren's allows different tours at their farm, allowing the community to learn and interact with the dairy process.

Committee Reports:

Lots of discussion on how well the fair went, as well as talk/buzz of the "Dish It Up", and the increase in the 4-H projects and their complexity.

Mention of the level of presence of the Meeker County Extension staff at the fair.

Overall fair had an increase in the number of attendees. There was a mention of the \$25,000 that will allow for new/updated blacktop on the grounds.

Leadership Program:

Tim discussed Meeker in Motion – Looking forward to the next year and the show of increased interest in the 9-month program. The 9 sessions include tours in different cities in Meeker County and leadership learning opportunities jointly with McLeod County.

Cassidy Martin– 4-H Report

4-H's day camps had increased attendees. The number of fair entries went up and had an overall increase in members this year, with 2/3 of the number being new members. The communities help with families offering to rent or mentor those without livestock is greatly appreciated.

Karen Johnson, Livestock Program:

Biosecurity is having a large impact on different livestock, such as the H5Nx influenza, looking at the different interactions that the livestock has with fair goers. They are working to develop and implement

new practical biosecurity plans. Recent questions related to pasture management with the increase of weed growth as well as animal health and CAWT requirements.

Emily Lindenfelser, Horticulture Program:

Summer storms and heavy rain have impacted the trees and other plant life. People are noticing this in a large number of the lilacs for the second year in a row. Emily also shares that she received the NACAA National Communication award for the newsletter that serves the Tri-County area. Master Gardeners visited the Milkhouse Flowers for a co-education opportunity, where they were able to learn from Dawn the history of her and the farm.

Taylor Herbert, Crops Extension Program:

With heavy rain, the weed growth has been hard to contain, mentioning things like the weed zapper and trying to prevent the seed pods from forming. Unable to have a field day due to the rain and wet soil for the 2nd year in a row; due to this, looking for alternative ideas for the field day.

Taylor and Karen have launched a Crops and Livestock needs assessment. This is allowing for local small farms to have a voice in what they need in the area; this can mean things such as concerns in crop growth and soil health, to pasture management and feed/nutrition management. The first run was done May-June, resulting in 170 responses. The survey continues to be available for farmers.

Lori Vicich, Regional Director

Real Life, Good Food- with the loss of funding for SNAP, this website still serves as a resource. The website is a one-stop shop for all things healthy eating and movement. Resource for the basics of nutrition, recipes, and helps people locate food shelves/farmer markets.

Next meeting is November 18, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. at the Extension Office.

Motion by LeAnne, seconded by Tim, to adjourn at 3:00 p.m.

Notes by Holly Nelson, County Auditor