

# Students grow produce for their lunches

**Peshtigo curriculum includes the science of farming**

By SPECIAL TO THE EAGLEHERALD

**P E S H T I G O** — Peshtigo students are learning to grow vegetables like lettuce year-round for their school lunches, in all grade levels.

“We had supply chain issues with some of our domestic produce. Lettuce products are very susceptible to droughts, flooding and wildfires,” said Peshtigo High School Chef Justin Collins.

Collins approached the superintendent about the possibility of growing produce in school. The Peshtigo School District was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Provident Health Foundation. Two hydroponic growing stations, called Flex Farms, were purchased and students at each building have a chance to learn about growing and harvesting produce year-round indoors.

Agricultural concepts are taught throughout the school curriculum. Science teacher Hank Reines said, “In Science 11 we spend at least a quarter of the year learning about agriculture because there are so many connections to make. Farming touches energy, economics, biology, chemistry, earth science, public policy, and so much more.”

Agriculture is important to our economy in Wisconsin. According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, 11.8% of Wisconsinites are employed in food processing, resulting in \$82.7 billion dollars in sales. In addition, Wisconsin exported \$3.96 billion dollars of agricultural products to 146 countries in 2021.

“Even if students are not pursuing agriculture as a career, it’s important for students to learn about the soils they live on,” Reines explains. “Students



SUBMITTED

Peshtigo senior Grayce Rich conducts a Slake Test for soil stability.

learn about the glacial history of Northeast Wisconsin and how the soils in their own backyards formed over the past 12,000 years.” Students get hands-on experience outside while also learning to use the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey.

This GIS system allows anyone to analyze the soil anywhere in the country.

“Buying food locally can help support your friends and neighbors, and also save you time and money,” Collins said. He adds that since young people see things in stores year round, they don’t realize what’s at peak freshness or is in season. “Buying local and fresh food provides the most nutritional value as well.”

“It’s ridiculous how many young people think that food comes from the store,” School board member Jenni Schwittay adds, “Many have no idea how much work goes into having hamburger available at your grocery store.”

Schwittay’s family business is Schwittay Farms, LLC, a 450-head dairy farm, in addition

to retail beef sales. She hopes that students gain awareness and appreciation for “how much work goes into the carrots or other foods they throw away at lunchtime.”

One of the Flex Farms is located in each building. Students having the ability to plant, evaluate and harvest produce including herbs and lettuce helps them experience the joy of growing and harvesting food.

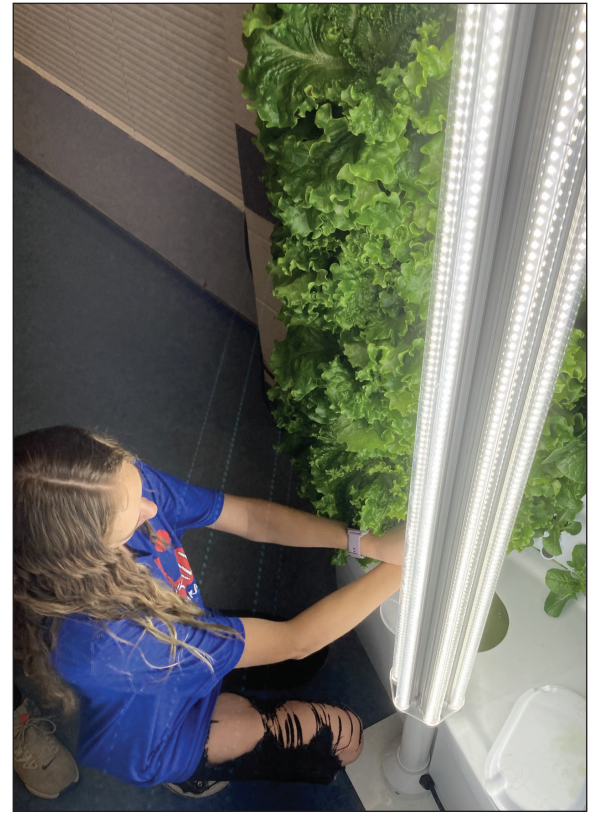
“For kids to see it go from seed to care to harvest and then to the dinner plate is priceless,” Schwittay said.

“Local farmers support our existing curriculum and I’m excited

to see what else we can do,” Reines said. Schwittay appreciates that all students learn agricultural concepts from the Flex Farms and within the current science curriculum. “I like that everyone is exposed to this, and as a board member, I’d love to see classes targeting students who are interested in agriculture.”

Secretary of State Daniel Webster said, “Let us not forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man.”

*This article was submitted by the Peshtigo School District.*



SUBMITTED

Peshtigo freshman Jaycee Mullins adds nutrients to the Flex Farm.



SUBMITTED

Peshtigo senior Shaun Johnston lays out a profile of a local soil type, wainola fine sandy loam.

## Wellhaven Linen Sectional Sofa with Storage Ottoman



MANY OTHER SECTIONALS IN STOCK AND READY FOR

Delivery

**\$1649**

Free Delivery IN THE AREA

**Lauerman's**  
HOME FURNISHINGS

GALLAGHER ROAD • NEXT TO BELLIN HEALTH • MARINETTE

WWW.LAUERMANS.NET | 715-732-4111

VISA

MasterCard

DISCOVER

SAY **CHEESE**

FRESH CURDS & HAND SCOOPED ICE CREAM



Your Extra Sharp Cheddar Specialists!

White & Yellow Cheddar, Aged 3 to 14 Years

Moolicious

Fresh Curds Daily

**10% OFF** YOUR NEXT PURCHASE

**SEGUINS CHEESE**  
HWY 41 MARINETTE, WI

800-338-7919 • www.seguinscheese.com

\*1 coupon per purchase. Excludes purchases of Alcohol, Old Friends Footwear, & Sale Items.