



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Bipartisan “Our Farms, Our Future” Legislation Introduced

Package Aimed at Increasing Agricultural Opportunities

Madison – Today, a bipartisan group of legislators introduced the “Our Farms, Our Future” package. These three bills aim to strengthen opportunities for Wisconsin farmers at every stage of their careers: from beginning farmers that are launching a career in farming, to new and established farmers looking to innovate and diversify their operations, to retiring farmers who are passing on their operation to the next generation.

Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo) introduced a bill with Rep. Bob Kulp (R-Stratford), Rep. Deb Kolste (D-Janesville), and Sen. Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) related to farm succession planning.

“As members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, we hear about the very real barriers that Wisconsin farmers face,” stated Rep. Considine. “I also know from personal experience about some of these barriers, such as farm succession planning. Since farming looks different today than it used to, passing down the family farm is no longer as simple as it once was. This bill will create two new positions in the University of Wisconsin System to help farmers create succession plans that fit their individual situations.”

Rep. Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit) introduced legislation with Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc), Rep. Deb Kolste (D-Janesville), and Sen. Janis Ringhand (D-Evansville) aimed at continuing our state’s proud agricultural tradition by mitigating student debt.

“Recruiting and retaining beginning farmers from diverse backgrounds is essential to continuing Wisconsin’s strong tradition of family-supporting farms,” said Rep. Spreitzer. “This bill addresses that need by awarding grants to qualified beginning farmers to pay down their student debt. Farmers are the backbone of our state’s economy, and this bill will help beginning farmers launch their farming career and continue this Wisconsin tradition.”

Rep. Don Vruwink (D-Milton) introduced a bill with Rep. Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City), Rep. LaKeshia Myers (D-Milwaukee), Sen. Jeff Smith (D-Eau Claire), and Sen. Janis Ringhand (D-Evansville) designed to help farmers diversify.

“Wisconsin is blessed with an abundance of well-educated, energetic people who want to start new farming operations or grow their existing farms,” Rep. Vruwink said. “While cows, corn, and cranberries will remain a cornerstone of our agricultural economy, we have a tremendous opportunity to diversify. The Small Farm Diversity grant will spur innovation and grow our ag economy. It is a competitive grant where the best and brightest proposals will rise to the top.”

As of today, the “Our Farms, Our Future” package is circulating for co-sponsorship.

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