



BRAD PFAFF
STATE SENATOR

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Sen. Pfaff Column: Agriculture Connects our Economy and Unites Our Community

As the sun rises and the morning dew burns off, a Westby area dairy farmer has already begun his day. Within a few hours, that farmer has milked, fed the calves, and finished the morning chores, all before sitting down for breakfast.

A few hours later, when many of us begin our day, a milk truck operated by a local driver picks up the milk and takes it to a regional processing plant. Processors will make the fresh milk into any number of healthy, nutritious foods, such as cheese, butter, or yogurt. The finished dairy products will, in turn, be picked up by a local driver and delivered to grocery stores, restaurants, and dinner tables across the globe-- allowing people from around the world to get a taste of why Wisconsin dairy is so famous.

Every June, we celebrate National Dairy Month to celebrate the contributions the dairy industry has made in our country. I want to take this opportunity to discuss how important the dairy and agriculture sectors are to Wisconsin.

We shouldn't think of agriculture as only a farmer's business – in fact, it is the business of many. Agriculture is part of a sophisticated supply chain that employs one out of every nine people in Wisconsin and serves as the bedrock for local economies across the state. From dairy genetics to feed nutrition, from crop scouts to cheesemakers, agriculture employs many people in our state. That's why we need to invest in agriculture and our agriculture supply chain. By investing in agriculture and our farmers, we invest in our communities and our future.

As the son and grandson of dairy farmers, I know how intertwined agriculture is with our state economy and rural communities. Investing in our farmers and growing our rural supply chains creates economic opportunities. I am pleased that the Governor proposed a much-needed investment in meat and dairy processing. I'm excited that there is a greater emphasis on seeking new markets locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally for our state's agriculture products. These efforts, coupled with the Governor's call for greater high-speed internet access, additional job training programs promoting skilled labor, and greater access to quality healthcare, will help rural communities move forward.

These investments will promote opportunities in our hometowns and attract businesses to create new, local jobs. This means we must also invest in our roads and railway infrastructure. Our economy can't move if we can't safely transport products to the market.

It's all achievable if we focus on what unites us and not what divides us. I look forward to working with any person in any party who has a good idea to build a brighter future for our Wisconsin community.

If you have an idea you want me to look into or a concern you'd like addressed, please don't hesitate to contact me at (608) 268-5490 or Sen.Pfaff@legis.wi.gov.

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Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, including La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County, where he serves as Ranking Member of the Committee on Agriculture and Tourism. He is the former Secretary-designee of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP).