



BRAD PFAFF
STATE SENATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 31, 2024

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June Dairy Month is Special

As a farm boy, June Dairy Month has a special meaning to me.

Growing up on my family's dairy farm in northern La Crosse County, I saw the huge impact dairy has on our state.

It is the economic and cultural lifeblood of Wisconsin. It signifies our heritage and who we are. Dairy provides a nearly \$50 billion impact and employs thousands of Wisconsinites. Green Bay Packers fans wear foam cheeseheads on game days. We take pride in our dairy. Our license plates read "America's Dairyland" for a reason.

Dairy products from Wisconsin cows are enjoyed by consumers worldwide. Dairy farming however, is not easy. Consolidation continues to occur in the agriculture sector, squeezing small family farmers. Much of our supply chain and distribution system is outdated and strained, limiting farmers' access to different markets. Uncertainty in market prices, high input cost, and labor challenges trim family farmers' margins.

Wisconsin farmers carry a significant weight of our state's economy on their shoulders, yet they struggle to make ends meet. We must work to provide our dairy farmers with the resources and tools they need to grow and thrive.

This means seeking new domestic and international markets. This means investing in conservation efforts that protect and restore our soil. This means improving air and water quality, while at the same time providing a financial return on investment for our farmers.

Local renewable energy opportunities await, along with the potential for greater agritourism and more direct farmer to consumer market opportunities.

Additional attention must be focused on the consolidation of agriculture taking place in the meat slaughtering and food processing sector.

It's vital that policy makers put people before special interests, because when a small handful of companies control most of the business, prices rise and choices decrease for Wisconsin's families.

I will always fight for agriculture and family farmers, because of the intrinsic value that agriculture provides. The value of hard work, resilience, and dedication. It's about seeing things through, from beginning to end, and not finishing until the job is done. These are the values I was raised with.

Growing up on the farm taught me the importance of knowing where you are from. Walking on that farm, literally in the footsteps of my parents and grandparents, connected me to my heritage. That's what agriculture means to me. I encourage you to join me in supporting Wisconsin's dairy farmers this month by buying Wisconsin dairy products, attending a dairy breakfast, and thanking farmers for the work that they do.

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Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, which includes La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County.