



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Senator Pfaff, (608) 266-5490

Sen. Pfaff & Rep. Considine: Invest in Agriculture, Grow our Future

When the pandemic began last year, and many folks adjusted to life at home, farmers, processors, and other agriculture community members were on the frontlines. In fact, Wisconsin farmers have been essential workers for centuries—in times of peace, war, pandemic, or recession, our crop, dairy, and meat producers have kept Wisconsin fed. Recognizing this fact, we know that what’s good for the agriculture community is good for our state. That’s why last week at the World Dairy Expo, we introduced a comprehensive bill package to invest nearly \$25 million into Wisconsin farmers and agriculture.

The “Invest in Agriculture, Grow our Future” bill package will directly support our farmers, strengthen their ties to our communities, and create new markets. These five bills help meet the diverse needs of agriculture stakeholders.

The pandemic has seen Farm-to-Fork and Farm-to-School programs become increasingly popular and necessary. Connecting local produce, meat, and dairy to Wisconsin dinner tables and lunchrooms is a win-win. The Farm-to-School initiative will prioritize school districts where a high percentage of students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch. Similarly, the Farm-to-Fork program helps farmers partner with hospitals, nursing homes, and other large cafeterias to ensure that more residents enjoy locally grown fresh fruit, vegetables, and dairy products. Wisconsin-grown food fosters an appreciation for farmers and the agricultural process while promoting good eating habits.

We’re also committed to finding ways for farmers to access new markets while helping their communities. For example, the Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant Program will award grants to food banks and nonprofits to purchase Wisconsin-grown food, supporting our state’s agriculture industry and those struggling to put food on the table.

Expanding the “Something Special from Wisconsin” initiative builds upon the two previous proposals by prominently featuring Wisconsin-made products in grocery stores and delis across the country. Additionally, the Meat Talent Development Program seizes the opportunity in meat processing to forge Wisconsin’s legacy as an animal agriculture state. Incentivizing young people to enter this promising industry will help diversify our meat product lines and create new family-supporting jobs.

Finally, our proposal provides farmers with additional regional consultation services to assist with production, marketing, and regulation questions. We want DATCP to be as effective as possible in helping farmers with their problems when they ask.

We’re proud to be America’s Dairyland, and to move our state forward, farm families and rural residents should have the tools they need to succeed. The investments we’re making aren’t just for the here-and-now but for the next generation of rural prosperity in our state.

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

Representative Dave Considine represents the 81st Assembly District, which includes parts of Sauk, Columbia, Dane, and Iowa County.