

Growing Wisconsin

Connecting consumers to farms, food and forestry



A Berry Fine Legacy

**WISCONSIN FARM FAMILY PRODUCES
CRANBERRIES THROUGH THE GENERATIONS**



Businesses that are driven to succeed, partner with Insight FS.

Insight FS is an agricultural cooperative serving agronomy, energy, feed, grain, and turf patrons throughout Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We are proud to be a member of the FS System of cooperatives. FS is a legacy brand that has been a core part of Midwest agriculture since 1955. At Insight FS, our products and services are backed by sound recommendations that will help your business thrive. We have a vested interest in your success, and our focus is clear – when you succeed, we succeed.

www.insightfs.com

Bringing you what's next.™





AMERICA DEPENDS ON FARMERS. SO WHO DO FARMERS DEPEND ON?

VALLEY® WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN.

Pretty simple. Farmers depend on what's dependable. That's Valley®, the #1 brand in pivots. Our machines have been in fields the longest, with engineering that just won't quit. As ever-increasing demands are put on your shoulders, let Valley lighten the load—and increase yields—with rock-solid reliability.

North Central Irrigation, Inc.

www.valleynci.com

Plainfield, WI | 715-335-6368 • 800-755-0268 – Beloit, WI | 608-362-0706 • 800-924-0321



PERFORMANCE
PLUS DEALER



www.valleyirrigation.com



NOTHING GOES BETTER WITH
WINE THAN A GOOD CHEESE.



HERE IN WISCONSIN, WE HAVE BOTH.

WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN, WE'RE HAVING FUN.

TRAVEL
WISCONSIN
.COM

FEATURING



14 Water Works

Aquaculture is a growing industry in Wisconsin, with state research and development helping this already successful sector thrive. The state has a long history in aquaculture, starting with its first fish farms established more than 100 years ago.

38 HEALTHY COWS, HEALTHY FARMS

Wisconsin is known nationwide for its excellence in dairy, and local farmers keep animals healthy and help dispel myths about the industry.

50 A BERRY FINE LEGACY

A four-generations-strong farm family legacy, the Habelman Brothers Company grows and packs high-quality, fresh Wisconsin cranberries.

THE POWER OF WISCONSIN DAIRY

9,500

dairy farmers

including a
new generation
of young,
forward-thinking,
committed
leaders



An
economic
powerhouse

Dairy contributes

\$43.4 BILLION

annually to Wisconsin's economy, creating and supporting jobs, local communities and public services.

A concentrated, vital
infrastructure, dedicated
to the industry's success:

- ▶ 200+ cheese, butter, milk and dairy processing plants
- ▶ 120+ ag colleges, research stations, Discovery Farms and Extension offices
- ▶ World-renowned Center for Dairy Research & The Center for Dairy Profitability, both based at the prestigious University of Wisconsin-Madison

Cheese RULES

Diverse network of artisan and traditional cheesemakers



Our Master Cheesemaker certification program is second to none and committed to helping build a new generation of world-class cheesemakers.

Wisconsin dairy farms are:

96%
family-owned

Diverse,
with operations ranging
from **<10 to 1,000+**
COWS.
(Our average: 129)



*Producing more
milk every year.*

In 2015, Wisconsin dairy farms produced **29 billion pounds of high-quality milk**, making up 14% of the nation's milk supply.



In Wisconsin, dairy is more than just our currency. It's our engine. Our heritage. And, our heart and soul. To learn more about America's Dairyland, visit AmericasDairyland.com.



READ ON THE GO

**OPTIMIZED
FOR ONLINE**

Each article can be read online, as a web article or within our digital magazine. Additional photos and statistics are also available on the website.

SHARE THE CONTENT

Easily share an interesting article, stunning photo or useful advertisement via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest or email.

EMBED IN YOUR SITE

Embed our digital magazine in your website to offer compelling information about Wisconsin agriculture to your site visitors.



Visit us online at
WIagriculture.com

Growing Wisconsin

Connecting consumers to farms, food and forestry

CONTENTS

- 8 GROWING TOGETHER**
Wisconsin agriculture stays strong through industry partnerships
- 18 CAREER BUILDERS**
Tech colleges strengthen workforce in Wisconsin's ag sector
- 22 SLICED TO PERFECTION**
Wisconsin cheese industry encompasses production and beyond
- 28 BEEFED UP IN WISCONSIN**
Wisconsin beef producers hold cattle welfare, performance to high standards
- 32 FROM THE GROUND UP**
Vegetable growers prosper in Wisconsin's fresh market, processing sectors
- 36 BROUGHT TO YOU BY WISCONSIN**
State agricultural marketing boards promote Wisconsin commodities
- 42 FROM THE FOREST TO FRONT DOOR**
Window, door manufacturers add value to Wisconsin's wood products industry
- 46 DIGGING UP AGRICULTURE'S ROOTS**
History and heritage drive agritourism in Wisconsin
- 54 GUIDING LIGHT**
Farm Center helps Wisconsin farmers through calm and crisis

On the Cover

A family tradition for more than 100 years, Habelman Brothers Co. grows and packs high-quality cranberries in Wisconsin.

Photo by Steve Voit

Wisconsin Farm Bureau is *A Voice for Farmers.* *A Vision for Agriculture.*[®]

Agricultural
Advocacy

Ag in the
Classroom

Money-saving
Member Benefits



Janel and Travis Clark, Fond du Lac County Farm Bureau Members

Wisconsin's 61 county Farm Bureaus are led by local farm families and agriculturists of all ages who care deeply about promoting agriculture.

Visit wfbf.com to join or learn more.

Wisconsin
Farm Bureau[®]
FEDERATION

stay connected WIFarmBureau



Growing Wisconsin

2017 EDITION, VOLUME 4

JOURNAL COMMUNICATIONS INC.

Project Manager KIM MADLON
Agribusiness Content Team RACHEL BERTONE, HANNAH PATTERSON, BRITTANY STOVALL
Agribusiness Marketing Director M.A. ORR
Contributing Writers TERECE CARUTHERS, MATTHEW D. ERNST, JILL CLAIR GENTRY, MAGGIE GINSBERG, CATHY LOCKMAN, JOANIE STIERS
Art Director LAURA GALLAGHER
Senior Graphic Designers SAMANTHA FRAZIER, HEATHER HAUSER, SUSANNA HAYNES, AMY HIEMSTRA, VIKKI WILLIAMS
Graphic Designer LINDSEY HIGGINS
Senior Photographer JEFF ADKINS, MICHAEL TEDESCO
Color Imaging Technician ALISON HUNTER
Photo Editor MICHAEL BETTS
Ad Production/Sales Support Manager KATIE MIDDENDORF
Ad Traffic Assistant PATRICIA MOISAN
Ad Production/Sales Support Coordinator COURTNEY COOK
Web Services Team RICHARD STEVENS, DYLAN UNDERWOOD

Chairman GREG THURMAN
President/Publisher BOB SCHWARTZMAN
Executive Vice President RAY LANGEN
Senior V.P./Agribusiness Publishing KIM NEWSOM HOLMBERG
Senior V.P./Agribusiness Sales RHONDA GRAHAM
Senior V.P./Operations CASEY HESTER
Controller CHRIS DUDLEY
V.P./Agribusiness Content JESSY YANCEY
V.P./Content Operations NATASHA LORENS
V.P./Creative Services CHRISTINA CARDEN
V.P./Digital Operations ALLISON DAVIS
Senior Accountant LISA OWENS
Accounts Payable Coordinator MARIA MCFARLAND
Accounts Receivable Coordinator DIANA GUZMAN
Photography Director JEFFREY S. OTTO
Executive Secretary KRISTY GILES
Human Resources Manager PEGGY BLAKE
Integrated Media Manager DREW COLSTON



Growing Wisconsin is published annually by Journal Communications Inc. and is distributed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture. For advertising information or to direct questions or comments about the magazine, contact Journal Communications Inc. at (615) 771-0080 or by email at info@jnlcom.com.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION:

Secretary BEN BRANCEL
Deputy Secretary JEFF LYON
Communications Director BILL COSH
Special thanks to all Department staff for their support.

For more information about the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, contact: Bill Cosh, Communications Director
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708
(608) 224-5020 or by email at william2.cosh@wi.gov.

No public funds were used in the publishing of this magazine.

© Copyright 2016 Journal Communications Inc.,
725 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 400, Franklin, TN 37067,
(615) 771-0080. All rights reserved. No portion of this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without written consent.

Member  The Association of Magazine Media

Member  Custom Content Council



We are all part of Growing Wisconsin.

Thank you for your interest in Wisconsin's growing agriculture industry. This magazine is an effort to share the value of the state's agriculture industry with all Wisconsinites.

Whether or not you've ever stepped on a farm or in a processing plant, agriculture impacts you. Agriculture contributes \$88.3 billion annually to Wisconsin's economy. These dollars circulate throughout our communities, benefiting local businesses, contributing to our schools and public services, and providing jobs. In Wisconsin, one in nine people works in a job related to agriculture. This is equivalent to 413,500 jobs. Agricultural jobs are very diverse, from on the farm and food processing to engineering and marketing. You may even have one of those jobs and didn't even know it was related to agriculture.

We all rely on agriculture to provide us with quality food, fuel and fiber. Our Wisconsin farmers are busy, working to produce for a rising world population, now more than seven billion people strong. By reading *Growing Wisconsin*, I believe you will gain greater understanding for all that is agriculture. A common theme throughout these articles and the agriculture industry is collaboration. Those in the agriculture industry often collaborate to share research, technology, promotion and education.

Collaborate with us to share this magazine with family, friends, coworkers, customers and others in your community. Help us to spread the word about the daily difference made by agriculture. I hope this magazine serves as just one tool to learn about agriculture. If you haven't been in a barn, plan a tour. If you haven't met a farmer, connect and ask questions.

We are all part of *Growing Wisconsin*.

Ben Brancel
Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

GROWING TOGETHER

Wisconsin agriculture stays strong through industry partnerships

When most people hear the words “Wisconsin agriculture,” they immediately think of cheese. In fact, the state ranks first in the nation and fourth in the world in cheese production. However, while Wisconsin has well earned its reputation as the cheese capital of the U.S., the agriculture industry encompasses so much more.

Wisconsin agriculture contributes a whopping \$88.3 billion to the state’s economy annually – with at least \$43.4 billion earned by the dairy industry alone – and provides 413,500 jobs, or nearly 12 percent of the state’s total employment, in fields such as management and business, science and engineering, forestry production, communications, and more.

Hardworking farmers operate around 69,000 farms in Wisconsin on nearly 14.5 million acres of land. These farms produce some of the state’s top commodities, such as milk, corn, cattle and calves, soybeans, potatoes, cranberries and more. And though they may not be among the Badger State’s top 10 commodities, other important commodities rank the state first in the nation, including mink pelts and snap beans for processing and milk goats. Wisconsin ranks

second in the nation in milk production, Italian cheese, mozzarella cheese, oats and milk cows, and third in several other commodities.

Additionally, Wisconsin continues to be a leader in organic production, ranking No. 2 in total number of organic farms with 1,228 operations – nearly 9 percent of the nation’s overall organic farms.

But while the producers of these crops are essential to Wisconsin’s success, it wouldn’t be possible without other agricultural commodity groups and entities.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; University of Wisconsin System; Wisconsin Technical College System; and many more all play a crucial role in working together to promote agriculture. Whether coming up with marketing plans to promote local products, helping farmers utilize technology and best management practices or educating consumers on the importance of agriculture in our everyday lives, Wisconsin’s industry could not survive without the cooperation of everyone involved.

With top-notch producers and education programs, innovative solutions, value-added products and cooperation among partners, Wisconsin is poised for continued agricultural success.

– Rachel Bertone







Be part of building the world's best dairy processing cooperative.

BE FOREMOST.



We're looking for employees who challenge the status quo, innovate, and aim for excellence. Because we're working to be the world's best – to Be Foremost – we'll bring out the best in you.



We're already one of the nation's top 10 dairy cooperatives, making Wisconsin cheese and dairy ingredients for customers in 40 countries. But we're not satisfied. Are you?



E10889 Penny Lane
Baraboo • WI • 53913-8115
(608) 355-8700
www.foremostfarms.com

Foremost Farms USA is an Equal Opportunity Employer:
M/F/Vets/Disabled
© 2015 Foremost Farms USA Cooperative
All Rights Reserved

HOP TO IT

Raise a glass to Wisconsin's burgeoning hops industry. With an increasing demand statewide and nationwide for local food, so, too, has the demand for local brews grown.

Hops production in the Badger State goes back about two centuries, when Sauk County was responsible for one-fifth of the world's hops production. However, a lack of knowledge about hops and poor farming practices led to its decline in the late 1800s. Producers like Gorst Valley Hops are helping the crop make a comeback, as well as groups like the Wisconsin Hop Exchange. Gorst Valley is committed to providing education, outreach, processing services and more to growers and brewers in Wisconsin and the Midwest. The Wisconsin Hop Exchange was founded for hop farmers to help each other, offering knowledge and experiences that aid the state in growing and selling quality hops.

Hops are used as a flavoring agent for beer, giving each style its unique taste, whether bitter, citrusy or something else.

STANDING TALL

Towering forests cover approximately 16 million acres in Wisconsin – close to half of the state's land area. These forests provide jobs, contribute to the economy, and offer recreational activities for consumers and habitat for wildlife. In fact, Wisconsin's forestry industry is valued at \$20 billion per year, with more than 62,200 full-time jobs in forestry and forest products.

Keeping forests healthy and protecting habitat calls for good forestry management. This means promoting diversity in tree species and age classes of trees, which helps improve wildlife habitat. Keeping wildlife healthy in turn sustains hunting for the state, which is a big pull for Wisconsin's tourism industry and an important part of our heritage.

Learn more about the state's forestry sector at gltpa.org.



IN 2015, **47 PERCENT**
OF WISCONSIN FARMERS
USED COMPUTERS FOR
FARM BUSINESS.

**AGRICULTURE
CONTRIBUTES
413,500 JOBS,
OR NEARLY
12 PERCENT
OF WISCONSIN'S
TOTAL
EMPLOYMENT.**

*Source: Contribution of Agriculture
to the Wisconsin Economy, Steven Deller,
UW-Madison, UW-Extension, 2014.*



HIGH ON THE HOG

Pork is a big player in the Badger State. In 2015, Hogs contributed \$160.8 million to the state's economy.

Additionally, Wisconsin had a total inventory of 320,000 hogs in 2015.

Not only is the industry good for the state, but it's good for consumers as well. Pork tenderloin and skinless chicken breasts have the same total fat content, and a 3-ounce serving provides protein, thiamin, vitamin B6, phosphorus and niacin.

Wisconsin also takes the top spot in the nation in the number of farms raising organic hogs and pigs. Learn more about the pork industry at wppa.org.



Dairy farmers are your friends and neighbors.

Your values are our values.



Educate • Advocate • Collaborate
dbmmc
Dairy Business
Milk Marketing Cooperative
dbmmc.com

 **dba**
DAIRY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
widba.com

WISCONSIN'S PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

A glimpse at the state's leading agricultural crops and livestock sectors

BROILERS

Wisconsin farms had 53.4 million broilers, or chickens produced for meat, in 2014. The commodity earned the state a production value of nearly \$142.88 million.

CATTLE AND CALVES

Wisconsin's 3.5 million cattle and calves generated a production value of \$1.92 billion in 2015. The state ranks ninth in the nation for inventory of cattle and calves.

CORN

The U.S. produces approximately one-third of the world's corn supply. In 2015, Wisconsin corn farmers earned a \$1.67 billion production value from harvesting a whopping 3 million acres of corn for grain.

CRANBERRIES

Wisconsin is the top cranberry-producing state in the nation. In 2014, the state's cranberry farms harvested 6 million barrels of the commodity and earned \$138.37 million in cash receipts.

DAIRY AND MILK

No. 1 in cheese and No. 2 in milk production, Wisconsin generated a production value of \$5.2 billion from 29 billion pounds of milk in 2015.

GREENHOUSE AND NURSERY

Wisconsin is the sixth leading state in the nation for Christmas tree production. In 2014, Wisconsin greenhouses and nurseries earned \$231 million in cash receipts.

HOGS

Pork is the most widely eaten meat in the world, and Wisconsin's 320,000 hogs earned the state a production value of \$160.8 million in 2015.

POTATOES

On average, Americans consume about 110 pounds of potatoes per person per year. In 2015, Wisconsin farmers earned a production value of \$257.12 million from harvesting 62,500 acres of potatoes.

SOYBEANS

Approximately 90 percent of newspapers are printed with soy ink. Wisconsin soybean farmers generated \$786.8 million in production value by harvesting 1.87 million acres of soybeans in 2015.

WHEAT

Wheat earned Wisconsin a production value of \$69.15 million with 15.54 million bushels of wheat in 2015.



WISCONSIN'S LEADING AGRICULTURAL SEGMENT IS DAIRY, EARNING THE STATE **\$43.4 BILLION** OUT OF A TOTAL OF **\$88.3 BILLION** IN 2015.



WISCONSIN IS HOME TO

52K

BEE COLONIES.

WISCONSIN LEADS THE NATION IN DAIRY GOATS.

WISCONSIN'S TOP AG EXPORT MARKETS

1. Canada
2. Mexico
3. China
4. Korea
5. Japan



IN 2015, WISCONSIN EXPORTED MORE THAN **\$3.2 BILLION** WORTH OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO 144 COUNTRIES.

Sources: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, WDATCP Export Information and Assistance

WATER WORKS

Research, development help grow Wisconsin's aquaculture industry

Wisconsin has a long history in aquaculture, starting when the state's first fish farms were established more than 100 years ago. Today, there are 2,587 registered fish farms in the state. Close to 300 of those are considered large commercial-scale farms – a clear indicator of the industry's continued success.

"I think you can view the longevity of some of the state's trout farms that have been in business for 50 to 100 years as success. Also, we've seen new businesses in the state raising and selling types of fish that, while familiar, have not been raised in the Midwest before," says Dr. Chris Hartleb, professor of fisheries biology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He is also the director of the Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility.

FISHING FOR BUSINESS

Hartleb points to Northside Enterprises, which raises walleye; Aqua Terra Farms, which raises Arctic char; and Superior Fresh, which will soon be raising Atlantic salmon, as recent successes. He says research by UW-Stevens Point in new Midwest cultured fish has also spurred production of these species.

"The newer species, such as walleye, Atlantic salmon and Arctic char, are growing very well in recirculating aquaculture systems that emphasize water reuse, conservation and high density fish production, and show great promise for expanding the Wisconsin aquaculture industry," Hartleb says. "UW-Stevens Point and its Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility and Aquaponic Innovation Center have had great success with tilapia and walleye in aquaponic systems."

Where aquaculture refers to





Nelson and Pade Inc. is helping lead the way in the Wisconsin aquaponics industry.



the farming of fish under controlled environments, aquaponics goes one step further, using the fish waste to supply nutrients for plants grown hydroponically that, in turn, purify the water.

Hartleb explains that research shows when a protein crop like fish and a vegetable crop are raised together in a closed, water-based recirculating system, chances are the system will increase fish production. This method can also open up the possibilities of the species of fish – with the value-added byproduct of fresh, locally produced vegetables. The university’s Aquaponics Innovation Center is also focusing on crop species diversification, energy efficiency, food safety and the microbiology of aquaponics.

SUCCESSFUL SYMBIOSIS

While the aquaponics industry in Wisconsin is small compared to aquaculture, the production method has gained a foothold due to the demand for quality, locally grown food. Aquaponics, combined with controlled environment agriculture, allows a grower to sustainably produce both fish and vegetables year round.

“In Wisconsin, there is a need for fresh, nutritious food, and both new and established aquaponic farms are helping to fill this demand,” says Rebecca Nelson, co-founder

of Nelson and Pade Inc., a leader in aquaponics based in Montello. “Most aquaponic farms in Wisconsin are raising tilapia and fresh vegetables and distributing to local markets that include grocery stores, restaurants, farmers’ markets, schools and institutions.”

Nelson says nearly any vegetable crop can be grown using aquaponics, including tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and many more. For commercial production though, most growers focus on fast-growing leafy crops like lettuces, kale and herbs. Nelson and Pade even grows tropical fruits, such as bananas, limes, lemons and papaya, in its demonstration greenhouse.

Nelson says the company’s patented clear flow aquaponic systems with ZDEP (zero discharge/extra production) produce significantly more food more efficiently than traditional aquaponic systems. She says the development of these systems, along with research taking place at the UWSP Aquaponics Innovation Center, is helping aquaponics grow into a profitable industry.

Both the aquaponics and aquaculture industries have been aided by the Aquaculture Industry Advisory Council, a collaboration between the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection and the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association. The

council provides a forum for producers to work with state and federal agencies to identify and address industry economic and environmental issues. With prominent industry leaders and research in Wisconsin, the state is poised for a bright future in aquaponics.

HELPING KEEP FISH HEALTHY

To have healthy aquaculture and aquaponics industries, fish need to be kept healthy, too. Dr. Myron Kebus, a veterinarian with the state Division of Animal Health, is helping guide farmers to do just that.

“It can be as simple as talking to fish farmers with fish health problems and advising them how to proceed, or where to find a fish veterinarian,” he says.

He also directs a program that registers fish farms and develops fish health requirements to move fish from one farm to the next, as well as into state waters or other states.

Wisconsin has trained more veterinarians than any other state in fish farm medicine, Kebus says. He trains other veterinarians to issue fish health certificates.

“Wisconsin has trained over 300 veterinarians – not only from Wisconsin, but also from virtually every state that receives fish from Wisconsin,” he says.

– Tere Caruthers

REPLENISH THE FISH

WISCONSIN WALLEYE INITIATIVE BOOSTS WALLEYE POPULATION

With an abundance of lakes, streams and rivers, it is no wonder fishing is popular in Wisconsin. And one of the most sought-after fish to catch in the state is the walleye. However, walleye populations were on a decline for more than 20 years. That is, until 2013, when Gov. Scott Walker announced a bold plan developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and his office to replenish the fish under the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative.

The initiative is boosting walleye populations in Wisconsin waters, and has a goal to restock more than 1.5 million larger walleye over a period of several years. As of fall 2015, walleye restocking was well underway, with the fish distributed primarily in northern lakes.

This, in turn, affects Wisconsin's economy, benefits fishers and aids in drawing anglers, and therefore tourism, to the state.

Fish farms are an integral part of the plan. Nine private and tribal farms were given grants to produce walleye fingerlings under the initiative. One of those hatcheries is Gollon Bait and Fish Farm of Dodgeville, which built new ponds on 12 acres in 2014 to produce walleye fingerlings.

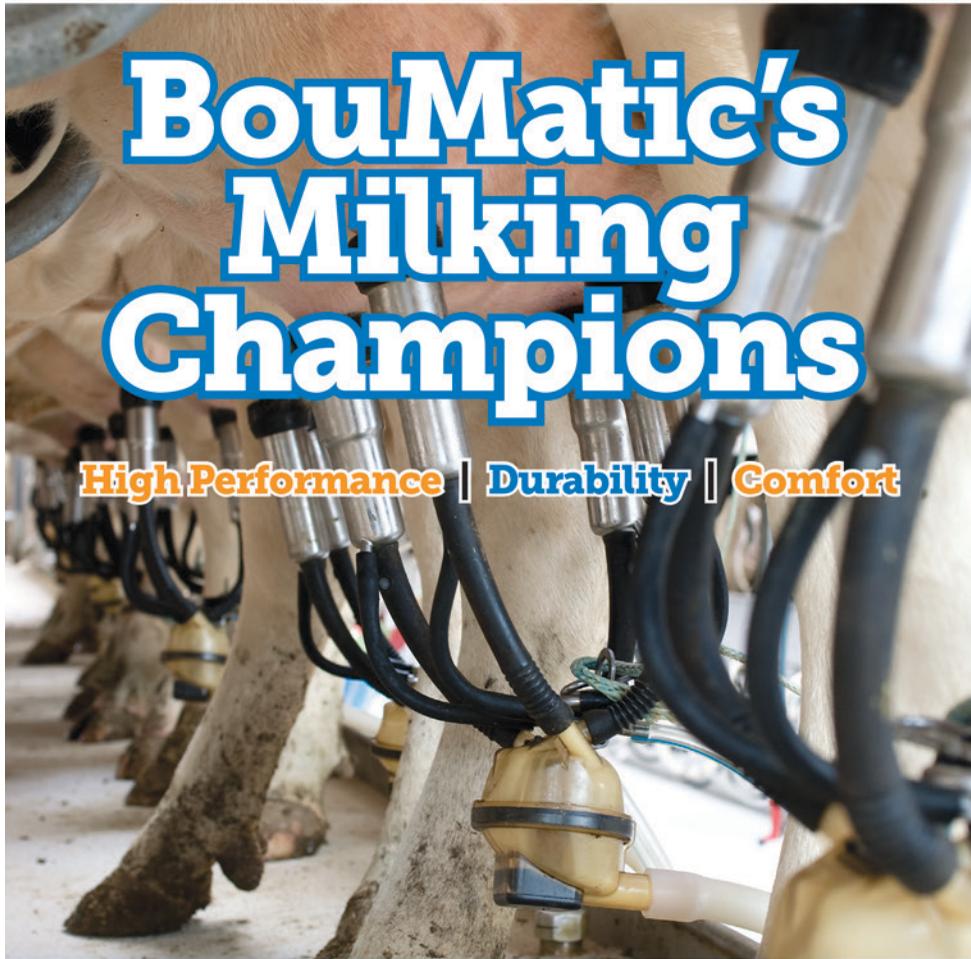
Under the initiative, the state dedicated a total of almost \$12 million to hatchery infrastructure improvements and operating costs for walleye production.

Learn more about the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative at dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/walleyeinitiative.html.



BouMatic's Milking Champions

High Performance | Durability | Comfort



Flo-Star® MAX - the gold standard in performance, capacity, durability, weight reduction, milkability and comfort.

HiFlo™ Evolution - the ultimate in durability and simplicity.



Magnum™ Liners - the best of both worlds by providing both cow comfort and unparalleled milking performance.



CAREER BUILDERS

Tech colleges strengthen workforce in Wisconsin's ag industry



As Wisconsin's multibillion-dollar agriculture industry continues to grow, the state's technical colleges have responded by adding new study programs, building training facilities and strengthening relationships with local agribusinesses to maintain a steady flow of talent to the agriculture community.

AN EDUCATION IN AG

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College in Fennimore offers certificates and associate degrees in four areas – agribusiness science and technology, dairy herd management, ag power and equipment technician, and farm business production management.

According to Deb Ihm, Business and Production Management instructor at Southwest Tech, the number of programs will soon grow to around 15 as the college

diversifies its ag-based course offerings to reflect expanding career opportunities for graduates.

“We have added additional classes so that we can now provide more specific training in the areas of agronomy, animal science and ag business management,” Ihm says. “Our diversification of programming includes preparing individuals for industry work and going back to the farm, and we are also providing more specific training in the areas of agronomy, animal science, business management and mechanics.”

Northcentral Technical College's Agriculture Center of Excellence is an example of creating enhanced learning opportunities for students pursuing agriculture careers. This farm-of-the-future learning laboratory includes a cow barn, robotic milker, pastureland, cropland, woodlands and wetlands.

Fox Valley Technical College has also responded to industry

evolution with an updated curriculum and changes to course offerings. The school added the state's only precision agriculture program to its roster, which includes horticulture, natural resources, ag business, farm operations and ag power technician, among others.

Fox Valley's off-campus farm business production management program allows students to work toward a certificate or degree on a local farm rather than in the classroom, and has become a popular resource for family farms. The school also has a dual enrollment arrangement with area high schools that awards college credits to students.

“When you look at that full spectrum of offerings that we have, and when you look at the family structure of the farms, if the kids have any interest in farming – whether it is mechanics, growing crops for production,



growing crops for urban industry, raising cows – we have a program for them,” says Mike Cattelino, associate dean of Agriculture and Manufacturing Technologies at Fox Valley Technical College, which boasts a 94 percent employment rate for its graduates.

‘HIRE’ LEARNING

Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland offers several programs that enhance students’ knowledge of agriculture and provide real-world application. Specifically, the college’s dairy herd management program and the newer agribusiness science and technology program allow students to learn in the classroom, but also apply that knowledge in a farm-based setting. Like Fox Valley and Southwest Tech, LTC works with local farms and agribusinesses to give students hands-on experience through corporate internships, farm visits and farm internships.

“With hundreds of careers in agriculture, the possibilities are endless. A student could go back to the farm, become a salesperson for a company, or design and engineer the next new technology,” says Rachel Kroepfen, Agribusiness Science and Technology instructor at Lakeshore Technical College. “According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are nearly 60,000 high-skilled agriculture openings expected annually in the U.S. and only 35,000 graduates available to fill them. There is truly something for everyone in agriculture.”

Third-generation farmer Becky Lezow agrees. Together with her husband, Ralph, and son, Kenneth, Lezow owns and operates a 180-cow, fourth-generation dairy farm near Rio, and represents the agriculture industry as a member of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board.

“Farming has changed so much since my grandparents were

farmers, or even my parents. Today, you need business skills. It’s like any other small business and it doesn’t matter if you have 10 cows or a 5-acre garden plot where you sell at farmers markets or a 1,000-cow dairy – all of us need business skills and communication skills and even marketing skills,” Lezow says. “There are a lot of skills you learn through the technical college system that help us be better business people, promote our products and communicate with consumers that we are good stewards of the land.”

– Teree Caruthers

Previous page: Students learn agricultural skills at the Northcentral Technical College Agriculture Center of Excellence site, which has cropland, pastureland, a barn and more. **Above, clockwise from top left:** Students study botany at Fox Valley Technical College; an instructor assists a student at Northcentral Technical College Agriculture Center of Excellence; a student works on a tractor at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College.



Kaitlyn Tesch, right, always knew she wanted to work in agriculture.

AG EDUCATION

FROM DREAMS TO JOBS

Wisconsin tech schools turn farming hobbies into marketable skills

Nearly every morning, Madison Area Technical College graduate Peyton Simon makes her rounds at Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese in Waterloo. As a certified veterinary technician and the resident assistant calf manager, Simon puts in 10-hour days taking temperatures and listening to lungs, administering vaccinations or tagging ears, dehorning, feeding or cleaning beds. Every day is different for the 2015 graduate.

“Tech school gave me that wide knowledge base to be able to jump into any position that would come,” she says.

Simon landed the job in December 2015. Before that, she worked six years at Poynette Veterinary Service, followed by a temporary position in the agronomy department at the University of Wisconsin’s Arlington Research Station.

Simon always knew she loved

animals. As a high school sophomore, she nursed a newborn orphan mouse with a milk replacer-filled syringe. She then cared for the mouse for six years.

“I kind of bounced from small animal to ag to now doing large animal, so it just goes to show how much you can do,” she says.

Tech school gave Simon the wide range of skills to make her passion marketable. That’s also been the case for Kaitlyn Tesch, who graduated from Fox Valley Tech in 2014.

“My family has a dairy farm in northern Wisconsin, so I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the ag industry, but I didn’t know exactly what,” Tesch says. “I was able to explore the animal side, the agronomy and plant side, as well as the business aspects.”

It was the business piece that clicked for Tesch. She started her job at the U.S. Department of

Agriculture Farm Service Agency after graduating with an associate degree in agricultural business and science technology. Within a year, she received a promotion.

Tesch’s job is to financially assist farmers just starting out who may not have much equity or capital, as well as seasoned farmers struggling due to low commodity prices or other challenges.

“I think one of the great parts about being at Tech was all the different hands-on and networking experiences I had. Being able to meet farmers on tours or in lab exercises, to be working with them now and have that prior connection is really nice,” says Tesch, who also stays in touch with many of her instructors. “They were all so knowledgeable and had experience in their fields. They’re great resources for me.”

– Maggie Ginsberg

GROWING OUR FUTURE

Ag internships benefit Wisconsin students, companies

Coursework, extracurricular activities and campus involvement are all part of an excellent college education, but employers are often most impressed with something else that may be hard for students to come by: work experience. Many ag industry employers, like Baraboo-based Accelerated Genetics, give students hands-on experience with summer internships.

“We understand there are many students who are interested in agriculture who have never had the opportunity to experience the artificial insemination industry,” says Kari Stanek, industry relations coordinator at Accelerated Genetics, a livestock genetic improvement source that provides breeding services and genetic material. “For many years, the agriculture industry has embraced internships as a way to grow skills of youth with farm backgrounds, and also to bring new people into the industry who maybe didn’t grow up on a farm or have prior experience.”

Accelerated Genetics has offered internships for more than 30 years. Each summer, 6 to 10 interns join, and the company hires many after graduation.

“It’s been really good for us and the students,” Stanek says. “Our interns turn into great employees.”

Jori Campbell, an agriculture business major at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College in Fennimore, interned in summer 2015. Although Campbell had worked on a farm for 10 years prior to her internship, the nature of her summer job – artificially inseminating cows all over the region – was originally a terrifying

prospect. The internship helped her gain valuable job experience, as well as important life lessons.

“It made me much more well-rounded,” she says. “I was shy and unsure of whether I could handle it.

But by the end of the summer, I came out of my shell and was comfortable making decisions. I learned to buckle down and take it one day at a time.”

– Jill Clair Gentry

Shullsburg Creamery™

THE TASTE OF OLD FASHION GOODNESS

Manufacturer, Processor and Marketer of Fine Wisconsin Cheese Since 1934.

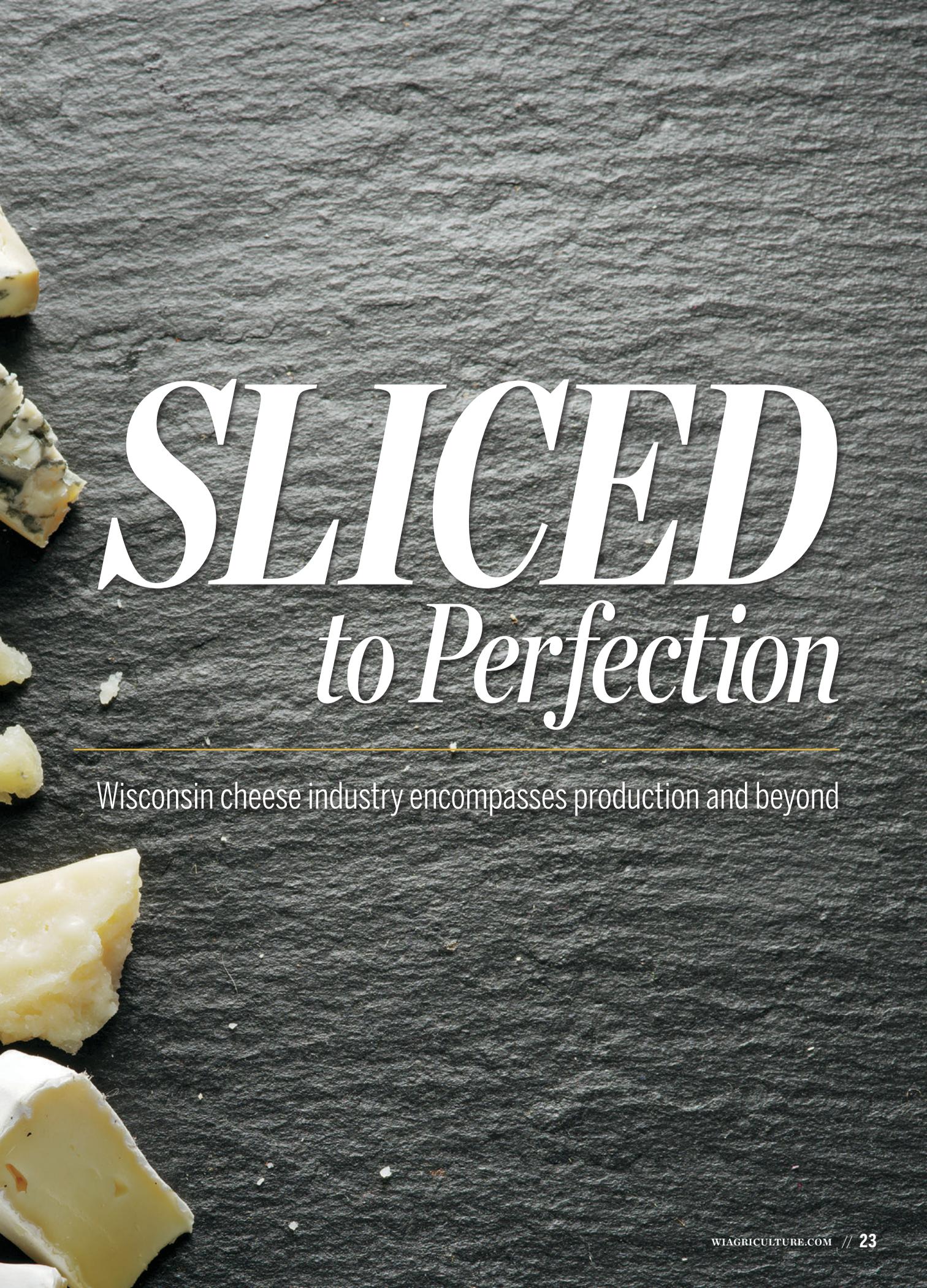
1-800-533-9594
www.shullsburgcreamery.com

SQF Safe Food Certified

f p

FAMILY FARMER OWNED



The background is a dark, textured slate surface. On the left side, there are several pieces of cheese: a wedge of blue cheese at the top, a wedge of yellow cheese in the middle, and a wedge of white cheese at the bottom. The text is centered and reads "SLICED to Perfection".

SLICED *to Perfection*

Wisconsin cheese industry encompasses production and beyond

DAIRY DAYS

ACTIVITIES ABOUND IN CELEBRATION OF WISCONSIN DAIRY

Dairy is delectable here. After all, there's good reason Wisconsin is known as America's Dairyland.

In fact, the state dedicates a whole month to a celebration of dairy. A variety of festivals and activities are on tap during June Dairy Month.

Featured events include the Great Wisconsin Cheese Festival in Little Chute, which offers a weekend of family fun in celebration of the state's great dairy industry. Cows on the Concourse in Madison lets enthusiasts get up close to dairy cows and their calves on the grounds of the State Capitol, as well as visit a dairy farmers' market. The Sparta Butter fest highlights the wonders of butter.

Also during June, the dairy breakfast program connects consumers with farmers, offering up tasty, homemade breakfasts at genuine Wisconsin farms.

Learn more about June Dairy Month at dairydaysofsummer.com. To read more about the Milk Marketing Board, visit wmmb.com.

WISCONSIN RANKS

#1

IN THE NATION AND

#4

IN THE WORLD FOR
CHEESE PRODUCTION.



90%
of Wisconsin's
milk is made
into cheese.



**THERE ARE DAIRY HERDS
IN 69 OF WISCONSIN'S
72 COUNTIES, AND SOME
COUNTIES HAVE MORE
COWS THAN PEOPLE.**

Sources: Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

THE VALUE OF DAIRY

DAIRY PRODUCTION
CONTRIBUTES MORE TO
WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE
THAN CITRUS DOES TO
FLORIDA OR POTATOES DO TO
IDAHO, EARNING THE STATE
\$43.4 BILLION ANNUALLY.



WISCONSIN
DAIRY

\$43.4 B



FLORIDA
CITRUS

\$9 B



IDAHO
POTATOES

\$6.7 B

From large, national cheese brands to artisan farmstead cheesemakers, it's no wonder that Wisconsin ranks No. 1 nationally in cheese production, producing more than 3 billion pounds per year on average.

"Our cheese industry is the broadest in the country," says John Umhoefer, executive director of the Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association. "We have about 130 places in the state where cheese is being made, including the biggest factory east of the Mississippi River. We like to think that Wisconsin dominates the large cheese side, but we also produce 45 percent of what people think of as gourmet cheeses."

Umhoefer's statement is validated by the state's leadership in production of many different cheese varieties. The state takes the top spot for American and Muenster cheese, and ranks second for Italian and mozzarella cheese. Wisconsin's dairy industry, which produces the milk used in more than 90 percent of the state's cheese, contributes \$43.4 billion annually to the economy.

THE BIG CHEESE

Norm Monsen, of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, says Wisconsin has some of the most innovative dairy entrepreneurs, who are using new techniques to capture new opportunities. But while production is a major aspect of Wisconsin's cheese industry, much more than that contributes to its success.

"Among the members of the WCA, about 250 are companies that help out the cheesemaking industry," Umhoefer says. "Everything from companies that make the stainless steel vats that the milk is poured into, to trucking companies, ingredient firms and more. And after the cheese is made, there is an enormous market of companies that just slice cheese. They're called converters. They take cheese that is already made and convert it into slices, dices and shreds that consumers see in stores."

Several packaging suppliers – partners to the converters – are also based in Wisconsin. Bemis

Corp. makes packaging film and bags for cheese, while Hart Design & Manufacturing makes packaging machines for the cheese industry.

Sargento Foods Inc. in Plymouth was the first company to sell consumer-sized packages of cheese to grocery stores, including sliced and shredded natural cheeses, as well as a full line of natural cheese snacks.

"We develop consumer demand through innovation of products," says Barbara Gannon, vice president of corporate communications and community relations at Sargento. "For example, we created the first blends of shredded cheeses, used peg bar merchandising in the dairy case before anyone else, and introduced both press-to-close resealable packaging and zippered resealable packaging for perishable products."

She adds that these innovations have actually grown the category, and sometimes Sargento creates new categories, such as finely shredded cheese or its Ultra Thin sliced cheese.

"Consumers are in a hurry today and don't have time to shred or slice cheese," Monsen says. "We have companies that are highly sophisticated and technical in the processes of putting cheese in consumer-friendly, ready-to-eat packages. We also have giant, state-of-the-art warehouses where cheese is simply stored and aged."

Monsen adds that DATCP strongly supports the industry in many facets, from international marketing to local programs to food safety inspections of each plant.

George Crave, one of the co-founders of Crave Brothers Farm in Waterloo, agrees that many times, consumers forget how many people are involved in making cheese. "Just because we drive past a farm, we forget there's a tractor dealer and other suppliers behind it that help the farmers," Crave says. "It's the same with the cheese industry. There are other businesses that are taking the cheese and making it consumer friendly."

– Rachel Bertone



HIGH-TECH & DOWN TO EARTH

NEW!

Agribusiness Science & Technology Associate Degree Program

OFFERED IN CLEVELAND, WEST BEND, FOND DU LAC AND BEAVER DAM.

Acquire an education in the high-demand career of Agribusiness, with instruction focused on the latest advances and cutting-edge technologies to gain the skills you need to run your own agribusiness operation or help other agriculture producers become more successful.

Gain skills in:

- Agribusiness marketing & economics
- Financial management tools
- Precision agriculture
- Crop production
- Soil science
- Animal science & nutrition

Flexible course offerings mean you can attend the program in person or complete the program online.

This program is offered in cooperation with Moraine Park Technical College.

Call 920.221.1159 or visit gotoltc.edu/Agribusiness



THIS NEW PROGRAM ALSO COMPLEMENTS LTC'S AWARD-WINNING 9-MONTH DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

LTC The Hire in HIGHER EDUCATION.
LAKESHORE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
1.888.GO TO LTC
1290 North Avenue • Cleveland WI
NCA-Accredited ncahlc.org

What's COOKING in Wisconsin?

FARM FLAVOR

Read more about Wisconsin's top farm products, and find recipes using ingredients grown and raised in the state at FarmFlavor.com.

Visit Our ADVERTISERS

Badgerland Financial
badgerlandfinancial.com

Milksource LLC
milksource.com

BMO Harris Bank National Association
bmo.com

North Central Irrigation Inc.
valleynci.com

BouMatic
boumatic.com

Rural Mutual Insurance Company
ruralins.com

Bushman's Incorporated
bushmansinc.com

Shullsburg Creamery LLC
shullsburgcreamery.com

Dairy Business Association & DBMMC
widba.com

University of Wisconsin-Platteville
uwplatt.edu/agriculture

Foremost Farms USA
foremostfarms.com

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
travelwisconsin.com

GNP Company
gnpcompany.com

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
inwisconsin.com

GreenStone Farm Credit Services
greenstonefcs.com

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
wfbf.com

Growmark Inc.
growmark.com

Lakeshore Technical College
gotoltc.edu/agribusiness

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
eatwisconsincheese.com

Midwest Food Processors Association Inc.
mwfpa.org

Wisconsin Technical College System
wistechcolleges.org

THE TASTE OF SUCCESS

Wisconsin pizza restaurant crosses state borders

Kozy's Pizza has been a hit with Wisconsin locals for more than 40 years. And thanks to an initiative by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, people across the country now know about the tasty treats at Kozy's.

"Before the Cooperative Interstate Shipment program started, we couldn't ship our product outside of Wisconsin," says Cindy Olson, owner of Kozy's. "The program eliminated this significant barrier to expansion and opened up so many opportunities that allowed our business to grow."

That's what the U.S. Department of Agriculture and department had in mind when they launched the program in 2013. It allows state-inspected meats from qualifying plants to be shipped across state lines. By creating a hybrid federal-state inspection process, the program ensures the safety of the product while opening up new markets.

"We jumped at the chance to participate in this program," says Cindy Klug, director of the Bureau of Meat Safety at the department. "Wisconsin has a long heritage of meat production and processing, and this was an opportunity to share our great products with other states. It's especially significant economically for smaller producers."

That has been the case for Kozy's. Where sales had been limited to their Mauston restaurant and grocery stores across Wisconsin, pizza lovers in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and Michigan can now heat up the oven and sink



their teeth into a Kozy's Deluxe. Olson says Kozy's has gone from needing one truck to deliver its frozen pizzas to using 17 through a partnership with Holiday Wholesale. Even the varieties of pizza have grown, from eight before the program began to 14 today.

Currently, a dozen meat and poultry businesses across the state participate in the program, but Klug sees those numbers doubling in the near future.

"We are always getting inquiries from new producers, who see this as an important way to build their

business over time. It's also a phenomenal program for those who sell to farmers markets, especially if they are located close to the state borders."

Olson is proud that her state has been an early participant in the CIS program.

"The program has not only impacted my bottom line in a very positive way, but it also taught me a lot. The people who run it are so great in helping you get answers. I think it's one more way that Wisconsin takes care of its businesses." – *Cathy Lockman*



BEEFED UP IN WISCONSIN

Wisconsin beef producers hold cattle welfare, performance to high standards



Longtime farm lore seems to work. “Feed cows at night and calves in the daylight,” cattleman Scott Hoffman says.

Even so, he still checks his cattle frequently at night during spring calving, the birthing season on his farm. He worries most about the new moms, prompting checks at 10 p.m., 2 a.m., 6 a.m. and then several times during broad daylight.

“Those 2 a.m. welfare checks are not fun when you have to get dressed, wake up and then try to go back to sleep again,” says Hoffman, owner of J&S Angus in southwest Wisconsin. “It makes my blood boil when people think we don’t take

care of the animals. I think cattlemen are very good stewards of the land and animal welfare.”

A fifth-generation farmer, Hoffman maintains Beef Quality Assurance certification, implements best management techniques and uses research-based, low-stress handling practices on his farm. He earned the title of 2016 Cattleman of the Year from the Wisconsin Cattlemen’s Association. The award annually recognizes a Wisconsin cattle producer with a positive influence on the industry.

Hoffman and his wife, Gail, live on the family farm, homesteaded in 1868. In the deeply carved area

of Richland County, they run a cow-calf and seedstock Angus farm, representative of Wisconsin’s diversity and family ownership in the beef industry. In traditional cow-calf operations, farmers care for brood cows to deliver calves, which they eventually sell as feeder calves to feedlots. Seedstock producers like Hoffman raise genetically superior cattle for breeding purposes. Other Wisconsin farms may background cattle, or teach calves to eat from a bunk before they head to a feedlot. Some of the state’s cattlemen may operate their own feedlots, where they feed the calves to market weight.

Scott Hoffman carefully monitors the welfare of his beef cattle.



“The Wisconsin beef market is very diversified, as well,” says Austin Arndt, president of the Wisconsin Cattlemen’s Association. “Anything from selling a quarter of a freezer beef to a neighbor to selling four truck loads of steers to a national packer.”

And beef is big business. The Wisconsin beef industry generates \$6.94 billion each year from on-farm and processing revenue, according to the Wisconsin Beef Council.

WISCONSIN BEEFED UP

While dairy claims Wisconsin’s cattle fame, the state actually contains more beef farms than

dairy. Dairy takes the lead in the number of cows, with more cows per farm.

“I try not to divide the industries because at the end of the day, they’re all beef cattle,” says Arndt, who operates a diversified crop and beef cattle farm with his family in southern Wisconsin. “When a dairy cow is done being productive with her dairy life, she is beef.”

Regardless of bovine type, cattle work well in Wisconsin. The state contains ideal natural resources, access to feed co-products from ethanol plants and profitable marketing opportunities with packing and processing facilities.

The state’s topography also caters to cattle.

“I got into beef because we have steep hillsides that are not good for row crops,” says Hoffman, also a director on the Wisconsin Beef Council. “Cattle can turn a brushy hillside into a good-tasting piece of beef. It’s also environmentally sustainable, and you can help feed the world.”

MOTIVATED TO PERFORM

Hoffman collects lots of data on his herd, symbolic of his emphasis on cattle performance. Whether birth and weaning weights, pregnancy confirmation or reproductive tests on bulls, Hoffman tracks statistics that encourage perpetual improvement. He also orders carcass ultrasounds to determine meat quality. And he works closely with his veterinarian to perform those evaluations, establish a health care plan and verify nutritional needs.

“After 22 years, I still wake up motivated and love raising beef cattle,” Hoffman says. “I sometimes call it cow therapy.”

– Joanie Stiers

WISCONSIN IS ONE OF ONLY 10 STATES THAT HAS INCREASED BEEF PRODUCTION IN THE LAST DECADE, SECOND ONLY TO OKLAHOMA.

Sources: Wisconsin Beef Council, 2013 State of Wisconsin’s Beef Cattle Industry

Midwest Food Processors Association
www.mwfpa.org

MWFPA
Midwest Food Processors Association, Inc.

Consumers’ and retailers’ link to Wisconsin agriculture

Rural Mutual
Insurance Company

As the leading insurer of Wisconsin farms, we recognize that agribusiness requires special protection.

The **FARM INSURANCE** experts you can rely on!

To protect what’s important to you, call 1-877-219-9550 or visit our website and we can show you the variety of coverages available to address all your insurance needs.

www.ruralins.com



BEEF BENEFITS

WISCONSIN BEEF COUNCIL IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING BEEF

No one is asking, "Where's the beef?" in the Dairy State, thanks to the Wisconsin Beef Council's efforts to promote the protein. The organization works diligently to educate consumers about this important agricultural commodity in a variety of ways.

"We try to promote beef as a healthy protein that's high in nutritional value," says Matthew Bayer, president of the Wisconsin Beef Council board of directors.

Bayer, who is also a board member of the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors, personally knows a thing or two about beef. His family owns Country Fresh Meats in Weston. The business employs 45 people and has been operating since 1982.

Wisconsin Beef Council members spread the word about the benefits of beef on the council's website, beeftips.com, which features the nutritional benefits of beef, recipes, cooking tips and other information. The council also distributes Beef Checkoff brochures.

The group sponsors beef cooking contests in the state, and also administers the Beef for the Classroom grant, which is funded by beef producers. The grant goes toward cooking-related high school courses. Team BEEF Wisconsin is the council's running team, a community of runners and health enthusiasts who recognize the nutritional benefits of lean beef for training.

Consumers can join the 30 Day Protein Challenge and receive daily emails with goals, tips and inspiration to stay on track to get an optimal amount of protein in their daily diets.

The council also promotes education about humane cattle handling and animal welfare.

"That helps producers do a better job of handling the animals in a more calm, natural state," Bayer says.

Learn more about beef at beeftips.com.



DAWN TILL DUSK TILL ALWAYS

Together with Farm Credit, Badgerland Financial is celebrating our 100th year of supporting rural communities and agriculture. But our job is far from over. Building on our century of experience, we'll be here to provide credit and financial services, today and tomorrow.



explore 100 years of Farm Credit at farmcredit100.com



Photo by Steve Wolt

From the GROUND UP

Vegetable growers prosper in Wisconsin's
fresh market, processing sectors

Next time you dig into a loaded baked potato or top your bratwurst with flavorful kraut, thank a Wisconsin vegetable farmer.

Along with a large variety of commodities, the Dairy State produces a wide range of vegetables for processing and the fresh market. In fact, the state ranks No. 1 in the U.S. for snap beans for processing and beets for canning and No. 3 for potatoes, sweet corn for processing, peas for processing and cucumbers for pickles, among others.

“Our state is blessed with outstanding soil and water resources, as well as a favorable climate for vegetable production,” says Tamas Houlihan, executive director for the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association. “Our growers have a long history of land stewardship. They are knowledgeable and

progressive, adopting the latest technology in their farming practices.”

A STRONG INDUSTRY

Among the many vegetables included in Wisconsin's industry, Houlihan says the potato sector is one of the strongest and most stable. Alsum Farms & Produce grows 2,300 acres of potatoes along the lower Wisconsin River Valley in Arena, Spring Green and Grand Marsh.

Founded in 1973, Alsum Farms & Produce, a second-generation, family-owned-and-operated farm, involves Larry Alsum working alongside several family members, including his two daughters.

“We grow russet, red, white, gold, fingerling and purple potatoes in a sustainable, eco-friendly manner,” Alsum says. “We’re growing four times as many potatoes as we did

25 years ago using less land, energy and water, and lower emissions per acre grown.”

Alsum Farms & Produce is a national distributor of Wisconsin potatoes and onions, and partners with other growers across the nation to deliver other fresh produce year round.

“These relationships are focused on providing our customers with top-quality produce throughout the year, and it simplifies the buying function for them,” Alsum says.

Though Alsum doesn't grow any vegetables organically, they do work with other organic farms to market a year-round supply of organic russet, red and gold potatoes.

According to the 2014 Organic Survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wisconsin was home to 68 organic potato farms that earned a value of \$1.33 million in sales.

Alsum Farms & Produce grows more than 2,300 acres of potatoes along the Wisconsin River Valley in Arena, Spring Green and Grand Marsh.



is dedicated to
healthy food,
families & farms



The "Mother Hen"

of TWO premium
natural chicken brands



Just **BARE**

We're part of the
GOOD FOOD
movement.

*We provide healthy,
natural chicken
to millions of people
each year. And we do
that while caring for
our people, animals
and planet.*

JOIN our flock!



NOW HIRING!

GNPCompany.com

Andy Diercks of Coloma Farms also produces Wisconsin potatoes, farming about 2,700 acres, 750 of which are for potatoes. Roughly half of the crop goes to a local French fry processor, McCain Foods, while other varieties go to the fresh market and for regional chip processors.

"On any given year, we have about 8 to 10 different varieties of potatoes," Diercks says.

He and his father, Steve, are the third and fourth generation to work on the family farm. They also grow corn and soybeans, and take advantage of opportunities with neighbors to rotate a variety of

vegetables such as sweet corn, green beans, peas, carrots and more, thanks to the potatoes' three-year rotation.

Diercks says he plans to continue to diversify to be more profitable, but also to make the best decisions for the environment, employees and neighbors. With the help of researchers at University of Wisconsin-Madison and the WPVGA, Diercks says Wisconsin vegetable farmers are always looking at new crops to grow, and better ways to grow and market existing crops.

– Rachel Bertone



WISCONSIN RANKS

#1

FOR GREEN BEANS

#3

FOR SWEET CORN



WISCONSIN RANKS **SECOND**
IN THE NATION FOR PRODUCING
MAJOR PROCESSING VEGETABLES
AND **THIRD** FOR POTATOES.

Sources: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Wisconsin DATCP

REACHING OUT

Minority Farmer Outreach and Assistance provides tools for success

As the coordinator for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Minority Farmer Outreach and Assistance Program, Jack Chang helps minority farmers connect with needed resources to successfully start or expand their businesses.

While participants in the program consist of Hispanic, African-American and Asian farmers, the vast majority are Hmong. They specialize in growing fruits, vegetables and ginseng, and selling in the fresh market.

"The Hmong have the most interest in agriculture and, in many cases, their family members have had experience in farming before coming to the U.S.," says Chang, whose parents were farmers in Laos before they settled in Wisconsin. "Our goal is to help minority farmers stand on their own feet by minimizing cultural and language barriers that exist as they enter the market and try to expand."

Chang says minority farmers already have the work ethic and the agricultural skills to be successful.

"Our program gives them more tools to make informed business decisions," he says. "For example, it might be about legal issues or production costs or pricing."

Some of that information may also include safety and risk management.

"Through workshops, we provide customized and culturally appropriate training," Chang says. "For instance, there is a complexity to regulations around the application of pesticides. We want them to understand the label

so that they mix the chemicals and apply them correctly."

Chang also works one-on-one with minority farmers as they navigate and build their businesses.

"The individual farmers and their

families are direct beneficiaries, but we are all lucky to have this program because it has a positive impact on our local, regional and state economies as well."

– Cathy Lockman

BUSHMANS' INC.
Your Professional Potato People

100 years of growing excellence

Full Line Potato and Onion Shippers
Year Round Supply
Custom Packaging
Food Safety and Traceability Experts

SPEEDY SPUDS
MICRO-CONVENIENT, ONLY 7 MINUTES...
NO PEELING!

Your Favorite Microwave Potato

Boxcar Joe

Mike Carter CEO
Michael Gatz Director of Business Development
800-826-0200
715-677-4533 • Fax: 715-677-4076
Rosholt, Wisconsin

MEMBER XXXX

FOOD SAFETY AND TRACEABILITY

www.bushmansinc.com

AG MARKETING BOARDS



Brought to You By **WISCONSIN**

State agricultural marketing boards promote Wisconsin commodities



Chances are you have already come in contact with the work of one of Wisconsin's seven agricultural marketing boards. If you've ever eyed a package of Wisconsin cranberries, traveled to a festival in Wisconsin cherry country or been wowed by a display of Wisconsin cheeses – those are all likely the result of work funded and managed by Wisconsin farmers who grow and produce those products.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Agricultural marketing boards direct industry-specific efforts for research, education and promotion. Wisconsin has state marketing orders for seven farm products: cherries, corn, cranberries, ginseng, milk, potatoes and soybeans.

"They choose to form boards because, as a group, they can accomplish far more than they could as individual producers," says Stacie Ashby, market orders interim program coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

The board receives funds by collecting an assessment on the production or sale of farm products. The assessment is a tiny percentage of total product value. For example, the Wisconsin Cranberry Board collects 10 cents for every barrel (or 100 pounds) of cranberries sold by Wisconsin producers. That dime is less than one percent of the total barrel value, but all those dimes add up to provide \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually for research, education and promotion specific to Wisconsin cranberries.

Agricultural marketing board members are elected to three-year terms.

"Each board of directors runs that marketing order," Ashby says. They manage the marketing order and the funds collected from the sale of the products under that order, allowing those closest to each commodity to determine where the funds are most needed.

"The boards are often working on long-range projects specific to their industry," Ashby says. DATCP supervises the board elections and makes sure each board operates in compliance with state law.

THE MESSAGE OF CHEESE

The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board is the largest agricultural marketing board. Farmers contribute a flat rate of ten cents per hundred pounds of milk to the board. "Since 90 percent of Wisconsin milk goes into the making of cheese, that is where most of our

promotional efforts are focused," says Patrick Geoghegan, WMMB senior vice president, corporate communications.

Promotional efforts include the WMMB Grilled Cheese Recipe Showdown, started in 2012. Consumers nationwide send in original grilled cheese recipes; and the winner receives a \$15,000 prize.



THE WISCONSIN MILK MARKETING BOARD IS THE LARGEST AGRICULTURAL MARKETING BOARD IN THE STATE.

WMMB partners with the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research and the University of Wisconsin-Extension to offer the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker program. The program provides specialized training and certifies graduates as Master Cheesemakers who can add the "Master's Mark" to product labels and marketing materials. Almost half of specialty cheese sold in the U.S. carries the Wisconsin seal, which thanks to the work of the board helps make Wisconsin cheese recognized worldwide.

GINSENG

Tom Hack, Ginseng Board of Wisconsin international marketing director, says the ginseng marketing order helps support Wisconsin's international reputation. Wisconsin grows nearly all the cultivated ginseng in the U.S.; 70 percent is exported to Asia.

"The marketing order funds ongoing research to improve the quality of ginseng seed and help us manage crop disease issues," Hack says.

The ginseng marketing order has another positive impact, Hack adds. Trademarked "Wisconsin Ginseng" commands a premium in the international marketplace, creating financial incentive for false product claims about ginseng not grown here. The Wisconsin Ginseng marketing order has controls requiring both registered producers and dealers to record the amount and destination of product shipments; these records can help identify false product claims.

"We are very fortunate to have the marketing order," Hack says.

– Matthew D. Ernst

Healthy Cows, Healthy Farms

Wisconsin dairy farmers keep
their animals healthy



Bob Nagel cares for the cows at Holsum Dairies in Hilbert.

Photo by Jeff Adkins

Wisconsin is known nationwide for its excellence in the dairy industry. As the demand for milk continues to increase, Wisconsin dairy farmers are innovating new ways to produce more milk while still keeping animal care their top priority. In fact, the two go hand in hand.

“It behooves us to do everything we can 24 hours a day, seven days a week all year long to care for our animals,” says Daphne Holterman of Rosy-Lane Holsteins in Watertown. “If they’re comfortable, they grow better and are healthier. It’s also the right thing to do. Caring for animals is just innate in me. When there’s a snow storm, my first instinct is to get right out there and check on the babies.”

Holterman and her husband, Lloyd, own Rosy-Lane with two other business partners. The farm milks 900 cows, employs 20 people full time and grows much of its own feed.

Holterman says each decision the staff makes hinges on whether it will benefit the cows, and employees are trained and held accountable to nearly 80 detailed animal care standards. Each quarter, the Rosy-Lane staff formally evaluates its animal care practices and continually educates and trains its employees.

“We feel it’s very important to remind them of the best practices,” Holterman says. “You can always get better at animal care.”

DAIRY MYTHS

General Manager Bob Nagel of Holsum Dairies, which milks over 8,000 cows in two locations, says so many of the myths about the dairy industry center around the idea that farmers push the cows too hard in an effort to increase production. Poor animal care practices do not benefit the animals or the farmers, he says.

“It benefits us to keep a cow healthy and productive for the long term rather than pushing her too hard for one lactation and then selling her,” says Nagel, who was recently named 2016 Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year by the International Dairy Foods Association and Dairy Herd Management.

Nigel Cook, professor of food animal production medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, says state farmers have used good animal care practices to increase milk production safely and humanely.

“Cows are producing a lot of milk while maintaining low levels of production disease through excellent management,” Cook says. “These cows are comfortable and healthy, which means our older cows are no longer beaten up and broken down by disease.”

Another common myth consumers may believe is that cows prefer to be outside.

“Three different studies have shown that when given a choice between housing and pasture, cows actually choose both,” Cook says. “They like to be in the barn during the daytime, and they like to go outside at night. So when we ask the cows, they don’t go bolting for freedom. There are strong, powerful reasons why we house the cows the way we do.”

BIG ISN'T BAD

Holterman says some people may have misinformation about large dairy farms and their ability to provide good animal care. But sometimes, she says, it’s easier to provide excellent care for animals on a larger farm because of the ability to invest in technology and superior genetics.

“I see animal care as a size-neutral issue,” she says. “We grew our farm business slowly

over time, and it just so happens we are now a medium-sized family farm. We’ve found it’s about economies of scale – if you don’t have a good economy of scale, you may not be as likely to invest in technologies, some of which help you treat the cows better.”

Technology allows Rosy-Lane’s cows to receive individual care.

“They wear a Fitbit-type electronic, an Afi transponder, that communicates to a computer every eight minutes,” Holterman says. “We can track a lot of different things, and if one indicator is off a little bit, we most likely can catch an illness early.”

Being a large dairy allows Holsum Dairies to hire and keep the best talent, Nagel says. Holsum has 86 full-time employees.

“We have some very well-trained, dedicated herdsman who are in the pens every single day getting to know these animals individually,” he says.

According to Nagel, the farm has had a herdsman on staff for 16 years who knows every cow and her history by sight.

“Having those talented people who dial in and make sure we are giving that one-on-one care on a large scale is a huge factor that helps us do well,” he says.

Cook says Wisconsin dairy farmers are some of the most hardworking, caring farmers he knows.

“I travel all over the world, and there isn’t a better group of progressive dairymen anywhere,” Cook says. “Wisconsin dairy farmers are good businessmen, and they take excellent care of their cattle.”

– Jill Clair Gentry



PARTNERS IN CARE

Veterinarians work closely with livestock producers to ensure animal health

Farmers and veterinarians have always relied upon each other, working collaboratively to ensure the health of hogs, horses, chickens, goats and cattle since the dawn of livestock production. But the nature of those partnerships has evolved to meet the holistic health needs of the business in unprecedented ways.

“The majority of the work now is in the subclinical area, meaning that there are no signs of sickness,” says Dr. Dave Rhoda, a dairy farm veterinarian who’s been practicing for 50 years.

In days past, it was far more common for Rhoda to receive an emergency call to treat a sick animal, and that still happens, of course. But the vast majority of his time is now spent on preventative health strategies and data recording of markers like somatic cell count, ketosis and milk fever.

“Because we are selling a food product every day, the dairy cow is the one that we really pay a lot of attention to how she’s feeling and what things we can use to treat her with,” Rhoda says. As for the human relationships, “They get stronger and stronger, because we’re working regularly as a team. The vet, the owner or manager and all the people who work cow-side.”

That team might include multigenerational family members, nutritionists, University of Wisconsin-Extension agents, equipment dealers or even loan officers, says Dr. Ray Pawlisch of Brodhead Veterinary Medical Center, in practice for 35 years.

“Teamwork provides the best



kinds of solutions, and developing those relationships over time establishes trust,” he says.

Emergencies aside, Pawlisch and his team perform farm visits multiple times a week to check for reproductive problems, vaccinate cattle, perform surgeries or strategize protocols. They’re also sending samples to the Wisconsin Veterinarian Diagnostic Laboratory for testing almost every day.

“We try to prevent problems and manage around them so we don’t have all these emergencies.”

But ultimately, Pawlisch says,

it’s still all about those human relationships. Veterinarians know all the farm dogs by name. They know whose daughter is off to college, whose son just got married. They attend weddings, graduations and funerals.

“My mission statement is to promote health, and educate and encourage farm families,” Pawlisch says. “There’s not a more dedicated group. This is their business and their life and they really are dedicated to the health of those animals.”

– Maggie Ginsberg

SAFETY FIRST

Wisconsin program protects food integrity nationwide

In an effort to be proactive in food safety at the farm level, Wisconsin veterinarians have collectively developed a precedent-setting program.

Food Armor™ is a one-of-a-kind, on-farm action plan that outlines how veterinarians and farmers can work together to redefine drug use in the dairy industry. The voluntary, educational outreach program takes a proactive approach to prevent drug residues in milk and meat. While testing and food plant protocol prevent residue-tainted milk or meat from entering the food chain, Food Armor™ aims to further reduce the risk of residues reaching the food processor.

“Our program started in Wisconsin and has had a lot of success,” says Dr. Katie Mrdutt, outreach specialist for Food Armor™. “We now have taken this program nationwide and trained veterinarians coast to coast.”

Since its inception in 2011, the program has shown decreased residue cases at the plant level, Mrdutt says.

The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association and Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin partnered to debut the formal program, fully titled the Food Armor™ Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) for Proper Drug Use Farm Certification Program.

The trademarked logo launched in 2014. In 2015, the program trained 200 veterinarians nationwide. In 2016, those veterinarians are working to

certify farms through the Food Armor™ six-section plan. Certification involves keeping stringent records, developing treatment plans, maintaining an inventory of on-farm medicines, identifying potential residue hazards and recording a permanent medical history for each animal.

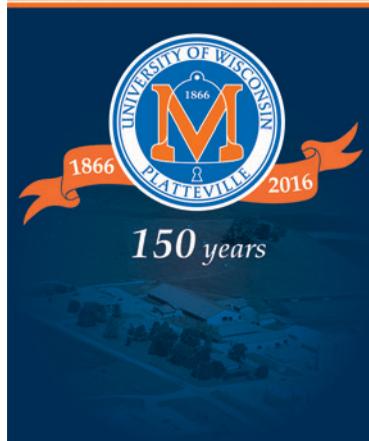
“The beauty of this program is it is customized per individual farm,” says Kim Brown Pokorny, executive director of the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association. “Whether it’s management style, employee skill sets or a different business model and goals, each and every HACCP program on each and every farm is customized.”

Embracing Food Armor™ requires a relationship with various livestock-related organizations, as the program has sponsorships from the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Wisconsin Beef Council, Professional Dairy Producers Foundation and Equity Livestock Cooperative. A random third-party audit ensures the integrity of the program.

“Not only am I a veterinarian, I’m a mom and a producer myself,” Mrdutt says. “I have the same concerns that any other mom might have about putting healthy and safe food on the table. I have confidence in meat and dairy products, knowing that there is a program out there like this and knowing all the safety practices at the farm level all the way to the grocery store.”

– Joanie Stiers

REMEMBER THE PAST.



CELEBRATE THE PRESENT.

UW-PLATTEVILLE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE PROFILE

Undergraduate enrollment ~800

Employment rate ~98%

Number of faculty and staff 34

Number of clubs/organizations 18

Number of competitive teams 7

PIONEER THE FUTURE.



608.342.1393 | soa@uwplatt.edu
www.uwplatt.edu/agriculture

f /UWPSchoolofAg

From the FOREST to FRONT DOOR

Window, door manufacturers add value to Wisconsin's wood products industry

When it's time to install a quality door or window at your business or home, Wisconsin has you covered. The central part of the state is home to a cluster of window manufacturers that make and ship energy-efficient and attractive panes worldwide, adding value to Wisconsin lumber and supporting thousands of manufacturing jobs.

The value added to Wisconsin's lumber industry – and the state's broader economy – starts with the wood in the window frames. Window and door manufacturers here say Wisconsin lumber provides a natural advantage.

“We have numerous lumber suppliers in the state of Wisconsin,” says Keith Koenig, vice president of manufacturing/

procurement at Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork Co. Inc., Wausau. The company purchases Wisconsin pine and hardwoods like oak, walnut and maple.

“When you can source materials you need locally, it does save on transportation costs,” Koenig adds.

GOOD THINGS COME IN TREES

Purchasing Wisconsin wood supports forest owners, loggers, sawmills, truckers and others in the wood products industry. But the glass that goes into the window may also come from a Wisconsin company, according to Dave Pfahl of Medford-based Weather Shield Windows and Doors, which employs approximately 1,200 people. Weather Shield also relies on

Wisconsin aluminum fabrication and metal stamping businesses to provide metal components made to spec for windows and doors.

The wood products sector serves as the foundation for many related jobs and businesses, as many of the items that protect and beautify windows and doors come from here, too. Wisconsin companies also supply finishing products such as paints, sealants, fasteners and hardware, as well as the packaging, advertising solutions and technology services.

Proximity to forests providing lumber, a long history of wood craftsmanship and established relationships with specialized input suppliers – many of them in Wisconsin – have resulted in a global reputation for Wisconsin window and door manufacturers.

Their ability to create energy efficient, environmentally responsible and aesthetically pleasing designs has given companies an edge in meeting the tastes of global consumers, including high-end home builders.

The luxury home market is a particular focus at Weather Shield, which created an entire design collection for the market, according to director of sales Dan Drost.

“This has allowed Weather Shield to take advantage of trends in the industry for sleek lines, square profiles, and large window and door units,” Drost says. “All major metro markets are seeing tremendous interest in this architectural style, and Weather Shield is poised to capture a large portion of business with our quality wood products from Wisconsin.”

Window and wooden door shipments, including wooden interior doors for nonresidential buildings, have increased since 2013, according to the Window and Door Manufacturers Association. Wood-clad windows made up about 20 percent of all window shipments from 2013 to 2015, and total shipments increased 8 to 10 percent annually. Wooden doors, especially higher-end entryway doors, are also seeing positive market growth. With positive growth forecast through 2017, Wisconsin’s window and door manufacturers have plenty of opportunity to continue beautifying homes around the world.

– *Matthew D. Ernst*

Weather Shield windows and doors manufactures Wisconsin wood products for homes.





62,200+

employees in Wisconsin's forest products industry

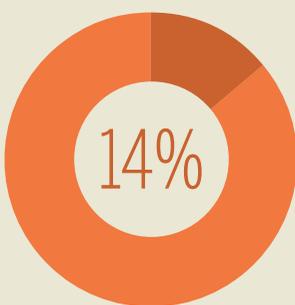
SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

WISCONSIN'S FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN STATE'S ECONOMY

Manufacturing forest products contributes greatly to Wisconsin's economy, with forestry as the state's second-largest manufacturing industry. The state has 16 million acres of forestland, and 54 percent of those are privately owned. The number of acres of forest land has increased by 640,000 since 1985. Overall, the industry employs about 74,000 people at 1,292 wood-product companies.

Each year, Wisconsin's forestry industry generates \$20 billion per year in shipments and another \$15 billion indirectly. Wisconsin wood exports increased 3.8 percent from \$201 million in 2012 to \$208 million in 2014. The Badger State also ranked No. 16 in the nation for export of lumber and logs in 2014.

Paper is a significant contributor to the state's economy. Wisconsin has been the top papermaking state in the nation for the last 50 years.



Forest products jobs make up about **14 percent** of all Wisconsin manufacturing jobs.



WOOD AND SAWMILL PRODUCTS ADD \$1.5 BILLION TO WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY.

WISCONSIN IS THE

#1

PAPER-PRODUCING STATE IN THE NATION.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

INNOVATION GROWS ON TREES

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY MAKES HEADWAY IN WISCONSIN

Innovative wood and fiber utilization research is taking place right here in Wisconsin.

Established in Madison in 1910, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Products Laboratory is the only federally funded wood utilization research lab in the U.S. Its scientists work to identify and conduct innovative wood and fiber utilization research that contributes to conservation and productivity of forest resources. The findings help sustain forests, economy and quality of life.

For almost 100 years, the lab's mission has been to use wood resources wisely and efficiently, while also keeping forests healthy.

The lab got its start preserving railroad ties, but now scientists venture into research focusing on issues in nanotechnology and environmental sustainability. They've found ways to use wood for everything from bridges and trail structures to paneling, sheathing and furniture to advanced composites and renewable biofuels.

Some research achievements in the lab's earlier days included reducing timber demand for railroad ties by 75 percent through preservatives research and wood frame technology used in over 90 percent of U.S. homes.

Learn more about the Forest Products Laboratory at fpl.fs.fed.us.

FROM THE FARM TO CHEF TABLE

Chef and cooking school partner with local farmers

When Random Lake producer Jeff Preder met Chef David Swanson and learned about Restaurant Supported Agriculture, he knew it was a great idea. With agritourism on the rise and farm-to-table popularity at an all-time high, “more farmers were wanting their products to get out to different restaurants,” says Preder. Preder’s Jeff-Leen Farm (a combination of his and his wife Kathleen’s names) produces naturally raised Piedmontese beef, pastured chickens and eggs.

Enter Swanson’s Braise RSA, which connects local farmers with urban Milwaukee-area restaurants. Braise absorbs the time and cost associated with buying directly from farmers while eliminating the guesswork and labor for participating restaurateurs who want to meet their customers’ growing demand for locally sourced food.

“There’s farmer speak and there’s chef speak, and they don’t always speak the same language. So I think of myself as a translator,” says Swanson, a four-time James Beard Award-nominated chef who coined the RSA term in 2006, based on the more consumer-oriented concept of Community Supported Agriculture. In 2008, he successfully secured

a Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and launched Braise RSA with four restaurants and 12 farms. That has now grown to 35 Milwaukee-area restaurants and 160 participating farms, translating to \$800,000 in sales for producers and business owners. With a second Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant awarded in 2016, Swanson plans to transform the business from an LLC into a cooperative to reflect the true nature of the collaboration.

“We want the farmer’s identity to be intact,” Swanson says. “If there are eight farmers supplying us with beets, for example, every end-user restaurant, chef or caterer will know exactly what farm they’re getting their beets from.”

Preder took over the 148-year-old family farm in 1977, sold the dairy cows in 1997 and transitioned to beef and chickens shortly thereafter. Participation in the RSA program has allowed him to develop his business while focusing the bulk of his time and energy on farming – and that was Swanson’s intention.

“We want chefs to chef,” Swanson says, “and farmers to farm.”

– Maggie Ginsberg



DIGGING UP AGRICULTURE'S ROOTS

History and heritage drive
agritourism in Wisconsin



Visitors step back in time and get an up-close look at agricultural history at Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center.

As the old adage says, you can't know where you are going until you know where you have been. Wisconsin's agritourism industry is a testament to that fact, as visitors flock to working farms and agricultural historic sites to learn more about this important part of the state's heritage.

"History buffs are now heading out to the local farms to learn more about historical barns and buildings who may have never before considered this a form of history," says Kelly Murray, executive director of Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association. "They are looking at it as an educational opportunity for themselves and their children, but they are also contributing to the state's tourism economy."

CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE

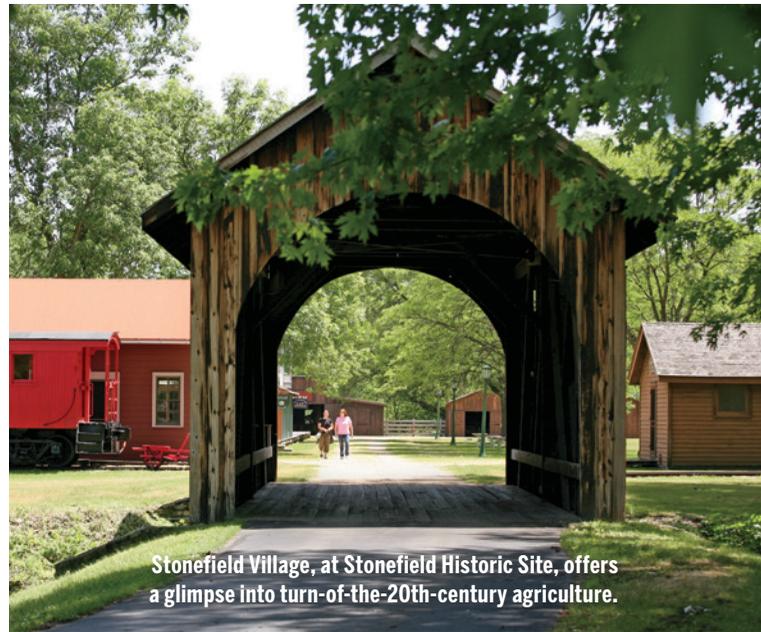
Stonefield Historic Site in Cassville – home of Nelson Dewey, the first governor of Wisconsin – offers visitors a look at agriculture in Wisconsin at the turn of the 20th century and explores the mutual relationship between farmers and the neighboring village. The site's extensive collection of agricultural artifacts includes the nation's very first rubber-tired tractor, as well as the oldest tractor in the country. Grant County, where the historic site is located, provides funding to ensure every school child can visit Stonefield for free.

"Families can visit Stonefield and talk about growing up on the farm, but also pass that along to their children and grandchildren. I think sharing those stories while they're visiting is important," says Allen Schroeder, Stonefield site director. "And I think it's important to preserve this material and buildings for future generations. Our past gives us a lot of lessons for today, as well as into the future. We need places like Stonefield."

Tammy Potaracke, operations manager of Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center in Coon Valley, agrees.

"People just don't have the firsthand, up-close interaction they used to have with farms. Lives have become distracted and busy, with visual overload. When you step onto a farm or museum site and breathe the air, smell the grass – it can be a stress reliever," she says.

While not a working farm, Norskedalen comes alive during many of its events and programs with demonstrations, live animals and hands-on discovery interactions for the more than 14,000 people including some 3,000 school children who visit each year. The nature and heritage center offers a historical look at agriculture with assets that include notable buildings complete with domestic and agricultural artifacts, such as implements, tools, and equipment; demonstrations of these tools; and guided tours to show how pioneers lived.



Stonefield Village, at Stonefield Historic Site, offers a glimpse into turn-of-the-20th-century agriculture.

LEARNING FROM THE LAND

Murray says Wisconsin's agritourism industry has also been fueled by consumer curiosity.

"People in the cities are continuing to want to explore where their food comes from and how farms take care of animals," she says.

This growing consumer interest has given many smaller farms an additional source of revenue through admission fees, for example, as well as a new market through which to promote their products.

"Some of the successes of our members can be seen in the continuation of growth expansion on their farms by building additional buildings, expanding on their activities or adding additional manufacturing to their farms," Murray says.

The ginseng production industry is another part of the state's agricultural history that's just now getting into the agritourism side of the sector. In Wisconsin, some 185 producers harvest 720,000 pounds of ginseng annually. In 2017, producers will host the inaugural North American Wisconsin Ginseng Festival to promote the Wisconsin-grown herb.

"We cannot do enough to help educate and promote the Wisconsin agriculture industry. This is so vital to the future of our respective industries," says Jeff Lewis, general manager of the Ginseng and Herb Co-op. "We hope to accomplish more name recognition with the festival. We already know that we are unique in the ginseng industry, and have a small, high-end niche market. We hope to attract a large international audience that will come to Wisconsin for the very first time and see what this industry is all about."

– Tere Caruthers

GET A TASTE OF WISCONSIN

STATE HAS A VARIETY OF FOOD FESTIVALS TO SATISFY ALL TASTES

Want a taste of Wisconsin? Then you're in luck. Wisconsin is packed with food festivals year round, featuring some of the state's most important agricultural commodities. For information on all of the food festivals in the state, go to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's Travel Wisconsin website, travelwisconsin.com. The following events are just a few examples of the many festivals that educate about the importance of agriculture and connect farmers with consumers, all while delighting a variety of palates.

BEEF: Beef-a-Rama

Running for more than 50 years, Beef-a-Rama brings enthusiasts together in Minocqua to celebrate Wisconsin beef products. The festival features a parade, cook-offs, live music, races, games and more – all served with more than a ton of tasty beef. Visit beefarama.com for details about scheduling and events.

CRANBERRIES: Warrens Cranberry Fest

People travel from all over to attend the world's largest cranberry festival. Warrens Cranberry Fest, founded in 1973, features cranberry marsh tours, a parade and cranberry recipe contests, as well as arts, crafts and a variety of market booths. Learn more details about the festival and schedule at cranfest.com.

CHEESE: Green County Cheese Days

The oldest food festival in the Midwest at more than 100 years old, Green County Cheese Days celebrates dairy farming, cheesemaking and Swiss traditions deeply rooted in the area. The family-friendly event, which is held in Monroe, features a cheesemaking demonstration, milking contest, parade led by a herd of decorated Brown Swiss cattle and more. Visit cheesedays.com for a festival schedule.

CHICKEN: Eleva Broiler Fest

The Eleva Broiler Fest serves up mouthwatering chicken to festivalgoers as they enjoy carnival rides, music, parades and other activities. The event dates back to 1947, when a local family wanted to hold a celebration with a fun parade. Over the years, the festival has drawn thousands to the small village of Eleva, which has population of 700. Learn more at elevabroilerfestival.com.



STONEFIELD, HOME TO THE STATE AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM, IS RICH WITH WISCONSIN'S AGRICULTURAL PAST, HAVING THE STATE'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF FARM TOOLS, MODELS AND MACHINERY.

Sources: Stonefield, Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association

THE BEKKUM HOMESTEAD at Norskedalen features original log buildings built by Norwegian immigrants.

CHECK OUT WISCONSIN'S VARIETY OF AG ADVENTURES, TOURS, FESTIVALS AND MORE AT VISITDAIRYLAND.COM.

IN THE SHAKE OF A LAMB'S TAIL

LAMBING BARN AT GOVIN'S FARM OFFERS EDUCATIONAL FUN

Each spring, the lambing barn at Govin's Farm, east of Menomonie, opens its doors to visitors to see new lambs. John and Julie Govin run the small family farm with their two sons, Kyle and Clayton. Over several weekends in March and April each year, the family allows visitors to come see new lambs bounce around the barn and nurse on their mothers. Children learn about the animals, and may even get a chance to witness the birth of a lamb.

Govin's Farm offers other activities as well. Families can stop by and pick ripe strawberries in season. A wedding barn waits for couples to say their vows and start a new chapter in life. In the fall, visitors make their way through an 11-acre corn maze and stroll through the farm's pumpkin patch.

Learn more about Govin's Farm at govinsfarm.com.



U-PICK YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Wisconsin farm provides acres of fun for visitors

Greg Zwald admits that he knew little about agritourism when he decided to take on a new challenge in 2012. What the former dairy farmer did know was that he and his wife, Irma, wanted to sell directly to consumers.

So he did his research and took classes on fruit and vegetable production before opening White Pine Berry Farm, a 10-acre U-pick operation in River Falls.

Today, the operation has grown to include blueberries; red, gold and black raspberries; currants; and a wide variety of vegetables. Customers looking for fresh, organically certified fruit and vegetables can come to the farm and pick the items themselves or buy them already picked.

They can also find Zwald at the St. Paul farmers' market, where, depending on the day, his stand might

include berries, asparagus, carrots, kale, tomatoes, peppers, sweet corn, currants and watermelon.

When visitors come to White Pine Berry Farm, Zwald hopes they find it to be a "fun adventure, a time when they can be in the open countryside, enjoy the atmosphere and learn something about the food they eat and the rural lifestyle."

To add to the adventure, Zwald added a corn maze and a pumpkin patch that families can enjoy in the fall.

"U-pick isn't a large segment of the ag market in Wisconsin, but it is an important segment for a lot of reasons," says Zwald, who also serves on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection board. "It's a great place for young people who want to get their start in agriculture.

– Cathy Lockman



CRANBERRIES

A BERRY FINE



Photos by Steve Witt

LEGACY

Wisconsin family produces cranberries through the generations



When Ray Habelman's great-grandfather bought his first marsh in Tunnel City in 1907, fresh cranberries represented the whole market. There was no cranberry juice, jellied cranberry sauce or any of the other processed products that today account for more than 95 percent of cranberry sales.

Despite that ever-widening marketplace, Habelman Brothers has not wavered from its four-generation commitment to producing high-quality, fresh cranberries. In fact, the Wisconsin company is the world's largest fresh cranberry grower and packer. It's a proud family legacy.

"It's very unusual to focus on producing fresh cranberries, because it's more expensive and time consuming to do," says Habelman, current CEO. "But our family has always believed in ensuring that customers not only can get fresh cranberries, but can get the best quality."

The family includes the first three generations: Ray's great-grandfather, Ed, who had seven children; his grandfather, Ray Sr., along with four brothers; and Ray's father, Ray Jr., who lives in the original farm home and continues to be involved in the company. Other family members have a hand in the operations as well, and Ray III hopes that his four children – Riley, 14, Carter, 12, Brody, 8, and Mila, 4 – will be future cranberry growers, too.

Habelman Brothers Company is one of more than 250 farms growing cranberries throughout Wisconsin.



Ray Habelman works at his family cranberry farm.

BY THE BARREL

As the family has grown, so has the business. While that first 13-acre marsh continues to produce cranberries, additional property in Millston, Tomah and Tunnel City has expanded the Habelman Brothers' operation to nearly 700 acres.

That translates into a lot of fresh cranberries. Habelman says the company produces between 100,000 and 130,000 barrels of the fruit each year. With every barrel weighing 100 pounds, that means up to 13 million pounds of cranberries are harvested each fall. Of that, up to 9 million pounds are packaged on-site for the fresh market. They end up in

the produce aisles at small grocery stores and large chains across the country. The rest, which may be bruised or off color, make their way to processing plants.

Habelman Brothers' 700 acres is part of the 20,700 acres of cranberry vines in production in the state. Tom Lochner, executive director of Wisconsin Cranberry Growers, says many of the growers are multigenerational businesses.

"Wisconsin has a proud history and a strong base of growers. Nearly 60 percent of the nation's cranberry crop is grown in our state. It's estimated that the industry has a \$1 billion per year impact on the state economy."

250+

farmers grow cranberries throughout Wisconsin.

20,700 ACRES

of cranberries are grown in 20 Wisconsin counties.



THE CRANBERRY IS WISCONSIN'S OFFICIAL STATE FRUIT.



The leading cranberry producer in the U.S., Wisconsin harvests around **60 percent** of the nation's crop.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Wisconsin cranberry farmers are in it for the long haul, committing to their land, local communities and economies. In Wisconsin, the average cranberry bed is 40 years old, with the oldest bed reportedly planted around 140 years ago.

HOW DOES YOUR CRANBERRY GROW?

Despite popular belief, cranberries do not grow in water. In fact, as a perennial plant, cranberries grow on vines in sandy bogs and marshes that are flooded during harvest because cranberries float.

Sources: Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association, Wisconsin Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION

What makes Wisconsin a prime place for the cranberry industry? Lochner says the perennial plant has grown in the wild in central and northern Wisconsin since well before European settlement. Commercial growing began in the 1800s.

The state's climate, acidic soil and abundance of fresh, clean water create an ideal environment. So, too, does the Wisconsin growers' commitment to sustainability.

"Wisconsin is the best place in the world to grow cranberries," Lochner says. "Our growers have always known that. In fact, they were conservationists before it was fashionable."

He adds, "Marshes provide homes for just about every type of wildlife that one can imagine. It's their habitat, and our growers take pride in ensuring that the land and wildlife are protected in Wisconsin."

What's another important reason for the state's success in cranberry production? That strong Wisconsin work ethic and multigenerational commitment to the industry.

"I realize the generations before me worked hard to build this business," Habelman says. "They were committed to protecting the land and to delivering the best product. There is a lot of pride that goes into duplicating that effort."

— Cathy Lockman



Lending of the local variety.

For a century, we've sewn the seeds of progress by supporting our communities with quality financial products and services.

- Agricultural loans
- Vacant land financing
- Crop Insurance
- Tax & accounting services

Experience the Farm Credit tradition today!

800-444-FARM

 Learn more about Wisconsin's cranberry industry at Wlagriculture.com.

 **GreenStone**[®]
FARM CREDIT SERVICES
www.greenstonefcs.com

GUIDING LIGHT

Whether it's a phone call or a conversation across the kitchen table, experts willingly help farmers with anything from new market opportunities to farm transitions or profit planning to family conflict.

These professional and confidential services cost nothing for farm families through the Wisconsin Farm Center, a unique farm assistance program that proves the envy of other agricultural states. Since its establishment during the farm crisis of the 1980s, the center has helped thousands of farm families with business, economic and social needs.

"Over the years, the Farm Center has become much broader and expanded its programs and services to be proactive," says Daniel Smith, administrator of the Division of Agricultural Development in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection. This Division houses the Wisconsin Farm Center. "While we still maintain the helpline and assist with crisis management, we have

an array of programs that try to help farmers across the board with any opportunities or challenges they may face."

The Wisconsin Farm Center's initial focus 30 years ago helped farmers through the business and psychological struggles associated with the 1980s crash of the agricultural economy. Today, the center helps farmers through calm and crisis, whether it is the farm succession process, conflict mediation, production challenges or new market opportunities. Staff members help beginning and minority farmers, including the Hmong community, with risk management. And the center provides technical assistance to livestock and specialty crop farmers.

The Farm Center averages 2,000 phone calls annually, a 10 percent increase from two years ago, Smith says. About half of the inquiries focus on farm transition issues, which includes transferring the farm to the next generation or an outside person. Meanwhile, more farmers approach the center wanting to capture new market opportunities, such as

organic farming. They also seek guidance with financial planning as margins tighten in 2016 for milk and grain production.

STAFFED TO HELP

A team of eight division employees, along with about 20 volunteers, provides Farm Center services, whether that involves a five-minute phone conversation or years of periodic conversations at a farm family's kitchen table. That relationship often continues after the situation is resolved.

"We have people who have kept in touch with us long after the case has been closed," Smith says. "They let us know how things are going. You really build a personal relationship, and we take that very seriously. That is a very rewarding experience for our staff."

Sue Bronson, owner of New Prospects, a mediation services company in Milwaukee, has volunteered professional mediation services to the Farm Center since 1989. In that role, she has served as a neutral party between farmers and government agencies, creditors and more.

Farm Center helps Wisconsin farmers through calm and crisis

In accordance with the Farm Center philosophy, the farmers whom Bronson helps ultimately make their own decisions.

“I love that people make their own decisions,” she says. “It’s not about telling people what to do. It’s about empowering people to be clear, to set their priorities and to balance what’s important to them so that they feel okay making an informed decision.”

Financially stressful farm situations, like the drought of 2012 or the milk price decline of 2009, often double the inquiries to the Farm Center. Yet Smith encourages more farm families to reach out in good financial times, too.

Frequently, Smith hears that farmers have intended to call the center for years. He reminds farmers that it takes just a quick, confidential first phone call for assistance. Then, the Wisconsin Farm Center staff can handle the footwork for the farmers on a variety of issues and accommodate a farmer’s schedule with follow-ups.

“Agriculture is always changing, and we’re here to help farmers navigate those changes,” Smith says.

– Joanie Stiers





From isolating Vitamin D for enriching food in 1968, to more than \$1 billion in research investment today, Wisconsin leads the way in bioscience discovery.



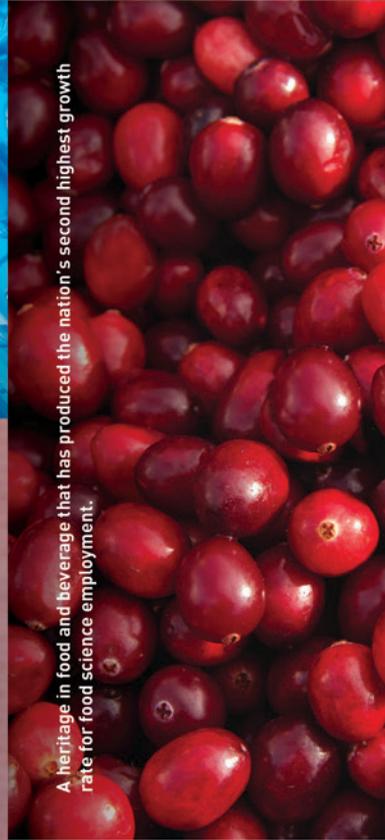
The Wisconsin Energy Institute promotes diverse scientific thinking from academia and industry to create integrated energy solutions.

OUR HISTORY OF INNOVATION HAS BECOME A TRADITION IN WISCONSIN[®]

To find out how your business can succeed in Wisconsin, visit inwisconsin.com or call 855-INWIBIZ to connect with a WEDC representative.



The freshwater capital of the world.



A heritage in food and beverage that has produced the nation's second highest growth rate for food science employment.



A national leader in advanced manufacturing using the same work ethic that built the motorcycle, typewriter and robotic welder (all invented in Wisconsin).



More science, technology, engineering and math graduates than any other metro area in the country.





Our passion
is to **help**
grow yours.

BMO  **Harris Bank**

We're here to help.™

From managing volatile commodity prices to planning for growth, our team of experienced agribusiness professionals understands your challenges and is dedicated to finding you sound solutions. At BMO Harris Commercial Bank, we can help make your vision a reality.

bmoharris.com/agribusiness

Banking products and services subject to bank and credit approval.
BMO Harris Commercial Bank is a trade name used by BMO Harris Bank N.A. Member FDIC

OUTSTANDING AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Visit wistechcolleges.org to learn how Wisconsin's Technical Colleges bring the latest farming technology into the classroom through:

- Bovine birth simulators
- GPS tracking systems
- Crop science
- Precision farming
- Sustainability

PROGRAMS
AVAILABLE

40+

IN AGRICULTURE
RELATED CAREERS

ALL

16

COLLEGES OFFER
AGRICULTURE
EDUCATION

MEDIAN
STARTING SALARY

\$40,000

2015 ASSOCIATE
DEGREE GRADS

92%
EMPLOYED WITHIN
SIX MONTHS
OF GRADUATION

WISCONSIN
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
SYSTEM