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Connecting consumers to farms, food and forestry

FRESH TAKE

Wisconsin is top mint producer

EXPORTING EXCELLENCE

Wisconsin products served around the globe

THE Sweet LIFE

Maple syrup is nature's perfect sweetener

CHEESE PLEASE

Wisconsin leads the nation in cheese production



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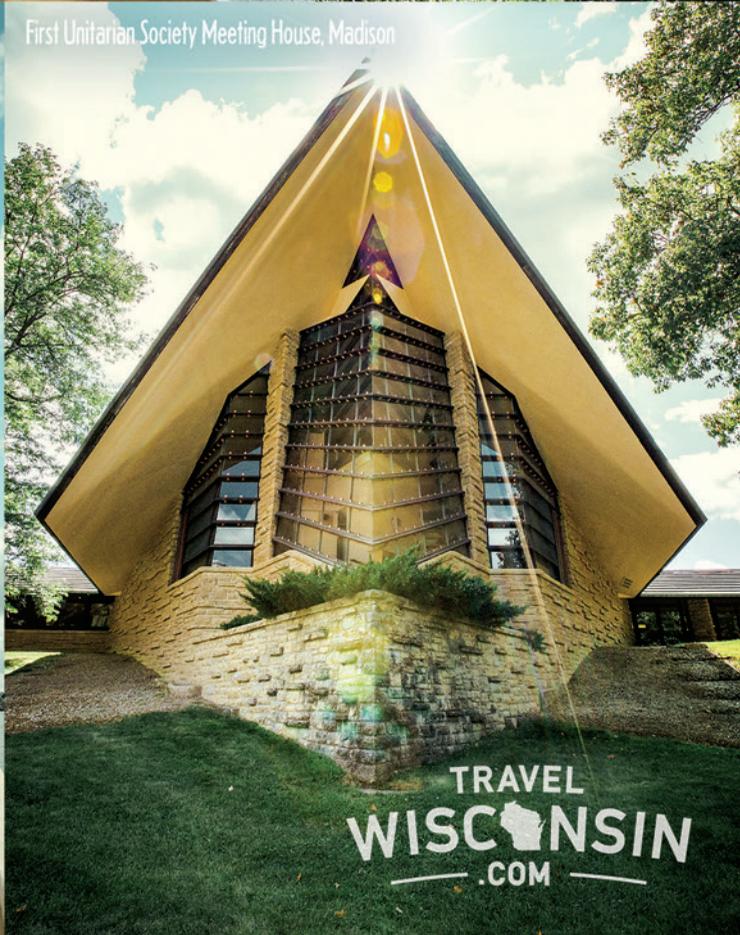
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Fresh dairy products including cheese, butter and sour cream are used to make Twice-Baked Potatoes.

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GROWING WISCONSIN

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Sheila E. Harsdorf was appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in November 2017. She has a bachelor's degree in animal science.

showcases examples of farmers and agribusinesses who have found great success marketing their products and sharing the value of agriculture. While some producers market their goods directly to consumers and institutions locally, others rely on processors and marketers to reach customers halfway around the world.

Agriculture is key to Wisconsin's prosperity. From our multi-generational family farms to our innovative research facilities, Wisconsin agriculture has much to be proud of. Thank you for reading their stories. I hope you enjoy this edition of *Growing Wisconsin*.

Best regards,

Sheila E. Harsdorf
Secretary

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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- Sustainability

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Wisconsin Agriculture

An overview of the state’s food, farming and agribusiness sectors

In Wisconsin, agriculture is a critical sector. While the state is recognized for its powerhouse dairy industry, agriculture encompasses much more, including unique specialty products like ginseng and mink pelts, food processing, fruit production, ag exports, and more.

With 69,754 farms spread across more than 14 million acres, each averaging about 209 acres, Wisconsin farmers grow and raise some of the state’s top products.

Wisconsin ranks first in the nation in snap beans for processing, cheese, cranberries, ginseng, milk pelts, dry whey for humans, milk goats, and corn for silage. It’s third in the nation for potato production, and also grows a significant amount of fruit, including tart cherries and apples.

The state didn’t get its nickname, “America’s Dairyland,”

for nothing. Wisconsin is home to more dairy farms than any other state and 1.28 million dairy cows. Dairy itself contributes \$43.4 billion to the state’s economy each year.

And while Wisconsinites reap the benefits of the state’s agriculture industry, so does the rest of the world. In 2017, the state exported \$3.5 billion in agricultural products to 147 countries. Prepared vegetables and fruits were Wisconsin’s most valuable export category, and its top markets included Canada, Mexico and China.

More than crops and commodities, Wisconsin’s agricultural sector includes everything from agritourism and food safety to agricultural technology, conservation and education. With the continued innovation and hard work of the industry, Wisconsin agriculture is only poised for continued success.

69,754
Total Farms



308
Farmers' Markets



\$88.3B
Economic Impact

413,500

jobs provided by Wisconsin agriculture

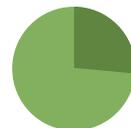


11.9% OF WISCONSIN JOBS ARE AG-RELATED.

Source: datcp.wi.gov

Crops vs. Livestock Production Value

Livestock: 73%
\$9.4M



Crops: 27%
\$3.5M

There are **33,184 women** working as primary farm operators in Wisconsin.

GROUNDBREAKING



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NEWS & NOTES

Marsh Success

As the nation's leading producer of cranberries, Wisconsin is responsible for more than 60 percent of the country's crop. The tart cranberry – once known as the crane berry – is grown mostly in the central and northern parts of Wisconsin by more than 250 growers on 21,000 acres. It's so important to Wisconsin agriculture that it's actually the state's official fruit.

Contrary to what most consumers think, cranberries are not grown in water, but instead on low-running vines in sandy marshes. During harvest, the marshes are flooded and the berries float to the top, thanks to small air pockets inside.

Learn more about Wisconsin's cranberry industry at wiscran.org.



A Winning Process

Wisconsin is a force to reckon with when it comes to vegetable production.

In the U.S., Wisconsin harvests the second-highest amount of vegetables meant for processing. The state is the nation's top grower of carrots and green beans for processing, and ranks third for sweet corn and peas for processing. In fact, in 2016, Wisconsin grew almost half – 43 percent – of the nation's processing green beans.

With many processing plants across the state, Wisconsin's processing industry provides about 259,600 jobs, and contributes \$67.8 billion annually in food-processing sales.

Ag Attractions

Discover more about Wisconsin's agriculture industry at several fun and interesting events.

OCTOBER 2018

World Dairy Expo, *Madison*

JANUARY 2019

Midwest Farm Show, *LaCrosse*

FEBRUARY 2019

Rice Lake Area Farm Show, *Rice Lake*

MARCH 2019

WPS Farm Show, *Oshkosh*

Eau Claire Farm Show, *Eau Claire*

JULY 2019

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days,
Johnson Creek



Hot Potato

Whether you like potatoes baked, fried, roasted or mashed, Wisconsin farmers know a thing or two about them. The state consistently ranks third in the country in potato production, only behind Idaho and Washington.

Farmers grow several types of varieties, such as russet, blue and purple, yellow, fingerling, and more. Wisconsin researchers are also developing new varieties and the state is a leader in potato research.

Learn more about Wisconsin potatoes at eatwisconsinpotatoes.com.



What's Growing in WISCONSIN?

A glimpse at the state's leading ag products based on cash receipts



DAIRY PRODUCTS

Wisconsin is home to 1.28 million dairy cows, and each cow produces 1,830 pounds, or 213 gallons, of milk per month.

\$5B

CASH RECEIPTS



Dairy cows give more than 7 gallons of milk each day, which equals 112 glasses of milk.



CATTLE AND CALVES

Beef cows can be found in nearly every county in Wisconsin, and the state lays claim to 285,000 beef cows.

\$1.6B

CASH RECEIPTS

SOYBEANS

In 2017, Wisconsin farmers harvested 2.14 million acres of soybeans, which is 190,000 acres above 2016's harvested soybean acres.

\$987.4M

CASH RECEIPTS



WHAT ARE CASH RECEIPTS?

Defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, cash receipts refer to the total amount of crops or livestock sold in a calendar year.

POTATOES

Wisconsin ranks third in the U.S. for potato production, and several varieties of the vegetable are grown across the state including russet, yellow, white, red, purple/blue and fingerlings.

\$283.2M

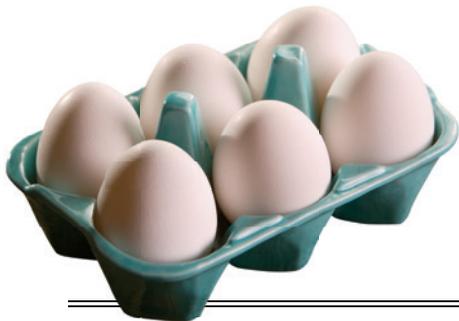
CASH RECEIPTS

CRANBERRIES

Wisconsin is perennially the top cranberry-producing state in the nation, and cranberries are the state's No. 1 fruit crop. Some of Wisconsin's marshes have been successfully producing cranberries for more than 100 years.

\$177.3M

CASH RECEIPTS



CHICKEN EGGS

Wisconsin hens produced 1.8 billion eggs in 2017, and in 2016, the state's egg production was valued at \$79 million.

\$79.1M

CASH RECEIPTS



BROILERS

Wisconsin produced 54 million broilers – or chickens grown for meat – in 2016, earning over \$108.6 million in production value.

\$108.6M

CASH RECEIPTS

FIND MORE ONLINE

Learn more about Wisconsin's top products at Wlagriculture.com.

HOGS

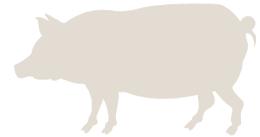
The state, home to a total of 300,000 hogs in 2017, has a thriving pork production industry that employs 10,000 people.

\$98.8M

CASH RECEIPTS



Each market hog represents 371 servings of pork.



HAY

Wisconsin farmers harvested 2.19 million acres of hay and haylage in 2017, worth \$816.2 million. They fed most of that to their own livestock, and sold about 10 percent of the crop.

\$84.4M

CASH RECEIPTS



CORN

Dane, Rock, Grant, Lafayette and Dodge counties produced the most corn in Wisconsin in 2016, when the state's farmers harvested 4.05 million acres and 573 million bushels of corn.

\$1.3B

CASH RECEIPTS





PHOTO: JCI STAFF

Commending COWS

Dairy month is full of fun, food and education for consumers

Every June, passionate dairy volunteers throughout the state invite Wisconsinites to more than 70 dairy breakfasts, many of them held at daybreak on a dairy farm.

The menus are threaded with dairy delights: waffles with fruit, whipped cream and a pat of butter. Scrambled eggs with cheese. An endless supply of white and chocolate milk. Sometimes, even ice cream sundaes at 7 a.m.

The meal often ends with a free farm tour or access to educational stations, delivering a farm-to-fork experience at its finest.

“June Dairy Month has been a celebration in Wisconsin since the late 1930s, and the first organized dairy breakfast was in Jefferson County in 1970,” says Brenda Murphy, director of farmer communications and programs for the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. “Wisconsin is known as America’s Dairyland and has been since 1930. It only makes sense that we celebrate a month dedicated to dairy with numerous events and celebrations.”

Throughout Wisconsin, more than 8,000 dairy farms – 96 percent of them family owned – care for 1.28 million cows that, in 2017, produced 30.32 billion

pounds of milk, second only to California. Dairy contributes \$43.4 billion annually to the Wisconsin economy, contributing more to the Badger State than citrus does to Florida and potatoes to Idaho, according to the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.

Undoubtedly, Wisconsin has plenty of reasons to celebrate cows.

Cows Take Center Stage in Communities

Parades, community fairs, string cheese giveaways and even run/walk events fill Wisconsin’s June Dairy Month calendar. In Pierce County, locals celebrate their famous cheese curds at the Ellsworth Cheese Curd Festival.

Over on the eastern side of the state, Sheboygan County hosts the Dairy Dash and Stroll. The county is home to Addie the Cow, a life-size fiberglass cow that milks, moos, and wears bells and flowers. This self-proclaimed “kid and camera magnet” with her own trailer travels throughout the county and beyond. The Sheboygan County Dairy Promotion Association owns Addie and employs a dairy ambassador who promotes dairy and gives free presentations in classrooms throughout



featured RECIPES

GRILLED CHEESE BITES

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 whole-wheat baguettes, sliced thinly (to make 20 pieces) | ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper |
| 1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded | 2 teaspoons mustard |
| 1 cup sharp white cheddar cheese, shredded | 4 ounces (1 jar) chopped pimentos, well drained |
| ¼ cup mayonnaise | 1 cup fresh spinach |
| | 2-3 tablespoons butter |

Instructions

1. Combine cheese, pimentos, cayenne pepper, mustard and mayonnaise until well blended. Distribute on 10 slices of the bread. Top with 10 more slices of bread.
2. Butter the outside-facing sides of the bread lightly. Grill until crispy and deep golden, about 3 to 5 minutes per side.
3. Just before serving, place several fresh leaves of spinach inside each mini sandwich.



TWICE-BAKED POTATOES

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 4 Russet potatoes, about 8 ounces each | 4 ounces cream cheese |
| ½ cup sour cream | ½ cup scallions, chopped |
| 2 tablespoons butter | ½ cup cooked bacon, chopped |
| ½ cup milk | 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt |
| ½ cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded | ¼ teaspoon pepper |

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Bake potatoes on foil-lined baking sheet until skin is crisp and fork easily pierces flesh, about 1 hour. Transfer to a wire rack and let sit until cool enough to handle, about 10 minutes.
3. Cut each potato in half lengthwise. Using a small spoon, scoop flesh from each half into a bowl, leaving ¼-inch thickness of flesh in each skin. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Mash potato flesh with fork until smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients, including salt and pepper to taste, until well combined. Spoon mixture into skins and return to the oven.
5. Broil until spotty brown and crisp on top, about 10 to 15 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Serve warm.



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Sheboygan County during the year.

Meanwhile, Murphy says Sheboygan County will average 3,500 to 4,000 people at its annual dairy breakfast. Jefferson County hosts between 1,500 and 2,000 at its fairgrounds. Some breakfasts in the state top 5,000 attendees, she says.

“We understand that consumers want to know more about their food and they want to get on the farm,” she says. “It reminds them of how their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents lived 60 to 70 years ago. Nowadays, most people are several generations removed from the farm.”

Served with a Side of Education

The Green County Agricultural Chest makes it a year-round affair to promote dairy products, which members call “Green County’s gold.” The group kicks off June

Dairy Month with an annual breakfast that requires 5,000 half-pints of milk, 126 pounds of ice cream mix, 110 pounds of butter and 480 pounds of cheese for an estimated 5,000 hungry visitors.

The breakfast has been held on a Green County farm for the last 38 years of its nearly 60-year history to give visitors a firsthand experience with a modern dairy farm. Farm tours or educational stations accompany nearly every dairy breakfast around the state, Murphy says. Consumers see cows, talk to veterinarians and meet dairy nutritionists.

“These breakfasts on a farm give them a glimpse of what it’s like to live the life of a dairy farmer, get up close and personal with some of these bovine beauties and have a great breakfast with their neighbors,” Murphy says.

— Joanie Stiers

June Dairy Month has been celebrated since the late 1930s. The first organized dairy breakfast was in Jefferson County in 1970.

\$43.4B

ANNUAL DAIRY CONTRIBUTION TO WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY



ANNUAL CHEESE PRODUCTION IN WISCONSIN INCREASED **37 PERCENT** FROM 2007 TO 2017.

Dairy farmers care for **1.28 million cows** that produced **30.32 billion pounds of milk** in 2017.

Wisconsin is for CHEESE LOVERS



Wisconsin leads the nation in cheese production

Wisconsin has long been known for its award-winning cheeses, and for good reason. Known around the world as America's Dairyland, Wisconsin has ranked No. 1 in the nation for cheese production for more than a century, since 1910. In 2017, Wisconsin produced a record

3.3 billion pounds of cheese.

"In Wisconsin, cheese is not just something we do – it's who we are," says Suzanne Fanning, vice president of marketing communications for the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. "Our culture of innovation, combined with our rich heritage, has inspired some of the best cheeses in the

world. Our cheesemakers have the awards to prove it."

Wisconsin produces nearly half of the nation's specialty cheese (47 percent) and about 27 percent of the nation's total cheese. That includes more than 600 different varieties and styles of cheese – far more than any other state. The top selling varieties include cheddar,

fresh mozzarella, Parmesan, colby jack blends, string mozzarella, provolone, queso fresco, Muenster, Monterey Jack and havarti.

Wisconsin's Specialty Cheeses

Specialty cheeses are big business in Wisconsin, too. Roth Grand Cru Surchoix, made by Roth Cheese in Monroe, was named the World Champion at the 2016 World Championship Cheese Contest.

“It was the first time a U.S. cheese had won the title in 28 years, an honor we’re very proud of here at Roth,” says Heather Engwall, director of marketing for Roth Cheese. “We were selected as the best cheese out of more than 2,500 entries from more than 25 countries.”

The company’s Roth GranQueso was an American Cheese Society winner seven years in a row, and Roth Chipotle Havarti recently won first place in its category at the 2018 World Championship Cheese Contest.

“These are all honors we cherish, because they showcase the talent and passion of our cheesemakers here at Roth,” Engwall says.

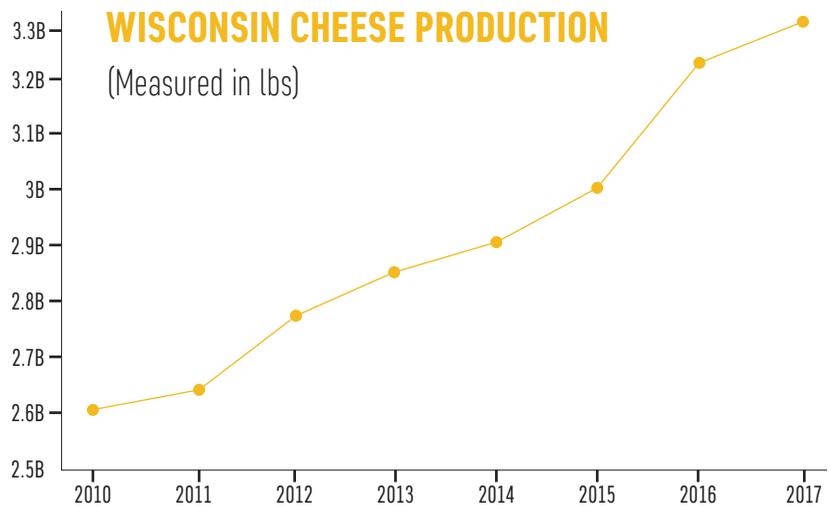
Roth’s signature Grand Cru along with flavored Goudas and havarti are customer favorites.

“Cheeses from Wisconsin earn awards and great reputations because we have a long history of great cheesemakers who have been perfecting the craft of cheesemaking for decades,” Engwall says. “The cheese industry is a family here in Wisconsin. We all support each other and local dairy farms in order to produce the world’s best cheese.”

– Jessica Mozo

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Learn more about Wisconsin’s dairy industry at WIagriculture.com.



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LASTING Legacies

Generations of families take pride in farms that have been passed down

Wisconsin residents can find plenty to be proud of. It might be the opportunities for higher education, the beauty of the outdoors or another football season with the Packers.

But nothing exemplifies pride like the family farm.

“People here are so proud of their heritage,” says Jill Albanese, competitive exhibits director for the Wisconsin State Fair.

To that end, Albanese says, the State Fair has been officially honoring multigenerational farms in Wisconsin since the creation of the Century Farms program in 1948, the year the state turned 100 years old. An astounding 9,344 farms have been listed in the program, with recognition occurring each August during the Wisconsin State Fair in West Allis.

The Sesquicentennial Farm and Home Award was established in 1998 to honor family farms that are at least 150 years old, and 836 have so far been added to that list.

“To be honored, your farm has to be at least 100 or 150 years old and you have to have kept the farm in your family continuously,” says Albanese, who helps to oversee the two programs.

A Need for Family Farms

That certainly fits the description for the farms in Rock County owned by Kathy and Ronald Woodman and their son Joe Woodman. The older Woodmans live on the Sesquicentennial Farm, while Joe is on the corn and soybean farm that was added to the Centennial Farms list in 2017.

“I’m a big history guy, so obviously I think it’s a cool thing when a farm can get passed down along the same family for so long,” Joe Woodman says. “As far as the significance of it, it’s so hard to start farming these days, to get your foot in the door.

“We need family farms to continue for future generations, and not only farms being passed down, but also knowledge, the ways of doing stuff (on a farm).”

Woodman began learning how to farm when he was around 8 years old, helping feed the calves his father and grandfather were raising on their dairy farm.

“My dad would always be working with my grandpa, and I showed a lot of interest in it,” he says. “I would choose working on the farm over going to my friends’ houses.”

Now in his late 20s, Joe Woodman is a fifth-

Father and son, Ron and Joe Woodman of Rock County own a Sesquicentennial Farm as well as a Centennial Farm. The family pride themselves on preserving history.



Left: The Woodmans take pride in working together on their family farms. Top Right: The Woodmans receive their Sesquicentennial Farm status. Bottom Right: The John Born farm was also recently added to the list of Sesquicentennial Farms.



generation farmer. He has two college-aged siblings who have other interests and will likely find careers off the farm, but he and his wife hope to have children who will carry on the family legacy.

“We’d like to keep our farm in the family,” says Woodman, who also has a full-time job at Seneca Foods. “It’s harder and harder to find kids with an interest in farming. So that’s a goal of ours.”

Pitching In

Family is the backbone of the John Born farm, located in Sheboygan County and recently listed on the Sesquicentennial Farm and Home Award list.

A fifth-generation farmer in his early 60s, Born oversees a total of about 215 acres of alfalfa, soybeans and corn, as well as a herd of cows in a small dairy operation. His parents are in their 80s, but still stay involved on the farm, and his siblings pitch in as well.

“My dad is 87 years old and he still stays busy on the farm,” Born says. “He doesn’t do it because he has to, it’s just something that keeps him going.

“All the family members come to help out, just because of the love for what we have. It’s a family farm. They don’t come for a paycheck, they just come to help out. This is their home, too.”

– John McBryde



PHOTOS: FROM TOP: BORN FAMILY; WOODMAN FAMILY



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READY FOR Market

Farmers' markets make it easy for consumers to connect with producers and enjoy seasonal foods



Thanks to many farmers' markets located across Wisconsin, the state's consumers have ample opportunities to purchase fresh, locally grown and produced foods – often directly from the hand of the farmer.

“I think farmers' markets have grown (in both number and popularity in Wisconsin) because more people are wanting to shake the hand and see the face of the person growing their food,” says Kietra Olson, program manager for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Wisconsin Foods Program. “Developing a relationship with your farmer is really a rewarding connection. People are also realizing that the carrots grown down the road and the honey harvested in the next town over tastes more like ‘home.’ ”

One of the state's most prominent farmers' markets is the Downtown Appleton Farm Market,

a year-round market that's held on Saturdays. The market, a local favorite since its creation in 1992, is home to more than 150 vendors from June to October – its busiest season – and includes a Kids Market where young entrepreneurs sell their handmade items every third Saturday from January through May.

Established in 1972, the Dane County Farmers' Market in Madison is also continuing to thrive, maintaining its status as the nation's largest producers-only farmers' market. The market's vendors, all of whom are based in Wisconsin, are required to grow or raise the products they're selling, which ensures everything customers come across is produced in Wisconsin.

As a year-round operation, the Dane County Farmers' Market hosts multiple markets throughout the year. The Saturday market on the Square and the Wednesday market are both held from April to November, along with a holiday market open during November and December and a late winter market from January to April. The Saturday market on the Square is the largest of the four markets, encircling the Wisconsin State Capitol and featuring about 150 to 175 vendors selling fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meats, honey, jams, jellies and more.

"We have more than 20,000 visitors each Saturday at the Saturday market on the Square," says Sarah Elliott, market manager for the Dane County Farmers' Market. "It's a big event, and we provide resources like recipes, because we want people to feel empowered to use local products for scratch cooking. Of course, the greatest resources of all are the producers. Customers can have conversations with farmers about how they like to prepare and eat the foods they're selling, and that is really special."

– Jessica Walker Boehm



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FUN at the FAIR

Wisconsin fairs promote
agriculture and community

When you think of a fair, visions of funnel cakes, Ferris wheels and carnival games may pop into your head. In Wisconsin, those elements ring true, but agriculture is at the heart of it all.

“All of our fairs promote agriculture as the primary backbone of the fair. They serve as the voice of agriculture,” says Jayme Buttke of the Wisconsin Association of Fairs. “Fairs provide the fairgoer an educational opportunity on agriculture that you can’t get unless you visit a farm. With our attendees being four or five

generations removed from the family farm, fairs are a great way to see agriculture showcased.”

Wisconsinites have many opportunities to attend a fair. The state has 75 state-aided county and district fairs, and the Wisconsin State Fair, held annually in West Allis. The State Fair attracts visitors from all over Wisconsin and beyond. Fairs include activities ranging from animal shows and baking contests, to live music and entertainment, to midway rides.

Buttke says that in recent years, fairs across the state have embraced creative ideas to maintain their agricultural

Wisconsin fairs offer a variety of fun, including activities such as carnival rides and corn boxes for kids to play in, livestock shows, tasty treats, and more.



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roots and educate the public about everything from dairy production to plant growth.

“Our fair members have realized that they need to provide more hands-on agricultural education,” she says. “They have created areas with interactive displays on how your milk gets to the grocery store, or how to plant seeds that produce a corn crop. Playing in a corn or soybean box instead of a sandbox, learning how to make ice cream or milk a cow are a few other hands-on examples.”

Buttke adds that fairs are not only fun, but they help teach life lessons as well, especially for those 4-Hers, FFA students and others who participate in showing livestock and other competitions.

“The first county fair was held in 1842 in Waukesha County. A total of \$40 in awards were presented,” Buttke says. “Today, more than 385,000 exhibits by 50,000 exhibitors are displayed at county,

district and state fairs annually. More than \$900,000 in awards is presented.”

She says that although the cash prizes are enticing, they aren’t the real rewards.

“Learning how to do a project, doing the work yourself and then being able to showcase that to your parents, grandparents and friends is the real prize,” Buttke says.

Each of Wisconsin’s 75 fairs is unique. Buttke says that this is another advantage, as they help connect a community and highlight togetherness.

“Fairs offer something special to their community and are often the highlight event of the summer as an opportunity for civic organizations to participate and give back to the community as well,” she says.

Learn more about Wisconsin’s many fairs and when they’re happening at wifairs.com.

– Rachel Bertone

1842

The first county fair was held in Waukesha County.

Wisconsin State Fair

6 hours average length
visitors stay

3 days average days
visitors attend

315,000

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A Place to Play with Your Food

Wisconsin State Fair's Farm & Family Building offers interactive ag

It's move-in day at the Farm and Family Building on the Wisconsin State Fairgrounds, and the truck out front is packed as tight as a clown car in a parade.

A half dozen carnival games, 40 banners, picket fences, life-size cutouts of cows, pigs and chickens, boxes of magazines, and cases of cleaning supplies all spill out of the truck. The tarps come off overwintered equipment: patio furniture, a coloring table for a half dozen kids, and the star of the show – the Veggie 500 racetrack.

For 11 days every August, this building becomes a wonderland where kids learn about farms, food and even consumer issues.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Farm and Family Building is a must-see for many families who visit the fair. The Veggie 500 has been a fixture at the State Fair since 1993, predating the building itself. The brainchild of the late Bob Williams, a long-time DATCP staffer known as Mr. Fair, the Veggie 500 gets some second-generation racers every year. State FFA officers deck out real vegetables with wheels and flashy decorations, interview racers with corn-cob microphones, and offer colorful commentary as the six veggie cars race down the slope. After the race, kids know something about vegetables.

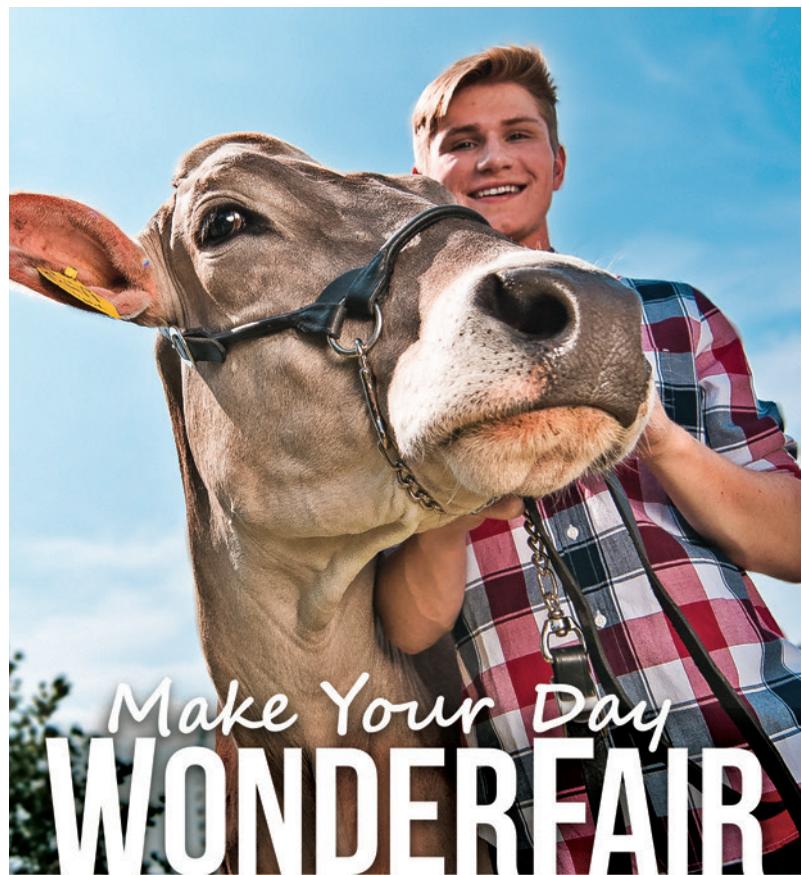
There's the Big Wheel, where kids learn fun facts like how many glasses of milk a Wisconsin cow makes in a year. They toss bean feedbags into animals' mouths while they learn what livestock and pets eat, they play Plinko to see if their "food" falls to a safe place, and track a bad guy through

a maze before he steals from consumers. They color. All for free.

"It's important to our leaders at DATCP that we educate our visitors, but we make it fun," says Bill Cosh, whose communications staff oversees the building. "Fair-

goers are mostly urban, and they're often amazed at the things that we take for granted because we grew up on farms and work in agriculture. It's a major investment of staff time, but it's gratifying."

– Donna Gilson



Summer in Wisconsin flies by! Make it WonderFair at the Wisconsin State Fair, the most fun, affordable, family-friendly event of the summer. The state's largest agricultural showcase features educational exhibits, delicious food, exciting rides, live entertainment and more!

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Better TOGETHER

Cooperatives benefit farmers, consumers

Running a small farm that markets directly to customers is a big job. Juggling marketing, distribution, food safety, accounting, customer service and growing crops can be a challenge for one farmer. That's why many are sharing the load by joining a cooperative.

"A cooperative provides farmers a way to pool their supply and work together to get their product into the marketplace," says Sarah Lloyd, secretary of the board and director of development for the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative in Madison.

"Most farmers like to farm. They don't want to do sales and marketing. A cooperative allows

farmers to be out in the field doing what they want to do while the cooperative does the other work on their behalf."

Retail and Restaurants

Most cooperative models allow farmers to get their products into retail stores and restaurants that are in search of a reliable source of locally grown products.

"We have a pretty good idea of what our customers want, so we contract with our farms to grow specific products," says Jesse Selin, director of sales and logistics for the Hungry Turtle Farmers Cooperative in Amery. "Just as a restaurant or retail store would have an agreement with a farm

directly, we have that agreement with the farmer and also with the restaurant. We handle all the marketing for our farmers and provide a guaranteed place for them to sell their product."

Selin says the cooperative also helps farmers stay ahead of trends and customer preferences, and makes sure each farm has the certifications, food safety standards and other documentation needed to be successful in the retail market.

A New Kind of CSA

Another innovative cooperative model allows farmers to sell their products through a cooperative community supported agriculture, or CSA. Single-farm CSAs have struggled in recent years because of competition from companies like Blue Apron and Hello Fresh, says Evan Flom, manager of Bayfield Foods' Lake Superior CSA, a cooperative that serves Bayfield and Ashland counties.

"In modern agriculture, you see

"It's wonderful to see so many agencies all working to support new ventures for farmers."

Sarah Lloyd, secretary of the board and director of development for the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative in Madison



Several farmers grow different vegetables for the Lake Superior CSA cooperative. Todd Rothe of River Road Farm (top left), John Adams of Yoman Farm (middle), and Chris Duke of Great Oak Farm (top right) are a few of the participating farmers.

a lot of specialization – big farms that only do row crops, hogs or whatever, because you can get really good at doing that one thing, and it’s more efficient,” says Chris Duke of Great Oak Farm, a founding member of Lake Superior CSA. “In the traditional CSA model, it’s the opposite. You’re asking one farmer to be a salad greens producer and a potato producer, and those crops require totally different skills and infrastructure.”

A cooperative like Lake Superior CSA not only helps farmers with marketing and logistics, but it also allows them to specialize in what they are good at growing. The

20 producers who make up Lake Superior CSA work together to decide what each member will grow each season.

“By doing that, we’ve built in some resiliency and we have better boxes for our customers,” Duke says. “If I have a bad year with carrots, we’ll have less carrots, but we can put in more of John’s potatoes.”

Getting Started

Cooperatives often require grant funding to get started.

“We’ve gotten a lot of help along the way,” Lloyd says. “It’s wonderful to see so many agencies

all working to support new ventures for farmers.”

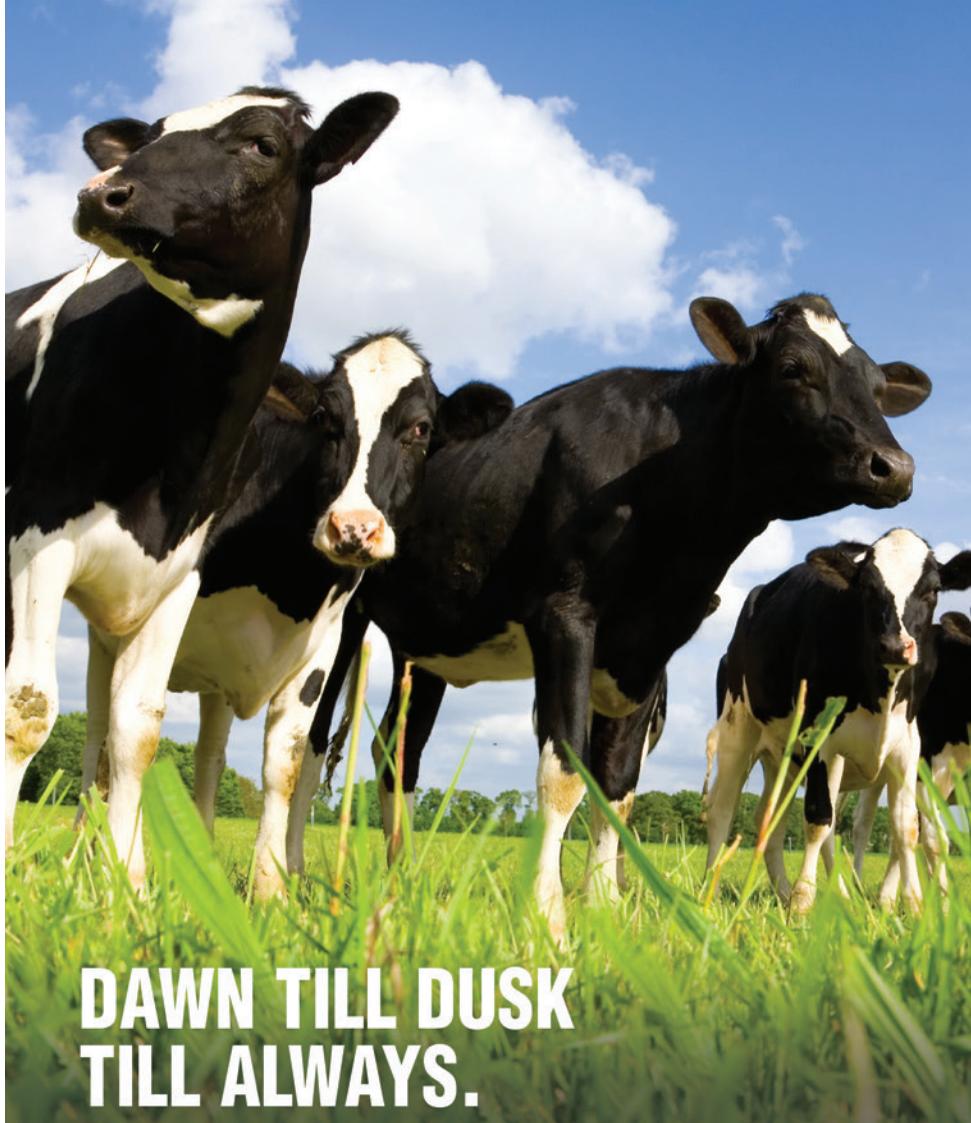
The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant program provided essential funding for the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, which was founded in 2012. Cooperatives also receive support from county-level government, the USDA, UW-Extension, UW Center for Integrated Agriculture Systems, UW Center for Cooperatives and the department to ensure food safety. The \$50,000 grant helped Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative market its early- and late-season



crops. This year, the cooperative is projected to hit \$3 million in sales.

“The purpose of Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin is to help local food producers and processors sell their products statewide and regionally,” says Kietra Olson, DATCP’s Wisconsin Foods Program manager. “Cooperatives are a natural fit for the grant, because it must be awarded to a cause that has a broad impact rather than funding a single entity. The grants fund projects that will reduce some sort of barrier or hurdle Wisconsin producers face in selling their products.”

– Jill Clair Gentry



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SPECIAL DELIVERY

The Something Special *from* Wisconsin™ program promotes locally made products

Finding Wisconsin-made products has never been easier, thanks to Something Special *from* Wisconsin™. Founded in 1983, the program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to promote products

of the products they purchase,” says Lois Federman, director of the SSfW™ program. “The highly visible Something Special *from* Wisconsin™ brand provides a quick, visual verification that assures consumers they are purchasing a Wisconsin product and supporting Wisconsin’s agriculture industry.”

are more likely to purchase a product made or grown in the state.

For example, the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, an SSfW™ member, values the program’s help in promoting its Wisconsin Healthy Grown® potatoes.

“The ‘buy local’ message is very important to the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, and we’re lucky to have SSfW™ as a partner in delivering this message,” says Dana Rady, director of promotions, communication and consumer education for the association.

Since 1983, Something Special *from* Wisconsin™ has offered consumers worldwide a brand identity that represents top quality and high value.

with at least 50 percent of the ingredients, processing or production done in Wisconsin.

The program has just shy of 500 members – everything from fruit and vegetable growers to pet food companies – who all have permission to use the distinctive SSfW™ logo, allowing consumers to easily identify that the product is local. Companies are also profiled on the SSfW™ website with contact information.

“Increasingly, consumers of all types, be it households, distributors, restaurants or retailers, want to know the origin

Federman says that members of the program pay an annual fee based on their gross sales, ranging from no fee for nonprofits up to \$200 per year for companies with annual sales of \$500,000 or more.

“Membership in SSfW™ is the best deal going for what you receive in return,” she says. “A company’s business profile on the program website alone is worth more than the top fee cost of \$200.”

Statistics show that member businesses are likely to have a strong competitive edge over those without the SSfW™ logo, as more than 70 percent of Wisconsin consumers

A Sweet Certification

Along with SSfW™, Wisconsin beekeepers have their own opportunity to market local honey to consumers through the Wisconsin Certified Honey label.

“The Wisconsin Certified Honey label is part of a regulation that was implemented in 2011,” says Peter Haase, director of the Bureau of Food and Recreational Business at the department. “This program is outside of the SSfW™ program. An actual administrative rule dictates requirements that must be met to use this label on honey.”

The label requires Wisconsin beekeepers to have apiaries in the state. The manufacturer of the honey must submit test results from an accredited lab once every two years, confirming the quality.

Sweet Mountain Farm in Washington, Wisconsin, is a Wisconsin Certified Honey farm. Owner Sue Dompke obtained the certification in 2015.

“As a consumer, unless one knows the beekeeper, the jar marked honey may not be the sweet substance the bees make,” she says. “Bees collect nectar from numerous plants and honey can vary from one region to the next. These differences have created an entirely new customer who wants to taste each location’s honey since everyone has a different mix of floral sources.”

Dompke says the Wisconsin certified label has helped her sell to corporate customers, who want to send local Wisconsin products across the country, as well as with those who are willing to pay more for high-quality, local honey.

Learn more about the Something Special from Wisconsin™ program at somethingspecialwi.com.

– Rachel Bertone

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE SOMETHING SPECIAL FROM WISCONSIN™ PRODUCTS:



Jim’s Cheese

Jim’s Cheese has been distributing delicious Wisconsin cheeses since 1955. Located in Waterloo, the company serves more than 2,000 customers in 12 Midwest states.

Wisco Pop!

With a love for the local food movement, husband-and-wife team Austin and Hallie Ashley launched Wisco Pop! in 2012. The whimsical sodas are certified organic and include flavors such as grapefruit, ginger, cherry, strawberry, lemon and lime.



Trainor’s Maple Essence Farms

The Trainor family has been making maple syrup on their farm every year but one since the early 1950s. They started with 300 taps, and as of 2013, the company had about 9,000 taps. They now boil in a state-of-the-art facility on the home farm, producing high-quality maple syrup.

It takes about 43 gallons of sap from trees to make 1 gallon of maple syrup.

Honey

Several honey producers across Wisconsin are part of the Something Special from Wisconsin™ program. Members include Honey Grove Apiaries, Hank’s Honey Acres, Kickapoo Honey, Liberty Honey, Patz Maple & Honey Farms, Wisconsin River Honey, LLC, and many more. Visit somethingspecialwi.com for a listing of all member companies.



Chip Magnet

Founded in 2011, Chip Magnet is a family-owned company committed to providing the best tasting, highest quality salsa, hot sauce, barbecue sauce and other condiments. The Eau Claire-based company verifies all of its products through the Non-GMO Project.

Chip Magnet began offering products in 17 more states in spring 2017.





Ag Attractions

Create new connections by visiting Wisconsin's agritourism destinations



Agritourism destinations across Wisconsin, including orchards, creameries, U-pick farms, wineries and more, offer a fun and educational experience for visitors.

PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ISTOCK.COM/YINYANG; DAIRY: MICHAEL D. TEDESCO/JCI STAFF; ORCHARD: STEVE VOIT



Farmers and producers across Wisconsin are opening their doors to the public and offering a glimpse into their operations. As a result, agritourism is on the rise, and it's continuing to create unique opportunities for the general population to see what agriculture is all about.

"Agritourism is important to the state because it connects

Wisconsinites to our agricultural heritage," says Kietra Olson, program manager for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Wisconsin Foods Program. "Many people remember visiting a relative's farm as a child and often want to pass those experiences on to their children and grandchildren. More of the

state's population is removed from farming and agriculture than ever before, and agritourism offers people a way to reconnect to the land and potentially their own family history."

Farms Offer Tours, Educate Visitors

Northern Wisconsin's James Lake Farms, an organic cranberry operation with marshes in Three



Lakes, offers free tours at 2 p.m. on Saturdays during its harvest season in October, as well as group tours by appointment throughout the year.

According to John Stauner, who owns James Lake Farms with his wife, Nora, each tour begins with a presentation that discusses the cranberry industry and the farm's history. Afterward, visitors have the opportunity to go out in the fields, and see how the cranberries are cleaned and prepared for shipping in the farm's packaging facility.

"We see these tours as an opportunity to get our message out and educate the public while establishing relationships," Stauner says. "It's very important for us to connect with the consumers of our products, and we encourage everyone to come out, bring their kids and see where our cranberries are grown."

In Columbus, Sassy Cow Creamery is another popular agritourism destination. Owned by brothers James and Robert Baerwolf and their families, Sassy Cow Creamery includes a farm with two dairy cow herds that produce two lines of milk – traditional and organic – as well as farm-made ice cream.

Tours take place on Fridays in June, July and August. Along with getting a look at the cows, visitors can peek into the creamery and see how the milk is processed and bottled. In addition, each tour includes a stop at the creamery's on-site ice cream shop, and everyone goes home with a pint of milk.

"Even here in America's Dairyland, people are so removed and disconnected from the farm, and we want to change that," says Kara Kasten-Olson, Sassy Cow Creamery's sales and marketing manager. "Being so close to Madison and having a unique operation with our own farm and processing facility gives us a great opportunity to share with others."

Berry Delightful

In Bayfield, also known as the Berry Capital of Wisconsin, Erickson's Orchard offers visitors delicious, homegrown produce. Beginning in late June, guests can pick their own fresh strawberries, move on to raspberries and blueberries in July and August, and finish with crisp, juicy apples in September and October.

The family-owned farm has been in operation since 1954 with Jim and Muriel Erickson at the helm,

and today, the third generation is carrying on the tradition, adding new and exciting expansions to keep the farm thriving.

Along with U-pick fruits, Erickson's offers pre-picked produce throughout the season, and in the fall, they have pasteurized apple cider and Muriel's famous apple cider donuts. They also hold an annual apple festival, bringing visitors from near and far to Bayfield.

– Jessica Walker Boehm



Wine and Cheese Trail Draws Residents, Tourists

Wisconsin lays claim to the Sip & Savor Driftless Wisconsin Wine and Cheese Trail, which is headquartered at Branches Winery in Westby. This marks a new collaboration between the state's renowned dairy industry and its growing wine industry. Made possible through a Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant from the department, the trail winds through southwestern Wisconsin and includes seven estate wineries and seven internationally recognized creameries.

Consumers can traverse the trail throughout the year, but during special event weekends, visitors can meet the winemakers, cheesemakers and their

families as well as enjoy tours, fun activities, discounts and more at each location.

Therese Bergholz, owner of Branches Winery and director of the Sip & Savor Driftless Wisconsin Wine and Cheese Trail, says the trail offers "a chance to learn what it takes to grow and produce award-winning products while meeting the families you support when you shop local" – a perfect combination for creating a lasting impression.



It Takes a Village

Community Supported Agriculture connects farmers and consumers



For those who want to feel close to the land without digging in the dirt, community supported agriculture offers a rich, sustainable option. In community supported ag, or CSA, consumers sign up for a weekly or biweekly share – a rotating harvest of vegetables, fruit, meat, cheese, eggs, flowers, honey and more, depending on the local farm – and producers gain cooperative investors who help absorb risk while reaping the rewards.

“CSAs are created through a community of people who pledge to support a farm by purchasing produce before it’s even grown,” says Kietra Olson, manager of the Wisconsin Foods Program at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. There are now about 85 CSAs in Wisconsin, some of which have been around for decades. Vermont Valley Community Farm in Dane County’s Driftless Region, for

example, celebrated 24 years in 2018. Besides offering vegetable share options and worker shares (that let consumers trade labor for produce), Vermont Valley provides recipes and farm news and hosts fun events like the annual corn boil, pesto fest, pumpkin pick and tomato U-picks.

“Most Wisconsinites are several generations removed from farming, but CSAs help consumers understand all it takes to produce the food that feeds a community,” Olson says. “You learn the hardships and the rewards alongside the growers themselves. Soon they start watching the weather and thinking about what it might be doing to the crop, and farmers feel more supported.”

Marathon County’s Cattail Organics is a new CSA in the field. It is certified organic, and is an offshoot of nearby Stoney Acres Farm.

“One of my favorite things about

CSA as a model is that it connects me directly with the people who eat my food and I am able to tailor my planning and growing to them,” says owner-operator Katrina Becker, who has managed the 150-acre diversified organic Stoney Acres Farm with Tony Schultz since 2005. With the new CSA option, Becker hopes to educate members with recipes and videos, as well as improve her own practices based on their feedback.

“CSA is unique, in that by placing money directly in farmers’ hands at the start of the season, consumers help spread out the risk and eliminate the need for seasonal debt,” Becker says. “This means farmers can focus on being excellent farmers first and foremost, and can grow more challenging but desirable crops for consumers, and it creates a more stable farming and rural community.”

– Maggie Ginsberg

Celebrating SAFETY

Meat Safety Inspection Program provides education, support and regulation for 50 years

Raising animals and processing meats is something humans have done for centuries, but as we learn more about pathogens and new ones evolve, food safety is an ever-increasing priority. In Wisconsin, farmers and processors have worked alongside the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Meat Safety Inspection Program for 50 years to provide consumers in the state and beyond with delicious and safe meats.

Cedar Road Meats

Three years ago, Marc Malterer bought his parents' popular Iron Ridge meat processing facility and retail storefront, Cedar Road Meats. The retail store offers fresh cuts of meat as well as smoked finished products, such as hot dogs, sausage and bacon. It is also known for its commitment to helping customers buy other

foods, such as honey and cheese, directly from local producers.

Cedar Road Meats has been evolving since the 1940s, when Marc's grandparents bought their land in Iron Ridge and began farming. Marc's parents, Barb and Marvin, raised hogs for many years. After new meat processing standards were put into place in 2004, they saw the need for a state-inspected meat processing facility in their region. The Malterers began processing their own animals, in addition to serving other local producers.

"It was a win for all the local farmers in that area when Cedar Road Meats opened," says Cindy Klug, director of the Wisconsin Bureau of Meat and Poultry Businesses. "Producers succeed through these state-inspected plants. Of the 27 states with meat safety inspection programs, Wisconsin has the most inspected facilities – 96 that process red

meat and three that process poultry."

Balancing Regulation and Education

Wisconsin's Meat Safety Inspection Program began in September 1968, and has made locally produced meats easily accessible across the state.

"We work with the plant owners to help them meet standards and strengthen their food safety systems, so they can provide the producer with services they need to serve the local consumer," Klug says.

In addition to inspecting and regulating facilities, the Meat Safety Inspection Program provides outreach to help producers stay ahead of new rules and trends.

"We partner with UW-Extension and the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors to do trainings for our facilities," Klug says. "We explain compliance changes,

Marc Malterer of Cedar Road Meats in Iron Ridge owns a meat processing facility as well as a retail store, selling fresh, safe meats, and aiding other producers as well.



allergen labeling, and help them ensure their products support the claims made on labels, like organic, all-natural or grass-fed.”

The meat safety inspection program is committed to helping producers and processing facilities succeed because it means more Wisconsin-grown products can get onto the dinner tables of Wisconsin consumers, Klug says.

“We have an extremely committed staff that has mastered the balance between education and regulation,” Klug says. “Sometimes that’s hard, but I’m so proud of this group. They all have a very good understanding of the impact they have on agriculture in our state. We are really lucky to be part of it.”

Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program

When Marc purchased his family’s business, he saw an opportunity to further expand through the cooperative interstate shipment program (CIS), which allows state-inspected facilities to ship across state lines, as federally inspected facilities do.

“I realized to grow, we needed to be able to ship across state lines,” Marc says. “We had five competitors within a 20-mile radius, so I knew being able to do business outside the state would set us apart. The options were to go federal or get CIS approval. So we worked with our inspector to become a CIS facility, and we are

now approved to ship out of state. We’ve gotten a lot of new business because of it.”

CIS was passed in the 2008 farm bill. Since then, only four states have implemented the program. Wisconsin has 15 CIS facilities, and five more in the application process.

“It’s a voluntary program that benefits meat and poultry processors,” Klug says. “It gives them the same abilities as federally inspected facilities, but they still continue to work with the state personnel they already know, and they don’t have to start all over with the federal inspection process.”

– Jill Clair Gentry

featured RECIPE

MAPLE APPLE PORK MEDALLIONS

Ingredients

1 ½ cups apple cider or 100% apple juice	¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
3 tablespoons cornstarch	½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup pure maple syrup	¼ teaspoon allspice
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar	1 pork tenderloin (1-1 ¼ pounds), cut into 8 medallions
2 teaspoons stone-ground mustard	1 tablespoon canola oil
	2-3 apples, cored and sliced

Instructions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk apple cider or juice with cornstarch. Add maple syrup, vinegar, mustard, pepper, cinnamon and allspice, and whisk until thoroughly blended. Set aside.
2. In a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add pork medallions and brown on each side for 2 minutes. Continue cooking for 4 to 6 minutes, or until pork reaches 145 degrees when checked in the middle with a meat thermometer. Remove medallions to plate and cover to keep warm.
3. Add spiced maple mixture to skillet and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Add apple slices, stir well, cover and reduce heat to medium-low.
4. Cook 4 to 6 minutes, stirring occasionally, until apples begin to soften but are still firm. Add pork medallions back to skillet and warm additional 1 to 2 minutes.



PHOTO: JEFFREY S. OTTO/ICI STAFF

MEAT Masters

Nationwide Master Meat Crafter certification calls Wisconsin home

As if 20 years behind the meat counter didn't make Tim Brueggen a master of his craft already, the owner of Falls Meat Service in Pigeon Falls is one of only 89 meat processors who holds a Master Meat Crafter accreditation from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This program, highly regarded among meat processors nationwide, offers intensive training intended to advance even the industry's most renowned, award-winning meat processors. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Meat Science Program, UW-Extension and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection collaborate to offer the two-year certification program, right here in Wisconsin.

"The Master Meat Crafter program gives you an idea of what other people do and gives you new ideas of how to improve your own production and make different products," says Brueggen, whose business specializes in custom processing for pork, beef and wild game, retail meats and sausages,

and wholesale meats. "I think the certification is a big value, because it makes our state more progressive. It gives Wisconsin a leg up. We have close resources. We have other plants that partake in these programs, which makes the whole industry better."

Brueggen started working at Falls Meat Service at age 15. He was employed there part time through college and returned to the meat processing business after college and deployments in the National Guard. Brueggen held multiple management roles, then was a part owner and eventually bought the entire business in 2017 when the co-owner retired.

The Master Meat Crafter class accepts only experienced meat processors like Brueggen from anywhere in the United States and some nearby foreign countries. For the length of the two-year program, Brueggen made lasting connections with counterparts from New York, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Canada and Illinois. The program costs \$7,500 and requires six multiday courses, a research

project, homework assignments and a mentorship to attain accreditation. The next class begins in March 2019, says Jeff Swenson, livestock and meats specialist with DATCP.

"It's the only program of its kind in the nation. Really we have found a lot of value to the industry, based on the people who have gone through the program and become leaders within the industry," Swenson says. "We've seen them make changes to affect the bottom line of their facilities, as well. This Master Meat Crafter program here in Wisconsin highlights the meat processors we have in the state, the excellent job that we do, takes it to the next level and announces it to the world."

— Joanie Stiers

FIND MORE ONLINE

Learn more about food safety in Wisconsin at Wlagriculture.com.



Tablet Edition

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Keeping Markets OPEN

Division of Animal Health keeps producers and consumers safe

From inspections and licensing to awareness and education, Wisconsin Division of Animal Health (DAH) helps protect the state's multibillion-dollar livestock industry so markets are open for farmers and agribusinesses – not to mention, its important role protecting human health. The division is part of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. A closer look at how division operations benefit both producers and consumers shows why this regulatory body is pivotal to maintaining the state's thriving agriculture industry.

How the Producer Benefits

Based in DeForest, ABS Global Inc. is a leader in bovine genetics, reaching roughly 68 countries with their product. To ensure each importing country's requirements are met, ABS Global works diligently with the division, including routine testing for animal diseases like tuberculosis, brucellosis and vesicular stomatitis.

"Any of these diseases would be detrimental to our business and could close markets. As a partner, we are kept informed of new potential disease risks by State Veterinarian Dr. Paul McGraw and his team at the division. Trusting that they always have our back is one of the reasons we are successful," says James T. Meronek, DVM, MPH, health assurance and supply chain director with ABS Global.

As State Veterinarian, Dr. McGraw works closely with members of the livestock industry statewide, and routinely meets with industry representatives to discuss program changes, diseases of concern and reporting protocol for foreign animal diseases.

"The division relies on several tools, including disease surveillance, record-keeping requirements, quarantines and controls on movements of animals within the state and across state lines," Dr. McGraw says. For example, the division requires that a certificate of veterinary

inspection accompany all animals imported into Wisconsin.

Another way the division helps contain disease threats is by requiring licenses for animal markets, animal dealers, animal truckers, deer farms and fish farms. The division also administers the livestock premises registration program, which significantly increases ability to respond rapidly to a disease incident.

On the poultry side, Bill MacFarlane, the owner and president of MacFarlane Pheasants in Janesville, understands the widespread concerns for avian influenza and participates in a DAH emergency group that discusses responses to disease outbreaks.

"We want to have a plan in advance on how people within the industry are going to work together. We have also taken our own farm veterinarian to meet with Dr. McGraw to discuss how to handle different problem scenarios. He has always treated us with a lot of respect and acknowledges our concerns," MacFarlane says.



SAFETY FIRST

DAH manages many disease programs such as:

- brucellosis herd certification for bovine, swine, farm-raised deer and goats
- tuberculosis herd certification for bovine, farm-raised deer and goats
- pseudorabies herd certification for swine
- brucella ovis-free flock certification for sheep
- chronic wasting disease herd status program for farm-raised deer
- Johne's disease certification for bovine and goats

Furthermore, MacFarlane feels this open-door policy has helped grow business: "We have been expanding into export markets and Dr. McGraw and his staff have been very helpful in communicating with us to acquire certain permits and health certificate requirements."

Although relationships between business and regulatory bodies are often portrayed in a negative light, both Meronek and MacFarlane agree that this has not been their experience. Instead, the animal health division extends a

cooperative attitude and the desire to help businesses comply with regulations, which helps them get into markets and maintain a good public image.

How the Consumer Benefits

Without the division working hand in hand with producers to prevent, diagnose and control animal disease, there's no doubt that the welfare of consumers would be at stake. But thankfully, this is a responsibility that has long been upheld.

"Wisconsin has a rich history of leading in U.S. animal health. We can be sure DAH will do what is right for Wisconsin agriculture and protect consumers," Meronek says.

MacFarlane confirms that "there are a lot of safeguards in place with the inspection of poultry and the goal is always that the product the consumer gets is something they can trust. DATCP and DAH are well-positioned to make sure the food supply is safe. There's no doubt about that."

- Keri Ann Beazell

COLLABORATING FOR CONSERVATION

Network of farms showcases successful stewardship practices

Lee Kinnard's ancestors settled on a northern Kewaunee County hilltop, where Kinnard today can view the sunrise over Lake Michigan and sunset over Green Bay from behind the barn.

He doesn't take that view, or the quality of those waters, for granted.

"What we do on the land can have an impact on the waters on either side of us and beneath us," says Kinnard, fifth-generation owner of Kinnard Farms. "I think that's a reason my ancestors were staunch conservationists."

The family-owned dairy and crop farm cares for

10,000 acres of farmland and 8,200 cows in Casco. There, the family adopted cover crop and no-till conservation methods before their popularity, developed an innovative recycling and drying system for bedding sand and now shares its conservation approaches through the Door-Kewaunee Watershed Demonstration Farm Network.

The Kinnard family exceeds legal requirements to protect soil and water, and firmly believes in a dairy cow's ability to feed the world in a sustainable and regenerative manner.

"We absolutely believe a cow is the world's best recycler," Kinnard says. "We live in an area ideal for growing forages only digestible by ruminants like cows, which take that whole plant and turn it into milk and meat for humans. That is the basis for everything we do here."

Farm Network Showcases Conservation Practices

The Door-Kewaunee Watershed Demonstration Farm Network was formed in 2017 by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and Peninsula Pride Farms, a farmer-led conservation group in Kewaunee and southern Door counties.

From field days to online resources, this network of farms showcases their established best practices

"If agriculture is to thrive to survive, it starts with soil health and water quality. I was pretty excited to work with other farmers who discovered the same thing."

Lee Kinnard, *owner, Kinnard Farms*



Lee Kinnard of Kinnard Farms in Kewaunee County has adopted several conservation practices to preserve soil health and water quality for future generations.

BUY Local, BUY Wisconsin



Wisconsin ranks first in the nation in the production of green beans for processing, beets for canning and cabbage for kraut. We rank second in the nation in the production of carrots and peas for processing and third in the production of potatoes, sweet corn and cucumbers for pickles; and are a top-ten producer of onions. Specialty crop production and processing account for \$6.4 billion in annual economic activity and nearly 35,000 Wisconsin jobs!



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Not just the **WHERE**
BEHIND YOUR FOOD
but the **WHO & WHY**



The Langmeier Family Farm
One of our more than 740 midwest farmer-owners.

Organic Valley dairy farmers like the Langmeiers love to provide healthy, local, organic dairy products for the communities they live in. Thanks to your support, we celebrate our 30th year as a farmer-owned cooperative producing nutritious, organic foods in harmony with the earth and with respect for animals. Learn more about our mission at OrganicValley.coop.



Bringing *the Good*

to protect local water. Water quality ranks as a top priority in this region of Wisconsin, which contends with shallow, fractured bedrock that provides a direct path for water contaminants.

“I’m really impressed with how much leadership these farms demonstrate and how much they want to make a difference, increase conservation and get other farmers on board,” says Rachel Rushmann, nutrient management coordinator for DATCP. “Farmer-to-farmer education is so much more effective because it’s your neighbor saying it’s working, versus a government regulator. That’s what makes this program and this network successful.”

Farmers Committed to Conservation

The Door-Kewaunee Watershed Demonstration Farm Network comprises four farms, including Kinnard Farms, Brey Cycle Farm, Augustian Farms and Deer Run Dairy LLC. Duane Ducat owns and operates Deer Run Dairy, a 1,500-cow family farm in Kewaunee, with his son, Derek, and friend, Dale Bogart.

In the mid-1980s, the farm bought one of the area’s first no-till planters, which allowed them to plant into the prior year’s crop residue as opposed to tilling the soil. The family farm worked with consultants who considered micronutrients in soil fertility before the practice was commonplace. They also became an early adopter of cover crops, which cover the ground with plants between cash crops to reduce soil erosion, improve soil quality, enhance water infiltration and control weeds.

In fall 2017, Deer Run Dairy LLC hosted the kick-off field day for the farm network. More than 100 attendees learned about different types of low-disturbance manure injection. They viewed a soil pit, dug to facilitate a discussion on soil health, and witnessed a rainfall simulator to show precipitation’s impact on various tillage practices.

This year, Ducat plans to install a bioreactor that filters nitrogen from water in drain tiles. Meanwhile, he is investigating an innovative process intended to compost liquid manure.

“We’re committed to conservation because it’s the right thing to do,” Ducat says. “You want to leave the land better than what you found it. If you have healthy soil, you have healthy crops. It’s good for the land, it’s good for us and it’s good for the community.”

– Joanie Stiers



Deer Run Dairy and Kinnard Farms are both part of the Door-Kewaunee Demonstration Farm Network, which aims to use best conservation practices to protect the Great Lakes and preserve land.

FIND MORE ONLINE

Learn more about the importance of conservation at Wlagriculture.com.

Fresh TAKE

Wisconsin ranks No. 5 in the country for mint production



Wisconsin is certainly known for its beer and cheese, its cranberry marshes and cherry orchards – but mint? Sullivan producer Tom Anfang says it still surprises his fellow Wisconsinites to learn that their state is a global leader in mint production.

According to the Wisconsin mint industry, the United States is responsible for more than 70 percent of the world's supply of mint – and Wisconsin ranks fifth in the nation for production of mint oils. Most Midwestern mint oil goes to companies such as Colgate and Wrigley's, which means when you chew gum or brush your teeth, there's a very good chance you've tasted Wisconsin mint.

"I get that all the time. Ninety percent of them say, 'Wow, mint,

I never realized,'" says Anfang, who pulled his first weeds on a Delavan mint farm at the age of 12 and never stopped. Raised as one of 11 children on an 80-acre family farm, he bought his first 40 acres while he was still in high school. Although he's dabbled throughout the years in sweet corn, peas, potatoes and beef cattle, the constant has always been mint. He now farms about 1,500 acres worth of the thirsty, aromatic perennial across parcels from Janesville to Sullivan. "Mint was always different, that's probably what I like about it," he says. "And it brings a little diversity to Wisconsin's agriculture."

How It's Grown

Mint, specifically peppermint and spearmint, starts as a row crop

but does not produce seeds. It's propagated by the root and favors rich, wet muck – sometimes up to 65 percent organic material. While 90 percent of commercially grown mint is distilled to a concentrated oil used for confectionary and pharmaceutical flavoring – one drum of oil can be used to flavor 5 million sticks of chewing gum or 400,000 tubes of toothpaste – it is also a refreshing herb used in cooking and drinks, and believed to have digestive and antiviral properties. With only about 80,000 acres cultivated in the U.S. each year, mint is still a small player in the grand agricultural scheme, but those who farm it, love it.

"More of my neighbors appreciate me when we're harvesting mint," laughs Richard Gumz, a fourth-generation mint

One drum of mint oil can be used to flavor **5 million** sticks of chewing gum or **400,000** tubes of toothpaste.



WISCONSIN RANKS
NO. 5 IN THE
NATION FOR MINT
PRODUCTION.

80,000
ACRES OF MINT
CULTIVATED IN THE
U.S. EACH YEAR



On average, Wisconsin mint farmers yield about **50 to 60 pounds** of oil per acre.

farmer in central Wisconsin and one of only three 2017 Top Producer of the Year finalists in the nation, according to *Top Producer* magazine. The Gumz family began growing mint in Wisconsin 70 years ago on land the government deemed too wet for farming or developing. Modern irrigation practices have since made more land amenable to mint. Mint also needs rotation every five or six years to ward off a disease called verticillium wilt. Gumz Farms raises onions, red potatoes, carrots, corn and soybeans along with its 900 acres of peppermint and 300 acres of Scotch spearmint. After cutting the 3-foot-tall leafy plants

and letting them dry in the field, they chop mint into fully enclosed wagons and inject it with steam. A two-hour distillation process extracts the oil and condenses the vapor. Wisconsin's state average yield is about 50 to 60 pounds of oil per acre – highly potent, highly concentrated and high in demand.

"I like growing mint because it's a specialty crop that ends up in products we're all familiar with that we all enjoy," Gumz says. "It smells good, it's unique and it adds to our diversification because we're harvesting in July and August when we're not harvesting other crops as heavily."

– Maggie Ginsberg

featured RECIPE

PEPPERMINT CHOCOLATE BARK

Ingredients

12 ounces high-quality semisweet chocolate chips
12 ounces high-quality white chocolate chips (not almond bark)
¼ cup peppermint candy, crushed
2 tablespoons vegetable shortening or coconut oil, divided

Instructions

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt the semisweet chocolate with 1 tablespoon shortening. Stir every 30 seconds or so, just until the chips begin to lose their shape.
2. Stir them until chocolate is very smooth, and spoon into a parchment-lined 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Set aside to cool. Let set completely.
3. Combine the remaining shortening with the white chocolate chips, and microwave following the same instructions above.
4. When smooth, spread the melted white chocolate over the semisweet layer. Evenly sprinkle crushed peppermints on top. Let set 1 to 2 hours. Break into pieces when ready to serve.





LIVING THE
Sweet Life



Jesse Wagner and his wife, Margo, own Inthewoods Sugar Bush in Manitowoc. The third-generation maple syrup producer says visitors can stop for tours of the operation in March and April.



Wisconsin maple syrup producers turn tree sap into nature's perfect sweetener

Jim Adamski of Antigo has been turning tree sap into sweet maple syrup for as long as he can remember.

"Back in the 1980s, my grandfather made syrup just for our family, and it was a 4-H and FFA project for me growing up," he recalls. "We started with about 25 taps, and it just snowballed from there. Today, we have 10,000 taps."

The "taps" Adamski refers to are small tubes driven into maple trees

that aid in the collection of sap in early spring. Some trees can take two taps if they are large enough, while smaller trees can support only a single tap.

Adamski's Sugar Bush is a family-owned business that produces between 5,000 and 6,000 gallons of maple syrup annually. Jim's parents, Gary and Vicky, are co-owners in the business, which also involves his wife, Sara, and 10-year-old son, Jacob.

Wisconsin-Made Maple Syrup

The Adamski family is one of about 270 licensed maple syrup producers in Wisconsin. Maple syrup is big business here – Wisconsin ranks fourth nationally in its production, and producers in the state harvested about 235,000 gallons of syrup in 2016. Together they tapped approximately 765,000 trees.

"We've seen increasing interest in maple syrup production," says

Steve Ingham, administrator of the Division of Food and Recreational Safety at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. “These producers have a great deal of skill and scientific knowledge that goes into making high-quality maple syrup, and their passion for their product is impressive.”

How Syrup Is Made

The process of maple syrup production begins in late winter or early spring, when the days are above freezing and the nights are below freezing.

“We look for that freeze-thaw process each year, because it moves the sap inside the maple tree and encourages the sap to flow,” Adamski says. “A tree draws the sap up from the root system at night to protect itself from the cold, and during the day, the opposite happens and the sap is forced back down to the roots. That’s when we see the run of sap.”

The Adamskis use a tubing

system with a vacuum to collect the sap. They haul the sap to their “sugar house” where it is processed. The sap is pumped through an osmosis machine to remove 85 percent of the water. Then, it is passed through the evaporator and boiled to condense further. The final product is filtered and hot packed into 55-gallon barrels before being bottled to order.

“It takes 43 gallons of raw maple sap to make one gallon of maple syrup,” Adamski says. “Real maple syrup is Mother Nature’s super food – a sweetener with potassium, zinc, antioxidants and a lot of healthy elements not found in white sugar.”

Inthewoods Sugar Bush

Fellow producer Jesse Wagner agrees. He’s a third-generation maple syrup producer in Manitowoc.

“It’s very satisfying to take something from Mother Nature, add absolutely nothing to it and

get an awesome product from it,” Wagner says.

Wagner owns Inthewoods Sugar Bush with his wife, Margo. His father, John, helps with the business. The Wagner family gives tours of their maple syrup operation on weekends in March and early April.

“Visitors can see every aspect of the process – the sap coming out of the trees, being taken into the sugar house and boiled into syrup,” Wagner says. “In 2017, we boiled 42,000 gallons of sap and made 1,100 gallons of syrup.”

Wagner enjoys the seasonal work of maple syrup that gives him a break from his full-time job in road construction.

“It gets me into the woods. It’s peaceful with the sap flowing, the smell is amazing,” he says. “If you’ve never been inside a sugar shack during maple syrup production, I strongly encourage you to visit one. I look forward to it 11 months out of the year.”

– Jessica Mozo



270

Licensed maple syrup producers in Wisconsin



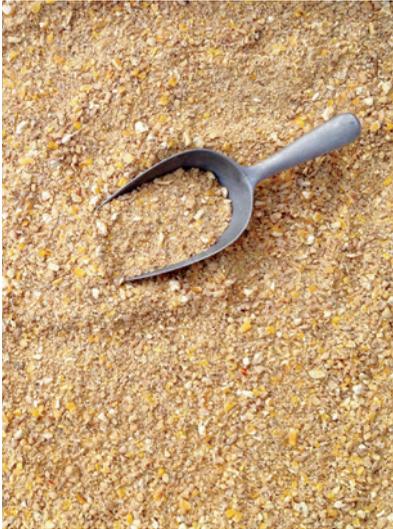
IN 2016, WISCONSIN MAPLE SYRUP PRODUCERS TAPPED ABOUT 765,000 TREES.

765,000

Real maple syrup contains zinc, antioxidants and a lot of healthy elements not found in white sugar.

WISCONSIN GOES GLOBAL

Buyers missions connect Wisconsin goods, foreign buyers



Wheaton Grain's relatively young export venture has already spurred its expansion, thanks to a buyers mission, a meet-and-greet event that introduces international customers to Wisconsin suppliers.

"Without the export business, we wouldn't have been able to expand and purchase another facility," says Darryl Custer, a grain merchandiser at Wheaton Grain, Inc., a family-owned grain elevator with affiliated trucking and farming businesses in Chippewa Falls. "It just got to the point where we couldn't originate enough soybeans and corn in the fall to support our export business, so we had to reach out and expand."

Since 2014, Wheaton Grain has exported corn, soybeans and distiller's dried grains – a feed product from local ethanol plants – to China and Thailand. The Custer family credits their export business to the Value-Added International Feed Buyers Mission, an orchestrated event during

the Madison-based World Dairy Expo that connects significant international buyers with quality Wisconsin feed suppliers. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Food Export Association of the Midwest USA and various interest groups sponsor the feed buyers mission and similar ones for other Wisconsin goods, such as cranberries, dairy products, baking ingredients and processed foods. All seek the same result: new exports and a wealth of opportunities for Wisconsin businesses. That's good for Wisconsin's economy.

Jennifer Lu and her colleagues at the department make it their mission to connect Wisconsin businesses with international buyers. Over the year, they have worked with buying delegations from more than 15 countries in Southeast Asia, South America

and the Middle East. "It provides our businesses with an opportunity for face-to-face contact with foreign buyers. These events have proven highly successful for many local businesses and opened the door for long-term trade relationships."

Lu and fellow economic development consultant Enrique Gandara recorded 173 international introductions to 24 Midwestern suppliers (12 from Wisconsin) at the 2016 Value-Added Feed Ingredients Buyers Mission in Madison. The three-day event assisted with \$1.2 million in export sales.

But the impact reaches far beyond these dollars and those three days.

"A lot of these feed companies sell to dairies and feedlots in their countries," Gandara says. "Any time they do this, they bring a wealth of referrals for livestock genetics and equipment and different products manufactured in

"We love to present the best of Wisconsin to the international market. There is such a large population around the world that depends on American farmers to feed them. We want to help with that."

Jennifer Lu, *economic development consultant, DATCP*

and the Middle East.

"Buyers missions are cost-effective ways for exporters to build relationships with prequalified international buyers without traveling overseas," says Lu, an economic development

the state. It's like a domino effect. They take this wealth of knowledge back to their countries and directly or indirectly share information about available Wisconsin products."

– Joanie Stiers

ON A MISSION

Trade missions get Wisconsin products into international markets

Forging business relationships with customers in other countries is not a simple task. Cultural and language barriers, different consumer preferences, regulations, and many other factors can make exporting products overseas seem impossible for small and midsize businesses. But thanks to trade missions organized by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s International Agribusiness Center, more Wisconsin products are showing up on shelves all over the world.

Ahead of the Curve

“What’s great about these trade missions is all of the pre-work is done for you,” says Michael Stone,

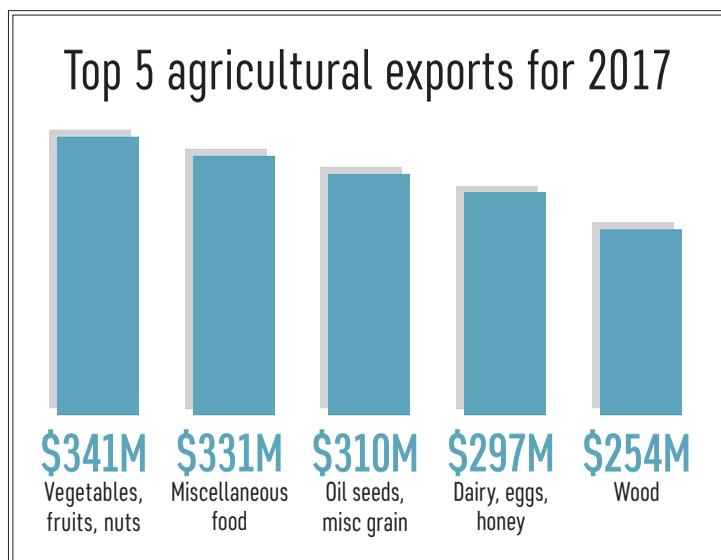
president and CEO of The Stone Group, Inc., which markets and sells Wisconsin products domestically and internationally. “If I want to sell in Japan, I’m wondering, ‘How in the world do I start?’ Trade missions put you in front of customers.”

Stone has traveled to Korea, Japan and Mexico through trade missions, and contacts he made on each trip have become customers.

Trade missions are often planned through a partnership between the International Agribusiness Center and Food Export Association of the Midwest USA, a nonprofit organization that promotes the export of food and agricultural products from the Midwest. Then trade experts visit the target country in advance to perform market research, build relationships and promote Wisconsin products. By the time company representatives arrive in the country, vetted buyers already know about their products and are ready to discuss business.

At the same time, International Agribusiness Center staff makes sure Wisconsin companies are ready to do business overseas when an opportunity arises.

“There are different processes, documentation and regulations when selling products internationally,” says Jack Heinemann, director of the Wisconsin International Agribusiness Center. “This program is organized so if you’re new to exporting goods or new to a particular



TOP EXPORT MARKETS FOR WISCONSIN IN 2017



Wisconsin currently ranks 12th among U.S. states in agricultural exports.

country, the team makes sure you have the correct information, gets you the right meetings and helps you overcome the learning curve very quickly.”

Affordable and Efficient

Alex Zwilgmeyer is vice president of international at Gehl Foods, a company that makes private label and branded cheese sauces as well as beverages. He says visiting Argentina and Mexico on trade missions was affordable and efficient.

“The people you meet with are vetted and have a positive record in the community, so you’re sitting down with solid people,” Zwilgmeyer says.

Suppliers receive a briefing of the market and visit retail stores on the first day of each trade mission. Day two consists of one-on-one meetings with potential buyers, along with a reception to encourage further relationship building. On the third day, there are follow-up meetings, and suppliers have the option to tour potential buyers’ facilities.

“It’s get in, meet buyers and go home,” says Tim Hamilton, executive director of Food Export Association of the Midwest USA.

Closing the Deal

While trade missions are effective at introducing Wisconsin companies to potential international customers, it’s essential to follow up after returning from a trip.

“Companies who are active and aggressive in their follow-up are going to be successful,” Hamilton says. “Buyers are busy, so you want to stay on their radar. You have to push to make the sale.”

Zwilgmeyer says trade missions are just the start of a relationship and require visits, negotiations and conversations to close a deal, just like any other sale.

Making contacts and putting in the effort to close the deal reaps huge benefits for the companies selling products, as well as for the producers who make them.

“My producers are so proud their cheeses are being sold in other countries,” Stone says, adding that it may seem intimidating to venture into international business, but it’s worth it.

“Success creates more success,” he says. “Once you crack one international market, you’re probably going to get in somewhere else. It just grows and grows.”

– Jill Clair Gentry



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Want to stay in touch with Wisconsin food and farmers? Here are a few ways to get started:

Shop at a Farmers Market

With more than 300 farmers markets across the state, it's easy to buy fresh, local produce, meats and other foods in Wisconsin. Find a farmers market near you at wifarmersmarkets.org.

Visit a Farm

Picking berries, exploring a corn maze, sipping delicious wines – these are just some of the fun things to do on farms. To learn more about Wisconsin agritourism, visit visitdairyland.com.

Buy Local Products

Want to support producers in your state? Discover products made in Wisconsin at somethingspecialwi.com.

Keep Learning

Ag in the Classroom provides agricultural education to students across the state. For more information, visit wisagclassroom.org.

Share Infographics

Download shareable graphics featuring the state's top 10 ag products, seasonal produce calendars and more at WIagriculture.com.

Stay in Touch

Keep up with the wide-ranging efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection at datcp.wi.gov.

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The UW School of Veterinary Medicine helps make both animal and human lives better. Our discoveries have advanced cancer treatments, we've created new ways to fight the flu, and we're a world leader when it comes to figuring out what keeps cows healthy and happy.

We make sure Wisconsin's dairy industry remains the best.



We have trained **over half of the veterinarians** in the state and serve as a resource and referral clinic for all.



Our livestock experts launched **The Dairyland Initiative**, a program that works directly with farms to optimize cow comfort, health, and production.



Our scientists conduct **75% of the infectious disease research** at UW-Madison, including work to prevent pandemic influenza.



Our teaching hospital provides exceptional care for animals throughout the state. Of our **26,500 patient visits** last year, **80% were from Wisconsin**.

AnimalsNeedHeroesToo.com

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Agriculture isn't just a market we serve. It's what we're founded on. It's who we are. Whether you have one acre or one thousand, our team members from Minnesota, Illinois and Wisconsin share an unwavering commitment to you and making that hope and dream of yours very, very real.

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