

Growing Wisconsin

Connecting consumers
to farms, food and forestry

Farm-Fresh FAMILY FEASTS

PLUS

**Mushroom
Mavericks**

Hive to Table

**Craft
Beverages**



3 recipes
using
Wisconsin
products



WHAT'S NEXT:

CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS TO MOVE YOUR FARM FORWARD

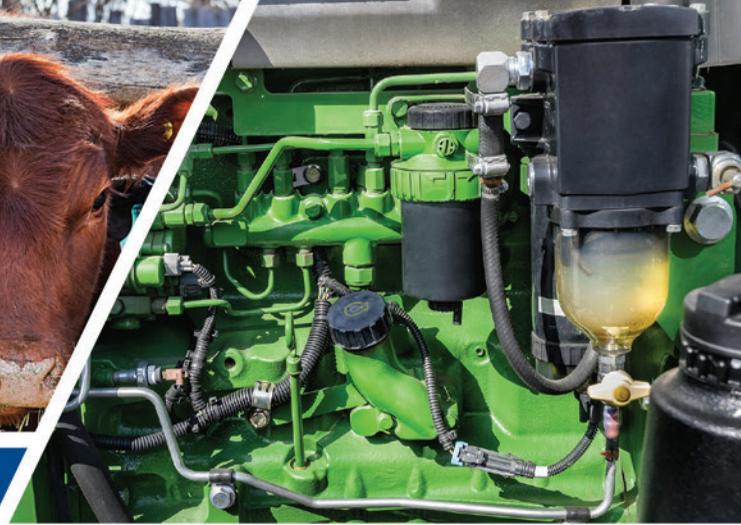
We combine our expertise with the latest technology to provide agronomic, grain and energy solutions at the forefront of industry trends. With an unmatched selection of products and services, our solutions deliver strong ROI for a better bottom line.

Visit insightfs.com to learn more.

**SEED • FUEL • PROPANE • LUBRICANTS • FERTILIZER • GRAIN MARKETING
PRECISION FARMING • CROP PROTECTION • AGRI-FINANCE • TURF**

920-674-7000

BRINGING YOU WHAT'S NEXT™



Southwest  Tech
AGRICULTURE

*Our passion is to
 help grow yours.*



**Southwest Tech offers an agriculture
 career track for everyone!**

ASSOCIATE DEGREES | TWO-YEAR TECHNICAL DIPLOMAS
 ONE-YEAR TECHNICAL DIPLOMAS
 CERTIFICATES | ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

WE DELIVER EDUCATION



ON
 CAMPUS



ONLINE



ON THE
 FARM



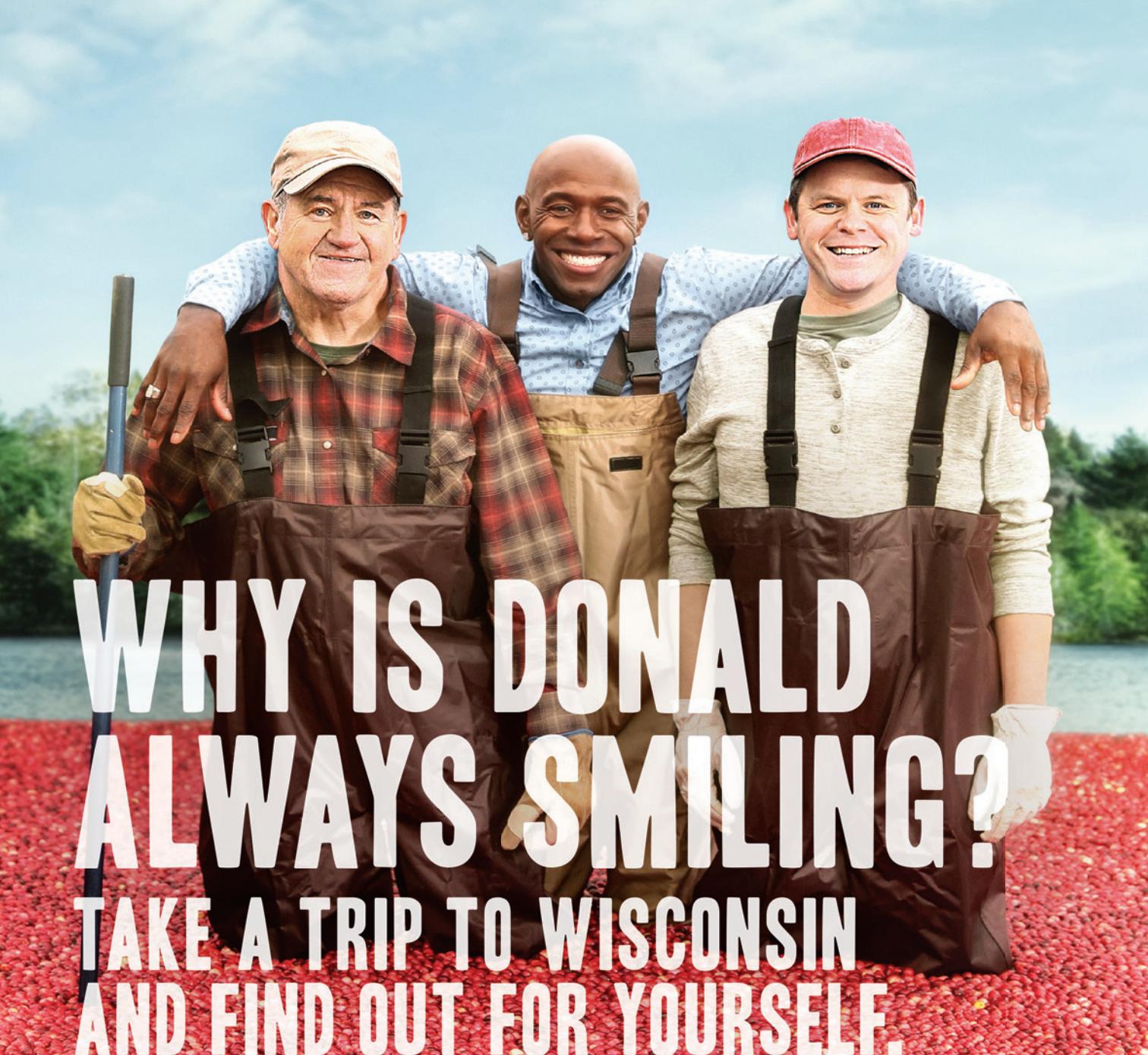
97%
 OF GRADUATES
 ARE SATISFIED/
 VERY SATISFIED WITH
 THEIR TRAINING



LEARN MORE!
**www.
 swtc.edu/ag**

Accommodations: 608.822.2632 (tdd: 608.822.2072) | disabilityservices@swtc.edu

Southwest Tech is committed to legal affirmative action, equal opportunity access, and diversity of its campus community. www.swtc.edu/equality



**WHY IS DONALD
ALWAYS SMILING?
TAKE A TRIP TO WISCONSIN
AND FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.**



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

TRAVEL
WISCONSIN
— .COM —



14 LAVENDER

Purple REIGN

WISCONSIN LAVENDER FARMS OFFER A NEW TYPE OF AGRITOURISM EXPERIENCE

9 AG PROFILE

Wisconsin Agriculture

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

12 TOP AG PRODUCTS

What's Growing in Wisconsin

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

PHOTO: AMY VANDEHEI

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!



**WISCONSIN
POTATOES**

wisconsinpotatoes.com

WIagriculture.com

Find even more online about Wisconsin agriculture, from education to agritourism to local food and more.



Shop in Season

When will your favorite fruits and vegetables be available? Download a produce calendar showing what's ripe right now.



Have a Field Day

Discover agritourism destinations from wineries to Christmas tree farms.



Cook with Local Products

Find tasty recipes using Wisconsin's top products such as Swiss cheese, eggs and more.



Stay Informed

Discover facts and stats about agriculture in your state, from the average farm size to the number of family farms.

Read the Digital Magazine

Optimized For Online:

Each article can be read online, as a web article or within our digital magazine.

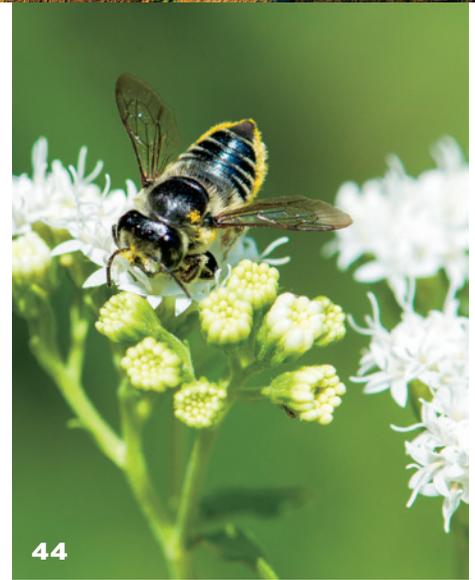
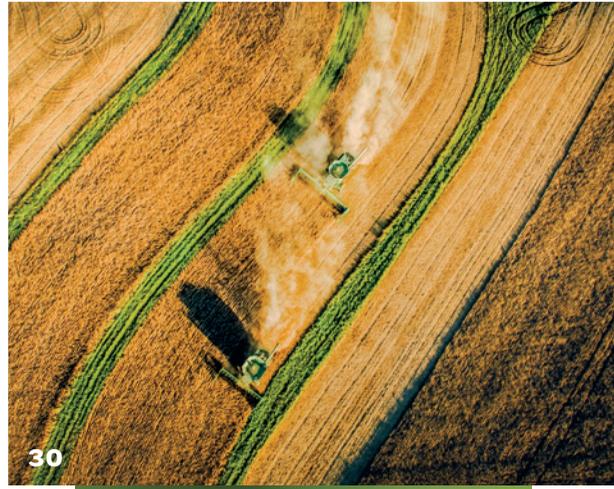
Share the Content:

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



FARM FLAVOR

To learn more about what's growing in your state, visit FarmFlavor.com.



18 AGRITOURISM

Discover Wisconsin

Innovative venue showcases state's farms

20 FARM TO TABLE

Farm-Fresh Family Feasts

Dinner on the farm events gain popularity

23 FARM TO TABLE

A Little Italy in Wisconsin

Farm dishes up European cuisine from local sources

24 FARM TO TABLE

Local Food and Stunning Views

Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin offers both

26 CHEESE

More Cheese, Please!

Wisconsin cheeses are making quite a stir in international markets

30 AG EXPORTS

Soybeans Bound for Abroad

Export market buys majority of state's second largest crop

32 GRANTS

Bolstering Specialty Crops

DATCP grant program advances industry

34 MUSHROOMS

The Marvelous Mysterious Mushroom

Wisconsin has some of the nation's finest amateur foragers and large-scale mushroom producers

37 CONSUMER PROTECTION

Fighting Fraud

DATCP efforts protect consumers, small businesses

38 BEVERAGES

Spirited Creations

Wisconsin-made spirits feature grains grown by farmers across The Badger State

41 BEVERAGES

Bottling Wisconsin

Cidery sells locally sourced craft cider, opens pub

42 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Everything Plus the Kitchen Sink

Organizations assist entrepreneurs building food businesses

30

20

44

44 HONEYBEES

Hive to Table

Thriving industry ranges from small family farms to large-scale commercial productions

47 HONEYBEES

What's the Buzz?

Research helps maintain bee health in Wisconsin

48 FOOD SAFETY

The First Line of Defense

On-farm produce inspections underway

COVER STORY | PAGE 20

Tony Schultz serves up pizza topped with ingredients from his farm, Stoney Acres, where he hosts Pizza Night. **PHOTO BY STEVE WOIT**

PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: AMY ELLIS; TRAVIS DEWITZ; J. HEMBERGER

Agricultural ADVOCACY



Ag in the CLASSROOM

For free agricultural resources visit
wisagclassroom.org.

Money-Saving MEMBER BENEFITS



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.

stay connected WIFarmBureau



Wisconsin
Farm Bureau
FEDERATION

Growing Wisconsin

2019-20 EDITION, VOLUME 7



SENIOR EDITOR Hannah Patterson Hill
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Kelly Rogers, Rachel Graf
CONTENT COORDINATOR Cara Sanders
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Cathy Lockman, Jessica Boehm, Joanie Stiers, Kayla Walden, Rachel Bertone
V.P./CONTENT & MARKETING Jessy Yancey
V.P./CREATIVE SERVICES Laura Gallagher
ART DIRECTOR Amy Hiemstra
SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER Emmylou Rittenour
SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER Jeff Adkins
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Nathan Lambrecht
MEDIA ASSET MANAGER Alison Hunter
V.P./DIGITAL OPERATIONS Allison Davis
WEB DEVELOPER Richard Stevens
DIGITAL ADS SPECIALIST Susanna Haynes
PRESIDENT Ray Langen
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Kim Newsom Holmberg
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT Jordan Moore
V.P./BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & SALES Drew Colston
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR Molly Morton
AD PRODUCTION MANAGER Katie Middendorf
SENIOR AD COORDINATOR/DESIGNER Vikki Williams
AD TRAFFIC COORDINATOR Patricia Moisan
SALES SUPPORT COORDINATOR Courtney Cook
FARM FLAVOR MEDIA IS A DIVISION OF JOURNAL COMMUNICATIONS INC.
CHAIRMAN Greg Thurman
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER Bob Schwartzman
CONTROLLER Chris Dudley
ACCOUNTING TEAM Diana lafrate, Maria McFarland, Lisa Owens
DATABASE DIRECTOR Debbie Woksa
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY Kristy Giles
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Peggy Blake

Growing Wisconsin is published annually by Farm Flavor Media and distributed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

For advertising information or to direct questions or comments about the magazine, please contact Farm Flavor Media at (800) 333-8842 or info@farmflavormedia.com.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION:

SECRETARY Brad Pfaff
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR Grace Colás
 Special thanks to all Department staff for their support.

For more information about the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, contact:

Grace Colás, Communications Director
 P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708
 (608) 224-5020
grace.colas1@wisconsin.gov

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

© Copyright 2019 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.

Please recycle this magazine.



Brad Pfaff was appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in January 2019. He grew up on a dairy farm and has spent his career striving for the betterment of Wisconsin's farmers and rural communities.

Greetings,

Thank you for picking up *Growing Wisconsin* magazine. I appreciate your interest in connecting with the farmers all over Wisconsin who grow our food each day.

I am extremely proud of Wisconsin's diverse and interconnected agricultural industry and the thousands of farms that call our state home. From our award-winning cheeses and sweet honey to our abundant soybeans and world-famous cranberries, Wisconsin is well known for our high-quality, nutritious products.

In *Growing Wisconsin*, you can read about how research allows our family farmers to innovate and how shared kitchen space enables food businesses to get their start. You can learn about

the many ways the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) works to keep our food safe and market our agricultural goods around the globe.

I hope *Growing Wisconsin* inspires you to connect with your food, from the farm to your table. Read about how you can tour a local farm or enjoy a meal in the country. Try your hand at a recipe that includes a Wisconsin product. Toast to agriculture with a drink made in Wisconsin.

Thank you again for reading the stories of Wisconsin agriculture in this year's issue of *Growing Wisconsin*. We are all consumers, and we all benefit from our state's farms and the food they grow.

Sincerely,

Brad Pfaff
 Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Growing Wisconsin's economy through practical agriculture education

50+ programs available in agriculture-related careers

2018 associate degree graduates' median starting salary is \$43,600+/year

(WTCS 2018 Graduate Outcomes Report)

16 colleges bringing technology into the classroom through:

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

Agriculture careers support many industries, including:

- Farm production
- Agriculture management & marketing
- Agriculture research & engineering
- Food science
- Animal science
- Horticulture
- Processing & retailing
- Banking
- Education
- Landscape architecture
- Urban planning
- Energy systems



Wisconsin Agriculture

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

TOTAL FARMS: **64,800** | **308** FARMERS' MARKETS

ECONOMIC IMPACT: **\$88.3B**

PRODUCTION VALUE: **\$11,400,000**
36% CROPS | 64% LIVESTOCK

AG PRODUCTS EXPORTED: **\$3.5B**

413.5K AG JOBS

1st in the nation for:

SNAP BEANS FOR PROCESSING, CHEESE, CRANBERRIES, GINSENG, CORN FOR SILAGE, DRY WHEY FOR HUMAN FOOD, MILK GOATS, MINK PELTS

Source: datcp.wi.gov

FROM CHEESE TO CHERRIES AND farm tours to farmers' markets, Wisconsin agriculture is a vast and diverse industry.

So vast, in fact, that it contributes a whopping \$88.3 billion annually to the state's economy. Wisconsin is home to almost 64,800 farms, which cover approximately 14.3 million acres, averaging 221 acres each.

Consumers may not think about agriculture in their daily lives if they're not directly involved, but perhaps they should, as many of Wisconsin's top products end up not only on their dinner plates, but also in their cars and closets.

For example, next time you pick up some frozen or canned veggies, thank Wisconsin's farmers. The state is a national leader in the production of major processing vegetables. In 2018, the state grew 660 million pounds of snap beans, 172 million pounds of carrots, 61.2 million pounds of cucumbers and 97.9 million pounds of green peas. Like cranberry juice? Wisconsin grows 64 percent of the nation's cranberries, making it the top cranberry-producing state in the country. It earns its nickname as America's Dairyland, with more dairy farms than any other state in the U.S.

If you want to experience agriculture hands on, Wisconsin has a variety of agritourism possibilities, including lavender farms, farmers' markets, farm-to-table dinners, breweries and cideries, and more. Farmers and producers at these destinations are committed to teaching consumers more about exactly where their food comes from, so they can feel confident and informed.

Wisconsin agriculture also includes education, exports, consumer protection, agribusiness and more.



WISCONSIN HAS
38,509

FEMALE FARMERS, MAKING
UP 35 PERCENT OF ALL
PRODUCERS WITHIN THE STATE.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Across the nation, women are becoming more prominent as primary operators within the field of agriculture, and that is especially apparent in Wisconsin.

According to the USDA's 2017 Census of Agriculture, Wisconsin has 38,509 female producers, making up 35 percent of all producers within the state. Compared to the last census in 2012, that's a 16 percent increase in the number of female operators.

Women have always played an important role in agriculture, but now they're being recognized more accurately from a data perspective for their contributions.

Learn more about women in agriculture and other important agricultural statistics for Wisconsin at nass.usda.gov.

RAPID RESPONSE LIVESTOCK PROTECTION

From a single pet llama to poultry houses full of chickens, all livestock needs to be registered with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). This allows the DATCP to respond rapidly to any outbreaks or emergencies.

Have you registered to protect your animals yet? To learn more about the premises registration process, visit wiic.org/premises_registration.



MEET ME AT THE MARKET

Wisconsin's many farmers' markets offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, flowers, meats, honey, baked goods and more. Check out a sampling of markets below and visit wifarmersmarkets.org to find one near you.

Dane County Farmers' Market,
Madison

Peach St. Farmers Market,
Wisconsin Rapids

Downtown Appleton Market,
Appleton

Baraboo Farmers' Market,
Baraboo

Chippewa Falls Farmers Market,
Chippewa Falls

West Allis Farmers Market,
West Allis

Stone Lake Farmers Market,
Stone Lake

Sources: travelwisconsin.com,
wifarmersmarkets.org

PHOTOS: FROM TOP: ISTOCK.COM/DEIMAGINE, SOLEG

FOOD FESTIVAL FUN

Tempt your taste buds at one of Wisconsin's annual food festivals across the state:

JANUARY

Hot ChocolateFest, Burlington

JUNE

Strawberry Festival, Cedarburg

Cheese Curd Festival, Ellsworth

Great Wisconsin Cheese Festival, Little Chute

Rhubarb Fest, Osceola

AUGUST

Sweet Corn Festival, Sun Prairie

Burger Fest & Balloon Rally, Seymour

SEPTEMBER

Bacon Bash, River Falls

Beef-A-Rama, Minocqua

U.S. Watermelon Speed-Eating and Seed-Spitting Championships, Pardeeville

Warrens Cranberry Festival, Warrens

OCTOBER

Bayfield Apple Festival, Bayfield

Source: travelwisconsin.com

INCREASED COMMODITIES

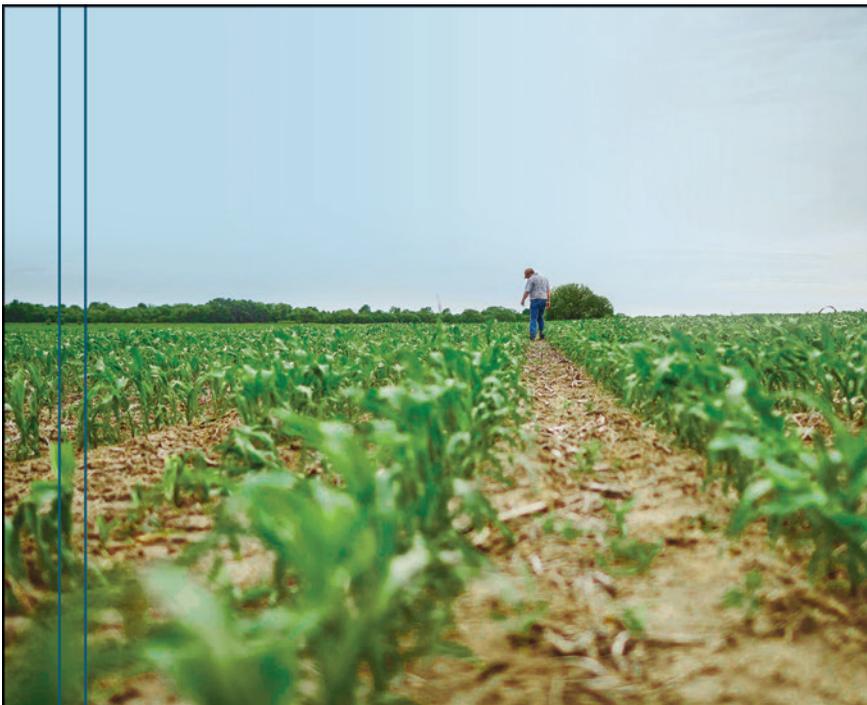


Wisconsin farmers grew **335 acres of sweet potatoes** in 2017, up from 23 acres in 2012.



Wisconsin produced **1.02 million more pounds of dry edible beans** in 2017 than 2012, for a total of 11.4 million pounds.

Source: nass.usda.gov



With you every step.

For more than a century, we've sown the seeds of progress by supporting agriculture and rural communities. Our unique lineup of products and services can help you reach your financial goals.

- Agricultural lending
- Country living loans
- Crop and life insurance
- Tax and accounting services
- Home and land loans

Contact your local GreenStone office today!

800-444-3276

 **GreenStone**[®]
FARM CREDIT SERVICES

www.greenstonefcs.com



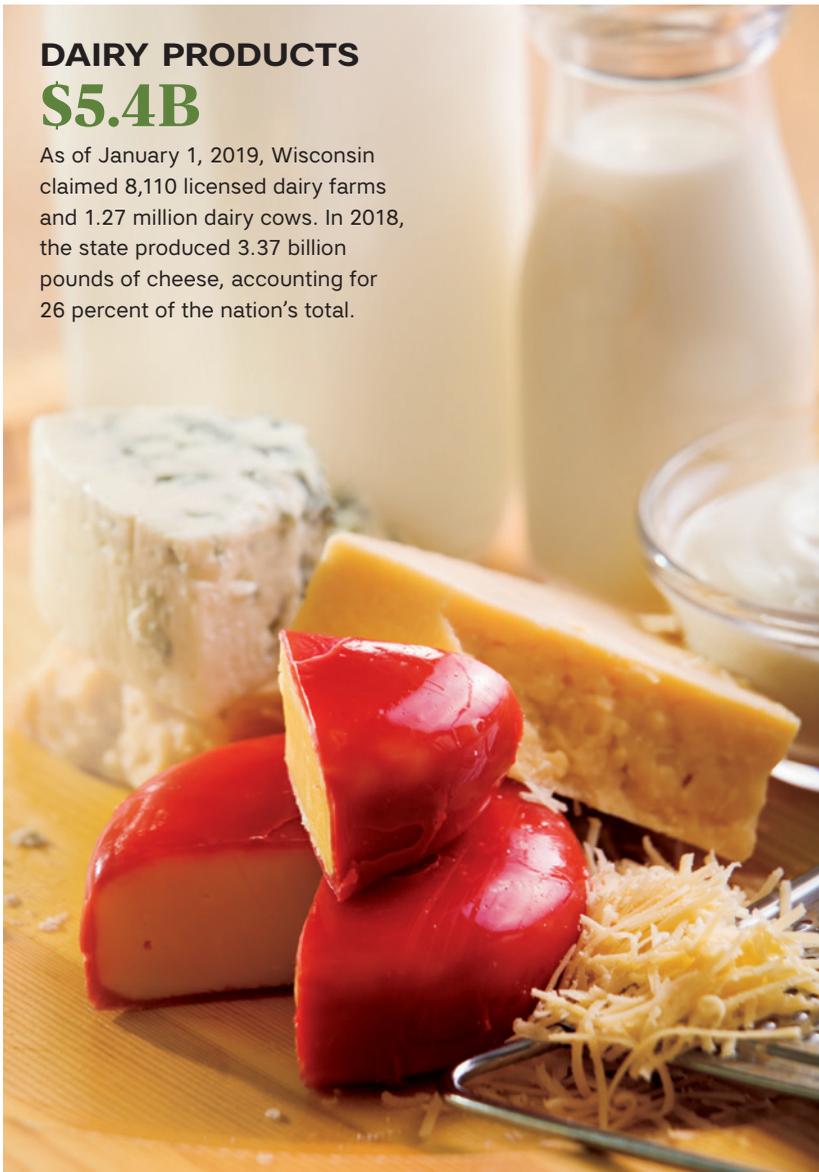
What's Growing in Wisconsin

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

DAIRY PRODUCTS

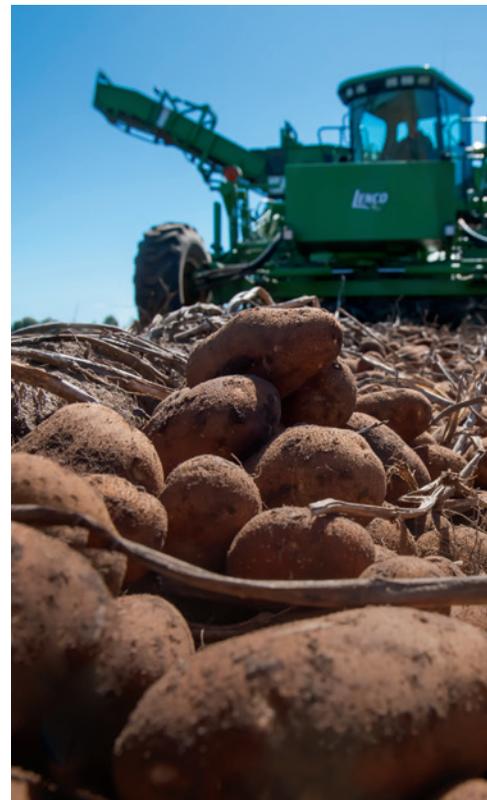
\$5.4B

As of January 1, 2019, Wisconsin claimed 8,110 licensed dairy farms and 1.27 million dairy cows. In 2018, the state produced 3.37 billion pounds of cheese, accounting for 26 percent of the nation's total.



*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

\$311.4M

Wisconsin ranks third in the nation in potato production, with farmers harvesting potatoes on 71,000 acres in 2018.

HOGS

\$122.7M

In 2018, Wisconsin had an inventory of 325,000 hogs. Grant and Sauk counties have the largest hog inventories in the state. Nationwide, more than 60,000 pork producers market more than 115 million hogs annually.



PHOTOS: FROM TOP: STEVE WOOT; JEFFREY S. OTTO; MICHAEL CONTI

CRANBERRIES \$156.1M

Growers across Wisconsin harvested 20,600 acres of cranberries (the state fruit) in 2018, which resulted in a production of 5.5 million barrels. Wisconsin produces 64 percent of the nation's cranberry crop, making it the top cranberry producing state in the U.S.



CATTLE & CALVES \$1.8B

In 2019, Wisconsin is home to 290,000 head of beef cattle – up 2 percent from 2018 – and although the state is well known for its dairy production, it has nearly 2,000 more beef producers than dairy producers.



HAY \$95M

Farmers across the state harvested 1.36 million acres of hay and produced 2.95 million tons of the crop in 2018.



BROILERS \$122.9M

Wisconsin produced 53.8 million broilers (chickens raised for meat) in 2017.

CHICKEN EGGS \$103.3M

In March 2019, Wisconsin produced 167 million eggs, and the reported number of layers (chickens raised to lay eggs) across the state totaled 7.15 million.



CORN \$1.4B

In 2018, Wisconsin corn growers harvested 545 million bushels on 3.17 million acres, which is equivalent to 172 bushels per acre. Wisconsin corn is mainly used for livestock feed, ethanol production, exports or food.

[Find more online](#)

Learn more about crops and commodities in Wisconsin online at Wlagiculture.com.



SOYBEANS \$912.6M

In 2018, Wisconsin farmers harvested nearly 2.2 million acres of soybeans, resulting in a production of 105.8 million bushels of the crop.

Purple REIGN



PHOTO: AMY VANDE HEI

Wisconsin lavender farms offer a new type of agritourism experience

Driving through Baraboo in Sauk County, you might feel as though you've been transported to the lush French countryside. Fields of stunning purple lavender have popped up over the past several years as multiple lavender farms are offering a new agritourism experience.

NEW LIFE LAVENDER & CHERRY FARM

Laura and Aron McReynolds knew they needed a change when they bought the farmland that would eventually become New Life Lavender & Cherry Farm in 2015.

"We had just moved from Kansas and had sold our business there. We were kind of waiting for what was next and knew we needed a change," Laura says.

The couple wanted to do something outside with their kids, and the 40-acre abandoned family farm seemed like just the opportunity for a new idea.

"I came across a picture of a lavender field and it was just so beautiful," Laura says. "I was really inspired by it. It was a rough time in our family's life, and we needed something to bring us together. The farm has been such a healing process."

The more they researched lavender, the more the couple learned about the crop's many healing properties, which seemed

to be a good fit for their life.

Along with lavender, part of the farm's 40 acres is used to grow cherries, which the McReynolds thought paired perfectly with the purple plant.

"That's kind of our brand, focusing on lavender and cherries together," Aron says. "We have a signature lavender cherry pie that's a very unique recipe. We spent six months working on it and we make it every day at the farm."

He adds that they're planning to expand the culinary offerings so visitors can learn that lavender is for more than just lotion.

Now the farm is open to the public, and Laura says visitors can walk in to visit or schedule a farm tour to learn more about the different varieties of lavender and their uses. The couple's kids each have their own parts of the farm, which also highlights the tour.

"My middle son loves animals and he started researching sheep, so now we have sheep," Laura says.

"My oldest son has bees, and we're now planting over 8 acres of



wildflowers. And my daughter has fish on the farm. For every farm tour, the kids talk to the group and explain their part."

Visitors can also stop by the farm store, which is full of lavender and cherry products. "Customers can

SINCE THE ROMAN EMPIRE, lavender has been used for healing, washing, repelling insects, and as an antiseptic.

CURRENT RESEARCH supports the calming, soothing and sedative effects of lavender's scent when inhaled.

Lavender is a member of the mint family.



Sources: herbsociety.org, justfunfacts.com

shop and purchase culinary treats made in our on-site commercial kitchen," Aron says.

DEVIL'S LAKE LAVENDER

Similarly, at Devil's Lake Lavender in Baraboo, Rebecca Powell Hill uses the freshly grown lavender in many unique dishes in the farm's bistro.

"We make everything from ice cream and lavender cookies to bouillabaisse and lavender lemon chicken," Powell Hill says. "We bought the bistro specifically to develop lavender food and beverage products, and this year we're

launching a new line of spice mixes."

Powell Hill grew up in Baraboo and returned after traveling the world. "This area is one of the most magnificent and beautiful environments I've ever seen," she says. She founded the farm in 2017 as a legacy project for her children.

The main farm at Devil's Lake consists of 17 acres, with about 12,000 lavender plants on four of those acres. Peak bloom occurs between the last week in June until the beginning of August. The farm features several other components

as well, including the aforementioned bistro, a spa and even a "speakeasy" in downtown Baraboo.

"We have over 30 different types of lavender in test plots," Powell Hill says. "We also have some goats, close to 1 million bees on the property, and this year we are starting an aquaponic garden."

It's safe to say there's no shortage of learning at Devil's Lake Lavender.

ROWLEY CREEK LAVENDER FARM

Also in Baraboo, Kehaulani Jones of Rowley Creek Lavender Farm says when she looks back at the beginning days of the farm in 2011, she wonders what she was thinking, uprooting her family from the ease of St. Louis. But after a few years, her decision to grow lavender in Wisconsin turned out to be one of the best she's ever made.

"Being South Pacific Islanders, my family was drawn to flowers. Why lavender? It offered the most potential as a crop and can be used as fresh or dried flowers and in culinary, medicinal and skincare preparations, just to name a few," she says.

RECIPE

Lavender Scones

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 2 teaspoons fresh lavender flowers
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 2/3 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- powdered sugar, for garnish

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees.
2. In the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, salt, orange zest and lavender flowers. Pulse to mix. Add butter; pulse briefly to break up butter. Add egg, buttermilk and vanilla. Pulse until everything is just wet.
3. Remove mixture to a floured surface. Knead until mixture just comes together. Don't overwork the dough. Divide the dough in half and pat each portion into a 3/4-inch-thick round. Cut each round into six wedges or squares and place the pieces 1 inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet or a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.
4. Bake for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Jones has a background as a natural skincare designer, so the primary use of the farm's lavender is cosmetic.

"However, we also create and sell culinary items and home décor made with our lavender," she says.

Guests who visit Rowley Creek have the opportunity to escape and enjoy the serenity of lavender.

"The Rowley Creek Farm experience is meant to nurture the soul," Jones says. "In addition to providing a relaxing place to meditate, we offer farm tours, group presentations on lavender, a visit with our goats and a shopping experience with amazing 'aloha-made' products."

A SOOTHING CELEBRATION

All three farms agree that lavender's versatility makes it a unique and interesting crop. To celebrate, Sauk County now holds a Lavender Festival in July, highlighting each farm and hosting various classes and events throughout the day.

– Rachel Bertone



AgCountry supports agriculture and rural communities with reliable, consistent credit and financial services, today and tomorrow.



800-450-8933 • www.agcountry.com  



Discover WISCONSIN

Innovative venue showcases state's farms

THE NEWEST FARM

attraction in Wisconsin invites visitors to indulge in up to 16 varieties of Wisconsin ice cream, take a bus tour through a working dairy farm and even witness a calf's birth from auditorium-style seating.

The Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center has exceeded expectations

since opening in July 2018. This nonprofit venue certainly meets its mission: to entertain visitors while connecting them to modern-day Wisconsin agriculture, an industry that contributes \$88.3 billion annually to the state's economy.

"The face of farming has changed in so many ways," says Julie Maurer,

a dairy farmer and president of the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center Board. "To have the opportunity to 'go beyond the barn' and experience some of that greatness and learn about the advances making agriculture better today than it was yesterday or 40 years ago is really exciting to do."



The Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center features an exhibit barn of hands-on, interactive activities.

CENTER OPENS DOORS TO MODERN FARMS

The Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center has come a long way since its inception in 2010. Today, it represents a \$13 million donor-funded, state-of-the-art agritourism complex situated on 36 acres between Milwaukee and Green Bay. The experience includes three main components: a farm bus tour, an exhibit barn of hands-on activities, and the Land O'Lakes Birthing Barn. The site also includes a café and ice cream parlor featuring Wisconsin-grown fare for lunch, snacks and dessert.

"I think definitely our birthing barn is the No. 1 attraction," says Melissa Bender, director of education and programming at Farm Wisconsin. "It is such an awe-inspiring experience to watch a new life come into the world."

The birthing barn manager fields questions throughout the day and a

site-wide speaker system alerts guests of an impending birth. Meanwhile, a coach bus takes guests on a scheduled farm tour through a dairy farm three miles down the road, where a video guides them through the sights of this three-generation family farm.

Back at the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center, about 10,000 square feet of interactive experience space awaits in the site's big red barn.

"We want people to realize there is much more to Wisconsin agriculture than what they see in the countryside," Bender says. "It can include cranberries, potatoes, mint and more."

In fact, the state ranks first in the nation for production of cranberries, ginseng, mink pelts, dry whey for humans, milk goats, snap beans for processing, cheese and corn for silage.

DEMONSTRATING FARM DIVERSITY

From alfalfa to zucchini, the museum-quality exhibit space at the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center allows guests to experience all things related to Wisconsin agriculture.

Kids and adults can feel like they work at one of the state's bustling cheese plants by lifting a block of cheese. They can churn butter or fill a plate with Wisconsin-grown foods from all the major food groups. A popular combine simulator allows visitors to experience a corn harvest and hold a friendly competition to see who can harvest the most bushels.

Kids especially love the kinetic sand table that replicates the topography of Wisconsin. They can build hills and valleys and watch water move to learn about nature and soil conservation.

"It's so thrilling to hear comments of people who have visited," says Maurer, who owns Soaring Eagle Dairy with her parents and siblings about five miles from Farm Wisconsin. "Based on the feedback from the folks who have visited, it's a fun experience. It's interesting. It satisfies their curiosity. We provide them with the opportunity to experience Wisconsin agriculture in the discovery center, taste Wisconsin agriculture in our café and take Wisconsin agriculture home with them in our country store. I really think we got the product right."

— Joanie Stiers

📍 If You Go...

Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center
7001 Gass Lake Rd.,
Manitowoc
(920) 726-6000
farmwisconsin.org

Farm-Fresh Family Feasts

Dinner on the farm events gain popularity



The Schneider family, owners of Together Farms, hosts Burger Night during the spring and summer.



WHEN FAMILIES COME TO TOGETHER FARMS

for dinner, they are literally enjoying a night out – outside, that is. The Mondovi farm, owned by Stephanie and Andy Schneider, is home to Burger Night, a casual event on the farm where guests can enjoy a gourmet burger meal, listen to a live band and relax by the bonfire.

Now in its second year of operation, Burger Night on the Farm has been a labor of love for the Schneiders, neither of whom grew up on a farm. “We knew we wanted to raise our children in a rural environment and bought the farm at the end of 2009,” Stephanie says. “We researched and took our time to consider what kind of an operation we wanted and decided to raise beef, pork and lamb.”

So when the Schneiders considered becoming an on-farm meal destination, they had a key ingredient right in their backyard – 100 percent grass-fed, organic beef. But taking Burger Night from an idea to a reality took extensive research, specialized equipment, helpful advice from chefs, and a lot of creativity and persistence.

Today, it’s paying off. The guests who visit Together Farms on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings in the spring and summer rave about the food, the family atmosphere and activities, and the opportunity to enjoy time on the farm. For the Schneiders, it’s also an opportunity to share the beauty and the bounty of their farm with others.



PHOTO: STEVE WOIT

Pizza Night brings friends and families together as visitors enjoy the beautiful scenery of the farm that produced most of the ingredients that went into making their delicious meal.

📍 **If You Go...**

Together Farms

W93 Norden Rd., Mondovi
(715) 210-4740
togetherfarms.com

Suncrest Gardens Farm

S2257 Yaeger Valley Rd.,
Cochrane
(608) 626-2122
suncrestgardensfarm.com

Stoney Acres CSA & Farm

7002 Rangeline Rd., Athens
(715) 432-6285
stoneyacresfarm.net

“My mission goes way beyond burgers,” Stephanie says. “It’s all about connecting folks with the land and their farmer and understanding where our food comes from. A great-tasting burger helps get the conversation going, for sure.”

A SLICE OF FARM LIFE

Burgers aren’t the only item on the menu at on-farm meal destinations across Wisconsin. At Stoney Acres Farm in Athens and Suncrest Gardens Farm in Cochrane, visitors can choose from a wide variety of delicious pizzas with ingredients fresh from their on-site gardens.

For Tony Schultz, a third-generation farmer, Pizza Night on the Farm at Stoney Acres means firing up his pizza ovens to serve guests a family favorite. All the toppings, other than the cheese, come from his 13 acres of organic vegetables and his 60 pigs.

It also means sharing his farm with families who have been coming to pizza nights since he started in 2012. As Schultz found out himself, Pizza Night can even mean hosing mud off a child who wandered too close to a wallow.

“People really enjoy the food and coming out to a working farm,” Schultz says. “You can sit on my lawn near the pizza ovens, but beyond that you’ll see my fields, my pigs, my tractor and even my weeds. They like to be in a setting that represents a time-honored tradition of hard work, and they enjoy the healthy, authentic food experience.”

Heather Secrist agrees. She and her husband, Jason Schaffner, own Suncrest Gardens. “We offer seasonal pizzas that are inspired by what is abundant in the garden at that time. It gives us a chance to talk with guests about freshness and flavor and what’s in season. There’s an educational component that helps consumers connect to their food.”

Secrist explains that they add zesty asparagus to pizzas in May. “When guests return in July and want asparagus, we have the chance to share with them how we cycle our eating throughout the season – that just because they see asparagus in the grocery store in July doesn’t mean it’s fresh. At our pizza nights, it’s not unusual for guests to see us dash out to the garden to get basil for the next batch of pizzas.”

Both Schultz and Secrist point to the laid-back, family atmosphere on their farms’ pizza nights.

“Taking kids out to eat can be a stressful experience,” Secrist says. “But on the farm, the kids can enjoy the outdoors and the play area, and the parents can relax and enjoy time together and with other families.”

Schultz says while it’s a lot of work to make 200 or 300 pizzas a night, he really enjoys creating an experience for others. “Plus, I’m really grateful and excited to have people join me on my farm every Friday and Saturday night.”

– Cathy Lockman



Families gather at Suncrest Gardens Farm.

Katie Calvin of Stoney Acres CSA & Farm prepares for Pizza Night.



PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: AMY ELLIS; STEVE WOIT

A LITTLE ITALY *in Wisconsin*

Farm dishes up European cuisine from local sources

ALMOST EVERY FRIDAY

and Saturday night, Marc and Mary Ann Bellazzini set tables for 20 to 30 dinner guests in the wine house on their farm.

Italian and French cuisine inspire their seasonal farm-to-table menu, which they prepare from fresh vegetables and meats sourced from their own Mount Horeb farm and other local farms. The first-generation Italian Americans passionately bring a bit of Italy to south-central Wisconsin.

“The idea of a farm-to-table dinner wasn’t even an inkling 10 to 15 years ago,” says Mary Ann, whose husband, Marc, is the resident chef. “But once we started selling vegetables and educating people on where their food came from and what they should eat and how they should spend time with people they love,



and Chicago. The seasonal menus – like dijon cognac beef stew and pasta puttanesca – are posted a few months in advance at campodibella.com, where guests can make reservations for these reservation-only dinners.

On Friday nights, the Bellazzinis serve family-friendly, three-course cenetta dinners – Italian for special and intimate – by reservation. Walk-ins are welcome to order from the wine bar menu, which includes wine sourced locally and from Italy, Germany, France and California. They also serve local beers, nonalcoholic beverages

and hard ciders.

Saturday turns formal with a reservation-only, five-course farm-to-table dinner on white linens. This pranzo-style meal, an Italian slow-food dining experience, lasts at least two hours and includes

Campo di Bella is a recipient of a Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The grant helped the Mount Horeb winery start production of barrel-aged red wine vinegar made from cold-hardy grapes, which they will begin to sell in fall 2019.

it felt like a calling and passion.”

The Bellazzinis call their 20-acre farm Campo di Bella, or “beautiful field” in Italian. The farm includes fruits, vegetables, a few livestock and a vineyard of 355 grapevines. Their farmstay, an apartment on the second floor of their wine house, is rented through Airbnb and overlooks Blue Mound State Park.

Campo di Bella’s unique and delicious on-farm dining experience attracts foodies from the local Mount Horeb area, Madison, Milwaukee, Rockford

a 30-minute walking farm tour (weather permitting) and lots of laughter and conversation at two communal tables.

“One of the most unique things about our dining experience is people tend to organically create friendships,” Mary Ann says. “They are strangers at the beginning of the night, and by the end of the night, they’re planning their next dinner together. That is fun to see happen.”

– Joanie Stiers



Local Food & STUNNING VIEWS

Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin offers both

WHEN IT COMES TO A Wisconsin farm-to-table experience, there may be no place more creative and rooted in tradition than the Riverview Terrace Cafe. The restaurant is part of the gateway to Taliesin, the 800-acre estate of Frank Lloyd Wright located in the Driftless Area's Wyoming Valley near Spring Green.

At the Riverview Terrace Cafe, the experience and the menu are inspired by Wright's legacy. As an architect, he often designed using local materials and focused on creating stunning views. He was also a farmer, who in the 1940s needed to feed the Taliesin Fellowship, a community of apprentices and their families

who lived, worked and studied with Wright at his studio and farm.

Today, that legacy of local food, breathtaking landscapes and innovation are on full display at the Riverview Terrace Cafe and special farm-to-table events and programs at Taliesin.

The Wisconsin River and the Wyoming Valley offer stunning views from the café, while the local food comes from Fazenda Boa Terra farm, owned by two farmers who moved from Minnesota in 2013 with a commitment to organic production and conservation. They farm 40 acres of the Taliesin property and are the sole source of fresh vegetables for the Riverview Terrace Cafe and Taliesin's farm-to-table events.

A FULL MENU OF EVENTS

Wright's legacy of innovation is carried out through the efforts and creativity of the dedicated Taliesin Preservation staff. According to Aron Meudt-Thering, communications manager at Taliesin Preservation, "That innovative thinking has created new events and programs that have been responsible for engaging more people in the estate and allowing them to experience it through immersion of all their senses."

Among those efforts are the Taliesin Farm Dinners, held outside near the farm fields multiple times every summer. Each dinner features an outstanding chef and a unique menu with items sourced from local producers.

"It's a perfect opportunity to enjoy

a great meal and engage in an extraordinary natural environment that showcases the beauty of how the lines can be blurred between landscape and architecture on the estate,” Meudt-Thering says.

It is also an educational event in which the chef, farmers and

the restaurant as well as these farm-to-table events. The Food Artisan Immersion Program, launched in 2018, is a 27-week work-study culinary program designed by Odessa Piper, farm-to-table pioneer and founder of L’Etoile restaurant.

Caroline Hamblen, director of programs at Taliesin Preservation, explains that the program was “founded on the principle that respect for nature and all that grows is the beginning of understanding good food and being more mindful of what we eat.”

She says that this year, seven artisans will live and work on the estate, preparing meals and gaining

valuable experience in kitchen skills, techniques, recipe development and food preservation practices. They will also interact and learn from local growers, producers and chefs. For the artisans, it’s a stepping stone to advancing their careers. For Taliesin, it’s a way to ensure a staff that provides a consistently high level of quality and service for guests at the café and farm-to-table events.

“Last year was our pilot year of this program, and we are building on that success,” Hamblen says. “Through our many programs and outreach opportunities, we continue to create alliances where we can come together and celebrate this beautiful Wisconsin region, educate guests, and promote the sustainable approach that is part of Frank Lloyd Wright’s legacy.”

– Cathy Lockman



Visitors to Frank Lloyd Wright’s Riverview Terrace Café at Taliesin enjoy delicious dinners and beautiful scenery.

diners share Wright’s vision of a bountiful way of dining in harmony with nature.

The popularity of the farm dinners led to a new event for 2019, the Taste of Taliesin. “This is a progressive culinary experience with a seasonal menu that will highlight the Driftless Area,” Meudt-Thering says. “Guests will walk through four different stations located at significant buildings on the estate. Each station will feature another artisan and beverage provider, so guests will not only have a chance to enjoy fresh, locally sourced food, but will also interact with the artisans and experience the architecture up close.”

AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Taliesin has also implemented a unique program that supports

Find more online

Taliesin is located at 5481 County Rd. C in Spring Green. For more information about tours and dining, visit taliesinpreservation.org.

To find other farm-to-table events, visit Wlagriculture.com.



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PLATTEVILLE

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

*Serving Wisconsin
dairy industry
workforce development*

The School of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville offers:

- Majors in high-demand areas of agriculture
- Undergraduate research and service learning opportunities
- Strong alumni and industry network
- Pioneer Farm—living and learning laboratory

To learn more visit:
campus.uwplatt.edu/agriculture

608.342.1393
soa@uwplatt.edu





More Cheese, PLEASE!

Wisconsin cheeses are making quite a stir in international markets



Right: Shullsburg Creamery



WHAT'S VERY VALUABLE, is yellow-orange, and sometimes comes in the shape of bricks? We're not talking about gold – we're talking about cheese! For Wisconsin, exporting this valuable commodity has been a boon to the economy.

“The dairy industry is an international business with approximately one-seventh of the nation's dairy supply being traded internationally,” says Paul Bauer, CEO of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery in Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

“Producers in the United States are

impacted by these prices. The question becomes, do we want to sit on the sidelines and accept the prices generated by the market, or do we want to drive our own future?”

At Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Bauer says they've decided it's in the best interest of their organization and owners to be drivers of the market.

They aren't the only ones.

Based in the heart of America's Dairyland, Ellsworth is one of Wisconsin's many major players in the rapidly growing international

export market. Others include Sartori Cheese and BelGioioso Cheese, which actively participate in the Japanese market, and Shullsburg Creamery, which has an impressive presence in the Middle East.

SHULLSBURG CREAMERY

Founded in 1934, Shullsburg Creamery earned its stripes selling 40-pound blocks of cheese to the government during World War II. At the time, the creamery worked within the confines of a rather small distribution system, but dedication

📍 If You Go...

Shullsburg Creamery

208 W. Water St.,
Shullsburg
(800) 533-9594

shullsburgcreamery.com

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery

232 N. Wallace St.,
Ellsworth
(715) 273-4311

ellsworthcheese.com

Learn more about
Wisconsin dairy products
at Wlagriculture.com.

to consistency and availability quickly made it a treasured household name.

Today, its uncompromising quality has generated over 450,000 brand-loyal customers who demand their cheese by name – many of whom live overseas.

“We enjoy regular yearly sales in seven upper Midwest states, Utah, Japan, Panama and the Middle East,” Stocker says.

With over 1,300 items in inventory, of which 98 percent are cheese, Stocker says the company’s sales advantage comes from being able to offer a wide variety of

branded product access to the Middle East without high minimum orders. Paired with excellent flavor profiles, it now boasts a major and growing presence in Dubai, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

“Our customers in these regions are excited to discover the delightful flavor satisfaction of high-quality cheese,” Stocker says. “There are many Americans living abroad in these areas, as well, and our cheese is a particularly exciting find for them.”

ELLSWORTH COOPERATIVE CREAMERY

The farmers who formed Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery joined together as a way to get more value from their products. At the time, those products were eggs and butter. While the products have shifted to artisan cheese, cheese curds and more, the original forethought remains an integral part of the organization’s culture today.

“We’re continually looking forward to ensure our patron farmer-owners are positioned to gain the most value from what they produce,” Bauer says.

Entering the international export market has opened up doors to do just that.

“When I was growing up, China was

always behind a wall in terms of exports,” Bauer says. “It was exciting to see their export market begin opening up and realize that venturing into this market was actually possible.”

Ellsworth got its foot in the door with whey powder, but has since broadened its offerings to include cheeses. The current challenge rests in figuring out the best way to position products to meet the needs of the international customer base.

“It’s exciting to be in these early stages of brand development,” Bauer says.

WISCONSIN CHEESE TRAILBLAZERS

Wisconsin exported \$3.5 billion in agricultural products to 143 countries in 2018, ranking second nationally in the export of whey and cheese. As major cheese and dairy export players like Shullsburg and Ellsworth continue generating revenue and value in both domestic and overseas markets in the coming years, it’s safe to assume these already impressive numbers will continue to rise.

– Kayla Walden



Ellsworth Creamery



PHOTOS: STEVE WOIT



Hot Buffalo Pizza Sticks

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces (1 roll) refrigerated pizza dough
- 3/4 cup buffalo wing sauce
- 2 cups cooked chicken, shredded
- 2/3 cup Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Ranch Cheese Curds, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup Blaser's Muenster Cheese, grated
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced

Instructions:

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Form pizza dough into a 15-inch by 10-inch rectangle on the baking sheet and bake for 8 to 10 minutes.
2. While the pizza crust bakes, add buffalo wing sauce and shredded chicken to a saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, 3 to 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated.
3. Spread the buffalo chicken mixture over the partially baked pizza crust. Then sprinkle with Muenster cheese, ranch cheese curds and sliced green onions.
4. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until cheese is bubbly. Cut into 16 sticks and serve.

Recipe courtesy of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. Find more online at ellsworthcheese.com.

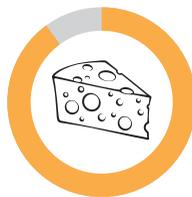


Wisconsin ranks
No. 1 in U.S. cheese
production.

**POUNDS OF CHEESE
PRODUCED IN
WISCONSIN IN 2018:**

3.4B

**Wisconsin is the only state that offers
advanced education in cheesemaking.**



About **90%**
of Wisconsin
milk is turned
into cheese.

**NUMBER OF DAIRY COWS
IN WISCONSIN:**

1.27M



Wisconsin produces about
45 percent of all **specialty
cheeses** in the U.S.

Wisconsin produces 26% of all cheese in the U.S.

SOYBEANS *Bound for Abroad*

Export market buys majority of state's second largest crop



WISCONSIN SOYBEANS

are racking up the air miles, making their way across the globe and onto the plates of international consumers.

On their family farm in southeast Wisconsin, Nancy Kavazanjian and her husband grow soybeans for the tofu market all the way in Kobe, Japan.

She has even traveled to meet her beans' buyers.

"I just think it's great that a farmer from Wisconsin can go to Japan and meet the people who are buying the soybeans that are made into tofu," says Kavazanjian, co-owner of Hammer & Kavazanjian Farms in Beaver Dam and a director for the United Soybean Board. "The soybean market in Wisconsin is good for all farmers. It produces a high-protein animal feed for our dairy cows and quality cooking oil for human consumption. The identity-preserved soybean is an added value to export markets that can keep us sustainable economically, which is as important as ever these days."

Across the United States, soy leads agricultural exports with a value of more than \$28 billion in the

2017-2018 marketing year, the United Soybean Board reports.

According to the Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board, about 65 percent of the state's annual soybean harvest is exported internationally. That means about two out of every three rows of soybeans growing in the Wisconsin countryside are exported to other countries.

WISCONSIN MEETS NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL BUYERS

Kavazanjian contracts and sells food-grade, identity-preserved soybeans through The DeLong Co., Inc. In this case, a premium soybean variety never comingles with other seeds or grains from the point of planting to customer delivery, preserving the characteristics that customers value.

The more than century-old family business, based in Clinton, consistently ranks as the top U.S. containerized shipper of agricultural products, including soybeans, corn, wheat, sorghum and feedstuffs.

The company annually contracts up to 25,000 acres



18K soybean farms in Wisconsin

Wisconsin soybean farmers **grow twice as much food** as their parents did, using less land, energy and water, and with fewer emissions.



Above: Hammer & Kavazanjian Farms in Beaver Dam. Right: Doug, Ken and Darryl Custer of Custer Farms in Chippewa Falls.

with central and south-central Wisconsin family farmers like Kavazanjian to grow food-grade crops, says Austin DeLong, non-GMO export sales manager and fifth-generation participant in the family business. Those crops include soybeans that sell predominantly to Southeast Asia and Pacific Rim countries.

“This food-grade soybean export market not only provides The DeLong Co. with something unique and interesting, but it also provides a premium for the Wisconsin growers,” DeLong says. “We pay a premium to the grower to grow these types of beans because of their characteristics. They are non-GMO, have specific protein levels, seed sizes and various traits our international customers are looking for.”

The DeLong Co. trucks soybeans from Wisconsin to a cleaning facility in northern Illinois. Afterward, the crop moves into containers and heads west by U.S. railways and then by ocean from West Coast ports.

“It really gives a niche market to the local producers,” DeLong says. “It’s something that drives a premium product in a tough environment right now.”

SOY EXPORTS SUPPORT ECONOMY

The Custer family in Chippewa Falls projects 2 million bushels of international soybean sales in 2019, double that of 2018.

“Adding another international market brings new money into the economy and increases the overall value to not only our farm, but a lot of the farmers we are buying from as well,” says Darryl Custer. He owns a

grain farm, trucking business and grain merchandising company with his father and brother under the names Custer Farms Inc., Chippewa Valley Grain Transport Inc. and Wheaton Grain Inc.

The soybeans that the Custers export travel by rail to West Coast ports, where they are loaded onto vessels bound for Southeast Asia. The sales support farm income, rural employment and various business sectors as the financial impact ripples across the economy.

“I feel really good about the fact that we are bringing new dollars into America and specifically bringing Southeast Asian dollars into Wisconsin,” says Ken Custer, Darryl’s father and a past president of the Wisconsin Soybean Association. “It bolsters our economy here, and we feel really good about being a part of that.”

– Joanie Stiers

Find more online

To learn more about soybeans and how they factor into Wisconsin’s economy, visit Wlagriculture.com.

Bolstering Specialty Crops

DATCP grant program advances industry

CRANBERRY PRODUCERS

can breathe a little easier today, thanks to a grant program for specialty crops.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) administers the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. This U.S. Department of Agriculture effort enhances the competitiveness of specialty crop industries in domestic and foreign markets. Entomology researcher Shawn Steffan credits three of these grants, totaling around \$147,000, for funding the discovery of native nematodes that battle the cranberry flea beetle, a top insect threat to Wisconsin's \$1 billion cranberry industry. This newfound biological control may reduce insecticide use and the pest's economic damage to cranberry marshes.

"The three DATCP grants are largely responsible for the conduct of this entire program," says Steffan, with the USDA Agricultural Research Service and University of Wisconsin-Madison. "They funded it at the start. They sustained funding during early virulence screening, and then for a third round, they stepped up to the plate to fund what I would call the last proof-of-concept work. That third stage of DATCP funding was critical, because that's the jump from small-scale efficacy work to real-world applications."

GRANTS FUND INDUSTRY-WIDE RESULTS

Over the last five years, DATCP has awarded an average of \$1.2



Rami Reddy, director of the UW-Platteville School of Agriculture, also leads a study on baby ginger.

million per year in Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds, says Juli Speck, the department's grant manager. Recipients include nonprofit and producer organizations, government agencies, universities and other agricultural groups. DATCP commits these dollars to projects with the potential to benefit the specialty crop industry in Wisconsin.

Steffan used the grant program to first locate and trap native nematodes that feed on cranberry flea beetle larvae near native cranberry plants in Central Wisconsin. The work escalated through years of lab work, field tests and experiments to the point of on-farm, large-scale application of two beetle-predator nematode types in summer 2018.

The results showed excellent control of about 60 percent of

underground cranberry flea beetle larvae, crippling the pest's population before emergence as adult beetles that feed on cranberry plant vegetation and fruit.

"This bio-insecticide can go shoulder to shoulder with the best insecticides we have," Steffan says. "It's a new tool in the toolbox. Because it doesn't leave residues in the fruit, it potentially will provide Wisconsin cranberry growers with the means to have a harvest that can then be marketed outside of the U.S., where some countries have different standards for allowable insecticide residues in imported fruit."

GRANT SUPPORTS NEW WISCONSIN CROP

Thanks to a \$64,000 Specialty Crop Block Grant, Wisconsin vegetable growers now know more about production of baby ginger,

a potential high-value crop for fresh-market sales.

“The most significant finding is that we are able to produce the ginger seedlings at a very low cost,” says Rami Reddy, the project’s leader and the director of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville School of Agriculture. “Secondly, we have shown how to use a bag method in production, which reduces susceptibility to soilborne diseases.”

The study on baby ginger grew from the idea to use compost, a resource from the university’s dairy farm. But it was the Specialty Crop Block Grant that provided the means for Reddy’s team to navigate this niche crop’s greenhouse production and marketing issues in Wisconsin’s climate and consumer base.

After testing various production methods, the research team assessed the market. They evaluated packaging methods and tested price points at retailers and farmers’ markets.

Meanwhile, educational efforts raise awareness of this crop with growers and consumers, who can use baby ginger to grate onto salads, add to soups or make tea that soothes cold and flu symptoms. Members of a campus student club also used ginger to make value-added products, including jam, candy and ginger beer from a locally sourced version of a crop that is largely imported from other countries.

“A tropical crop like ginger being grown in Wisconsin could never have been possible without the help of the Specialty Crop Block Grant administered by DATCP,” Reddy says.

– Joanie Stiers

Find more online

For more information about the DATCP grant program, visit WIagriculture.com.

Specialty crops are defined by law as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

\$147,000

**GRANT MONEY FUNDING
THE DISCOVERY OF NATIVE
NEMATODES THAT COMBAT
THE CRANBERRY FLEA BEETLE**

DATCP has awarded an average of **\$1.2 million** per year in Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds in the last 5 years.

Source: datcp.wi.gov



Make Your Day **WONDERFAIR**

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR
Presented By
U.S. Cellular

The Wisconsin State Fair happens once a year! Don't miss out on the most affordable, fun and family-friendly event of the summer. For discounts, deals, and more visit WISTATEFAIR.COM



PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: © 2019 FIELD AND FOREST PRODUCTS INC.; NATHAN LAMBRECHT

the MARVELOUS MYSTERIOUS MUSHROOM

Wisconsin has some of the nation's finest amateur foragers and large-scale mushroom producers



Mike Jozwik, known as Mushroom Mike, grows a variety of mushrooms in a warehouse near downtown Milwaukee.

THERE ARE MORE THAN

10,000 known types of mushrooms, and mycologists suspect there are more to be discovered. While not all grow in Wisconsin, the state's optimal soil conditions and wood types make it ideal for amateur foragers and large-scale producers alike.

FORAGE TO FORK

Born to early members of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside Mycological Society, Mike Jozwik of Mushroom Mike LLC cut his teeth with a combination of academic

study and early exposure to some of the best and brightest minds in the field.

"We started out primarily selling foraged morel mushrooms," he explains. "But we grew in such popularity in the Madison restaurant scene that our customers began asking us to provide cultivated mushrooms as well."

Wisconsin is home to about 300 edible mushroom species, but the morel is one of the most popular, and arguably the easiest type to spot in the wild.

While Jozwik no longer relies

exclusively on foraged mushrooms, he works with a network of national pickers who procure hundreds of pounds of foraged mushrooms per week. Between managing the foraged varieties and growing hundreds of pounds of cultivated mushrooms, Jozwik doesn't have much time to spare – but he loves what he does.

"If you thrive off problem solving like I do, it's a great industry to be in," Jozwik says.

LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION

For Eric Rose of River Valley Ranch, the inception of his family's mushroom operation was a matter of supply and demand.

"There was a farm near the restaurant my parents owned that had mushrooms some days and not others," Rose says. "It drove my dad crazy that they didn't seem to care when they had them."

Recognizing the market was poorly supplied, Rose's father launched River Valley Ranch in 1976. In its early days, the business operated out of a converted horse barn. Today it's developed into a much larger operation.

"We produce or grow about 15,000 pounds per week of organic cremini, portabella and white buttons, and about 500 pounds per week of oyster and shiitake," Rose says. They occasionally grow and offer the less common, but equally tasty, varieties like lion's mane, trumpets and hen of the woods.

While some varieties of wild mushrooms grow on living or decaying trees, River Valley Ranch mushrooms grow on farm-produced compost.

"We start with 200 cubic yards of stable bedding, add 3,000 pounds of protein supplement and gypsum, and 6,000 gallons of water," Rose explains. When the compost is ready to go, they inoculate it with



Mushroom Mike harvests a chestnut mushroom.

mushroom spawn, cover it with peat moss and limestone, and let nature take its course.

When the crop is ready, the team harvests the mushrooms by hand before starting the process over again.

SUPPLYING MUSHROOM SPAWN

In the 35 years Joe Krawczyk and Mary Ellen Kozak have owned Field & Forest Products, they've grown their selection of mushroom spawn from 1 species of shiitake to 14 strains of shiitake, 8 species of oyster mushrooms and 12 other edible and medicinal fungi.

Much like seeds are to a gardener, mushroom spawn is genetically complete mushroom mycelia, the thread-like structures that mushrooms use to reproduce. Mycelia are grown on a substrate, such as sawdust or compost, that is capable of producing a mushroom crop under the right conditions.

"We supply everyone from hobbyists to full-time, large-scale growers," Krawczyk says. "The hobby market has been steadily increasing, as has the seasonal market grower servicing CSAs and local farm markets."

In addition to supplying the market with mushroom spawn, F&FP produces mushrooms year round on supplemented sawdust, and seasonally on natural logs to test and develop new varieties and growing techniques.

For those who are interested in growing mushrooms but don't know where to start, Krawczyk's company offers workshops and a variety of ready-to-fruit "TableTop Farms" suitable for homeowners who lack the resources to grow mushrooms from scratch.

— Kayla Walden

RECIPE

Portabella Parmesan

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 4 medium portabella mushroom caps, de-stemmed and washed | 29 ounces (1 can) tomato sauce |
| 2 cups plain bread crumbs | 12 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded |
| ¼ cup parmesan cheese, grated | |
| ½ cup flour | |
| 4 eggs, beaten | |
| 2-3 tablespoons olive oil | |
| 26 ounces (1 jar) River Valley Kitchens Garlic Lovers Pasta Sauce | |



Instructions:

- Heat oven to 375 degrees.
- Using 3 shallow bowls, place flour in the first, eggs in the second, and combine breadcrumbs and parmesan cheese in the third.
- Dredge portabella caps in all 3 bowls, starting with the flour, then the eggs, then the breadcrumbs. Completely cover mushroom caps with all 3 ingredients.
- Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil is heated, fry the breaded mushroom caps until they are golden brown on both sides, about 5 to 8 minutes. Mix the pasta sauce and tomato sauce together while mushrooms are cooking.
- Place browned mushrooms in a shallow baking dish and pour the sauce mix over them. Bake in oven for 20 minutes.
- Sprinkle mozzarella cheese over the dish until the cheese melts, about 5 to 7 minutes. Serve over your favorite pasta and enjoy.

Recipe courtesy of River Valley Ranch. Find more online at rvrvalley.com.

Find more online

Wisconsin locals interested in learning more about mushrooms can attend the Wisconsin Mycological Society events and potlucks. Learn more at wisconsinmycologicalsociety.org.

FIGHTING FRAUD

DATCP EFFORTS PROTECT CONSUMERS, SMALL BUSINESSES

MOST OF US WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN

that millennials report losing money to scammers far more often than seniors do. According to the Federal Trade Commission, 43 percent of those who reported fraud in 2017 were ages 20-29, as opposed to the 15 percent of people ages 70-79.

Millennials' online activity and changing sense of privacy makes this newest generation of young adults potential victims for scammers looking to steal funds and identities in today's technological marketplace.

Wisconsin's consumer protection bureau knows that teaching millennials savvy ways to protect their identities and financial information can slow the trend.

"Our ultimate goal is to prevent the losses that can result from scams," says Lara Sutherland, who heads consumer protection programs at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). "There is an endless array of scams out there, but many are the same operation dressed up as a different package. The best way to avoid falling victim is to know what red flags to look for."

SCAMS EVOLVE, EDUCATION IS KEY

Every year, the Wisconsin Bureau of Consumer Protection fields about 100,000 inquiries and written complaints from Wisconsin consumers regarding scams and identity theft. The bureau's outreach and education efforts encourage these reports. Meanwhile, its investigation and resolution resources deliver results, returning millions of dollars every year to victims, Sutherland says. It's interesting to note that while more millennials are falling victim to scams, they do tend to lose less money than senior citizens. Scammed consumers ages 20-29 had a median loss of \$400 compared to \$751 for those ages 70-79 and \$1,700 for those ages 80 and older.

The scamming methods vary, from fraudulent charity pitches and office supply scams to phishing emails and data breaches. Scam artists may trick small businesses into handing over W-2 information to steal personnel

information. Criminals may act as a government agency or a utility company to demand money.

Many young people believe that they are more immune to scams because they are so web-savvy, but con artists still hit victims hardest by phone. In fact, 70 percent of 2017 fraud reports to the FTC involved contact by phone. Younger consumers are most susceptible to "imposter" scams: calls that claim to come from government agencies or well-known

businesses demanding money or personal information.

PREVENTING SCAMS

The Bureau of Consumer Protection uses education to combat scams, and staff members welcome invitations to speak at schools, businesses, nursing homes and community centers. In the event of a scam or identity theft, bureau staff provide mediation services, handle investigations and collaborate with attorneys and law enforcement.

"There is also a lot of coordination with law enforcement in the state and beyond our borders," Sutherland says. "We work with other states and federal agencies because most of these same scams are happening elsewhere."

Consumers who recognize a scam or fall victim to one can call the bureau's hotline at (800) 422-7128.

— Joanie Stiers

REPORT CONSUMER & SMALL BUSINESS FRAUD:

Call (800) 422-7128 or email
DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.



**Hampton
Inn & Suites**
by HILTON

**HAMPTON INN & SUITES
MADISON DOWNTOWN**

440 W. Johnson St.
Madison, WI 53703

FOR RESERVATIONS:
608-255-0360
madisondowntownsuites.
hamptoninn.com

Spirited CREATIONS

Wisconsin-made spirits feature grains grown by farmers across The Badger State

LOCAL CRAFT DISTILLERS ARE using Wisconsin-grown agricultural products to create adult beverages enjoyed in the region and beyond, a practice that's bringing big benefits to both farmers and consumers.

J. HENRY & SONS BOURBON FEATURES LOCAL PRODUCTS

After visiting the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, Joe Henry, who has been a seed producer in Dane County all his life, decided to add bourbon production to his repertoire. As a result, J. Henry & Sons Bourbon was born in 2009 and made available to the public in 2015.

In order to create his bourbon, Joe revived an heirloom red corn variety developed at the University of Wisconsin in 1939, which Liz Henry, Joe's wife, says helps to make J. Henry & Sons Bourbon so special and flavorful.

"We are the only people on the planet using this variety of corn to make bourbon, and it's very important to Joe. After all, his father raised it for more than 30 years on the family farm [Henry Farms], which is also where Joe farms today," Liz says. "This corn variety is naturally red in color, yielding a beautiful bourbon that has a smooth, mellow flavor."

Along with heirloom red corn, Henry Farms grows wheat and rye, both of which were also developed at the University of Wisconsin and are used to create J. Henry & Sons Bourbon's award-winning spirits. Each spirit is aged a

minimum of five years in barrels made of Wisconsin white oak.

"Before our first product [J. Henry & Sons 5 Year, 92 Proof Small Batch Bourbon] even went to market in April of 2015, we entered a competition and won a gold medal from the American Distilling Institute. We took that as a very good sign of things to come," Liz says. "Since then, we've won more than 40 awards and honors, and all of those were determined by blind taste testers who are bourbon experts. We feel proud that our products made entirely with Wisconsin ingredients are getting so much attention and recognition both nationally and internationally."

Henry Farms has entered the agritourism area, too, converting the living room of the 1840s farmhouse where Joe grew up into a tasting room.

"What's probably most exciting to Joe and me is the fact that our sons are interested in keeping the family business alive," Liz says. "We feel hopeful that our farm and bourbon might live on for years to come."



Left: Liz Henry explains how J. Henry & Sons Bourbon is made to a group participating in a tasting in Dane, Wisconsin.



Joe Henry ages his bourbon in a rickhouse at J. Henry & Sons Bourbon in Dane. Henry grows his own corn, rye and wheat before distilling it to create bourbon.

DANCING GOAT DISTILLERY SOURCES ORGANIC GRAINS

Located just outside Madison in The Vineyards at Cambridge, Dancing Goat Distillery opened to the public in 2017, debuting its collection of spirits created using organically grown Wisconsin grains including corn, rye, wheat and malted barley.

“We couldn’t do what we do without Wisconsin farmers,” says Mike Reiber, Dancing Goat Distillery’s chief operating officer. “We have to have conscientious growers and suppliers in order to create high-quality products; if the grain isn’t high quality, our spirits won’t be, either. We’re thankful to live and work in a state where we can depend on our farmers.”

The company produces the Dancing Goat Distillery Limousin Rye, which is aged with innovative barreling techniques using three different types of vintage and new oak, as well as three liqueurs: Travis Hasse Apple Pie, Travis Hasse Cherry Pie, and Travis Hasse Cow Pie that features Wisconsin dairy cream. In the near future, Dancing Goat Distillery plans to expand its offerings to include gin products.

Tours and tastings are available Thursday to Sunday in Dancing Goat Distillery’s 21,000-square-foot facility that Reiber says you have to see to believe.

“We were focused on creating a destination that folks from all over the state would enjoy coming to,” Reiber says. “We wanted that ‘wow’ factor, and I think we have it. We are right next to Cambridge Winery in what can only be described as a storybook setting, and our building is beautiful, made entirely with reclaimed Wisconsin barn wood. There’s a warm, inviting ambiance that’s hard to describe. You just have to experience it for yourself.”

– Jessica Walker Boehm

Left, from top: Dancing Goat Distillery opened in Cambridge, Wisconsin, in 2017; head distiller Chris Byles monitors the pot still; Limousin Rye is Dancing Goat’s signature product.



Bottling Wisconsin

Cidery sells locally sourced craft cider, opens pub

BRIX CIDER BOTTLES THE flavors of the southern Wisconsin landscape, producing hard cider with apples from 18 orchards within 30 miles of its cidery and pub.

The business model gives this new cidery in Mount Horeb a sense of place – a tasty one at that. Brix Cider doesn't blend. It bottles and labels batches of hard cider from each individual orchard, making each raised glass a genuine toast to these local family businesses.

"I think sourcing local is the right thing to do," says Marie Raboin, who owns Brix Cider LLC with her husband, Matt. "It would be hard for me to stomach buying apples or juice from out of state. We can make money doing it this way, and that's the bottom line. It's financially viable for us and it adds money into the local economy that would otherwise fall to the ground. It's a win-win for everybody."

Brix Cider began to sell commercially bottled cider in January 2017, producing the beverage at a winery in Stoughton. In January 2019, the Raboins opened their own cidery and craft cider pub in downtown Mount Horeb, where they now redefine cider for patrons. Rather than the stereotypical, ultra-sweet cider, the Raboins strive for a dry, crisp and bubbly beverage with a story.

"If you go to our Google reviews, a few say they didn't realize they liked cider until they came here," Raboin says.

Independent grocers, independent liquor stores, local orchards and the pub itself carry up to 10 Brix Cider varieties, which

contain a mix of fruits, hops, honey and other locally sourced ingredients. The Brix Cider crew hand-picks 95 percent of their main ingredient from local orchards: flavorful yet undersized and blemished apples that fail the appearance test for the wholesale market. In 2019, the Raboins hope to harvest enough apples from their own farm's young trees for a commercial batch, too.

Meanwhile, the menu at their craft cider pub includes a variety of farm-to-table foods that evolve with the local produce of the season. Their popular house-made sausages pay homage to Marie's family history in the sausage business, and the pork originates from a local friend's farm.

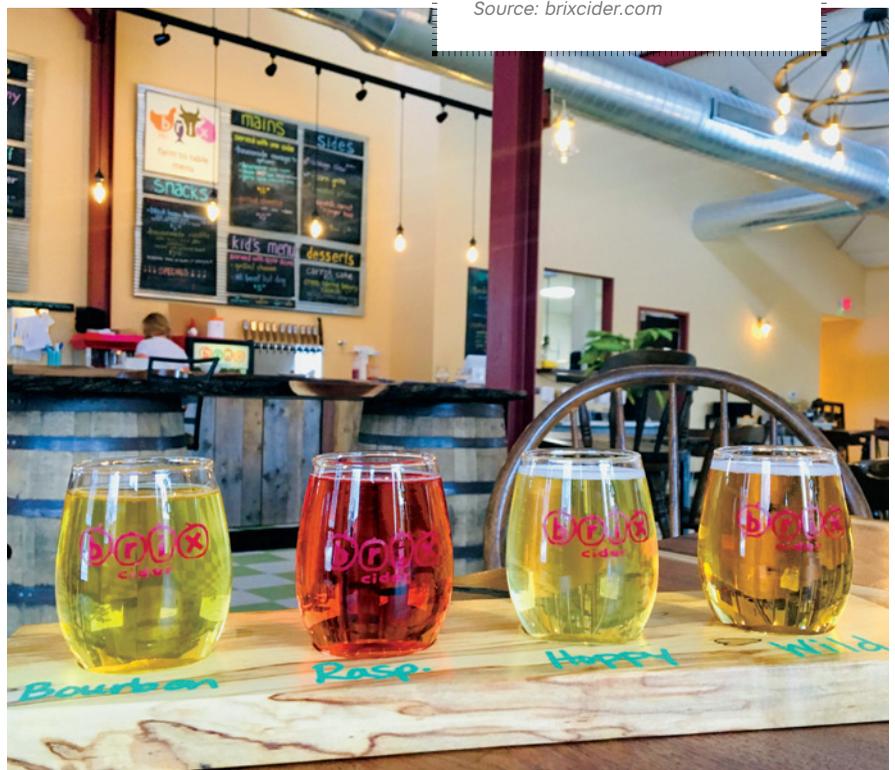
"We can actually produce something that is 100 percent locally grown and locally produced, and all the dollars are staying in the state," Raboin says. "My main goals are to keep money local and have a sustainable business that I can be proud of and still raise my family."

– Joanie Stiers

WHY BRIX?

Brix is the measure of the concentration of sucrose by percent mass in a liquid. (In this case, how much sugar is in the apple juice.) Yeast feeds on sugars to make alcohol, so the higher the Brix, the higher the alcohol content.

Source: brixcider.com



Everything *plus* the Kitchen Sink

Organizations assist entrepreneurs building food businesses

THE POPULARITY OF THE farm-to-table movement has consumers clamoring for fresh, locally grown products. In Wisconsin, that creates lots of opportunities for entrepreneurs looking to launch food businesses.

But with opportunity comes the reality of start-up costs, legal considerations, packaging, and food preparation space and skills.

Through the efforts of initiatives like the Food Enterprise and Economic Development (FEED)

Kitchens in Madison, aspiring chocolatiers, food cart operators, salsa makers and others have a resource to help them succeed.

“As the local food movement took off, there was a lot of talk about how Madison could support the efforts of our local farmers by eliminating some of the obstacles to establishing a food business,” says Chris Brockel, FEED’s kitchen manager. “One of the biggest is the cost of establishing a commercial kitchen.”

In 2013, the Northside Planning Council of Madison jumped in to offer a solution by creating FEED Kitchens, a 5,400-square-foot space with five commercial kitchens and specialized equipment for baking, produce preparation and processing, deli prep, and meat processing. For the past six years, the facility has been available for rent so that food businesses, nonprofit organizations, vocational

training programs and individuals have a legal place to prepare their food for sale to the public. Members have 24/7 access, schedule their time through an online calendar system, and receive orientation on all the equipment.

The three-person FEED Kitchens staff also provides business development assistance and matches members with agencies that provide other services to help them grow their businesses. And many of their members have grown – businesses like Madison Chocolate Company, Little Tibet, and Pickle Jar, all of which started in the FEED Kitchens before moving into Madison storefronts.

Brockel says FEED Kitchens members build more than businesses. They build camaraderie, too. “You get a lot of support from each other when you work in a shared space. You want to see everyone buy local, so you share mistakes and successes and help each other avoid pitfalls.”

There’s also a cultural benefit, he says, with members from Poland, Mexico, Pakistan and other countries all working in the same building. Food brings people together, after all.

“We’re lucky that the community recognized the need for a middle piece in the system – a place that could help people process their



FEED Kitchens coordinator
Chris Brockel

PHOTOS: NATHAN LAMBRECHT



Clockwise from top left: Amber Blumer and Diane Kuehn make turtle cookies for the bakery program inside FEED Kitchens in Madison; apple pie prepared by bakery instructor Jim McLaughlin; Luis Carmona operates a Puerto Rican food cart called El Wiscorican on the University of Wisconsin campus and prepares his food in the shared kitchen.



products so they could build their businesses. For enterprises of a certain size, we are that place.”

STIR IT UP AND SERVE IT

When a business outgrows the capacity of a shared kitchen, the state has other options to assist food entrepreneurs. Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen in Mineral Point is one of them.

Kent Genthe, the facility’s director, explains that Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen focuses on helping existing small food enterprises, including family farms, grow their businesses. They provide professional contract

food manufacturing services, called co-packing, to new food entrepreneurs, chefs and other food companies in a safe, certified processing facility.

The 10,000-square-foot facility is owned by Hodan Community Services, which supports people with disabilities. Services available at Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen include purchasing, food preparation, packaging, labeling, storage and logistics.

“We specialize in small-batch production to launch entrepreneurs into the market,” Genthe says. “Entrepreneurs work with us to

scale up their products, and then my staff takes it from there, getting them into packages, creating nutritional labels and ensuring FDA compliance.”

Clients include makers of applesauce, marinades, drink mixes and barbecue sauce. “Our facility helps a lot of local food producers realize their dream of building a successful business,” Genthe says. “And that’s good for the farm-to-table movement and for the state of Wisconsin.”

– Cathy Lockman

Find more online

To learn more about FEED Kitchens in Madison and Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen in Mineral Point, visit Wlagiculture.com.





Hive *to* Table

Thriving industry ranges from small family farms to large-scale commercial productions

WISCONSIN'S RICH HISTORY

of beekeeping stretches as far back as the late 1800s. Despite the cold climate that presented its fair share of challenges, local beekeepers pursued technological advancements and agricultural diversification to turn Wisconsin into one of the most impressive honey-producing states.

In 2018, Wisconsin hobbyists and commercial beekeepers produced 2.3 million pounds of honey valued at over \$6 million, and the state ranked 16th in the nation for honey production.

BEES, SUPPLIES AND TRANSPORTATION

Chris Hansen of Hansen Honey Farm in Rhinelander knew from an early age that bees were in his future. But little did he know that his beloved hobby would transform

into the booming business operation it is today.

"We have a retail store where we sell honey directly to consumers," Hansen says. "We also sell beekeeping supplies, packages of bees to start new colonies, and replacement queens for new and current beekeepers."

They also own and operate Hansen Honey Trucking.

"When we saw the demand for bees in the Northwoods, we expanded our orders for packages and began working directly with producers in California," Hansen explains. "But we had trouble finding reliable transportation for the bees. That led to the decision to start our own trucking company."

As their customer base grew and began asking Hansen Honey Farm to carry supplies, they quickly

realized the need to expand.

Customers interested in dipping their toes into the beekeeping industry can find everything from honey and bees to honeybee consulting and beekeeping classes at Hansen Honey Farm.

THE FAMILY BUSINESS

Eugene Woller of Gentle Breeze Honey in Mount Horeb says his affinity for beekeeping began when he bought his first seven colonies in 1965.

"It's grown since then," he says with a laugh. "We have about 600 hives now."

The longer story involves his attendance at University of Wisconsin-Madison, participation in an agricultural program for students interested in farming careers, a five-week session on



Beekeepers remove the honey supers to start the extraction process at Hansen Honey Farm.

PROFESSIONAL
BEEKEEPERS
PRODUCED
**2.3 MILLION
POUNDS**
OF HONEY
IN 2018.



The work of 51,000 colonies of bees statewide amounted to a product valued at more than

\$6.3 Million

**Pollination services
brought \$302 million
in income in 2018.**

beekeeping and a buddy who said, “How hard can it be?”

The bees of Gentle Breeze Honey pollinate Wisconsin’s prairie lands, dairy lands and small-scale vegetable farms, producing a beautiful golden honey with enhanced flavor and nutrition.

Woller says the bees have been abundantly good to him, providing him with a renewed passion for work, despite being at an age when one would traditionally retire to a life of leisure.

“People ask me all the time why I haven’t retired,” he says. “But I’m doing exactly what I want to do.

I’m working with bees and selling honey. I have the opportunity to work side by side with my family. It doesn’t get much better than that.”

“BERRY” GOOD BEEKEEPERS

Adam Rezin and his wife are the third generation on their family-owned blueberry farm and cranberry marsh, Rezin Berries, LLC. While they used to rent bees for pollination, it grew increasingly difficult to find beekeepers to supply hives to pollinate their crops.

“We decided to take on the task ourselves,” Rezin says.

With help from a former beekeeper and friend, they started with 12 hives. After a successful first year, they increased their hives threefold. Each year, they grew more confident, and the number increased to 100.

“We completely pollinate our own cranberry marsh now,” Rezin says. “We’re truly a family-run business, bees included.”

While the Rezin family raises honeybees only to sustain their operation, they do sell excess honey to locals and have enjoyed the transition into beekeeping.

“We’ve found that many beekeepers are willing to share their experiences to help you become a better beekeeper,” Rezin says. “We all ultimately want the same thing: healthy bees, good neighboring beekeepers, and to be good stewards of the environment.”

– Kayla Walden

“We all ultimately want the same thing: healthy bees, good neighboring beekeepers, and to be good stewards of the environment.”

Adam Rezin, *third-generation farmer of Rezin Berries, LLC*

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Research helps maintain bee health in Wisconsin

SEVERAL OF WISCONSIN'S top fruit and vegetable crops – including cranberries, cherries, apples and cucumbers – depend on more than just a farmer's care. They need pollinators to produce fruit.

"Wisconsin has a number of crops that are pollinator-dependent. Cranberries are huge. We produce

benefits the state economically."

Gaines Day says that although pollinators also include insects such as butterflies, and even birds, bees are by far the most important.

"There are a couple of reasons for this," she says. "First, bees are always actively collecting pollen, and their bodies are really built for

need undisturbed areas where they can nest.

In her research, Gaines Day has found that both farmers and consumers can take action to help pollinators first and foremost by planting flowers.

"That is my number one piece of advice," she says. "Bees need food all the time, and flowers provide that."

She adds that having undisturbed, semi-vegetated or woodland areas is very beneficial for wild bees that nest in these areas. "I've found almost 200 species of bees in cranberry marshes, and these tend to increase when you have more woodland in the area."

She also says bees need protection from pesticides.

And while many have heard about the decline in bee health over the past decade or so, Gaines Day says that determining

future bee health in Wisconsin is tricky. Wild bees are difficult to study, due to their solitary nature. Her ongoing research will continue to engage fruit and vegetable growers, together with beekeepers, to understand how working landscapes influence the health and effectiveness of wild and managed bees for crop pollination.

– Rachel Bertone



over 60 percent of the U.S. crop, and that requires pollination to produce fruit," says Hannah Gaines Day, an assistant scientist at the Gratton Lab in the entomology department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Gaines Day has been involved in research with insects, and specifically pollinators, since 2004, with a focus on bees in agricultural environments.

"I just love being on an ag landscape and working with farmers," she says. "The research is really important and can have a huge impact on the industry. It really

it. Bees also have a behavior called floral constancy, which means they tend to visit the same type of flowers during a single foraging trip. For apple blossoms, for example, it's important the bee is bringing the right type of pollen."

In addition to managed honeybees, Wisconsin is home to nearly 500 species of wild bees. Wild bees and honeybees are both important for pollination; however, Gaines Day says that honeybees are essentially domesticated livestock, with beekeepers managing their needs. Wild bees are solitary and

Find more online

To learn more about honeybees in Wisconsin, visit WIagriculture.com.

The First Line of Defense

ON-FARM PRODUCE INSPECTIONS UNDERWAY

WHEN WE PICK UP A BAG OF JUICY WISCONSIN

apples at the grocery store, we take them home to our families, confident in the safety of our purchase. The first phase of federally required on-farm produce safety inspections began in summer 2019, and officials see Wisconsin farms upholding the state's reputation for safe food.

The produce safety rule represents one of the first phases of implementation for the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), considered the most sweeping change to food safety law in 70 years. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) renewed the law to focus on preventing foodborne illnesses, rather than just responding to them.

State-led inspections began in summer 2019 on Wisconsin's largest fruit and vegetable farms growing apples, carrots, onions and other produce that people typically eat raw. More farm inspections and other compliance deadlines will follow through 2024.

"Our ultimate goal is to raise food safety awareness with our Wisconsin growers," says Mike Mosher, outreach and compliance specialist for produce safety with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). "Fortunately, we already have a community well-versed in food safety standards and practices. Wisconsin has a good reputation when it comes to food safety."

WISCONSIN PREPARES TO COMPLY

The goal is to reduce the risks of contamination that could occur while fruits and vegetables are grown, harvested, picked, packed and stored. DATCP offers low-cost grower training and no-cost, on-farm readiness reviews to help Wisconsin produce growers prepare for the first phase of the rule's implementation.

Mosher says the produce safety team, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, has sponsored more than 20 FDA-approved grower training sessions at regional locations throughout the state. The one-day course covers FDA's produce safety rule requirements, such as worker hygiene, soil

amendments, domestic and wild animal access to the farm, and water quality standards.

"This class gives growers a basic understanding of food safety and especially how it impacts produce that people typically eat raw," Mosher says.

Inspections for Wisconsin's largest fruit and vegetable farms

began in summer 2019 and impact about 60 growers, Mosher says. In 2020, field inspectors will review medium-size farms, and smaller farms must comply in 2021.

EDUCATION PRECEDES REGULATION

Federal law requires that states administer the produce

safety rule and its inspections. In response, DATCP hired and trained four field inspectors, and other staff members help with outreach efforts.

Mosher encourages produce farms of any size to schedule an on-farm review with DATCP or UW-Madison Division of Extension staff. The reviews have no regulatory paperwork and are intended to assess, educate and inform about common compliance issues. The review is not an audit or inspection.

"We walk around the farm with the grower, look at their on-farm practices and evaluate them for the food safety standards that are established in the produce safety rule," Mosher says. "We think that is the best tool growers have to prepare for the inspections themselves."

In most cases, farms already comply with most parts of the law and just need to keep more detailed records of current practices, he says. Information online at safeproduce.wi.gov can help growers navigate the requirements and ways to prepare.

"DATCP takes food safety very seriously," Mosher says. "We continue to build on this reputation through grower partnerships, to ensure consumers have confidence in buying fresh produce from Wisconsin."

– Joanie Stiers



KEEP UP WITH WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE

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 somethingsspecialwi.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 Wlagriculture.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.

Visit Our Advertisers

Learn more about the organizations that support Wisconsin's agriculture.

AgCountry Farm Credit Services
agcountry.com

GreenStone Farm Credit Services
greenstonefcs.com

Growmark Inc.
growmark.com

**Hampton Inn & Suites
Madison Downtown**
madisondowntownsuites.hamptoninn.com

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
swtc.edu/academics/programs/agricultural/ag

University of Wisconsin-Platteville
campus.uwplatt.edu/agriculture

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
travelwisconsin.com

**Wisconsin Economic
Development Corporation**
inwisconsin.com

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
wfbf.com

Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers
wisconsinpotatoes.com

Wisconsin State Fair Park
wistatefair.com

Wisconsin Technical College System
wistechcolleges.org



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PLATTEVILLE

SCHOOL OF
AGRICULTURE

LOCAL AND GLOBAL



Experience our short-term,
faculty-led international
study experiences

NETHERLANDS • GHANA
ROMANIA • NEW ZEALAND
INDIA • UNITED KINGDOM
THAILAND • SPAIN • COSTA RICA

- Strong job placement
- Hands-on student centered curriculum
- Award-winning student clubs and teams
- Personal care and attention
- One-on-one advising

Discover our world-class
undergraduate agricultural education
by scheduling a visit today.

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

CAN WE

FIND A DEVELOPMENT-FRIENDLY SITE
IN A WORKER-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?



In Wisconsin®, we can. When Canada's The Little Potato Company was looking to build its first facility in the U.S., DeForest, Wisconsin, was a natural fit. Using WEDC's Certified Sites Program, we helped them find a development-ready site in a place where they could find employees who shared their company's values of family and community. Just think what we could make happen for your business. See the whole story at WEDC.org/success-stories-lpc.

