

# Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Brancel asks state's farmers to help North Dakota neighbors

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MADISON - Secretary Ben Brancel is asking Wisconsin farmers to help out North Dakota ranchers suffering under drought conditions, answering a call for assistance from his counterpart there.

"Wisconsin farmers have always had big hearts, and this is one more way they can help out their neighbors, even neighbors who are two states away," Brancel said. He heads the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Brancel noted that some Wisconsin farmers experienced heavy alfalfa losses to winterkill this year. "You might even find someone right here who needs help," he said. The University of Wisconsin-Extension operates a farmer-to-farmer website at <http://farmertofarmer.uwex.edu> to connect farmers with hay to buy or sell.

North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring reached out to Brancel Thursday, asking for help to spread the word about his state's need.

A hotline is available for callers to report what they are able to provide: [701-425-8454](tel:701-425-8454). Anyone with hay to sell, hay land to rent, or time and equipment to move hay is asked to call and leave their name, contact information and what they can provide. Goehring said many

producers are also looking for farmers out of state who can dry lot or pasture their cattle.

Low precipitation combined with high winds and temperatures have created drought conditions across North Dakota in varying degrees. As of early June, the USDA was reporting that topsoil moisture was short to very short in more than half the state, and pasture and range conditions were rated 70 percent fair to very poor. Even if rains were to come by late June, Goehring said, forage production could be dramatically reduced. He has asked the USDA Farm Service Agency to allow emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands.