

University of Wisconsin-River Falls: Makes a case to ensure long-term viability of the state's dairy industry

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MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Testifying yesterday before the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Dale Gallenberg, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at University of Wisconsin-River Falls, called for continued investment in dairy programs at non-land-grant institutions.

"NIFA investments, such as the Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) Capacity Building Grants Programs, allow our universities to better provide necessary opportunities for students to have a hands-on learning experience and the ability to conduct research, thereby leading the agriculture industry towards a more certain and viable future," Gallenberg said.

Speaking on behalf of other non-land-grant campuses in the University of Wisconsin System, including UW-Platteville, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-Stout, Gallenberg stressed the importance of NIFA's support of programs and opportunities in agriculture and renewable resources at these institutions and encouraged the organization to consider this a national priority.

"In Wisconsin, one in every 12 jobs is related to agriculture, and the industry annually contributes \$88.3 billion to our economy," said Gallenberg. "We are called to help the State's dairy industry, and indeed the entire agriculture industry, maintain a skilled workforce as well as discover new innovations to advance the industry."

NIFA is holding listening sessions across the country to gather input to ensure investments efficiently and effectively support long-term prosperity and global

preeminence of U.S. agriculture.

Nationally, non-land-grant institutions are enrolling an increasing share of undergraduate students in agriculture, food systems and renewable resources as well as making significant contributions to basic and applied research and to extension and outreach. Ensuring the pipeline of talented students remains full is critical.

While Wisconsin is home to UW-Madison, one of the nation's premier R-1 research and land-grant universities, non-land-grant universities in Wisconsin are also necessary to fully realize NIFA's mission of supporting research, education, and extension in food and agriculture.

"Wisconsin has earned broad recognition as the 'Dairy State.' From evidence-based research to the development of new products, we aim to be the best in the world," said UW System President Ray Cross.

The UW System has a long history of supporting the state's dairy industry. More recently, the UW System hosted the first Wisconsin Idea Dairy Summit in 2017, bringing together more than 200 researchers, industry leaders, and policy makers to identify challenges and opportunities for the dairy industry. This past summer, the Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0 was created as a joint effort between the UW System and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to make recommendations on actions needed to maintain a viable and profitable dairy industry in Wisconsin.

UW-River Falls is part of the University of Wisconsin System, which serves more than 170,000 students. Awarding 36,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

MEDIA CONTACTS:



Heather LaRoi, UW System

608-265-3195, hlaroi@uwsa.edu Dina Fassino, UW-River Falls

universityrelations@uwsa.edu 715-425-4306, dina.fassino@uwrfl.edu