

UW System: Celebrates strong partnerships during National Agriculture Week

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Wisconsin's agriculture industry is vital to Wisconsin's economy. This week, campuses across the University of Wisconsin System are celebrating National Agriculture Week (March 18-24) by highlighting their strong partnerships with Wisconsin's agriculture industry, as well as UW research innovations that have helped boost agriculture across our state.

"Growing up on a farm, I learned valuable life lessons at an early age," said UW System President Ray Cross. "This week, we celebrate and recognize the importance of agriculture and the dairy industry to our state and the nation – and their impact on the economy. Whether growing crops or raising animals, farmers help feed our families and provide crucial benefits to communities."

UW campuses are key players in growing Wisconsin's agricultural success, mobilizing partnerships and innovation to help provide Wisconsin farmers and businesses with the most efficient and effective tools available to move the state's agriculture industry forward. Industry partnerships also provide vital research, educational, and internship/career opportunities for students. Below are a few UW highlights:

- UW-Green Bay is leading efforts on one of the first large-scale attempts to directly link in-field soil health with intensive edge-of-field water quality monitoring across

the Great Lakes Basin. This research will provide management recommendations for improving the health and quality of the Great Lakes. UW-Green Bay is partnering with Purdue University, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service on this \$508,000 grant project.

- UW-La Crosse students and researchers are partnering with Superior Fresh, an aquaponics facility outside of Northfield, Wisconsin, to push the frontiers of sustainable agriculture. This includes research exploring innovative methods to grow food without soil or consistent sunlight. Superior Fresh opened in August 2017 through a university-private industry collaboration with UW-Stevens Point. Superior Fresh has already hired one UW-La Crosse student as a lab technician in the company's fish house and connected with more than a dozen UW-La Crosse faculty members in subject areas ranging from microbiology to entomology to business.
- UW-Platteville's School of Agriculture provides approximately 800 students with learning opportunities that include real-life problem solving through on-campus science laboratories, a greenhouse, a 430-acre university farm, and a strong internship program. Its graduates have more than a 95% employment rate. As part of hands-on learning, agriculture students deliver locally-sourced, fresh, chemical-free produce grown in the Pioneer Greenhouse through a student-run business called Pioneer Produce.
- UW-River Falls features the only agricultural engineering technology program in the state, as well as one of the largest dairy science programs in the nation. The University's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) consistently ranks as one of the top undergraduate agricultural programs in the nation. CAFES has partnered with Land O'Lakes' Winfield United for nearly 30 years, establishing research plots on the campus farm for product development and field training for production specialists, agronomists, applicators, managers, and UWRF students and staff for classroom and outreach educational programs.