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Volunteers for Agriculture®: Endorses Gov. Walker

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MADISON – The Volunteers for Agriculture® Committee has given Governor Scott Walker its endorsement. The VFA® Committee is made up of 18 farmers appointed by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's Board of Directors.

"Governor Walker consistently listens to the agricultural community," said Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Jim Holte. "He recognizes the intense challenges our farmers face. In this time of low commodity prices, he placed key stakeholders on the Governor's Dairy Task Force 2.0 and tasked them to come up with viable solutions to help dairy farmers."

Governor Walker's endorsement comes from signing several initiatives that Farm Bureau supported, including:

- High capacity well legislation to provide regulatory certainty for farmers in the repair, replacement, reconstruction or transfer of a well
- Implements of Husbandry 2.0 and 3.0
- Creation of a $14 million broadband expansion grant program
- Legalization of industrial hemp
- Creation of a producer-led watershed grant program funded at $750,000 per year
- Comprehensive wetland reforms so farmers have greater flexibility with

"artificial" wetlands
- Creation of an assistance program to get veterans engaged in agriculture
- Major reform of aquaculture regulations to make Wisconsin competitive with other states
- Allowance of manure piping in right-of-ways to alleviate wear and tear on roads
- Roundabout design reforms implemented to account for the size of agricultural vehicles
- Expanded the fall harvest road weight exemption from August 1 to December 31
- Maintained state budget monies for nonpoint source abatement and cost-sharing
- Complete restructuring of ACM and ACCP to modernize the fee and license structure for pesticides, fertilizers, soil or plant additives and inspections
- Modernized the Agricultural Producer Security program to bring it in line with current practices
- Implementation of NR 151 targeted performance standards to address groundwater contamination
- Updated adverse possession law (squatter's rights) so state and local governments cannot claim adverse possession of private property
- Implemented the Manufacturing and Agricultural Tax Credit which is an income tax credit that may be claimed against a farmer's personal state income tax rate
- Investment by the State Building Commission of $5 million for the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center

In his second term, Governor Walker appointed farmer Cris Peterson to the UW Board of Regents and Sheila Harsdorf as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Former state representative and farmer Keith Ripp also joined DATCP as Assistant Deputy Secretary.

"Under Governor Walker's leadership, Wisconsin agriculture has accomplished many things," Holte added. "Our VFA Committee, led by farmers, endorsed Governor Walker because he respects rural communities and will help the agricultural industry grow."

Formed to give farmers a direct role in electing leaders with agriculture's best interests, Volunteers for Agriculture® (VFA) is Wisconsin Farm Bureau's political action committee. Since 1990, the VFA has helped elect candidates who work for agriculture's interests in Madison.