

Rep. Considine: Action on agriculture

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Madison - Today the Assembly passed several bills which will support our producers and rural communities. As ranking member on the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, Representative Considine (D-Baraboo) offered the following statement:

“Last month, Governor Evers called for a Special Session on Agriculture. Prior to this, the Assembly Committee on Agriculture took action on 3 bills in 379 days. After his call to action, we took action on 18 bills in just 28 days. I have been advocating for action on this issue since I was first elected. Our producers and rural communities cannot afford to be left behind.

“I was proud to vote for numerous bills on agriculture today, but we can and should do more,” said Rep. Considine. “We need to provide mental health resources for our producers, who are under incredible stress because of current commodity prices and trade relations. January Special Session Assembly Bill 2 would provide regional support for stress and mental illness. I urge my colleagues to read this bill and demand action on it. These regional resources are pivotal to the wellness of our farmers and the agricultural industry as a whole.

“We also need to provide for small and medium sized farms. These producers are the backbone of our communities. Right now, the price of a bushel of corn or a hundredweight of milk is not sustainable for many of these farmers. In order to ensure that these farms aren’t run out of business, we need to provide resources like county-based UW-Extension agents, grants for diversification, and succession and business planning services. These resources are included in legislation that has been ignored by my colleagues in the majority. There is no reason to ignore these bills or the needs of our small and medium farms.

“I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to view the important action

we took on agriculture today as the first step. Today is not the last day that we should focus on agriculture or our rural communities. For me, it won't be.