

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Calls on USDA Secretary Perdue to take stronger action for Wisconsin dairy farmers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – As Wisconsin dairy farms continue to go out of business and the state leads the nation in farm bankruptcies, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, is calling on Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to take immediate action to bring relief to Wisconsin dairy farmers.

Secretary Perdue will appear at the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee hearing at 10:30 a.m. (ET) on Thursday and Senator Baldwin will question him directly on dairy farm loss and propose actions that the Trump administration needs to take to support Wisconsin's agriculture economy.

"Wisconsin farmers are the backbone of our rural economy, but right now they are facing a storm of challenges and President Trump's trade wars have hurt, not helped, our farmers," **said Senator Baldwin.** "This administration needs to do better for family farmers in Wisconsin and I look forward to the opportunity to speak directly to Secretary Perdue about the steps President Trump needs to take right now on behalf of our farmers and our agriculture economy."

Since President Trump took office, 2,060 dairy farms in Wisconsin have gone out of business, including organic dairy farmer Paul Adams from Eleva who recently had to close his farm and sell off his herd of more than 600 cows. The farm had been in his family for 148 years.

Senator Baldwin is calling on Secretary Perdue to reverse the harmful budget cuts proposed in President Trump's FY21 budget and work with her to increase federal

funding for programs that support Wisconsin farmers and boost our agriculture economy.

Dairy Business Innovation

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Baldwin worked last year to secure \$20 million for her Dairy Business Innovation Initiative. President Trump's proposed budget eliminates this funding, which supports dairy product innovation so dairy farmers can modernize their plants and reach new markets.

Mental Health Resources

Senator Baldwin's *FARMERS FIRST Act*, which provides mental health resources for farmers and agriculture workers facing severe stress during these difficult times, was included in the 2018 Farm Bill. Last year, Baldwin worked to make sure her reform is fully funded at \$10 million for Fiscal Year 2020. However, the USDA has failed to make this funding available for the farming community and Baldwin is calling on the USDA to take action and get this funding to the farmers who need it.

This year, President Trump has proposed a \$2 million cut to the FARMERS FIRST initiative in his FY21 budget. Senator Baldwin is calling for the President to reverse that budget cut and work with her to increase funding for local mental health resources.

Farming Financial Planning Support

Baldwin is also proposing an increased investment in local extension experts who can help farmers navigate their financial options, better secure their financial future, and choose the right transition plan – to another type of farm business, another generation, or to selling their farm – and have some control over what they do with their life savings and professional legacy.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).