

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation: Ag Day at the Capitol brings farmers to Madison

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 5, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON - On February 4, more than 330 farmers and agriculturists gathered at the Monona Terrace in Madison for Ag Day at the Capitol.

Ag Day at the Capitol is an annual event for Wisconsin farmers and agriculturists to learn more about state issues affecting agriculture and meet with their state legislators.

Attendees started the day by listening to issue briefings on wildlife damage claims, food labeling and a host of other bills including farmer commercial driver's license exemptions and farmland preservation tax credit.

At 1 p.m. Governor Evers served as the event's keynote speaker. The Governor shared his focus on water quality in the state and why he declared 2019 the year of clean drinking water.

"Obviously it's going to take more than one year to deal with (clean water)," said Gov. Evers. "I have the utmost faith in the farm community. They are the original stewards of the land, after Native Americans, and there is no reason we can't work together to make clean water a priority."

Gov. Evers also emphasized his three-pronged approach to help rural Wisconsin.

Evers said, “I just want to work together and have some good conversations and do what’s right for rural Wisconsin.”

He asked farmers and agriculturists to stay engaged and be part of the solution.

“We appreciate Governor Evers taking the time to attend Ag Day at the Capitol this year,” said WFBF President Joe Bragger. “Our farmers and agriculturists want to know that their rural communities are a priority.”

Following the Governor’s speech, the afternoon session was a legislative panel on water quality. The panel was moderated by Dennis Frame, co-founder of Discovery Farms, and was comprised of Senators Howard Marklein and Patrick Testin and Representatives Todd Novak, Travis Tranel, Tony Kurtz and Katrina Shankland.

The panel discussed:

- Agriculture’s role in developing solutions for cleaner water throughout Wisconsin.
- Ways in which water quality can be positively impacted without new regulations.
- How the legislature will support Wisconsin farmers and local communities to identify solutions for cleaner water.

“It was appropriate to focus on water during our afternoon program,” said Bragger. “With this topic at the forefront of many discussions throughout the state, farmers and agriculturists need to hear about the latest updates on legislation and how they can be part of the conversation.”

The legislators featured on the panel are from the Speaker’s Task Force on Water Quality and who represent the Central Sands and Southwest Wisconsin areas who are engaged in water legislation and talked in-depth about water issues facing rural Wisconsin.

At the Capitol this afternoon, at the same time as the water panel, Wisconsin state Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and other Assembly leadership held a press conference to emphasize their plans to help Wisconsin farmers. Through a combination of existing legislation and new proposals there is an opportunity to put together a comprehensive package to help farmers during these stressful economic times.

“The news that the assembly leadership is putting a large focus on agriculture is welcomed news,” Bragger said. “Wisconsin agriculture is open to all ideas on how we can keep this state’s rural economy afloat. How exciting is this to have the attention on the agriculture community? Thank you to Speaker Vos and the Wisconsin Assembly leaders for their work.”

The afternoon’s program wrapped up with attendees hearing about water-specific bills and then walked to the Capitol to meet with their legislators from their respective areas.

Rural Mutual Insurance Company and GROWMARK Inc. were major sponsors of the event. Co-sponsors of the event, with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, included the Dairy Business Association, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Cattlemen’s Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Wisconsin Hemp Alliance, Wisconsin Horse Council, Wisconsin Pork Association, Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Soybean Association and the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association.