

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Wisconsin advocates for agriculture at national meeting

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MADISON, Wis. – This week, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) leadership participated in the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) annual meeting, contributing in policy committee discussions, taking part in business meetings, and joining plenary sessions. The NASDA annual meeting was hosted in Kentucky, September 18 – 22, 2021, and was also offered virtually.

“The NASDA annual meeting is a valuable opportunity to hear from federal government officials and connect with other state departments of agriculture,” said DATCP Secretary-designee Randy Romanski. “It is important that Wisconsin’s diverse agriculture industry is represented in these conversations to ensure that federal policy decisions benefit our state’s farmers, processors, and agribusinesses.”

The NASDA annual meeting included six committee meetings for members to thoroughly consider policy amendments and action items for the organization to adopt. One policy item, encouraging reforms to temporary agriculture worker programs, passed as part of a robust discussion about workforce needs.

“Across the country, the agriculture industry has identified the need for a reliable, trained, and skilled workforce,” added Romanski. “As NASDA members, these conversations will continue as we seek to identify productive solutions to meet employer needs, especially for those in Wisconsin who need employees year-

round.”

The organization members also passed a policy amendment asking for additional animal health protection and disease control nationwide. The group noted support of One Health’s mission of collaborating to accomplish the goal of safeguarding animal, public and environmental health comprehensively.

“Wisconsin has a strong dairy and livestock industry that relies on strong animal health practices, sound use of land and water resources, and a fair marketplace,” explained Romanski. “NASDA members continued to discuss the importance of support across the entire supply chain, including funding for meat processing and food purchases for the food insecure.”

During a committee meeting, the group advocated for federal leadership and consistent regulations in several areas, including the regulation of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). In addition, members approved an action item supporting an expansion of the federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP).

Throughout the meeting, members emphasized the importance of food safety and international agricultural exports. NASDA annual meeting speakers included Frank Yiannas, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Deputy Commissioner and Ceri Morgan, Director, EU and International Trade Directorate, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The NASDA annual meeting also included award presentations. Frank Friar, a DATCP financial consulting and farm transition specialist, received national recognition as the James A. Graham Award winner for his outstanding work in providing service to agricultural producers.

To learn more about NASDA, its annual meeting, and the James A. Graham Award, visit <https://www.nasda.org/>.