

Gov. Evers: WEDC announce \$4.5 million to support expansion in Wisconsin's Dairy Industry

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced today the state of Wisconsin will be supporting the expansion of Agropur Dairy Cooperative in Little Chute with up to \$4.5 million in business tax credits from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).

Agropur, one of the world's largest dairy suppliers, will be building a new \$168 million state-of-the-art cheese factory in Little Chute that will set the company up for future success in Wisconsin by investing in the latest cheesemaking technology and making room for growth. Agropur will be eligible for up to \$4.5 million in business tax credits over the next four years based on meeting hiring and capital expenditure goals.

“From our farmers and cheesemakers and the folks in the dairy supply chain to the workers who will help build this expansion, to the Wisconsin cheese consumers and enthusiasts everywhere, this investment will be felt far beyond the farm,” said Gov. Evers. “This project is great news for our economy and for Wisconsin, and on behalf of our great state, we are thrilled to support Agropur’s investment in America’s Dairyland and in the future of the dairy industry.”

Agropur is the largest dairy cooperative in North America and one of the top 20 dairy producers in the world. In Wisconsin, Agropur operates facilities in La Crosse, Appleton, Little Chute, Weyauwega, and Luxemburg, employing about 850 employees. With this project, the cooperative anticipates spending nearly \$60 million more a year on milk from Wisconsin farms and creating at least 54 new full-time jobs.

The governor was joined for the announcement by WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes

and Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Randy Romanski while visiting a family dairy farm in Seymour.

“Wisconsin is uniquely positioned to help Agropur develop new products and succeed in the dairy industry,” Secretary and CEO Hughes said. “In turn, Agropur invests in our dairy farms, pays family-sustaining wages and through the company’s charity work helps ensure access to healthy food for our communities.”

“Wisconsin has about 6,700 dairy farms—more than any other state—and the dairy industry contributes more than \$45 billion to our economy each year,” Secretary Romanski said. “But dairy farming is a tough business known for its incredibly hard work. For the producers in this part of the state, Agropur’s expansion can be a needed boost.”

The new Agropur cheesemaking facility is under construction on 24.5 acres in the Village of Little Chute. The 210,000 square foot facility will allow Agropur to increase its production and make future expansions in Little Chute possible. The facility’s milk processing would more than double from 300 million pounds a year to 750 million pounds with about 85 percent of that milk coming from within 40 miles of the plant.

“Having a new state-of-the-art facility will help us to solidify our leadership position in the dairy industry,” said Doug Simon, Agropur’s president of U.S. operations. “Beyond speed and efficiency, the process and equipment will provide greater flexibility and will allow Agropur to offer a broader line of products to meet our customers’ needs.”

Today’s announcement took place at Steffens Dairy Farm, an Agropur supplier near Seymour. The farm is run by Lorraine Steffens and her sons, Steve and Dan. The family, which has owned the farm since 1971, milks 130 cows on about 300 acres.

“This expansion is a promise to farmers that we’re going to be here, and you’ll have a place for your milk to go,” said Lorraine Steffens.