

# Gov. Evers, WEDC, Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Local Officials: Join Taiwanese trade officials in highlighting global appeal of Wisconsin ginseng

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WAUSAU — Gov. Tony Evers, Wausau Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) CEO and Secretary Missy Hughes, and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Randy Romanski joined Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan's representative to the U.S., for a visit to a Wausau ginseng farm to highlight the global appeal of Wisconsin ginseng.

“Wisconsin is the top producer of cultivated ginseng in the United States and is known around the world for having the highest-quality ginseng,” said Gov. Evers. “This is a great opportunity to connect our state’s ginseng growers with trade leaders from Taiwan—Wisconsin’s third-largest ginseng market—and further strengthen our ties.”

“Taiwanese consumers have a long tradition of appreciating ginseng products, and Taiwan being Wisconsin’s third-largest ginseng market, we look forward to further expanding this trade. I am glad to join Governor Evers and other leaders to support this cooperation,” said Representative Hsiao.

Mayor Rosenberg welcomed Representative Hsiao to Wisconsin and presented her with a proclamation declaring September Wisconsin American Ginseng month.

“The Wausau area has a long, proud history in ginseng production and exportation,” said Mayor Rosenberg. “I’m thrilled to welcome Taiwanese Representative Hsiao and Gov. Evers to our community to discuss successes, opportunities, and foster conversations about how we can continue to cultivate these important relationships that build our economy locally and globally.”

Wisconsin farmers have been growing ginseng for more than a century, with central Wisconsin serving as the epicenter of cultivated ginseng in the U.S. due to its cool summers, long winter, clean water, and virgin soil. Ginseng produced in Wisconsin accounts for more than 90 percent of all ginseng produced in the United States, and Marathon County is the top ginseng growing-county in our state, producing about 95 percent of Wisconsin’s annual crop. Wisconsin exported over \$19 million of ginseng to the world, with nearly \$1 million exported to Taiwan.

“Wisconsin ginseng is recognized internationally for its quality. That is a credit to the growers and an economic benefit to our state,” said Secretary Romanski. “DATCP’s International Agri-Business Center continually looks for opportunities to open or expand markets for Wisconsin ginseng and other agricultural or food products. Thank you to Representative Hsiao for making the trip to Wisconsin, and to Hsu’s Ginseng for hosting us today.”

“Wisconsin’s leadership as the world’s premier producer of high-quality ginseng is an important part of our state’s export strategy,” said Secretary Hughes. “WEDC is pleased that leaders from one of our top markets have the chance to see our ginseng farms up close.”

The Ginseng Board of Wisconsin has been working on opening the fresh ginseng root market of Taiwan for nearly 15 years. Taiwan recently published its protocol for importing fresh ginseng from the United States, so local leaders are hoping this may create more opportunities for Taiwanese consumers to enjoy the best of Wisconsin ginseng.

“We are excited by the new opportunity that the fresh ginseng market will offer to Wisconsin ginseng producers and ginseng consumers in Taiwan,” said Robert Kaldunski, Ginseng Board of Wisconsin President. “Taiwan is a growing market for the industry where Wisconsin ginseng is primarily used in traditional Chinese medicine, teas and sold at the retail level in the form of tea, slices and roots.”

Gov. Evers, Representative Hsiao, Mayor Rosenberg, and Secretaries Romanski and

Hughes visited Hsu's Ginseng Garden, a family farm founded in 1974 that employs about 100 people nationwide, with most at the business' headquarters in Wausau.

"Our company and our family is honored to have Gov. Evers and Rep. Hsiao visit our ginseng farm as our Wisconsin-grown crop is almost exclusively consumed by foreigners or destined for sale in export markets such as Taiwan," said owner Will Hsu.

"We are a second-generation business that was founded by my parents, who originally immigrated from Taiwan. For nearly 50 years our company has relied on access to foreign markets and free trade, but as a result of reduced commerce between the U.S. and Asia, local farmers and businesses like ours are suffering. This shows how, in a global economy, decisions made in other parts of the world can have severe and adverse ripple effects thousands of miles away here in Wausau. We hope that today's event can foster mutual understanding and improve the ginseng trade in a way that strengthens the ties between the local farmers in Wisconsin and our loyal consumers in Asia."