

Wisconsin Farmers Union: Members set policy priorities

Posted on Friday, Feb 12, 2021

>> **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.](#)**

CHIPPEWA FALLS – Election results are in from the Wisconsin Farmers Union’s 90th Annual Convention, which was held virtually January 30-31. Convention delegates voted on policy priorities and candidates by mail-in ballot, with results tallied this week at the family farm organization’s state headquarters in Chippewa Falls.

The following 2021 Special Orders of Business, which will serve as priorities for WFU’s work throughout the coming months, passed with overwhelming support from delegates:

- Dairy Policy Reform
- Concentration in the Agriculture Industry
- Family Farmers Shaping Climate Change Policy
- Meat Processing Infrastructure
- Pandemic Response & Recovery

Members passed 31 policy resolutions. Highlights included support of the following: diversity and equity in agriculture, greater transparency in livestock markets, overhaul of the Federal Milk Marketing Order system, development of local and regional fiber systems, increasing allowable THC content of hemp and creating a state hemp program, direct-to-consumer sale of poultry regardless of sales channel (i.e. farmer markets), transparency in allocation of federal farm payments, truth in food labeling, and measures to bolster the ethanol industry. The full 2021 WFU policy book will be posted soon at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/policy.

Election results

Several district director seats were up for election this year. Dairy farmers Dave Rosen of Glenwood City and Tina Hinchley of Cambridge were re-elected to Districts 2 and 7, respectively. Rosen represents Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, and St. Croix Counties, while Hinchley's district covers Dane, Jefferson, Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties.

Newly elected to the board was Sarah Lloyd, who will serve District 6, which spans Adams, Columbia, Green Lake, Juneau, Marathon, Marquette, Portage, Sauk, Waupaca, Waushara, and Wood counties. Lloyd farms with her husband Nels Nelson and his family on a 400-cow dairy farm outside Wisconsin Dells in Columbia County. She works off-farm as a Food Systems Scientist for the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and a Supply Chain Specialist for the University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative, working on the Grassland 2.0 Project. She also serves as the Director of Development for the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative (WFHC), a farmer-led cooperative focused on local and regional markets for fresh produce. Lloyd is president of the Columbia County Farmers and also worked for WFU for 7 years, most recently as the director of special projects.

Lloyd noted she appreciates the diverse range of farms represented in WFU and the long-time Farmers Union motto of "Let Us Reason Together."

"By coming together through Farmers Union we can understand our shared interests and strategically build our voice to gain economic and political power," Lloyd said. "As a board member I will work to make sure that all the voices are heard and we can build a strong future for the organization together."

Rachel Henderson of Menomonie and Michelle Miller of Madison were elected to serve as delegates to represent WFU in the March 1-2 policy discussion during the National Farmers Union's 119th Anniversary Convention. Henderson is president of the Dunn County Farmers Union and owner of Mary Dirty Face Farm, which is home to a mixed-fruit orchard and pastured livestock, including hogs, lambs, poultry and cattle. Miller works for the University of Wisconsin's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS) with current projects covering dairy policy, market structure and concentration, technology in the public interest, and climate change mitigation in the food supply chain. She also is active in the Dane County Farmers Union and serves on the Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation board.

Von Ruden retains presidency

Westby dairy farmer Darin Von Ruden has been re-elected as WFU president. Von Ruden is a lifelong Farmers Union member, and since 2008 has served as the organization's District 5 director, representing Crawford, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland, Rock, and Vernon counties. He also leads the WFU Foundation Board of Directors, serves on the National Farmers Union Board and is chairman of the NFU Membership Committee.

Von Ruden has high hopes for the year ahead, noting he is pleased to see agriculture being prioritized in the Governor's biennial budget and pivotal rural issues garnering national attention.

"In the midst of a tense political climate and a global pandemic, the past year has challenged our family farms and rural communities in many ways," Von Ruden said. "However, there are a lot of silver linings in the awareness it has raised for many of the deep-seated structural issues that are affecting our food supply chains and agriculture. WFU will continue to lead on these issues and organize for a better future for the generations to follow."

Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization, is committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement. For more information visit www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.