

DATCP: Participates in “United We Thrive” Conference

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MADISON, Wis. - Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) leadership participated in the 2022 National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) “United We Thrive” Winter Policy Conference in Washington D.C. this week. The annual meeting, held February 14 - 16, 2022, included the business meeting, committee meetings, and plenary sessions.

As part of the conference policy discussions, DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski submitted action items for consideration by the membership related to animal health and food safety. Both proposals were passed and will influence NASDA’s advocacy in the coming year.

In the first action item, NASDA requested that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) designate resources to reduce the incidence of swine lesions at slaughter, develop rapid methods to rule out foot-and-mouth disease, and develop resources to accelerate regulatory responses to swine lesions. Senecavirus A produces lesions in swine that appear similar to lesions caused by foot-and-mouth disease, and cases of Senecavirus A have increased significantly in recent years. In contrast to foot-and-mouth disease, Senecavirus A has little to no impact on swine production, and it does not restrict trade or commerce.

“When lesions are identified at slaughter, states need to respond quickly to determine whether the lesions are caused by foot-and-mouth disease, which is a severe and highly-contagious viral disease,” said Romanski. “Animals move within marketing channels across state lines, and a solution to this issue requires federal assistance and multi-state participation and cooperation.”

The second action item proposed by Wisconsin and passed by NASDA relates to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). NASDA encourages the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to consider developing, or allowing state programs to create, an

offline tool for covered farm grower populations with no internet capabilities, such as the Plain community.

“For growers to comply with the proposed rule requirements, FDA is creating an online tool to assist farms in developing the pre-harvest agricultural water assessments,” explained Romanski. “Wisconsin, like many other states, have growers with no technology capabilities and require hard copy resources so they are not disadvantaged on their farm.”

The NASDA Winter Policy Conference also included discussions on additional policy topics such as international trade, rural development, and pesticide regulation. Members engaged in conversations about current challenges including supply chain disruptions and emphasized the need for workforce development.

At the conference, NASDA members also discussed the upcoming 2023 Farm Bill and identified ten priority areas. Conservation and climate resiliency, animal disease, invasive species, trade promotion, and local food systems were some of the priorities NASDA expects to advocate for in the next Farm Bill.

NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. To learn more about the association or the conference, visit <https://www.nasda.org/>.