

Dairy Business Association: Reveals 2023 budget and legislative priorities

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MADISON, Wis. — The Dairy Business Association, Wisconsin's most prominent dairy lobbying group, released its 2023 budget and legislative priority issues. These priorities, established by the DBA board of directors, set the direction for fiscal and policy initiatives for the association for the next two years.

[Budget priorities](#) include supporting clean water initiatives, improving the Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) program, promoting dairy products in the global market, expanding the dairy processor grant program, supporting rural road funding and updating the farmland preservation tax credit and investment in rural broadband infrastructure.

[Legislative priorities](#) include supporting clean water initiatives, updating the farmland preservation tax credit program, improving the CAFO program and updating the commercial driver's license - Schedule F.

"DBA firmly believes in common-sense policy that moves Wisconsin dairy forward. This year, we will focus on several key issues with our legislators in Madison," said DBA President Amy Penterman. "Starting a new budget cycle presents opportunities to improve programs that work for dairy farmers and create new funding to enhance Wisconsin's vibrant and growing dairy community.

"DBA continues to work alongside political leaders to support new and existing initiatives to secure Wisconsin's place as America's Dairyland. Our priorities reflect our ambition to pave the way for a progressive future."

Summary of key budget and legislative priorities:

- **Supporting clean water initiatives** – Providing funding for existing and new initiatives to address groundwater quality is essential. Programs such as the state’s nonpoint program, well testing and groundwater mapping contribute to water quality improvements. Existing successful programs help farmers improve water quality with local solutions. Wisconsin must keep pace with the enhanced investments in water quality priorities. To continue progressive opportunities for success, continued and enhanced funding and flexibility for farmer-led watershed projects are essential. Enhancement and revitalization of the Farmland Preservation Program, the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot grant program and Cover Crop Reimbursement will continue to provide investment in water quality improvements.
- **Improving the CAFO program** – The current CAFO program needs efficiency and functionality for farmers and the public. Modern Wisconsin farmers need an efficient and structured permitting program that ensures dairy growth while maintaining water quality protections. The current regulatory system is unreliable due to a lack of structure, consistency and deadlines. A refocus on long-term compliance instead of the current priority for permitting is essential. Building efficiencies into the system would save staff time, relying more on private industry and focusing on continuous and quantifiable improvement. Solutions generally include an increase in CAFO fees and additional program staff. These solutions must be part of a broader package of improvements to the overall program.
- **Farmland Preservation Updates** – The farmland preservation program is a win for agriculture and conservation. The voluntary program creates conservation standards for farmers to utilize in their production practices, and in turn, they receive a per-acre tax credit. Due to declining participation in the program over the last ten years and stagnant per-acre tax credits, updates to the program are essential. Transitioning from a fifteen-year contract to a ten-year contract should bolster farmer participation. In addition, updating the rates of the per-acre tax credits would reflect current market incentives for conservation practices on farms.
- **Investment in Broadband Infrastructure** – Rural broadband is essential to rural communities, modern agriculture, farmers and farm businesses that grow

our food supply. Continuous investment in expanding broadband to rural areas to provide coverage for unserved or underserved locations is essential. Investment in rural broadband infrastructure strengthens farm businesses that enhance their communities through local investment. Ensuring investments in broadband infrastructure is targeted to rural users, efficiently installed, effective service and costs and timely installation are priorities for rural residents.

- **Supporting Rural Road Funding** – We need a long-term, sustainable fix for our state’s transportation funding needs. Bonding must remain reasonable to ensure our long-term investment in infrastructure is balanced. We acknowledge that road funding solutions will require additional revenue and advocate for a long-term funding solution that recognizes the importance of rural roads to our state’s economy and funds them accordingly.
- **Promoting dairy products in the global market** – We support continued funding for the Wisconsin Initiative on Agriculture Exports to increase Wisconsin’s export markets for agricultural products. We must continue doing everything we can to capitalize on the dairy economic engine for our state. Investing in the growth and expansion of the dairy industry is essential to continue to capitalize and fuel our main agricultural economic engine.