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U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Highlights her Dairy Business Innovation Initiative at dairy farm in Columbus

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Baldwin first created the program in 2018, helping deliver nearly $40 million to support Wisconsin dairy businesses, and is now working to boost resources for the program

COLUMBUS, WI – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin visited Gurn-Z Meadow Farm to see firsthand the impact her Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (DBII) is making for Wisconsin farmers, cheesemakers, and processors. Owners of Gurn-Z Meadow Farm, Jennifer and Julie Orchard, led Senator Baldwin on a tour of the farm and talked to her about how they have used DBII funding to diversify their business' products and launch a new processing venture, Royal Guernsey Creamery, to make butter with milk from their farm.

"Wisconsin's dairy industry is essential to our Made in Wisconsin economy and our state's identity, and I'm proud to lead the charge in Washington to support them," **said Senator Baldwin.** "Today, I've heard directly from Wisconsin dairies that have improved operations, tapped into new markets, and innovated new products thanks to my Dairy Business Innovation Initiative – and that's why I am fighting to ensure this program is available to more Wisconsin dairy businesses for years to come."

Senator Baldwin first created the DBII program in 2018, successfully getting the legislation included in the 2018 Farm Bill, to help cheesemakers and dairy businesses develop new products, meet market demands, and expand markets. Since then, the program has delivered almost $40 million to help Wisconsin dairy businesses. Senator Baldwin recently introduced the *Dairy Business Innovation Act*

of 2023 to strengthen the program and increase the resources that are available to Wisconsin businesses.

Following the tour, Senator Baldwin was joined by local DBII grant recipients for a guided tasting of their products. Senator Baldwin sampled butter made by Royal Guernsey Creamery in Columbus, paneer, panela, and queso fresco made by Specialty Cheese Company in Reeseville, raclette made by Alpinage Creamery in Milwaukee, and shallot and herb alpine made by Hill Valley Dairy in Lake Geneva.

“The targeted grant funding we received through the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance helped us launch Royal Guernsey Creamery, bringing our quality, artisan butter to local consumers and adding value to our family’s seventh-generation dairy farm,” **said Jennifer and Julie Orchard, Royal Guernsey Creamery.** “We’re grateful for the support of DBIA, and we applaud Senator Baldwin for leading the charge to increase funding for dairy innovation.”

“Senator Tammy Baldwin has championed investments in dairy farms and dairy processing plants, and the return on this effort is a stronger food supply chain and stronger rural communities. We thank her for now working to boost Dairy Business Innovation Initiative funding, and look forward to working with her to build on the program’s many early successes,” **said Rebekah Sweeney, Senior Director of Programs & Policy at the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.**

“Bringing raclette from France to America’s Dairyland is a dream come true for us – but starting a dairy manufacturing business from the ground up and maintaining its success is a complex challenge,” **said Orphee Paillotin and Paula Heimerl, Alpinage Cheese.** “Our DBIA grant helped us purchase the equipment we needed to take our company to the next level. Thanks to this funding, we were able to triple our production, grow our distribution, explore production of an additional cheese variety, and – just this week – win a first place distinction at the American Cheese Society competition. We appreciate Senator Baldwin’s dedication to dairy businesses.”

“Companies like Specialty Cheese benefit from the financial and technical support of the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance. Thanks in part to DBIA grants, we’ve increased production of our award-winning, value-added cheeses – and boosted our sales both domestically and internationally. Our thanks go to Senator Baldwin for her ongoing support for the dairy industry,” **said Paul Scharfman, Specialty Cheese Company.**

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