

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Notches victories for Wisconsin agriculture and rural communities in Senate Ag Bill

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, secured major victories for Wisconsin’s agriculture industry and rural communities in the Senate’s bipartisan Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The bipartisan legislation, which passed unanimously out of the committee today, included funding for Senator Baldwin’s Farmland Security Act, Dairy Business Innovation Initiative, and Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, among other priorities. The legislation also included a number of Senator Baldwin’s community inspired projects that will improve access to quality health care in rural parts of Wisconsin and boost Native language education.

“Our bipartisan legislation respects the hard work of farmers and ranchers and bolsters economic growth for our Made in America agriculture economy. We found common ground to invest in our rural communities, support the long-term health of our working lands, and ensure our farmers and ranchers have the tools they need to compete on the global stage,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “As we continue to work in a bipartisan manner towards signing the bill into law, I am going to be fighting to protect these investments to help grow our rural economies, support Wisconsin’s agriculture industry, and ensure families have the peace of mind that they can put food on the table.”

Wisconsin Priorities

Farmland Security Act: The legislation includes \$1 million to support the [Senator’s legislation](#) that increases scrutiny over foreign investments in American agricultural land. The funding will support a new data system that will

help provide the American people and Congress with information on the impacts foreign investments have on family farms, rural communities, and the domestic food supply.

Dairy Business Innovation Initiative: The bill includes continued investment in the program that Senator Baldwin [created in 2018](#) that provides technical assistance and grants to dairy farmers and businesses across Wisconsin, supporting them with business plan development, marketing, and branding, as well as increasing access to innovative production and processing techniques to support the development of value-added products.

Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network: Senator Baldwin secured increased funding for the [program that she helped create](#) to address the mental health epidemic in rural America and expand access to critical mental health support and resources for our nation's agricultural communities. Earlier this year, Senator Baldwin led her colleagues in a bipartisan letter to the Appropriations Committee seeking robust funding for the program.

Institute for Rural Partnerships (IRP): The bill includes continued investment for IRP, of which Wisconsin is a direct recipient through the work of the University of Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute in addressing challenges unique to rural communities. Most recently, the Institute announced a multi-year, multi-million-dollar investment in a weather station network that will provide real-time Wisconsin weather data. The project is vital for communities across the state impacted by increasingly common severe weather events, in particular, Wisconsin's robust agriculture community.

Congressionally Directed Spending Projects

Waadookodaading Ojibwe Language Institute (WOLI) Revitalization

Center: Baldwin secured \$5 million to establish an Ojibwe language revitalization center in Hayward, Wisconsin to house full-time pre-k to grade 12 Ojibwe immersion education, including classrooms, library and resource center, gymnasium, outdoor learning spaces, and all associated language programming initiatives.

Western Wisconsin Health Expansion: Baldwin secured \$1 million to expand the hospital's labor and delivery room and provide for birthing and medical-surgical room construction in Baldwin, Wisconsin.

Key Points & Highlights

Rural Development: The bill provides \$1.6 billion for rental assistance to ensure

rural Americans have access to safe and affordable housing. It would also decouple rental assistance from Multifamily Direct Loans, which will prevent thousands of low-income families from losing rental assistance.

Nutrition: The bill delivers critical new funding to ensure women, infants, and children can get the nutrition they need, and it protects vital nutrition assistance programs for families across the country with tight budgets.

- **WIC:** The bill includes \$6.3 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)—a \$615 million increase over FY 2023 that meets the President’s budget request. These new resources will ensure over 6 million women, infants, and children can get the nutrition they need.
- **SNAP:** The bill fully funds the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to serve an estimated 42 million people per month—and does not include any new restrictions on eligibility.
- **Child Nutrition:** The bill fully funds Child Nutrition Programs to ensure schools can continue to serve healthy meals. In 2024, this funding will help serve an estimated 5 billion lunches and 2.6 billion breakfasts to kids across the country.

Agriculture Research: Agricultural research plays a vital role in supporting farmers and ranchers, particularly as they continue to respond to a changing climate. The bill provides \$1.792 billion—a \$48.6 million increase—for the Agricultural Research Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) premiere in-house research agency.

Food and Drug Administration: The bill provides a \$20 million increase in funding for the FDA to carry out its critical mission to keep families healthy and safe. More specifically, it provides an additional \$7 million to conduct oversight of cosmetics for the first time ever, \$3.75 million to strengthen FDA’s food safety programs, \$3.75 million to address device shortages and supply chain issues, \$3 million to advance neuroscience research, and \$2.5 million for ALS research.

Food Safety: The bill provides \$1.205 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), an increase of \$46.7 million. This funding will help ensure FSIS can continue its vital work protecting America’s food supply without being forced to reduce its staffing levels, which would jeopardize food safety and exacerbate supply chain delays.

International Food Aid: The bill provides \$1.8 billion in funding for the Food for Peace program and \$248.3 million for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program. As the world experiences an unprecedented hunger crisis, this funding will continue to combat hunger abroad—and save lives.

Conservation: The bill protects funding for Conservation Technical Assistance, which supports voluntary conservation practices on private land.