

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Votes for legislation to support Wisconsin farmers, agriculture economy, and rural communities

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) is highlighting legislation President Biden signed into law to support Wisconsin’s farmers, rural communities, and Made in Wisconsin agriculture economy. As Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, Senator Baldwin worked to pass the Agriculture Appropriations bill, which was included in the bipartisan Omnibus Appropriations Legislation for Fiscal Year 2023.

“In recent years, our agricultural and rural communities have faced unique challenges, including supply chain disruptions, high input costs, and severe weather events. I am proud to have helped craft legislation that increases investments in our agriculture economy, supports our family farms, safeguards national security in the heartland, and increases rural development for a brighter, more sustainable future,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “With investments in clean water infrastructure, rural broadband, and affordable housing, our legislation delivers results for rural communities across the country and in Wisconsin.”

Key Highlights

The Fiscal Year 2023 Agriculture Appropriations bill includes significant funding to help farmers, ranchers, and growers maintain their leadership in production and sustainability on a global level by investing in research and infrastructure that benefits our agricultural economy. Senator Baldwin chairs the Senate

Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies and worked to include the following in the Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Agriculture Research: Agricultural research plays a vital role in supporting farmers and ranchers as they continue to respond to a changing climate. The Agricultural Research Service is funded at \$1.74 billion, an increase of \$111 million over fiscal year 2022. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture receives \$1.701 billion, an increase of \$64 million over fiscal year 2022. This includes \$455 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), and \$50 million for Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE).

Rural Development: Historic funding for Rural Development will deliver clean water and waste systems, ensure low income Americans continue to receive housing assistance, and help bridge the digital divide in rural areas.

- Rural Housing – The bill includes over \$2 billion for the Rural Housing Service, an increase of \$183 million over fiscal year 2022. Within these increases is \$40 million for Rental Assistance. This increase is necessary to fund all expiring fiscal year 2022 contracts. The increase also includes an additional \$20 million for multi-family housing construction and rehabilitation and an expansion of the Tribal Housing Relending Demonstration program. This funding will help almost 300,000 families in rural areas stay in their homes and avoid unnecessary rent increases.
- Rural Business – Rural Business programs are funded at \$127 million. The largest increase is for Business and Industry loans to assist businesses in rural areas with loans to ensure they continue to thrive.
- Rural Utilities – The Rural Utilities Service is funded at \$1.078 billion. The ReConnect broadband program receives total funding of \$364 million to fulfill its mission. The bill also continues to support critical investments in water and wastewater infrastructure and improvements to rural America's electrical grid.

Domestic Nutrition: One of the fundamental responsibilities of the Agriculture Appropriations bill is to ensure those that qualify for nutritional support, receive it. The bill fully funds this mission. These programs are all the more important as inflation has increased the cost of groceries for American families.

- Child Nutrition Programs – Child Nutrition Programs are funded at over \$28.5 billion. Included in this funding is \$40 million for the Summer Electronic Benefit

program and \$30 million for school equipment grants. This funding will ensure schools can continue to serve healthy meals.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – SNAP is funded at \$154 billion, an increase of \$13.4 billion over fiscal year 2022. This increase will ensure participants receive increased benefits to support the Thrifty Food Plan as well as emergency allotments to continue to address the pandemic.
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) – The WIC program is funded at \$6 billion. This will fully fund anticipated participation. The bill also includes authority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue the Cash Value Voucher. This will ensure over 4 million low income women and children do not see their benefits reduced.

Foreign Food Aid: Across the globe, more than 820 million people go to bed hungry every night and more than 49 million people in 49 countries are on the edge of famine. The United States is committed to combating hunger both domestically and abroad and funds two programs that provide foreign food aid. These include the PL 480 Title II grants program, which is funded at \$1.8 billion, and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program, which is funded at \$248 million for an increase of \$11 million over fiscal year 2022.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA): The responsibilities of the FDA are vast and the bill includes historic investments to ensure the country's food and medical supplies remain the safest in the world. The bill provides a net increase of \$226 million for the FDA. Included in this amount is \$35.8 million for medical product safety; \$41 million for food safety activities; \$122 million for cross cutting initiatives; and \$21 million for infrastructure investments. As families continue to struggle with the infant formula crisis, the bill also invests additional funding to ensure FDA has the resources they need to ensure this vital nutritional need is met.

Priorities for Wisconsin and Rural Communities

The legislation President Biden signed into law supports America's rural communities and Made in Wisconsin agriculture economy, including several provisions Senator Baldwin worked to include.

The Farmland Security Act: Senator Baldwin's [bipartisan legislation](#) to ensure the American people and Congress can address the impacts foreign investments have on family farms, rural communities, and the domestic food supply was signed into law under the annual legislation. The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure

Act requires foreign entities to disclose their purchases of American agricultural land. Current reporting shows that foreign-owned agricultural acreage has nearly doubled in the past decade, however, the data that has been collected is incomplete and inaccurate. The *Farmland Security Act* will increase transparency and assess the impacts foreign investments have on family farms, rural communities, and the domestic food supply.

Growing Climate Solutions Act: The bipartisan Greenhouse Gas Technical Assistance Provider and Third-Party Verifier Program, formerly known as the [*Growing Climate Solutions Act*](#) which Senator Baldwin cosponsored, was passed into law in the legislation. The bill will break down barriers for farmers and foresters interested in participating in carbon markets so they can be rewarded for climate-smart practices. Specifically, the legislation creates a certification program at USDA to help solve technical entry barriers that prevent farmers and forest landowners from participating in carbon credit markets.

Farm and Stress Assistance Network: Senator Baldwin secured \$10 million for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, which connects farmers and agricultural producers with stress assistance programs. The network assists farmers and ranchers in times of stress by offering a conduit to improving behavioral health awareness, literacy, and outcomes for agricultural producers, workers and their families. Senator Baldwin introduced the legislation that re-established the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network in 2018.

Institutes for Rural Partnership: Wisconsin is now home to an Institute for Rural Partnership, one in a network of three in the nation. The \$15 million investment from this legislation, in addition to the initial investment of \$28 million from 2022, in the network will help rural communities address their unique needs through research, outreach activities, and partnership development. More specifically, the funding will promote equitable, resilient, and prosperous food and agricultural systems, a fair marketplace for producers, and expanded opportunities for economic development in rural communities. The Partnership will also collaborate with community-based initiatives and local research, educational institutions, and subject matter experts.

PFAS Research and Resources for our Communities and our Nation's Farmers: The final FY23 Omnibus Appropriations Law included funding for addressing PFAS at the USDA. As Chair of the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration Subcommittee, Senator Baldwin helped include \$5

million for the USDA for testing soil, water, or agricultural products and for mitigating the impact of PFAS on producers.

Addressing Chronic Wasting Disease: The bill includes the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Research and Management Act, cosponsored by Senator Baldwin, for addressing the spread of the deadly prion disease. The bill specifically authorizes the USDA to provide \$70 million annually to be split evenly between the dual purpose of research and management of CWD in states with high rates of disease transmission in the deer population, including Wisconsin.

Marshfield Agricultural Research Station Dairy Facilities: The legislation includes \$6 million for expansion of the facilities at the Marshfield Agricultural Research Station in Marathon County currently used by UW-Madison and USDA dairy researchers. This project will finish the original station plan which remains incomplete by constructing permanent office space, restrooms, facilities for 24-hour animal studies, and indoor meeting space for stakeholders and community groups.

Investing in a Strong Future for Wisconsin's Agriculture Sector: The legislation includes \$1.74 billion for the Agricultural Research Service, an increase of \$111 million above Fiscal Year 22, to carry out research in Wisconsin and across the country. This investment will support the development of crop varieties farmers have asked for and that are adapted to their regions and changing growing conditions. Investments in research can help reduce the impact of disease and pests, increase plant efficiency, and save on water. This means less need for fertilizer and pesticides, which saves farmers money and decreases the impact of farming on the environment.

The bill also provides \$28.3 million for Rural Cooperative Development Grants, including \$13 million for the Value-Added Producer Grant Program which Wisconsinites use to increase new market opportunities. The bill also includes grants to help farmers in learning about and implementing sustainable agricultural practices.

Supporting Wisconsin's Dairy Industry: The Dairy Business Innovation Initiative will continue to be funded at \$25 million for Fiscal Year 2023. The bill also includes additional resources for the FDA to implement an updated approach to Standards of Identity enforcement against dairy imitation products. The legislation provides \$58 million for Agricultural Research Service Buildings and Facilities, including \$10 million to the UW Dairy Forage Center.

Protecting and Advancing Rural Communities: This bill includes key investments to help Wisconsin's rural communities to grow and thrive, including for housing, rural community facilities, business development, broadband, water and wastewater, and rural access to health care. For example, the bill provides \$1.49 billion for Rental Assistance, rent subsidies for low and very low-income rural households, \$40 million above Fiscal Year 2022.

Additionally, the bill provides more than \$2 billion in loans and grants to build and repair water and waste water treatment facilities and associated equipment to provide safe and clean drinking water for all rural Americans. These tools offer rural leaders' resources to address the challenges their communities face and take advantage of opportunities to improve their local quality of life.

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