

Gov. Evers: Read: Sends letter to the Trump Administration, urging the president to support American producers and ranchers, back off plans to import beef from Argentina...again

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers sent a letter urging President Donald Trump and the Trump Administration to back off its [latest plans](#) to import beef from Argentina and instead support and protect the livelihoods of American farmers, ranchers, and producers. This is the second letter Gov. Evers has sent, having previously [sent a letter](#) to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins after the president first telegraphed his plan to import beef from Argentina last fall.

At the time, the president's plan [drew strong opposition](#) from several groups, including the [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#), [the National Farmers Union](#), and [the American Farm Bureau Federation](#), who voiced strong opposition to purchasing additional beef from other countries, and some farmers, who [said](#), "[the plan] feels like a slap in the face to rural America." The president's plans also saw bipartisan opposition from members of Congress, [including from Wisconsin's congressional delegation](#) and members of [President Trump's own party](#).

Despite this outcry, earlier this month, President Trump signed a new [executive order](#) quadrupling the amount of beef imported into the U.S. from Argentina, increasing imports from the existing 20,000 to 80,000 metric tons and representing a roughly \$800 million expense for the foreign import. While

the president claims this latest effort was intended to address consumer prices, experts contend that the decision will [do little](#) to address the high cost of beef.

The Trump Administration's decision comes as the U.S. beef cow herd is currently the smallest in national history, caused by several years of drought and increased feed costs, coupled with increasing economic volatility caused by President Trump's erratic tariffs and trade wars. In his previous letter, Gov. Evers raised alarm about the significant impacts President Trump's proposed policy will have on farmers and cattle producers across the nation, especially in the Badger State, where livestock and meat are a [\\$34 billion](#) industry employing more than 43,000 people.

This also comes amid recent news that global food giant Cargill Inc., the largest privately held company in the United States, announced [plans to close](#) its Milwaukee ground meat processing facility, affecting more than 200 employees. This comes in the wake of Tyson Foods decision to [shutter](#) a major beef processing facility in Nebraska last November. Cargill's recent announcement emphasizes the mounting pressures and shifts facing the meat industry.

The letter to President Trump comes on the heels of the governor's 2026 State of the State address, where he [highlighted](#) efforts of the Evers Administration to support Wisconsin's farmers and agricultural communities, including creating the Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity and the Office of Rural Prosperity, as well as creating the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports (WIAE) to increase dairy, meat, crop, and other product exports by 25 percent. Today, under Gov. Evers' leadership, Wisconsin is well on its way to becoming a top 10 state in the country for agricultural exports, and the governor maintains that state and federal leadership must not turn its back on the farming families and communities who have been the backbone of the state for generations.

A copy of the governor's latest letter to the president is available [here](#). A transcript of the letter is available below.

Dear Mr. President:

I write to urge you to immediately reverse your recent executive order that aims to quadruple foreign beef imports from Argentina. We should be putting American farmers and producers first,

and supporting our farmers and producers who work tirelessly to feed our families and keep our shelves stocked. Wisconsin's livestock and meat industry alone represents more than \$34 billion in economic activity and supports over 43,000 jobs. This policy puts those livelihoods at risk.

In October, I wrote to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Rollins outlining the serious harm this approach would inflict on American producers. Despite that letter, and despite widespread opposition from farmers, ranchers, industry groups, and members of Congress from both parties, your administration moved forward with this policy and then recently doubled down on it. This decision is shortsighted and will cause real harm to Wisconsin's farmers and producers while doing little to lower costs for consumers.

Wisconsin is home to thousands of cattle producers and dairy farmers who play a critical role in bringing beef to the marketplace. These producers have already endured years of drought and fires, rising feed costs, and the economic volatility caused by your administration's reckless trade wars and erratic tariffs. The U.S. cattle herd is currently at a 75-year low, and rather than supporting American producers as they work to rebuild their herds, this executive order subsidizes farmers thousands of miles away. Flooding the market with 80,000 metric tons of Argentine beef undermines the livelihoods of Wisconsin families who have invested their lives in this industry and sends exactly the wrong signal to producers considering whether to invest in growing their herds.

This policy isn't only impacting our farmers trying to rebuild their herds. Nationwide beef processors have already felt the strain from the struggling cattle industry and volatile markets. This month, Cargill announced the permanent closure of their Milwaukee ground meat processing facility. This follows Tyson Foods' announcement last November regarding a major beef plant closure in Nebraska. Clearly, this is an industry already in distress, which will only worsen when the market includes an influx of Argentinian beef and fewer processing plants to facilitate operations to get the meat onto grocery store shelves.

This decision follows a troubling pattern of your trade policies that have hurt

Wisconsin's agricultural economy. Your administration's chaotic and reckless tariffs and trade wars have already cost our state's farmers dearly. When China shifted over \$12 billion in annual soybean purchases away from the United States and toward South America, Wisconsin's soybean farmers lost one of their biggest markets. In the third quarter of 2025, Wisconsin soybean exports were down 51 percent, with the largest contributors to the decline being Mexico, Indonesia, and China, in part due to tariffs. Now, rather than working to restore those markets and rebuild confidence among American producers, your administration is rewarding Argentina with an unprecedented expansion of preferential access to the U.S. beef market, a deal Argentina's own government has valued at roughly \$800 million in additional exports. Wisconsin's farmers deserve federal leadership that has their backs, not leadership that repeatedly puts foreign competitors ahead of the people who feed our communities.

Adding insult to injury, this policy is unlikely to deliver meaningful relief to consumers at the grocery store.

Recent analysis from agricultural economists shows that 80,000 metric tons of additional imports is a quantity too small to meaningfully reduce prices for families at the checkout line, yet large enough to destabilize the market for domestic farmers and ranchers working to rebuild their herds. Industry leaders have also noted that previous efforts to lower beef prices through increased imports did not succeed. Instead, those imports correlated with further contraction of the domestic herd. The path to sustainably lower beef prices remains in rebuilding America's cattle herds, a process that takes years and requires supporting producers, not undercutting them with foreign imports.

Mr. President, this is not a partisan issue. Leaders from across the political spectrum, along with organizations including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the U.S. Cattlemen's Association, the National Farmers Union, and the American Farm Bureau Federation, have voiced strong opposition to this policy. Our farmers keep our families fed and our economy running here in Wisconsin and across the country. I urge you to stop turning your back on America's Dairyland and our farmers and agricultural industries. Reverse this disastrous and shortsighted executive order and instead let us work to develop lasting solutions that encourage domestic beef production, protect our food supply, and safeguard long-term food security for all Americans.

Respectfully,

Tony Evers
Governor

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON GOV. EVERS' EFFORTS TO SUPPORT WISCONSIN FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Over the past seven years, Gov. Evers has secured critical investments for farmers, producers, and their families, including supporting the state's meat and dairy producers, investing in farmer mental health resources, and bolstering Wisconsin's exports worldwide. Building upon efforts of the Evers Administration to date to support Wisconsin's \$116 billion agricultural industry and proud heritage as "America's Dairyland," the 2025-27 Biennial Budget signed by Gov. Evers last summer provides:

- \$10 million to continue the Food Security Initiative, a program created by Gov. Evers that connects local nonprofit food assistance programs, such as food pantries, with local producers to keep shelves stocked;
- Ongoing funding for the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports (WIAE) program to continue to support farmers and producers wanting to expand into new markets and increase output and help Wisconsin navigate international markets for agriculture, forestry, and food products;
- \$150 million to continue support for the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program, created by Gov. Evers in the 2023-25 biennium, ensuring the ongoing improvement of Wisconsin's rural roads to help farmers and producers and the state's agricultural and forestry industries move products to market safely and efficiently;
 - \$30 million of the \$150 million secured for ARIP will be specifically targeted to bridge and culvert repair to help improve and repair deteriorating bridges across the state.
- \$20 million to create a new state program designed to support dairy and agriculture resilience;
- \$3 million to continue the Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program that helps Tribal elders access nutritious, culturally relevant food while supporting Wisconsin producers;
- \$800,000 to increase the available funding for the successful Dairy Processor Grant Program;
- \$1 million to bolster and support the Meat Processor Grant Program;
- Over \$2.4 million over the biennium for the Meat Inspection Program to ensure meat products are produced safely and match nutrition labels;

- \$200,000 to support farmers and their families' mental health;
- \$500,000 to increase funding for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program, which helps enable producers and producer-led groups to implement nonpoint source pollution abatement strategies to improve Wisconsin's soil and water quality;
- \$2 million to continue the commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program, which aims to protect vital soil and water resources; and
- An additional \$1.6 million to support the cover crop insurance program, which helps assist farmers with rebates of \$5 per acre of a cover crop planted for crop insurance premiums paid on those acres.

More information about the bipartisan budget signed by Gov. Evers is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).