

Wisconsin Farm Bureau: State Assembly passes key agriculture bills as session concludes

Posted on Monday, Feb 23, 2026

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MADISON -The Wisconsin State Assembly wrapped up its work for the legislative session late on Friday, passing numerous bills impacting Wisconsin farmers and rural communities. Wisconsin Farm Bureau worked with legislators and the Wisconsin Ag Coalition to move these measures forward. WFBF will continue working with lawmakers and Gov. Tony Evers to secure final passage and deliver meaningful results for Wisconsin agriculture before the session ends.

The Assembly passed the following bills that have already cleared the Senate and now head to Governor Evers for signature or veto:

- **Senate Bill (SB) 474** allows soy-based firefighting foam to qualify for Department of Natural Resources fire suppression grants, expanding market opportunities for Wisconsin soybean growers and providing a PFAS-free product to firefighters.
- **SB 443** allows local governments to qualify for Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP) grants based on engineering reviews, ensuring key routes can be improved without harming farm businesses.
- **SB 501** creates a veterinary loan repayment program for new veterinarians who commit to large animal practices in rural communities, helping address ongoing workforce shortages.
- **SB 783** provides commercial driver's license (CDL) training grants to help Wisconsin businesses offset the educational costs of employee training.

The Assembly also passed the following measures that still require Senate approval before being sent to the Governor:

- **Assembly Bill (AB) 131** provides access to \$125 million in cleanup and drinking water grants for communities impacted by PFAS contamination and includes liability protections for innocent farmers and landowners who unknowingly accepted materials contaminated with PFAS.
- **AB 679** creates new permits for transporting grain, feed and fertilizer on six-axle, 91,000-pound trucks to improve efficiency and reduce transportation costs.
- **SB 622** keeps Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection program fees flat after proposed increases that would have significantly raised costs for farmers, truckers and livestock dealers.
- **AB 956** creates an exemption for certain agricultural warehouses from sprinkler system requirements to prevent potential pollution of surface and groundwater.
- **AB 664** prohibits Wisconsin schools from serving margarine in place of butter.
- **AB 411** establishes a Farmland Link program to help facilitate farm transitions from retiring farmers to the next generation.

Both legislative chambers also passed **AB 554**, requiring clear labeling of lab-grown meat products to ensure consumer transparency and fair competition for Wisconsin livestock farmers. The bill now awaits action from Gov. Evers.

Despite strong advocacy from Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations, **SB 323**, which would have created a Dairy Cattle Innovation Loan Program to provide no-interest loans for farm modernization, and **AB 222** creating a production tax credit for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) were not voted on. Creating the loan program to access the \$20 million allocated in the state budget for dairy innovation and a tax credit to help attract SAF processors to Wisconsin will remain top priorities when the Legislature reconvenes in January.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau will continue working with policymakers to ensure these proposals become law and to advance policies that strengthen Wisconsin's farm families and rural economy.