

Wisconsin Farmers Union: Wisconsin farmers attend National Farmers Union Convention

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 11, 2026

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NEW ORLEANS – Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) members were in New Orleans this week for the National Farmers Union 124th Anniversary Convention. Five hundred farmers and ranchers from throughout the nation gathered March 7-9 to set the family farm organization's 2026 policy.

“The challenges facing family farmers and ranchers continue to grow more complex,” said NFU President Rob Larew. “But through it all, Farmers Union continues to do something Washington too often struggles to achieve: bringing people with diverse viewpoints together, working through tough issues and emerging with solutions they built collectively. That unity is our greatest strength.”

“Farmers Union policy starts with farmers themselves,” said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. “Wisconsin members put a strong focus on dairy this year at our convention last December, so it was great to see the Special Order of Business on dairy policy reform adopted nationally. It sends a clear signal that supporting family-scale dairy farms remains a national priority.”

On Sunday morning of the convention, National Farmers Union awarded Membership and Leadership Awards recognizing Wisconsin Farmers Union chapters including: Amnicon-Douglas, Ashland-Bayfield, Barron, Chippewa, Columbia, Dane, Eau Claire, Jackson-Trempealeau, Lake to Bay, Marathon, Milwaukee-Waukesha, Pepin-Pierce, St. Croix, Sauk, South Central, and Vernon-Crawford.

WFU member Hans Breitenmoser of Merrill, WI received the Bruce Miller Membership Award, which recognizes individuals within Farmers Union who display

a true passion for family farming and rural America, while promoting the work of Farmers Union. Hans also served on the NFU Policy Committee this year.

Ruby Sheaffer of Monroe, WI addressed the delegation as a member of the NFU National Youth Advisory Council, a role in which she is serving as a voice for youth across the country.

Lindsey Baris of River Falls, WI and Jess D'Souza of Mount Horeb attended the convention as part of NFU's Farmers Union Emerging Leaders (FUEL) program. LaToya Bates of Mayville, WI also represented Wisconsin as part of the Beginning Farmer Institute.

Following a full program of speakers and sessions, delegates from across the country participated in the democratic policy debate that lies at the heart of Farmers Union's structure. This grassroots process helps shape NFU's advocacy work throughout the year. Representing WFU as delegates in the deliberation of policy were: LaToya Bates, Mayville; Rachel Bouressa, New London; Patty Edelburg, Scandinavia; Deb Jakubek, New Auburn; and Darin Von Ruden, Westby. Krist Kvalheim of Sun Prairie guided delegates through the policy process as convention parliamentarian.

During the policy debate, delegates approved three special orders of business: **[Family Farmers, the Farm Crisis, and the Future of Food and Farm Policy](#)**; **[Family Farming and the Roots of Our Democracy](#)**; and **[Family Farming and Dairy Policy Reform](#)**.

Other members of the Wisconsin delegation in attendance included Michelle Bachand, Menomonie; Emmy Bates, Mayville; Crosby and Natalie Bouressa, New London; Hans Breitenmoser of Merrill; Linda Ceylor, Catawba; Danielle and Jesse Endvick, Holcombe; Tommy Enright, Amherst; Rachel Kvalheim, Sun Prairie; Joshua Mechaelsen, Baileys Harbor; Tom Moos, New Auburn; Dave Rosen, Glenwood City; Mirra Schulz, Eau Claire; Kirsten Slaughter, Madison; Cathy Statz, Oshkosh; Jan Stranz, Abrams; Erin Thompson, Madison; JoAnn Von Ruden, Westby; Elizabeth Yost, Chippewa Falls.

At the close of convention, during the NFU board meeting, Darin Von Ruden was nominated to continue on as the NFU Secretary.

The full NFU policy book will be available online soon at www.nfu.org. Learn more

at www.nfu.org and www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

NFU will host America's family farmers and ranchers again at the 125th Anniversary Convention in San Antonio March 7-9, 2027.

Group photo cutline: *Representing Wisconsin Farmers Union at the National Farmers Union Convention in New Orleans March 7-9 were, left to right, (front row) Camryn Billen, Washington, D.C.; Erin Thompson, Madison; Tom Moos and Deb Jakubek, New Auburn; Hans Breitenmoser, Merrill; Lindsey Baris, River Falls; Emmy & LaToya Bates, Mayville; Jess D'Souza, Mount Horeb; Ruby Sheaffer, Monroe; Rachel and Krist Kvalheim, Sun Prairie; Linda Ceylor, Catawba; Elizabeth Yost, Chippewa Falls; Olivia O'Callaghan, Madison; (back row) Patty Edelburg, Scandinavia; Cathy Statz, Oshkosh; Kirsten Slaughter, Madison; JoAnn and Darin Von Ruden, Westby; Rachel, Crosby, and Natalie Bouressa, New London; Michelle Bachand, Menomonie; Mirra Schulz, Eau Claire; Danielle and Jesse Endvick, Holcombe; Dave Rosen, Glenwood City. Not pictured: Tommy Enright, Amherst; Joshua Mechaelsen, Baileys Harbor, and Jan Stranz, Abrams.*

Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization, is committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement.