



UW System President Tommy Thompson cites ties between UW, agriculture

MADISON, Wis.—University of Wisconsin System President Tommy Thompson today told farm owners, agriculture and dairy officials, and researchers that the System’s effort to add agriculture extension agents is another illustration of the renewed Wisconsin Idea.

Thompson spoke to the 2021 Wisconsin Agribusiness Classic on the final day of its annual conference. It is Wisconsin’s largest agriculture industry conference, now in its 60th year.

“There is a long history of the University of Wisconsin working closely with Wisconsin’s agriculture and dairy industries,” Thompson said. “From the beginning, our commitment to the Wisconsin Idea has been linked to agriculture and dairy – working to help solve the challenges facing Wisconsin farmers.”

Thompson said his 2021-23 budget request seeks 20 additional agriculture extension agents for the UW-Madison Division of Extension. The additional agents are a key priority of Gov. Tony Evers.

“Gov. Evers and I share a commitment to Wisconsin’s farming community,” Thompson said. “These new agents will accelerate the knowledge the agriculture and dairy industries need to innovate and thrive.”

Thompson noted the long, deep history of the University of Wisconsin with agriculture and dairy operations in the state, including:

- The dairy school at UW-Madison was established in 1890 – the first in the nation. Almost a century later, the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research at UW-Madison’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is considered a premier dairy research center, benefiting our state’s agriculture industry.
- Following the recommendations of the Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0 in 2018, the new Dairy Innovation Hub is now up and running, and is a great partnership between UW System; agriculture programs at UW-Madison, UW-Platteville, and UW-River Falls; and the dairy industry.
- Major investments at UW-Madison’s Babcock Hall, the new Meat Science and Animal Biologics Discovery Building, and the expanded and renovated School of Veterinary Medicine facilities create world-class facilities that help our top-notch talent develop new technologies and find solutions.

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The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 165,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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