



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Sen. Smith’s Statement on Gov. Evers’ Critical Budget Investment
in Wisconsin’s Agricultural Industry**

MADISON – Governor Evers today previewed a portion of the 2021-23 budget including the initiatives directed toward supporting Wisconsin’s agricultural industry.

The Governor’s budget will include a \$43 million investment for one of Wisconsin’s biggest industries. This critical investment will go a long way to support the agricultural industry in a number of key areas, which include: 1) Expanding Local and International Market Opportunities; 2) Applying a Three-Pronged Plan to Bolster Local Meat Processing; 3) Promoting Agricultural Innovation & Farmer-Led Conservation; 4) Supporting Farmers’ Mental Health & Wellbeing.

The 2021-23 budget initiatives build off of Governor Evers’ existing record of supporting Wisconsin’s agricultural industry. In 2020, the Governor announced a three-pronged plan to address the state’s agricultural crisis. This plan called for a special session for the Legislature to take up legislation on these issues and established the Office of Rural Prosperity and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Governor Evers directed \$50 million of the federal CARES Act funding to support the agricultural industry, which included direct payments to 15,000 Wisconsin farmers.

Senator Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) released the following statement in response to this \$43 million budget investment:

“I greatly appreciate Governor Evers’ investment in the 2021-23 budget for Wisconsin’s agricultural industry. We, as Wisconsinites, are very proud of our agricultural heritage and long-held title of America’s Dairyland. It will take the support of leaders – and investments like what Governor Evers announced in his budget – to allow us to hold on to this reputation for generations to come.

“We must continue showing unyielding support for our farmers and the hardworking people of the agricultural industry for all that they do to feed our communities. With this budget announcement, Governor Evers proved he’s willing and ready to make the investments necessary to help our state recover and move forward stronger than ever.”

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The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo and Pepin counties and portions of Trempealeau, Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire and Jackson counties and very small portions of Chippewa and St. Croix counties.