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DAIRY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO USE VALUE ASSESSMENT

Removal of Language that Singles Out Agriculture Requested

Green Bay, Wis. – The Dairy Business Association wishes to preserve the billions of dollars of revenue and hundreds of thousands of jobs generated by agriculture in Wisconsin. The proposed changes to the “Use Value Assessment” law and other anti-agriculture provisions like fee increases for livestock operations that single out agriculture in the 2009-11 budget need to be removed.

In the past decade, the Governor and the Legislature established policies and provided incentives to ensure that the state’s economic generator remains viable and continues to prosper. If the state taxes dairy and agriculture-related operations out of business, the companies that depend on agriculture lose businesses, employees lose jobs and the state loses tax revenue. This budget provision that redefines Agriculture land as “not including any land that is platted or zoned for residential, commercial or industrial use,” but is actually being used for feeding people is an example of poor public policy being added to the biennial budget without public input. The people affected by this change have a right to an open debate on all law changes -- most importantly, on those that will significantly increase their taxes.

The Use Value Assessment law was created to maintain productive agriculture land and limit urban sprawl. It’s used to produce food and limit the conflicts that exist between agriculture and construction of non-farm residences. Use value assessments have prevented thousands of acres of land from being paved, preventing additional storm water runoff and other problems caused by urban sprawl. The argument that developers plant a few crops just to qualify for an agriculture exemption is not supported by fact.

The Dairy Business Association is asking the Conference Committee to reconsider the Senate’s 2009-11 Budget language and remove this language. Agriculture in Wisconsin is struggling to survive. Increasing farmer’s property taxes on land that is protected from development by growing crops and taking care of livestock will only encourage farmers to sell off land not zoned agriculture for top dollar and then retire to places with lesser tax burdens.

About DBA

The Dairy Business Association is an industry organization comprised of dairy producers, corporate and allied industry supporters. DBA promotes the growth and success of all dairy farms in Wisconsin by fostering a positive business and political environment. For more information about DBA, please visit our website at www.widba.com.

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