

*For Immediate Release
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Wisconsin Dairy Industry at Risk

Wisconsin's 13,000 family dairy farmers are facing what may be the most severe economic crisis in the history of the dairy industry. On average, dairy farmers will lose \$1,000 on each cow in their herd this year alone, resulting in statewide losses topping \$1.25 billion. While Wisconsin's family farmers are losing money at record pace, State and Federal agencies are in the midst of implementing and proposing a daunting series of new regulations that will make it even more difficult for the Wisconsin dairy industry, the cornerstone of our state's economy, to remain competitive.

Wisconsin's dairy farmers support prudent regulations that protect the soil, air and water. "We have a greater understanding of environmental stewardship than ever before. We recognize our responsibility to protect the natural resources. We drink the same water and breath the same air as our neighbors," said DBA President Jerry Meissner. "We support the 'zero discharge' standard that all permitted dairy facilities must meet to protect Wisconsin's precious water resources. However, we believe it's time to pause from this race to overregulate and truly understand the science and impact of our existing regulations before adding more. It seems to be 'open season' for adding new regulations to dairy farmers and they come with enormous costs."

WPDES-permitted dairy farms—those with more than 700 dairy cows—already comply with the most stringent regulatory standards placed on livestock operations in the country. The law requires these farms follow strict facility design criteria and apply the valuable nutrients found in manure in a way that assures there is not a discharge to any body of water or adverse impact to the environment.

"We need to protect both the environment and the dairy industry at the same time...and we can do both," said Laurie Fischer, Executive Director of DBA. "Many in the environmental movement appear determined to turn back the clock on dairy farming in Wisconsin. Their continued attacks along with additional regulations are putting the entire industry at risk in Wisconsin. And that industry isn't just farmers, its cheesemakers, ag lenders, farm machinery dealers and any other number of families in our rural communities whose very livelihood depends on a vibrant dairy economy in the State."

While many farms in Wisconsin are larger than 20 years ago, these farms are often more financially viable and able to invest in new technologies, environmentally friendly practices and technology, and they have complied with new regulations.

Dairy farmers are committed to producing safe, nutritious and affordable dairy products for families while supporting local communities and providing a future for Wisconsin's next generation.

Here are some of the new regulations that dairy farmers are or will be facing:

1. Restrictions on land applying manure on land designated as having "W" Soils (areas that are possibly seasonally wet.) Over 50% of the State has these types of soils and farmers are told where these soils are located from maps that were developed over 40 years ago. These maps are inaccurate and were never intended to be used for regulation.
2. Restrictions on land apply manure on land designated as having "R" Soils (areas that may have bedrock near the soil surface). Again, these maps are inaccurate and were never intended to be used for regulation.
3. Farmers are mandated to comply with a new technical standard for feed storage areas even though it is not required in the law.
4. The technical standards for design and construction of manure storage structures are being expanded without any determination that the existing standards are inadequate. Unnecessary changes in design standards result in more costly construction of manure storage.
5. Total Maximum Dairy Loads (TMDL's) in State Watersheds are being developed with little oversight and will implement further restrictions based on computer models that assign phosphorus contributions to the waterway from all types of runoff including wetlands, forests, urban areas and farmland, as well as discharges from industry and municipal treatment.
6. Phosphorus Reduction Standards will be implemented for all farmers who are not located in watersheds that have TMDL standards.
7. Modifications will be made to Natural Resource Code 151 which addresses pollution from runoff. Modifications to NR 151 will only be made for farmers, while others including municipalities or other industries are exempt.
8. State Climate Change legislation will likely add a low carbon fuel standard making fuel derived from Canadian oil shale and biofuels more costly. This will raise fuel prices in Wisconsin and make it more costly for Wisconsin farmers to pay for the fuel they need to grow their crops.
9. New regulations are being considered that will give local governments the power to further limit the amount of nutrients that can be applied on farm fields.
10. Additional water bodies may be added to the list of outstanding and exceptional resource waters which could limit the amount of crops farmers can grow because new setbacks will likely be needed around these water bodies.

11. Farmers with a WPDES permit will be required to undergo a permit modification each time land is removed or added to their nutrient management plan. As little as one acre change would require a permit modification, thus requiring additional staff resources and work from the DNR.
12. The WDNR is planning to develop new air emission regulations before the national scientific study is completed. This means the air emission regulations will not be based on the science from the national study.

Dairy is the largest industry in Wisconsin, employing 150,000 people and contributing \$26 billion to the state's economy. Maintaining a viable milk supply is the foundation of Wisconsin's dairy industry. The constant barrage of new and expanding regulations puts that foundation at risk.

About DBA

The Dairy Business Association is an industry organization comprised of dairy farmers and other businesses that support them. 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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