



## **Wisconsin Farmers Union 2021-2023 Budget Priorities**

### Expand BadgerCare

- Accept federal Medicaid expansion dollars available through the Affordable Care Act to raise BadgerCare income eligibility limit to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level.

### Expand Rural Broadband Access

- Maintain funding for Broadband Expansion grants at a level of \$24 million per year.
- Direct federal COVID-19 relief funds to expanding broadband access in rural counties.

### Develop Small Meat Processing Infrastructure

- Provide grants to new meat processors and existing small plants to fund facility upgrades, cutting equipment, and cold storage to increase processing capacity, upgrade inspection level, and meet the needs of small and medium livestock producers.
- Fund additional state meat inspectors as needed to accommodate growth in processing infrastructure.
- Direct federal COVID-19 relief funds to expanding meat processing infrastructure.

### Support for Clean Water and Conservation

- Fully fund County Land and Conservation staffing grants at \$12.4 million per year. These county employees help farmers adopt best management practices and install soil and water conservation practices on their farms.
- Increase Department of Natural Resources funding for CAFO regulations.
  - Add \$300,000 per year for CAFO monitoring and oversight.
  - Increase CAFO permitting fees to defray the cost of additional monitoring.
- Add one Full-Time Employee (FTE) at the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey to update groundwater maps. WGNHS has a high level of expertise, but groundwater studies have a long turnaround time due to lack of staff.
- Increase funding for Producer-led Watershed Grants to \$1,000,000 per year. This program promotes peer-to-peer learning and spurs increased adoption of on-farm conservation practices such as cover cropping, no-till planting, and managed grazing.



### Support for Climate Solutions in Agriculture

- Establish a statewide grazing program at the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to provide education and technical assistance for transitioning livestock and dairy producers.
- Add 3-4 regional coordinators (employed by DATCP or partner organizations) to support grazing practices through technical assistance, business planning, and education.
- Establish a Carbon Farmers program at DATCP to develop methods for measuring how much carbon is stored through various agricultural management practices.
- Provide incentives and technical assistance to encourage cover crops, reduced tillage, and crop rotation adjustments to increase soil carbon storage.

### Increase staffing for Antitrust Enforcement

- Add two full-time employees (FTE) to the Consumer Protection and Antitrust Unit of the Wisconsin DOJ to carry out investigations in anticompetitive business behavior.