



State of Wisconsin  
Governor Scott Walker

**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
Sheila E. Harsdorf, Secretary

**Date:** February 27, 2018

**To:** Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

**From:** Sheila Harsdorf, Secretary, *Sheila Harsdorf*  
Dan Smith, Administrator, Division of Agricultural Development

**Subject:** Wisconsin Farm Center Updates

**Presented By:** *MS* Kathy Schmitt, Bureau Director, Division of Agricultural Development

**Recommendation/ Requested Action:** Information only. No Board action is required.

**Summary/Background:**

The Wisconsin Farm Center has been rooted in the agency since 1984, as a response to the 1980's farm crisis. It is likely the most robust, longest continuously operating service of its kind to farmers in the U.S. and a testament to the State's commitment to agriculture.

The Wisconsin Farm Center works with farmers to improve their wellbeing so they can Grow Wisconsin Agriculture. Staff work with farmers to provide objective information they can use to make informed decisions. Assistance is provided through the use of a toll-free helpline as well as individualized service at the farm table and educational workshops.

Core services include:

- Financial consultations and feasibility analysis
- Farm succession planning
- Mediation
- Veteran, minority and beginning farmer services
- Specialty enterprise development
- Livestock and dairy development
- Dairy herd-based diagnostic services
- Information and referral resources
- Counseling vouchers

This verbal report will provide highlights of the Wisconsin Farm Center's activities. The following outline contains the information that will be presented.

*Agriculture generates \$88 billion for Wisconsin*

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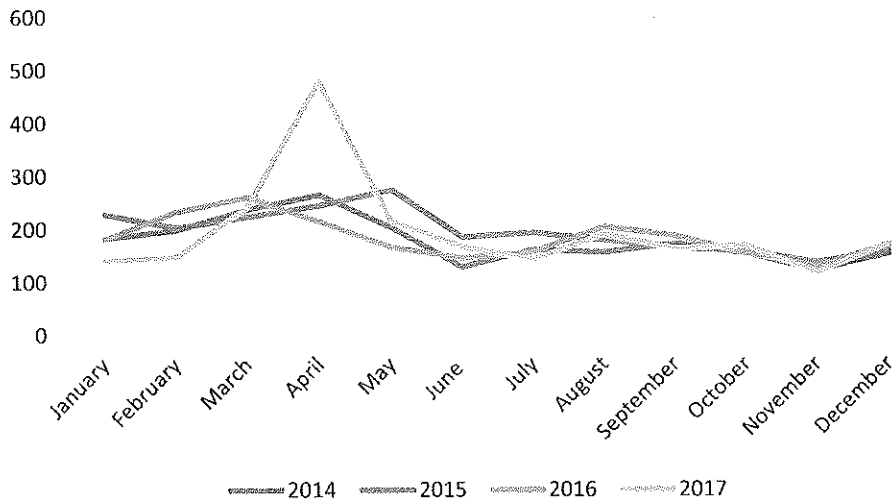
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**Wisconsin Farm Center**  
**Report to the Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
**February 27, 2018**

I. Helpline calls by Calendar Year

2017	2016	2015	2014
2,330	2,189	2,335	2,121

WI Farm Center Call Numbers by Month



II. Outreach Events

- Exhibit space at 6 conferences
- Speaking engagements at 11 events
- Press Releases and media interviews
- More planned in the coming months
  - Webinar for FSA staff
  - Cheese plant field staff
  - UW Platteville class presentation
  - Event in Dodge County
  - UW Extension event
  - Forage Council
  - 4 – Food Faith and Farming events

### III. Cases

#### Cases – Historical

	2017	2016	2015
Total New Cases	123	113	196
Total Closed Cases	123	129	81

111 Active Cases on December 31, 2017  
60 new financial cases over calendar year  
60 farm transition cases over calendar year

#### Mediation Cases

2017	Opened	Closed	Total Covered	Total Not Covered
January	1	4	23	6
February	5	1		
March	5	3		
April	2	2		
May	2	4		
June	2	1		
July	2	2		
August	2	3		
Sept	3	2		
Oct	0	2		
Nov	3	2		
Dec	1	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>		

### IV. Beginning Farmer Grant

- a. Collaborative project with Easter Seals WI and AgrAbility
- b. 3 year USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant
- c. Goal: 57 farmers are prepared to go to attorney to finalize succession plan
- d. Easter Seals submitted new 3-year proposal to continue the project

### V. Veterans Program

- a. Program development progress