

# **BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION MINUTES**

**March 6, 2025**

The Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Board) met in the DATCP Boardroom, 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison, WI 53718 and via zoom on **March 6, 2025**. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. §19.84.

## **Call to Order**

Board Chair Doug Rebout called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Secretary Romanski introduced Gary Besaw, a new DATCP Board member.

## **Members Present**

Gary Besaw, Cindy Brown, Dr. Clare Hintz, Doug Rebout, Dan Smith, and Carla Washington

Not present: Tina Hinchley, Miranda Leis and Paul Palmby

## **Minutes**

### **Motion**

A motion was made by Dan Smith and seconded by Clare Hintz to approve the January 30, 2025, Board minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

## **College Leadership Panel**

Dr. Wayne Weber, Dean from University of Wisconsin Platteville College of Business, Industry, Life Sciences and Agriculture, Dr. Glenda Gillaspy, Dean from University of Wisconsin Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and Dr. Michael Orth, Dean from UW River Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences participated in a college leadership panel highlighting their agriculture programs, research, and industry collaboration for the Board.

University of Wisconsin Platteville (Platteville) is known for their engineering, healthcare, criminal justice, agriculture, business and education programs. Platteville has a 95% placement rate for their students with 89% being placed in the tri-state area (Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa). Their School of Agriculture provides classes in animal science, crops and soil science, agribusiness, environmental horticulture, dairy science, ecological restoration and resource management, and agricultural education. Platteville also collaborates on Agroecosystems research with surface and ground water monitoring, cover crops and tilling systems; with the UW Extension on dairy business and economics, and crops and soils nutrient management; and industry and farmer stakeholders. They also collaborate with the Dairy Innovation Hub on animal health and nutrition, dairy product improvement, sustainable agriculture, nutrient management, and D1 grant research.

University of Wisconsin Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) has 15 academic departments, 26 undergraduate majors, 47 graduate programs, totaling a combined

enrollment of 3,931 students. CALS also has had 6 Nobel prize winners, been awarded \$185 million for research, and has 47 innovation disclosures filed by CALS personnel. Their program consists of applied science with faculty that want to make a difference in Wisconsin, internationally, in rural areas, with Native Nations, and beyond. CALS collaborates through the Dairy Innovation Hub with a \$7.8 million state investment per year, on 3 campuses, and with 230+ funded projects in land and water, farm business and community, animal health and welfare, and human health and nutrition.

The University of Wisconsin River Falls (UWRF) has a joint MBA program in Agribusiness in collaboration with the School of Business, a Veterinary Tech Program, and General Engineering. Their two largest Departments consist of Animal Science and Plant and Earth Science. UWRF also has a 75-acre piece of property that was gifted to the UWRF Foundation that is used for experimental learning. This land includes a wildflower farm, wetlands, prairie, forest, and a creek.

### **Public Appearances**

The following made public appearances in front of the Board today:

Dr. Roxann L. Englestad, Professor Emerita University of Wisconsin-Madison

Re: DATCP's policy on agricultural impact statement on large scale solar facilities.

Anita Martin

Re: H5N1. Asking DATCP to work with Jefferson County poultry partners to develop mass mortality plans.

Peter Harden

Re: DATCP's delay and failure to enforce laws of illegal butter.

### **2026-2028 DATCP Board Meeting Schedule**

#### **Motion**

A motion was made by Carla Washington and seconded by Clare Hintz to approve the proposed 2026-2028 DATCP Board meeting schedule. Motion was approved unanimously.

### **Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Survey Update**

**Greg Bussler**

Greg Bussler, State Statistician from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service presented his March 2025 report to the Board on December prices received, vegetables, milk production, results from the January Livestock Surveys, and other noteworthy items.

### **Agricultural Export Highlights 2024 Year-End Report**

**Division of Agricultural Development**

Mark Rhoda-Reis, Bureau Director, from the Division of Agricultural Development, presented the 2024 year-end agricultural export highlights to the Board.

Please see the International Agribusiness Center export highlights report for more information:

[IABC Export Highlights Full-yr 2024](#)

### **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI H5N1) Update Divisions of Animal Health and Food and Recreational Safety**

Dr. Darlene Konkel, Administrator, Division of Animal Health and State Veterinarian, and Adam Brock, Administrator, Division of Food and Recreational Safety presented an update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI H5N1) to the Board.

The H5N1 virus is highly pathogenic to avian species, specifically poultry. This virus started in North America in 2021 and in the United States since 2022. Initially the virus emerged in Europe and now has spread all over the world. In the past 30 days 112 domestic poultry flocks have been infected throughout the nation. In Wisconsin we had 3 detections in December 2024. As for dairy cattle, this virus presented itself in March 2024 which was a major shift for the virus to enter a new species. Since that time there have been 973 positive cases in dairy herds in 17 states. None of the detections are in Wisconsin and 747 cases have been in California. The numbers have slowed down with new cases by increasing biosecurity to limit its spread.

On December 6, 2024, the USDA announced a start of a national milk testing strategy to get more surveillance through dairy herds in the U.S. and DATCP will be participating in this. We have been working with our federal partners and animal health to find a solution since this is a complex process of balancing public health with economic viability. As for food safety, pasteurization works and continues to work. There are also other innovation methods being explored and tested, such as research in thermalization.

### **2024 Division of Trade and Consumer Protection Highlights and Statistics Division of Trade and Consumer Protection**

Michelle Reinen, Administrator, Division of Trade and Consumer Protection presented the 2024 Division of Trade and Consumer Protection highlights and statistics to the Board.

It is National Consumer Protection and Weights and Measures week. The Bureaus received 11,374 complaints from consumers in 2024 and we returned more than \$23.4 million back to consumers. The top 10 complaints we received were:

1. Landlord/tenant (2,525 complaints)
2. Telemarketing (1,513 complaints)
3. Home improvement (664 complaints)
4. Identity theft (618 complaints)
5. Telecommunications (527 complaints)
6. Medical services (439 complaints)
7. Motor vehicle repair (341 complaints)

8. Motor vehicle sales (297 complaints)
9. Travel (244 complaints)
10. Motor vehicle accessories (141 complaints)

The Bureau of Weights and Measures completed 226,832 total inspections in 2024 on devices (sales, gas pumps), package checking, price accuracy, LPG, vehicle tank meter, and vehicle scales. The Metrology Laboratory tested 12,185 total standards for weight kits, 50lb weights, 1000lb weights, and volume.

The following are also enforcement actions in the Division completed in 2024:

- Roundy's supermarkets, Inc.
- US Ventures, In., dba US Energy Inc.
- Petco Animals Supplies Stores, Inc.
- Berrada Properties management, Inc.
- Centurion Filing Services LLC dba WI Certificate Service
- Relief solution International
- AM Protection

**Telephone Solicitor Audit Program  
Bureau of Consumer Protection  
Division of Trade and Consumer Protection**

Michael Domke, Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection presented an overview of the Telephone Solicitor Audit Program to the Board. This program requires businesses to register with DATCP if they are going to solicit businesses. This program includes the Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry where consumers can register their phone number to limit the amount of telemarketing calls, they receive. This registry does not prevent scam calls. Currently there is over 5 million numbers registered on the do not call registry and the largest complaint is robocalls.

**Weights and Measures Overview  
Bureau of Weights and Measures  
Division of Trade and Consumer Protection**

Joe Smith, Director, Bureau of Weights and Measures presented a Weights and Measures overview to the Board. The Bureau's goal is equity in the marketplace and to protect the buyer and seller by conducting routine inspections to ensure that the consumer receives their money's worth in Wisconsin stores. This program regulates petroleum storage tanks and fuel quality by reviewing:

- Weights and Measures
- Packaging and labeling
- Methods of sale of commodities
- Net quantity of contents
- Price verifications
- Weighing and measuring devices
- Good weighing and measuring practices

- Petroleum and hazardous liquids storage tanks
- Laboratory – fuel quality and metrology side

**Superior Grain Inspection Program  
Bureau of Business Trade Practices  
Division of Trade and Consumer Protection**

Jeremy McPherson, Director, Bureau of Business Trade Practices presented an overview of the Superior Grain Inspection Program to the Board. This program conducts official USDA inspections established by the Federal Grain Inspection Service. Grain is the number one export in the twin ports of Duluth and Superior. The grain that moves through this port is delivered to southern Europe, Africa and the middle east; and consists of high protein grain mainly used for pasta, bread, and cake. This program has the authority to inspect, sample, and test the grain. If the grain matches the load, a certificate is issued, and the grain is exported.

**Office of the Secretary Report**

Secretary Randy Romanski presented the Office of the Secretary update to the Board on the following:

- Thank you to the college leadership that joined us today.
- Mark Rhoda-Reis is retiring. He has led our spectacular international team and we wish him all the best.
- Julie Lassa is the new Administrator for the Division of Agriculture Development. Julie has decades of experience in agriculture. She has been in the legislature and is the original author of our Buy Local Buy Wisconsin program. She was most recently the Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development.
- Governor Evers has introduced his new biennial budget since we met last. His investment in agriculture is shown in these areas of the budget: conservation and market development, programs that support farmers, and investments of market development.
- Attended the NASDA winter policy conference last week. The common theme was for States to receive adequate funding to meet regulatory responsibilities and continue cooperative agreements.
- Currently recruiting for next Wisconsin Ag Youth Council. High School Juniors are able to apply through March 31, 2025.
- Recently attended FFA Day on the Hill and spoke at the Farmer's Union Board of Directors.
- Hosted the Ag Export Council yesterday to talk about the program's impacts on trade talks, tariffs, and retaliatory tariffs.
- Tomorrow I will be leaving for a Trade Mission in Thailand.

### **Board Member Updates**

The following DATCP Board members commented on industry, business, training and personal agricultural issues that arose since the last Board meeting: Gary Besaw, Cindy Brown, Dr. Clare Hintz, Doug Rebout, Dan Smith, and Carla Washington.

### **Future Agenda Items**

May 8, 2025, Board meeting: Speaker will be the Wisconsin Ag Youth Council.

Possible future meeting topics: focus on dairy resilience, urban agriculture, and farm transition.

### **Adjournment**

#### **Motion**

A motion to adjourn was made by Cindy Brown and seconded by Clare Hintz. Motion approved unanimously. The Board adjourned at approximately 1:47 p.m.

All reports and any associated documents presented during a Board meeting can be accessed by contacting the [datcpboard2@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcpboard2@wisconsin.gov) or (608) 224-5029.