

Wisconsin Agricultural Export Advisory Council (WAXC)

2025-2026 Members

Agency Representatives

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

Aaron Zitzelsberger, J.D., Senior Director of Global Trade & Investment

Email: aaron.zitzelsberger@wedc.org

Aaron Zitzelsberger is the Senior Director of Global Trade and Investment with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). In the role, he is responsible for management of WEDC's export and the international grants teams, both of which focus on initiatives that accelerate Wisconsin exports. Additionally, the Director manages Wisconsin's federal SBA State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)

Ira Frydman, Export and Business Development Bureau, Division of Agricultural Development

Email:

Ira Frydman is the Export and Business Development Bureau Director at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), where he leads efforts to strengthen international agricultural trade and expand market opportunities across the state. Prior to DATCP, Mr. Frydman was a career U.S. diplomat with over 20 years of experience managing teams and designing international programs in the fields of agriculture and food security, economic growth, trade, environment, and energy. Since 2010, he served as United States Agency for International Development Foreign Service Officer in Nicaragua, Kenya, Afghanistan, Thailand, and Pakistan.

Earlier in his career, Ira worked with the United Nations Development Programme in Malawi and Kenya and served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Haiti. He holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of Kansas and a master's degree in International Agricultural Development from the University of California, Davis. He currently lives in Madison with his wife and two kids.

Ex-Officio (Non-Voting Members)

Rep. Brienne Brown

Email: Rep.Brown@legis.wisconsin.gov

Brienne Brown was born on an Air Force base in Germany to a fighter pilot and combat nurse. She grew up in Iran and Austin, Texas. As a young adult, she traveled extensively, working in a fish cannery in Alaska and an art gallery in Hawaii, until she went back to school and earned a bachelor's degree in journalism, Communication and Media Studies from the University of Texas at Austin, along with a minor in Spanish. After a decade in journalism, Brienne returned to UT Austin for graduate studies in Health Education, focusing on the built environment and chronic disease epidemiology. She went to work in Childhood Lead Poisoning and moved into chronic disease caused by pesticide exposure and workplace health risks. In 2012, Brienne and her husband moved to Whitewater with their small children for her husband to be a professor at UW-Whitewater. She taught community yoga classes,

and later joined UW–Whitewater as an adjunct instructor in Health Education. She has served on the Whitewater Library Board, helped launch the Whitewater City Market and Whitewater Grocery Cooperative, served on the Common Council and as Program Director for the Whitewater Community Foundation. Brienne was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly in 2024 and serves on the Committees on Veteran and Military Affairs and Agriculture.

Rep. Tony Kurtz

Email: Rep.Kurtz@legis.wisconsin.gov

Representative Tony Kurtz was born in Columbus, Ohio. Following high school, Tony spent the next two decades in the U.S. Army. Since retiring from the Army, Tony and his wife Kim have made their home in Western Wisconsin, where they own an organic grain farm in Wonewoc. They have two children, Kaylin and Nick, who are currently attending college in Wisconsin. He received a Bachelor of Science in Professional Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Master of Science in International Relations from Troy State University. He was elected to the State Assembly in 2018.

Sen. Jeff Smith

Email: Sen.Smith@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Jeff Smith has served in the State Senate since 2019 and the Eau Claire region as a small business owner, operating a window cleaning business for 30 years. He also served on the Brunswick Town Board as Chair for 6 years. He was active with the Governor’s Task Force for Educational Excellence, the Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association Board, the Department of Public Instruction’s Parent Leadership Corps, and the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools. Senator Smith was later elected to the State Assembly and served during the 2007 and 2009 legislative sessions. Senator Smith was Chair of the Assembly Committee on Elections and Campaign Reform. Senator Smith was elected Minority Caucus Chair for the 2021-22 legislative session and currently serves as the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Elections, Election Process Reform & Ethics and the Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, & Rural Issues. He also serves as member of the Agriculture & Tourism Committee; the Education Committee; the Government Operations, Legal Review & Consumer Protection Committee; and the Utilities, Technology & Telecommunications Committee. Senator Smith and his wife Sue live on their farm in the Town of Brunswick caring for horses, chickens, dogs, cats, a llama, and their land.

Industry Professionals (Voting Members)

Brandon Bickham, The Delong Co., Inc.

Email: bbickham@delongcompany.com

Crop Member | Term: 2025-2028

Brandon Bickham is the Senior Export Director at The Delong Co., Inc., which is consistently ranked in the top five containerized exporters in the Journal of Commerce and the number one agricultural exporter of containers in the U.S. From corn and soybean production to exports, he has spent his entire life involved in agriculture. He was hired by Delong 16 years ago as an Export Sales Associate and is now responsible for Delong’s Export Sales, Container Logistics and Export Documentation teams. Brandon has served on the board of directors for the U.S. Soybean Export Council and currently serves on Delong’s board of directors. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Finance and

Agricultural Business, and in his free time, enjoys spending time with family and friends, along with hunting and shooting sports.

Craig Briess, Briess Industries

Email: Craig.briess@briess.com

At-Large Member | Term: 2024-2027

Craig Briess is Chief Executive Officer and fifth generation leader of family-owned Briess Industries, a producer of natural specialty ingredients for food and beer. He began his career as a Customs and International Trade Law attorney at a New York City-based law firm before joining the International Trade Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. He subsequently joined U.S. Customs and Border Protection, where he was an attorney with the Office of Chief Counsel, Trade, and Finance and Chief of the Trade Agreements Branch, where he managed trade agreements and special trade legislation matters. Craig earned his Bachelor of Arts from Franklin and Marshall College, International MBA from Instituto de Empresa Business School in Spain, and law degree from University of Miami School of Law. He is a member of the New York, Connecticut, and Washington, D.C. bars and admitted to practice before the Court of International Trade.

Jackie Fett, Ginseng Board of Wisconsin

Email: jackie@ginsengboard.com

Crop Member | Term: 2023-2026

With more than 20 years of experience in the natural products industry, Jackie is passionate about promoting the value of agriculture. She currently serves as the Executive and Marketing Director for the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin (GBW), a board dedicated to the research, education, and promotion of Wisconsin ginseng. During her previous 16-year career with Standard Process, a Wisconsin whole food supplement manufacturer, Jackie held a variety of roles in marketing, education, and management. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing.

Bob Fitzgerald, Johnsonville

Email: BFitzgerald@johnsonville.com

Meat Member | Term: 2024-2027

Since 2012, Bob Fitzgerald has served as the Vice President of International Business for Johnsonville, leading the companies export business. He is involved with the U.S. Meat Export Federation, U.S.A Poultry and Egg Export Council, U.S. Dairy Export Council, and the Madison International Trade Association. He has also led the development and growth of products produced in Wisconsin, exported to more than 30 countries, and been involved with exporting fresh and cooked Sausage, cheese, and frozen bread. Fitzgerald obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Dayton, MBA from Rutgers University, and a Graduate Certificate in Global Supply Chain Management from Boston University.

Keith Heikes, URUS

Email: Keith.heikes@urus.org

Meat Member | Term: 2023-2026

Keith Heikes retired as the Chief Operating Officer of URUS in 2021 after a 40-year career in the cattle breeding industry. Prior to this position, he served as the Chief Operating Officer of GENEX

Cooperative and Chief Executive Officer of Cooperative Resources International. He also spent 15 years as the Vice President of International Programs for CRI, helping expand their international reach around the world by establishing new distributors through the acquisition of retail businesses. Keith has served as a board member and chairman for the National Association of Animal Breeders, a board member for the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, member of the USDA Emerging Markets Advisory Committee, board member and vice-chair of the Overseas Cooperative Development Council, and board member of joint ventures in India and Australia. He currently is on the board of World Dairy Expo and serves on its finance committee.

Dr. Grant Holley, Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association

Email: grant.holley@wiscran.org

Crop Member | Term: 2025-2028

While born in West Virginia, for the past five years Grant Holley is very happy to call Wisconsin home. Grant is currently the Executive Director of the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association, the Wisconsin Cranberry Research and Education Foundation, and the Cranberry Board. Prior to his position with the cranberry growers, Grant spent fourteen years in Academia, seven with a global conglomerate, and the past five years leading non-profits. Believing that strong trade makes for good neighbors, Grant has established several international agreements within multiple countries including China, Russia, Turkey, Brazil, Botswana, and Honduras.

Kevin Krentz, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Email: kkrentz@wfbf.com

At-Large Member | Term: 2025-2028

Since 2020, Kevin Krentz has served as the president of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation (WFBF), previously serving on the WFBF board of directors. He also serves as president of the Rural Mutual Insurance Company. Kevin was elected to the American Farm Bureau Federation board of directors in 2021 and appointed to serve on the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's board of directors. He also currently serves on the Wisconsin Livestock ID Consortium and University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences board of visitors. He has served on DATCP's Raw Milk Taskforce, the Department of Commerce Dairy 2020 Council, American Farm Bureau Federal Milk Marketing Order Workgroup, and the Wisconsin DNR NR 151 Technical Advisory Committee. He has participated in the U.S. Dairy Export Council Trade Policy Committee meeting discussions, and in 2016, he participated in a Transatlantic Dialogue Agriculture Perspectives trip to Germany focusing on dairy production and trade. Kevin, his wife Holly, and their family own and operate a dairy farm in Berlin, Wisconsin.

Larry Krueger, Krueger Lumber Company

Email: larry@kruegerlumber.com

Crop Member | Term: 2024-2027

Larry Krueger was born and raised on a family-owned sawmill and forestry business called Krueger Lumber Company where he is now the owner. Through this business, he exports forestry products to China, Vietnam, and the European Union and has participated in DATCP led trade missions in the past. He is a member of the Wisconsin Freight Advisory Committee and served on the Board of Directors for the Lake States Lumber Association (LSLA), a regional hardwood lumber organization for many years.

Kevin Lipps, Seneca Foods Corporation

Email: klipps@senecafoods.com

Crop Member | Term: 2024-2027

Kevin Lipps has served as Vice President of International Sales at Seneca Foods Corporation since 2011. Growing up in New Richmond, Wisconsin and graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, he began his international career in 1997 with the Friday Canning Corporation, transitioning to Seneca when acquired in 2003. Kevin has participated in numerous international trade missions and trade shows, helping Seneca's processed vegetables from Wisconsin reach more than 50 countries annually. He is grateful for the opportunity to explore further success in promoting Wisconsin's agricultural and agribusiness exports.

Dr. Amy Radunz, Purina Animal Nutrition

Email: aeradunz@gmail.com

Meat Member | Term: 2022-2025

Dr. Amy Radunz currently works as a beef cattle technical consultant for Purina Animal Nutrition and owns a stocker operation in Ellsworth, Wisconsin. She has been actively involved in Wisconsin's beef industry for the past 10 years. She served as at-large board member for Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association (WCA) from 2015- 2020. Since 2019, Radunz has represented the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association on the Wisconsin Beef Council (WBC) and serves on the WBC Executive Committee as President-Elect. In 2021, she represented WBC at the Latin American Product Showcase to help promote Wisconsin beef and will be representing WBC at the U.S. Meat Export Federation. Amy is looking forward to serving on the WAXC committee to apply her experience and interest in beef cattle, meat science, and international trade to help Wisconsin agriculture.

Jeff Schwager, Center for Dairy Research

Email: Schwager3@wisc.edu

Dairy Member | Term: 2024-2027

Jeff Schwager is an experienced President and CEO with a proven track record of revenue and profitability growth. Jeff spent over 13 years at Sartori Company as President and then CEO. He was able to retire with a successful transition to the 4th generation family member leader. Prior to Sartori Company, Jeff was the president and CEO of Rite Hite Products Corporation for 15 years. He is able to help build sales, marketing, operations and logistics functions while defining and building an organization to drive future success at companies that want growth in revenue and/or profitability.

Chad Vincent, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Email: cvincent@wisconsinmilk.org

Dairy Member | Term: 2025-2028

Chad Vincent currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. In this position, he has worked to build foreign markets for dairy products in partnership with DATCP, the U.S. Dairy Export Council, Wisconsin Cheese Maker's Association, Governor's Task Force 2.0, and dozens of cheese companies. Prior to his position with the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, he spent six years working in Europe, Latin America, and Asia for Miller Brewing International, working on international marketing and export operations before being promoted to President of Miller Asia. He has also held positions with Gerber Knives/Outdoor, Fiskars, and Sartori Cheese.

Charles Wachsmuth, Chippewa Valley Bean

Email: charleswachsmuth@cvbean.com

Crop Member | Term: 2023-2026

Charles Wachsmuth is a Vice President at Chippewa Valley Bean, the largest processor and exporter of dark red kidney beans in the world. He joined the company in 2012 as part of the sales team, focusing on targeting and developing new export markets, and now leads Chippewa Valley Bean's Sustainability and Social Responsibility projects. Prior to this position, Charles managed his own consultant business for 10 years with a focus on agricultural development and humanitarian feeding. Over his years of experience, Wachsmuth has worked and traveled in more than 50 countries. He currently holds committee assignments with the Global Pulse Confederation, American Pulse Association, and U.S. Dry Bean Council.

Angela Weber, La Crosse Distilling Co.

Email: Angela@lacrossedistilling.co

Crop Member | Term: 2024-2027

Angela Weber is Co-Owner and Director of Marketing at La Crosse Distilling Co., the only geothermal power distillery headquartered in Wisconsin and producer of USDA certified organic distilled spirits with an emphasis on sustainable farming and production practices. Through this business, she has participated in DATCP-led trade missions and trade shows, leading efforts to expand distribution to global markets. She has been instrumental in establishing Fieldnotes Organic Vodka as the House Vodka of Lambeau Field and Green Bay Packers. Prior to La Crosse Distilling Co., Angela founded one of the first social media consultancies located Wisconsin in 2018 - consulting for Mayo Clinic and serving client for three years before relocating to New York, NY to join IBM as the Global Social Media Partnership Manager. In this role, she managed key relationships with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Reddit, ensuring IBM's \$40M media investment is maximized through strategic partnerships. During the pandemic, she moved back to Wisconsin to re-join her family. Angela was born and raised in La Crosse, Wisconsin and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing. She is a proud wife and mother of two toddlers.

Open

Email:

Dairy Member | Term: 2023-2026