



Wisconsin Agriculture, Be Proud This Thanksgiving

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A commentary by Secretary Romanski of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)

MADISON, Wis. – Happy Thanksgiving! With these words, you often hear a message of thanks. This holiday, I echo this message and share my immense gratitude to everyone from the farmer to the consumer. In 2021, however, I also want to share my tremendous pride this Thanksgiving, and I hope you, Wisconsin agriculture, are proud as well.

When you look at the Thanksgiving table, you see a bounty of products that are grown and raised in the state. From the poultry farms of western Wisconsin to the cranberry marshes of central Wisconsin to the green bean fields of southern Wisconsin, farmers are working hard each day to produce safe, quality, and nutritious foods for families around the world. Farmers, I hope you are proud of the land you care for, crops you harvested, and livestock you raised.

These products could not move off the farm without our milk haulers and truck drivers. Transportation is essential to ensure our raw goods make it from the field to the processors to their final point of sale. Drivers, be proud of your important contribution to our food supply. Because of long hours and hundreds of miles on the state's interstates, county highways, and town roads, our food supply is secure to its destination.

In Wisconsin, we are lucky to be home to so many food processors who take the milk from the tank and crops from the farm and transform them into the value-added products we rely on for our dinner table. Our dairy, meat, vegetable, and other food processors are dedicated to innovation and food safety to meet the needs of consumers. Processors, I hope you are proud of your commitment to creating the products we rely on year after year for our holidays.

Many families visit their local grocery store or restaurant to fill their table for Thanksgiving Day. Employees work around the clock to fill the retail shelves with the products you are seeking, from fresh potatoes to canned corn. Chefs are working to create meals that are ready to carry out for families to enjoy. Grocery and restaurant staff, be proud of the important role you play to allow families to fill their table.

While most are able to purchase the foods they need, others rely on food pantries during times of need to feed their families. Organizations, volunteers, and donors work together to ensure families are able to have a happy holiday and feed their loved ones a nutritious meal. Food security networks, be proud of all you do to distribute food to those in need.

Consumers should also feel a great sense of pride this holiday. You are the ultimate customer for Wisconsin agriculture. You spend your hard-earned dollars on Wisconsin products and choose to purchase foods that are grown and raised in the state. You keep the food supply chain moving. Consumers, when you look at your dinner table this Thanksgiving, be proud to be from such a plentiful agricultural state.

Here at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), I am proud that the department, its dedicated team, and I can be a small part of Wisconsin agricultural products' journey to your dinner plate. Governor Evers understands the challenges Wisconsin farmers continue to face because of supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19.

Because of that, he invested another \$50 million in the Farm Support Program to provide aid payments directly to farmers.

The Governor also realizes the tremendous pressure on the state's food processors. Through his 2021-23 biennial state budget, he invested in a new meat processing grant program and included additional dollars for the dairy processor grants. These funds will ensure the agriculture industry is able to modernize its facilities, expand its products, and grow its capacity for years to come.

Wisconsin agriculture, I am proud to be part of this industry, and on this holiday, I hope each of you take a moment to feel that pride of what you accomplish each harvest, growing season, and milking. It is because of you, Wisconsin agriculture, that our tables are full. Happy Thanksgiving!

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