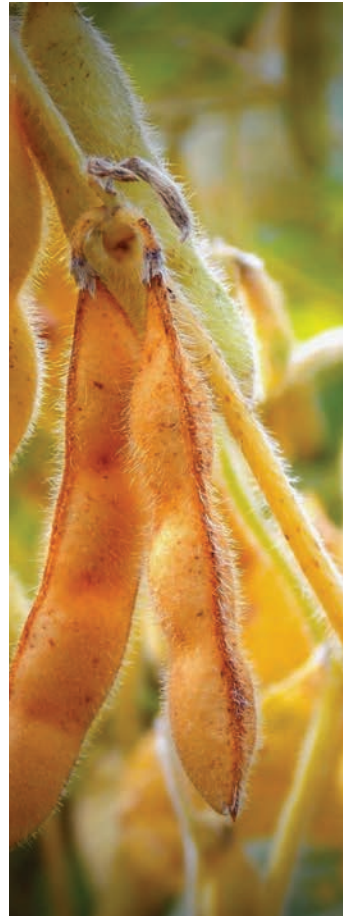


Fall 2022

Wisconsin Agri-Business Association

QUARTERLY NEWS



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Industry insights, highlights, and updates

Tom Bressner, Executive Director

Greetings once again from WABA! I hope this past quarter has been a good one for each of you. Around WABA, June through August is always one of the busiest periods of the year for us, offering member events and programs prior to you all getting tied up with the upcoming harvest. Here is just a partial rundown of some of what your association has been doing these past three months:

Four State Dairy Nutrition and Management Conference – During the first week of June, WABA handled all the registration and administrative work for the Four State Dairy Nutrition and Management Conference in Dubuque, Iowa. Besides a great lineup of speakers, it was great to see conference attendee numbers rising once again to levels closer to pre-pandemic attendance.

Wisconsin FFA Convention – Surrounded by over 1,000 blue and gold jackets, WABA staff judged contests, presented awards, hosted a booth at the career fair, and spent time talking to FFA members and agriculture teachers about the many outstanding occupations that can be pursued in agribusiness. In all, we spent one-on-one time talking to over 250 students. If you ever need to get your “battery charged” about the future of agriculture, try spending a day at the FFA Convention. This year’s Wisconsin FFA Convention was held on June 14-16.

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days – On July 12-14, WABA once again sponsored the Exhibitors Lounge at the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. This year, FTD was held on a farm just south of Loyal in Clark County. By hosting the Exhibitors Lounge, WABA has the chance to talk to many current WABA member companies, as well as spend time recruiting new members and potential exhibitors for the Wisconsin Agribusiness Classic in January.

Safety Day Program – On July 21, WABA hosted its always popular WABA Safety Day Program at the Wilderness Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. In addition to increased attendance and participation this year, it was once again a quality program with outstanding speakers and presentations.

WABA Scholarship Trap Shoot – One other great summer event is our annual WABA Scholarship Trap Shoot. This event was held on July 28 at the Heart of Wisconsin Sportsman’s Club in Wisconsin Rapids. I think anyone who participated will tell you that it was a great day of outside cookout, some great shooting, prizes, comradery, and beautiful weather. What a great time!

Leadership Development Academy – On August 9-11, WABA hosted its fifth class of our popular Leadership Development Academy. This year, eleven industry leaders came together for three days in Madison to hone and build their leadership skills. Topics included in the LDA are: leadership personal assessment, effective communications, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and decision making, team building, networking, managing conflict and difficult situations, interest-based problem solving, and leading organizational change and transitions. This is a great program. We hope you will join us the next time it is offered.

WABA Grain Grading Schools – On August 29 and 30, we hosted two days of grain grading, helping grain operations personnel to learn valuable information on how to probe and grade grain. Besides our normal training on identifying kernel damages, insect infestation, dryer damage, foreign material, etc., this year a lot of time was spent helping participants identify off-color soybeans due to genetic issues with the new

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Enlist E3 soybean trait. Some grain elevators have been receiving substantial discounts when trucking soybeans to the river this summer. Make sure you are on top of the issue.

WABA Scholarship Golf Outings – We all need to have a little fun, and golfing for a great cause makes it even more fun. On August 25, WABA hosted the first of our two annual Scholarship Golf Outings. The outing was held at Lake Arrowhead Golf Course near Nekoosa. Threatened by showers most of the morning, the weather cleared up for a great event in the afternoon. Our second golf outing of the season was held on September 1 at the Yahara Hills Golf Course near Madison. The day was absolutely beautiful for golf, and a great time was had by everyone. And best of all, the outings will help to fund \$19,000 in college scholarships for future agribusiness employees. You can't beat that.

Legislative Visits – With this being an election year, elected officials and candidates are very interested in talking about legislative issues important to voters. WABA takes full advantage of this opportunity, scheduling numerous visits to discuss topics important to agribusinesses. WABA met with 22 State Representatives and Senators this past quarter, and have more scheduled in September, including a meeting with the Governor's office.

UW - Discovery Farms – WABA serves on the Steering Committee for UW- Discovery Farms, our own in-state research center for everything water quality and nutrient retention. On August 16, we had the opportunity to spend the day on farms near Kewaunee, touring in-field water monitoring stations, cover crop demonstrations, and other good management practices that are helping to control water contamination concerns.

UW - CALS Dean Glenda Gillaspy – WABA had two opportunities in August to meet and get to know the new Dean of UW-CALS, Glenda Gillaspy. Dean Gillaspy is excited about the great research being conducted by UW-CALS and Extension. As important as UW research is to

agriculture and agribusiness in Wisconsin, it is important to build great working relationships with decision makers at this level. If you get the opportunity, I hope many of you will also get to know Dean Gillaspy.

Grain Traders Workshop – To kickoff September, for the first time ever, WABA offered a WABA Grain Traders Workshop. It was a great opportunity to learn more about grain buying, merchandising, hedging, basis trading, and so much more. The Grain Traders Workshop was held on September 7.

Wisconsin Agribusiness Classic – That is right – planning for the 2023 Wisconsin Agribusiness Classic has begun. The 2023 Classic will be held on January 11-12, 2023 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. We are currently working on topics and speakers for the educational breakout sessions. If you have topics you would like to hear discussed, please let us know. This year, in addition to all the Continuing Educational Units (CEUs) we offer for agronomy, we will be offering CEUs for Animal Nutrition as well. It looks like another exciting year for The Classic.

Before signing off, I want to take a moment to talk about our new website and rebranding. On April 1, 2022, WABA celebrated its 10th Anniversary. And while we have been very successful in our first 10 years, it is our goal to position ourselves for an even more successful next 10 years. Our new website, logo, and mission statement were kicked off on August 1. Please check out our fresh new website at wiagribusiness.org.

Thank you for being a member of WABA. We appreciate you all!

Sincerely,
Tom

Save the Date!



January 11-12, 2023
Alliant Energy Center, Madison



Wisconsin Agri-Business Association: Strong history, promising future

Sara Schoenborn, Director of Marketing & Communications

If you have visited the WABA website or social media recently, you may have noticed a few exciting changes. Last year, the WABA Board of Directors held a strategic planning session with the goal of ensuring the organization remains as strong and successful in the next 10 years as it was in the last. One of the resulting initiatives was to refresh our brand, reevaluate our mission statement, and redesign our website.

When undertaking these projects, we strove to improve communications as well as representation of our members and our industry. We wanted to show the difference we make and the services we provide in a clean, compelling way.

By rebranding and redesigning how we communicate, we hope to better share the advocacy, education, and engagement opportunities we provide. We are focused on supporting the next generation of agricultural leaders to help ensure a safe, reliable, and high-quality food, fiber, and fuel system for years to come.

Our new logo and website reflect our desire to grow with the industry and meet its needs. We



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want to be a resource for you – our members – as well as other partners, so that we can all work better, together.

Please visit our new website and updated social media outlets, and let us know what you think!



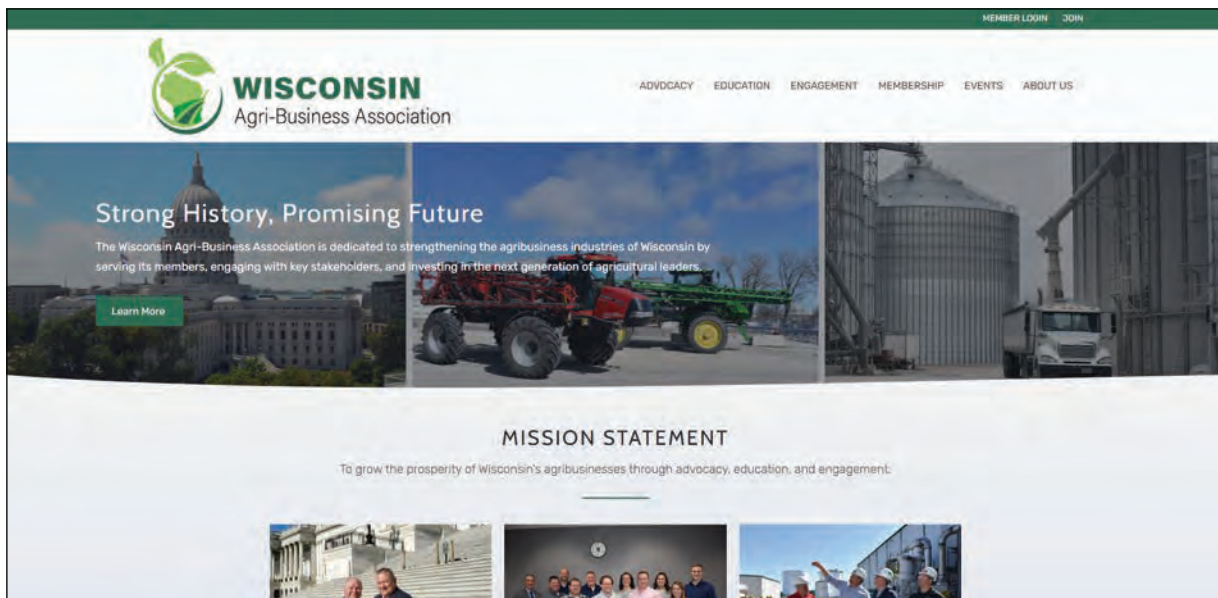
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WABA Scholarship Events

The Wisconsin Agri-Business Association hosts three annual fundraising events to benefit the WABA Scholarship Program. Each year, the Association awards \$19,000 in post-secondary scholarships to students pursuing careers in agriculture.

Awards are given annually to:

- UW-Madison
- UW-Platteville
- UW-River Falls
- UW-Stevens Point
- Chippewa Valley Technical College
- Fox Valley Technical College
- Lakeshore Technical College
- Northcentral Technical College
- Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
- Western Wisconsin Technical College
- Wisconsin FFA Foundation

In addition to all of these great undergraduate scholarships, WABA was very instrumental in establishing a Distinguished Graduate Fellowship at UW-Madison. The "Leo Walsh/Wisconsin Agri-Business Association Distinguished Graduate Fellowship," named after Leo Walsh, a past dean of the University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, is annually used to help fund a graduate student working on an advanced degree in agricultural research. This fellowship pays out over \$10,000 per year in accomplishing that mission.

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's scholarship events to aid in this effort. Save the date for our next fundraising event, the Scholarship Silent Auction at the Wisconsin Agribusiness Classic, January 11-12, 2023 in Madison.





Preventing grain bin fires

Jim Nolte, Safety Director

Each year the number of grain dryer fires goes up during harvest. The risk of dryer fires, and the disruption and delays they cause, can be reduced with a proactive, thoughtful approach to cleaning and preventative maintenance activity.

Preventive maintenance is a critical component of a safe harvest and an overall safe operating facility. Equipment failure can be prevented if proper preventive maintenance activities are performed. Remember to address the following items when preparing for harvest:

- Anticipate equipment problems before they arise and make sure a plan is in place to address them.
- Check maintenance records to ensure that equipment is in proper working order and that critical maintenance activities are performed. Critical items may include belts, lagging, buckets, bearings, dryers, and grain stream processing equipment.
- Make sure that hazard monitoring equipment (belt alignment, motion detection, bearing temperature) is connected and operational.
- Stock critical parts in preparation for breakdowns.
- Allow adequate time for preventive maintenance activities during busy periods.

While a variety of issues can cause a dryer fire, the most common cause is a build-up of debris within the dryer. A dryer that needs cleaning is not always obvious considering the closed environment. Cleaning schedules will often vary from season to season and is dictated by the

amount of chaff and debris in the grain that comes in from the fields. The cleaning schedule used last year may not be sufficient for this season. Although pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest cleaning and maintenance are all important; the pre-harvest cleaning and inspection is the most important.

When deciding how often to clean the dryer, consider external factors as well. According to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, external air temperature plays a factor in debris build-up. The plenum temperature inside the dryer may vary from 210 degrees F to 230 degrees F. As the cooler fall air settles in, the risk of condensation build-up within the hot dryer increases. Condensation leads to wet surfaces which in turn attracts debris buildup; it's the debris buildup that increases the risk of a dryer fire.

Preventing dryer fires does not have to be a complex operation. Developing a housekeeping and preventative maintenance schedule can be straightforward and implemented at any sized operation. OSHA requires employers to implement a preventive maintenance program for all equipment including grain dryers. Most companies are diligent about making sure the dryer is maintained and ready for the harvest season. However, once harvest starts the focus tends to be more on production rather than cleaning and maintenance.

Spending 30 to 45 minutes a couple of times each week to inspect and clean out the dryer will maximize dryer efficiency and minimize the risk of fire. Although grain quality varies from harvest to harvest, paying extra attention to the dryer at the beginning of the harvest season will help determine if your cleaning frequency is sufficient.



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November election has lots at stake

Wisconsin is one of the few competitive states in the country

Shawn Pfaff, Pfaff Public Affairs

In two months, Wisconsin voters will be going to the polls to vote for U.S. Senate, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, congressional and state legislative races and partisan county government races. In fact, in just over a month, many Wisconsin voters will be able to vote early or by mail if they so choose.

There are two huge races on the November 8 ballot. The first is for U.S. Senator where incumbent GOP United States Senator Ron Johnson is running for a third, six-year term. Johnson is facing Democratic Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes. Barnes won the Democratic primary on August 9. Current polling shows Barnes with a lead of 51 to 44 percent in the latest Marquette University Law School poll that was released on Wednesday, August 17. Other subsequent polls have showed the race tighter. Many national interests are heavily involved in this race because it is one of only a handful of competitive races that could determine who controls the United States Senate come this January.

The other marquee race is between Governor Tony Evers, a Democrat, who is running for a second term against GOP businessman Tim Michels who defeated former GOP Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch in the August 9 primary. Evers is leading Michels by a 46 to 43 percent in the latest Marquette University Law School. Other subsequent polls have shown the race just as close. This race has national significance as well because it is only one of a handful of competitive gubernatorial races across the country.

In state legislative races, Republicans, who control both houses of the state legislature, are hoping to expand their majorities in both chambers - especially in the state Senate where they hope to gain a veto proof majority. Opportunities for GOP



pickups in the state Senate include former state Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Rice Lake) who is running to replace retiring Democratic state Senator Janet Bewley. Quinn is facing Democrat Kelly Westlund in the November election.

Other legislative races in rural Wisconsin to watch include the seats of retiring Democratic state Representatives' Nick Milroy, of Superior, and Beth Meyers of Ashland and the seats of retiring state Senator Jerry Petrowski, of Marathon, and Kathy Bernier of the Chippewa Falls area.

Due to Wisconsin's uniquely competitive nature, independent election analysts are predicting \$344 million will be spent on ads for Wisconsin races this cycle, which includes \$159 million in the U.S. Senate race and \$126 million for the Governor's campaign. Moreover, tens of millions will be spent on congressional and state Senate and state Assembly races.

Shawn Pfaff is the President of Pfaff Public Affairs, LLC a government and public relations firm that represents the Wisconsin Agri-Business Association in the state Capitol.





WABA Safety Day 2022



Thank you to everyone who attended Safety Day and special thanks to our event sponsors:

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- Syngenta
- True North Consultants
- United Cooperative
- Wisconsin Corn



Recommended safe practices for truck dumps

Jim Nolte, Safety Director

Harvest is an especially busy and potentially dangerous time at the truck dump pits. Consider implementing and enforcing these safe work practices when dumping trucks:

1. Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on the hazards. This may include wearing safety glasses, a particulate-filtering face-piece respirator (dust mask), work gloves, hearing protection, and high-visibility or reflective clothing.
2. Enforce the company's "No Smoking" policy near grain receiving areas. Lit cigarettes can ignite combustible dust.
3. Be cautious when crossing in front of or between trucks. Keep adequate clearance and communicate with the driver (verbal or visual).



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Follow your company's clearance distance requirements.

4. Ensure that the driver sets the truck's brakes once the trailer is positioned properly over the receiving pit. This will help prevent inadvertent movement during unloading.
5. Follow your company's policy regarding drivers. The policy may require them to exit the truck and stand in a designated area or stay in their truck during the unloading process.
6. Inspect the hopper gate prior to use. Look for sharp edges or burrs that may cause cuts or lacerations.
7. Maintain proper body mechanics when opening the hopper gate. Grasp the handle firmly and operate it slowly. Keep the feet shoulder width apart, back straight, and bend at the knees. Proper body mechanics may prevent back and shoulder injuries.
8. When directing the movement of the truck, stay in a designated area that is out of the path of the moving truck. Stand in an area visible to the driver.
9. Avoid walking on surfaces covered with grain. These areas will be slippery and may cause slips and falls.
10. Remember; if you cannot see the driver in the mirror, he or she cannot see you. Maintain communication with the driver at all times.



Membership in National FFA Organization reaches all-time high

National FFA Organization announced a record-high student membership number of 850,823, an increase of 15% from last year

As the importance of agriculture continues to be a focus throughout the world, students around the country understand the vital role it plays in everyday life. No more is this more evident than in the growth of membership in the National FFA Organization.

The National FFA Organization has announced a record-high student membership number of 850,823, an increase of 15% from last year. In addition, chapter numbers increased by 178, resulting in 8,995 chapters in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Interest in FFA and agricultural education continues to grow as membership and the number of chapters increase. The top five student membership states are Texas, California, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. This year, the

organization has more than 132,700 Latino members, more than 47,000 Black members and more than 13,000 American Indian and Alaska Native members. Forty-three percent of the membership is female, and 50% is male, with .5% reporting as nonbinary, 4.7% undisclosed, and 1.2% unreported.

"Our FFA members are the future generation of leaders who make a difference in their communities as well as agriculture and other industries," said National FFA CEO Scott Stump. "As we continue to grow, we see the enthusiasm for agricultural education and FFA reflected in our membership."

The National FFA Organization is a school-based national youth leadership development organization of more than 850,000 student members as part of 8,995 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

– National FFA Organization



Invest in agriculture's future leaders. Support FFA.

Visit wisconsinaged.org/foundation to learn more about supporting Wisconsin FFA and agricultural education.

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Thank you WABA for being a proud supporter of Wisconsin FFA.



Addressing the rural workforce challenge

Running a business in a rural area comes with some wonderful perks, such as lower crime rates, beautiful scenery to enjoy, and a sense of community connection that differs from urban areas.

However, it also comes with some unique challenges for workforce development. These can include a lack of access to broadband internet, rural “brain drain,” a lack of diversity, and limited access to educational advancement opportunities. Additionally, there may be challenges with community resources, such as transportation, childcare, health care, and housing. Although every community is different, there are still best practices supported by research and demonstrated solutions that can be considered to support and enhance rural workforce.

There have been multiple research reports published on rural economies and workforce. In 2017, the Investing in America’s Workforce initiative held listening sessions and conducted extensive research. The focus of the initiative was to shed light on workforce challenges and opportunity, with rural issues included. The research identified stakeholder strategies to build stronger rural economies. Building off of the research and listening sessions from 2017, a 2019 report entitled Strengthening Workforce Development in Rural Areas by Ashley Bozarth and Whitney Strifler, was published by the Federal Reserve. The relevant findings presented in Strengthening Workforce Development in Rural Areas are reflected in the data and suggestions provided in this article and AEM’s Rural Workforce Action Plan in the recently released AEM Workforce Solutions Toolkit.

Current outlook

According to Strengthening Workforce Development in Rural Areas:

- One out of every four businesses located outside metro areas struggle to find qualified workers, compared with one out of six in metro areas.
- Adults 65 and older average 25% of rural

populations, versus 19% in metro areas.

- White, non-Hispanic adults age 16 and older make up about 82% of the population in nonmetro areas, compared to 60 % in metro areas.
- The vast majority of counties with persistent poverty, where more than 20% of the population has been living in poverty over the past 30 years, are located in nonmetro areas.
- 40% of nonmetro renter households and 21% of nonmetro owner occupants spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.
- 58% of rural census tracts in the United States have limited or no access to quality childcare.
- In rural areas, the overdose rate exceeded metropolitan rates in 2015.
- Rural residents comprise 57% of the population in neighborhoods with no broadband access, but only 15% of the country’s total population.

What you can do

To address rural workforce issues, companies need to be willing to think beyond their own needs by connecting and investing in their communities. One report encouraged companies to approach rural workforce development with a quasi-public good approach. The systemic challenges faced by rural business require a willingness to collaborate with key community stakeholders in a way that encompasses the five broadly categorized best practices below. These are robust strategies that require a community focus and long-term mindset. Organizations like economic development corporations or chambers of commerces often lead these initiatives. Lending your support, at whatever level you are able, will contribute to your community’s success and a stronger available workforce.

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Rural workforce strategies

The strategies outlined below tie closely with those framed in *Strengthening Workforce Development in Rural Areas*. Additional research reports and articles confirmed the validity of this comprehensive strategy set.

Connect youth and adult workers with education and training programs that relate directly to existing and burgeoning industry sectors.

A critical piece of the rural workforce puzzle is ensuring that the limited educational programs available in rural settings match the skill and labor needs of the community. It is important that programs create clear career pathways from school to employment. Presenting these pathways to both youth and adult learners is critical. Funding career technical education (CTE) can and should be supported through both public and private agencies. These connections are best supported through industry education partnerships. *(Examples of career pathways and funding opportunities can be found in the Workforce Solutions Toolkit.)*

Support economic diversification initiatives that increase economic resiliency.

Many rural communities have one or two anchor businesses that drive the economy. Losing one of those key industries can put a community at risk. Diversification of business size and type can help stabilize the impact of potential losses. This diversity also paves the way for attracting workers along the entire skill spectrum. Understanding this dynamic while contributing to a collaborative effort makes sense.

Create community amenities that improve the quality of life in order to attract and retain workers.

Rural employers face a duality when recruiting and retaining employees: the challenge of disproportionate rural poverty and reduced

educational access, and the opportunity to entice additional workers who are looking to experience abundant natural resources or a community experience that differs from urban areas. These challenges and opportunities give rural employers the ability to leverage benefits beyond wages while building their workforce. Employers should articulate their area's unique benefits when posting positions, as it can be very effective (especially if they are targeting a specific audience).

Support community development efforts focused on reducing common rural barriers including transportation, housing, childcare, health care, and broadband.

When willing people are held back from working by issues such as transportation, housing, and lack of childcare, businesses will need to ask themselves whether it is more expensive to invest in solutions or suffer the loss of production capacity. Rural communities also disproportionately lack quality broadband coverage which, in today's world, is an expectation of workers looking to relocate. Businesses may not want to take these issues on themselves, but engagement in community efforts to address these issues directly benefits workforce recruitment and retention.

Collaborate across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to align workforce development, economic development, and community development goals.

Rural communities, businesses, and economies face unique challenges that require community stakeholders to work together to overcome. Learn more about how communities can come together and create success by viewing the resources in the Educational Partnership, Regional Initiatives, and Rural Workforce action plans inside the [AEM Workforce Solutions Toolkit](#).

- Association of Equipment Manufacturers



A branding strategy for the sales professional

Become a big fish in a small pond

Greg Martinelli, Ag Sales Professionals

The Problem: You struggle to sell your branded products.

As you head out to sell your products, it can seem daunting for our sales professionals as they face a sea of competitive products sold by an army of competing salespeople. We struggle to stand out and differentiate ourselves as we seek to become respected members in our agribusiness community. We have great branded products that truly give our customers a better ROI, but it's just so difficult in such a noisy marketplace.

If that sounds like your situation, then here are three reasons you might be struggling and three steps to climb your way to become the top brand in your area.

Your reason #1: You're not the brand leader.

In most markets, there is one company that has spent more time, resources, and money to become the brand leader. They rightfully deserve brand recognition. However, it's tough to sell into this market because few customers even know who you are. In my own experience, I found myself competing against a company that had a 100-year head start on marketing to our customers. They also had seven salespeople in the same geography that I was assigned to cover by myself. Not only did everyone in the ag world know their brand, but everyone in the country knew their brand. It was like they were Coke and there was no Pepsi.

In many examples, the market leaders' brand is synonymous with the product. Great examples are Xerox, Kleenex, and Google. "I need to make a Xerox of this paper," was a common phrase for decades. Xerox copiers dominated the brand so much that people referred to their name as the actual product. Same thing for Kleenex or Google. Imagine trying to sell an internet search engine against the most common brand name, which is now one of the most common verbs in all languages. Well, you don't have to imagine because you can just, "Google it."

Your reason #2: Generic marketing material from corporate.

The next issue occurs with corporate branding. As salespeople, we tend to leave all the marketing up to the marketing team in the main headquarters office. We let them deal with developing brochures, color patterns for our logos, social media posting, and all the advertising. That's not totally wrong but let's think about one important point. If your company is nationwide or worldwide, then the marketing material has to fit all of that diverse geography. That's a tall order to fill. Customers in your territory (pond) might not feel like they are represented in your generic marketing material.

Marketing material is important for identifying and developing brand recognition. However, the real version of the brand is determined at the point the customer interacts with your company. Brand is established when they call your office, walk into your local store, or receive a delivery from your driver. And brand is certainly established when they work with you as their salesperson. You make the brand come to life in your pond. It's nice to have good marketing material, but customers determine your actual brand by what you do in your territory (pond).

Your reason #3: Credibility and other noise in the marketplace.

There is a business phrase, "Nobody ever got fired for buying IBM." It's in reference to who you buy from. If you were buying computers for your company, your boss would not fault you for buying from IBM. They were the most trusted brand in the market. However, as an unknown brand in your market, customers will doubt you and your product's credibility. Realize the risk they are taking by buying from you, an unknown brand. If you sell to a retailer, they may tell you that customers aren't asking for it. This is when salespeople will tell me that their marketing department needs to step up their efforts. They need more advertising, more marketing material, or a better product design that accommodates

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everything a producer wants. Customers might play a wait-and-see game. In agribusiness, there has been plenty of flash in the pan products. Time is one piece of building credibility and so are you.

Solutions: If you face this dilemma in your market, here are three methods for managing your territory to overcome it. Obviously, there are many other ways, but these have worked for me and many fellow salespeople to become the market leader in their territory.

Step 1: Fix your attitude and your view first.

This has to begin the process or you will be frustrated for many years. Don't lose sleep over what your company should have done. Likewise, don't lose sleep over what your large competitor is doing in the marketplace. It doesn't matter where you are in the brand strength in a market. They all have advantages and disadvantages.

Big brands are great to sell initially as everyone knows the name, customers ask for the products and retail availability is great as many dealers carry them. On the downside, every retailer wants to carry it. So, the big brand may have over-saturated the market with dealers. That means they may not have the sales support to take care of that many dealers. Also, in the last two years of the pandemic, they may not have the inventory to keep that many dealers supplied with product. When it comes to pricing, there are many problems that can occur with a product going through multiple channels: direct to the farm, through a dealer network, an off-the-farm dealer channel, or distributor route. Lastly, the online market has shaken up all channels to some extent. Pricing, products, and promotions have to remain consistent in that scenario or chaos will soon break out.

Small or unknown brands are tougher to sell during the early years as no one has heard of you, trusts you, or wants to take a chance. However, your strength is in your flexibility. With a smaller distribution network, you can do things with products and promotions that would be difficult for your big competitor to copy. All of this depends on your company's desire to grow the business. Obviously, start with your sales manager. Then get to know the admin, production,

and trucking department really well. All three of these departments will be critical to accomplishing your goals.

Step 2: Build a smaller pond.

While your big competitor has built themselves into the big fish in the big pond, you can now slice off your own small pond and begin your strategy. They have conquered the U.S. or North America or maybe even the world. Typically, that means they can't be as focused on a local market. Think about the variety of producers from the Washington produce industry to West Texas cotton to row crops in the Midwest to dairy producers here in Wisconsin to multi-crop farms in Kentucky. And if your competitor has dominated the market in your region, you can still narrow down the size of your pond further. We can use the dairy market right here as an example. The customer base and their needs change drastically from the large farms in the Green Bay and Madison area to the smaller farms in the Southwest and West area. Narrow your pond down until you can take the next step and build your empire.

Step 3: Building your empire.

I have been around many top-performing salespeople. Getting to know them and how they got there, it always feels like they are sitting on top of an empire. They worked really hard and built themselves into a powerhouse. They did all this within a narrow segment (small pond) of customers. When I ask about how they did all this, the story is similar. They started out trying to be everything to everyone in their market. They tried to chase the big competitor in their area. Soon, they developed a method of isolating down to what was needed for their specific segment. Then they poured all their focus into that segment.

Author and speaker Joe Calloway wrote about this concept in his book, "Becoming a Category of One." It's all about narrowing down your niche until you have no competition. That niche might be in geography, products, or service. In my own personal example, it was all of the above. Every competing salesperson was trying to be the smartest expert on animal nutrition in the feed business. For me to try and compete in that category was pointless as the dealers and customers didn't need it.

CONTINUED on Page 21



The mental health crisis in Wisconsin's agri-business community

Leif Erickson, Vice President, HUB Agribusiness

Too often, friends, family and co-workers don't see the emotional pain others are in until it's too late for intervention. Even then, communities may well have been lacking sufficient resources to intervene anyway.

It is a concern in Wisconsin, where public resources are either not available or those who desperately need them are too stumped by the "system" to successfully gain access. There is a good case for employers in the State to intervene with solutions on their own as the crisis state of mental health intensifies – in both the U.S. and globally.

When it comes to spending on mental health programs, Wisconsin ranks at the bottom of the list of States – a decades-long pattern of underfunding.

How Wisconsin's agribusiness employers can respond

Employers that are smart will act swiftly to fill the gap in mental health services. A comprehensive benefits program that provides solutions demonstrates empathy and goes a long way toward cementing a psychologically safe culture. It's also just the right thing to do.

The framework for such a program should be built around six best practices:

1. Build awareness to reduce stigma, expand utilization.

Considerable stigma surrounds mental health, especially in the workplace. The availability of solutions isn't widely promoted, as a rule. Take Employee Assistance Programs: these are a common and helpful resource, but don't typically get high utilization, to which 50% of employers blame on lack of awareness. In addition to promoting resources, messaging should emphasize that mental health maintenance is a core value. Further, managers need to be trained



to recognize and respond to mental health trouble signs, and when company leaders champion the cause, stigmatization is vastly reduced.

2. Manage the work-related risks.

The work environment – from culture to the job itself – has a huge influence on the mental health of employees. Every organization needs to take a hard look at this factor to identify conditions that can lead to or intensify traumatic conditions. Involve employees in decision-making. Make sure work-life integration is a priority. Don't just pay lip service to "flex" work. Make it real. And identify what other benefits can relieve the stress, like childcare and eldercare support and financial planning resources. There's a lot at stake: 71% of employees who feel stressed out at work say they'll look for a new job in the next year.

3. Measure – or you won't be managing.

Any program geared to relieve the mental health pressures the workforce is facing must also be accompanied by a series of metrics to show that time, effort and resources are having a meaningful impact. No emotional wellness strategy should be launched, for example, without capturing baseline insights into the overall health of the organization. What should be measured? Workplace outcomes like absenteeism, productivity, motivation and retention. Measuring outcomes achieved by intervention solutions will help the organization fine-tune its mental wellness offering. In contrast, only 31% of employers measure the benefits' value – even though 94% of their leaders say mental health is a key pillar of their wellness strategy.

CONTINUED on Page 19

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4. Not just any mental health wellness benefits will do.

Access must be provided to evidence-based, high-quality mental healthcare – meaning it is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, equitable and scientifically-based. Access should be through health plans, EAPs and other partnerships with mental health care providers, eased through reduced co-pays and other actions. It is also key to ensure programs span mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services. The more strategies employed to raise awareness and reduce stigma, the better. Over 80% of employees thought an awareness campaign would counter the stigma of seeking help, but only 23% of employers had put one in place.

5. Integrated mental health into broader corporate wellness program.

Employers are spending more on their wellness programs, partially because so many – 92% – are expanding their support for mental health and well-being under that umbrella. That’s the smart way to go, given the tight link between mental health and physical health. Programs should recognize the eight dimensions of wellness linked to emotional well-being, and use them as the basis of their efforts. They include emotional wellness (think lifestyle coaching), intellectual wellness (career development and coaching), and financial wellness (guidance on budgeting and financial goal setting).

6. Mental health partnerships matter.

Everyone benefits when employers partner with community groups that have a stake in the public’s emotional health. These ties make more convenient and cost-effective resources available. They also encourage greater volunteerism by employees – which has been shown to improve mental health and well-being outcomes. Further, by sharing their experiences and successes with these partners, the broader learning ecosystem for mental health organizations is enriched.



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Harvest and upset conditions!

Mary Bauer, Compliance Assistance Specialist, OSHA

Name a time that everything went as planned... still thinking? Audibles are often called during the workday and tasks are accomplished by alternative means. "Safety" needs to be in the forefront to prevent the plan changes from being life altering decisions.

The clock is ticking during harvest. Decisions are made to best maximize personnel, equipment and what mother nature has in store. The most common failure points are equipment, human error, and environmental conditions. A strong preventive maintenance program helps prevent equipment failures. Human error is more complex to fix or control! Mother Nature has several tricks up her sleeve!

Strong traditional safety and health programs/procedures such as fall protection, electrical safe work practices, machine guarding, lockout-tagout (LOTO) and confined space entry control hazards. In upset conditions, the hazards may not be readily apparent or underestimated. Hazard recognition training, along with a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) can help brainstorm possible hazards and solutions in uncontrolled situations.

Many of the hazards involve forces or energy of significant magnitude. The Energy Wheel – an innovative approach to Hazard identification & Risk Assessments.



If a sprayer or unit gets stuck in the field, the process to free the unit is dangerous. Penn State published a great article on ["Extracting Stuck Equipment Safely"](#). One of the best quotes is "Just because you can doesn't mean you should." Tales of narrow escapes are common, like this operator: "It's more than the potential of being hurt. It's the critical near misses that we have had as a company. We've had chains go through the cabs of loaders while trying to pull out high-boy sprayers. We've had chains slam into the back tailgates of pickup trucks when they break."

If the decision is to extract the vehicle with the equipment on hand rather than calling a tow truck, ensure that the chains/slings/rope and towing vehicle are inspected and have the capacity to pull the vehicle and its load. Discuss the plan and communicate with the drivers. Clear the area of others and remain out of the line of fire. Protect the cab/windshield of the towing vehicle from the line snapping back.



Gravity affects many breakdowns. Equipment needs to be elevated to work on it. Proper chocking, blocking and cribbing prevents the unit from falling or sinking when working underneath the unit. Many crushing fatalities occur when a vehicle shifts off blocks or jacks fail during field repair and in maintenance shops. Hydraulic

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systems often fail when they are in a raised position. Before going underneath any elevated part (bucket, arm or attachment), ensure it is blocked, pinned or chained in place. To eliminate the hazard, ground or lower the attachment to its lowest point.



Augers and other moving parts need to be guarded. When guards are removed, then LOTO procedures need to be implemented. If the auger is at the bottom of a trailer and does not have a guard, before entering the trailer consider fall protection (egress/access), engulfment hazard (CSE) if grain is bridged or present, and LOTO.



As for the human element, train workers and give them the tools to make the right decision. Communicate when there is a problem, so that the best solution is implemented. Watch fatigue of workers with long days or long stretches without time off.

As OSHA's [Safe and Sound](#) promotes, 'a safe workplace is sound business.'

CONTINUED from Page 17

- They needed product availability: distribution (route trucks, stocked products, smaller order sizes).

- They needed someone that would be available, knowledgeable, and help them get customers in their store: I focused on high levels of service to my top tier of customers. Important factors were:

- I answered my phone. If they called, I answered no matter what time or what I was doing. If I didn't answer, I called back immediately.

- A solid understanding of the admin and production side of the business. They needed a salesperson that knew how to keep them in product from a company that was easy to do business with.

- Hyper availability and responsiveness. I can't control everything, but I can control my follow up. I was and still am relentless in getting back to customers as fast as possible.

- They needed a company that was flexible: Small Pond Strategy. Create the products services and promotions that fit that particular market. This was the most powerful brand strength. The large market leader simply didn't have nor want to be flexible. They focused on their proprietary products and it was working for them. This left the customer looking for someone who might be more flexible and work with them on customized solutions.

When you think about your role and your brand strength, it comes down to starting from where you are and where you want to go. If you are selling for the big brand in a market, that's great. Take it from there and you can apply everything just mentioned to continue to dominate your market. However, if you are in that small unknown brand category, trust me. The effort and the journey are worth it. It will seem like a long road, but very rewarding.



WABA Educational Programs

WABA's member programs serve as the backbone of our value-added services and benefits that underlie why our members support WABA. We pride ourselves in providing best management practices and the latest in industry trends and issues. Recently, we hosted two of our most popular events: the Leadership Development Academy and Grain Grading School. We

also introduced a new event: a Grain Traders Workshop. Attendees of each of these events were provided with valuable lessons, contacts, and resources that will last a lifetime. If you are interested in learning more about these programs or have an idea for a new one we should consider introducing, please reach out to the WABA staff at 608-223-1111.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

WABA Webinar Series

October 19, 2022

*Insights to the 2022 election;
Wisconsin is razor thin...once again*

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Moderated by Shawn Pfaff



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September 6, 2022

Media Contact: Greg Bussler

Wisconsin had **5.5 days suitable for fieldwork** for the week ending September 4, 2022, according to the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. Harvesting for corn silage was just beginning and some producers started planting winter wheat.

Topsoil moisture condition rated 2 percent very short, 12 percent short, 77 percent adequate and 9 percent surplus. **Subsoil moisture** condition rated 3 percent very short, 22 percent short, 71 percent adequate and 4 percent surplus.

Corn in the dough stage or beyond was 86 percent, 3 days behind last year but 3 days ahead of the 5-year average. Forty-four percent of corn had reached the dent state, 7 days behind last year and 1 day behind the average. Corn condition was 78 percent good to excellent statewide, up 2 percentage points from last week.

Soybeans setting pods was 95 percent, 5 days behind last year but 1 day ahead of the average. Leaves were turning color on 15 percent of the state’s soybean acreage, 8 days behind last year and 5 days behind the average. Soybean condition was 78 percent good to excellent, up 4 percentage points from last week.

Oats harvested for grain was at 91 percent, 1 day behind last year but 5 days ahead of the average.

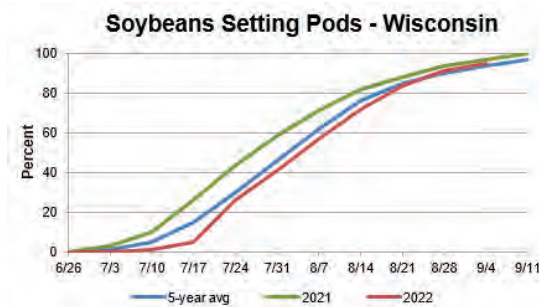
Potatoes harvested was at 27 percent, 6 days behind last year and 3 days behind the average. Potato condition was 96 percent good to excellent, up 1 percentage point from last week.

The third cutting of **alfalfa** was reported at 95 percent complete, 5 days ahead of last year and 7 days ahead of the average. The fourth cutting was 52 percent complete, 2 days ahead of last year and 6 days ahead of the average. **All hay** condition was reported 77 percent good to excellent condition, down 3 percentage points from last week.

Pasture condition was rated 71 percent good to excellent, down 1 percentage point from last week.

Crop Condition as of September 4, 2022

Item	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Corn	1	4	17	56	22
Hay, all	1	4	18	60	17
Pasture and range ..	1	6	22	57	14
Potatoes	0	0	4	84	12
Soybeans	0	4	18	56	22



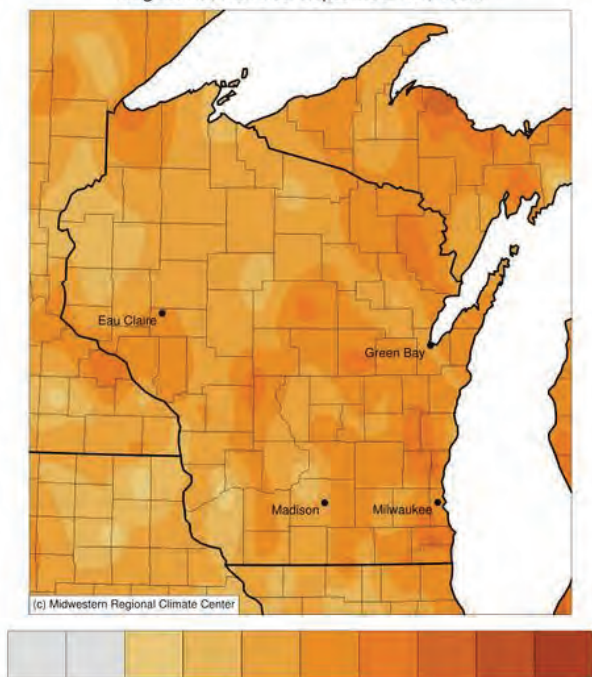
Crop Progress as of September 4, 2022

Item	Districts									State			
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE	This week	Last week	Last year	5-year avg
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Corn dough	73	51	80	84	92	92	91	92	92	86	75	90	83
Corn dented	23	16	27	41	56	58	52	41	59	44	24	62	48
Hay, alfalfa, 3rd cutting	95	89	97	93	98	98	96	95	99	95	91	92	91
Hay, alfalfa, 4th cutting	37	20	55	46	49	55	71	56	62	52	32	46	39
Oats harvested for grain	96	76	90	99	96	84	99	99	97	91	82	92	87
Soybeans setting pods	99	96	99	98	97	94	96	93	89	95	91	97	94
Soybeans coloring	12	7	14	16	9	24	15	9	25	15	6	37	27

Days Suitable for Fieldwork and Soil Moisture Condition as of September 4, 2022

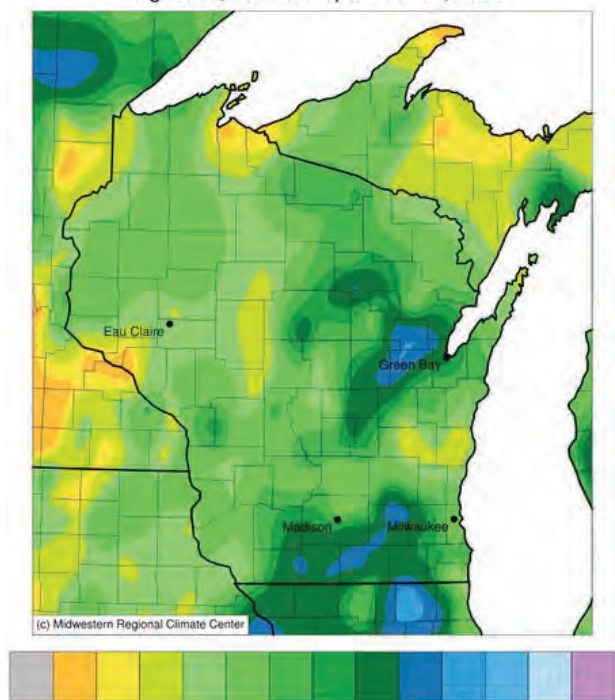
Item	Districts									State		
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE	This week	Last week	Last year
Days suitable	(days) 5.5	(days) 6.6	(days) 5.0	(days) 5.9	(days) 5.1	(days) 5.3	(days) 5.3	(days) 4.9	(days) 6.3	(days) 5.5	(days) 4.7	(days) 5.5
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Topsoil moisture												
Very short	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	17	2	1	9
Short	11	3	21	13	7	6	1	20	46	12	11	12
Adequate	77	71	67	77	88	84	91	76	37	77	77	68
Surplus	9	25	11	10	5	10	8	2	0	9	11	11
Subsoil moisture												
Very short	3	2	5	1	0	0	0	3	28	3	3	10
Short	14	3	29	22	9	13	19	43	42	22	22	13
Adequate	78	95	55	74	87	81	75	52	30	71	70	67
Surplus	5	0	11	3	4	6	6	2	0	4	5	10

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals
August 29, 2022 to September 04, 2022



Stations from the following networks used: WBAN, COOP, FAA, GHCN, ThreadEx, CoCoRaHS, WMO, ICAO, NWSLI, Midwest Regional Climate Center
cli-MATE: MRCC Application Tools Environment
Generated at: 9/6/2022 10:21:59 AM CDT

Accumulated Precipitation (in)
August 29, 2022 to September 04, 2022



Stations from the following networks used: WBAN, COOP, FAA, GHCN, ThreadEx, CoCoRaHS, WMO, ICAO, NWSLI, Midwest Regional Climate Center
cli-MATE: MRCC Application Tools Environment
Generated at: 9/6/2022 10:20:11 AM CDT

Weather Information: Week Ending September 4, 2022

District and State	Temperature		Precipitation		Growing Degree Days ¹	
	Average	Departure from Normal ²	Total	Departure from Normal ²	Since April 1	Departure from Normal ²
Northwest	66.3	3.1	0.35	-0.71	1,814	67
North Central	65.8	3.9	0.57	-0.41	1,700	56
Northeast	67.5	5.2	0.73	-0.11	1,820	133
West Central	69.6	3.3	0.23	-0.61	2,183	43
Central	69.5	3.6	0.70	0.04	2,109	57
East Central	69.7	3.7	0.63	-0.01	2,032	65
Southwest	70.0	2.6	0.49	-0.14	2,279	61
South Central	70.1	2.6	1.01	0.45	2,286	67
Southeast	70.9	3.1	0.89	0.32	2,252	66
Wisconsin	68.3	3.5	0.57	-0.24	1,995	67

¹ Base 50° F.

² Normal based on 1991-2020 data.



Wisconsin Ag News – Cash Rent and Land Values

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Cooperating with Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

August 5, 2022

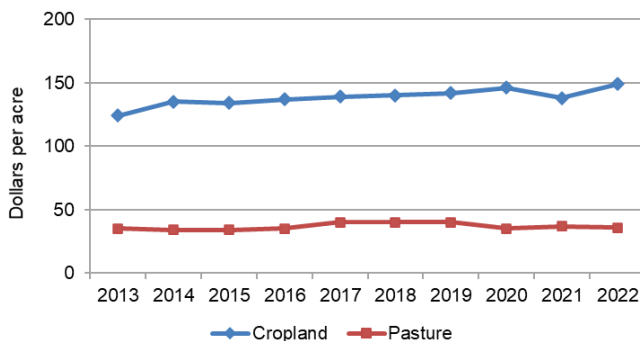
Media Contact: Greg Bussler

Cropland **cash rent** paid to Wisconsin landlords in 2022 averaged \$149.00 per acre according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Non-irrigated cropland rent averaged \$145.00 per acre, \$12.00 above last year. Irrigated cropland rent averaged \$250.00 per acre, \$13.00 above 2021. Pasture rented for cash averaged \$36.00 per acre, \$1.00 below the previous year.

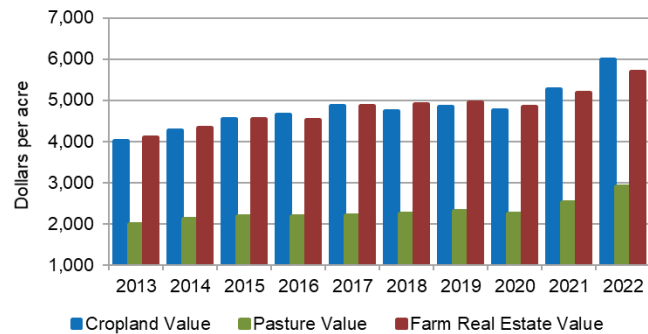
Wisconsin's **farm real estate value**, a measurement of the value of all land and buildings on farms, averaged \$5,700 per acre in 2022, according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service – *Land Values 2022 Summary*. This was up 10 percent, \$510 per acre higher than last year's value.

Cropland, at \$6,000 per acre, was \$720 higher than last year. Pasture, at \$2,900 per acre, was \$380 above last year.

Cash Rent Per Acre – Wisconsin: 2013-2022



Land Values – Wisconsin: 2013-2022



Cash Rent and Land Values – Wisconsin: 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cash rent					
Cropland, cash rent expense (dollars per acre)	140.00	142.00	146.00	138.00	149.00
Irrigated, cash rent expense (dollars per acre)	238.00	237.00	245.00	237.00	250.00
Non-irrigated, cash rent expense (dollars per acre)	134.00	137.00	138.00	133.00	145.00
Pasture, cash rent expense (dollars per acre)	40.00	40.00	35.00	37.00	36.00
Land values					
Cropland, average value (dollars per acre)	4,740	4,850	4,770	5,280	6,000
Pasture, average value (dollars per acre)	2,260	2,310	2,250	2,520	2,900
Farm real estate, average value (dollars per acre)	4,900	4,950	4,850	5,190	5,700
Value of farmland and buildings ^{1 2} (million dollars)	70,070	70,785	69,355	73,698	(NA)

(NA) Not available.

¹ 2022 Land in Farms acres used in this calculation will be released in February 2023.

² Total value of land and buildings is derived by multiplying average value per acre of farm real estate by the land in farms.

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The complete report can be found under **Publications** on the USDA NASS website at www.nass.usda.gov.

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(SBOC)...One MORE thing to think about this fall?

Fall is time where farmers literally reap the production of their year's efforts, but fall can be a crazy and chaotic time as well. Each year offers new challenges, and this one will be no different.

Farmers in the Midwest should be aware of an issue in the production system that may affect how their soybean deliveries may be handled. The issue is related to soybean seed coat color and it is important that producers are aware of this prior to harvest.

Soybean seed coats can vary in color based on genetics of the seed, the environment where they are produced, or through infections by disease organisms. The presence of colored seed coats is not uncommon and the U.S. Federal and Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) includes a measure of seed coat color in its soybean grading standards. U.S. #1 yellow soybeans are allowed up to 1% soybeans of other colors (SBOC), a general term to note any soybean with off-colored seed coats. U.S. #2 soybeans may contain up to 2% SBOC.

Following the 2021 harvest season, it became clear that Enlist E3 soybeans can produce soybean seed containing some off-colored soybeans, and the percentage of the seed with this SBOC appearance can be very large. Not all varieties produce this trait, and this trait may not express itself in all fields.



Graded grain sample containing a high percentage of SBOC.

By May, of 2022, around 32% of FGIS soybean certificates included SBOC of greater than 1%. So, nearly 1/3 of soybean samples did not make US #1 yellow soybeans due to off-colored soybeans (Images 1, 2 and 3). In previous years, fewer than 1% of soybean certificates failed to make US #1 due to

SBOC (<https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/giac-june-2022-meeting>).

From a practical standpoint, seed coat color is unlikely to have any effect on the quality of soybean meal or oil produced from these soybeans. However, significant quantities of U.S. soybeans are exported for food use. Presence of these off-colored seeds in shipments destined



SBOC Highlighted. Image courtesy of PJ Liesch.

CONTINUED from Page 28

for food use may lead to rejections at either the origin or destination of these shipments. This increases risk for all in the value chain.

Currently, it appears U.S. soybean processors will be unlikely to implement dockage on soybeans containing over 1% SBOC. However, elevators that have connections to overseas markets are likely to segregate soybeans by Enlist E3 vs other traits. While direct dockage to producers may be uncommon, it is very possible that basis levels will be adjusted based on local supply and demand of soybeans for processing and soybeans for export. Regardless of direct impacts, segregation of commodity soybeans into different markets reduces efficiencies and will lead to additional costs that must be borne by buyers or sellers of soybean.

If concerned, farmers should consider reaching out before harvest starts to their local elevators and/or seed dealers to determine how this issue may be handled locally.

*– Seth Naeve and Shawn Conley,
Wisconsin Soybean Extension Program*

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