

# cattleTRAILS

..... June 2025

To promote the Wisconsin beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education.

Picture submitted by Callie Behling



WISCONSIN  
CATTLEMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION



## President's Path

Tressa Lacy, WCA President

I hope everyone reading this has first crop of hay underway, and you're one of the lucky ones if it's complete! As we have wrapped up May Beef Month and continue into summer, I wanted to share some beef demand facts pulled from [beefresearch.org](http://beefresearch.org) that may be of interest for anyone who direct markets their beef.

1. Beef is the star of the grill! Nearly 75% of consumers indicate burgers are a "must have" food for grilling, and nearly 60% say the same about steak.
2. Retail data indicate that beef is competitive with chicken and far exceeds pork in terms of volume sales throughout summertime.
3. Father's Day compared to other top summer grilling occasions sees an increase in 28% of consumers purchasing steaks.
4. With rising costs, budget friendly beef cuts and package sizes at retail may become more attractive to shoppers looking to balance budget with the grilling experience they value.

WCA President-Elect Jared Geiser and I will be heading down to Missouri alongside Wisconsin Beef Council (WBC) folks the week of June 16th to collaborate with the rest of NCBA Region III representatives. We are greatly looking forward to this time and appreciate our Region III leadership for making this a priority. The intention is to make this an annual occurrence and extend the invite list out beyond the

## Heading towards industry collaboration

WCA President Tressa Lacy and President-Elect Jared Geiser will meet with fellow Region III representatives in June. executive committee.

In case you missed the email, Grace Link has taken another opportunity within the industry. The WBC is currently recruiting to fill the Director of Compliance and Operations position. The intention is whoever accepts that role with the Wisconsin Beef Council will also serve contractually to meet the WCA administrative needs just as Grace did. In the meantime, Kaitlyn and Tammy with WBC and myself will try to fill the void. I cannot express enough gratitude for the quality of work and dedication Grace exhibited for the industry. I look forward to her future engagement in our organization as a member.

We hope to see you at Summer Tour on June 28 and look forward to updating you on our conversation in Missouri.



*-Tressa Lacy*

2025 WCA President

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## upcoming events:

**WCA Summer Tour**  
June 28  
Southeast Wisconsin

**Wisconsin State Fair**  
July 31-August 10  
West Allis, WI

**Farm Technology Days**  
August 5-7  
Bear Creek, WI

**Wisconsin Red Angus Association Annual Meeting**  
September 13  
Lodi, WI

**World Beef Expo**  
September 18-21  
West Allis, WI

**CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST EVENTS AND INFORMATION**

.....  
[wisconsincattlemen.com](http://wisconsincattlemen.com)

# Wisconsin's Budget Process Continues

Jordan Lamb

WCA Legislative Counsel

The Welch Group



The Wisconsin State Legislature continues to work on preparing amendments to Governor Evers' proposed 2025-27 biennial budget bill, which he presented in February. Following the conclusion of four statewide public hearings on the bill in April, which the Joint Committee on Finance held in Kaukauna, West Allis, Hayward and Wausau, the Republican-controlled Joint Finance Committee met on May 8 and removed 612 of Gov. Tony Evers' proposals from the state budget as "non-fiscal policy" items. The Committee also amended the bill to take it back to the current base budget, meaning that they will start with a bill reflecting the spending approved in the 2023-2025 budget rather than starting from the Governor's spending proposal.

On May 15, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) released updated state revenue estimates for the Legislature to use while working on the budget. According to the LFB, the projected gross balance in the general fund will be \$4,337.7 million, which is \$70.2 million above the January projection of \$4,267.5 million. This means that the legislature still has a surplus to work with for this biennial budget process, but the projected surplus is \$335 million less than was previously expected.

The top priority for WCA and the Wisconsin Ag Coalition in this biennial budget bill is securing additional funding for the Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP), a local road improvement grant program through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The 2023-25 state budget invested \$150 million to create ARIP, the nation's first agriculture-specific road funding program. The funding provided through this program upgraded local roads that are essential to farms and forestry operations. As part of the initial two rounds of grant applications, the Department of Transportation received nearly 300 requests totaling over \$500 million—more than triple the available funds. The Ag Coalition is seeking an additional \$150 million over the 2025-27 biennium for the ARIP program to continue investment into Wisconsin's rural infrastructure.

In addition, the WCA and the Ag Coalition have requested support from the legislature in the 2025-27 budget bill to incentivize use and production of biofuels in Wisconsin; continued funding for farmer-led conservation programs; continued support for the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports; and increased investment in animal health. Many of these proposals were also included in the Governor's budget proposal.

However, included in Governor Evers' version of the budget is also \$3.7 million to provide farmers with fencing to prevent wolves from killing or injuring livestock. Most of the funding allocated by Governor Evers would fund fencing used to deter wolves in areas where they are chronically preying on livestock and \$25,000 of the funding would support DNR wolf monitoring. WCA continues to work with federal lawmakers to support the federal delisting of the gray wolf in Wisconsin.

The Legislature is working toward finalizing their 2025-27 budget proposal by the end of June at which time they will send their version back to Governor Evers for his review, potential vetoes, and approval as early as July.

## Cattle Trails Advertising

Half-page advertisements are available for placement in an upcoming issue of the Cattle Trails newsletter for \$50 per issue. Ad spaces for the June issue must be claimed by August 15, 2025.

Contact the WCA office for advertising details.

Phone: (608) 228-1457 | Email: [kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com](mailto:kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com)



# Join Summer Tour in Southeast Wisconsin!



The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association invites beef producers and industry members from across the state to gather in southeast Wisconsin for its annual Summer Production Tour on Saturday, June 28—a day dedicated to learning, networking, and seeing firsthand how fellow cattlemen are adapting and thriving in today's beef industry.

The first stop will be at **Adams Land and Cattle**. Located just outside of Lake Geneva, Adams Land and Cattle is a fourth-generation family farm with deep roots in Wisconsin agriculture. The Adams family moved from St. Charles, Ill., to their current location in 1952, starting as a dairy operation with cash crops. Today, Dave and Sherry Adams, along with their children Kimberly, Stacey, and Andrew, continue to build on that legacy. The family manages nearly 1,500 acres of corn, soybeans, and hay, supporting a beef herd that typically ranges from 150 to 225 head. They currently maintain about 180 head, including purebred Angus, Charolais, and crossbred cattle. Andrew also raises dairy cross calves, adding further diversity to their operation.

Dedicated to both production and promotion, the Adams family frequently partners with the Wisconsin Beef Council to host farm-to-fork tours for dietitians and culinary students—helping bridge the gap between farm and plate. Attendees of this year's Summer Tour will gain firsthand insight into how this progressive family farm blends tradition with innovation in Wisconsin's beef industry.

The **DeLong Co. Inc.** in Clinton will then welcome attendees to their facility. This sixth-generation, family-owned agribusiness has been operating for more than 110 years. Their motto, "We cultivate prosperity," reflects their commitment to farmers, families, communities, and future generations. They function across six main divisions including agronomy, seed, grain, exports, transport, and wholesale. Founded in 1913 by William E. and Jesse DeLong in Darien, Wis., DeLong expanded through acquisitions and infrastructure investments. Over the coming decades, the company pioneered in feed milling, fertilizer production (including Wisconsin's first liquid fertilizer), grain storage,

and transportation infrastructure. In the 1980s, they entered identity-preserved and food-grade grain markets and established export and transport subsidiaries, growing into a containerized export leader. The company currently operates 39 facilities across seven states.

The tour will then head to **Country Pride Meats** in Clinton. Established in 2009, Country Pride Meats offers custom slaughter for beef, hogs, lambs, goats, bison, and elk. They also stock a full freezer and fresh retail counter. They are known for their specialty sausages carrying more than 30 different varieties of bratwurst along with several different types of summer sausage and snack sticks made in house. Their team will share insights into meat marketing and value-added opportunities that can help farmers diversify and grow their customer base.

The final stop will be **Blueprint Genetics LLC** in Janesville. The goal of Blueprint Genetics is to improve the bottom line for producers by helping them maximize the genetic potential of their herd with donor housing and ET and IVF service. They built a donor housing facility designed for comfort as well as special needs housing for cattle that require attentive care. They work closely with a nutritionist who focuses on donor condition and offer creep feed for any calves alongside cows. Blueprint Genetics works with trained veterinarians, going above and beyond for animal health with their protocols.

The tour will also have special guest speakers including NCBA and Wisconsin Beef Council Executive director Tammy Vaassen. The 2025 Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association award recipients will be honored as well as this year's scholarship recipients. Lunch and hors d'oeuvres are provided on the tour. Attendees will be responsible for their own transportation throughout the day. Registration for this one-day program and meals is \$50, or \$45 per attendee for groups of four or more. Registration is available online at <https://www.wisconsincattlemen.com/events/summer-tour>. Please contact WCA with questions at 608-228-1457 or [info@wisconsincattlemen.com](mailto:info@wisconsincattlemen.com).



# Steak Trailer Update

Brady Zuck, WCA Steak Trailer Co-Chair



As we head into the summer months, the Steak Trailer is busy preparing for our largest event, the Wisconsin State Fair. Our first two events of the year, WPS Farm Show and Midwest Horse Fair, went extremely well, with a nice increase in sales at Midwest Horse Fair. Due to the cost of products, we have raised our prices again to maintain our margin – fortunately, we have not received any negative feedback, as consumers are expecting to pay higher prices at events.

We are excited to announce that we have ordered a new food preparation trailer! The new trailer will allow us to conduct all food preparation inside, including grilling. This will help eliminate the variable weather challenges we face – for example, windy conditions at this year's Oshkosh Farm Show made it difficult to keep the grills lit. With everything contained in one unit, we will be able to set up and tear down at each event more efficiently. Overall, we look forward to utilizing a modern trailer that helps increase our efficiency, make operations easier, and maintain food safety standards. We will continue to serve out of the red serving trailer, but combine all other equipment into the new unit.

The Steak Trailer is crucial to funding the activities of WCA – without it, we would not be able to continue to operate in our current capacity. Please consider volunteering at the Steak Trailer – even a few hours here and there is a great help! With the on-going challenges with labor that we are all well aware of, coming together as a membership to support the Steak Trailer is more important now than ever.

For the remainder of 2025, we will be attending the following events:

- Wisconsin State Fair- Milwaukee – July 31 – August 10
- World Dairy Expo – September 30 – October 3

If you know of a local 4-H/FFA/youth group looking for a fundraising opportunity, consider the Steak Trailer! Please contact Carrie Goss (608-606-2356, [wcasteaktrailer@gmail.com](mailto:wcasteaktrailer@gmail.com)) to secure your group's time at an upcoming event for the 2025 season.

We want to thank you all for your continued support and look forward to another great year at the Wisconsin State Fair!

*-Brady Zuck*

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# Four Ways to Maximize Calf Value

Written by: Beth McIlquham, Regional Livestock Educator, La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford and Richland Counties, and Adam Hartfiel, Regional Livestock Educator, Adams, Green Lake, and Waushara Counties.

With fewer feeder calves available, prices have continued to stay high and will most likely stay that way into the fall run. In a strong feeder calf market, it can often be difficult for producers to identify areas where premiums can be made come sale time. Producers can still increase calf value through proactive management practices before marketing. Optimizing weight gain and minimizing stress through practices you start the day the calves hit the ground will benefit your pocketbook in the fall.

### Vaccination:

Calves, at minimum, should be vaccinated for the most common respiratory diseases (IBR, PI3, BRSV, and BVD type 1 and 2) and Clostridia. Work with your vet to set up a plan and always follow the instructions on the label of the vaccine. Note that vaccinations given at the time of weaning will not be as effective due to the stress of weaning, which could reduce the immune response to the vaccine.

### Castration:

The preferred method of castration by buyers is surgical removal of the testes (knife) as this method provides a visual of a healed scrotum and gives trust that both testes have been removed. Placing a band above both the testes (banding) is also common. Most importantly, both methods of castration should be done before two months of age. As calves get older, swelling and chronic pain increases. Pain mitigation should be used if castrating calves older than two months. Decreasing pain in any stage of life helps calves return to feed faster and allows them to be more resilient.

### Weaning:

At a minimum, calves should be weaned for 30 days. Recent market data research by Oklahoma State University reported premiums for weaning length beyond 59 days at some markets. These premiums do not account for associated costs of keeping calves on the farm. Be sure to acknowledge your input costs when determining how many days your calves will be weaned. The time between weaning and sale allows for calves to adjust to living without the guidance of their mothers. Weaning is one of the most stressful times in a calf's life. During this time, try to avoid any other stressful events, such as castration, dehorning, or vaccinating. Spreading stressful events out across the early lifespan of a calf is a great way to help build resilient calves.

### Nutrition:

Calves need to learn to eat and drink independently post weaning. Although it seems simple, these aspects can be easily overlooked. Calves should learn how to eat from the bunk before leaving the farm. Recommended bunk space for

calves weighing 400-800 lbs. is 18-22 inches. It is common for young calves to want to eat together as a group, especially after being weaned because they don't realize feed is always available. Not providing enough bunk space early on can lead to variable growth within the group, and a group of calves lacking uniformity is less attractive to buyers.

Access to clean, potable water is essential for health, growth, and development. If possible, calves should be familiar with drinking from a tank or fountain by allowing their mothers to teach them prior to weaning. Water intake levels will vary based on weight and environmental conditions (Table 1), but the importance of clean, potable water cannot be overlooked.

### Conclusion:

High prices should not be an excuse for poor management. Opportunities for premiums still exist for the seller in a high market if good management practices are utilized. Building a reputation for high-performing, quality cattle can take a while to build, but choosing to take a short cut in a bullish market can have long lasting consequences.

### Works Cited:

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Article reviewed by UW-Madison Extension Colleagues Bill Halfman, Ryan Sterry, and Sandy Stuttgart

Table 1: Water Requirements of Beef Cattle

|              | Temperature in Fahrenheit  |     |      |      |
|--------------|--|-----|------|------|
|              | 50   | 60  | 70   | 80   |
| Weight (lb.) | Daily Water Requirements of Growing Steers and Heifers (Gallons) |     |      |      |
| 400          | 4.3  | 5.0 | 5.8  | 6.7  |
| 600          | 5.8  | 6.6 | 7.8  | 8.9  |
| 800          | 7.9  | 9.1 | 10.7 | 12.3 |



# Britt Meyers Joins National Industry Leaders at 2025 Young Cattlemen's Conference



I had the privilege of representing Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association at the 2025 Young Cattlemen's Conference, hosted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association at the beginning of June. This incredible experience brought together more than 60 individuals from across the country, each selected for their passion and dedication to the cattle industry.

Our conference began in Denver at NCBA headquarters, where we focused on advocacy, personal development and gained behind-the-scenes insight into the daily operations of the

association. From there, our group spent eight days traveling through Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., experiencing the industry from the ground up.

In four days, we toured the Five Rivers Cattle Feeding Kurer Yard, Greeley Hat Works, Tyson Foods Beef Plant, Empirical Foods, and Certified Angus Beef, each stop offering a unique perspective on the beef supply chain. We concluded our trip on Capitol Hill, where we explored the national policy issues impacting our industry and spent the day engaged in lobbying efforts with our state representatives.

I believe I speak for all attendees when I say that while this opportunity was initially intimidating, it quickly became one of the most inspiring and impactful experiences of our lives. The connections made, the insights gained, and the passion shared will continue to shape our careers and contributions to the cattle industry for years to come.



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## Congratulations 2025 Scholarship Winners!

The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association is proud to announce the recipients of our 2025 scholarships! Each year, WCA awards scholarships to outstanding high school seniors who plan to continue their education at a university, technical college, or community college in the United States. These students exemplify leadership, commitment to agriculture, and a passion for the beef industry.

Congratulations to this year's scholarship winners:

Kylie Garner, Almond – Kylie will attend the University of Wisconsin–River Falls to major in animal science with a minor in agricultural business. She plans to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

Alison George, Mondovi – Alison will also attend UW–River Falls, where she will study animal science with a meat animal

emphasis. Her goal is to become a large animal veterinarian.

Emily Kalina, Rice Lake – Emily is headed to the University of Minnesota–Crookston to major in animal science and minor in biology. She aspires to work as a large animal veterinarian.

Brooke Mitchell, Boscobel – Brooke will study agricultural communication at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Olivia Zuehls, Montello – Olivia will attend UW–River Falls to pursue a pre-veterinary medicine major with the goal of becoming a large animal veterinarian.

We congratulate these future leaders and wish them continued success as they represent the next generation of the beef industry.

# What Can the Checkoff Do, Part 2



**Tammy Vaassen**  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Beef Council

The Wisconsin Beef Council team had an incredibly busy May – from naming Brazen Head Pub in West Bend as the winner of our 2nd annual Wisconsin's Best Burger Contest to hosting farm tours for Wisconsin Grocers Association and the Aldi Sustainability team

to sponsoring Madison Burger Week and Run Madtown Marathon – there has been much education on the beef industry and bumps in beef sales as a result of your Checkoff investment.

I regrettably need to let you all know that Grace Link has moved on from employment with the Beef Council. Her contributions to this organization were incredible and she leaves us in a great position to continue to build upon her efforts. She also played a key role in supporting efforts of WCA, through a contract agreement between the two organizations. Her leadership will be missed, but we know she's a strong supporter of our organizations.

In my March article, I talked about what the Checkoff can and cannot do and shared a few details about how the Cattlemen's Beef Board operates. We also know there is confusion around the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, who works in both the Checkoff and policy areas of your industry. Here's a deeper dive into their efforts and how they keep these two areas separate.

Founded in 1898, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is the oldest and largest national trade association representing U.S. cattle producers. NCBA's two divisions, Policy and Federation, operate with one mission: To serve the cattle and beef industry by improving the business climate, growing beef demand, and increasing the world's access to U.S. beef. (The Federation represents the Beef Checkoff arm.) NCBA's Board of Directors includes both Federation and Policy officers and regional vice presidents, providing a voice for producers across the country. Wisconsin is in NCBA's Region III – Amy Radunz represents Region III on the Federation division, and Charlie Beshar of Missouri represents the region on policy issues.

## Partners in Policy

The Policy Division is guided and funded by NCBA members representing cow-calf producers, stockers, feeders and others who support the organization's work to enhance cattle industry profitability. Additional funding comes from sponsorships of programs, meetings and events.

NCBA is a grassroots producer-led organization with all policies introduced by producer-members, most of them through their state and breed organization affiliates, such as the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association. Every member maintains a final vote on NCBA policy. NCBA staff

in Washington, D.C., are on the front lines of the cattle industry's most critical political battles. The government affairs team assures that cattle producer voices are heard in the halls of Congress, at regulatory agencies and at the White House, based on policy developed by the membership. The NCBA Government Affairs office works on issues involving international trade, taxes, food safety, animal health, property rights, environmental regulations, federal lands, marketing, nutrition and more.

## Federation of State Beef Councils

NCBA is the home of the Federation of State Beef Councils, with individual councils investing Checkoff dollars into a collaborative effort that supports all 43 Qualified State Beef Councils. The Federation builds beef demand by inspiring, unifying and supporting an effective and coordinated state and national Checkoff partnership. NCBA's Federation Division also provides services to state beef council partners such as website development, issues and crisis management, communications, governance, leadership development and creative/design assistance to increase Checkoff investment efficiency and assure consistent and effective messages nationally. Wisconsin Beef Council uses all of these services on a regular basis, which allows us access to professionals with expertise in areas that we don't have internally.

NCBA is a contractor to the Beef Checkoff and manages the iconic *Beef. It's What's For Dinner.* brand; and oversees a variety of Checkoff-funded projects in the areas of beef promotion, research, education, human nutrition, consumer behavior and retail and foodservice partnerships. As a contractor, NCBA must annually submit program proposals to the Beef Promotion Operating Committee (BPOC), which is made up of producer leaders from the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the Federation. NCBA's proposals are evaluated against other program proposals, and the BPOC determines which contractors and programs to fund and at what level.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans is an example of how both NCBA divisions work toward a common goal. Checkoff-funded research managed by NCBA, as a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, provides foundational results that demonstrate the role beef plays in a healthy lifestyle. The Policy Division then carries that message to Capitol Hill and decision makers to make sure beef remains an essential component of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and stays on consumers' plates.

Honestly, after starting with the Beef Council it took me some time to understand the national organizations and how they operate, are funded, and how Wisconsin is represented at the national level. I'm always happy to answer your questions related to the Checkoff, on both the state and national level. Best wishes for a productive, fun and safe summer! Find great grilling recipes at <https://www.beeftips.com/cooking/grill-like-you-mean-it>.



## Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association

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