

cattleTRAILS

.....September 2026

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



Photo submitted by Douglas Schulz



Focused on Members

Our mission remains clear: "To promote the Wisconsin beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education."

We want to better understand your priorities as a Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association member.

Scan the QR code to take our membership survey! →



President's Path

Jared Geiser, WCA President

Late summer is here, and pastures across the state are showing the unpredictability of our weather with "just in time" rains hitting some and drought expanding across our state. County fairs are wrapping up, and we're all still trying to make the most of these last stretches of long days before fall settles in.

On the policy front, wolves remain front of mind. WCA joined NCBA and the Public Lands Council in urging the Senate to pass legislation that would return gray wolf management authority to the states. We appreciate Senator Ron Johnson's efforts to elevate this issue for livestock producers, and while the bill was blocked from immediate passage, we will continue supporting commonsense, state-led management that recognizes the realities cattle producers face on the ground.

Our strong cattle industry depends on reliable infrastructure, fair markets, and policy that understands the needs of producers. We're in incredibly frustrating times, with policy signals from Washington moving markets, packing capacity reductions adding uncertainty, and consumers hungry for more beef. As another election year approaches, no matter who holds office, WCA will continue building relationships and laying the groundwork for lasting policies that benefit Wisconsin cattle producers.

We had another successful WCA Summer Tour in the Chippewa Valley in June. These events are always a great reminder that there is no substitute for getting cattlemen together in person. Seeing different

operations, sharing ideas, and meeting new folks helps strengthen our organization and our industry. Great work again to our events committee!

As we look ahead, I want to again encourage members to take a few minutes to complete the WCA membership survey. Hearing directly from our members helps the board better understand your priorities and make sure we are focusing time and resources where they matter most to you. Whether your concerns are state policy, national issues, education, or events, your input helps guide the future of the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association.

Our mission remains clear: "To promote the Wisconsin beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education." That mission is not just a line on paper but lived out by each and every one of our members. It's the work we do when we speak up on policy, invest in leadership, support youth and producer education, and help consumers better understand the people behind Wisconsin beef.

I hope fall brings each of you timely rains, heavy weaning weights, and a safe, bountiful harvest.



-Jared Geiser

2026 WCA President

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Steak Trailer Update



Brady Zuck, WCA Steak Trailer Co-Chair

The WCA Steak Trailer was excited to see the bustling crowds of people return to the state fairgrounds for the 2026 WI State Fair. Official attendance at the 2026 State Fair was 925,749 compared to just 892,968 in 2025. You may recall the final day of the 2025 fair was cancelled due to historic flooding. As a result, we had a great show with positive sales near \$330,000. We continue to monitor historically high beef prices and adjust menu pricing to ensure we remain profitable.

Dave and Carrie successfully staffed a team of people who served 9,425 ribeye sandwiches, 8,523 burgers, 2,315 roast beef sandwiches and 824 hotdogs! Our new Cooking Trailer continues to be a great asset, helping us to increase efficiency and serve a quality product. A special thank you goes out to all the volunteers who shared their time, including:

- Emerald Clovers
- Milton FFA
- Marshall FFA

The final Steak Trailer event for 2026 will be World Dairy Expo, Sep. 29 - Oct. 2.

Additionally, we are already gearing up for next year's events. 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) to secure your group's time at an upcoming event for the 2027 season.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event soon!

Brady Zuck

upcoming events:

World Beef Expo
September 24-26
West Allis, WI

World Dairy Expo
September 29-October 2
Madison, WI

Winter Conference
February 27
Wisconsin Dells, WI

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

.....
wisconsincattlemen.com

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 December issue must be claimed by November 15, 2026.

Contact the WCA office for advertising details.
Phone: (608) 228-1457 | Email: info@wisconsincattlemen.com

Legislative Update: Battleground Wisconsin



Jordan Lamb

WCA Legislative Counsel

The Welch Group

Although the Wisconsin Legislature has adjourned for the 2025–26 legislative session, the state’s political activity is far from over. Wisconsin voters will elect a new governor on November 3, along with all 99 members of the State Assembly and senators from the odd-numbered State Senate districts. With control of both legislative chambers potentially at stake, Wisconsin will once again be at the center of the national political landscape.



Gubernatorial Race

Wisconsin’s August 11 partisan primary produced a dramatic result that captured national attention. The Democratic campaign had grown increasingly unpredictable throughout the summer. Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley ended his campaign on July 8, only to reenter the race after Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez withdrew on July 17 amid reports of campaign financial problems. Crowley subsequently received the endorsement of Gov. Tony Evers.

Meanwhile, public polling consistently showed Madison State Rep. Francesca Hong, a self-described democratic socialist, leading the Democratic field, sometimes by double digits. On Election Day, however, Crowley defied those predictions and narrowly secured the Democratic nomination by just over 0.4 percentage points.

The Republican primary was far less competitive. U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, a former state legislator who currently represents Wisconsin’s 7th Congressional District, easily won his party’s nomination.

The general election is now set: David Crowley (D) will face Tom Tiffany (R) on November 3, 2026, in what is expected to be one of the nation’s most closely watched gubernatorial contests.

State Assembly

All 99 State Assembly seats will be on the ballot this November. Republicans currently hold a 54–45 majority, meaning Democrats need a net gain of five

seats to take control of the chamber.

Under Wisconsin’s new legislative maps, the fight for the Assembly majority is expected to come down to a relatively small number of competitive districts in the Milwaukee suburbs, the Fox Valley and western Wisconsin.

Among the races receiving the most attention are:

- The 21st District in the Milwaukee suburbs
- The 51st District in southwestern Wisconsin
- The 53rd District in the Fond du Lac area
- The 61st District in West Allis and Milwaukee County
- The 88th District in the Green Bay area

These districts, and a handful of other closely divided seats, will likely determine whether Republicans retain control or Democrats win an Assembly majority for the first time in more than a decade.

State Senate

The Wisconsin State Senate is more competitive than it has been in years. Republicans enter the election with a narrow 18–15 majority, leaving Democrats just two seats short of controlling the chamber. The new legislative maps were first used in the 2024 elections, but only the even-numbered Senate districts were on the ballot that year. With the odd-numbered districts up for election in 2026, the new map will now be fully in effect across the Senate.

Several Republican-held districts have become genuine battlegrounds. Political observers are particularly focused on:

- The 5th District in the Waukesha and Milwaukee suburbs
- The 17th District in southwestern Wisconsin
- The 21st District in the Racine and Kenosha area
- The 25th District in northwestern Wisconsin

The 5th Senate District is widely viewed as the pivotal contest and could ultimately decide control of the chamber. National Democratic organizations have already identified Wisconsin as one of their top state legislative targets for the 2026 election cycle.

With an open governor’s office and narrow margins in both legislative chambers, the November election could significantly reshape the balance of power in Madison and the direction of state policymaking in 2027 and beyond.

Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Celebrates Industry Leaders During Annual Summer Tour

The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association (WCA) recognized outstanding leaders in Wisconsin's beef industry during its 2026 Annual Summer Tour, honoring individuals and families whose dedication has strengthened cattle production, producer education, and industry advocacy across the state.

Hosted in the Chippewa Valley, this year's Summer Tour brought cattle producers together for a day of education, networking, and on-farm learning. Attendees visited Rooney Angus, Strey Farm, and Kostka Ranch, where they learned about each operation's unique approach to beef production while discussing opportunities and challenges facing Wisconsin's cattle industry.

"The Summer Tour is one of our favorite opportunities to bring producers together," Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association President Jared Geiser said. "Not only do we get to learn from fellow cattlemen and women, but we also have the privilege of recognizing individuals whose leadership and service continue to move our industry forward."

Friend of the Cattlemen: Larry Parr

WCA presented its Friend of the Cattlemen Award to Larry Parr in recognition of his lifelong commitment to Wisconsin's beef industry.



Parr began his agricultural career on a dairy farm in southwest Wisconsin. Throughout his career, he managed a feed mill, raised beef cattle, and later worked with Quality Liquid Feeds, all while becoming a respected advocate for the beef industry. He also served on the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Board of Directors, representing the Vernon County Cattlemen's Association.

While expressing excitement for future generations in the industry, Parr encouraged producers to confidently

share the story of modern agriculture. During his remarks, he reflected on an experience where he unknowingly sat next to an animal rights activist at a WCA event and built trust by honestly explaining how farmers care for their livestock.

"Hear or know the story. Learn it, and tell it, because you never know who you're going to sit next to," Parr said.

Beef Quality Assurance Award: Dr. Sandy Stuttgen

The Beef Quality Assurance Award was presented to Dr. Sandy Stuttgen for her exceptional commitment to improving beef quality, cattle well-being, and producer education throughout Wisconsin.



As the agriculture educator for Taylor County with the University of Wisconsin Division of Extension, Stuttgen has been a driving force behind Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) programming statewide. She has devoted countless hours to developing educational resources, leading BQA workshops, and helping producers implement best management practices that strengthen consumer confidence.

Prior to joining Extension, Stuttgen spent her career as a large animal veterinarian. She earned a Bachelor of Science in bacteriology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison before completing her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree through the UW School of Veterinary Medicine.

"I'm honored to receive this award and grateful for the opportunity to continue working with Wisconsin's beef producers," Stuttgen said. "Beef Quality Assurance has allowed me to combine my passion for veterinary medicine with education, helping producers adopt practices that benefit their cattle, their operations, and the future of our beef industry."

Cattlemen of the Year: Hallstrand Angus

Summer Tour Cont.

Hallstrand Angus was recognized as the 2026 Wisconsin Cattlemen of the Year for generations of dedication to producing high-quality cattle and providing outstanding leadership within Wisconsin's beef industry.



Family-owned since 1884, Hallstrand Angus traces its roots to the original Hallstrand homestead near Jump River. In 1998, Kurt and Christina Hallstrand purchased their first registered Black Angus cows, and today the family manages more than 300 registered and commercial Black Angus cattle. The operation is led by Kurt and Christina alongside Todd and Jed Hallstrand, with support from multiple generations of the Hallstrand family.

In addition to raising quality Angus seedstock, the Hallstrand family has demonstrated decades of service to Wisconsin agriculture. Kurt Hallstrand previously received WCA's Friend of the Cattlemen Award in 2021 and has served as a founding member and longtime president of the North Central Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association, vice president of the Wisconsin Angus Association, and a member of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Board.

Kurt, Todd, and Jed Hallstrand accepted the award on behalf of their family.

Kurt credited the success of their operation to the family members who keep the farm running while others volunteer their time to strengthen the industry.

"If I didn't have Todd or Jed or some of the others taking care of things, I couldn't be involved with anything," Hallstrand said. "A lot of credit goes to my family. That's what makes an operation work. You need to have good people around you, and good organizations around you."

Reflecting on today's cattle market, Hallstrand added, "What a great business that we are in. Two years ago, we couldn't have imagined where we were going to be today."

He also encouraged producers to remain optimistic about the future.

"Some people might doubt if you can make it in the industry, but keep your head high. That's why I got involved in organizations because I always believed that we can."

Todd Hallstrand emphasized the importance of industry organizations working on behalf of producers, comparing the beef industry to a bicycle chain.

"A bad link can impact the entire machine," he explained, noting that organizations like the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association help ensure the industry continues moving forward together.

He also reflected on the challenges their family has overcome.

"Throughout the highs and the lows, we had a lot of heart-to-heart talks. We just said we have to stick with it, and it's working out really well for us today, but it's because of the people we've gotten to know."

Through educational farm tours and recognition of industry leaders, WCA's Annual Summer Tour continues to strengthen connections among producers while celebrating the people who are shaping the future of Wisconsin beef.

Save the date!

Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Winter Conference & Annual Meeting



Saturday, February 27



The Wisconsin Hotel (Wisconsin Dells)

More details to come!

Don't Let Trailer Safety Take a Back Seat



Written by: Bill Halfman, Beef Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Extension and Kim Cramer, Dairy & Livestock Program Manager, UW-Madison Extension

Fall is one of the busiest hauling seasons of the year. Whether you are buying or selling calves, moving cattle from pasture, or transporting culls, safety is of the utmost importance. Keeping loads within the safe working limits of the truck and trailer as well as performing regular maintenance improves safety for you, your livestock, and other drivers. If it's a brand-new trailer, a new-to-you trailer, or even the trusty rusty out of the shed, consider these key safety reminders.

Your truck, trailer, and hitch components should all be rated for the load you are hauling. Getting a load moving is one thing; stopping it safely is another. Several ratings are important to determine the maximum safe weight that can be hauled. For the truck, these include trailer weight rating (TWR), gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of the truck, maximum gross combined weight rating (GCWR) from the truck's manufacturer, and rear axle and hitch ratings. The trailer itself will also have a maximum load rating. Verify hitch, ball, ball mount, and trailer safety chains are all rated for a weight equal or greater than the fully loaded trailer. Trucks within the same duty rating model can vary in their towing and hauling capacity.

Inspect tires for tread depth (more than 2/32"), dry rot, sidewall cracks, or other damage that may become a problem with added weight and highway speeds. Cut gates and rear gates of the trailer should swing freely and latch properly. Look for signs of wear and cracked welds; these can quickly become a hazard once cattle are jostling inside the trailer. The trailer emergency breakaway brake system is often overlooked during safety checks and routine maintenance. If the trailer becomes separated from the truck, the battery pack mounted on the trailer activates the emergency brakes. Check the breakaway battery before each trip and replace it if corroded or unable to hold a charge.

Don't forget to keep your trailer clean. A two-inch layer of manure across a 7-foot by 20-foot trailer weighs about 1,456 pounds – that's equivalent to two hefty feeders or a finished steer! That weight only adds to the load your truck and trailer are hauling and could inadvertently push you over their maximum load ratings. Excess manure reduces animal traction, accelerates corrosion, and can cause manure to leak onto public roads, which is illegal and reflects poorly on the industry.

Finally, be prepared for emergencies. Pack for the breakdown that you don't plan to have. Ensure the items you pack are accessible even when the trailer is loaded.

Items to pack in case of a breakdown

- Spare tire

- Ramp or jack
- Cordless impact (don't over torque)
- Breaker bar
- Compressor (cordless battery or one hooks to truck)
- Tire pressure gauge, tire tread gauge
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Jumper cables or jump pack
- Highway warning/safety triangles
- IR temperature gun to check wheel bearings on long hauls
- Basic list of how many and type of cattle in the load

Another topic that warrants attention is the loading and unloading set up at the farm. How big of a step up or down do your cattle have to take when entering or exiting the trailer? For many gooseneck and bumper pull trailers it is a relatively large step. This can impede cattle movement as they stop to inspect and make the step, and increase risk of injury. A ramp can be as simple as a mound of fill dirt positioned so it extends under the back of the trailer. This simple improvement can prevent cattle legs from getting broken can improve cattle loading. It is also time well spent to check the condition of the alleys, gates, and footing in this area prior to use. This will help reduce the risk of injury to cattle, and people. Cattle prices are high, and an injury during loading can significantly reduce their value.

A thorough inspection of your trailer and loading area before fall hauling season can improve safety for humans and livestock, prevent catastrophic failures, and get animals to their final destination in good condition.

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Reviewed by:

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Spring and Summer Checkoff Activities

Tammy Vaassen

Executive Director,
Wisconsin Beef Council

The Wisconsin Beef Council team has been engaged in a number of activities in recent months, working to keep beef messaging in front of consumers, nutrition professionals, restaurants and retailers. Below are a few highlights that I wanted to share with you.



But first, I'd like to introduce you to the newest member of our team, Beth McIlquham, as our Industry Relations Manager. In this role, Beth will manage communications and key relationships with Wisconsin beef producers, auction markets, industry organizations, ag media and other partners across the state's diverse cattle industry for Wisconsin Beef Council. In addition, Beth will serve as the primary contact and staff lead for the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Executive Committee, where she'll work to organize board meetings and membership events, including Summer Tour and Winter Conference. Beth is a graduate from UW-River Falls and has spent the last two years as a Regional Livestock Educator for UW-Madison Division of Extension.

Project Recaps:

Kwik Trip Campaign - The Wisconsin Beef Council partnered with Kwik Trip during May Beef Month to promote the versatility of Ground Beef through fuel pump advertising, in-store promotions and consumer sweepstakes. Customers earned sweepstakes entries through store visits and could earn additional entries by purchasing fresh beef products. The campaign generated strong consumer participation with 216,511 sweepstakes entries and 139,908 purchase-based entries for a Pit Boss grill, demonstrating meaningful engagement with beef promotions and encouraging beef purchases among Kwik Trip shoppers. Beef dollar sales for the month saw a 12% increase as compared to month prior.



Best Burger Contest - The Dump Bar & Grill in Cambria earned the title of Wisconsin's Best Burger for its Tennessee Whiskey Burger. The Dump reported a 30% increase in business following the announcement. This is particularly noteworthy given that The Dump has been in the Elite Eight for all three years of the contest and benefited from growing exposure and customer traffic each year. For first-time participant, Pastimes Pub & Grill in Ripon, the impact was even

more dramatic. During the 25 days following the Elite Eight announcement, the restaurant's daily burger sales increased 114% compared to its previous quarterly average, while daily beef usage increased 118%.

We had excellent media coverage across all platforms, including online, TV, social, print and radio. The Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) of our public relations efforts came in at \$4.15 million, which is the estimate of what we would have had to pay for earned media coverage of the contest. The AVE in 2024 was \$1.1 million, so the public relations value of the contest has increased by 277%!

Nutrition Conferences - To help healthcare professionals confidently discuss beef's role in healthy eating patterns, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, has developed toolkits for these audiences that focus on heart health, infant and adolescent nutrition, and the importance of high-quality protein throughout the lifespan. These resources include clinical takeaways, patient education materials, and guidance that healthcare providers could incorporate into their practices.



To get these materials to Wisconsin's healthcare professionals, WBC attended conferences for nurses, dietitians, family physicians, and cardiovascular rehabilitation professionals. In addition to conference outreach, Checkoff funds supported mailing these kits direct to the offices of family physicians, pediatricians, and general practitioners. Distribution was further amplified through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's state and national outreach efforts.

Feedback has remained overwhelmingly positive from the audiences who have received these materials. In fact, in a recent survey of recipients, 96% of survey respondents rated the resources as valuable or very valuable, with 90% indicating they would recommend beef more frequently to patients after receiving and using the materials.

If you have a local healthcare facility, clinic or provider that you think would benefit from these materials, please let us know! We can get you the materials to hand deliver OR we can mail them. You can call me at 608-833-9940 or email tvassan@beeftips.com.



Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association

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