



LEGISLATIVE update

WISCONSIN
CATTLEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION

June 2022

Information provided by Jordan Lamb, DeWitt, LLP.



The Wisconsin State Senate and the State Assembly have adjourned their 2021-22 legislative sessions. However, our advocacy work on administrative rules continues through the calendar year. Barring unforeseen circumstances, they will not reconvene until January 2023.

Ag Water Quality Bill Signed Into Law (2021 Assembly Bill 727 / Senate Bill 677)

Senator Rob Cowles and Representative Joel Kitchens authored legislation that promotes farmer-led water conservation. This legislation creates a pilot grant program to promote commercial nitrogen optimization by allocating \$2 million for a commercial nitrogen optimization grant program. The program will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to farmers who implement projects to optimize commercial nitrogen use. In addition, the bill provides funding for a 3-year project position for one full-time hydrogeologist for the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey focusing on soil depth-to-bedrock information, which farmers must utilize to comply with existing environmental regulations. Finally, this bill also creates a cover crop insurance premium rebate of \$5 per acre to help offset the costs to plant cover crops, which is funded at \$400,000 per year. Based on similar programs in other states, incentives to encourage planting cover crops work to reduce agricultural runoff. AB 727 was approved by the State Assembly on February 23 with a unanimous 96-0 vote and concurred in by the Senate on March 8 by a voice vote. It was signed by Governor Evers on April 8, 2022, and is now 2021 Wisconsin Act 223.

DATCP Board Approves Scope Statements for Emergency Rules to Implement the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Grant Program and Cover Crop Insurance Premium Rebates – Proposed Revision to Wis. Admin. Code s. ATCP 52

Recently enacted 2021 Wisconsin Act 223 directed DATCP to create (1) a commercial nitrogen optimization grant program and (2) a crop insurance premium rebate paid on acres planted with cover crops. The Department proposes to amend ATCP 52 to create both of these programs through emergency rules.

Under the **commercial nitrogen optimization pilot program**, an agricultural producer may apply for a grant to implement a project, for at least two growing seasons, that optimizes the application of commercial nitrogen. An agricultural producer receiving a grant must collaborate with a University of Wisconsin System (UWS) institution, which would monitor the grant project on-site. The UWS institution may also receive a grant to implement that monitoring. The total grant to an agricultural producer and a collaborating UWS institution may not exceed \$50,000. The Department will consider rule provisions needed to implement the above statutory requirements.

The Department also proposes to amend ATCP 52 to also establish how to provide **crop insurance rebates for cover crops**. The Act authorizes DATCP to provide a crop insurance premium rebate of \$5 for each acre that is planted with a cover crop. DATCP will consider how: to establish the application and award process, to determine eligible cover crops, and to establish procedures to verify that a cover crop is planted on an acre for which a rebate is provided. DATCP will also consider how to determine the maximum amount of acres for

Like Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association on Facebook for the latest news!

which an applicant may receive funding in a year, except that DATCP may impose such a maximum only in years in which the total amount of funding requested by eligible applicants exceeds the total funding available. DATCP may not provide a rebate for the planting of a cover crop on an acre for which funding for planting a cover crop is provided from a federal or state grant or incentive program. The Department may begin the emergency rulemaking process for these two programs once these Scope Statements are approved by the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules.

DATCP and WEDC Announce New Wisconsin Agricultural Export Advisory Council

As directed by 2021 Wisconsin Act 92, which invests \$5 million into increasing agricultural exports from Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Randy Romanski and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes announced in April the creation of the new Wisconsin Agricultural Export Advisory Council (WAXC). This council will help guide the initiatives created through the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports (WIAE), a collaborative project between DATCP and WEDC to promote the export of Wisconsin’s agricultural and agribusiness products.

The council includes international trade experts from WEDC and DATCP, state legislators, and agriculture organizations and agribusinesses representing crop, dairy, and meat products. The council will meet at least twice per year, and the first council meeting was held on May 4, 2022, in Madison. Wisconsin agricultural exports reached an all-time high of \$3.96 billion in 2021. Through the WIAE, DATCP is working collaboratively with WEDC to build on that momentum by promoting Wisconsin agricultural products in the international marketplace.

Historic Levels of Wisconsin State Legislative Retirements


Wisconsin is nearing historical levels of incumbent legislators choosing not to run for re-election. As of April 20, 2022, more than 20% of the state Assembly and 18% of the State Senate are not seeking re-election. To-date, 31 members have announced they are not returning to Madison. In the last 80 years, we have only seen higher retirement numbers twice – 32 members did not return in 1942 and 31 members did not return in 1954.


WISCONSIN FEDERAL: U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany (R) introduces another bill to remove gray wolves from the endangered species list


The Minocqua Republican introduced the bill with U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colorado. If passed, this legislation would permanently remove the gray wolf from the endangered species list in the lower 48 states. See Tiffany’s Press Release: U.S. Rep. Tiffany: Reps. Tiffany, Boebert introduce the Trust the Science Act to remove the gray wolf from the endangered species list | WisPolitics.com



957 Liberty Drive, Suite 201, Verona, WI 53593

 info@wisconsincattlemen.com

 608.228.1457

 wisconsincattlemen.com