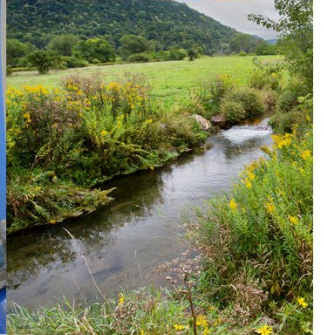
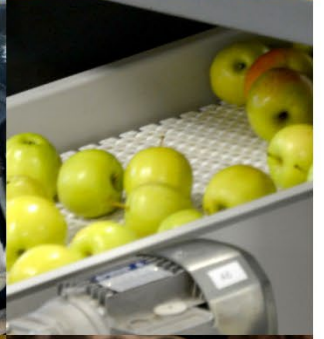




2023-25
Biennial Report
Wisconsin Department of
Agriculture Trade, and
Consumer Protection
(DATCP)



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About

State agencies are required under Wis. Stat. § [15.004 \(1\)\(d\)](#), to submit a biennial report to the Governor and Legislature in every odd-numbered year. This biennial report includes a department overview, update on internal operations, major program goals and objectives, and performance measures. Additional information about the department is online at datcp.wisconsin.gov.



Introduction

Greetings,

Thank you for your interest in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The agency's mission is to partner with all of the citizens of Wisconsin to grow the economy by promoting quality food, healthy plants and animals, sound use of land and water resources, and a fair marketplace.

During the 2023-2025 biennium, DATCP made progress on this mission while continuing to serve as a resource to businesses, consumers, and stakeholders across Wisconsin. We are glad to be America's Dairyland, recognized internationally for our high-quality and nutrient-rich dairy products. However, diversity is our strength in Wisconsin agriculture, and DATCP is proud to support farmers and the agriculture industry as they produce the food, fiber, and fuel that sets the state apart.

This was done through many programs, including Dairy Processor Grants, Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants, the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, and the Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program. These programs provide support to producers and agribusinesses as they work to provide quality products to those in Wisconsin and abroad.

DATCP remains committed to the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports and is continuing to make significant investments to increase the export of Wisconsin agricultural goods. The past four years have been the top four years on record for Wisconsin agricultural exports, and the agency will continue to support both existing and aspiring exporters in this effort.

Additionally, the agency worked with food and retail businesses as the agency, businesses, and consumers all want safe, healthy products that follow state and federal regulations. DATCP is proud to partner with businesses, and, as part of this work, Wisconsin now has three dozen state-inspected establishments participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Interstate Shipment program.

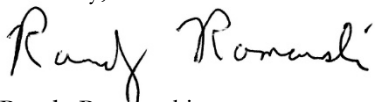
Through the agency's work, the department also detected new pests and responded to ongoing pest response needs around the state, including treating tens of thousands of acres for spongy moth. DATCP also assisted landowners seeking to enroll in the Farmland Preservation Program, Producer-Led Watershed Protection Program, Agricultural Enterprise Areas, Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program, and Crop Insurance Rebates for Planting Cover Crops program.

In the past two years, the agency built on stakeholder partnerships to protect and educate consumers, developed and implemented a Safe Online Shopping presentation, hosted the *Working Together to Protect Wisconsin Consumers* Conference, and, in 2024 alone, delivered nearly 500 presentations across the state. Through this work, the agency has educated consumers, businesses, and advocates about scams, data privacy, and housing and eviction issues.

Foreign animal diseases and pests remain one of the top threats to agriculture, and DATCP remains committed to protecting human and animal health. The agency works to prevent, diagnose, and control animal diseases and continues to guard against and educate the public about Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry and HPAI (H5N1) in cattle with producers, stakeholders, and local and federal counterparts. DATCP will continue to train and prepare for both current and future animal diseases. I am hopeful that this report provides you with information about DATCP's work and accomplishments from the previous biennium. I encourage you to visit [DATCP's website](#) and contact our team to learn more about our programs.

Thanks again for your engagement with our department.

Sincerely,



Randy Romanski
DATCP Secretary

Overview

The mission of the department is to partner with all the citizens of Wisconsin to grow the economy by promoting quality food, healthy plants and animals, sound use of land and water resources, and a fair marketplace. The department's programs are administered through six divisions: Food and Recreational Safety, Trade and Consumer Protection, Animal Health, Agricultural Development, Agricultural Resource Management, and Management Services.

Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

The department is headed by a nine-member citizen board, including two consumer representatives, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for staggered six-year terms. The board establishes department policy at scheduled meetings and approves all department administrative rules. Board member profiles, schedules, and meeting materials are available on the [DATCP board website](#).

Office of the Secretary

The Governor appoints a [secretary](#), who is confirmed by the Senate, to administer the department. The Office of the Secretary includes the secretary, deputy secretary and assistant deputy secretary. Attached directly to the secretary's office are the general legal counsel, legislative liaison and communications director.

Boards and Councils

There are numerous boards that are attached to the department, including the [Veterinary Examining Board](#), the [Land and Water Conservation Board](#), and the [Livestock Facility Siting Review Board](#). There are also a number of councils, which are created by statute and attached to the department for administrative purposes. There are also both standing and ad hoc advisory councils established to advise the department. Information about councils are available on [DATCP's website](#).

National Agricultural Statistics Service

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Wisconsin Field Office is co-located in DATCP's Madison office. NASS develops statistics on agricultural production and provides statistical analyses on a broad range of agricultural issues. DATCP funds 1.6 full-time employees' positions and provides general support to this work. Wisconsin agricultural data, including the [annual statistical bulletin](#) and other publications, is available on the [NASS website](#).

Internal operations

2023 Wisconsin Act 19 authorized 639.29 DATCP employees. Of these employees, about half are based in the field, providing essential functions across the state including inspections. A table of position authority by program includes:

(Table 1. Position authority by program)

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection position authority by program.

(Source: *human resources authorized position report*.)

	FTE	%
Food & Recreational Safety	235	37%
Trade and Consumer Protection	138.90	22%
Agricultural Resource Management	98.50	15%
Management Services & Secretary's Office	66.40	10%
Animal Health	45.00	7%
Agricultural Development	23.50	4%

Management Services-Laboratory	30.39	5%
Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service	1.60	0%
	639.29	

DATCP implemented a telecommuting policy in June 2021. This policy recognized the benefits of flexibility in work patterns for employees when both program and customer needs can be met. The document outlines the policy and procedures that must be followed when requesting, approving, and working under a Telecommuting Agreement. Division management has the ability to approve telework up to 60 percent over a pay period, provided that supervisors and division administrators are confident that program and customer needs can be met.

The department also maintains an alternative work schedule, in accordance with Wis. Stat. § [230.215\(4\)](#), allowing approval of alternative work schedules when scheduling supports efficient and effective business operations and quality customer service. DATCP continues to work through the [State of Wisconsin's continuous improvement initiative](#) to streamline processes and develop efficiencies. In addition, nearly half of our positions are field-based, working to serve consumers and businesses in communities across the state.

Major program goals and objectives

Wisconsin State Statute [20.115](#), identifies the department's program areas as: food safety and consumer protection, animal health services, agricultural development services, agricultural assistance, agricultural resource management, and central administrative services.

Division of Food and Recreational Safety

The [Division of Food and Recreational Safety](#) oversees food production, processing, distribution and retail sale. The division also ensures the safe operation of lodging establishments (hotels, bed-and-breakfast operations, and tourist rooming houses), pools and water attractions, campgrounds, and recreational/educational camps. Division of Food and Recreational Safety programs require close integration, clear communication, and clear collaboration with the federal government and local partners.

The division provides fair, effective, and efficient licensing and inspection services so that businesses can pursue their goals while adequately protecting public health. While the bulk of the division's work is on-site inspections, the division also submits food samples to the department's Bureau of Laboratory Services to perform analyses to ensure food safety and protect consumers. Further, the division evaluates and certifies private laboratories and laboratory analysts who perform microbiological and chemical (including drug residue) analyses on food, milk, and water.

The Division of Food and Recreational Safety works to ensure the public is properly informed, from food labels to information postings at hotels. Similarly, the division operates a program for grading cheese, butter, and eggs. Quality grades provide accepted standards for commerce. Finally, the division maintains its role in aiding growth of existing businesses and creation of new businesses by providing assistance to prospective businesses or existing businesses looking to expand. The division includes two bureaus: the Bureau of Food and Recreational Businesses, and the Bureau of Meat and Poultry Businesses.

Food and Recreational Businesses Bureau

The Bureau of Food and Recreational Businesses licenses and inspects thousands of dairy farms, dairy-related businesses, food processing plants, grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants, retail food establishments, and food warehouses. The bureau also licenses hotels, tourist rooming houses, bed and breakfast businesses, public pools, water attractions, campgrounds, and recreational/educational camps.

Laboratory analyses serve an important function in ensuring the safety of food, dairy products, and water supplies throughout Wisconsin. The bureau certifies food, dairy, and water laboratories and the analysts working in these laboratories.

The bureau also works with local governments to protect food safety. Serving as agents for the bureau, staff from

local health departments in 60 cities, counties, and multi-jurisdiction consortia license and inspect restaurants and other retail food establishments, lodging facilities, public pools, and water attractions, campgrounds, and recreational/educational camps. These “local agents” must comply with state statutes and Wisconsin administrative code. During this reporting period, the bureau continued its efforts to efficiently and effectively collaborate with local agents in providing oversight of mobile retail food establishments and collaboratively implemented a risk assessment factor in calculating retail food establishment license fees. In December 2024, USDA issued a federal order calling for a National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS). DATCP follows the NMTS to assist USDA in facilitating its comprehensive H5N1 surveillance of the Nation’s milk supply and dairy herds. The NMTS identifies [which States and herds within them are affected with H5N1](#).

Meat and Poultry Businesses Bureau

The Bureau of Meat and Poultry Businesses administers Wisconsin's meat inspection program, which is one of the largest state-run meat inspection programs in the nation and meets all USDA requirements for state programs. State-licensed meat establishments can only sell meat products within the state borders and must have state inspectors on site for slaughter and processing. The state also licenses custom exempt meat establishments that can slaughter and process livestock and poultry for the exclusive use of the animal or carcass owner. Custom exempt meat establishments are only subject to a periodic, risk-based inspection.

Wisconsin also participates in the USDA Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program, which allows selected and approved state-inspected meat establishments to ship certain products wholesale across state lines. Thirty-nine state-inspected meat establishments participate in this program and are expanding their market areas. Wisconsin has the second highest number of participating establishments in the CIS program, out of only ten states receiving this authorization from USDA.

Division of Trade and Consumer Protection

The Division of Trade and Consumer Protection works to ensure fair Wisconsin markets by fighting fraudulent and deceptive practices that harm consumers and businesses. The division enforces consumer protection laws, maintains the state’s official weights and measures system, conducts petroleum tank and fuel quality inspections, administers the producer security law, and inspects, certifies, and grades agricultural commodities.

This biennium, the division served on statewide and enterprise initiatives convened to address significant current topics impacting our state, such as the [Lead-by-Example State Agency Technical Team](#). The division continues to work with its agency partner, the Department of Financial Institutions, to promote financial literacy and root out financial fraud. The division regularly engaged with stakeholders to provide regulatory updates and share insights about new trends and issues to monitor in the marketplace. The division also conducted numerous training activities, listening sessions, and hearings on administrative rules using both in-person gatherings and virtual online platforms. For example, the Bureau of Consumer Protection held its third *Working Together to Protect Wisconsin Consumers* Conference in 2025.

The Division of Trade and Consumer Protection consists of three bureaus: the Bureau of Business Trade Practices, the Bureau of Consumer Protection, and the Bureau of Weights and Measures. Each bureau has conducted listening sessions with various stakeholders over the past two years. By improving these working relationships through continued engagement, the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection has developed a better understanding of the picture of protecting consumers and the markets of Wisconsin.

Business Trade Practices Bureau

[The Bureau of Business Trade Practices](#) promotes fair and open competition in the marketplace. Specifically, the bureau administers the [Agricultural Producer Security Law](#) and a number of regulations prohibiting a variety of unfair business practices, including the [Unfair Sales Act](#) (a prohibition against selling below cost), dairy trade regulations, price gouging, and a public warehouse keeper security program. The bureau also maintains cooperative agreements with the USDA to provide commodity grading services for grain, fruits, and vegetables. The bureau is made up of two sections: the Agricultural Producer Security Section and the Trade Practices Section.

Consumer Protection Bureau

DATCP is Wisconsin’s lead agency for consumer protection. The [Bureau of Consumer Protection](#) has statutory

and rulemaking authority over transactions between businesses and consumers. These statutes and rules serve as a framework that allows legitimate businesses to flourish and provides consumer confidence in the marketplace. The bureau fights fraudulent and deceptive practices that harm consumers and honest businesses through the administration of more than 60 statutes. The bureau receives more than 100,000 contacts each year – more than 10,000 of which are received as formal written consumer complaints. Each year, the bureau publishes a [“Top Ten” list of consumer complaints](#). For the past three years, landlord-tenant issues were the top consumer concern. Telemarketing was the second-most common complaint, and home improvement issues rounded out the top three.

The bureau continued to expand its consumer education and awareness efforts to help consumers combat scams and fraud by adding a “Safe Online Shopping” presentation and surpassing 500 community presentations annually. These presentations, along with all the bureau’s informational resources, are available in both English and Spanish. To enhance the user experience, the bureau developed an online tutorial that walks consumers through the complaint process and emphasizes historically overlooked areas to ensure complaints include important details. As a result, the bureau has been able to mediate and resolve issues more efficiently, which benefits consumers and businesses alike.

Weights and Measures Bureau

The [Bureau of Weights and Measures](#) maintains the state’s official weights and measures and petroleum inspection services. Through inspections and other regulatory services, the bureau ensures businesses operate in a fair marketplace and consumers receive the correct amount of product at purchase. The Weights and Measures Inspection Program is a key consumer protection program that impacts all of Wisconsin’s taxpayers. The bureau performs inspections of a wide range of devices statewide, including gasoline pumps, scales, and store checkout scanners, to ensure accuracy for consumers and businesses. The bureau also administers fuel quality standards, inspects and permits tank systems that contain petroleum and other hazardous and flammable liquids, and provides certification examinations and credentials for tank installers, inspectors, removers, testers, and site assessors.

In 2025, the bureau updated weights and measures credentialing testing options providing a virtual proctoring method through the National Council on Weights and Measures (NCWM). This update also affords weights and measures technicians reciprocity to conduct weights and measures service work in many other states in the country that accept NCWM exam completion.

Also in 2025, the bureau procured new vehicle tank meter (VTM) and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) inspection trailers. These new trailers expand the bureau’s capacity to test licensed VTM and LPG devices that are used by consumers across the state, ensuring equity in the marketplace.

The bureau maintains and staffs the state’s Metrology Laboratory, which maintains the State of Wisconsin standards of mass and volume, and has a Certificate of Measurement Traceability from the National Institute of Standards and Technology Division of Weights and Measures with precision up to Echelon II for mass. The laboratory annually calibrates and certifies more than 13,000 standards used by weights and measures officials and private weights and measures companies to inspect commercial scales and other measuring devices and to calibrate their equipment.

Division of Animal Health

The Division of Animal Health is responsible for preventing, diagnosing, and controlling animal disease. The goal is to protect animal and human health and to prevent losses to livestock and animal industries. The division employs several tools to achieve this goal, including animal health and disease programs, animal disease response, and proactive education. The division has two bureaus, Animal Disease Control and Field Services, and includes the Veterinary Examining Board.

Animal Health and Disease Programs

The division is responsible for animal disease response. When a disease of concern is identified, the division implements quarantines and conducts epidemiological investigations to trace the disease to its place of origin and to other potentially infected premises. The division administers the livestock premises registration program through a contract with the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium, which significantly enhances the division’s ability

to respond rapidly to a disease outbreak. The ability to trace animal movements rapidly is essential to containing and eradicating disease threats and protecting export markets for animals and animal products.

In March 2022, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) was confirmed in domestic birds in Wisconsin for the first time since 2015. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2025, HPAI was confirmed in domestic birds on 11 premises in seven Wisconsin counties. A total of 419,014 domestic birds in Wisconsin were affected. The response required a joint effort of DATCP, the USDA, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), counties, and municipalities. More than 40 state and federal staff were involved. Affected premises were quarantined and the birds were depopulated to prevent the spread of disease. Carcasses and infected materials were disposed of and premises were cleaned and disinfected.

For trade purposes, poultry flocks that sold birds or their products were classified as “poultry” while those not involved in sales of birds or their products were considered “non-poultry.” The management of locations affected by HPAI differed depending on this designation. As positive poultry flocks were detected, 10 kilometer control areas were quickly established around the infected premises. Movement of susceptible animals or animal products into or out of the control areas was restricted to prevent disease spread. Movement resumed via a special permitting process, which sometimes required disease testing and additional biosecurity measures. For flocks classified as non-poultry, 10 kilometer surveillance zones surrounding infected premises were established in place of control areas. All registered flocks located within the surveillance zones were contacted to report signs of disease in their birds, and commercial poultry flocks were required to perform laboratory testing to ensure their birds remained uninfected. The State completed the necessary actions and surveillance requirements to be considered free from HPAI in poultry as of June 11, 2025.

In the previous biennium, Division of Animal Health staff continued an extensive Bovine Tuberculous (TB) investigation. In September 2018, TB was identified in a cow from a Wisconsin farm with more than 2,000 cattle. The division immediately issued a quarantine of the affected premises and began an investigation. In accordance with direction from the USDA, the division began a test and removal protocol of the infected herd, rather than a full depopulation. A total of 11 rounds of whole herd testing were conducted by division staff, including initial within-herd prevalence testing, removal testing to cull infected animals, and verification testing to establish a low probability of continued infection within the herd. In August 2021, verification testing was conducted and, finding no evidence of TB, the quarantine was released. The herd is required to participate in regular assurance testing for five years following quarantine release. Assurance tests were conducted by division staff in September 2022, 2023, and 2024. No additional infected animals were identified. Through this investigation, Wisconsin preserved its status as a TB-free state. The division will conduct further assurance testing in the next biennium.

Division of Animal Health staff continue to respond to Chronic wasting disease (CWD) in farm-raised deer herds. Since 2002, there have been 47 farm-raised deer premises diagnosed with CWD in the State, 24 of which have been fully depopulated. Of these totals, three were first diagnosed with CWD during the last biennium, two were fully depopulated during the last biennium, and one was partially depopulated during the last biennium (July 2023 – June 2025). When CWD is diagnosed, the herd is immediately quarantined, which restricts movement from the premises of live animals, as well as carcass parts and equipment that may come in contact with the farm-raised deer or their bodily fluids. Herds containing farm-raised deer that were previously purchased from the CWD positive premises may also be quarantined. If the animal in which CWD is diagnosed was purchased from another premises within the last five years, the origin farm may also be quarantined. All premises under quarantine have regular (every six months) inspections to inform decisions about what will happen with the premises.

Division of Animal Health staff continue to train and prepare for animal disease responses. Select animal health staff attended national level African swine fever response exercises in August and October 2023. As part of a USDA National Animal Disease Response and Preparedness (NADPRP) Grant, staff conducted four Catastrophic Animal Mortality Planning workshops for producers and veterinarians across the state in 2024. Also in 2024, field staff conducted Site Manager training for new staff that could be assigned as a Site Manager during a foreign animal disease response. In April 2025, as part of a USDA NADPRP Grant, select staff from the Division of Animal Health and from the Division of Food and Recreational safety completed training at the Humane Handling Institute (HHI) on the proper use and maintenance of captive bolt stunners. Additionally in April 2025 and as part of a Medical Reserve Corps Grant, the Wisconsin Animal Response Corps (WARC) hosted a Basic Animal Sheltering in Emergencies (BASE) course for responders who may have to establish animal shelters during a disaster.

Proactive Education

Another component of the division's mission is to provide education and guidance to the public and affected industries. The division's veterinary program managers frequently meet with private veterinarians, members of animal industries, and local units of government to discuss program changes, diseases of concern, and disease reporting. The division provides chronic wasting disease sampler certification training, humane officer training, and rabies control trainings. Division staff provide expertise and guidance as needed regarding the humane handling of animals.

The Division of Animal Health also supports the Veterinary Examining Board (VEB). The division provides support for licensing of veterinarians, certification of veterinary technicians, veterinary complaint investigation, disciplinary monitoring, administrative rule proposals, and communications and outreach with industry. During calendar years 2023 and 2024, the VEB received 374 complaints regarding veterinarians and veterinary technicians. Of these, the VEB opened 111 cases for investigation. The VEB closed 99 investigations during these two years.

Division of Agricultural Development

The Division of Agricultural Development serves and strengthens the state's agricultural industry by helping producers and processors innovate, expand, and thrive through one-on-one consultations; referring to expert technical assistance through public and private partners; and providing funding through grant programs funded using federal and state resources. The division has two bureaus, Agricultural Export and Business Development, and Agricultural Resource and Promotion.

Agricultural Export and Business Development Bureau

The Bureau of Agricultural Export and Business Development consists of the International Agribusiness Center and the Economic Development and Innovation Center.

International Agribusiness Center

The [Wisconsin International Agribusiness Center](#) (IABC) identifies export opportunities around the world for Wisconsin's agricultural companies and producers. Staff provide technical expertise and market development of Wisconsin agriculture through increased exports and the development of trade enhancing partnerships. The IABC uses client feedback and global trends along with market and export data to establish criteria for identifying target markets and potential trade promotion activities.

Staff coordinate international trade shows and trade missions abroad, as well as host buyers' missions to the state. The IABC provides Wisconsin agribusiness access to grant funding and trade support through the Export Expansion Grant program and partnering with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to provide International Market Access Grants. Housed within the IABC, DATCP created the Wisconsin Agricultural Export Advisory Council (WAXC). WAXC is comprised of 21 members, who advise the DATCP Secretary on strategies, make recommendations, and evaluate the progress of the [Wisconsin Initiative for Agriculture Exports plan](#). In July 2024, DATCP filed a [report to the legislature](#) detailing the progress of the Wisconsin Initiative for Agriculture Exports (WIAE). Utilizing WIAE funding provided in the budget totaling \$558,400 in 2023 and \$1 million in 2024, IABC staff were able to execute 50 trade promotional activities domestically and internationally. During those trade promotional activities, IABC staff were able to work alongside 231 agribusinesses to promote Wisconsin products worldwide.

Economic Development and Innovation Center

The Wisconsin Economic Development and Innovation Center supports agricultural producers, processors, and agribusinesses to start, grow, and diversify their business through a wide range of financial grants and technical assistance programs. Staff provide information, resources, and connections for businesses and organizations throughout the supply chain to sustain and grow Wisconsin's agricultural industry. Staff also offer technical assistance to farmers and processors to foster connections and provide access to resources and information.

Staff coordinate the DATCP Farm to School Advisory Council, which is comprised of 15 individuals who make recommendations to the DATCP Secretary to guide the development of the Farm to School initiative in Wisconsin and create the required [Wisconsin Farm to School Annual Report](#). Staff also manages the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council (OAC). The OAC promotes Wisconsin's national leadership position in organic agriculture by

advising the DATCP Secretary on organic issues, production, processing, and purchasing opportunities for Wisconsin farmers, processors, and consumers.

Staff manage several grants that support innovation, profitability, and long-term viability of Wisconsin agriculture. [Dairy Processor Grants](#) provide access to services and resources for proposed dairy processing plant projects that enhance or develop the current business, solve an existing problem at the plant, improve production or profitability, and help the processor innovate. DATCP administers funding and provides technical assistance to recipients for the [Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program](#), which supports Indigenous food system development to bring healthy culturally relevant foods to Tribal elders and their families. The [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) is funded federally and distributed by DATCP to help organic farmers and processors pay for organic certification. The [Specialty Crop Block Grants](#) fund crop production research, grower education, and market development projects. The [Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants](#) work to mitigate barriers in local food systems by increasing efficiencies in processing, marketing, and distributing local food in markets including stores, schools, and institutions.

Staff also administer [Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants](#) to help grow Wisconsin's meat and meat processing industry. The [Meat Talent Development Program](#) was also created to help attract students to meat related careers, provide financial support to students, and connect the meat processing industry to potential employees. DATCP also maintains a cooperative agreement with USDA that that helped support the [Wisconsin Local Food Purchase Assistance Program](#) and the [Wisconsin Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program](#), which are designed to strengthen systems and support Wisconsin farmers and food processors.

Agricultural Resource and Promotion Bureau

The Bureau of Agricultural Resource and Promotion consists of the Wisconsin Farm Center and the Agricultural Marketing and Outreach Center.

Wisconsin Farm Center

The [Wisconsin Farm Center](#)'s primary role is to help farmers sustain, grow, or transition their businesses by providing free, confidential, and specialized assistance. Farmers can reach Farm Center staff through a toll-free phone number and by email with their industry questions or to receive help identifying available resources.

Wisconsin Farm Center services include farm [financial consulting](#) on topics such as profitability and farm viability, debt structure, and cost of production. Transition planning assistance supports farmers while planning for transfer of their farm businesses to the next generation of operators. Mediation and arbitration provide a neutral facilitator trained in mediation to help parties in conflict pursue an understanding and agreement in farm-related disputes. The [Veteran Farmer Assistance and Outreach Program](#) supports Wisconsin military veterans interested in farming by helping them access technical expertise or the special Homegrown by Heroes logo to utilize for selling their agricultural products. The Farm Center also supports its [Herd-Based Diagnostics Program](#) that provides veterinary diagnostic analysis to Wisconsin dairies of all sizes and management types for issues related to stray voltage.

The [Farmer Wellness Program](#) includes a 24/7 Farmer Wellness Helpline, professional counseling services at no cost via tele-health sessions, in-person sessions, and monthly online support groups. Finally, the popular [Rural Realities podcast](#) releases episodes every other month so listeners can consume new educational content at a time and location of their choosing.

Agricultural Marketing and Outreach Center

The Agricultural Marketing and Outreach Center supports the growth and success of local and regional food systems through business, farm and rural development, strategic marketing programs, and outreach services. Targeted promotional campaigns in partnership with key industry partners maintain and grow consumer demand. The [Something Special from Wisconsin™](#) (SSfW) is a trademarked marketing program that provides marketing and business opportunities for any business, no matter the size. Businesses can apply to use the SSfW logo if at least 50 percent of the value of the product or service is attributable to Wisconsin ingredients, production, or processing activities.

One of the most recognizable spokespersons of Wisconsin agriculture is [Alice in Dairyland](#). Alice in Dairyland is a public relations professional who promotes Wisconsin products to audiences of all ages and educates the media, youth, and civic groups about the many facets of the state's agricultural industry. Alice in Dairyland works with

media personnel across the state of Wisconsin, and beyond, to share the story of Wisconsin's agriculture industry. The Alice in Dairyland program has a 77-year history.

Staff manage seven [marketing orders](#) for major agricultural commodities in Wisconsin including cherry, cranberry, corn, milk, soybean, ginseng, and potatoes. Staff provide operational guidance and election oversight to these boards as they determine how to manage funds for market research and development, industrial research, and educational and promotional programs. Staff work with [county and district fairs](#) to improve exhibits and signage to better showcase and educate fairgoers about Wisconsin agriculture. Staff register fair judges and distribute state aid for fair premiums. Staff also register licensed cultivated [ginseng growers](#) and dealers, compile the value and acreage of Wisconsin ginseng, and issue shipping and retail certificates for cultivated ginseng growers and dealers.

Agricultural Resource Management

The Division of Agricultural Resource Management is responsible for farmland preservation, soil and water conservation, plant protection, and agrichemical management. The Division of Agricultural Resource Management includes three bureaus: Land and Water Resources, Plant Industry, and Agrichemical Management.

Land and Water Resources Bureau

The [Land and Water Resources Bureau](#) works with local governments, other state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, university researchers, and landowners to conserve soil, prevent agricultural runoff, and preserve farmland for future generations. This work is done through numerous programs and partnerships. To promote long term soil productivity, protect natural resources, enhance water quality, and address soil erosion, the bureau supports local development of Land and Water Resource Management Plans. In addition, the bureau is charged with supporting the works of the Land and Water Conservation Board, which advises the department on soil and water conservation programming amongst other duties.

DATCP distributes Soil and Water Resource Management Grants to fund county conservation staff and landowner conservation practices, provides support services such as [nutrient management](#) education and training for project cooperators, and aids in innovative conservation projects. Conservation engineering staff provide technical assistance and training for planning, design and construction of conservation practices, and nutrient management staff provide training and support in developing nutrient management plans. In 2024, 3.82 million acres, or 44 percent, of Wisconsin's cropland was covered by an approved nutrient management plan. Through the Soil and Water Resource Management Grants and other programs, funds and resources are distributed to farmers to voluntarily implement local conservation practices, crop, and nutrient management changes to prevent and reduce runoff from farm fields. In 2024, through [Producer-led Watershed Protection Grants](#), 47 groups throughout the state received \$1 million in total funding and enacted practices that prevented approximately 235,405 pounds of phosphorus and 331,157 tons of soil from leaving farm fields.

The bureau also has numerous programs to preserve farmland. [The Farmland Preservation Program](#) encourages protections for agricultural land resources, promotes sound land use planning, encourages agricultural investment, promotes soil and water conservation, and helps farms stay economically viable. Landowners and local governments may cooperatively participate through [Agricultural Enterprise Areas](#) (AEAs), Farmland Preservation Zoning Districts or both. AEAs are community driven efforts to identify locally important agricultural areas. Once established, landowners within an agricultural enterprise area can enter into a 15-year farmland preservation agreement with the state. The department designated two new AEAs and modified six existing AEAs during the biennium. As of January 1, 2024, Wisconsin had 51 AEAs totaling 1.64 million acres. During the biennium, the bureau enrolled 47 new farmland preservation agreements on 5,928 acres of farms. Farmland Preservation Zoning is a locally crafted and administered zoning ordinance that seeks to promote agricultural growth, restrict non-agricultural uses and limit potential land use conflicts. During the biennium, the bureau certified two new farmland preservation zoning ordinances in two towns. The bureau also prepares [Agricultural Impact Statements](#) (AIS) for public projects that affect farm operations in Wisconsin.

The bureau also implements the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP), in cooperation with the USDA and the counties. The department enters into 15-year agreements or perpetual easements with landowners that establish conservation practices such as buffers and filter strips along eligible water bodies to reduce agricultural

runoff, protect the soil and improve water quality. More than 100 CREP contracts were enrolled in CREP each year of the biennium establishing upwards of 2,500 acres of water quality protecting conservation practices across the state over the two-year period. As of October 2024, the state had 3,451 active CREP contracts on 39,868 acres. There are 541 active CREP contracts with landowners that are perpetual easements. These require active monitoring by DATCP and county conservation staff. During the biennium, the bureau again had a summer conservation compliance intern each year to implement easement monitoring protocols with a goal of checking a fifth of the easements annually for compliance with program guidelines.

The [Conservation Engineering Program](#) within the bureau provides a range of technical, training, and other assistance to ensure the proper design and installation of conservation practices on farms and other rural lands. This assistance is vital to the functioning of cost-sharing and permitting of conservation programs operated by Federal, state, and local governments. DATCP certifies conservation engineering practitioners and employs 11 engineers and environmental specialists around the state. Over the past year, conservation engineering staff provided 1,204 technical assistance services in the form of designs, plan reviews, construction inspection, consultations, and approval of designs and installed practices to help get conservation on the ground. Engineering staff also oversee the state's [Agricultural Drainage Program](#) and associated drainage districts statewide and is responsible for monitoring county drainage board and drainage district compliance with applicable law.

The bureau also implemented two emergency rules in 2024, the [Commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Grant Program](#) (NOPP) and [crop insurance premium rebates for planting cover crops](#). Under the NOPP, agricultural producers collaborate with University of Wisconsin System scientists to conduct two-year research projects that enhance the understanding of and refine new methods that optimizes nitrogen applied to agricultural fields and decreases nitrogen loss to atmosphere, groundwater, and surface water. During 2024, nineteen projects were awarded totaling \$1 million in grant funds for NOPP. DATCP partnered with the USDA Risk Management Agency to establish crop insurance premium rebates for planting cover crops. In 2024, the department awarded an estimated \$800,000 in insurance premium rebates to 488 agricultural operations across the state for planting cover crops on 163,000 acres of land. Both programs have been funded under the 2025-2027 state budget and will require emergency rule making until the permanent rule is in effect.

The Land and Water Resources Bureau develops technical standards for [Livestock Facility Siting](#) under the livestock facility siting law (s. 93.90, Wis. Stats. and Wis. Admin Rule ATCP 51). These provide administrative support to the Livestock Facility Siting Review Board, which hears appeals of zoning decisions regarding livestock siting made by local governments who have adopted livestock facility siting regulations under the livestock facility siting law..

Plant Industry Bureau

The [Plant Industry Bureau](#) protects Wisconsin's agricultural, forestry, and horticultural industries and native plants by overseeing and ensuring compliance with laws and regulations involving [plant pests](#), [honey bees](#), [nursery plants](#), [Christmas trees](#), [firewood](#), and [seed](#). The bureau implements programs designed to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful plant pests and diseases, especially introduced regulated invasive species. Plant Industry Bureau program activities include inspection, quarantine, survey, compliance, control, and providing outreach and information related to plant pests.

The bureau also facilitates interstate and international trade of Wisconsin agricultural products and commodities by [certifying](#) plant health and the pest-free status of plant products. During the biennium, bureau staff licensed an average of 654 nursery growers, 1,259 nursery dealers, and 372 Christmas tree growers annually. Nursery program staff inspected an average of 449 nursery grower, 442 nursery dealer, and 524 Christmas tree locations per year for regulatory plant pests during this period. In 2023 and 2024, staff in the export certification program issued 8,217 and 9,559 phytosanitary certificates in the export certification program, respectively, for more than \$2.3 billion worth of logs, grain, and other plant product exports. Bureau staff certified an average of 38 firewood dealers per year who heat-treated or seasoned firewood to kill pests, enabling it to be sold and used statewide. Seed program staff licensed an average of 719 seed labelers per year during the biennium and collected an average of 382 agricultural, lawn, and vegetable seed samples per year that were tested for germination, purity, and noxious weeds.

From 2023-24, apiary inspectors conducted an average of 216 inspections per year for honey bee diseases and pests, collected 24 honey bee samples per year for the National Honey Bee Survey, and issued an average of 54 certificates

of apiary inspection per year to migratory beekeepers to facilitate movement of colonies to other states for pollination.

Spongy moth slow the spread program staff set 9,733 traps and 8,921 traps in 2023 and 2024, respectively. These traps caught a total of 397,415 moths in 2023, identifying a population peak at the height of a statewide outbreak, and 213,702 moths in 2024, signaling a decline in state spongy moth populations for the first time in five years. These data, combined with data from previous seasons, were used to plan, execute, and evaluate the aerial treatment of 86,927 and 23,108 acres in 2023 and 2024, respectively. Trapping data were also analyzed to make regulatory decisions, including the addition of Douglas County to the quarantined area for spongy moth. Collectively, these actions slowed the spread of spongy moth, delaying the impacts of an injurious forest pest in western Wisconsin. Other pest surveys conducted annually during the biennium included 1,546 visual surveys of commodity crop fields, more than 750 traps set in farms, gardens and orchards, and 130 forest pest traps set that yielded more than 10,000 total specimens screened and identified by our entomologists annually to support early detection surveys for regulated and economically important pests.

The [Plant Industry Bureau Laboratory](#) (PIB lab) provides plant pest diagnostic services to the bureau's programs and conducts early detection surveys for diseases of economic and regulatory significance. A total of 626 and 679 plant samples with diseases caused by bacteria, fungi, nematodes, and viruses were submitted to the lab by DATCP inspectors and survey specialists trained to recognize disease symptoms in 2023 and 2024, respectively. In addition, 50 and 46 samples with insect and mite pests were submitted in 2023 and 2024, respectively, in support of the nursery, Christmas tree and phytosanitary programs and more than 1,000 insect trap catch samples were screened annually for non-native and regulated target organisms. As a result of inspection, survey and through cooperative efforts with public reporting and partnerships with other state agencies, the bureau's plant pathologists and entomologists identified a number of new state records in the landscape and intercepted organisms moving through trade including: cycas necrotic stunt virus, tomato bushy stunt virus, the conifer pathogen *Sporothrix varicicbata*, hemlock woolly adelgid, elongate hemlock scale, elm zig zag sawfly and the leafhopper *Tautoneura polymitusa*.

In 2023, the PIB lab joined the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) as the member lab for the State of Wisconsin. The NPDN is a consortium of diagnostic labs in all U.S. states and territories that protect national plant health and agricultural security by providing efficient, accurate diagnostics of plant pests and pathogens. Since becoming an NPDN member lab, DATCP's plant pathologists have begun the process of achieving accreditation. Accreditation ensures NPDN laboratories meet core quality standards for strengthening readiness in performing timely detections, while reducing the risk of exotic pathogens and pest establishment. The bureau maintains cooperative agreements and MOUs with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS), the USDA Forest Service (USDA FS), the Wisconsin DNR, the University of Wisconsin and other state and federal agencies.

[Agrichemical Management Bureau](#)

The [Agrichemical Management Bureau](#) regulates chemicals used in agriculture, such as a pesticide or fertilizer, known as agrichemicals, as well as agrichemical storage, handling, use, and disposal to protect human health, property, and the environment. The bureau certifies pesticide applicators after they pass an examination, which then makes them eligible for [licensing](#). Each year, the bureau licenses approximately 1,500 pesticide manufacturers and labelers who list approximately 13,000 pesticide products; 450 restricted-use pesticide dealers; 2,500 pesticide application businesses; and 9,500 individual commercial pesticide applicators. The bureau also works to prevent fraudulent sales of fertilizers, liming materials, and soil and plant additives. In addition to certification and licensing of pesticide and fertilizers applicators, the bureau provides enforcement, training, and information to these licensees.

Staff perform routine monitoring for pesticides and nitrate to evaluate the occurrence of agrichemicals in the [surface and groundwater](#). DATCP is a member of the state Groundwater Coordinating Council and provides funding for pesticide and fertilizer related groundwater research.

Pesticide and fertilizer spills may threaten public health and the environment. The bureau directs clean-up of pesticide and fertilizer spills and administers the [Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program](#). The bureau also works with farmers and local officials to collect and dispose of unused chemicals and chemical containers. DATCP-

sponsored events collect about 2.5 million pounds of unwanted household and agricultural pesticides, as well as unwanted prescription drugs, annually.

The bureau's [Animal Feed Program](#) regulates Wisconsin's large feed industry to protect livestock and pets, protect the human food chain and human health, and prevent deceptive sales practices. The bureau currently licenses about 1,500 commercial feed and pet food companies. Each year, these companies distribute about 4.9 million tons of livestock feed and pet food in Wisconsin.

Division of Management Services

The Division of Management Services provides administrative support to the department, including finance, information technology, and laboratory services. The division is also responsible for developing and reviewing DATCP policies and procedures and providing agency-wide services such as workplace health and safety and mail and print services. The division is comprised of three bureaus, the Bureau of Finance, Bureau of Information Technology, and the Bureau of Laboratory Services.

Bureau of Finance

The Bureau of Finance has overall responsibility for the department's financial operations. The department administers a wide range of programs with diverse fund sources with a number of appropriations and statutory funds. Less than one-third of the department's expenditure authority and only 32 percent of its position authority is from general purpose revenue (GPR) funding. A table of expenditure and position authority includes:

(Table 2. Expenditure and position authority)

DATCP expenditure and position authority by fiscal year and fund source, 2023-25 biennium. (Source: state budget system.)

	2023-24	2024-25	2024-25 Percentages	2024-25	2024-25 Percentages
	\$	\$	\$	FTE	FTE
GPR	\$42,106,300	\$33,351,400	28%	201.40	32%
PR	\$34,305,000	\$33,296,800	28%	218.62	34%
FED	\$11,910,300	\$11,635,300	9%	88.77	14%
SEG	\$41,338,300	\$41,829,000	35%	130.50	20%
	\$129,659,900	\$120,112,500		639.29	

About 17 percent of the department's budget is used for local assistance and aids to individuals and organizations. This includes grants to individuals, businesses, and local governments. The remainder is used for state operations, including salary and fringe benefits, rent, equipment, and supplies. A table of expenditure authority by use includes:

(Table 3. Expenditure authority by use)

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection expenditure authority for fiscal year 2024-25, by use. (Source: state budget system.)

	2024-25	Percentage
State Operations	\$96,553,300	80%
Aids to Individuals & Organizations	\$10,934,800	9%
Local Assistance	\$12,624,400	11%
	\$120,112,500	

Bureau of Information Technology

The Bureau of Information Technology manages the department's internal IT operations that include application development, telecommunications, geographic information system (GIS), and data used by program staff in handling licensing, inspections, and related functions.

Information technology staff continually work to improve customer service, offer additional services online through our [MyDATCP](#) website and while decommissioning outdated systems. MyDATCP allows customers to apply for licenses online, make payments, submit complaints, access lists, and schedule exams.

Bureau of Laboratory Services

The Bureau of Laboratory Services performs sample testing in support of various statewide regulatory programs. Examples include animal feed and fertilizer label guarantees, protection of groundwater from agricultural chemicals, food and meat safety, and more.

Performance measures

Food Safety

Description	By the numbers	Time period
Dairy farm inspections	10,445	Calendar year 2024
Food and Recreational Safety licensing information packets sent out, all programs	4,428	Calendar year 2024
Retail food, lodging, and recreation inspections	6,230	Calendar year 2024
Meat establishments issued a license	283	Calendar year 2024

Consumer Protection

Description	By the numbers	Time period
Complaints resolved by the Business Trade Practices Bureau	1,566	Biennium
Unique numbers registered on the Wisconsin Do Not Call list	5,099,145	Federal Fiscal Year 2024
Completed weights and measures inspections	213,498	Calendar year 2024
Completed tests to ensure fuel quality	16,709 tests	Calendar year 2024

Animal Health

Description	By the numbers	Time period
Pig investigations with Senecavirus A (SVA) lesions, which are indistinguishable from lesions caused by Foot and Mouth Disease and therefore require prompt testing and diagnosis to keep interstate commerce and international trade moving	147 investigations	Calendar year 2024
Animals imported and moved accompanied by Certificates of Veterinary Inspection to prevent the spread of disease	958,463 animals	Calendar year 2024
Fish farms licensed and monitored	2,309 fish farms	License year 2024
Credentialed veterinary and veterinary technicians	7,458 veterinary and veterinary technicians	Bi-annual renewal cycle 2024-2025

Agricultural Development

Description	By the numbers	Time period
Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants awarded to strengthen Wisconsin's agricultural and food industries by working to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products to local purchasers	16 grants awarded	Biennium
Immediate and anticipated export sales reported by Wisconsin companies resulting from International Agribusiness Center services	\$30,173,750	Fiscal year 2025
The Farm Center's Farmer Wellness Program counseling vouchers redeemed	\$88,200	Biennium
Number of Dairy Processor Grants awarded to foster innovation, improve profitability, and sustain the long-term viability of Wisconsin's dairy processing facilities	26 grants awarded	Biennium
Number of Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants to grow Wisconsin's meat industry and improve the long-term viability of the state's livestock industry	48 grants awarded	Biennium
Number of Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program Grants to expand capacity and infrastructure across the state for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products	71 grants awarded	Biennium
Wisconsin Farm to School Pilot Program Grants to support sustainable partnership development in communities across the state	\$250,000 (8 grants awarded)	Biennium
Wisconsin LFPA Statewide Programming and Community Partner Grants to strengthen Wisconsin's food security network and expand equitable access to communities previously underserved by the existing networks	\$1.5 million (9 grants awarded)	Biennium
Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program Grants to purchase and distribute food to tribal elders for the purpose of supporting the growth and operations of food producers	\$3 million (4 grants awarded)	Biennium
Specialty Crop Block Grants for projects that will enhance the competitiveness of Wisconsin's specialty crop industries in domestic and foreign markets	16 grants awarded	Biennium

Agricultural Resource Management

Description	By the numbers	Time period
Amount of funds allocated to pay for conservation staff in 72 counties	\$22.9 million	Calendar years 2024 and 2025
Active producer-led groups that have been funded through the DATCP program across the state	49	Calendar year 2025

Number of citizens of the state provided services to properly collect and dispose of agricultural chemicals and household hazardous waste, including unwanted prescription drugs	Approximately 113,250	Calendar years 2023 and 2024
Treated acres for Spongy Moth (<i>Lymantria dispar</i>) at 27 sites in 17 counties	23,108	Calendar year 2024

Management Services

Description	By the numbers	Time period
Total number of samples tested by the Bureau of Laboratory Services	21,070	Biennium
Samples tested and average turnaround time for Bureau of Laboratory Services microbiology testing (Dairy – Grade A, General Food, Meat)	11,152 samples 3 days	Biennium
Programs available in the MyDATCP online service portal	108 available	Biennium