

If you have a passion to farm, it's our mission to help you get started

A program of the UW Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and the Farm and Industry Short Course, within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences - CALS



Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers

2018 WSBDF Newsletter

A Word from the WSBDF

Nadia Alber, WSBDF Director

Hello and welcome back to another edition of our annual newsletter. The 24th session of the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers (WSBDF) is in full swing! This year's class is chock full of farmer and industry leader speakers, farm tours, conferences and, most importantly, student-farmers who are attending our class throughout Wisconsin, other Midwestern and Northeastern states, and now around the globe online!

We would like to thank everyone who has donated in some way, shape or form to our cause: program sponsors, families who have made financial contributions, classroom speakers, distance education classroom facilitators, our agency and WI Technical College partners, farm internship mentors, farm family and FFA hosts for our annual class field trip and Ride to Farm picnics, Ride to Farm riders, and all of our friends—for your continued belief in and work towards our mission: We're here and going strong to help the next generation get started farming! Since its inception in 1995, the WSBDF has nurtured over 550 students, about three quarters of whom have gone on to pursue their life-long dreams of owning, managing or operating a farm. Without all the help of our donors this would have never been possible, so THANK YOU!!!

The WSBDF remains an accredited business training program for new borrowers in the USDA FSA Beginning Farmer Loan Program. To find out more go to www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA. The WSBDF is also part of the core curriculum for the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program (DGA), which is now a nationally recognized apprentice-mentor program. To find out more go to www.dga-national.org.

A highlight of the past year was our annual *Ride to Farm* fundraiser which brought in about \$9,000! Our sincere appreciation goes out to all those who contributed. With fundraisers such as these, the WSBDF UW-Foundation Endowment Fund established in the late '90s, along with WSBDF endowed scholarship funds, have surpassed \$500,000. Thanks to you, the WSBDF aims to establish a permanent place at UW-Madison and around the state!



Ride to Farm cyclists Kate, Patty, Will and Merle pose in their stylist jerseys at Fischer Valley Dairy Farm in June (**top**), grass-farmer Chad Backes, Nadia Alber's husband, and their son Charlie pose with Scott Mericka in his cow suit during a WSBDF class field trip touring Mericka's Grass Dairy and the home of Uplands Cheese in December (**middle**), and Dick Cates at his retirement party in November 2018 after 23 years of service to UW Madison CALS (**bottom**). What amazing dedication Dick had to educating the next generation of farmers in our state and worldwide!

Ride to Farm 2018

On June 2nd, we hosted our 15th annual *Ride to Farm* bicycle ride fundraiser. Approximately 50 cyclists embarked on a hilly 100k (about 62-mile) ride, or a half-day ride of about 30 miles. The event began and ended at Goodland Park just outside of Madison with a lunch stop at Culver's in New Glarus (*see photo below*).

Dick Cates, Co-Director of the WSBDF, provided a thoughtful, energizing morning send-off as this would be his last ride as Director of the school. From there, the route included rest stops and tours on two Southwest Wisconsin farms, where participants sampled cheeses, Organic Valley Fuel and other snacks sourced from local farms. The morning stop was at Fischer Valley Farm, a grazing dairy farm owned and operated by Tom and TJ Grady, father and son WSBDF graduates! The afternoon stop was at the Pauli Dairy Farm, a small organic, grass-based dairy, owned and operated by Tim Pauli, one of the members of a grazing dairy cooperative that helped start the WSBDF.

This event would not have been possible without the dedicated volunteers who helped with route preparation, registration, farm stops and rider support. Thanks to all those who donated their time and effort to make this event a success!

The top friends and family team fundraiser this year was Team "Cows and Goats" and Organic Valley was our top business team.

Many thanks to Culver's Restaurants, Sitka Salmon, and Organic Valley Farmer-Owned for significant contributions of coupons, food and prizes which helped make the ride such a successful fundraiser this year!

For more information on how you can be a part of our 16th annual Ride to Farm, which will be held June 6th, 2020. (Yes, we are taking a year off, because WSBDF Director, Nadia Alber, is having a baby in early June 2019), please take a minute and visit our Ride website: ridetofarm.dojiggy.com. We are always looking for more riders and volunteers; any help is greatly appreciated!



Richard "Dick" Cates Farewell

I am blessed to have had 23 wonderful years as director of the WI School for Beginning Dairy & Livestock Farmers, many of the earlier years with Jennifer Taylor, and the past six serving with Nadia Alber. Through the years we were able to reach so many people who had a dream to farm....and it means the world to me that we have been there to assist. The WSBDF is a singularly important effort to ensure that there is a next generation of farmers in WI; and I am so honored that it will continue under the guidance of someone so competent and passionate as Nadia.

Of course, friends ask what I'm up to these days. In a nutshell, son Eric and daughter-in-law, Kiley, took over the farm business spring 2016 and I offer my assistance as a farm hand when needed and as a mentor when asked; otherwise I get the heck of the way. It is extremely meaningful to watch them because they are so competent and thoughtful in the way they care for the land and cattle.

I serve on the Board of Directors of four local efforts (Iowa County Cattlemen's, River Valley School District Endowment Fund, SW WI Community Action Program, and Upland Hills Health Hospital), serve as a volunteer Ambulance Driver on the Spring Green EMS, and make music on my fiddle with friends.

My family and I are active members of two farm conservation demonstration projects, the Iowa County Uplands Farmer-led Watershed Group and the Lowery Creek Watershed Partnership. We hope to serve as a host farm for UW research looking into aspects of soil health. And I am beginning efforts to write about our family and farm's three decades process of discovery of how an embrace of a conservation land ethic can help provide for a resilient farm business.

But most exciting to me is spending time with my darling dear new grandchildren Sloane Helen (born 7/17 to Eric and Kiley) and Peter Ray (born 10/18 to my daughter Shannon and son-in-law Dan), and continuing to explore the world and share life with Kim, my wife and best friend in the world for the past 44 years. I am forever grateful for the opportunities I've been granted through my fortunate employment at our state's great public land grant institution, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and want to thank you all for teaching me and sharing along this journey.

WSBDF via Distance Education:

The distance education option for taking the WSBDF seminar in locations across the Midwest continues to grow. Currently, nine locations have a classroom facilitator who is ready and able to lead the on-site discussion and host the weekly live webinars.

For the 2018-19 academic year, the distance education fee is approximately \$300 (varies slightly by site) for 15 weeks of instruction, which includes lectures from experienced farmers and UW faculty, plus the creation of your own farm business plan and the opportunity for discounted attendance at conferences. For those looking to obtain a loan, lease a farm or enter into their own farm business, this investment of a modest amount of time and money can reap great dividends in obtaining critical information and support for future success.

Class meets Thursdays from mid-November through March. The deadline each year to apply to a distance education site is **Nov. 1**. Those interested should contact the facilitator at one of the sites below:

Appleton/Chilton/Waupaca/Clintonville – Jeremy Hanson 920.585.1821, **Green Bay** – Amy Kox 920.498.6908, **Independence** – Brad Sirianni 715.533.8081, **La Crosse/Viroqua** – Aimee Finley 507.273.7722, **Medford/Antigo** – Bob Brandt/Patti 715.965.6771, **Monroe** – Dustin Williams 608.391.0238, **Portage/Reedsburg/Watertown** – Randy Zogbaum 608.745.3192, **Wausau** – Victoria Pietz 715.803.1414, and **Waldo, Maine** – Rick Kersbergen 207.342.4229

To get application materials to attend the WSBDF on the Madison campus, or for more information about any aspect of the program, go online to www.wsbdf.wisc.edu or call 608.265.6437.

Alternatively, now you may also purchase our online course for self-study on our website.



To contact the UW Foundation Friends of the WSBDF Fund: Jodi Wickham, 608.263.2027; jodi.wickham@supportuw.org

Contributions may be mailed directly to: The UW Foundation, attn: Jodi Wickham; Friends of the WSBDF Fund;
US Bank Lockbox, Box 78807, Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

Please do not mail cash; checks can be made out to: UW Foundation-WSBDF Fund

THANK YOU! FOR GENEROUSLY SUPPORTING THE WSBDF

Donations received September 1, 2017 – August 30, 2018

Friends of the WSBDF...

Businesses/Agencies

Bloomer FFA Alumni
Coloma Farms Inc.
Compeer Financial
Culver's Restaurants
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
Herbert H Kohl Charities
Krusen Grass Farms LLC
LNRP and Gathering Waters
Organic Valley-Farmer Own
Spring Street Sports Inc.
Whitetails Unlimited Inc.
Wisconsin Farmers Union

Individual Donations

Joseph Anderson
Maggie & Tim Arguello
Katherine Axelrod
Daryl Ball
Bridget Basset
Richard Bower
Katherine Brewer
Courtney Carlson
Janice Carusi

Individual Donations (cont.)

Dick & Kim Cates
Robert & Linda Cates
Anna Cates
Eric & Kiley Cates
Phil Crawford
Christy Davidson
Andy Diercks
Cornelis Dorresteign
David Drapac
Allison Dungan
Chris Dungan
David Evans
Lynn Evenchik
Bruce Evenchik
Bradley Feder
Craig Ficenc
Stefanie Fieck
Emily Goken
James Grant
Mark Griffin
Spencer Griffith
Arthur Hackett
James Harrington
Renee Hartman

Audrey Ingersoll
Bill Ivancic
Nicholas Ivancic
Clifford Klassy
Russell Knudson
Altfred Krusenbaum
P. Craig Kuentzel
Patty Laskowski-Morren
Rachael Levy
Brook Luers
Colleen McGovern
Douglas Orman
Will Osterholz
Barbara Osterholz
Laura & Bill Paine
William Plummer
Courtney Robinson
Elizabeth Seagle
Rhonda Seibel
Mary Seibel
Rose Seibel
Ann Seibel
Leonard Seibel
Vanessa Shewmaket
Bradley Sirianni

Jennifer Smetana
Sandra Tanck
Aliya Taube
Alice Wanty
Justin Wolfe
Stacey Zeman

Save the Date

More Ride to Farm fun...

June 6th 2020!

(Yes, we have to skip a year, because Nadia is having a baby!)



DEPARTMENT OF
Soil Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

*Thank You to
our Sponsors!*

