



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Danielle Endvick, 715-471-0398 or dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

WFU members speak up at Farm and Rural Lobby Day

MADISON - On Feb. 28, over 100 farmers and rural residents from across the state traveled to Madison to share their views with their Senators and Representatives during Wisconsin Farmers Union's Farm and Rural Lobby Day.

"Farmers from across the state met with their legislators to share how the issues raised in the 2017-19 State Budget and other upcoming legislation influence their farms and rural communities," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden.

Lobby Day participants encouraged lawmakers to support funding for several priorities in the Governor's state budget proposal: rural schools, roads, expansion of high-speed internet, and the Farm to School program. They also urged legislative support for nonpartisan redistricting, sound conservation policies, and loan forgiveness for beginning farmers.

WFU is a grassroots organization. The positions members presented during the Farm and Rural Lobby Day were adopted by farmers from throughout the state during the 86th annual WFU State Convention in January in Wisconsin Dells.

Roughly half of the attendees were participating in their first WFU Farm and Rural Lobby Day, including Alicia Razvi, president of the Wood-Portage-Waupaca Farmers Union, who says the experience left her feeling energized and hopeful.

"Inside two hours, my local group of Farmers Union members met with four politicians. Some were Democrat, some were Republican," she said. "But it didn't matter much in those moments. We were present, and we were from the same community, and we all wanted the best for that place and for our farms."

"Having a group of farmers, all with different types of farming practices, different backgrounds and different types of farms, all sitting in the same legislator's office fighting for the same cause was quite powerful and energetic," added Amherst dairy farmer Patty Edelburg. "That's the backbone of our democracy."

"With the many issues facing our farms and small towns, it's very important for people to be engaged and take part in things like the Lobby Day," said WFU Vice President and Osseo farmer Craig Myhre. "We had a very good crowd with lots of energy and many new faces, which is good to see."

Nearly 30 WFU members will carry that good energy to the 115th annual National Farmers Union Convention this weekend in San Diego, Calif., where farmers from across the U.S. will come together to network and set the policy that will guide the national family farm organization through the coming year.

Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization, is committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement. For more information visit www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

(MORE - photo cutlines on next page)



Cutlines:

LobbyDay2017

Over 100 farmers and rural advocates took part in the Wisconsin Farmers Union Farm and Rural Lobby Day Feb. 28 in Madison.

RepShankland

Members of the Wood-Portage-Waupaca Farmers Union chapter met with Rep. Katrina Shankland during the Farm and Rural Lobby Day Feb. 28. (From left are front row: Patty Edelburg, Scandinavia; Polly Dalton, Stevens Point; Alicia Razvi, Stevens Point; McKenna Jakubek, Amherst Junction; back row, Tommy Enright, Amherst; Chris Holman, Custer; Colton and Deb Jakubek, Amherst Junction; and Stephen Honish, Tomah.)

RepPetryk

Wisconsin Farmers Union members, from right to left, Emmet and Ted Fisher, Stockholm; Faye Jones, Spring Valley; Ed and Kristi Gorell, Eleva; met with Rep. Warren Petryk during the Farm and Rural Lobby Day Feb. 28.

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