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For more information, contact:

Amber Seitz, Wisconsin Bankers Association

608-441-1237 | [aseitz@wisbank.com](mailto:aseitz@wisbank.com)

Twitter: [@wisbank](https://twitter.com/wisbank)

## Wisconsin's Banks Support, Celebrate Ag Industry

*On National Ag Day and year-round*

Madison – Wisconsin has a strong and diverse agricultural community and it's important to recognize the positive impact it has on our state. On National Ag Day, Wisconsin's 21,000+ bankers say "thank you" to all the farmers and agribusinesses for everything they do.

Bankers understand and appreciate the value farmers contribute to Wisconsin, which is why they go above and beyond lending services when working with their clients.

The Wisconsin Bankers Association recently polled its members for stories on what they and their bank do to go the extra mile for farmers. "We value the farms, agribusiness, and hardworking people that make up the communities we serve," one banker responded. "For over 160 years, agriculture has been a part of our business and will continue to be important to us, just as it's important for the ag community to have local, community banks to help them through these tough times. Whether it's sitting at the family dinner table late in the evening discussing the future of an operation, an afternoon visit to drop off a gift card just to say

'thanks and have dinner on us' during the busy harvest season, or a quick phone call to a dairy farmer just to check in on his or her mental well-being, we continue to help our ag community grow and prosper."

Bankers from other institutions revealed they support their community through service on local ag boards, buying animals at county fairs, hosting annual informational meetings on agribusiness-related topics, and sponsoring major ag events. Yet another banker responded, "With our time and talents, our bank and our bankers support local ag community initiatives and youth programs. Healthy communities and schools are important to our current generation of farmers and our next generation of farmers. Succession planning is a part of every customer annual review." Other institutions reported offering similar forward-looking assistance with long-term planning and succession.

Ultimately, WBA's survey of member banks revealed their dedication to serving their ag customers, even when a loan or other financial product isn't the best solution. "In these difficult times, just being there to listen is the most important thing we do," one banker wrote. "Saying yes is easy, saying no is difficult... and sometimes no is the most honest answer."

Wisconsin's banks offered over \$7 billion in agricultural loans during the last fiscal quarter, but that number does not reflect the often unquantifiable ways they have supported Wisconsin's farmers which truly make a difference during tough times. With that support system in place, Wisconsin's farmers and agribusinesses have the tenacity to thrive despite today's difficult circumstances.

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*The Wisconsin Bankers Association is the state's largest financial industry trade association, representing nearly 235 commercial banks and savings institutions, their nearly 2,300 branch offices and 23,000 employees.*