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Farm groups call on Legislature, governor to pass Dairy Innovation Hub

State budget proposal includes \$8.8 million for UW-led research

MADISON, Wis. — As the state Assembly began debating the budget today, six groups representing dairy farmers, processors, cooperatives and other related businesses in Wisconsin called again for support of a university-based Dairy Innovation Hub.

The proposal would add researchers at the University of Wisconsin System's three agricultural colleges — in Madison, Platteville and River Falls. The research would focus on four areas: land and water use, human health and nutrition, animal health and welfare, and improving and integrating farm businesses and rural communities.

The groups — [Cooperative Network](#), [Dairy Business Association](#), [Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin](#), [Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association](#), [Wisconsin Farm Bureau](#) and [Wisconsin Farmers Union](#) — distributed a joint letter to legislators and the governor's office emphasizing the critical importance of the dairy hub proposal.

"The hub intends to attract the world's best research talent to our state and provide the tools for making important new discoveries. It will train industry leaders, who will help transfer that new knowledge to farms, processing plants, watershed groups and beyond," the groups said in the letter.

In its proposed state budget, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee designates \$1 million in the first year of the two-year spending plan and \$7.8 million in the second for the dairy hub. Both the Assembly and Senate must agree on a budget before sending it to the governor, who has veto authority.

The groups said the hub would be a long-term investment but urgent nonetheless, pointing to financial problems many farmers are facing due to depressed milk prices, increasing operating costs and disruptive trade policies. They also noted the need for more research on water quality and soil health.

"The state cannot afford to wait on this," they wrote.

Click here to read the full letter.

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