Al Ott

State Representative • 3rd Assembly District

AB 83
Agricultural Education & Workforce Development Council
Assembly Committee on Education
March 27, 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 83 (AB 83), which creates an Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council.

Agriculture, Wisconsin's largest industry, generates over $51 billion in annual economic activity. From a single dairy producer in Calumet County to Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee, our state's economy relies heavily on the success and vitality of our farms and related agribusinesses.

Wisconsin agriculture provides nearly 420,000 jobs, employing 12 percent of the state's workforce. These jobs are diverse – farm owners, on-farm employees, veterinarians, geneticists, crop and livestock consultants, engineers, feed and fuel suppliers, biochemists, food processors, economists, farm machinery manufacturers, nutritionists, and agricultural lenders, just to name a few. Every new job in agriculture generates an additional 1.3 jobs in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, industry leaders – employers – are finding it to be increasingly difficult to obtain enough appropriately trained and skilled workers capable of responding to the industry's wide range of employment needs. Research warns of projected shortfalls in the workforce needed to fuel Wisconsin's agricultural sector.

AB 83 creates a private-public partnership to be known as the Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council within the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. I have been working closely with a group of industry and education stakeholders since the fall of 2005 to craft the language of the bill – and amendment – before you today.

The goal of the Council is to provide long term advocacy and coordination for agricultural education initiatives that improve the employment opportunities for, and retention of, a well-qualified workforce necessary to meet the changing and challenging demands of Wisconsin's agricultural sector.

The Council will be comprised of industry representatives, education leaders, agency heads, and legislators. AB 83 also authorizes one FTE position, to serve as the Council's executive director, which will be responsible for facilitating the duties of the Council.

The bill requires the Council to create an executive committee, and allows for the creation of other committees, as needed, to address specific issue areas. Further, because coordination is a key element

Office: P.O. Box 8953 • Madison, WI 53708 • (608) 266-5831 • Toll-Free: (888) 534-0003 • Rep.Ott@legis.wi.gov
Home: P.O. Box 112 • Forest Junction, WI 54123-0112 • (920) 989-1240

of this initiative, the bill also allows the various state agencies and educational institutions – with members on the Council – to assist the Council in performing its functions. Additionally, AB 83 requires an annual report of the Council's activities and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature, including termination of the Council if necessary.

This initiative has been almost exclusively industry driven. Agribusinesses in this state firmly believe the Council will help address their workforce needs. They've worked diligently with their industry peers and with educational leaders to shape the legislation and successfully balance the varied interests of the numerous stakeholders in this effort.

Knowing that you often have to "put your money where your mouth is," industry is committed to being an equal partner in this effort, which is why the bill provides for a private-public funding mechanism.

The functions of the Council and the salary of the executive director will be funded by privately raised contributions matched by GPR funds, with GPR capped at $75,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium. The key here is that the private money must be raised prior to any state contribution. The state dollars are meant only to match privately raised funds.

In a show of support and commitment to AB 83, the core industry groups leading the charge in this effort have already raised $25,000.

You will note that I have introduced an amendment to AB 83 to address some concerns which were not immediately brought to my attention as we had the bill drafted and introduced. The amendment represents a consensus position by the stakeholders.

In addition to some minor language clean-up type changes, Assembly Amendment 1 to AB 83 adds members to the council, specifies some members of the executive committee, and modifies the Council's reporting mechanism.

The amendment adds six members to the Council. A teacher, guidance counselor, school board member, and district administrator, to be appointed by the State Superintendent; as well as a technical college district director and technical college dean, appointed by the Director of the Technical College System.

The amendment also specifies that the State Superintendent and Secretary of the Department of Agriculture be members of the executive committee. However, to ensure that the Council remains industry based and industry focused, the amendment further states that the majority of the membership of the executive committee must be non-state employees.

Finally, under the amendment, the reporting mechanism now calls for each educational system (K-12, Technical College System, and UW) to prepare their own report on the status of agricultural education programs under their purview, which the full council will review and comment on as part of their annual report.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have on AB 83.

Freedom Agricultural Education Department
Freedom FFA Chapter
Freedom High School
N4021 County Road E P.O. Box 1003
Freedom, WI 54131
920.788.7940

March 27, 2007

Good morning, my name is Paul Larson and I teach agricultural education at Freedom Schools. I am part of the most intense and dynamic career areas available, agricultural education. In my opinion, there is no faster paced, evolving, challenging career than agricultural education. Agriculture technology changes so quickly that it is nearly impossible to stay current as a teacher. What I first taught when I began teaching a relatively short 20 years ago, is now ancient history. The methods used in agriculture advance so quickly that it is a daily challenge to keep up. My business is quite similar to the rest of agriculture. It is constantly advancing and improving.

Before I get too far into my testimony I would like to share some history with the committee. My opening statement is nearly identical to the opening I first presented to the WDATCP Board on November 12, 2002. What is significant about that statement, is that it is at least partially the reason we are all here today. My testimony resulted in a pre-Ag. Ed. Summit in March of 2003. The pre-conference identified a need to hold a statewide summit on Agriculture, The Wisconsin Agricultural Education Summit; "The Knowledge Crisis in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources" was held in July of 2003. These summits brought industry leaders, teachers, government agencies, legislators, and concerned citizens together to focus on Agricultural Education in Wisconsin. After the Summit, the Sec. of Agriculture appointed a taskforce to start working with the information gathered and compile a report. This report was completed and the Sec. of Agriculture then appointed the Secretary's Panel on Agricultural Education. This panel then worked with existing agencies and associations to address the findings of the taskforce. One of the items needed was a process to address issues not currently being addressed by any group or agency. For these reasons, the Secretary of Ag. appointed an Ag. Ed. Council. This council is now know as the Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council and is charged with implementing the recommendations of the Secretary's Panel on Ag. Ed. The current council has done a tremendous amount of work over the past 12-18 months including the work necessary to have this legislation before you today. That is a brief history of where we have been and why we are here. Now here is why it is important.

The Ag. Ed. and Workforce Development Council and appropriation for AB-83 is needed because:

- Agriculture is Wisconsin's number one industry generating over $51.5 billion of the state's economy.
- National statistics show that we will need to educate one third more students than we currently are in order to meet the demands of the industry over the next several years.

- Agricultural is vital to the health and welfare of the rural areas of Wisconsin, which provides the fabric for the lifestyles we enjoy in Wisconsin.
- Agricultural Education is vital for the "hands on" real life training needed for students to be ready to work in the industry. Our education provides the foundation of the students' knowledge base needed to be successful in the industry.
- This council is a partnership between the State and private industry to help address the needs of the vital agricultural industry.
- The council will serve as a conduit between industry and education and enhance educational opportunities for students.

The agricultural education profession very much supports the efforts of the council on their behalf. In fact, the agricultural educators in Wisconsin have been very involved in the effort to hold the original summit and the follow-up activities. The Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators has invested time and money to this effort and will continue to do so as the council evolves to meet its objectives. This professional commitment clearly demonstrates the importance of the council and the entire agricultural industry in the lives of these educators.

When I consider this council and why it is important to Wisconsin, I need to look no further than the students I teach everyday. Agriculture is an opportunity for many of my students to go on to school and then return and remain in their local community. Agriculture is truly the fabric of Wisconsin and offers more than 300 different career options for students to consider. Also included in the agricultural education program is access to the National FFA Organization. The FFA is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The more students who have access to agricultural education and the FFA, the better prepared they will be to accept positions in the vital industry of agriculture in Wisconsin. I encourage your support of AB-83 and would be happy to answer any questions.

Paul A. Larson
Agricultural Educator
Freedom High School

BADGERLAND
FARM CREDIT SERVICES

315 Broadway • P.O. Box 69 • Baraboo, WI 53913-0069 • (608) 356-4903 • Fax (608) 356-8375

March 20, 2007

The Honorable Brett Davis
Room 308 North
State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952

Dear Mr. Davis:

I write regarding AB 83, the act that would create an "Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council." As I am unable to attend the March 27, 2007 public hearing on this bill, I would appreciate it if you could arrange for this letter to be distributed to the members of the Education Committee.

I am the senior vice president of branch operations at Badgerland Farm Credit Services located in Baraboo, Wisconsin. We are cooperative lending money to over 8,000 members in southern Wisconsin. We also provide financially related services to an additional 5,000 members. One of our member's big concerns is finding and keeping qualified, competent workers. Traditionally, employees were able to count on farm families to produce a steady supply of farm labor. As rural populations dwindled, this labor pool has dried up and now farmers find themselves in stiff competition for qualified and trained workers.

There was a time when the general consensus that anyone with a strong back could do farm work. Today farm workers are asked to be tech-savvy with such things as strong computer skills. Since today's farmers are larger and more specialized there is an emerging need for middle managers in agriculture.

No single industry-led council or other entity that systematically reviews or seeks to coordinate agricultural education's programming or enrollments in relation to the current and future workforce needs of Wisconsin's more than $50 billion agricultural industry. There is also no single industry-led council or other entity that reviews or encourages additional support from Wisconsin's agricultural industry for agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council proposed in AB 83 would provide the entity to do these things. I believe the leadership of this council would assist agriculture education in its efforts to:

- Most efficiently coordinate and deliver existing programs of study
- To identify and develop new programs of study necessary to meet new workforce needs
- To encourage sufficient investment of the resources needed to develop Wisconsin's agricultural workforce

In summary agriculture needs this council and I ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Frank Friar

Frank Friar
Sr. Vice President &
Member of the Agricultural Education & Workforce Development Council

cc: Representative Alvin Ott
Mr. Allan Herrman

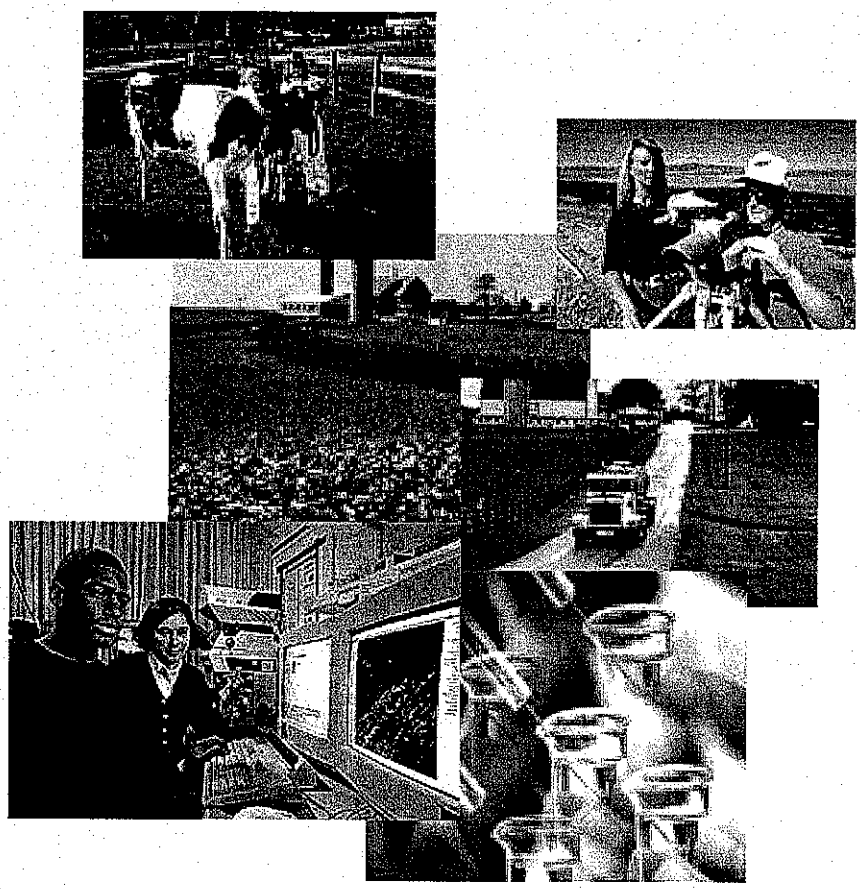
Developing Human Capital Needed To Grow Wisconsin Agriculture

Secretary's Panel on Agricultural Education

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Final Report

Issues, Specific Recommendations and Rationale



July 2004

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Executive Summary

The Secretary's Panel on Agriculture Education was convened to recommend actions that offer the greatest potential for assuring the sufficient human resources to "Grow Wisconsin's Agriculture." Agricultural education in Wisconsin's schools and colleges is intended to develop: 1) general awareness and knowledge and 2) preparation for careers within the agriculture, food and the natural resources system.

The panel met on three occasions. The first meeting was on February 16, the second, March 29, and final meeting May 10, 2004. The panel has had the benefit of recently prepared reviews of the status of agricultural education at the K-12, technical college and university levels, and the issues identified at the July 23, 2003 Statewide Summit on Agricultural Education.

Wisconsin's leading demographer shared an assessment of the state's workforce and population trends, as noted in the appendix. Reports were also shared about the University of Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy Farmers and about Wisconsin's agricultural literacy initiatives. The panel also reviewed how individual institutions, K-12, technical college and university levels (including Cooperative Extension) decide on the programs that they will conduct and support.

The Panel focused on the following four areas.

A. Definition of agricultural education and how it is delivered and supported.
B. The role of agricultural education in economic development.
C. The importance of and commitment to sustaining a positive image of the agriculture industry, agricultural careers, and agricultural education.
D. Shrinking public resources, declining school enrollments and the competition for funding.

<u>The Panel recommends the following:</u>

1. Every K-12 Agricultural Education Program establishes and utilizes an advisory committee including the implementation of the Academic Standards for Agricultural Education.
2. K-12 agriculture teachers should have certification in additional areas such as science, or technology education.
3. University of Wisconsin System institutions should accept science-based agriculture coursework as science credit for admission purposes.
4. Every K-12 Agriculture Education Program should establish a local support group for agriculture education such as the FFA Alumni.
5. Establish a joint state-wide agricultural education advisory committee for the K-12 System and the Technical College System.

6. Beginning in the 4th grade and continuing through high school, students gain an understanding and should be able to explain and give examples of the economic and social values derived from the agriculture, food and natural resources systems and other important sectors of the state's economy.
7. Aggressively recruit underrepresented populations into Wisconsin's agricultural educational programs and occupations to ensure they exceed the percentage they represent in our state's population.
8. Expand entrepreneurship training and recognition for those who have demonstrated the capacity for creativity and the willingness to assume risk in agricultural enterprises.
9. Expand beginning farmers programs.
10. Formalize the relationship between the programming of local schools and technical colleges, and other higher education institutions and the economic drivers of the service area(s) for purposes of a seamless system.
11. Secure the means to routinely and systematically sample and report statewide supply and demand for skilled workers, technicians, managers and professionals in Wisconsin's agriculture, food and natural resources systems.
12. Ensure that leadership development be a fundamental and continuing element in fully implemented programs of agricultural education at every educational level.
13. Agricultural educators and industry leaders should take individual responsibility to exhibit and promote positive images about their professions and about careers related to agriculture, food and natural resources.
14. Increase staff at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction by one person to provide leadership in support of agricultural education in the public schools.
15. Ensure that K-12 agricultural education teachers have full-time year-round employment which includes a 40-day extended contract for purposes of instructional programming that focuses on agricultural career development and youth leadership.
16. Agricultural education at all levels should actively recruit to establish new agricultural education programs where programs do not exist and where they can be justified by local needs and support.
17. Support the continued growth in enrollments in agriculture teacher preparation programs and programming leading to Master's degrees and other advanced degrees.
18. Enhance the quantity and relevance of applied research in agriculture, food and natural resource systems of Wisconsin to develop industries, generate new ideas and provided educational relevance.
19. Expect the Wisconsin Technical College System and University of Wisconsin-Extension to continue to work closely together in program planning and implementation at the local, regional and state levels.
20. DPI, WTCS, and University of Wisconsin develop an implementation team with the mission of immediate follow-up on the recommendations of this Panel. The implementation team is also charged with creating a statewide entity with dedicated funding to staff and implement the recommendations of this report. Additionally the implementation team will be responsible for identifying future key issues affecting agriculture education.

BADGER STATE ETHANOL

P.O. Box 317 – 820 W 17th Street, Monroe, WI. 53566-0317
Phone: 608-329-3900 Fax: 608-329-3866

3-26-07

To the Assembly Education Committee; Brett Davis Chairman:

Like all businesses in Wisconsin; a trained and prepared workforce is vitally important to the success of Badger State Ethanol. The creation of an Agricultural Education and Workforce Council to guide curriculums is extremely important in giving our young workforce countless real life experiences and contacts. Supporting Assembly Bill #83; which creates the WI Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council; is a very smart investment in Wisconsin's future workforce. With all the advancements and changes in the agricultural industry; a council of this sort ensures that the curriculums of High Schools; Vocational Colleges; and Universities are pointed in the right direction and also creates the chain of communication between the Ag Industry and Ag Education.

Respectfully

Gary L Kramer

Gary L Kramer
President / General Manager
Badger State Ethanol, LLC

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Office of the Secretary

TO: Chairman Brett Davis
Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Secretary Rod Nilsestuen

DATE: March 27, 2007

RE: Support of AB 83

I am pleased to join a broad range of Wisconsin agricultural interest in support of Assembly Bill 83---the establishment of a Wisconsin Agriculture Education and Workforce Development Council.

Soon after being appointed Secretary of DATCP I realized that if we were to grow the Wisconsin agricultural economy we needed a consistent source of competent workers---from the labor force on our farms and in our plants, to the business owners and managers, and the researchers in our laboratories. Too many rural communities are witnessing the outward migration of potential workers.

Upon the urging of both industry operatives and educators I appointed a task force to identify the needs of the sector and provide recommendations that, if enacted, gives greater assurance to investors they would have a qualified human resource pool to draw upon. The proposal before you is a result of those deliberations. I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the industry leaders who have shown tremendous resolve in designing and advancing this legislation. It has been a wonderful display of citizens recognizing a need and working in behalf of a greater economic and social good.

Currently few industries are experiencing the rapidity of change being witnessed in agriculture. Not since Wisconsin moved from growing wheat to dairying has there been such profound transitioning. While some operations are investing in size and technology, others are successfully carving out production and marketing niches.

In addition, the exploding renewable energy industry calls for new land management systems, and considerable research to create more efficiencies and products from the extruding process.

Many producers and processors now rank the sourcing of a quality labor force above the securing of capital and management expertise as an expansion consideration. Many simply could not operate without immigrant labor. These people must be integrated into our educational systems.

It would be my hope that the establishment of this council will:

---Serve to monitor the state's agriculture and natural resource labor needs and when appropriate become advocates for change.

---Help insure that we have a seamless system of offerings from K through 12 through the technical and University programming.

---Help design and support continuing educational programming that will make Wisconsin a preferred location for the establishment and/or expansion of agricultural commerce.

Establishment of the Council and funding for an executive director at DATCP will give us another resource in our quest to further expand the $51 Billion agricultural industry.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Assembly Bill 83

Testimony of Allan D. Herrman

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

Chair Davis, Members of the Assembly Education Committee, Representative Ott and other members of the education and agri-buisness community, my name is Al Herrman and I appear here today in full support of Assembly Bill 83 and Assembly Amendment One to Assembly Bill 83.

I have had the distinction honor and pleasure to serve as the Interim Chair of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council. My testimony begins with a thank you. A thank you to all of you for your support in taking up this measure. A thank you to Representative Ott and Erin Ruby for their guidance and leadership. A thank you to the educational institutions and state agencies for reaching a compromise on this important legislation. A thank you to all the volunteers from the agribusiness community who have donated time, talent and treasure, real dollars, to make this effort a reality. And finally, a thank you to my employer, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, for allowing me to work on this project and for providing financial support to help kick off the matching portion of this proposal.

So what is the VISION of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council? From an industry perspective it's all about jobs – the Council's vision statement is: **Attract, Develop and Retain the Superior Human Capital Required to Grow Wisconsin Agriculture, Food, Environmental and Natural Resource Systems.**

The mission of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council is to provide long term advocacy for agricultural education, educational initiatives, and associated resources that improve the employment opportunities for and retention of a superior workforce necessary to meet the changing and challenging demands of Wisconsin's agriculture, food, environmental and natural resource systems.

So why is this effort important to an electric and natural gas utility from Green Bay? Providing a superior workforce to meet the needs of our agricultural and industrial customer base is critical to our survival as a company. We can not just pickup our poles, wires and gas lines and move them to another area when a company ceases to exist or chooses to relocate to another area due to a deeper supply of well educated and better trained workforce.

Let me share with you a sample of our production agricultural area. We serve the dairy farm counties of Marathon, Sheboygan, Brown, Manitowoc, Kewaunee, Winnebago and others in Northeast and Central Wisconsin. We serve the Golden Sands area where potatoes and vegetable crops are so critical to livelihood of these areas. Please let me identify some of the industry that depends on food and fiber with facilities in our area – you may recognize a few of the names: Stora Enso – one of the largest paper plants in North America, Schrieber Foods, Georgia Pacific, Packerland Packing – Smithfield Foods, Sargento, Lakeside Foods, Von Stiehl Winery, Del Monte, Mc Cain Foods, and

so many more. Many of our communities depend heavily on the success of these industries and the support services they need.

We also need individuals who are well trained in critical thinking to deal with emerging issues such as land use planning and regulation, environmental remediation, siting of critical facilities to deliver or provide the power, communications and transportation infrastructure to meet the growing needs of education, health care, business and rural community development. We need individuals trained in rigorous thought processes who can tell the difference between "junk science" and "applied science". We need individuals who can help propel the developing ethanol industry to the next level of competitiveness while finding a way to keep feed stock available on an affordable basis for our animal agriculture industry.

Before I go into our OBJECTIVES and why we need Assembly Bill 83 I would like to share with you what the effort is not:

- **It is not an effort to take funding away from Ag in The Classroom, The WI FFA Foundation, the Ag Coalition and others that you may be familiar with – they are doing a great job and need our support to enhance their efforts,**
- **It is not an effort to take money and FTE's away from one state agency or institution and move it to another,**
- **It is not an effort to tell or dictate to state agencies or educational institutions how they should run their programs, and**
- **It certainly is not an effort to dictate curriculum at the secondary or post-secondary levels or take away local control from school boards and local communities.**

So what are the objectives of this Council?

1. Implement the recommendations of the Secretary's Panel on Agricultural Education that you heard about from Mr. Larson.

2. Identify the highest priorities for training workers in all facets and at all levels of employment related to agriculture, food, environmental and natural resource systems; to assure sufficiency in both quality and quantity of human resources to meet employment demands for entrepreneurial, sole proprietor, large business and other opportunities; and to include a measurement of leadership development needs for local, regional, state, and national community development needs.

3. Create new resources, processes and advocacy for documented needs for enhanced education at all levels (PreK-12, Technical Colleges, UW-Extension, University System, and Private Industry).

4. Encourage the evaluation, development and coordination of related education programs among the various public education institutions.

5. Provide support for and avoid duplication of existing agricultural literacy programs.

6. Encourage recruitment, education, training, ongoing professional development and retention of educators at all levels to ensure that Wisconsin has sufficient

capacity, leadership and motivation to deliver the education and training necessary for a superior workforce.

7. Encourage diversity in the workforce and a living wage necessary to attract, sustain and retain a superior workforce.

8. Encourage individuals, organizations, foundations and private industry to support the private – public partnership with the resources necessary to carryout the mission of the Council.

9. Identify employment challenges and opportunities and the changes in education necessary to help Wisconsin enhance its global competitiveness.

10. Annually report to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary and the Wisconsin Legislature on the state of the Wisconsin agricultural, food, environmental and natural resource sector workforce, its' challenges and opportunities, and recommendations for changes to the educational system to accomplish the vision, mission and objectives of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education Council.

Our neighbors have a head start to some degree. Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa have implemented similar programs with state funding in the seven figure range. We recognize and appreciate the fiscal constraints faced by our great state. That is why we have brought forward a private-public partnership proposal that we think is fiscally prudent and manageable given our current budgetary situation. We have also put in place an annual sunset review provision such that if the council is not providing value or has out lived its usefulness that it can be retired in an orderly fashion.

On behalf of the Council and myself – thank you for your attention. We sincerely and respectfully request your strong support for Assembly Bill 83 and Assembly Amendment One to that bill and we pledge to you that we will to the best of our ability make this effort a success for Wisconsin's agriculture, food, environmental and natural resource sectors and the citizens of this great state.

From Allan Herrman

WISCONSIN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

VISION

Attract, Develop and Retain Superior Human Capital Required to Grow Wisconsin Agriculture, Agricultural Industry, Food, and Natural Resource Systems.

MISSION

The mission of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council is to provide long term advocacy for agricultural education, educational initiatives, and associated resources that improve the employment opportunities for and retention of a superior workforce necessary to meet the changing and challenging demands of Wisconsin's agriculture, agricultural industry, food, and natural resource systems.

OBJECTIVES

1. Implement the recommendations of the Secretary's Panel on Agricultural Education.

2. Provide ongoing assessment of needs for training workers in all facets and at all levels of employment related to agriculture, agricultural industry, food, and natural resource sectors. Assure sufficiency in both quality and quantity of human resources to meet employment demands for entrepreneurial, sole proprietor, large business and other opportunities.

3. Mobilize new resources and advocacy for documented needs requiring enhanced education at all levels.

4. Encourage the development, coordination and evaluation of agricultural, agricultural industry, food, and natural resource education programs within and among the various public education institutions.

5. Provide encouragement for agricultural literacy programs.

6. Encourage recruitment, education, training, ongoing professional development and retention of educators at all levels to ensure that Wisconsin has sufficient capacity, leadership and motivation to deliver the education and training necessary for a superior workforce.

7. Promote diversity in the workforce and a living wage necessary to attract, sustain and retain a superior workforce.

8. Support leadership development for citizenship and community needs.

9. Encourage individuals, organizations, foundations and private industry to support the private – public partnership with the resources necessary to carryout the mission of the Council.

10. Annually report to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary and the Wisconsin Legislature on the state of the Wisconsin agricultural, food, environmental and natural resource sector workforce, its' challenges and opportunities, and recommendations for change necessary to accomplish the vision, mission and objectives of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council, including potential sunset of the Council.

March 27, 2007

Good Morning! My name is Richard Aide and I serve as the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators. As such, I represent over 300 secondary and post-secondary agricultural educators across Wisconsin. WAAE has been actively involved in the effort to create the Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council. Our members see the value of the Council's objectives and have invested financially and worked to assure the Council's success.

It should be noted what other states have been doing to assist with the success of agricultural education in their states. For example, in Minnesota, their Minnesota Agricultural Education Council has secured state funds to assist with agricultural education in excess of one million dollars. In Iowa, the state recently provided over $1.5 million additional dollars to their agricultural education programming. Iowa's state legislature recognized the value of quality agricultural education and increased funding to assure agricultural education continues to growth and be successful. In Illinois, the State has invested millions of dollars and actually has a staff of 5-6 specialists who travel the state and assist instructors with their work and program development. This exceptional model helps young teachers get off to a good start and assists veteran teachers to continue to evolve with the profession. This mentoring system should be the model for all education to follow. Our neighboring states have recognized the importance of agriculture and have stepped up and provided funding to facilitate an even more successful agricultural education program. In Wisconsin, agriculture is our number one industry and we need to be sure we are investing in the education and training of students to assure a bright future for agriculture. With over 300 career options for students, there is a multitude of opportunities for students to be involved in agriculture. The industry is very diverse and will continue to need more and more employees as the baby boomer generation begins to retire. How can we help assure we have enough quality, trained employees to meet the demands of the agricultural industry?

One positive step would be the formation of a legislated Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council. This council is unique in that it is an industry and State partnership that has been created for the benefit of agricultural education and our students. AB-83 is the first step in the State recognizing the importance and value of agriculture. This legislation will enable agriculture and agricultural education to receive the attention it deserves and provide a clear mechanism to engage industry and education in meeting the needs of the students and the industry.

If we can work collaboratively with the industry, state agencies, and educators we can help assure we meet the needs of all parties efficiently and effectively. I encourage your support of this legislation and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Richard Aide
WAAE Executive Director
920-324-8787
dick@waae.com

Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives

131 West Wilson Street, Suite 400 • Madison, WI 53703-3269
Phone 608.258.4400 • Fax 608.258.4407 • www.wfcmac.coop

3/27/2007

To: Members, Assembly Committee on Education

From: John Manske, Director of Government Relations

RE: Support for AB 83 and author's amendment LRBa0180/2

Good day. I'm John Manske, Director of Government Relations for the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives (WFC). Today I'm accompanied by my colleague Dave Erickson, Director of Member Services for the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives (WFC). Dave is a member of the Secretary's Wisconsin Agricultural Education Council, and has over thirty years of experience at WFC in education programming for our members and their cooperative employees and boards. On behalf of WFC, we are pleased to indicate our strong support for AB 83, and thank not only the author and sponsors, but also Chairman Davis for scheduling this legislation for a timely hearing.

WFC represents 600 cooperatives, mutual insurance companies and credit unions that employ approximately 20,000 people. Approximately 30 to 40 percent of these employees will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years. Replacing these experienced and skilled employees with qualified individuals will be a necessity for our members and is a concern to us as well. It is essential that a pool of highly trained and skilled workers be available in order for Wisconsin employers to be able to continue to succeed in a competitive marketplace.

The Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council created through AB 83 will be the convening mechanism for legislators, agricultural organization representatives, educational institutions and state agency representatives to assess the state of agricultural education programs at all levels – K-12, university and the technical colleges. The council will be essential to the development, coordination and evaluation of agricultural, industry, food and natural resource education programs within and among various public education institutions. The council will also help mobilize new resources – dollars and people for programs where needs have been identified. It will serve first and foremost as an advocate for agricultural education!

The authorization of the council executive director position at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is a critical part of this initiative. The agricultural business community believes that it is necessary to have a strong agricultural education liaison at DATCP to work with educators, industry, policy makers and the public. In fact, the industry is committed to raising matching funds for this position, as well as initiatives undertaken by the council.

At an annual legislative conference held in February in Madison by our Farm Credit Services (FCS) members, a policy statement was adopted that endorses AB 83. Our four FCS member associations are already active in supporting agricultural education through a number of memberships, scholarships and other means of helping to prepare individuals for careers of service to agriculture. I relate this to be illustrative of what much of the cooperative community is already involved with, and also to relate that there is WFC member support for creating the council called for in AB 83.

Wisconsin needs to do everything it can to keep its agricultural industry strong and growing. Much has been accomplished the past two sessions due to the strong partnership between agricultural organizations and state government. Thank you to all of you who have led and supported these past efforts. Now we are back to ask for your support to help continue to build a "bridge to the future." With the agricultural sector, educators and state government all working together in a focused and strengthened effort, we will help ensure a well trained workforce for our state's largest industry and a brighter future for Wisconsin.

Thank you for your attention to this request of support for Assembly Bill 83. Dave Erickson and I welcome any questions from you.

Wisconsin Agribusiness Council, Inc.

P.O. Box 46100 • Madison, WI 53744-6100 • Phone (877) WIS-AGRI • Fax (877) 947-2475

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Agribusiness Council (WAC) strives to be a positive voice for Wisconsin Agriculture and is dedicated to improving the business environment of the Agricultural Industry.

OUR HISTORY

Established in 1971, the Wisconsin Agribusiness Council (WAC) is an independent non-governmental, voluntary organization of individuals and businesses that are directly involved in the agricultural industry. WAC provides a strong, unified and effective voice for Wisconsin Agriculture and encourages the growth and profitability of all sectors of the industry. WAC policies are advanced through non-partisan government involvement and educational initiatives.

WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY SECTORS WE REPRESENT

Animal Production Agriculture

Traditional	Non-Traditional
Dairy	Organic/Sustainable
Beef	Aquaculture
Swine	Game Birds
Sheep	Exotics (Deer/Elk/Emus/Buffalo)
Poultry	Honey Bees
	Horses
	Fur Farming

Related Industries: Veterinarian, Hoof Trimmers, Nutritional Consultants, Manure Haulers, AI/Stud Services, Truckers, Livestock, Sales/Marketing.

Plant Production Agriculture

Traditional	Non-Traditional	Non-Traditional (Specialty)	Non-Traditional (Green Industry)
Corn	Forestry	Seed Production	Christmas Trees
Beans	Potatoes & Vegetables (Truck Farm)	Cherries	Flowers
Alfalfa		Cranberries	Turf & Sod Farms
		Apples	Nursery Plants
		Ginseng	
		Mint	
		Maple Syrup	

Related Industries: Green Houses, Golf Courses, Landscapers, Loggers, Crop Consultants.

Agribusiness Industries

Processing	Manufacturing	Sales	Chemical & Fertilizer	Finance	Construction
Canning	Metal Fabrication	Grocery Stores	Chemical Manufacturing	Ag Lenders	Shed / Building Supplies & Construction
Slaughter	Farm Machinery	Feed Mills	Chemical & Fertilizer Distribution	FC Wisconsin	Cement Contractors
Meat Processing	Small Engines	Cooperatives	Ag Lime		Operation Equip Supply & Installation
Bakery	Paper	Farm Stores			
Beer & Wine	Lumber				
Bedding					
Feed Stuff Production					

Related Industries: Biotechnology, Traditional & Renewable Energies, Ag Education (K-12, Post-Secondary, Adult Farmer), Inspectors (sanitation/regulation/quality standards)

To: Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Education
From: Nickolas C. George, Jr., President, Midwest Food Processors Association
Date: March 22, 2007
Re: Assembly Bill 83 – Support

The Midwest Food Processors Association (MWFPA) supports Assembly Bill 83, which creates an agricultural education and workforce development council. We urge the committee to pass the measure and recommend it to the general Assembly with the suggested amendment below.

MWFPA represents food processing companies with 80 facilities and over 200 supporting companies throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois that have more than a $3 billion impact on the region's economy. The impact to the agricultural community is significant since the food processing industry contracts directly with thousands of producers to provide the raw product necessary to produce food that is shipped around the country and the world.

The food processing industry, from farm to fork, has always been complex and competitive. Today our members find it increasingly difficult to compete against foreign food processors that pay lower wages and operate with fewer regulatory restrictions than those in the United States. Technology, scientific research and a well trained labor force give the industry the tools necessary to stay competitive.

AB 83 can facilitate a process that should already be taking place, namely, the communication between interested parties. Unfortunately, as technology, science and training become more specialized people tend to focus on their area of expertise and not communicate with others outside of their area. AB 83 should facilitate communications and highlight the importance of agriculture and related industries to Wisconsin and the Midwest.

We would make one recommendation to the bill which is to eliminate the 0.5 position and its funding. A group such as this has more than enough support to carry on its duties without the additional overhead. Food processors and producers are finding it increasingly difficult to pay the costs of increased regulation and bureaucracy in state, federal and local government. The council as outlined in this legislation should be able to operate without the increased cost or a part time bureaucrat.

With the suggested amendment, we urge your support of AB 83. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me at 608-255-9946; or by email; nick.george@mwfpa.org.

March 19, 2007

The Honorable Brett Davis
Room 308 North
State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952

Dear Mr. Davis:

I write regarding AB 83, the act that would create an "Agriculture Education and Workforce Development Council." As I am unable to attend the March 27, 2007, public hearing on this bill, I would appreciate it if you could arrange for this letter to be distributed to the members of the Committee on Education.

I lead a college at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville that offers programs of study in agriculture, accounting, biology, business administration, communication technologies, industrial technology management, and project management. We serve over 2000 on-campus students and over 800 distance learners. All of the programs in the college I lead offer preparation for work in professional and technical positions critical to the workforce needs of Wisconsin.

Our School of Agriculture currently enrolls over 450 undergraduate students in six major programs: Agribusiness; Agricultural Education; Animal Science; Ornamental Horticulture; Reclamation, Environment and Conservation; and Soil and Crop Science. Within UW-System we join our colleagues at UW-Extension, UW-Madison, UW-River Falls, and UW-Stevens Point in providing agricultural education and workforce development programming for the State of Wisconsin. To fill our programs, we heavily recruit graduates from agricultural education programs in Wisconsin's PK-12 schools and in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

Agricultural businesses and organizations in Wisconsin historically have been very supportive of agricultural education. To ensure a sufficiently sized and adequately prepared workforce, these businesses and organizations have long recognized the need to be involved in recruiting and retaining agriculture students at all educational levels. They have also recognized the need to participate in agricultural education through financial support, scholarships, internships, and other investments of time and treasure.

However, there is currently no single industry-led council or other entity that systematically reviews or seeks to coordinate agricultural education's programming or enrollments in relation to the current and future workforce needs of Wisconsin's more than $50 billion agricultural industry. There is also no single industry-led council or other entity that reviews or encourages additional support from Wisconsin's agricultural industry for agricultural education.

Office of the Dean
College of Business, Industry, Life Science and Agriculture
152 Pioneer Tower 608.342.1547 Fax: 608.342.1254

The Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council proposed in AB 83 would provide the entity to do these things. I believe the leadership of this council would assist agriculture education in its efforts: a) to most efficiently coordinate and deliver existing programs of study, b) to identify and develop new programs of study necessary to meet new workforce needs, and c) to encourage sufficient investment of the resources needed to develop Wisconsin's agricultural workforce. On a very practical level, the council would offer a single entity and voice representing Wisconsin's very diverse agricultural industry to which agricultural educators like myself and others could turn for information, advice, and assistance.

Sincerely,

Duane Merlin Ford

Duane Merlin Ford, Dean
College of Business, Industry, Life Science and Agriculture

DMF:kiw

c: Representative Alvin Ott
Representative Phil Garthwaite
Senator Dale Schultz
Mr. Allan Herrman
Chancellor David Markee
Provost and Vice-Chancellor Carol Sue Butts
Dr. Mark Zidon
Dr. Rick Bockhop