



Written by [Billy J. Stephen](#) on September 18, 2025

The War on Dairy State Farmers

Wisconsin farmers face a major threat to their livelihoods, as the [Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection \(DATCP\)](#) is pushing a radical [fee hike](#) that could [devastate](#) auction barns, livestock dealers, and farm families statewide. The proposal would increase licensing fees for auction markets by an astonishing [1,700 percent — from \\$420 to \\$7,430](#) — placing enormous burdens on those who work tirelessly to keep Wisconsin's agricultural economy alive.

As U.S. Representative Tom Tiffany (R-Wis.) [warned](#), this is not merely a matter of dollars and cents: "Democrats cannot manage a budget, so they shift the burden onto you." "Not only is this outrageous," he said, "it will force many of these businesses to close and drive up food costs for all Wisconsinites."



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Skyrocketing Costs, Threat to Rural Economies

The timing of this proposal is particularly concerning, as farmers are already grappling with rising input costs, labor shortages, and volatile market conditions. As U.S. Representative Tony Wied (R-Wis.) [stated](#), "The idea that Governor Evers' Administration would stick farmers with a 1,700% fee increase is downright unconscionable." Wied warned this doesn't just punish livestock dealers, auction houses, and haulers — it threatens the stability of entire rural communities.

Disregard for Stakeholders

Perhaps most troubling is the way this proposal was advanced. Curtis Larson, CEO of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association, pointed out that DATCP developed its fee schedule without [sufficient input](#) from those most affected. This lack of collaboration reflects a disturbing pattern: bureaucratic agencies prioritizing their budgets and regulatory ambitions over the real-world needs of the people they are supposed to serve.

Competitive Disadvantage for Wisconsin Farmers

If enacted, these fees would make Wisconsin one of the most expensive states for livestock marketing. Neighboring states such as Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois charge [dramatically lower fees](#) for similar licenses, putting Wisconsin producers at a competitive disadvantage.

Farmers such as Rocky Olsen, co-owner of Premier Livestock & Auctions, have [warned](#) that such increases could be too much all at once. Auction barns selling thousands of head of cattle each week cannot simply absorb these costs — and if they close, farmers will have nowhere to sell their livestock



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locally. This could drive agricultural businesses to relocate to other states, draining economic activity from Wisconsin and weakening its proud farming tradition.

A Larger Agenda

The [War on Farmers](#) is not unique to the Dairy State. Around the world, agricultural producers are under attack — not only by misguided national policies, but by globalist initiatives such as the [United Nations' Agenda 2030](#). Under the banner of “[food security](#)” and “sustainability,” international organizations [push measures](#) that restrict fertilizer use, cap livestock emissions, and concentrate control of food production in the hands of government agencies and unelected bureaucrats. All of these policies are connected to the [Green New Deal](#).

Drastic fee increases such as those proposed by DATCP do more than hurt family farms; they advance a dangerous trend toward [centralized control of food](#). When governments make it prohibitively expensive to produce and market food independently, they force farmers into dependency on state programs, and ultimately make consumers dependent on government-controlled supply chains.

Take Action: Stop the Attack

[Public hearings](#) on this proposal were scheduled for September 16 and 17, 2025, with [written comments accepted](#) through October 15. Written comments may be submitted to Angela.Fisher1@wisconsin.gov or mailed to Angela Fisher, DATCP, P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708. This is a crucial opportunity for farmers, auction owners, and concerned citizens to push back.

Powerful organizations such as the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and Dairy Business Association generally work to combat rules such as these. United, the agricultural community can defeat this measure and demand that policymakers pursue constitutional solutions that respect farmers' property and business rights and preserve Wisconsin's agricultural heritage without government interference.

Defend Farmers, Defend Freedom

Wisconsin's farmers are more than economic contributors — they are stewards of the land and pillars of their communities. DATCP's proposal threatens not just their financial stability, but their independence.

Government has no [constitutional](#) authority to micromanage agriculture or impose punitive fees that cripple private enterprise. Instead, its duty is to [protect property rights](#), ensure free-market policies, and uphold the freedom of individuals to engage in productive labor without undue interference.

This fight is about more than fees; it is about preserving liberty, property rights, and Wisconsin's agricultural identity. If Wisconsin's farmers fall under bureaucratic control, the ripple effects will harm every family that depends on affordable food and a thriving free market.

When government oversteps its bounds, citizens must remind their leaders that power belongs to the people — not the bureaucracy.



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