



Summer 2025 #448 WATA Staycation Challenge

- Visit the following:
- ~ 4 Dairy Breakfasts
 - ~ 4 County Fairs or Festivals
 - ~ 8 Agricultural Tourism Destinations

It's time for Guests to plan their 2025 Agricultural Tourism Adventures!

Read the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism [Blogs](#); [Blueberry Bliss U-Pick Farms](#), [Iconic Wisconsin Fairs](#), [Wisconsin Lavender Farms](#)

Every day we celebrate agricultural tourism, an industry that fuels opportunity and connects us all. If you, ate today Thank a Farmer. 2025 is the year for our audience to plan their agricultural tourism on-farm experience by visiting a tulip farm, cut flower farm, lavender farm, petting farm, apple orchard, winery, experience a farm stay, cooking class, farm to table dinner, pizza on the farm and so much more.



Grow Your Farm's Winter Season

Join the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association (WATA) and the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association (WCTPA) for a collaborative, one-of-a-kind event at the 2025 Summer Convention.



August 15 | 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

**Hillview Farms Wedding Barn
W3651 Hillview Rd, Merrill, WI 54452**

Hosted by Northwoods Evergreen & Wire Company

[Register here prior to August 1, 2025](#)

This energizing day will bring together **250+ growers, vendors, and ag industry leaders for education, networking, and hands-on learning** designed to help your business **Branch Out Toward Tomorrow**—especially if you're considering adding a winter or Christmas season to your farm.

WATA Member Price: \$50 (\$175 for non-members)

Includes BBQ lunch, three educational sessions,
and valuable networking opportunities!

In the News... On the Air

- USDA SCBG23-10 gowiaagtourism.com podcasts featuring specialty crop growers. Listen to all the new podcasts featuring; peppermint, lavender, blueberries and sweet corn.

Go WI Ag Tourism SCBG 23-10



Apple River Farm Tour



Mike and Jody Lenz
Threshing Table Farm
Star Prairie, WI



Farmer Darrin
Gramma Miller's Market
& Café
Hancock, WI



The following is an opinion editorial by Jean Bahn of Farmview Event Barn regarding Act 73, a law modifying Wisconsin's alcohol regulations. It will require any venue made available to the public for rent for an event as a "public place." Because of this, businesses such as wedding barns must obtain a liquor license.

The impact of Act 73 regulations on private event rental spaces is detrimental to small family farms. With USDA forecasting another income drop for 2025, farms rely on private agricultural events to survive. The current limit of six events per year is overly restrictive, driving away high-spending clients and hurting small businesses that depend on these events.

The Division of Alcohol, created without funding, could generate more revenue by increasing the number of allowed "no sale venue permit" events. Forcing small venues — who don't sell alcohol — to obtain liquor licenses they don't need also restricts others from starting businesses.

Small business owners deserve fair legislation, not rules favoring specific lobbying groups like the Tavern League. Defining private, invitation-only events as public while exempting public events makes no sense.

A trailer bill allowing 36 "no sale permit" events annually would cost the state nothing but bring in more tax revenue. It would help farms stay viable, protect family land, and support rural economies. Consumers would regain lost options, and Wisconsin would remain competitive with states that welcome such events without burdensome regulations.

A simple change from 6 to 36 events would benefit Wisconsinites. Ask WI legislators to support legislation increasing the number of "no sale event" permits to 36 per year for seasonal agricultural structures on working farms and allow the consumption of beer, wine and spirits served by licensed bartenders. This change would elevate Wisconsin as America's Agricultural Tourism Destination, driving economic growth for farms, rural communities, and the state.

Act 73 regulations on private event rental spaces will be **detrimental** to small family farms.

Fill out the form below to write to your legislators about changing the law.

[Click Here Send a letter to your elected officials in Madison !](#)

This will take you all of 5 seconds to complete. Thank you for your support.

Solution Proposal

Support the creation of a trail bill that would make the no-sale event venue permit (administrative rules) workable for farmers, i.e. increase the number of events per calendar year to 36 for seasonally temporary permitted agricultural structures, an event would be recognized with one signed contract for multiple days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday); allow the consumption of beer, wine and spirits and change the definition back to private event. Together we can elevate Wisconsin; America's Agricultural Tourism Destination as an economic engine for our farms, rural communities and state.

**** SIGN THE [CHANGE.ORG](https://www.change.org) PETITION ****

News to Know... Upcoming WATA Events

~Fairs and Festivals - Wisconsin Fairs June 18- September 14

~The next NET webinar will take place on September 17, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. ET, and will feature “**Agritourism Trail Systems of California, New York, and Oregon.**” We will look at the various types of trails in each state including Wine, Beverage, Cuisine, Farm, Apple, and more. The speakers will provide information on the establishment process, involvement with state organizations, financial support, and incentive programs.
Learn more and access registration here.

~**Conduct a safety review.** Inspect your operation with visitor safety in mind. Remember, many visitors have never been on a farm or don't understand what might harm them on a farm. Examine all areas visitors will be in, including surrounding “off limits” areas visitors might try to access, and identify any possible safety hazards. Great Article Morning Ag Clips Checklists and Resources from Safe Agritourism

~**Save the Date — August 4, 2025 — WATA State Fair Stage Show 5-6 p.m.**
Would you like your Agricultural Tourism Destination recognized at the Wisconsin State Fair?

Send prizes before August 1st to:
WATA 4618 West County Road A
Janesville, WI 53548

Ideas: hats, t-shirts, admission tickets, lotions, balms, jams, keychains, etc.

~Wisconsin Farm Technology Days August 5-7, 2025. WATA will be booth PP44

~Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Summer Conference August 14-16, 2025

~Branching Out Lunch and Learn, August 15th
8:30 am—4 pm

~Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Fall Season
September 11- October 31, 2025.

WATA Maze Challenge
#WATAMAZE.

~Growing Wisconsin
Conference Jan 18-20, 2026
in Wisconsin Dells. Registration opens in October 2025.



2025 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days at Clinton Farms
Bear Creek, Wisconsin
August 5-6-7, 2025

Clinton Farms is located on State Highway 22 just west of Highway 45 near Bear Creek, Wisconsin. It is a 750 cow dairy operation, now in its fourth generation. Check out the video on the right to see more about the farm!

Clinton Farms hosted the 25th anniversary show of the old **Wisconsin Farm Progress Days** in 1978 as well as the very first **Wisconsin Farm Technology Days** show in 2003.

Be sure to join us this August 5-6-7!



WELCOME
Growing Wisconsin Conference
2026 REGISTRATION

Harvesting Knowledge, Cultivating Connections,
Producing Quality and Promoting Success

WATA WISCONSIN GRAPE GROWERS ASSOCIATION WISCONSIN CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION

January 18-20, 2026 | Wisconsin Dells, WI

Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association “Leader & Voice for Wisconsin’s Agricultural Tourism Industry”



Agricultural Tourism, where agriculture meets tourism, is growing popularity as travelers seek authentic rural experiences. Agricultural Tourism is the marriage between agriculture and tourism/outdoor recreation.

Agricultural Tourism is experiences on a working farm, ranch, orchard or grove, conducted to the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the farmer. Activities include; farm stays, educational

tours, on-farm festivals, farm-to-table experiences, stargazing, herbal walks, forest bathing and u-pick opportunities.

**Remember to invite fellow Agricultural Tourism Operators to join WATA.
[Online membership form.](#)**

Join the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association (WATA) and connect with a statewide network of over 200 agricultural tourism and rural businesses.

Here’s how WATA supports you:

- ✓ Get listed on the WATA website
 - ✓ Gain exposure through 30+ signs at visitor centers
 - ✓ Be part of a supportive, connected network
- 📄 Learn more: WIAg tourism.com/Membership

Wisconsin Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers highlights tourism spending in new state budget (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027)

By Anne Sayers, State of Wisconsin, July 11, 2025

Collectively we all promote Wisconsin’s \$25.8 billion tourism industry. From the Governor’s Office to legislators on both sides of the aisle, it’s so encouraging to see broad support of the value of tourism promotion for Wisconsin residents statewide, driving \$1.7 billion in state and local tax revenue and supporting 182,000 full- and part-time jobs.

The signed budget:

~Matched our previous **budget increase with \$31 million in critical new funding**. These funds are structured almost identically to the last budget, with \$30 million in one-time funding and a \$1 million increase in our base-building funds in the second year of the biennium. This investment ensures we will be able to continue our consumer marketing efforts at a much higher level than we would have been able to afford had we gone back to our \$18 million base budget. Additionally, these funds will continue to power our high-profile public relations efforts as well as the Office of Outdoor Recreation and the Office of Group Travel. This means the Department of Tourism can continue driving traditional and new revenue streams to help grow economic impact.

~Made the **Office of Outdoor Recreation** permanent so the Office can continue to uplift Wisconsin's amazing outdoor recreation economy and connect it to one of our top drivers of Wisconsin tourism.

~**Created a Film Office** housed at the Department of Tourism, including one staff position and \$5 million in film tax incentives at the Department of Revenue. This item is getting incredible interest. Funding for this position does not begin until Oct. 1, so we are asking for patience as we begin to rebuild the Wisconsin Film Office. Our first order of business is to create a platform whereby interested parties can sign up to be notified of future film updates. Please stay tuned for that update in your inbox.

~Allocated enough **funds for the Arts Board** to continue reaching the federal match requirement, with **\$34,300 in fiscal year 2026 and \$79,400 in fiscal year 2027** in new funding. Unfortunately, a deeper increase in Arts Board grants did not happen, but I am grateful for the wonderful interest in the arts from both sides of the aisle.

~**Allocated \$5 million to Taliesin Preservation, Inc.** for restoration projects at Taliesin, Wisconsin's very special UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Iconic Wisconsin Fairs ...

Ozaukee County Fair | July 30- August 3

Since 1859, the Ozaukee County Fair has been a cherished tradition, uniting generations with classic fair fun. From live music and thrilling truck & tractor pulls to a bustling midway, fireworks, demolition derbies, horse shows, contests, and 4-H livestock exhibitions and judging. There's something for everyone, including plenty of entertainment for the kids!



Pierce County Fair | August 7–10

Feel the thrill of roaring engines and hometown pride at the Pierce County Fair! From tractor, truck, and horse pulls to an action-packed demo derby and a wide variety of exhibits in the iconic Round Barn, there's no shortage of excitement. Don't forget to nominate someone special—our Most Admired Senior Citizen (ages 60+).

Brown County Fair | August 13–17

Held along the scenic west shore of the Fox River, the Brown County Fair is a cherished tradition celebrating agriculture, history, and community. With a focus on education and lifelong learning, the fair offers exhibits, demonstrations, and a warm welcome to guests of all ages.



Price County Fair | August 21–23

Head to the Price County Fairgrounds for four days of non-stop fun, featuring thrilling carnival rides and games from K&M Amusements (included with your admission!), mouth-watering fair food, and a wide variety of entertainment for all ages. Enjoy agricultural displays, school exhibits, 4-H and open class competitions, a competitive horse show, antique displays, the old log school, live music, a kiddie tractor pull, horse pull, antique appraisals, and so much more. Prefer to skip the rides? A discounted admission option is available.

[Crawford County Fair | August 21–24](#)

Celebrating 166 years, the Crawford County Fair continues to be a proud tradition and a true cornerstone of the local community. From livestock shows and live music to action-packed events like the Challenge of the Champions Bull Ride, Tri-State Truck & Tractor Pull, Antique Tractor Pull, and Demo Derby, there's something for everyone to enjoy.



[Shawano County Fair | August 27–September 1](#)

The Shawano County Fair is a cherished Labor Day weekend tradition, celebrating the community's youth and agricultural roots. Visitors can enjoy an exciting lineup of carnival rides, games, bingo, live music, and racing, along with a wide variety of delicious fair food.

[Vernon County Fair | September 10–14](#)

Widely regarded as one of the best fairs in Wisconsin, the Vernon County Fair offers a rich blend of tradition, community spirit, and family fun. Visitors can enjoy outstanding local food stands, prize-winning exhibits, and cherished family picnics—all made possible by the many dedicated individuals who contribute their time and talents year after year. The fair features a full schedule of entertainment, including harness racing, demo derbies, tractor pulls, a draft horse show, Free Stage performances, Mr. Ed's Midway, and so much more. As one of the oldest county fairs in the state, with over 164 years of history, the Vernon County Fair is more than just an event—it's a beloved tradition filled with fond memories and small-town charm.

[WATA's Marketing Campaign continues to Drive Visitors to Your Farm](#)

[LUV R AG scan the QR code](#) [Family Fun on the Farm](#)

[Plan your Ag-Venture Today](#) [Napa Valley of the Midwest](#) [Wisconsin Farm Weddings](#)

Share these PSA's with your local radio stations.

[PSA 1](#) [PSA 2](#) [PSA 3](#) [PSA 4](#) [PSA 5](#) [PSA 6](#)



In the News...



Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association (WATA) the Leader and Voice, representing Agricultural Tourism in Wisconsin, announces the appointment of Sue Nelson to the Board of Directors. Her addition continues to build momentum toward branding Wisconsin, America's Agricultural Tourism Destination. This appointment will enhance and complement the Board's existing core Leadership. Nelson of Green County has been a WATA Member for three years.

She replaces Dave Carlson of Trempealeau County Tourism, who had a career change. Nelson joins President, Sylvia Burgos Toftness, Vice President Clara Hedrich, Treasurer Brian

Schuett as well as Directors; Jean Bahn, Dorothy Harms, Shawn Lehman, Malorie Paine, and Abigail Winkle. Ex-Officials include; Andrew Nussbaum, Department of Tourism, Lois Federman, DATCP, Mellissa Ploeckelman Brown, National Farm Medicine Center, and Trisha Wagner, UW Extension. The Board of Directors would like to thank Dave Carlson for his two years of service.



Notice of Annual Meeting:

The 2025 WATA Annual Meeting will be held January 19, 2026 at the Kalahari Resort, WI Dells during the Growing Wisconsin Conference. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us. The time of the meeting will be announced in the November 2025 Newsletter. Watch for the conference schedule and registration in October 2025.



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