Subject: Media Cover Sheet:

First-of-its-kind study reveals Agricultural Tourism contributes Hundreds of Millions of Dollars to Wisconsin's economy.

As autumn wraps up, Wisconsin's pumpkin patches and corn mazes are celebrating more than just a good harvest—they are celebrating a massive economic lifeline for rural communities.

Today, joined by Governor Tony Evers at Schuster's Farm, the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association (WATA) unveiled the state's first-of-its-kind **Agricultural Tourism Economic Impact Study**.

Given the intense economic pressures and volatile market conditions family farms face every single year, these findings reveal that agritourism is no longer just a weekend hobby—it is a critical economic engine keeping rural Wisconsin viable.

The Data at a Glance:

- **$765 Million:** The economic impact generated by a sample of Wisconsin's agricultural tourism sector.
- **4.3 Million+ Visitors:** Welcomed in 2025 across a sample of 240 agritourism destinations.
- **A Lifeline for Family Farms:** Vital alternative revenue that allows multi-generational farms to remain competitive and survive.
- **The Downtown Ripple Effect:** Urban tourist dollars directly fueling small-town economies—benefiting main street businesses, local diners, gas stations, and rural hotels.

Why This Matters Now:

Wisconsin is tapping into a powerful global trend. States across the U.S. and countries around the world are aggressively harnessing **agricultural tourism** to revitalize rural areas. For Wisconsin, this study provides a clear roadmap. Cities, towns, and counties can now use these landmark findings to shape their future rural economic development initiatives, long-term plans, and local zoning policies.

The announcement marks the 33rd anniversary of WATA, which began as a simple conversation between five farmers around a kitchen table looking for ways to survive tough commodity prices. Today, it represents a premier pillar of Wisconsin's tourism and agricultural legacy.

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