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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: ***New Study Shows Agricultural Tourism contributes Hundreds of Millions of Dollars to Wisconsin's economy.***

MADISON, WIS. – Governor Tony Evers today recognized the growing impact of Wisconsin's agricultural tourism sector — working farms that generate much needed income by meeting the public's growing demand for authentic on-farm recreation, education and food — activity that also boosts the economic vitality of rural communities.

Agricultural Tourism is a significant contributor to Wisconsin's economy, generating more than $765 million, according to a new economic impact study conducted by the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association (WATA). The study analyzed 2025 visitor data from a sample of 240 agricultural tourism destinations across Wisconsin. Collectively, those destinations welcomed more than 4.3 million visitors from the state and beyond the borders.

"For the first time, we have data that directly shows how visitors to Wisconsin's agricultural destinations boosted rural economies," WATA Executive Director Sheila Everhart said. "Agriculture and Tourism are critical to our state's economy and reputation, and now we have the hard numbers to show just how important agricultural tourism is."

The findings demonstrate the important role agricultural tourism plays in connecting visitors to Wisconsin farms with communities and downtown districts across the state generating economic activity that extends well beyond the farm gate.

Agricultural Tourism includes activities such as pumpkin patches, corn mazes, flower farms, orchards, vineyards, Christmas tree farms, and agricultural event venues.

The study, which was funded through a United States Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant (USDA SCBG), used real visitor data and spending habits to identify the total economic impact of the study's sample destinations. While the study represents a sample of 240 agritourism destinations, the scale of visitation and economic activity captured in 2025 data demonstrates the substantial contribution agricultural tourism already makes to Wisconsin's economy.

The economic activity generated by these visits can benefit a broad network of businesses, including restaurants, lodging properties, retailers, gas stations and other tourism-related businesses.
For agricultural producers, agricultural tourism also provides opportunities to diversify farm operations, create new revenue streams and build direct relationships with consumers.

"The strength of agricultural tourism is its ability to create a connection between agriculture and the communities and visitors who support it," Everhart said. "When people visit a farm, attend an agricultural event or purchase products directly from a producer, they are contributing to an economic ecosystem that reaches throughout the community."

The study's findings also underscore the opportunity for continued growth in Wisconsin's Agricultural Tourism sector. As consumers increasingly seek authentic experiences, locally produced products and opportunities to connect with the people behind their food and agricultural products, Wisconsin's farms and agricultural businesses are uniquely positioned to meet that demand.

WATA will continue working to support the growth and development of agricultural tourism operations throughout Wisconsin and to increase awareness of the important role agricultural tourism plays in the state's economy. "We look forward to connecting with business and civic leaders about how they can use the study to benefit their communities, businesses and agricultural tourism destinations near them," Everhart said. ###

The Economic Impact Study of Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Executive Summary can be found at wiagtourism.com