



capitol update

with Joan Sanstadt

Brancel Testifies on Ongoing Issues

Ben Brancel, secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, last week testified before the Assembly Agriculture Committee on "a smattering of issues." He was invited to brief ag committee members on ag-related issues that they may have to address in the future.

Governor Scott McCallum has named former lawmaker and DATCP chair as DATCP secretary. Harsdorf's first day on the job will be March 20.

The issues Brancel talked about included the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (formerly the Animal Health Lab), biosecurity, international marketing, natural resources issues, the Ag Stewardship Initiative, indemnity fund, biotechnology and stray voltage.

Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

Staffing for the new Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory is currently taking place. "We're down to two applicants for the lab director post," Brancel said. "And, we've started hiring pathologists and they are not easy to find."

Brancel, who serves on an oversight committee that was established when the animal health lab was transferred to the UW from DATCP, said the location of the new facility would be on the UW's ag campus, next to the veterinary school. Plans call for it to be a stand-alone facility, although there "was a lot of discussion about including a large animal hospital in the facility."

While there is still a possibility a large animal hospital could be included in the plan, this would only happen if the UW was able to raise enough funds for the hospital by November of this year. If the fund-raising was successful, the lab would be built on top of that hospital, Brancel said.

"Few whole animals are brought to lab," Brancel pointed out. "The lab is usually sent animal parts for diagnosis."

All members of the oversight committee who voted, voted in favor of the lab location, although the new UW Chancellor John Torphy abstained from voting, he added.

from Michigan for slaughter," Siroky said. "The TB situation in Michigan is there because of the high number of deer that feed on the same ground and intermingle with cattle."

Brancel urges every farmer have a biosecurity plan or know in advance how they will handle guests who show up at their farm.

Another animal issue that will likely move to forefront in this country is that of animal identification. "So far, we have no animal ID system in Wisconsin," Brancel said. "But it is important because Canada, Mexico and Europe all have ID systems and this is important in marketing our products. Two people at the DATCP are working on this issue."

International marketing

Overall, there has been a 9 percent increase in ag exports, Brancel said. While he rates this increase "fairly good," he noted the increase "varies by commodity. International marketing is very competitive."

The New Uses Bureau established in the DATCP's Marketing division, is handling the Ag Development and Diversification (A.D.D.) Program which is slated for a funding increase in Gov. McCallum's budget.

Brancel discussed the \$3 million that is earmarked in the budget for the second year of biennium for ethanol subsidies. While the ag committee is in favor of the subsidy for farmers who furnish corn for an ethanol plant, there were some concerns.

Rep. Barbara Gronemus (D-Whitehall) wanted to know "does the first plant that gets up and running get all of the subsidy money?"

Brancel said "the money would be used to support all ethanol plants in the state and, if necessary, would be prorated."

John Malchine, farmer and DATCP board chair, is actively involved in the new ethanol plant that will soon be operating at Monroe. Malchine said the subsidy and possible proration was of concern to bankers because as more plants get up and running, the amount of money won't be increased, but prorated.

added.

As for the Pesticide Database Pilot Program, Brancel noted his recommendation has been sent to the Joint Finance Committee. The pilot Brancel favors would involve two surveys; one done in an urban setting and the other in a rural setting. Residents would be asked to keep available information about how they've used pesticides. While name and addresses of those surveyed would be optional, respondents would be asked to fill out a form as completely as possible.

"Our attempt is to find out how much the public knows about pesticide use and how willing they are to give it and also how accurate it is. Whatever comes in on the survey forms will be made available. In the future, I'd like researchers to be able to rely on it. Regulators could use it for verification but not for witch hunts," Brancel added. "In the future," he warned the committee, "you'll be asked to pass laws that we can't give you any reason for."

Ag Stewardship Initiative

Brancel described the Ag Stewardship Initiative that gives a new research focus for UW-Platteville and the associated network of Discovery Farms to be located around the state.

"There's only one way farmers can be successful and that is to know how to deal with problems and how new technology can help," Brancel says.

Because of population density, Europe is having to do things now the U.S. will face in the future. "When I was told of some of those new technologies being developed in the Netherlands to deal with nonpoint, I was intrigued," Brancel said. On the first visit, the ag secretary went alone; the next time he asked DNR Secretary George Meyer to join him; and on the third trip he took the Deans of the Colleges of Agriculture at Madison, River Falls and Platteville. He also took producers to the same "environmental farms" in Holland.

"Every time people came back, they were very enthused," Brancel said. The Ag Stewardship Initiative, that was

put together under Gov. Thompson and that Gov. McCallum supports in his budget, is the result of those trips.

A total of 14 farms are involved in the Netherlands. In Wisconsin, plans call for a number of Discovery Farms to be located around the state. These farms will include sites with different soil and water conditions.

In addition to UW-Platteville, UW-Madison, UW-River Falls and graduate students from UW-Stevens Point will all be involved.

A coordinating council that will include producers, will help direct the program. "There are a lot of self-created fiefdoms in each university," Brancel said, "but the council is the real key to the whole effort. If you are not careful in how this initiative is funded and structured, you will not see the benefits. There is a real need to help farmers understand the practices that will come out of this initiative and how to put them in place."

"Agriculture is going to have some huge challenges in the future and you can't deal with them through regulation or piece-meal financial support," Brancel warned.

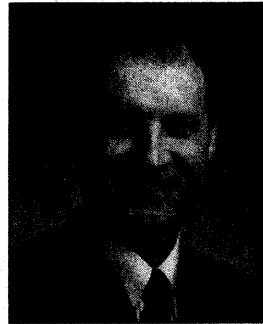
It's not hard to understand why such environmental programs are being developed in the Netherlands. They have 16 million people in one-fourth the land surface. Wisconsin's population is five million.

"My effort is to make every farmer successful in Wisconsin, with that success not dependent on size," Brancel said. "The government of the Netherlands wants more space for people and less for farms. This has led some Dutch producers to relocate in Canada, Michigan and Ohio. Some have visited Wisconsin, where they've been shown farms that were for sale. "We've given guidance but have not gone out on farms with them," Brancel said.

Indemnity fund

Included in the 2001-2003 biennial budget is an appropriation to help establish a new indemnity fund

"because our producer security fund doesn't work. The new program would work more like



Ben Brancel

an insurance policy proposal. It would start out with a \$2 million loan from the Ag Chem Management Fund, which would be used to buy security bonds. If there were a failure, we'd pay the producer up front and then argue with the bonding company," Brancel told the ag committee.

"By going to an indemnity fund, we could free up \$180 million of working capital for grain, vegetable and dairy industries. That \$180 million is what they wouldn't have to pay to buy their bonds. This program will benefit producers, farmers and processors and will be easier for the DATCP to administer. I hope you will support it," Brancel said.

Biotechnology

All products resulting from an embryo transplant are eligible for use in the human food chain. "Yet a cloned animal is not eligible for any kind of use in the same chain. We're working with the FDA and the USDA to be sure cloned animals are recognized in a way that doesn't hurt our industry," Brancel explained to ag committee members.

"Gene displacement is another biotech issue we'll see a lot about in the future. My advice to this committee is that you start boning up on these issues. You'll have to deal with the fear which people have when they do not understand something. Science is moving so fast, it's essential you learn what is taking place and what is going on in biotechnology."

See Brancel, on Page 11

Concern over the current outbreak of hoof and mouth disease in Europe and Great Britain, along with worries about BSE (mad cow disease), Johne's disease and chronic wasting disease were all addressed by Brancel under biosecurity.

"These diseases can erode animal agriculture in Wisconsin by public perception or by science," Brancel said. "BSE has not been found in the U.S., due to a strong USDA rule on not using animal protein."

State Veterinarian Clarence Siroky emphasized "any product coming from a ruminant cannot be fed back to a ruminant."

Wisconsin's new market based program that encourages on-farm testing for Johne's has attracted inquiries from around the country, Brancel noted. He's made federal agencies aware of the need for funding for the testing program. "I don't care if states or the feds do the testing, as long as it gets done."

Chronic Wasting Disease or CWD has mostly been found in western states, "and it's a disease I never want to see in Wisconsin. We're working with the federal government on this and at some time I'm sure there will be rules the ag committee will be asked to look at," Brancel said. So far two cases have been found in Montana and both herds have been depopulated.

"CWD exists in the wild, and we haven't seen any case pop up in about a year," Siroky added. Responding to a question from a committee member, Siroky said CWD has been found in mink, sheep, deer, elk and cattle. "But it appears the cause is different in sheep. It is the same class of disease as BSE," he added.

The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in England has closed parks and schools and other public places. Authorities in the U.S. are always on alert for any indications of the disease here. When there are unknown animal deaths, a toxic response team is called to look at the animal or carcass. Funding for this team may be a future budget item, Brancel said.

A new food safety lab at Marshfield is also involved in testing for animal diseases.

The tuberculosis found in Michigan herds is of concern to Wisconsin authorities. So far TB has been found in 13 Michigan herds. "We're monitoring animals that come into the state

"Banks are not looking at the ethanol subsidy as a viable option. You have to have a program that will allow banks to depend on that revenue stream for a longer period of time. We looked at every major bank in the state and they all said financing is a major risk. If the state is serious, you need to establish the subsidy for a longer term - that's what will give a bank comfort."

Rep. Scott Suder (R-Abbotsford) reminded Malchine that subsidies were "a taxpayer gift" and asked, "about how long a subsidy should continue,"

Brancel reminded the committee that Minnesota has 14 ethanol plants and earmarks \$34 million for subsidies. "But a subsidy for ethanol means you will have more farmers stay farming. It is an investment; it is taxpayer dollars; but we believe this will help rural development."

Malchine said the present program in the budget goes to the year 2006. "Another five years would be a tremendous help because we need a solid, dependable program," he added

Environmental challenges

Brancel said concerns over AFO/CAFO regulations, shoreland zone management and the pesticide database are all issues that will continue to impact farmers.

If the AFO/CAFO rules were to go into effect in their present form, the state of Wisconsin would end up with 4,500 permitted farms instead of the 80 it has right now. "I've argued that's not fighting pollution but a way to get more personnel. The money would be better spent if it were paid to farmer to put in practices on their farms," Brancel said.

When point source pollution was being dealt with, bonding could be used for practices because the way of combating point source was bricks and mortar. "When you get to the nonpoint program, you're not battling something that comes out of a pipe. You're talking about salt, leaves and fertilizer and you can't use bonded dollars to accomplish nonpoint goals," Brancel said.

Brancel doesn't believe solutions for nonpoint problems have to be expensive. "There are huge benefits that can come from low cost practices," he

— Brancel —

Continued from Page 6

"Using a human protein, pigs are being used right now to grow organs for organ transplants. Everyone is in favor of organ transplants, but it can be quite another story when people start asking where the organs came from." Brancel warned.

Quality assurance is another issue Brancel wanted to emphasize.

"The public will demand food safety be enhanced so products coming from the farm must have some kind of quality assurance. Such a program could be associated with antibiotic use or environmental stewardship and it will be run by third party consumer groups.

"Such a program will have to be backed up by laboratory tests and our department of lab sciences is in dire need of updating," Brancel added.

Stray voltage

Right now there are two issues associated with energy and power to run industry. One of those issues has to do with power quality and the other in getting power. The NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) attitude is often heard when it comes to placement of power plants and/or transmission lines, Brancel pointed out.

"Some day agriculture will provide more power," he continued. "I'm fully convinced someday agriculture will be looked upon as the power provider, through production of methanol and wind power. I often tell utilities they should be renting from farmers so each farm benefits. If we don't watch what we're doing, we could end up with quantity problems, such as California is experiencing."

When it comes to the issue of stray voltage, Brancel said, "this is probably one of my true failures in the department."

He said, "Ninety-five percent of stray voltage cases are solved. But the other 5 percent

don't know. There are people out there who say they'll solve it all - but not everything works everywhere. I've asked the Marshfield Clinic to look at human health and animal health issues that people say are associated with stray voltage.

"It's not that we're protecting anybody," Brancel said. "In the medical community, people accept the way you pull blood and nobody disputes the results. But the same things - sampling, equipment, and results - are not accepted in the stray voltage area.

"In fact, we don't even get to where we accept the same equipment," he said.

As for the 5 percent that remain unsolved, Brancel said, "they are tough. People get angry and accusatory when they aren't helped. I like to help everyone and there are still people who need help.

"I'd like to have research equipment analyzed for what they're supposed to do, as in a sort of consumers approach. Some equipment is very expensive, some is oversold and some is not being used for what it is intended," he added.

Brancel told the committee about his visit to the Indianhead Holstein Farm in Barron County last fall. "The problem was found in the electric boxes where others had looked, but not seen."

Having people on staff to inspect farm wiring would be a help, Brancel believes. "We need to look at how a farm is wired? Is the right type of wiring being used? How is it connected to the utility system? Maybe we have to beef up our efforts and work with the Department of Commerce to get funding for more electrical inspectors."

Thanks to Brancel

At the conclusion of the ag committee hearing, Brancel was lauded and applauded by committee members and by DATCP Board Chair John Malchine.

ment to the reality of business. Ben Brancel, you are probably the most well-versed man in agriculture in this state and you brought a real class to the department. I've never met a man who went into an issue with such vigor," Malchine said.

Rep. Gronemus, who was chair of the ag committee when the Democrats controlled the Assembly, had her own words for the outgoing secretary. "I want to extend my thanks to you, Ben. It's a tragedy for farmers of the state and for all the people that you're out. You've been a real friend."

Rep. Al Ott (R-Forest Junction), chair of the ag committee, said, "it's been an extreme pleasure to have worked with you. We will miss your presence. We know your love of agriculture, and we know where your heart has been."

Hemp resolution

Rep. Ott asked members of the ag committee to study an Assembly Joint Resolution, which asks Congress to review the current U.S. policy regarding the production of industrial hemp "to determine if it continues to be supported by a rationale of sound public policy."

The resolution directs that a copy of the resolution be sent to the U.S. secretary of agriculture, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, the director of the office of national drug control policy, the chairs of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

DNR Nonpoint Hearings

March 12 - Richland Center
 March 13 - Eau Claire
 March 14 - Fitchburg
 March 19 - Wausau
 March 20 - Green Bay
 March 22 - Pewaukee

Two hearings will be held at each site, with one getting underway at 1 p.m. and the second at 6 p.m.

Agriculture Committees and to each member of the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation.

If all members of the ag committee sign on the joint resolution, it will be presented to the Legislature as a committee resolution, Rep. Ott said.

DNR hearings on nonpoint

This is a reminder that the DNR's public hearings on nonpoint administrative rules related to the design of the nonpoint programs get underway next week.

Two hearings will be held at each site, with one getting underway at 1 p.m. and the second at 6 p.m.

It is just as important for farmers to attend this round of hearings as it was the sessions held last spring. Many of the issues farmers brought up last year have been incorporated into the new proposal, BUT NOT ALL.

For more information, contact your farm organization or call Carol Holden at the DNR at 608-266-0140.

Brancel has farewell session with Assembly Agriculture Committee

JAN SHEPEL

MADISON

Outgoing state Agriculture Secretary Ben Brancel spoke with members of the Assembly Agriculture Committee last week about issues that will need to be addressed on behalf of the state's agricultural industry in the future.

Brancel thanked the committee for its efforts in getting the veterinary diagnostic laboratory on track in the state. The lab is in the process of getting a new director, he said, and the board governing the lab has narrowed the choices in two possible candidates. The new lab is also trying to hire pathologists, which isn't easy to do, because people with the right qualifications are hard to find, he said.

The board for the lab also met several times to work out a proposal for a new laboratory building. Their final recommendation was for a stand-alone building near the state college of veterinary medicine, Brancel said, that would not include a large animal hospital.

He said the board told the vet school that if it wanted to have the large animal hospital, it should raise funds by November and the lab facilities could be built



BEN BRANCEL

together. The board didn't want to fund-raise itself for a large animal hospital, he said, but at the same time it tried very hard to appease the various interest

groups.

Committee members wanted to know how the LW she would affect truck and trailer traffic, and some had concerns about the campus setting. Brancel said there is limited need for truck and trailer traffic because most practicing vets are doing much of the diagnostic work in the field and sending samples to the lab rather than bringing animals in for diagnostics.

Brancel and the committee talked about biosecurity concerns, especially with regard to diseases like John's, BSE (mad cow disease) and chronic wasting disease. "All have a chance to erode, either by public perception or by true scientific evidence," he said.

Mad cow disease has not been found in the United States and, he said, the FDA has implemented strict rules about feeding animal byproducts that are imported to ward off any possible problems like those seen in England.

The rule is that any product, like meat and bone meal, coming from a ruminant cannot be fed to another ruminant.

Brancel said his office was contacted by ABC News for a possible story on mad cow disease and the state's compliance with the FDA rule on byproduct feeding. Brancel told them the state had 99 percent compliance and that the other two percent were those who were unaware of the reporting requirements — an essentially there was 100 percent compliance.

With that information, the news organization was not interested in including Wisconsin in their investigation, he said. "You're not the state we want to use for our program," he was told.

Of the diseases that were discussed, Brancel noted that only John's disease is found in the state.

On another topic, Brancel said he believes a permanent animal identification system is important for several reasons. It will allow trace-back of animals in cases of disease or food quality problems. In Europe, Canada and Mexico there are such systems, he said.

Such a system could be useful for a sales tool as well, providing information on the quality of the animal and proof of where it came from, and how it was raised, he said.

Brancel said the state appears to be poised for some significant ethanol production, which is part of an overall plan to bring more value-added products to the state's agricultural economy.

Another looming issue for the state's agriculture is the whole nonpoint pollution issue and the various federal and state regulatory schemes that are being formulated to deal with it. Coastal zone management and CAPO, short for confined animal feeding operation regulations, could have significant impacts on the state.

If CAPO is adopted as now perceived by federal regulators, Brancel said the state would go from having 90 farms with permits to 4,500 farms that would need permits to operate.

That would take huge amounts of resources, lots of personnel to do (the work). I have argued that this won't fight pollution. Hiring personnel to write permits for farms that are already doing things right is not going to help pollution," Brancel said.

Brancel told committee members that his belief is that huge benefits can be derived from low-cost practices installed in all the counties.

The new state John's disease program has encouraged greater testing, Ben Brancel noted that the state doesn't "certify" any herds. "The tests are just too poor. We can't verify that positives are positive and the negatives are negative," he said. With tests like that, it's too costly to "certify" as John's free.

Still, producers are testing in record numbers, up from 3,000 samples per month to 16,000 samples per month. There are 400 herds that have asked to be classified, he said.

Committee members were concerned about chronic wasting disease, an illness of some wild ruminants like white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk, that seems to be related to mad cow disease. "I want to never see it in Wisconsin," Brancel said.

Dr. Clarence Siroky, who accompanied Brancel to the committee session, said there have been cases in Canada, Oklahoma and Nebraska. It exists in Colorado and Wyoming in the wild. There were cases in South Dakota, he said.

The panel also talked with Brancel about the problem with bovine tuberculosis in the white-tailed deer herd in Michigan. The TB problem in Michigan is there because the deer population number is kept high due to feeding large piles of feed continuously, Siroky said. Any infected deer is easily able to contaminate the food with its feces, he said.

"I couldn't believe it. In some of those states in Michigan they were going through 100,000 pounds of feed each week," Brancel said.

Siroky said Wisconsin continues to monitor animals coming here from Michigan that are intended to go for slaughter.

Money to achieve nonpoint goals is going to be a challenge, he said. Bonding was able to bring money into the point-source pollution battle years ago, but it won't work for nonpoint, he said.

The pesticide database issue is another challenge facing agriculture in Wisconsin. Brancel's proposal is to set up a pilot project for one or two townships with a small village and ask residents for information about their pesticide use. The first goal of such a pilot would be to determine people's willingness to give such information. It could also help find out how much people know about pesticides.

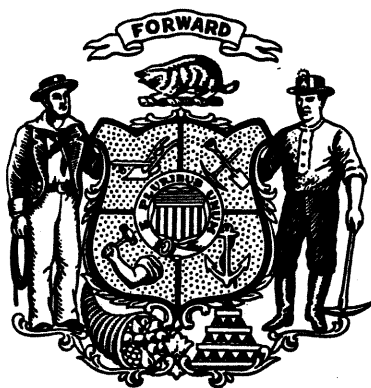
Brancel has also invested significant personal capital in the idea of the Discovery Farms approach to look at environmental concerns and the economics of various practices. He took several trips to the Netherlands and hatched the idea, with then-Gov. Tommy Thompson, of a Wisconsin model based on what he saw there.

Brancel is concerned that the new state budget may not support the whole project to the level it needs to be in order to be successful.

"We can succeed in the environmental arena and ruin some farms financially," he said.

Brancel said he has spent numerous days and hours addressing stray voltage concerns of farmers in the state. While 93 percent of the farms with problems have their cases solved, it is the remaining 5 percent that are the tough ones. "I am not happy when we can't find an answer."

END



END

JUL 31 2000



To: Rep. Al Ott
From: Jim Massey
Date: 07/27/00
Re: Dairy meetings

Jim Massey
Editor/General Manager
PO Box 570
Eau Claire, WI 54702-0570

1-800-236-4004 ext. 3275
Fax 715-833-7438

Dear Al,

I enjoyed our visit yesterday regarding your proposal to hold hearings for farmers to "vent" on milk prices.

I'm enclosing the story from the Eau Claire hearing. As indicated in the story, the hearing "focused on testimony from the University of Wisconsin System, farm organizations and dairy governing groups." If you have more hearings, I would suggest you may want to go at it from a different angle -- perhaps focusing on testimony from **producers**. I think producers get frustrated when university types get up and tell them what they already know. If you want to hold a dairy hearing for producers, then let Average Joe Producer be the one who testifies. Not necessarily Dan Poulson, Bill Brey and Greg Alaska, although they certainly can't be excluded.

Although there are probably not many concrete things that can be done at the state level to help dairy farmer, it may be helpful to hold the hearings just to listen to ideas producers may have. Some states have instituted a minimum milk price -- that may cost the state a lot of money, but you may hear that as a proposed solution. You may hear sentiment for a dairy compact, although we both know that would have limited value in a milk export state such as Wisconsin. You may hear a proposal to eliminate the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. I'm not sure what you'll hear, but as you indicated on the phone, maybe just giving producers an opportunity to talk is worth something.

I think you have to preface any discussion with the admission that there may not be much that can be done to help at the state level. You don't want to raise false hopes. But if you let producers know that state government cares, that may be all you can do.

If you would like to discuss this further, don't hesitate to give me a call. I'll look forward to a notice on when and where you'll hold the hearings. I'll be happy to give your advance story prominent play, if you want to call me for a brief interview.

I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Jim Massey

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Massey', written over the printed name.

Milk price debate rekindled

By Tawny Colalzy and Joe Knight

Special contributors

EAU CLAIRE — Dairy farmer Greg Blaska was surprised to hear a state Senate committee was getting involved in the milk pricing debate.

Pleasantly surprised, that is, the Sun Prairie man said as he prepared to testify in Eau Claire June 23 before the state Senate's Judiciary and Consumer Affairs Committee.

"I'm encouraged the committee is taking a look at the problems of Wisconsin dairy farmers," said Mr. Blaska, president of World Dairy Expo. "I consider this very good news."

The committee, with some members linked via satellite from Madison, met for an informal hearing on the future of dairy farming.

Sen. Gary George, D-Milwaukee, the committee's chairman, called for the hearing to rekindle the debate over low milk prices.

"We want to raise the profile of the discussion of dairy farms because those family farms are intrinsically an historic part of the economic and social framework of Wisconsin," Sen. George said.

The hearing focused on testimony from the University of Wisconsin System, farm organizations and dairy governing groups. Mr. Blaska said getting support

from state governmental leaders is essential to passing legislation at the national level.

"We need the same leadership on the state level that the members of the Northeast Compact got,"

Mr. Blaska said. "They had full cooperation from their state governments and were able to pass national legislation."

The Northeast Dairy Compact is comprised of dairy farmers in New England states and allows them to receive higher milk prices than farmers elsewhere.

Paul Zimmerman, director of governmental relations for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau, told the committee to maintain the use-value assessment, which has saved farmers money by allowing them to pay property taxes based on the agricultural value of their land, rather than market value.

However, Mr. Zimmerman encouraged the committee to change the use-value legislation in a way that would include farmers' nonproductive land, such as wood lots, in the use-value formula.

Earlier last week area dairy farmers gathered in the Chippewa County community of Tilden to support a national Fourth of July



Greg Blaska



Bill Brey

this issue has to be addressed now, in anticipation of the next budget session in January," he said.

"Changes in federal dairy policy have ripped to shreds the safety net for dairy producers," said Bill Brey, a dairy farmer from Sturgeon Bay and president of the Wisconsin Farmers Union.

Drops in milk support prices, combined with changes in trade rules allowing more imports of milk products, have caused dairy prices to plunge, he said.

Similarly, the number of dairy farms in Wisconsin is plummeting. The state had 41,000 dairy farms in 1985, dropping to 23,000 by 1998, Mr. Brey said. The rate of dairy farmers getting out of business has increased even more this year because of low milk prices, he said.

Bob Cropp, a UW-Madison dairy specialist, said that under the current federal farm policy, milk prices for farmers never

would get above \$13 per hundred-weight for long. When prices got higher, farmers would produce more milk, which would cause prices to drop again, he said.

State Sen. Alice Clausing, D-Menomonee, chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Resources and Campaign Finance Reform, said although some reforms need to take place at the federal level, the state can do more to improve education for farmers and help them diversify.

Producing ethanol or developing niche markets for such products as organic foods or specialty cheeses are possibilities, she said.

Brad Barham, a UW-Madison agricultural economist, said some Wisconsin farmers have used rotational grazing to produce milk with less labor. In some cases this has allowed them to work another job off the farm.

In response to a question from legislators, Mr. Barham said farmers in many European countries are paid more for their milk, but that system probably wouldn't work with American farmers and consumers, who are used to more of a free market.

American consumers probably wouldn't like the higher milk prices, Mr. Barham said, and many American farmers wouldn't like the restrictions on production that European farmers face.

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Publication: It

Low milk prices getting government's attention
Senate committee, farmers meet in city
By Tawny Colaizy
Leader-Telegram staff

Dairy farmer Greg Blaska was surprised to hear a state Senate committee was getting involved in the milk pricing debate.

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"We want to raise the profile of the discussion of dairy farms because those family farms are intrinsically an historic part of the economic and social framework of Wisconsin," George said.

The hearing, at UW-Eau Claire's McIntyre Library, focused on testimony from the UW System, farm organizations and dairy governing groups.

Sen. Alice Clausing, D-Menomonie, chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, also participated in the hearing. As the hearing began, seven representatives of the dairy industry had signed up to testify.

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George said he believes it is time for state government to get more involved in the dairy pricing issue.

"We think this issue has to be addressed now, in anticipation of the next budget session in January," he said.

Colaizy can be reached at 833-9202, (800) 236-7077 or tawny.colaizy@ecpc.com.

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Date: Fri 23-Jun-2000

Publication: lt

Quick Words:

elections-gubernatorial

thompson

gary george

milk-pricing

Full Text:

Low milk prices getting government's attention

Senate committee, farmers meet in city

By Tawny Colaizy

Leader-Telegram staff

Dairy farmer Greg Blaska was surprised to hear a state Senate committee was getting involved in the milk pricing debate.

Pleasantly surprised, that is, the Sun Prairie man said as he prepared to testify this morning before the state Senate's Judiciary and Consumer Affairs Committee in Eau Claire.

"I'm encouraged the committee is taking a look at the problems of Wisconsin dairy farmers," said Blaska, president of the World Dairy Expo. "I consider this very good news."

The committee, with some members linked via satellite from Madison, met for an informal hearing on the future of dairy farming.

Sen. Gary George, D-Milwaukee, the committee's chairman, called for the hearing to rekindle the debate over low milk prices.

"We want to raise the profile of the discussion of dairy farms because

those family farms are intrinsically an historic part of the economic and social framework of Wisconsin," George said.

The hearing, at UW-Eau Claire's McIntyre Library, focused on testimony from the UW System, farm organizations and dairy governing groups.

Sen. Alice Clausing, D-Menomonie, chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, also participated in the hearing. As the hearing began, seven representatives of the dairy industry had signed up to testify.

Blaska said getting support from state governmental leaders is essential to passing legislation at the national level.

"We need the same leadership on the state level that the members of the Northeast Compact got," Blaska said. "They had full cooperation from their state governments and were able to pass national legislation."

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Beata.txt

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Sobocinski, Ray

From: Rossmiller, Dan
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2000 2:56 PM
To: Sobocinski, Ray
Subject: Sen. Judiciary & Consumer Affairs Hearing--Testimony

or your information, here are the people who have agreed to testify at the dairy hearing.

1. Gary Frank, Farm Management Specialist, Center for Dairy Profitability at the UW-Madison.
2. Bill Brey, president, Wisconsin Farmers Union.
3. Janet Nelson, dairy farmer and member of the National Dairy Board.
4. Dureen Van Ruden, a small dairy farmer from Westby.
5. Greg Blaska, president of B Farms in Marshall and with the World Dairy Expo.
6. Either Brad Barham or Douglas Jackson-Smith, co-directors of the Program on Agricultural Technology Studies at the UW-Madison.
7. Roger Cliff, Director of Governmental Relations, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.

(We may also have several others. I am not making these arrangements directly but will try to let you know if others commit to testify.)

Rasmussen, Pat

From: Sobocinski, Ray
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2000 3:26 PM
To: Sen. Huelsman
Subject: FW: compact statement

Importance: High

Senator,

Found some stuff in my e-mail files, if you still need it for Ott's office.

-----Original Message-----

From: Roehl, Dan [mailto:Dan.Roehl@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Thursday, June 22, 2000 2:11 PM
To: Sobocinski, Ray
Subject: compact statement

I have attached Mark's statement before the Judiciary Committee out here on the Compact. I will also include some background with this e-mail. Next year, the East Coast Reps are going to have to try and renew the compact. I, MArk, does not believe they will be able to extend it this year. It is our hope that the eastern reps will fail in their attempt to do this. I think Congress as a whole is starting to move against the eastern guys on this issue. There are too many free traders who do not feel comfortable supporting a trade barrier within the U.S. Here is the background and mark's statement:

<<Agriculture, Compact, Statement for Judiciary hearing.doc>>

Dairy Compacts Background

The 1996 farm bill gave the Secretary of Agriculture the power to grant the New England states the authority to enter into a regional dairy compact. Under the authorizing statute, this authority ends at the same time as the adoption of the required consolidation of federal milk marketing orders, which was set in current law as October 1, 1999.

The legislatures of the six New England states agreed to enter into a dairy compact that would create an interstate commission with the power to set a minimum price paid by dairy processors to dairy farmers in the six New England states at a level above the federal minimum price. However, any proposed interstate compact had to be approved by Congress, as required by the interstate commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution.

New England farm groups support the compact because they believe that the current minimum milk prices dictated by federal milk marketing orders are not sufficient to cover the cost of producing milk on family-sized farms, thus forcing many dairy farmers out of business.

The strongest opponent of the Northeast compact has been Upper Midwest dairy producer groups which maintain that the compact artificially encourages the production of milk within the compact region at the expense of other parts of the country that have lower production costs and can sell at lower prices. In addition, opponents maintain that the compact could set a precedent for other regions and industries to protect themselves from competition, an action which critics maintain is anti-consumer and market-distorting.

In late May 1997, New England dairy farmers gave nearly unanimous approval to a compact commission-proposed minimum price of \$16.94 per cwt. for Class I milk in the compact region. (This compares with an average minimum fluid milk price of \$14.82 for the first 8 months of 1997 in the New England milk marketing order; a 1996 average of \$16.88; and a 1995 average of \$14.87.) The \$16.94 floor price became effective on July 1, 1997 and currently serves as the floor price for farm milk used for fluid consumption in the Northeast compact region.

Following the creation of the Northeast compact, many other states expressed interest in either joining the Northeast compact or forming a new, separate compact in the South. Current law allows New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey,

Delaware, and Maryland to join the Northeast compact as long as their membership is approved by their respective state legislatures and by the Congress. All five state legislatures have approved membership; congressional approval is pending. Fourteen other states, mainly in the South, have approved membership of their states in a new Southern dairy compact, which is also awaiting congressional approval.

Current Compact Issues

Extending the Sunset Date. The 1996 farm bill (P.L. 104-127) required the Northeast dairy compact to terminate upon implementation of federal milk marketing order reforms.

P.L. 104-127 mandated an April 4, 1999 deadline date for these reforms. However, a provision in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Appropriations Act, 1999 (P.L. 105-277) extended the deadline date for reform to October 1, 1999, which in effect extended the life of the dairy compact until that date. On September 28, 1999, a federal judge granted a temporary restraining order requested by Northeast dairy farm groups to prohibit USDA from implementing its final rule for federal milk marketing order pricing reform on October 1.

Since the termination of the dairy compact is directly tied to the implementation date of order reform, the compact did not terminate on October 1.

A provision in the dairy legislation.

(H.R. 3428) was enacted as part of the FY2000 consolidated appropriations act (P.L. 106-113), H.R. 3194) extends authority for the Northeast dairy compact by 2 years until September 30, 2001. The measure does not address the extension of membership in the compact to the five states (NY, NJ, PA, DE and MD), which have approved membership in the compact at the state legislature level. Congressional approval is required before these states can join the Northeast compact.

Northeast Compact Supply Management Program.

The Northeast Dairy Compact Commission has issued proposed regulations for a supply management program that the Commission says will help prevent potential overproduction of milk in the Northeast region. Critics of the dairy compact contend that the higher mandated farm milk prices under the compact encourage farmers in the region to overproduce milk, which they say depresses milk prices for dairy farmers in other regions.

The proposed rule would provide for an assessment of 5 cents per hundredweight (cwt.) on all farm milk sold within the compact region. At the end of the year, the annual funds collected would be refunded to any compact eligible producer who increased his annual milk production by less than 1%.

One-half of the total amount refunded would be divided equally among all eligible compact producers; the other half would be distributed based on the total volume of milk produced during the year. A hearing on the proposed rule was held on April 5, 2000.

In May, farmer members of the compact voted to approve the rule. The rule is expected to be finalized and printed in the Federal Register on July 1, 2000. Supporters of the assessment say that it will control potential excess production of milk in the Northeast and help limit the purchase of surplus dairy products by USDA.

Opponents contend that the supply management program will be ineffective, and that it is designed more to fend off criticism of the compact as its sunset date approaches later next year.

Massachusetts State Legislature Action on Rescinding Compact Membership.

The Massachusetts State Senate voted in late May 2000 as part of the state's annual budget plan to withdraw Massachusetts from the Northeast dairy compact and instead allocate \$3 million annually for a trust fund to benefit state dairy farmers. The Senate bill is in conference with the House budget bill, which does not contain a comparable provision.

Supporters of the provision to remove Massachusetts from the compact contend that consumers in the state are contributing significantly more to the compact than the benefits accruing to Massachusetts dairy farmers. Major Northeast dairy farmer groups have spoken out in opposition to the rescinding provision. If Massachusetts were to leave the compact, it could potentially threaten the membership of Connecticut and Rhode Island, since current law requires a member state to be contiguous to another member state.

Proposed Southern Dairy Compact. H.R. 1604 and S.J. Res. 22

As introduced in late April 1999, would grant congressional approval for a new Southern dairy compact. The following states already have enacted legislation approving membership in a Southern dairy compact: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Other states likely to consider membership are Texas and Florida. Congressional approval for the Southern compact was considered during conference deliberations on the FY2000 agriculture appropriations bill.

A threatened filibuster by Upper Midwest legislators forestalled this action. Authority for a Southern compact also was not included in the subsequent dairy legislation (H.R. 3428) adopted by Congress that extended the authority of the Northeast compact for 2 years.

Written testimony brought in to Sen. Harkin 8/28/00.

Rep Al Ott:

I am a dairy producer with my son in Pierce Co, Wis. We have 200 milking cows and 250 ^{1000 acres plus} heifers. This has been an active dairy farm since 1946. We must save the dairy farms and the farmers doing the work.

Milk price to the producer is now 11.50 per cwt but the cost to produce that 100# is 20.05 per cwt.

No justice in this and it must be changed now. Not wait to farm Bill change in 2002. Must have emergency payments to keep us in the dairy production business until a real program pays us a just price - how as said before it costs 20.05 today to produce that 100# milk.

Production is up - cow numbers are up but price is far from just - But I must add people population is up every year in U.S. including year 2000.

When milk leaves our farm - then the retail price for milk products to consumer figures 300. - per cwt.

In addition milk price crisis - we must also talk about grain prices - all grain prices including Corn, oats, barley, soybeans. Corn price now is about \$1.50 per bu. but consumer pays \$3.50 per 18 oz pkg cereal.

Grain price crisis is here - when you consider cost of production in the grain area -

29 Now we must also add livestock farmers
and their livestock production. Livestock
off to market for meat now priced at
about \$60.- per cwt to the producers.
Easily we can explain retail meat
conservatively at \$3.⁰⁰ and on up per
pound for any meat used for human
consumption.

37 Farmer & his family are working
as slave laborers Fair Equity price to
farmer must come our way now

41 Aug 28, 2000

Sincerely
Carol Subowatey
W 3031 Co Rd G
Elmwood Wis

715-728-5607

54740

F41

Representative Al Ott

Non-Constituent Information Sheet

Date: 11/8/2000

Last Name, First Name: Mike Geier

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone (608) 823-7801 Work Phone () _____

Problem:

Want to know why the price of milk is so low in Wisconsin? He thinks he knows what the main problem may be.

Price of milk is down because of imports. It's not overproduction or anything like that.

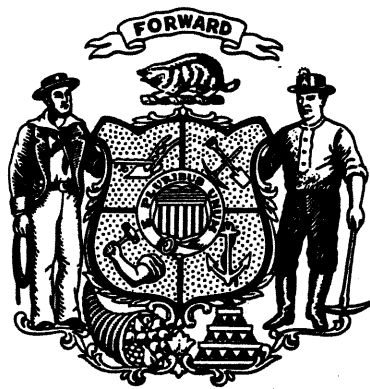
Action:

While at warehouse where milk is stored there are heaps of powdered milk from New Zealand. They mix it with our milk to make cheese.

If they did not have the powdered stuff they would have to use our milk. We have great cheese. Wisconsin cheese reputation is great. He now is trucking & when they go deliver cheese to Illinois, most other trucks wait to be unloaded but not the ones with Wisc.

Told him about our hearing & report & hope
for the federal government to do something
regarding imports and prices as that is
out of the realm of state government.

END



END

Agricultural Issues - Informational Hearing - March 1, 2001

Invited Speakers:

Ben Brancel, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection

Dr. Clarence Siroky, State Veterinarian, Animal Health Director DATCP

John Malchine, President Board of Directors DATCP

Barbara Knapp, Director Budget & Accounting DATCP

Vet Lab Location Update –

New director of Lab is being selected.

Lab will be a stand alone building, next to vet school.

Large animal hospital was discussed but at this time not supported by industry to be built at the same time and place as the Vet Lab.

If raise enough funds by Nov.2001, will consider Lab on top of Hospital.

Vet school students will help run the lab.

Lab will be more than diagnostics.

No large animal traffic expected since usually work with specimens –parts.

Do not usually get whole animal, and if yes it's dead.

Biosecurity – Mad Cow Disease, Johne's, Chronic Wasting Disease

Marshfield Clinic will do food safety tests on cheese and milk products.

Important issue, need all 4 departments to work together to get it done:

- 1) Marketing
- 2) Food safety
- 3) Resource management
- 4) Animal health

Johne's -

Wisconsin approach is market based, encourages testing.

Money needed.

Have good resources on advisory council – Mike Collins.

Biosecurity continued –

CWD Chronic Wasting Disease –

Affects elk and deer.

BSE –similar bovine sponge like disease

MAD COW / BSE -

No cases in captive animals in US.

Program to address disease is not yet in place, but is being worked on.

Created holes in the brain/ sponge like.

Caused by different things in different animals.

Feed that comes from a ruminant should not be fed to a ruminant.

Ruminant = hoofed, usually horned animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, deer. Not pigs.

How can the public help? Volunteer samples? – Food Safety Dept. needs to be alerted to pull samples when there is suspicion of something wrong.

DNR is working on info/education initiatives to alert markets, hunters to disease.

Bovine TB –

Big issue in Michigan.

Huge feeding stations contribute to spread of the disease among animals.

Stopping feeding is not necessarily the answer.

Wild deer are tested in WI.

Tests are done where large concentrations of animals are and where previous cases have been found.

Animal Id System –

Currently not in US, and not in WI. But needed.

Canada, Europe and Mexico have. Needed for trade.

Need a single system to make it work.

Ben has people at DATCP working on it.

General public is warming up to the idea.

Great sales tool for marketing.

International marketing –

Progress is being made. Increase of 9% in exports.

New Co-op Bureau is being created to search for more products in ADD grant program.

Bio-diesel –

Other states are using bio-diesel fuels.
Becoming new standard with use of soybeans, other oils.
Some states require it for school busses etc.

Selling price is \$1.30.

Ethanol –

14 plants in Minnesota deal with Ethanol.

Banks in WI will not touch ethanol.
Producer credit, direct payment to company best since guarantees that would give bank comfort.

Impact study done by corn growers, indicates better jobs, transportation, and investments.

How long will the subsidy be needed before self-sufficient?

Ben says that Minnesota has subsidized \$34 million already and will be increasing amount.

Subsidy helps by
Lessening transportation costs.
Increasing corn profits.
Less land sold.
More farmers stay in farming.

Timetable - John Malchine

5 years of subsidy would be most helpful.

Need solid dependable program to help gain financing.

Technology is increasing corn product use fast.

Need time frame for business not for industry.

CAFO's –

Ben wants to send message to DC that we need a common way to address the issues.

Huge resources are required, people in order to give permits to 4,500 facilities.

Non-point –

GPR \$ are needed, can help for low cost shorter term projects.

Can not use bonded dollars alone.

Pesticide database –

No options selected, instead will try pilot project.

Include survey to find out how much the public uses, how informed it is and how accurate their knowledge is, then to create a better system.

Do not want to waste money trying to set something up and have it fail.

Need research material, information to help in policy development.

Global Economy –

Ben wanted to know what other countries are doing, particularly European
Because there past problems are our current problems and their current problems are our future problems. Benefits us to learn what is out there.

Ben's focus was the environment side of ag, especially cost factors and regulatory factors.

Stewardship / Discovery Farms –

Require extra costs like bookkeeping.

DATCP has asked for a single position to coordinate the efforts and activities between campuses and farms

Need to look at how it is funded and how it is handled.

Looking at the proposal, see holes in funding and piece meal financial support is not good.

Global Economy continued –

Foreign farmers here –

Why would a farmer from the Netherlands want to come to Wisconsin?
Because they have the same number of farms but much smaller land size.
They pay farmers to leave!

Indemnity Fund / Producer Security Fund –

An insurance policy of sorts.
Producer is assessed according to risk.

Borrow \$2 million from Ag. Chem. Program then repay once program on.

Eventually what it will do is free up capital for producers.

Rather than getting a bond that you hang onto until needed in case of failure. Fund gets you ahead with security.

\$180 million working capital saved.
Does not impact farmer payments.
Does not require new money in the budget but changes the entity.

Biotechnology –

Product is taken from an embryo and used to create a new life,

Cloning is not used in the same manner.

Gene displacement –

Has created advances into the future.
Regulation will be needed as science leaps faster ahead.

Global Economy continued – Biotechnology continued–

Quality Assurance –

Food safety enhancement for farms.

Firms are asking for signatures on forms, backing up info on feed and general health of animals. If a single farmer handled it, then it works out but if animals are sold at Equity for example, then run into problems because their livestock originates all over.

Aquaculture –

Stray voltage –

95% are solvable cases and the other 5% are not.
Hard to find answers for some of these issues.

When look at the medical practice see same guidelines for

sampling
equipment
results

While the stray voltage area has no acceptance of any one way.

Electrical review of farms needed.

Approach as electrical wiring issue rather than stray voltage.

Need to work with commerce and co-ops.

Other issues –

Processing plants –

Bill is being worked on that addresses the interstate shipment of small processing plants. There is debate in Texas court about the outcome of one case. After this case is settled more info will be forthcoming...

Power –

Ben is convinced that farms will eventually provide power. Through wind or methane or some other forms.

WI Land Council –

What role does it play in development?
Seems to have challenges and not sure what role to play.

Ag Financing –

Rep. Gronemus will author bill requiring that all contracts be in duplicate rather than copied. Banks work with duplicate forms.
Hope is that this will eliminate problem areas with loans and such.

Joint hearing –

Committee members suggest that Assembly Ag and Senate Labor and Agriculture committee should meet together to cover some issues such as the budget.

Quality Assurance –

Ben would like research on products being sold for quality.

BUDGET ISSUES –

Ben was asked to do a 5% reduction at DATCP of operation costs.

Run 50/50 now on programs, half funded by state half by federal dollars.
If take out state money, will lose federal programs.

Secretary's office handles program, policy and such.
If need to loose \$221, 000 = 20 positions would need to be eliminated (\$54,000 per average salary).

1990 = 699.84 employees
now = 660.18 employees

Even though lost people due to vet lab closing, gained when took on Consumer Protection Department.

If they have to let people go, how can he allocate people elsewhere?

Farmland Preservation –

Land conservation board levies \$ to counties.
Want better way to address back taxes and such...

\$ issue has not been analyzed

World Center Authority –

Obsolete. Board was disbanded years ago.

Al said that he is upset because he is on the board and they did not have a single meeting! (just kidding)

Amendments –

Ben encourages members of committee to talk to new secretary before caucus meetings take place to determine which matters DATCP will be focusing on.

Concerns / Issues brought up by John Malchine, President of DATCP Board

Bio-security –

Destroying the beef industry

Consumer Protection –

Area of DATCP that needs more attention

Ag Chem Fund –

Money is being taken away for other programs

Biotech –

*Challenges ahead for exports
Brazil is a sleeping giant*

Environment –

The way US is handling the environment is good in comparison to what is happening worldwide. Amazon River for example is a landfill in some areas.

At the tail end of the meeting, Al mentioned the

- 1) Hemp resolution – wanted members to consider committee as author
- 2) Summer listening sessions report – ideas for legislation or amendments
- 3) Sub-committee creation – brainstorm on possible ideas

MATERIALS TO BE SENT TO MEMBER OFFICES regarding these last items.

Committee Meeting Attendance Sheet

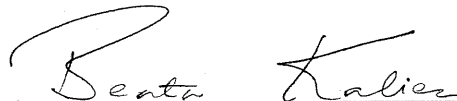
Assembly Committee on Agriculture

Date: 03/01/2001 Meeting Type: INFORMATIONAL HEARING

Location: 417 NORTH - GAR ROOM

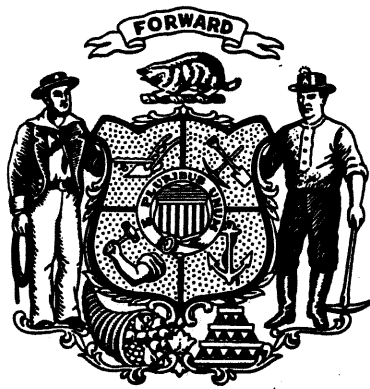
<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Rep. Alvin Ott, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Eugene Hahn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. John Ainsworth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Joan Wade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Jerry Petrowski	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Scott Suder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Steve Kestell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Gabe Loeffelholz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Garey Bies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Joe Plouff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Marty Reynolds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rep. John Steinbrink	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Barbara Gronemus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Julie Lassa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Marlin Schneider	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rep. Mary Hubler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals: 15 0 1



Beata Kalies, Committee Clerk

END



END



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Ave M. Bie, Chairperson
Joseph P. Mettner, Commissioner
Robert M. Garvin, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

May 29, 2001

The Honorable Alvin Ott
The State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 318 North
Madison, WI 53702

MAY 30 2001

Re: Cooperatives Voluntary First Time Investigation Stray Voltage Data

Dear Representative Ott:

As you requested in your letter of May 7, 2001, I contacted Mr. David Jenkins, Manager of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), regarding submission of electric cooperatives' first time stray voltage investigation data to our program. He responded by letter that I have enclosed for your review. I believe he has adequately outlined what I have requested from the cooperatives regarding data.

WECA's central office will submit the data on behalf of the individual cooperatives. The data will be used to compile information from time to time that allows the Public Service Commission (PSC) and other relevant governmental concerns to better serve the public.

The letter also acknowledges their volunteer participation in our program. As you know, we have always had a very good working relationship with electric cooperatives in this state. This is another fine example of their willingness to help support our statewide efforts.

Thank you again for your letter and your continued support. If you need further assistance, please call me at (608) 267-6718.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Cook by sp
Mark A. Cook, Electrical Inspector
Program Manager
Rural Electric Power Services

MAC:ljv:L:\letter\Rep Ott SV 5-24-01

Enclosure

cc: Chairperson Ave M. Bie, PSC
Secretary Jim Harsdorf, DATCP
David Jenkins, WECA
Bob Fick, WUA
Dave Hansen, DATCP
Paul Nelson, PSC
Jim Loock, PSC



WISCONSIN PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION
A Division of the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives

30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 401 • Madison, WI 53703 • Phone (608) 258-4400 • FAX (608) 258-4407

2001 MAY 23 A 11: 58

May 22, 2001

Mr. Mark Cook
Wisconsin Public Service Commission
610 North Whitney Way
Madison, WI 53705

RECEIVED

RECEIVED
MAY 23 2001
Electric Division

Dear Mr. Cook:

This letter is written as a follow-up to our conversation in which you described the current program wherein information is submitted to you on a regular basis from the various Wisconsin utilities. You have advised me that the useful information that is provided to you falls into basically three categories, which are: information concerning a periodic inventory of copperweld conductor used in the primary distribution system; information concerning the amount of replacement or reconductoring of primary distribution line complete on an annual basis in rural areas; and the submission of data (following a PSC generated format) of first-time stray voltage on farm investigation information conducted by the electric cooperatives. In order to assist the Commission, the electric distribution cooperatives (through my office) agree to provide the PSC with this information. The cooperatives will do so on a voluntary basis, with a view toward assisting the Commission in its work concerning electrical issues in rural areas in Wisconsin.

In regard to the third point, since the cooperatives are sensitive to the confidential nature of information provided by farm members, if any members object to the cooperatives providing information about their farm to the PSC, the cooperatives will refrain from giving you data concerning that particular member.

I will be submitting this information concerning copperweld conductor and the information on line replacement and have requested our members to begin using your format specific data chart for new first-time investigations. We will attempt to follow the same reporting cycle as the utilities, which you have advised is every six months.

I would sincerely appreciate it if you would acknowledge our willingness to participate in the submission of data that conforms with the methods that you have in place for the utilities in Wisconsin. If you have any additional requests or concerns regarding providing this data from the cooperatives, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Very truly yours,

David J. Jenkins
Manager, WECA Division
Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives

"Call the energy professionals at your electric cooperative today"



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Ave M. Bie, Chairperson
Joseph P. Mettner, Commissioner
Robert M. Garvin, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

May 29, 2001

Mr. David Jenkins, Manager, WECA Division
Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives
30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 401
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

I received your letter of May 22, 2001, regarding submission of data to the Public Service Commission (PSC) from the cooperatives in the state. You have adequately outlined what I requested from the cooperatives regarding data. The data will be used to compile information from time to time that allows the PSC and other relevant governmental concerns to better serve the public. Your letter acknowledges the volunteer participation in our program, and I will inform Representative Alvin Ott, Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, of your assistance in this matter.

I appreciate your willingness to help support our statewide efforts and your prompt response. I am pleased to affirm that the electric cooperatives have always been eager to work with us on this important policy issue.

Thank you again for your letter. If you need further assistance, please call me at (608) 267-6718.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Cook by sp

Mark A. Cook, Electrical Inspector
Program Manager
Rural Electric Power Services

MAC:ljv:l:\letter\Jenkins SV reprtng 5-01

cc: Chairperson Ave M. Bie, PSC
Secretary Jim Harsdorf, DATCP
✓ Representative Al Ott
Bob Fick, WUA
Dave Hansen, DATCP
Jim Loock, PSC Chief Engineer

May 7, 2001

Mr. Mark A. Cook, Manager
Rural Electric Power Services
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Mr. Dave Hansen
Rural Electric Power Services
Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911

Dear Messrs. Cook and Hansen:

Thank you for providing the information I requested regarding the type of data currently collected from investor-owned utilities and for the acknowledgement that obtaining data from electric cooperatives would provide more complete statewide statistics.

As Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, I respectfully ask that the Public Service Commission embark on a formal request at your earliest convenience to obtain similar data from the electric cooperatives and unregulated electrical utilities serving rural areas as it currently does with investor-owned utilities.

By including reports of first time stray voltage investigation data from all utilities, the Public Service Commission would create a more complete database for future analysis of stray voltage and other electrical problems. My hope is that cooperatives could voluntarily submit such information without incurring additional administrative costs. Your suggestion to utilize the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association central office as the responsible party for submitting the data on behalf of the individual cooperatives sounds practical.

Thank you in advance for cooperating with this request and for submitting an official appeal to the electric cooperatives for their data.

Sincerely,

Representative Al Ott, Chairman
Assembly Committee on Agriculture



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Ave M. Bie, Chairperson
Joseph P. Mettner, Commissioner
Robert M. Garvin, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

April 4, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE AL OTT

FROM: Mark A. Cook, REPS Program Manager *mac*
Richard S. Reines, Public Service Engineer *RSR*

RE: PSC Utility Stray Voltage Database

Since 1988, the Public Service Commission's Rural Electric Power Services Program has required investor owned utilities to report first time stray voltage investigation data to us on a periodic basis. The following information details the contents and structure of the database that was created from the submitted utility data.

The utility database was constructed according to the attached specifications. Each investor-owned utility collects the data over specific six-month periods (Jan. – Jun., Jul. – Dec.) and submits a completed report to the PSC during the next six-month period. The data is submitted in either a Microsoft Access database format or a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format. Each row of data represents one farm and there are 46 columns with data points, as detailed below, to report the data for that particular farm. The data can then be analyzed for trends over time, averages, distributions and other statistical properties. Data that is unattainable or unknown is left blank.

The data specifications listed below contain six columns. The first column describes the data point in plain language. The second column lists the exact spelling and wording for the column header in the database. The third column describes the data type, whether it is numerical or textual. The fourth column describes the number of places or spaces the particular data entry occupies (essentially, the width of the column). The fifth column gives a range (minimum to maximum or allowable submissions) for the entries in each data type. The last column provides an example of typical data from the database. Generally, the data encompasses the particulars of the farm and the utility system, and records the results from the first-time stray voltage testing.

MAC:RSR:ljb:S:\Letters\Ott Attach memo 4-01

Enclosures

First time investigations data specifications

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

<u>Data</u>	<u>Field name</u>	<u>Data type</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Example</u>
Visit date	VISITDAT	Date	10	ANY	04/02/2001
Wis. Region ¹	LOCATION	Text	2	C – WC	SC
Miles to substation	DISTSUBS	Single	10	ANY	4.5
Grounds per Mile	GROUNDSD	Integer	8	1 AND UP	12
End of line? ²	END_LINE	Text	2	Y/N	N
Primary voltage	PRIM_VOL	Integer	8	2400 – 25000	7200
Size of phase conductor	PHASCNDC	Text	12	ANY	1/0 ACSR
Size of neutral conductor	NEUTCNDC	Text	12	ANY	8A CW
Feeder phase type ³	FEEDR_PH	Integer	8	1,2,3,4	3
kVA transformer rating	TRANSFOR	Single	10	5 AND UP	37.5
SNVD measured ⁴	MEASVLTD	Single	10	ANY	1.54
SNVD calculated	CALCVLTD	Single	10	ANY	1.45
Secondary phase type ⁵	SECND_PH	Integer	8	1,2,3,4	1
Source resistance at cow contact	SRCE_RES	Single	10	ANY	271
Shunt resistance at cow contact	SHUNTRES	Integer	8	Usually 500	501
Vporef ⁶ worst case	PRIMARYN	Single	10	ANY	1.27
Vsnref ⁷ worst case	SECNDRYN	Single	10	ANY	1.30
Vcc worst case	CCA_VOLT	Single	10	ANY	0.258
Non-farm source?	NONFARMS	Text	2	Y/N	N
As-found ⁸ EPP? ⁹	ASF_EPP	Text	2	Y/N	N
As-found EGS? ¹⁰	ASF_EGS	Text	2	Y/N	N
As-found isolation transf.	ASF_ISOT	Text	2	Y/N	N
As-found 4-wire system	ASF_4WIR	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. ¹¹ More grounds	ONF_GROU	Text	2	Y/N	Y
Recomm. EPP	ONF_EPP	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. EGS	ONF_EGS	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. Isolation transf.	ONF_ISOT	Text	2	Y/N	N

¹ See attached table for regions vs. counties

² End of line is within ½ mile of end of a feeder or a tap off the feeder of more than ½ mile.

³ Types: 1 – single phase, 2 = two phase, 3 = three phase, 4 = mixed phases

⁴ Worst case secondary neutral voltage drop encountered

⁵ Types: 1 – single phase, 2 = two phase, 3 = three phase, 4 = mixed phases

⁶ Primary neutral to reference voltage

⁷ Secondary neutral to reference voltage

⁸ Record as-found condition before any testing

⁹ EPP = Equi-potential plane

¹⁰ EGS = Electronic grounding system

¹¹ Recommendations as a result of testing for on-farm and off-farm

<u>Data</u>	<u>Field name</u>	<u>Data type</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Example</u>
Recomm. 4-wire system	ONF_4WIR	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. Larger neutral cond.	ONF_NEUC	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. Balance 120-v. phases	ONF_BAL1	Text	2	Y/N	N
Other recomm.	ONF_OTHE	Text	12	ANY	NONE
Recomm. Pri. Syst. grounds	OFF_GROU	Text	2	Y/N	Y
Recomm. Larger Primary Neut. cond.	OFF_NEUC	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. Re-build primary system	OFF_RBUI	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. Bury counterpoise	OFF_BURY	Text	2	Y/N	N
Recomm. Balance phases	OFF_BALA	Text	2	Y/N	N
Other primary recomm.	OFF_OTHE	Text	12	ANY	NONE
Recomm. Isolate neutrals	NEUTISOL	Text	2	Y/N	N
Is fencer ok?	FENCEROK	Text	2	Y/N	Y
Stanchion bonded?	MILKSTAN	Text	2	Y/N	Y
Pipeline bonded?	MILKPIPE	Text	2	Y/N	Y
Pulsation electric?	ELECTPUL	Text	2	Y/N	Y
Size of herd ¹²	HERDSIZE	Integer	8	ANY	75
On DHIA?	TESTPROG	Text	4	Usually DHI or NONE	DHI
RHA lbs ¹³	MILKPROD	Integer	8	ANY	15892
SCC (x1,000) ¹⁴	SCC_THOU	Integer	8	ANY	329

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COUNTIES</u>
C	Adams, Green Lake, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Waupaca, Waushara, Wood
EC	Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Sheboygan, Winnebago
NC	Clark, Iron, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Price, Taylor, Vilas
NE	Florence, Forest, Langlade, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Shawano
NW	Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Douglas, Polk, Rusk, Sawyer, Washburn
SC	Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Jefferson, Rock
SE	Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha
SW	Crawford, Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland, Sauk, Vernon
WC	Buffalo, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix, Trempealeau

¹² Number of actively milking cows at time of test

¹³ RHA of record on day of test

¹⁴ Somatic cell count of record on day of test

March 26, 2001

Mr. Mark A. Cook, Manager
Rural Electric Power Services
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Mr. Dave Hansen
Rural Electric Power Services
Department of Agriculture, Trade and
Consumer Protection
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911

Dear Messrs. Cook and Hansen:

The Assembly Committee on Agriculture discussed a number of issues in connection with your March 15, 2001 presentation to the committee. You noted that investor-owned utilities, at the direction of the Public Service Commission, are supplying certain information on a semi-annual basis regarding progress both in addressing stray voltage issues and in modernizing the rural electric grid. Some of our knowledge of the success of the state programs is based on this information.

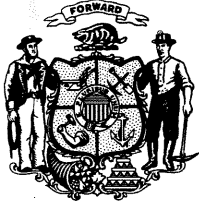
Committee members had a brief discussion regarding the potential for electric cooperatives to supply this information, and the potential value of that information. Due to the full committee agenda, there was not time to fully discuss this issue.

So that the committee can determine whether it should play a role in seeking to obtain information from the electric cooperatives on the stray voltage issue, could you please describe the information that investor-owned utilities currently provide and the value of any knowledge the state would gain by having the same or similar information supplied by the electric cooperatives?

Thank you for your presentation to the committee and thank you for your cooperation with this further request.

Sincerely,

Representative Al Ott, Chairperson
Assembly Committee on Agriculture
3rd Assembly District



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Ave M. Bie, Chairperson
Joseph P. Mettner, Commissioner
Robert M. Garvin, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

April 4, 2001

The Honorable Al Ott
The State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 318 North
Madison, WI 53708

APR 06 2001

Re: Utilities Reporting Stray Voltage Data

Dear Representative Ott:

Thank you for your letter. It was our distinct pleasure to share our program's success with your committee.

As you know, the state agencies charged with the responsibility of dealing with stray voltage (SV) issues are the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Wisconsin can be proud that it has taken a progressive approach with this issue and is the only state in the nation with a program that is specifically charged with the task of responding to farmers' reports of stray voltage concerns.

In Wisconsin, we have spent more than one million dollars of ratepayer funds on research of SV and other electrical phenomena concerns. Thousands of miles of rural line have been rebuilt as a direct result of our program. Wisconsin utilities are averaging more than 500 miles of rural line rebuilds each year and millions of dollars are spent on those projects. We have developed and implemented farm wiring assistance programs with the utilities. Three million dollars of ratepayer funds have been spent to date on these programs.

We have developed uniform testing for utilities. Our uniform phase II testing protocol is used throughout the country to help find and reduce stray voltage levels from on-farm and off-farm sources. We created an isolation policy that allows dairy producers to take control of the SV issue and install devices to help mitigate sources regardless of the voltage levels found.

The Rural Electric Power Services (REPS) staff from both agencies has conducted training in 14 states and presented several national satellite broadcasts. Staff has written more than 20 technical papers to share the findings of the state program. REPS has developed and implemented three levels of training courses (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) with the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Biological Systems Engineering that are presented annually. People from across the country attend these courses.

From 1988 to 2000, the average primary neutral to reference voltages have been reduced 53 percent, and the average cow contact stray voltage levels have been reduced by 69 percent. In 1988, when we started working on this issue, we could expect that 41 percent of all dairy farms in Wisconsin would have levels of cow contact stray voltages above an action level. Today, that number is less than 6 percent for a reduction of 8 to 1. At the same time, the average neutral conductor resistance has decreased 20 percent. We are very proud of these accomplishments.

The PSC's existing regulations are based on its stray voltage docket 05-EI-115. Stray voltage is defined by the Commission as a natural phenomenon that can be found at low levels between two contact points in any animal confinement area where electricity is grounded. The PSC "level of concern" referred to in docket 05-EI-115 is an extremely conservative amount of stray voltage that the PSC deems acceptable in an animal's environment, based on considerable government and university research.

Stray voltage is not just a utility distribution system concern. We have found that about 50 percent of stray voltage levels measured are from on-farm wiring sources. It is very important to continue to work together to enhance farm-wiring programs and provide electrical inspection for the Wisconsin agriculture community. On average, on-farm sources of SV have increased about 4 percent since 1988. We believe the lack of funding, certified electricians and state electrical inspector presence and authority contribute to this rise. Electrical inspection needs to be the backbone of any new farm wiring program.

For several years, the Public Service Commission's REPS program has required investor-owned utilities to report first time stray voltage investigation data to us. A utility database has been constructed according to the specifications developed by the PSC REPS program. Each investor-owned utility collects data over six-month periods and submits a completed report to the PSC REPS. To date, the utilities have submitted data on 5,097 farms. Sometimes the data is unknown, but the utilities report as much data as is possible to gather. The data can then be analyzed for trends over time, averages, distributions, and other statistical properties.

We would be happy to incorporate SV data from electric cooperatives into our existing database. If you decide to move forward with this idea, we recommend that the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's (WECA) central office submit the data on behalf of the individual cooperatives. We can then track cooperative and investor-owned utilities individually, or more importantly, as a statewide industry.

It is my understanding that the electric cooperatives have already agreed to voluntarily submit data to the PSC regarding copperweld conductor according to PSC 113.0615 that requires each utility to maintain an inventory of copperweld conductor size 6A and smaller that is more than 50 years old (as of January 1, 1998). The inventory must include the amount of such conductor by size and age and its location as needed in the distribution system. Each utility must submit its

The Honorable Al Ott
The State Assembly
Page 3

inventory to the PSC every four years until all of this conductor is retired and removed from service.

We have attached a sample of the types of farm and utility data investor-owned utilities provide to the REPS program.

Thank you again for your letter. The excellent working relationship we share with you, DATCP, and the Rural Energy Management Council gives us reason to be positive about the future. If you need further assistance, please contact Dick Reines or me at (608) 267-6718. Dave Hansen of the DATCP can be reached at (608) 224-5055.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Cook, Electrical Inspector
Program Manager
Rural Electric Power Services

MAC:ljv:S\letter\Ott SV Reporting 4-04-01

Attachment

cc: Chairperson Ave M. Bie, PSC
Secretary Jim Harsdorf, DATCP
Dave Hansen, DATCP
Dave Jenkins, WECA
Joe Hertel, COMM
Paul Nelson, PSC



State of Wisconsin
Scott McCallum, Governor

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
James E. Harsdorf, Secretary

April 3, 2001

The Honorable Al Ott
The State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 318 North
Madison, WI 53708

APR 10 2001

Dear Representative Ott:

Thank you for your letter. We were glad to be given the opportunity to share with you and the agriculture committee, our program's success.

As you are aware, the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) have been given the responsibility of dealing with stray voltage issues on farms in Wisconsin. We are proud of the fact that the Rural Electric Power Services (REPS) program has taken a proactive approach when dealing with farmer's stray voltage concerns and that our state is the only state in the nation to have a program used to address these various issues.

The utilities have made many improvements to their distribution systems on the urging and encouragement of the REPS Program. They have also implemented testing protocols and procedures that adhere to the standards set by the PSC. The REPS program works hard to address farmer's concerns and promotes cooperation and communication between all the parties involved.

There are still needs in the rural community when dealing with electrical issues. DATCP remains committed to support increasing the number of electrical inspectors in the state; initiating a statewide rewiring program; and ongoing scientific research that may lend insight into power quality issues.

We recognize the continuing need for dialog and exchange of ideas on this very important topic. If you need further information please contact Mark Cook or me.

Sincerely,

David D. Hansen
DATCP-REPS Supervisor
(608) 224-5055

cc: Secretary James E. Harsdorf, DATCP
Stan Shaw, DATCP
Mark Cook, PSC

Napralla, Erin

From: Mark A. Cook [mark.cook@starband.net]
Sent: Friday, March 30, 2001 8:09 AM
To: Alvin Ott
Subject: SV

Hello Al, I received your letter. I will put something together for you as soon as possible regarding data reporting for cooperatives.. Thanks

Mark A. Cook
Program Manager, Inspector
Public Service Commission
608-423-7151
608-267-6718

Kalies, Beata

From: Mark A. Cook
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2001 7:34 PM
To: Alvin Ott
Cc: Lorna Vinger; Paul *PSC Nelson
Subject: SV

Hello Al,

Thanks for the pat on the back. I was very happy to share our success with your committee. I often share our good news with anyone that will listen but the only thing that seem to makes the press is the bad stuff.

I got your message late Thursday. I will try and put something together for you regarding the numbers. I am very proud of the success we share. I hope you enjoyed my talk.

Thanks for your support,

Mark A. Cook
Program Manager, Inspector
Public Service Commission
608-423-7151
608-267-6718

3/16/01