

**Wisconsin Agro-Security Resource Network (WARN)
Special Committee on Disaster Preparedness Planning
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Thank you for the opportunity to make you aware of a networking and incident preparedness effort developed by the agricultural and food industries in Wisconsin, called the Wisconsin Agro-Security Resource Network, or WARN.

Over the last two years, several agricultural industry leaders have met to develop a network to facilitate an industry-wide response to an incident involving Wisconsin agriculture or food systems, with the goal of maintaining consumer confidence in Wisconsin's food products and U.S. food safety systems.

WHAT IS WARN

- WARN is a network of agricultural and food industries and organizations and government agency representatives focused on agricultural and food security preparation and incident communication response, to both industry partners and to consumers.

WARN GOALS

- The main goal is to maintain consumer confidence in Wisconsin's food products and U.S. food safety systems prior to and in the event of an incident.
- Establish formal participation in incident communication (WEM, DATCP, DHFS, law enforcement) by helping coordinate development and distribution of consistent, scientific, and accurate information to media, producers, industry groups and consumers.

WARN STRATEGIES

- Create a network of key contacts between WARN and incident planners, responders and communicators. For example, WARN is part of the FBI Agro-Security Working Group.
- Create an industry network to communicate with consumers and industry constituents in concert with regulatory officials in the event of an incident.
- Identify gaps and needs of agro-security preparedness and serve as a clearing-house for incident communication preparedness.
- Provide educational opportunities for government personnel who may not be familiar with Wisconsin agriculture.

WHO'S INVOLVED IN WARN

- Over 20 local state, regional and national government agencies who are involved with animal health, food safety, emergency management and incident response.

Federal Agencies

- USDA-Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service
- Department of Homeland Security
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

State Agencies

- Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Department of Natural Resources
- Emergency Management Services
- Department of Health & Family Services

Local Government

- Town & County Boards
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- First Responder Networks

- Over 35 industry groups, organizations and companies connected to animal agriculture.

Ag Producer Groups

- Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
- Wisconsin Beef Council
- Wisconsin Cattlemen's Assn
- Wisconsin Pork Association
- Foremost Farms, USA
- Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin
- National Farmers Organization
- Dairy Business Association
- Grande Cheese Company
- Family Dairies USA
- Equity Livestock
- Alto Cheese Cooperative
- Wisconsin Farmers Union
- AgSource/CRI
- Dairy Farmers of America
- Central Livestock Association

Affiliated Industry Groups

- Wisconsin Assn. of Meat Processors
- WI Public Service (WPS)
- WI Cheese Makers Association
- WI Agribusiness Council
- WI Independent Livestock Dealers Association
- WI Dairy Products Association
- WI Restaurant Association
- WI Federation of Cooperatives
- WI Grocers Association
- Wisconsin Technical College System

- UW – River Falls
- UW – Madison
- UW/Cooperative Extension
- WI Veterinary Medical Association
- Milwaukee Stockyards
- Smithfield Beef Group
- American Food Group
- Emmpak Foods

WARN ACTIVITIES

The main element of WARN's work is establishing and maintaining an incident communications procedure and network. This includes:

- An Incident Communications Procedure for WARN to follow in the event of an incident.
- Incident Communications Modules of the likely kinds of agriculture and food incidents Wisconsin could experience, which include key contacts, resources and messages.
- Industry Preparedness where WARN is connected with government and emergency responders to be in the "inner circle" on communication development.
- Web site - www.wisconsinagroresource.net.

WARN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Thieding, Executive Director of Public Relations, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, (608)828-5709

Matt Joyce, Vice President of Producer Communications and Programs, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, (608)836-8820

John Freitag, Executive Director, Wisconsin Beef Council, (608)833-7177

Tammy Vaassen, Director of Operations, Wisconsin Pork Association, (608)723-7551

John Petty, Executive Director, Wisconsin Agri-Service Association, (608)223-1111

Ferron Havens, Chief Executive Officer, Wisconsin Agribusiness Council, (608)235-1799

Brandon Scholz, President, Wisconsin Grocers Association, (608)244-7150

Strategy Team

Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association

Robin Schmidt, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Others based on type of incident

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Identify resources before something happens.
- Have incident communications plans in place before something happens.
- Formal connection with WARN to government and emergency response agencies in agriculture and food incidents.