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STATE OF WISCONSIN
DWD
Department of Workforce Development

Tony Evers, Governor
Amy Pechacek, Secretary-designee

Date: September 22, 2021

To: Governor Tony Evers, State of Wisconsin
Senate Chief Clerk Michael J. Queensland, pursuant to Wis. Stats. s. 13.172(3)
Assembly Chief Clerk Edward A. Blazel, pursuant to Wis. Stats. s. 13.172(3)
Secretary-designee Randy Romanski, Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
State Superintendent Jill Underly, Department of Public Instruction
Secretary Preston Cole, Department of Natural Resources
Secretary-designee and CEO Missy Hughes, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
President Tommy Thompson, University of Wisconsin System
President Morna K. Foy, Wisconsin Technical College System
Chancellor Rebecca Blank, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Chancellor Dennis Shields, University of Wisconsin-Platteville
Chancellor Maria Gallo, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
Chancellor Thomas Gibson, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Dean and Director Karl Martin, UW-Madison Division of Extension

From: Department of Workforce Development Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek on behalf of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council

Memorandum: WAEWDC Annual Report SFY2021

Introduction

This memorandum serves as the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council (WAEWDC) Annual Report for state fiscal year (SFY) 2021 as required under Wis. Stats. s. 106.40(5). This memorandum includes information about the reformation of WAEWDC, its purpose, the activities of the council in SFY2021, its goals and focus, and a review of agricultural education programs provided by Wisconsin's educational institutions. Per Wis. Stat. s. 106.40(4), the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Technical College System, and University of Wisconsin System shall prepare an annual review of the agricultural education programs under their purview.

Reformation of the Council

After several years of inactivity, the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council (WAEWDC or "the council") was reformed in 2020 under Governor Tony Evers' leadership to serve a key role in Wisconsin's economic and workforce development efforts. In early 2020, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) worked with the Governor's Office, Legislative leadership, the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and key stakeholders to identify new members to serve on the council. Progress to rebuild the council was slowed by the onset and continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the reformed council held its first meeting on September 9, 2020.

Under the guidance of DWD leadership, WAEWDC continued the rebuilding process throughout 2021. At its March 2021 meeting, the council elected a new chairperson, identified the statutorily required executive committee members (DWD Secretary, DATCP Secretary, and DPI State Superintendent or their designees), and elected the remaining executive committee members, three from the private sector and two representatives from educational institutions. The council membership for SFY2021 is as follows:

Chair: Sara Schoenborn, Wisconsin Agri-Business Association

Executive Committee:

Amy Pechacek, Secretary-designee, DWD
Randy Romanski, Secretary-designee, DATCP
Sharon Wendt, designee on behalf of the State Superintendent, DPI
Gwendolyn Boettcher, DeForest School District
Jeff Edgar, Silver Creek Nurseries, Inc.
Erik Huschitt, Badger State Ethanol
Betsy Leonard, Wisconsin Technical College System
Paul Palmby, Seneca Foods

Members at Large:

Kevin Bernhardt, University of Wisconsin-Platteville
Gary Besaw, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Department of Agriculture and Food Systems
Greg Cisewski, Northcentral Technical College
Alberta Darling, State Senator, 8th Senate District
Jeff Eide, Blair-Taylor School District
Monica Gahan, Vincent High School of Agricultural Sciences, Milwaukee
Dale Gallenberg, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
Tom Gillis, WI Corn Growers Association
Bob Hagenow, Rio Community School Board
Pete Kondrup, Westby Cooperative Creamery
Corey Kuchta, Wisconsin Public Service
Larry Lee, Brownfield Ag News
Miranda Leis, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation; CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley
Lynn Maki, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine
Howard Marklein, State Senator, 17th Senate District
Dr. Susan May, Fox Valley Technical College
Shelly Mayer, Dairy farmer/Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin
Loren Oldenburg, State Representative, 96th Assembly District
Kristin Olson, Cooperative Network
Pam Porter, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Sam Rikkers, Deputy Secretary, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
John Rosenow, Rosenholm Wolfe Dairy Farm/Cowsmo Compost
Jill Runde, McFarland School District
Nick Stadnyk, Rusk County Land and Water Conservation Department
Gary Tauchen, State Representative, 6th Assembly District

In acknowledging the reformation and rebuilding of the council, DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek stated, "We all know there are long-standing workforce challenges across our state, in many different industries and markets. It's critical that we work together in addressing those challenges with both short- and long-term solutions. This council is one way to build the connections necessary to ensure a bright future for our agricultural industry and our state's economy."

Purpose of the Council

Pursuant to Wis. Stats. s. 106.40(2), the purpose and functions of the council are to:

1. Increase the hiring and retention of well-qualified employees in industries related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.
2. Promote the coordination of educational systems to develop, train, and retrain employees for current and future careers related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.
3. Develop support for employment in fields related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.
4. Recommend policies and other changes to improve the efficiency of the development and provision of agricultural education across educational systems.

In addition, the council shall accomplish the above by advising state agencies on the integration of agricultural education and workforce development systems through the coordination of programs, exchange of information, and monitoring and evaluation of programs.

As part of the council's rebuilding efforts this past year, at its June 2021 meeting the council reviewed the purpose statement used to guide its work under its previous iteration. The council agreed that the following should still serve as its purpose statement as it remains relevant and summarizes the charge of the council:

> "The Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council provides advice and counsel to state agencies, educational institutions, and the Wisconsin Legislature on matters related to agricultural education and workforce development. In addition, the committee helps attract, develop, and retain the superior workforce required to grow Wisconsin's production agriculture, agribusiness, food, and natural resource sectors."

With the re-adoption of the council's purpose statement, DATCP Secretary-designee Randy Romanski stated, "Wisconsin agriculture is a significant employer in our state, responsible for 435,700 jobs. The diversity of this industry means there is a place for everyone in our agriculture community, from farmers to veterinarians, cheese makers to meat processors, policymakers to marketing professionals and many more. I'm confident this council will help foster the next generation of Wisconsin agriculture."

Summary of the Council's Activities – SFY2021

As outlined above, SFY2021 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021) was a rebuilding year for WAEWDC. In brief, during SFY2021, the council:

- Identified and appointed new members.
- Held three full council meetings virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Elected a chairperson and executive committee.
- Re-adopted its statement of purpose.
- Conducted goal setting activities for its focus and work in SFY2021.

At the March 2021 council meeting, Secretary-designee Pechacek and Secretary-designee Romanski provided introductory remarks and brief presentations highlighting provisions in Governor Evers' 2021-2023 Executive Budget related to DWD and DATCP's work and other key provisions that intersect with agricultural education and

workforce development. In addition, the council heard a presentation from late DPI staff member Jeff Hicken, Education Consultant for Agriculture Education and FFA, about the status of Wisconsin agriculture, food, and natural resource education and the Wisconsin Association of FFA. Lastly, council members affiliated with K-12 education reported on the work their schools or organizations are doing to connect youth to programs related to agricultural education or agricultural workforce development.

In advance of the council's June 2021 meeting, Chair Schoenborn conducted a survey with all council members. The survey questions were designed to help council members evaluate possible shared goals, what is needed to accomplish those goals, and how the council moves forward, together. Survey results were compiled and presented at the June 2021 council meeting.

Through robust discussion at the June 2021 meeting, the council reached consensus on its top three priority goals for SFY2022. The goals, developed using ideas generated and priorities identified by the council, will guide the council as it continues to rebuild and take on projects that fulfill its charge.

The three key goals are as follows:

1. Support agricultural education instructors and find effective ways to reach every student to highlight the opportunities available in agriculture in a positive, purposeful way.
2. Partner with DPI to embrace and promote the development of a statewide agriculture pathway.
3. Research current trends, evaluate established perspectives, and develop a branding, marketing, and public outreach plan for careers in agriculture.

As the council worked to identify its three key priority goals, broader goals also emerged. As the council works to develop projects to implement the three goals, the following broader goals and those summarized in the survey results can be used to supplement and strengthen the council's focus:

- Identify best practices and clarify resources to lay a path for others to follow.
- Develop or strengthen an Agricultural Apprentice Program.
- Help create a viable pool of quality and prepared workers to engage in the vibrant Wisconsin agriculture economy by providing rewarding careers.
- Better understand alignment and pathways for students at all levels of education.
- Increase the number of graduates with post-secondary training focused on the agriculture career cluster.
- Ensure all students in the state have access to high quality agriculture education programs (also known as Agriculture Career Pathways).

Lastly, the survey and subsequent discussion also helped the council identify current challenges related to agricultural education and workforce development. Examples of challenges identified include:

- The current workforce shortage in agriculture and agricultural education, combined with competition for employees with other industries like healthcare and manufacturing.
- Old paradigms about the industry that need to be debunked. Examples include misconceptions related to careers in agriculture having low-pay, harsh working conditions, or a lack of appreciation.
- Finding job seekers in rural areas, and with the skills needed for agricultural work.
- Not as many students are familiar with agricultural industries as have been in the past.

As the council moves forward with implementation of its goals in SFY2022, additional challenges will be identified to inform future goal setting. “Wisconsin is fortunate to have a vibrant agriculture industry,” said WAEWDC Chair Sara Schoenborn. “There is so much to be proud of about the innovation and dedication we see each day in our state. I’m honored to lead this council as we work with government and industry to support and encourage a strong agricultural workforce for years to come.”

Annual Agriculture Education Program Reviews

Department of Public Instruction Review

Agriculture Education in Wisconsin's PK-12 Public Schools

Agriculture education continues to prepare students for careers in the agriculture industry, while developing students' leadership skills through FFA and their Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE). Today's agriculture education departments have developed a comprehensive structure that includes areas such as biotechnology, veterinary science, alternative energy, food science, horticulture, and landscaping. With such variety, students are being prepared for a variety of careers and opportunities in agriculture.

Program Status

- The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is pursuing the development of an Agriculture Career Pathway. This pathway would be developed at the state level and made available for regional adoption. This pathway would join the list of other career pathways already developed in high skill, high wage, and in-demand occupational areas. More information can be found on the Regional Career Pathways webpage.

- Over 19,800 agriculture education students are also members of the Wisconsin Association of FFA. Despite pandemic-related disruptions to events and activities, membership decreased only slightly as demonstrated in chart below:

Year	FFA Membership
2018-2019	20,830
2019-2020	21,273
2020-2021	19,804

- In SFY2020, over 47,700 grade 6-12 students took at least one agriculture course. The table below demonstrates the enrollment breakdown by race:

Race	Enrollment
Asian	558
Black-African American	1,435
Hispanic	3,066
American Indian Alaskan Native	607
Native Hawaiian-Pacific Islander	20
White	40,802
Two or More	1,194
Total	**47,682**

- DPI continues to implement an agriculture/science equivalent credit process to award science credits for agriculture courses.

- The implementation of career clusters and pathways in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, as well as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, (STEM) fields, expands career development opportunities and helps students transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

Agricultural Education Challenges - Pre-K through 12 in Public Schools

- Shrinking supply of qualified agriculture education teachers.
- Expanding agriculture education programs in Wisconsin.
- Expanding agriculture education programs in urban school districts.
- Sustaining rural agriculture education programs during periods of declining Pre-K-12 enrollments.
- Promoting quality curriculum and instructional facilities for an agriculture education program to meet STEM needs.

Wisconsin Technical College System Review

Agricultural Education in Wisconsin's Technical Colleges

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is comprised of 16 individual colleges across the state making up the system, enrolling more than 300,000 people each year. The colleges provide 49 campuses and facilities to meet students where they are demographically, serving every community in Wisconsin – large or small, urban or rural. Wisconsin's technical colleges have a long history of offering high quality programs in agriculture and natural resources, offering 500 programs awarding two-year associate degrees, one- and two-year technical diplomas, and short-term technical diplomas and certificates.

The mission of WTCS is to deliver skills training that recognizes the rapidly changing educational needs of residents to keep current with the demands of the workplace. This is accomplished by creating guided career pathways and dual credit opportunities for students in high school to receive college credit, and developing the workforce using disaggregated student success data allowing leadership and faculty to create opportunities for business and industry.

Students of WTCS may be right out of high school or adults seeking their first college education, additional professional development, second careers, or a fresh start from the justice system. They differ in age, gender, race, and socio-economic status, and may have goals that include working while attending classes such as in an apprenticeship, improving their skills for their current job, graduating from a program of study to go directly into the workforce, or transferring to a four-year college for additional education.

Program Status

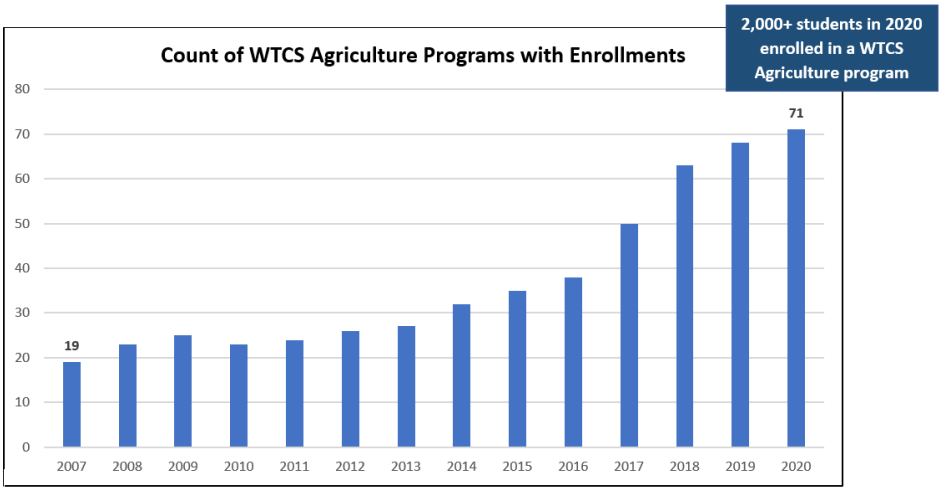
Programs in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Career Cluster teach the production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, management, and development of agricultural commodities and resources including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, renewable energy, and other plant and animal products or resources.

Pathways in the cluster include:

- Agribusiness Systems
- Environmental Science Systems
- Food Products & Processing Systems
- Power, Structural & Technical Systems
- Plant Systems

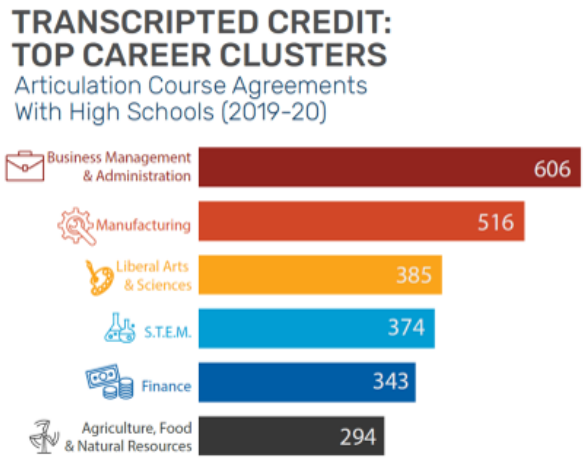
In the 2019-2020 school year, more than 2,000 students were enrolled in 71 agriculture and natural resources programs. This is an increase of 52 programs since 2007. (Figure 1.)

***Figure 1. 2020 WTCS Agriculture Programs with Enrollments**



In high schools across the state, students in vocational agriculture courses can earn technical college credits while still in high school. Students get a jump-start on their post-secondary education by taking classes such as Animal Science, Greenhouse Management, and Plant Science. In the 2019-2020 school year, WTCS had 294 articulation agreements in the Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources cluster. (Figure 2.)

***Figure 2. WTCS Transcripted Credit Career Cluster**



Employment Opportunities for Technical College Graduates

Six months after graduation, WTCS conducts graduate follow-up surveys to determine graduate median starting salaries and success rates at finding employment. Graduates from agriculture programs in WTCS have high success rates for being employed in their chosen fields. (Figure 3.)

The 2020 survey indicates that 93 percent of WTCS agricultural programs graduates who filled out the survey were employed, and 87 percent were employed in an agriculture-related field. The median starting salary for these graduates was $35,097. These numbers show exceptional employment opportunities for WTCS agriculture program graduates.

***Figure 3. WTCS Graduate Outcomes for 2020 Agriculture Program Graduates**

WTCS Graduate Outcomes for 2020 Agriculture Program Graduates

	Agriculture Program Graduates
% Employed	93%
% Employed Related	87%
Employed Related Median Annual Salary	$35,097
% Employed in Wisconsin	92%
% Satisfied with Training Received	96%

WTCS Ag. Program Graduates Continuing Education Outside of the WTCS

7% (41 graduates) of the 2017-18 agriculture program graduates continued their education outside of the WTCS after graduation within one year. The top three colleges for WTCS agriculture program graduate transfers include UW-Platteville, UW-River Falls, and UW-Stevens Point.

University of Wisconsin System Review

Agricultural Education in Wisconsin's Public Universities

According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection's Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics, Wisconsin agriculture and associated industries provide 435,700 jobs or 11.8 percent of the state's employment and contribute $104.8 billion annually to the state's economy. Career pathways associated with these economic engines include:

- Agribusiness
- Animal Systems
- Environmental Services
- Food Products & Processing
- Natural Resources
- Power, Structural & Technical Systems
- Plant Systems

Recruiting and educating students for these professions is vital to the growth of Wisconsin's economy. Baccalaureate programs that prepare students for professional careers in agriculture and natural resources are offered by the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS); UW-Platteville School of Agriculture (SOA); UW-River Falls College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES); and UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources (CNR).

Program Status

Based on data from the Food and Agricultural Education Information System 2021 and 2018 enrollment data for UW-Madison (newer data was not yet available at the time of this report), nearly 4,800 students (not including biology and life sciences students) enrolled in undergraduate colleges and schools of agriculture in 2020 between UW-Madison, UW-Platteville, UW-River Falls, and UW-Stevens Point. This represents a 12% decrease across all institutions since the last WAEWDC Annual Report in 2015 when enrollment totaled 5,449 students.

Academic areas with increased enrollment since 2015 include Agricultural Education/Studies (+5.0%), Animal Systems (+4.0%), Environmental Services (+4.6%), and Power, Structures and Technical Systems (+23.4%). Programs with decreased enrollment compared to 2015 include Agribusiness Systems (-21.7%), Plant Systems (-34.9%), Food Products and Processing (-4.2%), Natural Resources Systems (-20.0%), Agricultural Communications and Journalism (-22.6%), and Other Agricultural Programs (-18.2%).

See the following chart for more enrollment data:

Career Cluster and Academic Program	UW Institution	Upper Class Undergraduate Fall Enrollment			Graduates		
		2019	2020	% Change	2018	2019	% Change
Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources							
Agribusiness Systems							
Agribusiness Management	UW-Madison	56	53	-5%	40	19	-53%
Agribusiness	UW-Platteville	100	106	6%	73	53	-27%
Agribusiness	UW-River Falls	107	113	6%	28	44	57%
Agriculture & Applied Economics	UW-Madison	38	29	-24%	13	19	46%
Agribusiness Systems Totals		301	301	0%	154	135	-12%
Agricultural Education & Agricultural Studies							
Agriculture Education	UW-Platteville	38	29	-24%	23	15	-35%
Agriculture Education	UW-River Falls	52	52	0%	24	22	-8%
Agricultural Studies	UW-River Falls	17	19	12%	6	9	50%
Agricultural Education & Agricultural Studies Totals		107	100	-7%	53	46	-13%
Animal Systems							
Animal Science	UW-Madison	75	76	1%	39	26	-33%
Animal Science	UW-Platteville	83	76	-8%	47	43	-9%
Animal Science	UW-River Falls	309	357	16%	125	118	-6%
Dairy Science	UW-Madison	50	40	-20%	15	19	27%
Dairy Science	UW-River Falls	72	60	-17%	27	29	7%
Poultry Science	UW-Madison	0	0	N/A	0	1	N/A
Animal Systems Totals		589	609	3%	253	236	-7%
Environmental Service Systems							
Community & Environmental Sociology	UW-Madison	45	38	-16%	25	15	-40%
Conservation/Land Use Planning	UW-River Falls	59	59	0%	26	24	-8%
Environmental Science	UW-Madison	136	128	-6%	43	54	26%
Environmental Science	UW-River Falls	29	33	14%	8	10	25%
Geology	UW-River Falls	21	21	0%	5	9	80%
Reclamation, Environment, & Conservation	UW-Platteville	24	26	8%	8	12	50%
Resource Management	UW-Stevens Point	181	178	-2%	90	81	-10%
Sustainable Management	UW-River Falls	10	19	90%	4	5	25%
Environmental Service Systems Totals		505	502	-1%	209	210	0%
Food Products & Processing Systems							
Food Science	UW-Madison	71	65	-8%	26	29	12%
Food Science & Technology	UW-River Falls	16	24	50%	2	2	0%
Food Products & Processing Systems Totals		87	89	2%	28	31	11%

Natural Resource Systems							
Fisheries & Water Resources	UW-Stevens Point	140	118	-16%	61	61	0%
Forestry	UW-Stevens Point	167	153	-8%	69	67	-3%
Forest Science	UW-Madison	19	14	-26%	13	8	-38%
Paper Science	UW-Stevens Point	28	38	36%	9	5	-44%
Wildlife	UW-Stevens Point	156	169	8%	64	55	-14%
Wildlife Ecology	UW-Madison	49	55	12%	18	16	-11%
Natural Resource Systems Totals		559	547	-2%	234	212	-9%
Plant Systems							
Agronomy	UW-Madison	16	9	-44%	6	5	-17%
Crop & Soil Science	UW-River Falls	39	35	-10%	17	18	6%
Entomology	UW-Madison	14	16	14%	5	4	-20%
Environmental Horticulture	UW-Platteville	20	23	15%	9	9	0%
Horticulture	UW-Madison	37	28	-24%	7	14	100%
Horticulture	UW-River Falls	32	27	-16%	12	8	-33%
Landscape Architecture	UW-Madison	31	34	10%	16	16	0%
Plant Pathology	UW-Madison	13	13	0%	6	3	-50%
Soils	UW-Madison	8	4	-50%	2	4	100%
Soil & Crop Science	UW-Platteville	42	47	12%	20	17	-15%
Soil Science	UW-Stevens Point	52	43	-17%	30	25	-17%
Plant Systems Totals		304	279	-8%	130	123	-5%
Power, Structures & Technical Systems							
Agricultural Engineering Technology	UW-River Falls	29	18	-38%	20	20	0%
Biological Systems Engineering	UW-Madison	176	176	0%	66	60	-9%
Power, Structures & Technical Systems Totals		205	194	-5%	86	80	-7%
Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Totals		2,657	2,621	-1%	1,147	1,073	-6%

Biology & Life Sciences							
Biochemistry	UW-Madison	479	461	-4%	145	164	13%
Biology	UW-Madison	857	877	2%	376	334	-11%
Genetics	UW-Madison	271	282	4%	79	79	0%
Life Sciences Communication	UW-Madison	137	137	0%	47	49	4%
Microbiology	UW-Madison	188	191	2%	64	71	11%
Nutritional Sciences	UW-Madison	174	160	-8%	62	63	2%
Biology & Life Sciences Totals		2,106	2,108	0%	773	760	-2%

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources plus Biology & Life Sciences Totals	4,763	4,729	-1%	1,920	1,833	-5%

Employment Opportunities for University Graduates

The career outlook remains strong for new college graduates with baccalaureate and graduate degrees in agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), U.S. college graduates can expect approximately 59,400 job opportunities annually between 2020 and 2025, representing growth of 2.6% from the previous five years. The NIFA report provides the following statistics on jobs, types of jobs, and expected graduates:

	Number of Jobs, 2020-2025	Percent of Total Agriculture Jobs	Number of Expected Graduates
Management and Business	24,700	42%	25,700
Science and Engineering	18,400	31%	17,100
Food and Bio Materials	7,900	13%	7,900
Education, Communication, and Government Service	8,400	14%	8,700
TOTALS	**59,400**	**100%**	**59,400**

Council Structure Recommendations

Activities and results of the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council continue to strengthen the council's commitment to fulfill its purpose and goals. All functions as originally identified remain and are still necessary for Wisconsin's agriculture, food, and natural resource sectors to succeed. On September 17, 2021, the Council voted and approved a motion recommending the Council remain in place to carry out the following functions as defined by Wis. Stats. s. 106.40(2):

1. Increase hiring and retention of well-qualified employees in industries related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.
2. Promote the coordination of educational systems to develop, train, and retain employees for current and future careers related to agriculture food and natural resources.
3. Develop support for career pathways and employment in fields related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.
4. Recommend policies and other changes to improve the efficiency of the development and provision of agricultural education across all educational systems.
5. Accomplish these purposes by advising state agencies on matters related to integrating agricultural education and workforce development systems.

As required by law, the Council will re-visit this motion in September 2022.

Council Member Approval of Activities and Recommendations:

The Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council SFY2020 Annual Report was distributed electronically to all Council members. Each Council member was asked to review the Annual Report, provide input, and approve or oppose the Annual Report at the Council's September 17, 2021 meeting. No dissent or minority opinions were received. The Annual Report was approved unanimously.

Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council Annual Report contacts:

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