



## REGIONAL & FEDERAL

### Agreement reached between House and Senate on 2018 Farm Bill

Language for the 2018 Farm Bill was officially unveiled last night by lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. One of the lead negotiators on the bill is current House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Congressman Collin Peterson (DFL – MN), who is expected to assume the Chairmanship of the committee in 2019 due to the results of the fall elections. Peterson anticipates broad bipartisan support in both bodies of Congress after language supported by President Donald Trump and the House GOP was dropped that would have required stricter work requirements for individuals receiving food stamps. United States Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has also indicated his support for the bill and will advocate that President Trump sign it into law after it is advanced by the Congress. The current farm act, known as the Agricultural Act of 2014, authorized the nation's principal farm, rural support, and nutrition assistance programs, expired on September 30.

### Cooperative Network participates in American Antitrust Institute round-table

Last week, Cooperative Network participated in the American Antitrust Institute's (AAI) food and agriculture round-table hosted by the University of Wisconsin Law School. Speakers looked into major policy issues involving the increasingly concentrated food and agricultural markets. They discussed how competition and antitrust enforcement has been weak for over 40 years, and it was pointed out that four packers control 85% of the meat market.

One tool for change that was discussed was having the State Attorney Generals step in and enforce anti-competition and antitrust laws to take the place of the Federal Department of Justice and the United States Department of Agriculture. Peter Carstensen, Professor of Law Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin Law School, warned those in attendance that "competition enforcement is not the answer to all of agriculture's problems."

### U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement signed by leaders at G-20 meeting

President Donald Trump, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto recently signed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) at the G-20 meeting in Buenos Aires.

According to the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC), President Trump has 60 days to report to Congress on changes to U.S. law that are required to comply with the agreement under Trade Promotion Authority. Within 105 days of the agreement being signed, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) must complete a study of the agreement's economic impact.

It is unclear as to when Congress may vote on legislation to implement USMCA. President Trump has indicated that his likely strategy to get Congress to approve the deal would be that he would initiate the termination of the North American

## Calendar of Events

### December 12, 2018:

[Cooperative Network/UWCC Co-op Directors Forum](#)  
Organic Valley, Cashton, Wis.

### January 9-10, 2019:

[Minnesota Cooperative Leadership Program](#)  
Jackpot Junction Casino, Morton, Minn.

### January 29-31, 2019:

[Leadership Institute](#)  
Madison College, Madison, Wis.

### January 15, 2019:

**WI Farm Credit Legislative Day**  
Madison, Wis.

### February 12, 2019:

**WI Co-op Day at the Capitol**  
Madison, Wis.

### February 21-22, 2019:

**Co-op Communicators Conference**  
Eau Claire, Wis.

### March 4-5, 2019:

**Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference**  
Eau Claire, Wis.

### March 19, 2019:

**MN Co-op Day at the Capitol**  
St. Paul, Minn.

Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to set up a choice – pass USMCA or not have any agreement in place.

Under the new USMCA, most of the key provisions of NAFTA will remain largely in place. While there are changes for the U.S. agricultural sector, the new USMCA leaves the bulk of the original agreement unchanged. Under the USMCA, Canada will provide additional access to U.S. dairy, poultry and egg producers, while the United States will reciprocate by allowing Canadian dairy, peanuts, processed peanut products and a limited amount of sugar and sugar-containing goods. Canada also has agreed to change their pricing system for some dairy products. USMCA also has sections on biotechnology, SPS issues, Geographic Indications, and grading standards.

A summary of agriculture provisions can be found by clicking [here](#). In addition, USDA has done state-by-state one-pagers that can be found by clicking [here](#).

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## MINNESOTA

### November state budget forecast shows \$1.544 billion surplus

Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) officials announced last week that according to projections, there will be a \$1.544 billion surplus for the FY 2020-21 budget. According to MMB, Minnesota's budget and economic outlook remains sound, despite slower growth through the budget horizon. A revenue forecast increase and lower base expenditure estimates add to an improved outlook for the current biennium. Statutory allocations, partially resulting from the improvement to the current biennium, added \$491 million to the budget reserve which now totals \$2.075 billion. Slower economic growth is projected to continue into FY 2022-23, resulting in a slowdown in forecast revenue growth. MMB officials indicated that will leave forecast revenues exceeding base expenditure estimates by only \$456 million for that biennium. For more detailed information on the budget forecast, please see the following link to MMB's web page on the November [forecast](#).

### Senior Cooperative Housing Council to meet next week

Members of the Senior Cooperative Housing Council will be gathering on Wednesday, Dec. 19 at Cooperative Network's office from 9:30 a.m. to Noon. Topics to be covered by council members will include a recap of the 2018 Cooperative Network Annual Meeting, a legislative and resolutions committee update from Cooperative Network, the 2019 Senior Cooperative Housing Conference, 2019 Minnesota Co-op Day at the Capitol, and ideas for possible workshops in the future. If you plan to attend, please contact [Vicky Chaput](#) or call (651) 280-4900.

### Minnesota Department of Agriculture announces restrictions on use of dicamba for 2019

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently announced a state-specific restriction for the use of the herbicide dicamba in Minnesota for the 2019 growing season. The 2019 Minnesota restriction is in addition to those established by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The decision follows the MDA's ongoing investigations and informal surveys into reports of crop damage from alleged dicamba off-target movement over the past two growing seasons. In 2017, the MDA received 253 reports of alleged dicamba drift; 55 of those were formal complaints requesting investigations. Those reports impacted an estimated 265,000 acres. After state restrictions were put in place for the 2018 growing season, the number of complaints dropped dramatically this year to 53 reports, of which 29 were formal complaints. Just over 1,800 acres were impacted in 2018.

The additional protocol for dicamba use for the 2019 growing season includes a cutoff date of June 20, which is expected to help reduce the potential for damage to neighboring crops and vegetation. MDA stated that the majority of Minnesota soybeans are still in the vegetative growth stage by June 20 and research has shown that plants in the vegetative stage are less affected than those in the reproductive stage. There will be no temperature application restriction in 2019.

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## WISCONSIN

### **Governor-Elect Evers discusses vision for transportation funding with Cooperative Network**

Governor-Elect Tony Evers met with transportation advocacy organization DRIVE (Devote Resources, Invest for a Vibrant Economy) last week, and Cooperative Network was on hand to participate in the discussion. Cooperative Network is a member of DRIVE, whose mission is to build support for a transportation funding solution, aligning with Cooperative Network's resolution *General Cooperative 1.12 Transportation*, which calls for "an efficient, well-maintained transportation network and other components of a strong, multi-faceted infrastructure is vital to the future of cooperatives."

Evers told DRIVE members that everything is on the table and that he wants to work with stakeholder groups like DRIVE, as well as democrats and republicans to solve transportation funding problems. He also stated "it's time to retire Wisconsin's position ranked with the 44<sup>th</sup> worst highways in the nation, much like the UW-Badgers retired former Badger basketball star Frank Kaminsky's #44 jersey."

Cooperative Network and other DRIVE members will now work on suggestions to improve Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure and forward them to Governor-Elect Evers.

### **Legislature meets in Extraordinary Session**

The Wisconsin Legislature met in Extraordinary Session last week under a cloud of controversy. Democrats and Governor-Elect Evers allege that republicans went against the will of the people in voting for legislation that - they say - strips powers away from Evers and newly-elected Attorney General Josh Kaul. Republicans indicated the legislation guarantees that the dually-elected Legislature will have an equal seat at the table.

The legislation deals with Wisconsin's Administrative Rule process, which dictates how legislation passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor is implemented. The legislation also limits the time when people can early vote to two weeks before an election. This measure will give voters who live in small rural townships equal access to voting to those voters who live in large metropolitan areas.

Extraordinary Sessions are not new to Wisconsin. Eight years ago, before current Governor Scott Walker took office, the democrat-controlled legislature and former Governor Jim Doyle tried to pass four-year state employee contracts in an Extraordinary Session, but the measure failed by one vote in the State Senate.

### **Evers to host "Building the People's Budget" tour in upcoming weeks**

Governor-Elect Tony Evers will be hosting a series of events to give citizens the ability to share their budget priorities for the upcoming legislative session. These events will include stops in Green Bay, Wausau, La Crosse, and Milwaukee. Rather than a traditional listening session format, attendees will participate in small group sessions that focus on specific issue areas, generate group discussion, and create valuable feedback. The first budget session is in Green Bay this afternoon, and information about each session, as well as the link to RSVP to each event, is below:

- December 11, 4:30PM-6:00PM: Green Bay, University of Wisconsin Green Bay, Phoenix Room. 2420 Nicolet Dr., Green Bay, WI 54311. Register for Green Bay session at this [Green Bay link](#).
- December 12, 12:00PM-1:30PM: Wausau, Wausau Labor Temple. 318 South Third Avenue, Wausau, WI 54401. Register for the Wausau session at this [Wausau link](#).
- December 18, 12:00PM-1:30PM: La Crosse, American Legion Post 52. 711 6<sup>th</sup> St South, La Crosse, WI 54601. Register for the La Crosse session at this [La Crosse link](#).

- December 19, 4:30PM-6:00PM: Milwaukee, United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County Volunteer Center. 200 West Pleasant Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212. Register for the Milwaukee session at this [Milwaukee link](#).

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