



NEWS RELEASE

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10 Individuals Selected for 2nd Wisconsin Beef Leadership Institute

VERONA, Wis. – The Wisconsin Beef Council (WBC) is proud to announce the 10 individuals selected to participate in the 2nd class of the Wisconsin Beef Leadership Institute. This year's participants represent a wide range of backgrounds and expertise in Wisconsin's beef industry.

The 2025 participants are:

Abigail George (Mondovi), Avery Bermel (Platteville), Danielle Wafle (Mauston), Dennis Breneman (Loganville), Heidi Strey (Osseo), Morgan Bobek (Markesan), Paige Gaffney (Barneveld), Ray Melander (Black Creek), Rhandi Ehn (Winter), and Ryder Starck (Elk Mound).

The group kicked off the year-long program in April with a two-day workshop held in Madison and Verona. Participants toured the University of Wisconsin-Madison Meat Science and Animal Biologics Discovery building, engaged in a hands-on meat cutting demonstration, and explored the latest in beef industry research. They also completed advocacy and spokesperson training with staff from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (a contractor to the Beef Checkoff), took part in CliftonStrengths coaching, and even visited WISC-TV to learn about working with local media.

For some, like Avery Bermel, joining the Institute is a commitment to the industry. "I grew up on a small cow-calf operation in Northeast Nebraska," Bermel said. "Working with cattle is a lifelong passion of mine in multiple areas of the industry. That passion brought me to Wisconsin to work with producers."

Ray Melander added, "I was pleased to be selected into the Wisconsin Beef Leadership Institute. I look forward to working with the Wisconsin Beef Council to advance education on beef nutrition and promote beef as a vital component to healthy living."





The Institute provided opportunities for personal growth. Danielle Wafle shared, "My experience partnering with the Institute and fellow participants was nothing less than extraordinary. No matter your level of experience in the beef industry, WBC opened new doors. Attending our first 2025 event motivated me to further my education and involvement in agriculture."

Abigail George reflected on the value of creating personal narratives: "One of the most impactful sessions was the advocacy training where we focused on how to tell our own story. Sharing stories of the industry, for the industry, is where I fit. I left the session feeling renewed and excited to be surrounded by like-minded individuals."

This program is a collaborative effort between the Wisconsin Beef Council and the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association. Over the course of the year, these 10 participants will take part in quarterly workshops focused on advocacy training, policy engagement, media relations, and leadership development.

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The Wisconsin Beef Council is a producer-led non-profit organization funded by the \$1.00 per head Beef Checkoff. Half of the dollar remains in Wisconsin for local beef promotion, while the other half is used by the Cattlemen's Beef Board to fund national projects. The purpose of the Council is to fund beef promotion, research and consumer education activities to grow beef demand and support Wisconsin's \$2.1 billion beef industry. The WBC operates under the guidance of its Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of representatives from cattle-related organizations around the state of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association is a trusted leader in the Wisconsin beef industry and gives a voice to Wisconsin's beef producers on a local, regional and national level. Cattlemen and women can count on the WCA to protect their backs when it comes to legislation impacting beef farms. The association works closely with many industry partners to maintain a positive business environment for cattlemen through leadership and education. Become a member to ensure a viable Wisconsin beef industry now and in the future.

