

# cattleTRAILS

December 2024

To promote the Wisconsin beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education.



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CATTLEMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION



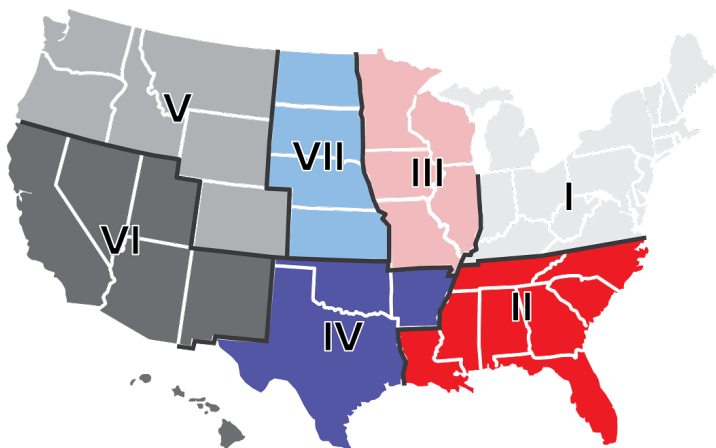
## President's Path

Tressa Lacy, WCA President

As we look to close the door on 2024, it has been an interesting year, though I suspect 2025 will bring plenty of excitement with President Donald Trump reelected and shifts in our legislator here in Wisconsin. Be sure to read Jordan Lambs update, Preview of the 2025 Wisconsin State Legislative Session.

Looking towards 2025, NCBA Region III's current policy division leader Charlie Beshar, MO, and federation division leader Janine Moore, IA are gearing up efforts to create regional unison on national concerns. Region III includes Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin.

### NCBA REGIONS

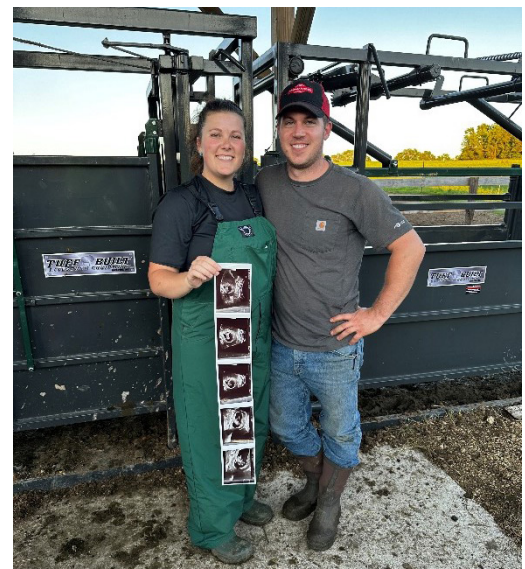


In recent years, we interact as a region when we get together for CattleCon in January or the Summer Business meeting in July, and rarely in between there. It is proposed for Region III to get together in June 2025 to identify national issues that we share alignment. As discussed at Winter Conference '24, Wisconsin holds one vote on

### Looking towards 2025

There will be new opportunities to increase WCA's voice at the national level.

national issues due to the number of WI NCBA memberships. Increasing our ties with Region III has potential to increase WCA's voice at the national level, as other states in Region III carry more votes than Wisconsin's one. I am personally very excited for this opportunity for WCA and appreciate the Region III leadership foresight.



As I close out my President's Path, I want to share that my husband and I are expecting our first child here in the coming weeks. If I am harder to reach over the next few months, this is likely why. Merry Christmas and I will see you all at Winter Conference!



*-Tressa Lacy*

2024 WCA President

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## in this issue:

- President's Path
- Steak Trailer Update
- Preview of the 2025 Wisconsin Legislative Session
- Membership Update
- Beef Leadership Institute Applications
- Winter Conference Preview
- The Role of Cold Stress on Beef Color and Quality
- WCA Scholarships
- Reminders for Producers
- Season's Greetings

## upcoming events:

### Producing Quality Beef Workshops

Feb 12 - Blooming Livestock Exchange

Feb 26 - Altoona Equity Livestock Sale Barn

Feb 28 - Milwaukee Stockyards

### Eastern Wisconsin Beef Producers & Promoters Steak Out

Feb. 15  
Kohler, WI

### Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Winter Conference

Feb. 22, 2025  
Mauston, WI

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST EVENTS AND INFORMATION

.....  
wisconsincattlemen.com

# Steak Trailer Update



## Brady Zuck, WCA Steak Trailer Co-Chair

The WCA Steak Trailer wrapped up the 2024 season with a very successful World Dairy Expo. We made the difficult decision to not attend the World Beef Expo, as it was held one week earlier than usual, and not in conjunction with the Harvest Fair. The Harvest Fair provided a steady flow of people in the afternoon/evening hours that help increase sales at the event. With the two events separated, we would not be able to generate enough sales to be profitable.

At World Dairy Expo, we continue to be the main destination for the lunch crowd – even though we have a long line, it moves quickly. Personally, it was great to hear the many positive comments floating around the lunch tent on the quality of our product and speed of service. The new condensed schedule at World Dairy Expo has allowed us to maintain consistent sales in fewer serving days, helping to increase our efficiency. We also had a new location for 2024 near the Coliseum.

We would like to recognize Dave and Carrie Goss for an extremely successful third year of operating the Steak Trailer. Their focus on efficient operations, a quality product, and excellent customer service continue to make the Steak Trailer a go to destination at each event. We are currently evaluating the repairs and improvements needed to equipment and will complete that work over the winter months. We look forward to having the Goss' continue their management in 2025.

We have elected to not attend the 2025 WI Farm Technology Days. Farm Tech Days was a successful event for the Steak Trailer in 2023, and we will consider future events. However, the 2025 event will be held during the same time as the WI State Fair.

Additionally, we are already gearing up for next year's events. If you know of a local 4-H/FFA/youth group looking for a fundraising opportunity, consider the Steak Trailer! Please contact Carrie Goss (608-606-2356, wcasteaktrailer@gmail.com) to secure your group's time at an upcoming event for the 2025 season.

We want to thank you all for the support in 2024 and look forward to another successful year in 2025!

*-Brady Zuck*

(715)-415-9131  
brady\_zuck@diamonddv.com

## 2025 Event Schedule

WPS Farm Show-Oshkosh  
April 1-3

Midwest Horse Show-Madison  
April 11-13

Wisconsin State Fair-West Allis  
July 31 – August 10

World Dairy Expo  
September 30 – October 3

# Preview of the 2025 Wisconsin State Legislative Session

Jordan Lamb

WCA Legislative Counsel

The Welch Group

The new Wisconsin State Legislature has been elected, leadership choices have been made and legislators are preparing for the upcoming 2025-26 legislative session. Inauguration day in Wisconsin is January 6, 2025, and WCA's advocacy team is gearing up for the session.



welcome 37 new members of the legislature. When the legislature convenes, 57 of the 99 legislators in the Assembly will have been elected in the last 4 years. In the Senate, 20 of 33 will have been elected in the last 4 years.

The first six months of the upcoming legislative session will be dominated by work on the 2025-27 biennial budget bill. This bill will direct all state spending from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027. It is expected that Governor Evers will present his proposed budget bill to the legislature in mid-February. The legislature will then begin the lengthy process of reviewing and amending the bill.

According to the most recent fiscal estimates, the State will start 2025 with a surplus of approximately \$4 billion. The Republican legislative majority has indicated that it is interested in returning the surplus to the taxpayers as a tax cut. Some Democrats in the legislature have expressed interest in additional public school funding.

The WCA advocacy team is working with our members and our colleagues from across agricultural sectors to urge support of state budget initiatives that will support Wisconsin's farmers. Look for updates on our Wisconsin legislative priorities early in 2025!

Although the Republicans held the majorities in both the state senate and the state assembly for the 2025-26 session, the majorities in both houses tightened. The Assembly Republicans will start the session with a 54-45 majority as compared to their 64-seat majority in the 2023-24 session. This is the narrowest majority that the Assembly Republicans have seen since they took the majority in 2010. Similarly, the Senate Republicans will return with a 18-15 majority, which is down from their 22-seat lead last session. Democrats swept all five of the competitive state senate seats that were up in 2024.

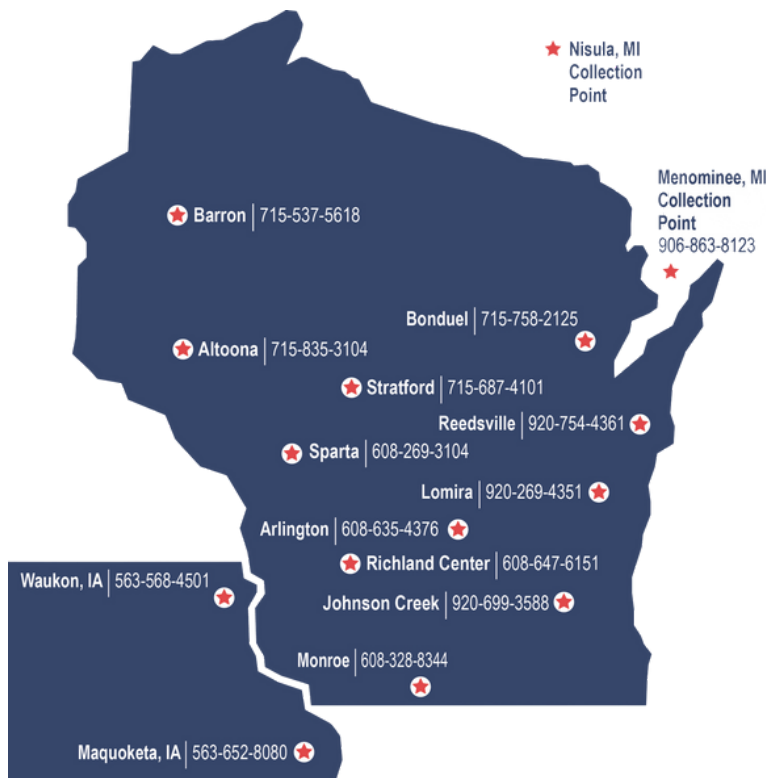
There was also historic turnover in the Wisconsin State Legislature for the 2025 session. The new session will

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# Membership Update

## Memberships are expiring!

Memberships with Wisconsin Cattlemen's that were paid in 2024 expire on February 28, 2025.

Below is a breakdown of renewing and expirations of WCA memberships. To renew your membership, visit the WCA website ([www.wisconsincattlemen.com](http://www.wisconsincattlemen.com)). Please contact the WCA office at [info@wisconsincattlemen.com](mailto:info@wisconsincattlemen.com) or by phone at 608-228-1457 if you need to check the status of your membership.

The membership timeline is as follows:

January 1 – February 28: Primary Membership Period

- Both new and renewing members who pay their dues during this time will be considered active through February 28 of the following year

- Example: ABC Farms pays their membership dues on January 5, 2025. Their membership is active through February 28, 2026.

March 1 – August 31: Grace Membership Period

- Both new and renewing members who pay their dues during this time will be considered active through February 28 of the following year
- Example: ABC Farms has an expired WCA membership because they forgot to pay their dues on or before March 1. ABC Farms pays their dues on March 5, 2025, and is then considered active through February 28, 2026.

WCA is a member-driven organization, so your membership is pivotal for us to lobby on behalf of the Cattlemen in Madison. WCA appreciates your continued support!

# Beef Leadership Institute Applications due February 15

The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association is once again teaming up with the Wisconsin Beef Council for the Beef Leadership Institute. The Wisconsin Beef Leadership Institute exists to train future champions of Wisconsin's cattle industry. Those selected to participate will complete a series of educational sessions designed to shape local advocates. They will gain skillsets to enhance their communication skills and diversify their knowledge of the beef industry. These leaders will use their voices to extend the reach and impact of the Wisconsin Beef Council and Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association.

This collaborative effort will be divided between the two organizations. Each will host separate workshops during the quarterly sessions. After completing a year of training, institute graduates will join an esteemed group of alumni and will be called upon to assist the Wisconsin Beef Council and/or Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association. Such duties may

include responding to media requests, identifying local media contacts, being a voice to consumers and educators, encouraging participation in the Masters of Beef Advocacy program, ensuring the voice of the cattle industry is heard, or providing aid for any other needs that may arise.

The program timeline is as follows:

- April 1-2, 2025 (Madison, WI): Finding your voice
- June 27-28, 2025 (Southeast WI): Getting involved with WBC and/or WCA
- November 11, 2025 (Madison, WI): Advocating for agriculture
- February 2026 (Mauston, WI): Graduation and Alumni Reception

The application can be found online at <https://bit.ly/4iyMeWb>. For more information, contact Kaitlyn Kesler ([kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com](mailto:kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com)).

Save the date!

## WINTER CONFERENCE



### DATE

Feb. 22, 2025



### LOCATION

The Lodge at Mauston  
104 Lodge Lane  
Mauston, WI



### COST

\$40 to attend  
\$30 for groups of four or more  
\*Lunch will be provided

Register and learn more at  
[www.wisconsincattlemen.com](http://www.wisconsincattlemen.com)

### The agenda includes:

- WCA Annual Meeting
  - NCBA Update
  - Legislative Update, Jordan Lamb, WCA lobbyist with The Welch Group
  - CattleCon24 Updates
  - Committee Chair Updates
  - President and President-Elect
- Needed Hitch Pins, Why Connecting Matters, Laura Daniels of Hitch Pin Consulting
- Breakout Session:
  - Option A: Beginning and Aspiring Farmer/Rancher Tips and Tricks, Kevin Plante with The WI Farm Center
  - Option B: What's your farm's future? Start making your plan, Joy Kirkpatrick with UW Extension Farm Management Program
- Pasture to Plate: How Feeding Impacts What We Eat, Zeb Gray of Diamond V
- Defending Your Empire; Secure Beef Supply Planning, Bill Halfman and Sandy Stuttgart, DVM of UW Extension Division of Livestock

# The Role of Cold Stress on Beef Color and Quality



Written by: Dr. Megan Nelson, Dairy and Livestock Program Manager, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension  
Reviewed by: Dr. Kimberly Kester, Regional Livestock Educator, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension  
Adam Hartfiel, Regional Livestock Educator, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension  
Bill Halfman, Statewide Beef Outreach Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension

As winter brings extreme weather conditions, it is important to keep in mind how these conditions cause cold stress and play a role in meat color and quality. As beef producers, you rely on repeat consumers regardless of if you are direct marketing your beef products or if you are selling live animals that will then enter the human food consumption chain. Maintaining consistent color and quality is important in keeping your customers happy.

## What is Cold Stress in Beef Animals?

Cold stress is caused when an animal needs to increase their metabolic rate to stay warm, this also increases the need for dietary energy and overall appetite. The temperature at which cold stress occurs in beef cattle is dependent on hair thickness, how wet the hair is, body condition score, and wind chill. A beef animal with a heavy dry, winter coat will likely be able to maintain warmth down to approximately 19 degrees Fahrenheit while a beef animal with a summer coat or wet coat will only be able to maintain warmth, without increased metabolic rates, down to 59 degrees Fahrenheit. Shelter and proper nutrition can both help to keep beef cattle warm in the winter months with extended cold periods. For more information on winter energy requirements, read this article by Bill Halfman: <https://go.wisc.edu/og0788>.

## What is DFD?

DFD, or Dark, Firm, Dry, is often referred to as dark cutter. A dark cutter is the result of an animal being under long-term stress prior to harvest without an adequate rest period. Long-term stress isn't caused by just one thing but can be caused by several events such as cold stress, heat stress, or increased physical activity. Dark cutters can result in up to 40% carcass value deductions. You will want to consider your production practices and work with the harvest facility to track the

quality of beef you raise to maximize your profits while providing adequate care to animals.

## How Can Cold Stress Lead to DFD?

In the case of long-term cold stress, animals use muscle glycogen stores to maintain core body temperature which leads to the decrease of overall muscle glycogen. If an animal does not have an adequate rest period after long-term energy demands and before harvest, that animal will have a higher-than-normal pH level, resulting in a dark cutter.

The length of time beef animals need to recover from long-term stress is dependent on the level and duration of that stressor.

## How Does Cold Stress Play a Role in Meat Color and Quality?

The higher-than-normal pH level is a result of not having enough glycogen that naturally gets converted to lactic acid when an animal is harvested. Because there is a higher pH in the meat, less denaturation of myoglobin occurs preventing beef from blooming and turning the bright, cherry red color beef consumers recognize. Instead, dark cutters appear to be a dark red or purple color. Not only do consumers shy away from the dark color, dark cutters can cause poor eating experiences due to decreased tenderness.

## Conclusion

Cold stress can lead to dark cutters and plays a role in a consumer's perception of beef quality and acceptability. Consider how you will keep your beef animals warm this winter to prevent cold stress. Some strategies to keep beef animals warm throughout the winter include providing shelter, feeding higher energy feeds, and keeping your animals as dry as possible.

## Cattle Trails Advertising

Half-page advertisements are available for placement in an upcoming issue of the Cattle Trails newsletter for \$50 per issue. Ad spaces for the March issue must be claimed by February 15, 2025.

Contact the WCA office for advertising details.  
Phone: (608) 228-1457 | Email: [kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com](mailto:kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com)

# WCA Scholarships

The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association will open scholarship applications Jan. 13 -Feb. 28, 2025 for high school seniors enrolled or planning to enroll in any university, technical college, or community college.

Interested applicants must be Wisconsin residents with backgrounds in the beef, veal, or dairy industry. Preference may be given to those majoring in an agriculture-related field or attending a Wisconsin school.

Award recipients are encouraged to attend the WCA Summer Tour held in June 2025. The event typically tours Wisconsin

beef businesses and concludes with an awards ceremony and dinner.

To apply, students must submit a completed application, essay, two letters of recommendation, and a high school office enrollment verification form. These items may be mailed to the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Office (957 Liberty Drive, Suite 201, Verona, WI 53593) or emailed to [info@wisconsincattlemen.com](mailto:info@wisconsincattlemen.com).

Additional information about the scholarship as well as the application will be available at [www.wisconsincattlemen.com/resources/scholarships](http://www.wisconsincattlemen.com/resources/scholarships). Watch the WCA Facebook page for an announcement when the applications go live!

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## Reminders for Producers

### Application Period for Crop Insurance Premium Rebates for Planting Cover Crops to Open December 2

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA), DATCP opened the application period for crop insurance premium rebates for planting cover crops on December 2, 2024. There is \$800,000, or 160,000 acres of coverage, to be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

### DATCP Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Grant Program Application Period Open Through January 17

DATCP invites Wisconsin farmers and cooperating entities to apply for commercial Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) research grants through January 17, 2025. These grants aim to enhance the understanding of and refine new methods that optimize commercial nitrogen applied to agricultural fields.



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# Season's Greetings



**Tammy Vaassen**  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Beef Council

With the holidays upon us, the team at the Wisconsin Beef Council is focusing efforts throughout the month on ways families can include beef in their holiday menus – from appetizers to the center of the plate, brunch to leftovers – your Beef Checkoff investment is working to make sure consumers have confidence in preparing beef.

To help understand overall consumer sentiment and holiday intentions, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, put together a comprehensive analysis of holiday-related data based on a recent consumer survey and other reputable resources. The analysis shows that amidst ongoing economic challenges, beef remains a priority on holiday menus, with consumers looking for budget-friendly cuts and recipes to keep it included.

Some of the key points from the analysis include:

- Beef is highly valued for its taste and versatility, consistently outpacing other proteins<sup>1</sup>. Its versatility allows it to fit into a variety of holiday dishes, from traditional favorites to budget-friendly alternatives.
- Considering the current economic landscape, consumers may choose to purchase alternative, lower-cost cuts or types of beef, explore new preparation methods, or repurpose leftover beef into new dishes<sup>2</sup>.
- While many will stick to their traditional meals, there's significant interest in exploring new food and recipes. Budget and preparation time are crucial factors in these decisions, underscoring their focus on value and convenience<sup>2</sup>.
- For the December holidays, 54% of consumers are interested in new beef meal ideas featuring roasts, while 47% are interested in new steak recipes for New Year's. In addition to new recipes, consumers are looking for innovative ways to use leftovers or prepare meals for guests arriving before or after the main holiday events<sup>2</sup>.



If you're looking for new prime rib recipes or have a consumer asking questions about how to prepare one, send them to

<https://www.beeftips.com>. There you'll find our 'Beef Up the Holidays' page that includes a short video highlighting key tips for roasting the prime rib, along with an oven roasting timetable. You'll also find wine pairing suggestions and how to create a charcuterie board there too!



## BQA & Producing Quality Beef Workshops

This is a reminder that we still have several Beef Quality Assurance in-person certification meetings scheduled through early February. You can find more details and registration information the BQA meetings at <https://www.beeftips.com/cattlemens-corner/beef-quality-assurance> or by calling the Wisconsin Beef Council office at 608-833-7177. If you need help getting logged onto the online BQA system to complete your certification, we can help with that as well.

In addition, we're continuing our partnership with the Division of Extension and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture by extending additional Producing Quality Beef (PQB) Workshops in more locations in February. Topics to be covered will include: live cattle evaluation and discussion with packer representatives; impacts on value, including shrink, mud, dirt and fitness for transport; meat quality defects – with real examples from the packing plant; quality and yield grades discussion; pre-harvest factors that impact meat quality; and feeding and management practices to produce cattle the market seeks

The dates and locations for these sessions are below. Each program will begin at 10 am and conclude by 3. Pre-registration is requested 7 days in advance to ensure that plenty of food and handouts will be available for everyone. To register, go to <https://bit.ly/3GSZtuJ> or call the Wisconsin Beef Council.

- Feb 12th Blooming Livestock Exchange, 9663 Co Hwy A, Bloomington, WI 53804
- Feb 26th Altoona Equity Livestock Sale Barn, 5150 US-53, Eau Claire, WI 54701
- Feb 28th Milwaukee Stockyards, N3645 Co Rd J, Reeseville, WI 53579

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

1. Consumer Beef Tracker, Directions Group, analyzed and summarized by NCBA, on behalf of the Beef Checkoff.
2. Holiday Consumer Survey, analyzed and summarized by NCBA, on behalf of the Beef Checkoff, September 2024.



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