



JOAN BALLWEG

STATE SENATOR · 14TH SENATE DISTRICT

Senate Bill 311: State Aid for Prizes Awarded at Local Fairs
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism
Testimony of Senator Joan Ballweg
July 27, 2023

Good morning, members of the committee. Thank you for hearing this important legislation to support our county and district fairs.

Last session, the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism partially objected to a new DATCP rule on county and district fairs (CR 21-093) that prohibited someone from being able to present their exhibit at multiple fairs and receive a state-aided premium. The concern from the committee, as well as several fairs that testified, is this rule would serve as a disincentive for participation at fairs and place a difficult administrative burden on fairs to be able to enforce the rule. Following the committee's action on the rule, Representative Kurtz and I continued to have discussions with the Wisconsin Association of Fairs, various individual fairs, and DATCP to find a mutually agreeable solution.

This bill prohibits DATCP from enforcing the portions of the rule that were objected to, and it also increases the cap on state aid that fairs can receive from \$10,000 to \$20,000. In addition to this legislation, we worked on a budget motion through the Joint Finance Committee to successfully increase the annual funding for County Fair Aids from \$456,400 to \$650,000 per year.

The state provides aid to county and district fairs based on the premiums awarded for fair exhibits, but prior to this budget, the funding was not enough to cover the amount fairs submitted for reimbursement. The increase in funding and doubling the cap on reimbursements will ensure that all fairs are kept whole and that they will receive additional aid to more appropriately cover their costs, including any expected costs associated with the policy changes in this bill.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Association of Fairs.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.



TONY KURTZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 50th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony for the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism

Senate Bill 311

Good morning, Chair Ballweg and committee members. Thank you for holding this hearing today on Senate Bill 311, relating to state aid for prizes awarded at local fairs.

2023 Wisconsin Act 19, the most recent state budget, provides an additional \$193,600 annually to aids for county and district fairs, bringing the state aid up to a total of \$650,000. Senator Ballweg and I submitted the motion for this increased funding in order to ensure that all of the fairs would see additional aid after the changes in this bill are made.

Last session, DATCP promulgated CR 21-093. This committee partially objected to a provision that prohibited someone from being able to collect a state-aided premium for their exhibit at multiple fairs. This discourages increased participation at fairs and places an administrative burden on fairs that is difficult to enforce, especially smaller fairs like the Juneau County Fair and Elroy Fair in the 50th Assembly District.

Senate Bill 311 prohibits DATCP from promulgating the objected portions of CR 21-093 and increases the cap on state aid that fairs can receive from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

This bill reflects our agreement with the Wisconsin Association of Fairs to ensure all fairs receive an increase in aid to appropriately cover their costs as well as the expected costs associated with the policy changes. I am proud to stand by all of our local fairs to advocate for the state to continue to recognize and celebrate the incredible agricultural contributions of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 311. I apologize I am unable to testify in person today, but please feel free to reach out to my office if you have any questions.

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	WISCONSIN COUNTY AND DISTRICT FAIR PREMIUMS						
2	COLUMN G IS PAYOUT SCENARIO BASED ON 2022 FAIR NUMBERS WITH \$456K STATE AID WITH A \$10K CAP						
3	COLUMN H IS PAYOUT SCENARIO BASED ON 2022 FAIR NUMBERS WITH \$650K STATE AID WITH A \$20K CAP						
4	FAIR CALENDAR 2022					State Aid	State Aid
5						Maximum	Maximum
6			1st formula step	2nd fomula step	after formulas	CAP	CAP
7	Fair Name	FAIR PREMIUMS PAID OUT 2022	95% of first 8,000	70%>8,000	Total	10,000.00	20,000.00
8							
9	Adams Co.	3,926.50	3,730.18	0	3,730.18	3,345.94	3,730.18
10	Ashland Co.	3,768.00	3,579.60	0	3,579.60	3,210.87	3,579.60
11	Barron Co.	20,398.50	7,600.00	8,678.95	16,278.95	8,969.91	16,278.95
12	Bayfield Co.	6,190.75	5,881.21	0	5,881.21	5,275.39	5,881.21
13	Brown Co.	11,212.25	7,600.00	2,248.58	9,848.58	8,834.09	9,848.58
14	Buffalo Co.	9,296.75	7,600.00	907.73	8,507.73	7,631.36	8,507.73
15	Burnett Co.	5,554.50	5,276.78	0	5,276.78	4,733.22	5,276.78
16	Central Burnett	1,787.75	1,698.36	0	1,698.36	1,523.41	1,698.36
17	Calumet Co.	8,945.25	7,600.00	661.68	8,261.68	7,410.65	8,261.68
18	Northern WI State	18,692.50	7,600.00	7,484.75	15,084.75	8,969.91	15,084.75
19	Clark Co.	11,180.50	7,600.00	2,226.35	9,826.35	8,814.15	9,826.35
20	Columbia Co.	7,896.25	7,501.44	0	7,501.44	6,728.72	7,501.44
21	Lodi Union/Ag Fair	7,347.75	6,980.36	0	6,980.36	6,261.32	6,980.36
22	Crawford Co.	6,422.75	6,101.61	0	6,101.61	5,473.09	6,101.61
23	Dane Co.	10,529.25	7,600.00	1,770.48	9,370.48	8,405.24	9,370.48
24	Dodge Co.	13,801.50	7,600.00	4,061.05	11,661.05	8,969.91	11,661.05
25	Door Co.	4,995.75	4,745.96	0	4,745.96	4,257.08	4,745.96
26	Head-of-the-Lakes	4,190.75	3,981.21	0	3,981.21	3,571.11	3,981.21
27	Dunn Co.	4,640.50	4,408.48	0	4,408.48	3,954.37	4,408.48
28	Eau Claire Co.	4,924.00	4,677.80	0	4,677.80	4,195.94	4,677.80
29	Florence Co.	710.75	675.21	0	675.21	605.66	675.21
30	Fond du Lac Co.	8,640.00	7,600.00	448.00	8,048.00	7,218.98	8,048.00
31	Forest Co.	886.25	841.94	0	841.94	755.21	841.94
32	Blakes Prairie	3,344.75	3,177.51	0	3,177.51	2,850.20	3,177.51
33	Grant Co.	10,075.75	7,600.00	1,453.03	9,053.03	8,120.49	9,053.03
34	Green Co.	7,800.50	7,410.48	0	7,410.48	6,647.13	7,410.48
35	Green Lake Co.	5,154.00	4,896.30	0	4,896.30	4,391.94	4,896.30
36	Iowa Co.	8,553.50	7,600.00	387.45	7,987.45	7,164.67	7,987.45
37	Iron Co.	3,604.75	3,424.51	0	3,424.51	3,071.75	3,424.51
38	Jackson Co.	9,514.25	7,600.00	1,059.98	8,659.98	7,767.92	8,659.98
39	Jefferson Co.	17,118.50	7,600.00	6,382.95	13,982.95	8,969.91	13,982.95
40	Elroy	5,169.75	4,911.26	0	4,911.26	4,405.36	4,911.26
41	Juneau Co.	4,541.00	4,313.95	0	4,313.95	3,869.57	4,313.95
42	Kenosha Co.	17,770.25	7,600.00	6,839.18	14,439.18	8,969.91	14,439.18
43	Kewaunee Co.	6,008.55	5,708.12	0	5,708.12	5,120.13	5,708.12
44	LaCrosse Interstate	14,042.00	7,600.00	4,229.40	11,829.40	8,969.91	11,829.40
45	Lafayette Co.	5,245.25	4,982.99	0	4,982.99	4,469.70	4,982.99
46	Langlade Co.	5,740.00	5,453.00	0	5,453.00	4,891.29	5,453.00
47	Lincoln Co.	5,416.50	5,145.68	0	5,145.68	4,615.63	5,145.68
48	Manitowoc Co.	10,575.25	7,600.00	1,802.68	9,402.68	8,343.12	9,402.68
49	Athens	5,492.25	5,217.64	0	5,217.64	4,680.18	5,217.64

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8							
50	Wisconsin Valley *	15,555.25	7,600.00	5,288.68	12,888.68	8,969.91	12,888.68
51	Marinette Co.	5,065.25	4,811.99	0	4,811.99	4,316.31	4,811.99
52	Marquette Co.	4,431.00	4,209.45	0	4,209.45	3,775.84	4,209.45
53	Monroe Co.	10,148.50	7,600.00	1,503.95	9,103.95	8,166.16	9,103.95
54	Oconto Co.	5,577.50	5,298.63	0	5,298.63	4,752.82	5,298.63
55	Oneida Co.	455.00	432.25	0	432.25	387.72	432.25
56	Outagamie Co.	11,128.00	7,600.00	2,189.60	9,789.60	8,781.18	9,789.60
57	Ozaukee Co.	8,768.25	7,600.00	537.78	8,137.78	7,299.51	8,137.78
58	Pierce Co.	15,118.75	7,600.00	4,983.13	12,583.13	8,969.91	12,583.13
59	Polk Co.	11,358.00	7,600.00	2,350.60	9,950.60	8,925.60	9,950.60
60	Portage Co.**	5,834.75	5,543.01	0	5,543.01	4,972.03	5,543.01
61	Price Co.	3,457.50	3,284.63	0	3,284.63	2,946.28	3,284.63
62	Racine Co.	17,290.50	7,600.00	6,503.35	14,103.35	8,969.91	14,103.35
63	Richland Center	7,551.50	7,173.93	0	7,173.93	6,434.95	7,173.93
64	Rock Co.	13,969.25	7,600.00	4,178.48	11,778.48	8,969.91	11,778.48
65	Rusk Co.	3,964.00	3,765.80	0	3,765.80	3,377.89	3,765.80
66	Sauk Co.	8,495.50	7,600.00	346.85	7,946.85	7,128.25	7,946.85
67	Sawyer Co.	3,841.95	3,649.85	0	3,649.85	3,273.88	3,649.85
68	Shawano Co.	18,462.00	7,600.00	7,323.40	14,923.40	8,969.91	14,923.40
69	Sheboygan Co.	13,009.25	7,600.00	3,506.48	11,106.48	8,969.91	11,106.48
70	St. Croix Co.	11,133.25	7,600.00	2,193.28	9,793.28	8,784.48	9,793.28
71	Taylor Co.	3,061.50	2,908.43	0	2,908.43	2,608.84	2,908.43
72	Trempeleau Co.	7,976.75	7,577.91	0	7,577.91	6,797.32	7,577.91
73	Vernon Co.	16,200.25	7,600.00	5,740.18	13,340.18	8,969.91	13,340.18
74	Vilas Co.	2,284.75	2,170.51	0	2,170.51	1,946.93	2,170.51
75	Walworth Co.	42,193.75	7,600.00	23,935.63	31,535.63	8,969.91	20,000.00
76	Washburn Co.	5,666.75	5,383.41	0	5,383.41	4,828.87	5,383.41
77	Washington Co.	10,724.00	7,600.00	1,906.80	9,506.80	8,527.51	9,506.80
78	Waukesha Co.	9,081.50	7,600.00	757.05	8,357.05	7,496.20	8,357.05
79	Waupaca Co.	10,493.25	7,600.00	1,745.28	9,345.28	8,382.63	9,345.28
80	Waushara Co.	8,197.00	7,600.00	137.90	7,737.90	6,940.83	7,737.90
81	Winnebago Co.	10,351.25	7,600.00	1,645.88	9,245.88	8,293.47	9,245.88
82	Central WI State	22,298.95	7,600.00	10,009.27	17,609.27	8,969.91	17,609.27
83							
84	Total	664,250.20	444,531.38	137,425.81	581,957.19	456,309.03	570,421.56
85				STATE AID	456,000.00	456,000.00	650,000.00
86				OVER/SHORT	-125,957.19	-309.03	79,578.44

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF FAIRS

5320 County Road L

Merrill, WI 54452

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July 24, 2023

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism,

The Wisconsin Association of Fairs is writing in support of SB311.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Association of Fairs (WAF), I would like to express our thanks for all of the work done on fair legislation on state-aided premiums. Changes were necessary due to the way state statutes were written and interpreted. With the total funding of \$650,000 now in place to support state aid, WAF supports the changes proposed in SB311.

As always, exhibitors can exhibit at more than one fair, but now, fairs will no longer need to track if they have. This will streamline the paperwork, which will benefit all fairs. All fairs will now have the opportunity, if they choose, to allow more exhibitors at their fair, regardless if they have shown at another fair before in the same fair season.

Making the change on the cap any fair can receive in State Aid from \$10,000 to \$20,000 is another big and necessary change. This will have a very positive impact for fairs.

Once again, thank you for understanding the importance of the fair industry and helping push for funding and legislative changes that are necessary. Fairs have been a place for youth, open class and senior exhibitors to showcase their works and for communities to come together to continue to learn about agriculture for more than 180 years. We strive to keep this agricultural showcase in place and appreciate your support to do that.

We'd also like to thank Senator Ballweg and Representative Kurtz for all of their efforts in making this change in legislation possible.

Sincerely,

Jayme Buttke
Executive Director
Wisconsin Association of Fairs

Our mission is to increase Wisconsin fairs quality by providing education and advice on all aspects of producing a fair in Wisconsin mainly through our annual convention and district meetings.

Hon. Steven E. Thomas
Juneau County Supervisor
District 17
W3801 W. Lemonweir CT
Mauston, WI 53948-8712

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture

To our lawmakers in public hearing on the current proposed DATCP 160 rule changes. Thank you for your time to listen to my concerns with these proposed rule changes.

I am a Juneau County Supervisor concerned about the ramifications of these proposed rules. I am a member of the Juneau County Agriculture, Industrial and Recreation Society. I also input on the UW extension committee. At age 70, I still take an active role in the fairs and the education of our youth, as does my wife. This month I provided a STEM presentation to Cloverbuds in an introduction to aviation in Juneau County. When they were finished, they had enough material for a fair exhibit with a little more work. I am a third generation 4H alumni and Leader, and would be opposed to anything that would hinder the youth from participating in the fair experience. For myself, I started young in Champaign County, IL and exhibited several times to the Illinois State Fair. When we moved to Wisconsin, we once again got involved in 4H/ open class/Senior exhibiting along with my children in the Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Dodge, and Juneau County Fairs, the Alto and Elroy Fairs as well as the Central Wisconsin State and Wisconsin State Fair.

In argument, the proposed rule changes are saying this will encourage more participation not less. Our fairs took a heavy blow due to COVID, many 4H clubs were not able to meet, even by zoom due to broadband failure in this state, which is another issue of too little to late. It is said that in many worthy departments, especially STEM there are no exhibits at the fair. In many folk arts there are no exhibits at the fair, and in many of the animal categories no exhibits and even fewer buyers to buy livestock. The proposed rule change is not the way to go!

However, the proposed rule changes are seen as one more hoop to jump through for exhibitors and is enough to kill the enthusiasm of the exhibitor. Sometimes you look at the fair premium as it is and say, "It is not enough for the effort and the price of gas to take it to the exhibition and return to pick up." So how can you still say this will have no effect on local economy or small businesses. Any decrease in exhibits affects how many people come to our fairs, which effectively work down to amounts vendors take in and even the amount that local service clubs make, whose funds are put back into our local communities.

There still is no way to police these rule changes and it is hard enough to police from year to year even in Senior Categories. The proposed changes create a lot more work for all fairs, even if they were able to get results in and get state aid on all our exhibits, they still have to work with all surrounding fairs to make sure that they do not show at another fair. So, this affects every single one of our exhibitors, since we have a district fair. The only way to enforce would be a state central entry office and I would be afraid it will kill fairs completely, as it would be another state fiasco as unemployment was the past two years. Again, this is discriminating against exhibitors that have put in the work to make these exhibits and fulfill requirements to exhibit at more than one fair. Plus, every exhibit may change from one fair to another. If a correction is suggested by a judge on a woodworking exhibit at one fair, then an exhibitor has a chance to fix that issue before another fair. Items such as baked goods are always from another batch baked on a different day as you do not take old items to the fair. Animals are another whole category, as every animal is cared for and fed each day and the daily care impacts how the animal looks. Plus, between each fair an animal has to be refitted, so even if an animal is fitted the same it will not look the exact same as it has grown and changed. Example my daughter: who took a Cockerel to fair and then the next year exhibited as a cock and then the next year as canned meat. And then another year showed another Cockerel and sold it at the fair and visited another fair and it had taken Grand Champion. In one sense, if one shows at a small fair and then at county fair and maybe the Central Wisconsin State Fair and then on to the Wisconsin State Fair, there is a progression for excellence. Unfortunately, the Wisconsin State Fair is mainly a tri-county fair as premiums are not inducive to travel, even more so now with the price of gas. Unless the Youth education agent takes an item to State Fair, the exhibit does not make the state fair.

The overall description is 54 pages long. And this rebuttal is getting to the same length. I ask you to please look through any areas that would affect exhibition changes. While I agree it was time for an update, it was not done in the best interest of all fairs and really hurts small fairs such as the Elroy Fair, in our county and the Juneau County Fair.

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture,

My name is Sheila Siegler, 516 Mauston, WI 53948.

Thank you for listening to our concerns on the state's fair's premiums. My children showed at both the Juneau County fair and the small, but very important to them, Elroy fair. My girls learned many life skills and made many friends by crossing county lines in the 4-H program.

This new rule on fair premiums will affect my grandchildren, who will have to make a choice on which fair to show at, if this should pass. The small fairs will not be able to survive. A terrible loss to us all. The educational impact could change their appreciation for the ag industry. We need this as ag in Wisconsin is always changing. I want them to be future leaders. To make friends in different districts and other counties. To learn from different judges, face to face and Danish, both.

How and who will keep track of what everyone who attends a fair enters? Why is this change needed? Where will this money now go? I want to keep the fair tradition alive for all the children in our state, especially for my grandchildren. The oldest two love showing their dogs at both shows. The two younger are just getting started in their fair careers. They want to show everything and have great enthusiasm for the fairs, where they can show off all their hard work.

Thanks again, for listening.

From us all, Sheila Siegler, my daughters, Kimberly Clark and Courtney Denzer (who still show at both fairs). Amara Mathews (14), my grandchildren, Bailey (12), Henry (11), Westley (8), and Rowan (6), he's in kindergarten and has been waiting for his turn. It's finally here!

Please let my grandkids have the same benefits my children had.

My children have worked hard to build a life for themselves and their families. I want to make sure they can pass on the same opportunities to their children.

I am looking for a way to protect my assets and provide for my loved ones in the event of an untimely death or disability.

I want to make sure my children have the same financial security and peace of mind that I have. I want to make sure they can afford to live the life I have built for them.

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Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture,

I hope you will consider eliminating the proposed rule that state aid cannot be used to pay more than one premium to an exhibitor or an items/animal previously exhibited resulting in a premium in a calendar year in a department in the same division.

I grew up in 4-H and only had the opportunity to show at one fair. I am now 53 years old and have raised two children who were very involved in 4-H. My children had the unique opportunity to show at two fairs—Elroy Fair and Juneau County Fair. I saw first-hand the benefits that showing at two fairs has on their educational experience.

From 1992 through 2017, I volunteered at the Juneau County Fair and at the Elroy Fair. There again I would see first-hand how the educational experience was different at each fair. Juneau County Fair does all their non-animal junior project judging face to face. This type of judging experience provides an opportunity for youth to engage in an adult youth partnership. It sets them up for success when they have to engage their boss at a job or interface with a teacher at school. They learn to articulate their successes and the things that didn't go as planned with the exhibit they are discussing with the judge. The Elroy Fair uses the Danish system for their non animal exhibits. The youth learn how to make their exhibit speak for itself as they are not able to talk to the judge about why something with the exhibit might be a little off.

The youth have to follow different sets of rules at each fair too. Different poster sizes, # of cookies on the plate, technique for attaching their ribbon to exhibit etc. are required for each fair. Youth become very adept at reading guidelines and paying attention to details. These are great life skills! Youth are simply not just showing up at each fair with the same exhibit without some modifications so that it fits the rules of each fair.

The fair runs solely on volunteers. I really hope you know how complicated you are making this for the fair volunteers to track what you are proposing. This is not a good use of their skill or time.

Thank you for taking a look at the educational side of what you are proposing.

Sincerely,
April Martell
122 Tremont Street
Mauston WI 53948

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture:

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns about ATCP 160.

I am Kathryn Granger, age 75, live in the Southeast corner of Vernon County, rural Hillsboro and am passionate about County and District Fairs. I have been an exhibitor for decades and am a certified judge, judging at almost 40 different fairs, statewide, and have contracted over a dozen fairs. Pre-COVID found me judging almost 30 days throughout the summer: judging multiple days every week and loved every day.

Why? Fairs are an exceptional educational experience for both youth and adults. The benefits are life long.

I support that every exhibitor should receive premiums from multiple fairs without the fair losing any State Aid. This has been done for years and I think this policy should be continued. Exhibiting at multiple fairs has many advantages: it can increase learning experiences (different interaction with the judges by Danish, Conference, or Face-to-Face judging depending on the Fair), adding exhibits, meeting new competitors, improving social skills, gaining time management skills, etc. Let me share examples from my children's experiences: because of our location they were in Vernon County's FFA, Richland County's 4-H and a short district from the Elroy District Fair. Therefore, they worked hard with their exhibits at three fairs, plus Wisconsin State Fair and the National Cattle Congress in Iowa. They learned different things at each of these. Vernon County Fair offered the Collegiate Dairy Judging which they didn't get at Elroy or Richland. Obviously, there were different exhibitors and judges to help to gain new skills at the three Fairs. It especially changed our daughter's life. She became a State FFA Officer, a Junior Dairyman's State Officer and was one of three national FFA members chosen to travel the world for one full year and lived with agricultural families in many countries, sharing our culture and learning about theirs. She finished her degree at UW-Madison and has an excellent professional career in the ag world. She is grateful for the fairs that enhanced her life.

Why does this rule affect the fairs in Southwest Wisconsin? Having served on the Wisconsin Association of Fair Board for two terms made me realize that we are the only District (state has 4 Sections) that have all three District Fairs in our Section (Elroy, Blake's Prairie and Lodi). This makes it possible for youth and adults to show at multiple fairs and, in my opinion, makes for wonderful displays and competitions. The date of the fair and its location determine the multiple opportunities for the exhibitors. If this rule is enforced, it may get complicated. Some County Fairs do not allow anyone from outside their county to exhibit, but the reverse may happen. An exhibitor may show at an early fair, then show at their own county fair and get paid at both, with their County unaware of their first fair. Who is expected to police this? Most of our small fair coordinators get a stipend, if anything, and many Board members, superintendents, etc. are volunteers – many of these fairs do not have a paid office staff. Our geographic location is not compatible with this 160 Rule. Hillsboro School District, even though it is a small district, has students in five counties: Vernon, Richland, Monroe, Juneau and Sauk Counties. And Elroy Fair allows students from multiple school districts.

What impact would the proposed rule have? I am on the Juneau County Board. Approximately 50% of our exhibitors show at another fair. What would our exhibit shelves look like if they decided not to come? How would we come up with the lost State Aid if we opted to pay those premiums. We already have calendar raffles, on-line auctions, etc. for fundraisers. Juneau County does not have large corporate businesses to give us large sponsorships.

Fewer exhibitors result in fewer fair goers, fewer food vendors, smaller grandstand crowds, etc. It is a ripple effect, resulting in a struggling fair, but, most importantly, what the exhibitors would miss is immeasurable.

Does this make a difference for our Open Class and/or Senior Citizens? Yes. I judge at several fairs that have 85 and 90+ year old exhibitors that look forward to exhibiting at more than one fair. They work year-long on their Cultural Arts, Woodworking, Natural Science, etc. projects. They have been supportive of the fairs for decades, taking great pride in their non-animal exhibits. These experiences add to their mental, social, physical and therapeutic health.

Fairs have been experiencing a reduction in exhibits. Shelves need to be filled. Why would we want to enforce a rule that could and would further reduce our exhibits? I can't imagine what our Juneau County Fair's Open Class Building would look like without our 80+ year old exhibitors.

Does every fair know about this rule? No. In calling a number of fairs that I judge at, some don't even know what I am talking about. They either didn't read or hear about it, or they don't think it makes a difference for them. One fair told me she doesn't even want to get involved and said her fair is not going to police it.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning my letter: 608 489-3629 or email fairladykkg@yahoo.com. I firmly believe that allowing young and old exhibitors to show at multiple fairs while receiving State Aid premiums and not decreasing Aid to Fairs, is paramount. Thank you.

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture:

Hi my name is Brenda Totzke, I am from Juneau County and live in the rural Mauston area. I am writing to you in concern for the ATCP 160 changes that you are proposing. I grew up not being involved with county, regional, state fairs but my children have and I can not express the education, the sociability, the responsibility that they have gained by being active in fairs. We moved into a rural area when my girls were in third and first grade and as my husband grew up an active 4-H member; I was determined to have my children also join 4-H. We joined the Wonewoc Badgers and met some great families.

One exciting category that 4-H promotes is the involvement of being an exhibitor at fairs. My children and other children are held accountable for purchasing animals, taking care of animals, training animals, registering animals, transporting animals, showing the animals, cleaning up after animals and then even saying goodbye to animals that will go to market. All great life skills for the future that I truly believe could not be gained if not for exhibiting at fairs. While at the fairs they are responsible for making new friends from other clubs, answering questions that the general public have about the animals, and showing pride in their events.

My family competes in 4 fairs a summer. We start off with Elroy Fair, travel to the Lodi Fair, head to the State Fair, and then end with the Juneau County Fair. At each fair the girls learn something new. Each time they have a different judge they learn something new; each time they meet new people (exhibitors/visitors) they learn something new; and all the while teaching people and other exhibitors something new.

My oldest learned at the Lodi Fair about a unique way that they bring their special needs children of the community to the fair to have their own show. This not only brings those with special needs to the fair but also teaches the exhibitors valuable lessons also. She has incorporated this special show into the Elroy fair this year. Had she never exhibited at the Lodi Fair she would have never been able to start this at the Elroy fair.

State Fair is awesome for education!! My girls show rabbits there. They not only show rabbits and do showmanship but also have to do an interview, judge rabbits themselves, and identify rabbit breeds as part of an Expert Exhibitor challenge the state fair has. Every year my girls move up in the standings and are so proud that they improved. All this and they are still being educated. You can't get that by only going to one Fair.

To be honest I am not sure what my girls would do if they had to choose going to only one fair a year – they simply love the family time at each and every one of the fairs they participate in. Fair premiums are not the reason the kids do what they do at the fairs BUT it is incentive to go to all these fairs and learn and educate. Nothing about participating in a fair comes without a cost and the fair premiums do help offset this cost. I don't understand why this change is needed and where the money would go if these changes go through.

Fairs are a great educational resource, responsibility builder, and memory maker for the younger generation. I say we should be encouraging each and every exhibitor to go to as many fairs as they can. Why would anyone want to take this away from our younger generation?

I thank you for your time to hear my thoughts on the ATCP 160 changes that you are proposing. I ask that you don't make the changes for the above reasons that fairs are so important to the community in which they serve. Please do not make it harder for an exhibitor if anything figure out a way to enhance exhibitors coming to the fairs as it is invaluable for exhibitors and their communities!

Sincerely

Brenda M. Totzke

Brenda M. Totzke
W8318 Hwy O
Mauston, WI 53948

July 25, 2023

Dear Senator Ballweg and Committee,

I am Vicki McGowan from the Juneau County Fair in Mauston; I come to you today as a 3rd generation exhibitor of the Juneau County Fair, the mother of 4th generation exhibitors and grandmother of 5th generation exhibitors of the Juneau County and Elroy Fair.

My paternal Grandmother exhibited until she was 103 years old, my mother exhibited until her death at 92 and my Granddaughter is so very excited to be able to exhibit in Pee Wee Showmanship this year.

I also come to you as a retired Special Education Teacher and the Juneau County Fair Secretary - a position I have proudly held for 24 years.

Juneau County is one of the poorer counties in the State of WI, but is filled with some of the most generous and kind people I have ever had the privilege of living and working with. Aside from annual county aid of \$3000 and our annual state aid for premiums that was \$4,045.25.

We depend on the generosity of our local sponsors, which all except 2, Festival Foods and Kwik Trip, are small local mom and pop businesses that give from their heart not from their surplus of income. We have no working budget and survive from fair to fair on only the generosity of our sponsors and the luck of very good weather to be able to pay for our annual fair. The rain-out of even 1 grandstand event, may very well put us in the red and force us to borrow money to pay our bills, including our percent of the premiums to our exhibitors. We do not own our grounds, but have to rent the buildings for \$6000.00 per year plus electrical, water, insurance, and all needed supplies, (right down to the toilet paper), to put on the Juneau County Fair.

Here at the Juneau County Fair, we are all volunteers. We have no one paid by the county, or any other government agency working for the fair. We do, however, have one of the best, most dedicated and generous fair boards and groups of volunteers you can find anywhere.

I tell you this to help you understand how the cutting of any state aid to premiums truly puts an additional burden on our fair - a burden that hits the very heart of why we - the Juneau County Fairboard / Agricultural Society and volunteers give so much of our own time and money; we do it for our exhibitors.

As a volunteer in charge of entries and reports to the state, it is my understanding that without this change of this statute - the allowing of an exhibitor to show exhibits at more than 1 state aided fair, without the loss of state aid to the individual fairs is of utmost importance. Aside from the loss of funding, each individual fair would be expected to spend even more volunteer hours, to somehow determine if an exhibit is eligible for state aided premiums.

One of my fair families shared this perspective with me that I think explains the need for this statute change so well.

Exhibits are the same in name only. For example: their daughter's sheep - or any animal exhibit for that matter, from a dog to a cow - at the Elroy fair is not the same animal at the Juneau County Fair - 6 weeks later, that animal has grown, had to be cared for and worked with everyday to compete again at the next fair. But without the change in this statute, her premium at the Juneau Co. Fair would not receive any state aid, because her sheep had already received a state aided premium at the Elroy fair.

I strongly feel that all exhibits that are entered within the guidelines of our fair premium book should be eligible for state aided premiums. Regardless if that exhibit has been shown at another fair.

I could share with you countless examples from our fair families of the benefits of showing at multiple fairs and the countless learning experiences these exhibitors gain at each and every fair.

With the help of the secretary from the Elroy Fair and using data from our last fair, we shared 63 or approximately 40% of our exhibitors, please note that these are also our biggest exhibitors, in terms of the number of exhibits brought to the Juneau County Fair. Using these figures, without the change to this statute, in regards to state aided premium monies; would mean the loss of approximately 61% of the Juneau County Fair's state aided premium monies and that is a huge percentage for any fair to make up for.

I thank Senator Ballweg, Representative Kurtz and many others for their continued work resulting in the increase of funding to our fairs.

But without the statutes being amended to read:

All fairs shall receive aid in the same manner and the department may not restrict the number of fairs at which an exhibitor may participate and be eligible to receive state-aided premium awards,

My fair - the Juneau County Fair would receive over 50% less funding this year than we did last year.

Now at a time where all over the state the number of exhibitors and exhibits are at an all time low and we - everyone of us here and all in the fair, agricultural, educational, social services, governmental agencies; should be doing everything we can to encourage more involvement at our fairs from more citizens - young and old - of the State of Wisconsin.

I personally have seen how exhibiting at our fair kept my mother and grandmother more active, focused, independent and gave them something to look forward to, something that showcased their continuing abilities. I have personally worked for years to encourage my students with special needs to become involved in our fair and seen them achieve great things through their

experiences at the fair. But even as wonderful as the experiences have been for my students with special needs - the experiences the other youth and adults had working together with our special needs exhibitors is even greater and has made lifelong differences for all involved.

One of the many outstanding events we have at our fair, I want to share and am so very proud of is - our youth's annual visit to the Fair View Nursing Home. Many of our youth exhibitors walk and / or carry their animal exhibits across the road to Fair View Nursing Home, where the residents come outside to pet the animals and share their stories with our exhibitors of the days when they were showing at the Juneau Co Fair and to listen to these present day exhibitors' stories in regards to their projects. I worry that with the reduction of funding to our fair - if we lost even 1 exhibitor, due to lack of state aided premium monies, would be so very sad and a loss of so much more than a few dollars from the State of WI.

As a small rural fair we are the longest running annual event in Juneau County and we are now preparing for our 157th fair. Even though we are a rural community, we are no longer a predominantly farm community and our exhibitors reflect that change. Our exhibitors are from the urban areas too; with backyard gardens, chicken and rabbit projects, learning to sew, knit, do woodworking, conservation projects, recycling projects, preserving food, doing photography, training their dog or horse, growing your next T-bone steak, developing social skills, public speaking abilities, leadership skills, and countless other skills our exhibitors learn through their exhibits and participation in the fairs.

I now Thank You for your time today and appreciate you listening to our concerns and sharing the importance and love I have for our county fair and know I have only touched the surface of all the positive impact our county fairs have to offer everyone involved with or attending our fairs.

I now personally want to invite you all to the 157th Juneau County Fair - August 13 - 20, in Mauston; to experience for yourself all our county fair has to offer everyone and see where our state aid is being put to work for the future of us all.

Thank You!

Vicki McGowan
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