



# Capitol LINK

CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE & AGRI-BUSINESS

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## The 2013 Legislative Session Begins

By Jordan Lamb -- DeWitt Ross & Stevens

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The Wisconsin State Legislature opened the 2013-14 legislative session on January 7<sup>th</sup> when all new members were sworn in. The largest issue looming on the horizon is the 2013-14 biennial budget bill, which Governor Walker will introduce on February 12<sup>th</sup>. The Governor also delivered the State of the State on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

There are a tremendous number of new faces in the Legislature this session. In fact, for only the second time in history, a majority of the members of the State Assembly are in their first or second terms (*i.e.*, they have served for 2 years or less.) In addition, there are fewer members of the Legislature with connections to agriculture than ever before. In 2003, 12 legislators listed themselves as farmers. For the 2013 session, only 6 list themselves as farmers.

Each new legislative session also brings new legislative leaders. For this session, the State Senate Majority Leader is Senator Scott Fitzgerald (R) and the Assistant Majority Leader is Senator Glenn Grothman (R). The Minority Leader in the Senate is Senator Chris Larson (D). The Speaker of the State Assembly is Representative Robin Vos (R) and Majority Leader in the Assembly is Representative Scott Suder (R). The minority leader in the Assembly is Representative Peter Barca (D).

Because the Republicans control both the Assembly and the Senate this session, there are Republican majorities in each standing committee and a Republican is the chairman of each standing committee in both houses. The following committees are typically of interest to Wisconsin farmers:

**Senate Agriculture, Small Business and Tourism:** Terry Moulton (R) (Chair) and Tom Tiffany (R) (Vice-Chair).

**Senate Natural Resources:** Neal Kedzie (R) (Chair) and Terry Moulton (R) (Vice-Chair).

**Senate Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs:** Jerry Petrowski (R) (Chair) and Joe Leibham (R) (Vice-Chair).

**Assembly Agriculture:** Lee Nerison (R) (Chair) and Gary Tauchen (R) (Vice-Chair)

**Assembly Environment and Forestry:** Jeffrey Mursau (R) (Chair) and Scott Krug (R) (Vice-Chair).

**Assembly Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage:** Al Ott (R) (Chair) and Joel Kleefisch (R) (Vice-Chair).

**Assembly Rural Affairs:** Gary Tauchen (R) (Chair) and Kathy Bernier (R) (Vice-Chair).

**Assembly Transportation:** Keith Ripp (R) (Chair) and Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R) (Vice-Chair).

After Governor Walker introduces his proposed budget bill, the bill will first be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Finance. This 16-member committee is made up of legislators from both the Senate and the Assembly. This session, twelve of the members are Republicans, and four are Democrats. Once this committee reviews the Governor's budget and makes any amendments, the budget bill can be considered by the full Senate and Assembly. The budget process will begin on February 12 and likely conclude before the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Joint Committee on Finance (JFC):** *Senate Members:* Alberta Darling (R) (Co-Chair), Luther Olsen (R) (Vice-Chair), Glenn Grothman (R), Sheila Harsdorf (R), Mary Lazich (R) Joe Leibham (R), Sen. Bob Wirch (D), Sen. Jennifer Shilling (D); *Assembly Members:* Rep. John Nygren (R) (Co-Chair), Rep. Pat Strachota (R) (Vice-Chair), Rep. John Klenke (R), Rep. Dale Kooyenga (R), Rep. Dan LeMahieu (R), Rep. Dean Knudson (R), Rep. Cory Mason (D) (Ranking), Rep. Jon Richards (D).

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Jordan Lamb is a partner at DeWitt Ross & Stevens' Capitol Square office in Madison. Jordan's law practice focuses on government relations and administrative law. She concentrates on legislative drafting, legislative research, and facilitating communication between clients and state government including administrative agencies and the State Legislature. Ms. Lamb also offers litigation support for administrative law issues. Jordan can be contacted at 608-252-9358 or at [jkl@dewittross.com](mailto:jkl@dewittross.com). For more information about DeWitt Ross & Stevens, go to [www.dewittross.com](http://www.dewittross.com).

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Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin  
820 N Main Street Suite D Juneau, WI 53039  
Phone: 800-947-7379  
[www.pdpw.org](http://www.pdpw.org)