

Wisconsin Agriculture and Economics



Illustration by Laurie Schammel, DATCP

Wisconsin cash receipts totaled \$6.79 billion in 2006, down less than 1 percent from 2005. This is the second straight year for which cash receipts have declined. Receipts from livestock comprised 69 percent of the total marketings of all commodities, down from 74 percent the previous year. Milk accounted for \$3.08 billion of all sales by farmers, while sales of meat animals totaled \$1.05 billion. Both poultry and miscellaneous livestock gained sales in 2006, growing by 14 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

In 2006, cash receipts for crops totaled \$2.14 billion, a jump of 18 percent over the previous year and the highest level in the past seven years. The increase was driven by the increase in corn marketings, rising 40 percent to \$789 million. Soybean receipts, at \$275 million, grew 8 percent. Higher receipts for potatoes and snap beans for processing helped total vegetable marketings to increase by 10 percent from 2005 to 2006. Potato receipts increased by 16 percent, while snap beans for processing receipts jumped 28 percent. Cranberries rose 11 percent to \$143 million.

Wisconsin farm production expenditures totaled \$7.93 billion in 2006, up 7 percent from the previous year's total of \$7.42 billion. The largest increase in expenditures was in interest, at 20 percent, followed by livestock, poultry, and related expenses, at 18 percent, and farm improvements and construction, at 17 percent. Expenditures per Wisconsin farm averaged \$104,342 in 2006, below the national average of \$112,788.

The rapid growth of land values in Wisconsin calmed somewhat in 2006. Fewer acres of agricultural land were sold, and the rate of increase was lower than in recent years. Land continuing in agricultural use rose 3 percent to \$3,366 per acre. Land without buildings and improvements continuing in agriculture sold for \$2,984 per acre. Vacant land being diverted to other uses decreased 6 percent to \$10,310 per acre. Development continued to lead to high land values near Wisconsin's urban areas, but the rate of growth slowed substantially in 2006.

After remaining steady for three years, the number of farms in Wisconsin declined, from 76,500 in 2005 to 76,000 in 2006. The largest economic sales class, farms with agricultural sales of \$500,000 or more, was the only one in which the number of farms increased. Land in farms decreased 1 percent to 15.3 million acres, while the average size of a Wisconsin farm remained steady at 201 acres.