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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **WISCONSIN PORK ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Wisconsin Dells, WI --The Wisconsin Pork Association (WPA) recognized four individuals that were selected as their outstanding pork industry leaders during the organization's annual meeting held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> in conjunction with the Corn/Soy Expo in Wisconsin Dells.

#### **Friend of the Industry- Secretary Randy Romanski**

This award is given to an individual that provides exemplary service to the Wisconsin Pork Association.

Randy Romanski was announced secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection by Governor Tony Evers in 2020 and was subsequently confirmed by the Wisconsin State Senate. Governor Evers has reappointed Romanski as DATCP Secretary. Prior to his appointment, Romanski served as DATCP deputy secretary and interim secretary. He brings decades of experience in government administration and policy development to the department.

Originally from Wisconsin Rapids, Romanski earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and his master's degree in Public Policy and Administration from the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Secretary Romanski has been very supportive of the meat industry and, through his involvement in the Badger Box Program, WPA has been given the opportunity to develop our Passion for Pork Program. Romanski currently resides in Monona, Wisconsin.

#### **Agri-Communicator Award- Bernie O'Rourke**

WPA presents an Agri-Communicator Award, which acknowledges the efforts of individuals in the ag industry to communicate with others.

Bernie O'Rourke is a Senior Outreach Specialist in Animal Science and the Extension Youth Livestock Specialist in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bernie received her Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Sciences from South Dakota State University and her master's degree in Animal Sciences/Meat Science from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Bernie provides leadership and support to the livestock project areas by sharing current research and practices to youth and adults engaged in 4-H, FFA, and other organizations. She also teaches the Career Orientation course for college undergraduates, animal sciences prospective student

recruitment, and actively involved in local and statewide organizations. Bernie has always been very supportive of youth programs and gone above and beyond to communicate and spread the word about WPA opportunities and events to families around the state. Bernie, her husband, Ron, and her three sons live on their sheep farm near Dodgeville, WI.

### **Distinguished Service Producer Honoree- Silver Creek Family Farms**

Each year, the Wisconsin Pork Association presents a Distinguished Service Award to a fellow pork producer whose contributions to the Wisconsin swine industry merit special recognition.

Berget Farms started with pigs as a 20-sow farrow-to-finish operation in 1967. In the 1980's they moved the sows to the home farm and grew to a 300-sow farrow-to-finish. In 2000 the herd was sold in preparation for the new barns to be built. In 2002 Berget farms swine division got a new name, Silver Creek Family Farms, which is owned and operated by the Berget Family in Darlington, WI. It is now a 1,500 head sow unit that sells around 50,000 wean pigs annually. Silver Creek has 6 full-time and 3 part-time employees. The farm prides itself on exceptional animal husbandry, efficiency, sustainability, and its welcoming family-oriented atmosphere.

Since establishing the farm in 2002, Mike Berget has been highly proactive in establishing sustainability programs at the farm and as well as being involved in WPA. Christina (Berget) Meylor is currently the President of the WPA. Everyone at Silver Creek Family Farms is actively involved in the many activities WPA has to offer including the golf outing, fundraisers, Pork Schoppe, and the mentorship program. Additionally, the farm is enrolled in the Swine Health Improvement Program (SHIP), National Pork Board's Sustainability Project, and the Secure Pork Supply Plan.

### **Distinguished Service Industry Honoree- Dr. Tara Donovan, DVM**

The pork industry is fortunate in having many industry representatives who are dedicated to promoting and serving the industry. The Wisconsin Pork Association honors these individuals and companies by presenting them with the Industry Honoree Award.

Dr. Tara Donovan is a veterinarian and vice president of health management for The Hanor Company headquartered in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Donovan has a Bachelor of Science in animal science from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and earned a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from K-State in 1998. Donovan oversees the company's preventive health care programs. Her responsibilities include animal caregiver training, oversight of the company's animal well-being and quality assurance programs, pharmaceutical management and compliance and on-farm swine health practices.

Donovan has been an active member of veterinary organizations throughout her career, including the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association, the Wisconsin Pork Association and the National Pork Producers Council. She has been a key resource for Wisconsin's swine health and also served on the WPA Swine Health Committee. Donovan's husband, Dirk Donovan, also is a veterinarian and private food animal practitioner in Richland Center, Wisconsin. They have two children, Gus and Tekla.