



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photo(s) Available Upon Request

### **32<sup>nd</sup> Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction Raises \$130,000**

Madison, Wis. (August 15, 2024) – The Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction at the Wisconsin State Fair celebrated its 32<sup>nd</sup> year by raising a record-setting \$130,000. Proceeds from the auction benefit the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, which supports Wisconsin 4-H activities including 4-H conferences, teaching materials and workshops, and overall development of 4-H youth.

“Enthusiastic 4-H supporters made for an exciting evening,” said Wisconsin 4-H Foundation Executive Director Brenda Scheider. “Seeing our 4-H youth and adult volunteers working next to our generous donors really brings home what 4-H is all about.”

Wisconsin DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski kicked off the sale by encouraging the audience to bid high and bid often. Hostess Nicole Barlass of Sheboygan Falls, a former Alice in Dairyland and 4-H alumna, introduced outstanding 4-H members and special guests before she, along with Auctioneer Bob Johnson of Milton, sold 26 award-winning meat products. Johnson, a long-time 4-H supporter, has been the auctioneer and cheerleader for the sale for more than 30 years.

Wisconsin State Fair Chairman of the Board John Yingling and Wisconsin 4-H Foundation Board President Charlie Crave, along with the family of Dennis Buege, presented the 2024 Dennis Buege Best of Show Award to RJ's Meats of Hudson. RJ's Meats earned the honor for its entry in the bone-in ham division. A new record was set for the auction when it sold to a consortium of Johnsonville Sausage, Badger State Auction, Bill Thompson, Merwin Farms, Adams Farms, Wilson Farm Meats and Cathy Buege for \$25,000.

A Wisconsin Specialty Package featuring local Wisconsin cheese, sausage, wine and bourbon was purchased by Rich and Evelyn Rathke of Sandwood Hill Farm for \$2,600. The Guest Auctioneer selling this specialty item was 11-year Ozaukee County 4-H member Tim Gierach, who learned to call through a county 4-H program.

Becky Merwin of Merwin Farms, a dedicated supporter of the auction and our 4-H youth, broke a record when she purchased the honorable mention specialty cured meat product, “Super Bacon,” created by Wilson Farm Meats of Elkhorn for \$5,500.

Another high-selling item was the champion bacon created by Lodi Sausage Company of Lodi that sold for \$5,000 to UW Provision Company.

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The auction is produced in partnership with the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation and the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors (WAMP). The event was sponsored by WAMP, Egg Innovations and The Hull Farm of Lake Geneva, all long-time supporters of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Meat Products Auction and the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation.

The Grand Champion, Reserve Champion and Honorable Mention winners and their buyers were:

### **BACON**

**Grand Champion from Lodi Sausage Company, Lodi**

Buyer: UW Provision Company for \$5,000

**Reserve Champion from RJ's Meats, Hudson**

Buyer: Rural Mutual Insurance for \$3,500

**Honorable Mention from West Bend Sausage Plus, West Bend**

Buyer: Crane Farms for \$2,300

**Honorable Mention from Gehring's Meat Market, Hartford**

Buyer: Hartmann Sand and Gravel for \$3,000

### **BONE-IN HAM**

**Grand Champion from RJ's Meats, Hudson**

Buyer: Wisconsin Souvenir Milkcaps for \$4,100

**Reserve Champion from Block and Cleaver Artisan Meats, Siren**

Buyer: Johnsonville Sausage for \$2,750

**Honorable Mention from Mr. B's Smokehouse Meats, Hillsboro**

Buyer: Daluge Travel for \$2,250

**Honorable Mention from Lake Geneva Country Meats, Lake Geneva**

Buyer: The Hull Farm of Lake Geneva for \$3,000

### **DRIED BEEF**

**WAMP RW Bray Award of Excellence from Weber's Processing Plant, Cuba City**

Buyer: Rural Mutual Insurance for \$2,100

### **SUMMER SAUSAGE**

**Grand Champion from Geiss Meat Service, Merrill**

Buyer: Wisconsin Farm Bureau for \$3,200

**Reserve Champion from Organic Prairie, LaFarge**

Buyer: Major Goolsby's for \$1,400

**Honorable Mention from Mr. B's Smokehouse Meats, Hillsboro**

Buyer: UW Provision Company for \$1,750

**Honorable Mention from Salmon's Meat Products, Luxemburg**

Buyer: Gibbsville Implement for \$1,900

### **RING SAUSAGE**

**WAMP Dr. Buege Award of Excellence from Leroy Meats and Catering, Horicon**

Buyer: UW Provision Company for \$2,500

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### **SNACK SAUSAGE**

**Grand Champion from RJ's Meats, Hudson**

Buyer: Ultimate Confections for \$1,700

**Reserve Champion from Block and Cleaver Artisan Meats, Siren**

Buyer: Sunnyside Hatchery for \$1,500

**Honorable Mention from Lake Geneva Country Meats, Lake Geneva**

Buyer: The Hull Farm of Lake Geneva \$3,000

**Honorable Mention from Gehring's Meat Market, Hartford**

Buyer: Hartmann Sand and Gravel for \$3,000

### **BRATWURST**

**Grand Champion from Block and Cleaver Artisan Meats, Siren**

Buyer: Crave Brothers for \$2,750

**Reserve Champion from Louie's Finer Meats, Cumberland**

Buyer: UW Provision Company for \$2,700

**Honorable Mention from Falls Meat Service, Pigeon Falls**

Buyer: Daluge Travel for \$2,100

**Honorable Mention from The Meat Block, Greenville**

Buyer: Crane Farms for \$2,100

### **SPECIALTY CURED MEAT PRODUCT**

**Grand Champion from Mr. B's Smokehouse Meats, Hillsboro**

Buyer: Crave Brothers for \$2,400

**Reserve Champion from Geiss Meat Service, Merrill**

Buyer: Wisconsin Souvenir Milkcaps for \$1,900

**Honorable Mention from Roskom Meats, Kaukauna**

Buyer: Johnsonville Sausage for \$2,300

**Honorable Mention from Wilson Farm Meats, Elkhorn**

Buyer: Merwin Farms for \$5,500 (New record!)

### **WISCONSIN SPECIALTY ITEM**

Buyer: Evelyn and Rich Rathke of Sandwood Hill Farm for \$2,600

### **BEST OF SHOW**

**RJ's Meats, Hudson (Bone-In Ham)**

Buyer Consortium: Johnsonville Sausage, Badger State Auction, Bill Thompson, Merwin Farms, Adams Farms, Wilson Farm Meats, and Cathy Buege for \$25,000. (New Record!)

The Wisconsin 4-H Foundation, based in Madison, provides essential funding for 4-H programs throughout Wisconsin. By partnering with individuals, corporations and foundations, the Foundation supports more than 150,000 youth who take part in various 4-H leadership, developments, and community-building activities throughout the state. Learn more about the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation by visiting [www.Wis4HFoundation.org](http://www.Wis4HFoundation.org).

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<PHOTO> **Dennis Buege Best of Show:** L-R: Wisconsin 4-H Leadership Council President Juniper Rydberg (Portage County); Wisconsin 4-H Leadership Council member Evan Numrich (Winnebago County); Catherine Buege (family of Dennis Buege); Secretary of DATCP Randy Romanski; Charles Crave (Wisconsin 4-H Foundation Board President); Winning Processors Ann and Rick Reams of RJ's Meats.