



# Real Christmas Trees Benefit Wisconsin's Economy, Environment

by Casey Langan

MADISON – Some parts of American culture should never change, like motherhood, apple pie and real Christmas trees, says Bill Bruins, president of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.

“While the farmer’s market season might be over, buying a real Christmas tree is a great way for consumers to support Wisconsin’s economy and the environment,” said Bruins, a Fond du Lac County dairy farmer who leads Wisconsin’s largest farm organization.

Wisconsin is home to over 1,300 Christmas tree farms, where over 1.8 million evergreens are harvested annually from approximately 36,000 acres of land. This industry generates about \$50 million dollars worth of economic activity in Wisconsin alone, according to the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association.

Wisconsin ranks fifth in the nation for the number of Christmas trees harvested, behind the states of Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Bruins says it’s time to dispel the notion that cutting down a Christmas tree harms the environment.

“In fact, having a real Christmas tree is a better environmental option, because they are a recyclable and renewable resource,” he said.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, between 40 million and 45 million trees were planted in 2008 in North America. These trees provide good wildlife habitat, stabilize the soil, protect water supplies, absorb carbon dioxide, and remove dust and pollen from the air.

“Most tree farms plant 1 to 3 trees for every one that is cut,” Bruins explained,

“and after the holidays they don’t end up in a landfill like artificial trees eventually do. Instead these biodegradable products can be recycled into mulch, and have also been made into soil erosion barriers and placed in ponds for fish shelters.”

“Artificial trees are typically made from petroleum and shipped across the planet from China,” Bruins said. “So all things considered, locally grown Christmas trees are a true gift, while artificial trees equate to a lump of coal in the environment’s stocking.”

<http://www.wfbf.com/archive/htm/Archive/showPage.aspx?page=15551.htm&id=15551>

*Reprinted with the permission of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.*