

## Director Candidates: Region 2 — Wis. (4-year term), Candidate 1 of 2



### **Evan Hillan**

35 years old  
Ladysmith, Wis.  
(715) 415-3765  
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Farm Credit Member Since: 2013

**Family:** Parents, Eric and Carol

### **Brief description of agricultural operation and employment/business experience over the past five years:**

I'm a fourth-generation dairy farmer and farm in partnership with my parents. We currently milk 500 cows and crop 1,600 acres.

### **Boards or committees you currently serve on and boards or committees you have served on in the past five years:**

I have served on the Land O' Lakes Board of Directors for three years. Previously I served on the National Dairy Board and Dairy Management Inc. Board of Directors. I serve as the Chair of the Rusk County Dairy and Beef Promoters and am the Vice Chair of the Flambeau Valley Watershed.

**Community involvement/government service:** I am a member of Ladysmith Church of Christ. I serve on two local organizations; our county's Dairy and Beef Promoters and our local watershed group.

**Education:** I earned my Bachelor's from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire in Entrepreneurial Management in 2011 and a Master's of Business Administration from University of Indiana - Bloomington in 2017.

### **What is your vision for the future of agriculture?**

Agriculture will continue to remain the foundation of our economy. Farmers and their families will continue to provide the food, fuel and fiber to feed and clothe their friends and neighbors. We embrace each future season and adapt to its changes. Some of those changes include the advancing use of technology. There are now two AI's — one we learned in genetics class — and the other is artificial intelligence which is increasingly finding roles to analyze a farm's data. While social media has allowed us to virtually bring back our consumer to the farm.

In the next decade, I see more technological developments happening on farm than in the previous 50 years. It will provide more insights into the way we farm, the transparency in which we farm and change some ways in how we farm. While we adapt to all these changes, from the new "AI," to blockchain; to see and spray cameras on sprayers. I know that we farmers will continue to be the backbone of our nation's economy supporting our friends and neighbors.

**What do you believe are the primary issues facing agriculture and Compeer Financial?** There will always be certain issues facing agriculture and Compeer such as interest rate changes, commodity cycles, the next Farm Bill,

and regulatory issues. However, there are certain issues that come together to define a period like the 1930's Dust Bowl or the 1980's farm crisis. In this decade, I see three major shifts happening: generational shifts in agriculture, AI and the fragmentation of worldwide trade into competing trade blocks.

As the baby boomer generation begins to retire, relationships that the retiring generation had built over decades will disappear. The next generation may not have the same relationship towards Compeer and could look elsewhere for their financing needs. The flip side is that the following generations are used to multiple communication methods and generally are more tech savvy allowing both them and Compeer to interact in new ways.

AI is reshaping the way we interact with the world. Generating new and faster insights into data. This will in agriculture and Compeer deliver new ways to increase financial performance, reduce risk and create new business opportunities. It will also flip upside down the dynamics of agriculture. Successful businesses will be the ones that can derive the best insights from their data and apply it to their circumstances.

Lastly, the fragmentation of global trade patterns, particularly due to geopolitical tensions between the West and China, will significantly impact the agricultural industry. As countries redirect their trade routes away from adversarial nations, agricultural commodities will be traded not only on price but also on their origins. This shift is creating new market dynamics, such as Brazil surpassing the U.S. as the largest corn exporter. Such changes are leading to increasingly volatile markets as the world sorts out new trade patterns.

**Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors at Compeer Financial?** When I first came back to the farm, a piece of land came up for sale. I went around town to different banks looking for a loan to buy that land. Compeer was the only one that gave the time and the respect to a young farmer looking to start their career. From then on, I have considered Compeer not only as my bank, but a partner in the success of my farm. It is with the same respect and partnership in success that I want to give back to the co-op that gave me my first start in my farming career.