



Sent Electronically

April 8, 2019

Wisconsin State Lawmakers:

As you weigh priorities for the 2019-2021 biennial budget, we as members of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association write to urge you to support key investments in Wisconsin's \$44 billion dairy industry.

For 128 years, WCMA has advocated for cheese, butter, and whey processors and now represents the vast majority of dairy manufacturing, processing, and marketing companies in Wisconsin, as well as hundreds of their supplier partners.

Recent years have posed challenges for dairy processors and our partners in the farming community, but we are optimistic that targeted state support, along with business ingenuity and hard work, will usher us into the next chapter of growth.

First, we ask that you champion several apolitical Executive Budget provisions through the legislative process, including:

- An increase from \$200,000 to \$400,000 in annual funding for dairy processor grants issued by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for innovation, modernization, and food safety projects;
- An allocation of \$200,000 to support the Wisconsin Initiative for Dairy Exports program, designed to help build Wisconsin's dairy brand in international markets and increase dairy exports; and
- Adjustments to DATCP expenditure authority to allow the reclassification of staff positions for the retention of high-quality plant inspection personnel.

WCMA members also support full funding for the Department of Natural Resources to ensure uninterrupted service from business-essential divisions, such as the Water Quality Bureau, and a sensible, sustainable funding source for much-needed transportation investments across the state.

Beyond the Executive Budget proposal, we ask that you consider including a provision to expand access to capital for rural dairy processors. This proposal, approved by the Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0, would create a pilot loan guarantee program within the current Agribusiness Guarantee program at the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development



Authority. We'd ask that up to \$3 million of existing – and unused – authority could be directed to support processors' expansion and modernization projects at plants in rural communities.

Finally, as you may know, renovations are underway at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Dairy Pilot Plant, and we thank lawmakers for partnering with us to fund the building project. The College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at UW-River Falls reinstated its Food Science and Technology program in 2016, and now offers a food processing technology minor; both of these programs have bolstered the dairy processing industry with well-trained staff. The school's dairy processing plant also hosts continuing education classes focused on pasteurization, cheesemaking, and food safety which are critical to the advancement of Wisconsin's dairy processing industry.

We now ask that the state fund the addition of two full-time employees to build on the work of the lone current staff member to coordinate, run, and promote educational programming. It is WCMA's position that, without additional support, the plant's impact will not be fully realized.

We welcome any opportunity to speak with you about these requests, and other matters of importance at any time. Thank you for your consideration, and for your public service.

Best Regards,



Baker Cheese Factory
Saint Cloud, Wisconsin



Bytec Resource Management
Monroe, Wisconsin



Cedar Grove Cheese
Plain, Wisconsin



Improving food & health

Chr. Hansen, Inc.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Clock Shadow Creamery
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



DAIRYEQUIPMENT
— ADVISORS —
EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Dairy Equipment Advisors
Madison, Wisconsin



Door Artisan Cheese Co.
Egg Harbor, Wisconsin



Eau Galle Cheese Factory
Durand, Wisconsin



Hook's Cheese Company
Mineral Point, Wisconsin



Masters Gallery Foods
Plymouth, Wisconsin



Ellsworth Cooperative
Creamery
Ellsworth, Wisconsin



JDG Consulting
Madison, Wisconsin



Kelley Supply
Abbotsford, Wisconsin



Meister Cheese Company
Muscodá, Wisconsin



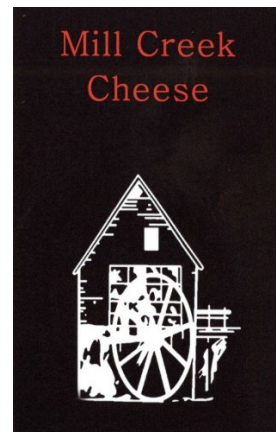
Food Safety Net Services
Green Bay, Wisconsin



Henning Cheese, Inc.
Kiel, Wisconsin



Klondike Cheese Company
Monroe, Wisconsin



Mill Creek Cheese
Arena, Wisconsin



Nasonville Dairy
Marshfield, Wisconsin



Ron's Wisconsin Cheese
Luxemburg, Wisconsin



Stainless Technologies
Menomonie, Wisconsin



Sulbana Inc.
Monroe, Wisconsin



Pine River Dairy
Manitowoc, Wisconsin



Sartori Company
Plymouth, Wisconsin



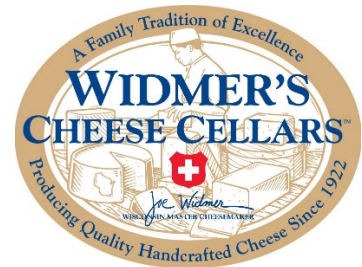
Uplands Cheese
Dodgeville, Wisconsin



Pine River Pre-Pack
Newton, Wisconsin



Sentry Equipment Corp.
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin



Widmer's Cheese Cellars
Theresa, Wisconsin



Ponderosa Dairy Products
Kewaunee, Wisconsin



Specialty Cheese Company
Reeseville, Wisconsin



Zepnick Solutions, Inc.
Green Bay, Wisconsin

