



WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

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Coronavirus Information and Resources

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As often news and needs warrant, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association will distribute special bulletins alerting you to information and resources related to industry operations and coronavirus (COVID-19). Your WCMA staff is here to support you, and we thank you for your important work.

Perdue Says USDA Will Purchase Dairy Products, Issue Direct Payments to Farmers

On FOX News this morning, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny [Perdue noted for the first time publicly](#) that his agency intends to purchase dairy products and issue direct relief payments to farmers, as WCMA and other leading dairy organizations have requested.

Full details on the USDA package are expected within the week, but Perdue noted, "We want to have direct payments to farmers, but more importantly ... we want to purchase as much of this milk or other protein products, hams and pork products, and move them to where they can be utilized in our food banks and possibly even international humanitarian aid."

WCMA continues to lobby lawmakers and agency officials on this issue, and to keep the topic in the news. Here's a look at a few of the latest headlines:

- *Associated Press:* [Virus sours business for already-reeling dairy industry](#)
- *EurWeb:* [Farmers dump dairy and produce as restaurant, school closings disrupt demand](#)
- *Door County Pulse:* [Dairy groups urge aid for farmers forced to dump milk](#)

DFW, WDATCP, Hunger Task Force Announce Million Dollar Wisconsin Dairy Recovery Partnership

Leaders from [Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin \(DFW\)](#), the [Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection \(WDATCP\)](#), and [Hunger Task Force](#) [this morning announced](#) the creation of the [Wisconsin Dairy Recovery Partnership](#).

Hunger Task Force is committing up to \$1 million to pay farmers to supply milk to

Kemps, which will process the milk for distribution as milk and dairy products at food banks and pantries throughout Wisconsin.

Members of the public may support this new initiative - and, in turn, Wisconsin's dairy farmers and food-insecure families - with a monetary donation made through [Hunger Task Force's website](#).

Evers Signals Extension of Safer At Home Order, MN Gov Extends Mandate to May 4

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers signaled Tuesday that the state's [Safer At Home order may be extended](#) beyond April 24, noting it could be a month before he relaxes social distancing mandates.

Minnesota Governor Tim [Walz recently extended](#) his stay-at-home order through May 4, and has [extended his peacetime emergency powers](#) through May 13.

Wisconsin Launches Wi-Fi Finder

Wisconsin officials have [launched an "emergency internet" tool](#) to help people find free broadband service during the coronavirus health emergency. The [tool](#) points users to nearly 450 identified open Wi-Fi connections, many of which are in schools, libraries or other public buildings that are physically closed.

Wisconsin State Senate Approves Coronavirus Response Package, Evers Set to Make It Law

The Wisconsin State Senate met virtually this morning to [approve the state's coronavirus response package](#), designed to help capture federal aid dollars for businesses, provide some tax relief, and temporarily lift the one week waiting period on unemployment insurance. The bill has been sent to Governor Tony Evers, who is expected to quickly sign it into law.

Coronavirus Headline News

Wisconsin:

- *WKOW-TV*: [Help sought for farmers struggling in coronavirus pandemic](#)
- *KMSP-TV*: [Wisconsin dairy co-op to donate cheese to Midwest food banks](#)
- *WKOW-TV*: [Wisconsin relief bill waives unemployment waiting period but waiting period still struggling to file claims](#)
- *WLUK-TV*: [Denmark facility \(sausage-maker\) confirms some employees tested positive for COVID-19](#)
- *La Crosse Tribune*: [State may have seen COVID-19 peak, but threat remains](#)

National/International:

- *Eater*: [How the coronavirus continues to devastate the restaurant industry](#)
- *Bloomberg*: [Hundreds of U.S. meat processing workers test positive for](#)

coronavirus

- *CNN*: [Highest number of U.S. coronavirus deaths in a day recorded, after several days of downward trend](#)
 - *Reuters*: [U.S. may need to extend social distancing for virus until 2022](#)
 - *Washington Post*: [After Trump suspends payments, other countries rally behind WHO](#)
 - *Politico*: [Republicans push Trump to restart economy](#)
 - *Reuters*: [U.S. retail sales collapse as coronavirus keeps consumers at home](#)
 - *MSN*: [State-by-state coronavirus news](#)
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Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) for More Resources

WCMA will provide links to new and timely coronavirus resources for members in these bulletins, but we want to alert you that we update our coronavirus resources page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) daily. Please visit the page for additional information on employee safety, regulatory flexibility, operations guidance, federal and state support, and ways to salute your critical, essential staff.

WCMA Key Contacts

WCMA staff is continuously reaching out to dairy manufacturer and processor members throughout this crisis to identify ways we can be of service. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at any time. Here are ways to get in touch.

- WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer: jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org or 608-225-7130
 - WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney: rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org or 608-386-3012
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