



# WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

EST. 1891

## Coronavirus Information and Resources

Bulletin Distributed: April 24, 2020

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.

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### USDA Details Broad Eligibility for Farmers to Families Food Box Program, RFP Expected Today

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is expected to release its request for proposals this afternoon for the new [Farmers to Families Food Box](#) program, supplying \$300 million per month worth of consumer-ready boxes of food to non-profit organizations on a recurring schedule. Dairy product purchases will encompass \$100 million per month. USDA will accept offers from dairy manufacturers and processors to prepare and ship dairy-specific food boxes, and additional contracts will be offered for combination boxes, including dairy, meat, and produce. WCMA will send an alert when the request for proposals is released.

In the meantime, WCMA has learned details that note the broad eligibility for participation in the program, which may be beneficial to many of our members:

- **USDA intends to allow businesses that are not yet approved as vendors to make offers and earn contracts.**
- Unlike other USDA contracts, **price will not be the only factor in awards**, as the agency acknowledges that some dairy products, such as specialty cheeses, are more expensive than traditional commodities.
- All food products must be 100 percent American-made.
- Dairy boxes may include, but are not required to include: fresh fluid milk, natural cheese, processed cheese, yogurt, and butter. A box may include only one or more cheeses, for example.
- Dairy manufacturers and processors who offer bids to create and ship boxes should develop relationships with nonprofit food banks or food charities. Together, your business and the food organization decide the acceptable products for your boxes. Products may be retail or food-service items.
- Contract awards are size-neutral, meaning that large and small bids (many boxes or few, many destinations or few) will be considered. A dairy business

may offer a recurring delivery of any amount in consultation with their nonprofit food bank partners.

- Your bids will include your cost of products, packaging, boxing and shipment.
- USDA intends to publish its list of food banks and charities around the nation, but your existing relationships with food charities will be valuable to tap when you prepare your offer.

Bids for the first round of Farmers to Families Food Boxes will be due on Friday, May 1, with delivery to begin on May 8 and to conclude on June 30. The program is expected to renew for two-month periods after that, through 2020.

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## WCMA Members Aid Food-Insecure, Communities

WCMA members continue to find ways to help their neighbors in need. Here's a look at some of the generous gifts making headlines:

- *Facebook:* [Klondike Cheese Company donates to four local pantries](#)
- *Rome Sentinel:* [Dairy Drive to aid farmers Friday \(Featuring Great Lakes Cheese\)](#)
- *WGLR-AM:* [Prairie Farms makes milk donation](#)
- *WXOW-TV:* [Organic Valley donates PPE to local emergency managers](#)

Have good news to share? Alert [WCMA staff](#), so we can help shine a light on your efforts to help!

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## Focus Friday: Stress Management Strategies

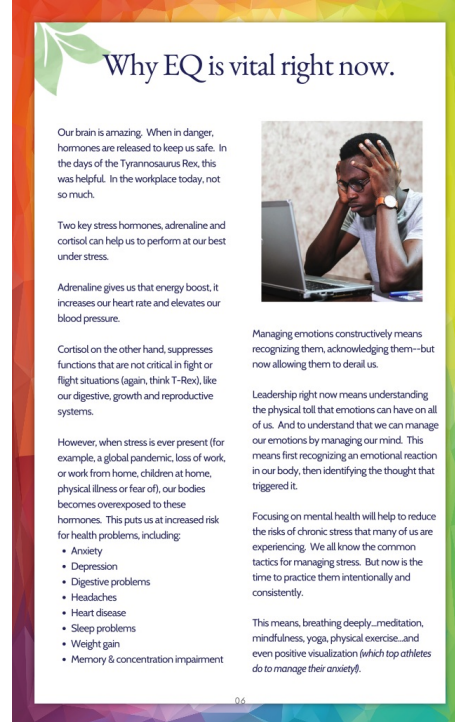
WCMA is proud to bring you *Focus Fridays*, leadership strategies to help you motivate your team and move your business forward.

Last week, WCMA shared a new, free e-book, [Leadership. Not Cancelled. Leading in Challenging Times](#), from our leadership training instructor Cyndi Wentland of [Intentionaleaders](#).

This week, Cyndi shares how to employ emotional intelligence to reduce your stress and the stress of those around you. Click on the image for full details, or if you have just 30 seconds, consider these three quick tips.

1. Acknowledge emotions, and build trust with your team by listening to their concerns.
2. Focus your efforts on what you can control, increasing your personal power and limiting anxiety.
3. Practice gratitude, even for the smallest of wins.

Have questions? Feel encouraged to get in touch with [Cyndi](#) - or [WCMA staff](#) - anytime. We're here to help.



**Why EQ is vital right now.**

Our brain is amazing. When in danger, hormones are released to keep us safe. In the days of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, this was helpful. In the workplace today, not so much.

Two key stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol can help us to perform at our best under stress.

Adrenaline gives us that energy boost, it increases our heart rate and elevates our blood pressure.

Cortisol on the other hand, suppresses functions that are not critical in fight or flight situations (again, think T-Rex), like our digestive, growth and reproductive systems.

However, when stress is ever present (for example, a global pandemic, loss of work, or work from home, children at home, physical illness or fear of), our bodies become overexposed to these hormones. This puts us at increased risk for health problems, including:


- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Heart disease
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory & concentration impairment

Managing emotions constructively means recognizing them, acknowledging them—but now allowing them to derail us.

Leadership right now means understanding the physical toll that emotions can have on all of us. And to understand that we can manage our emotions by managing our mind. This means first recognizing an emotional reaction in our body, then identifying the thought that triggered it.

Focusing on mental health will help to reduce the risks of chronic stress that many of us are experiencing. We all know the common tactics for managing stress. But now is the time to practice them intentionally and consistently.

This means, breathing deeply...meditation, mindfulness, yoga, physical exercise...and even positive visualization (which top athletes do to manage their anxiety!).



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## Register for Dairy Food Safety Alliance Webinar

WCMA, together with its partners at the Center for Dairy Research and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, will host a **free** Dairy Food Safety Alliance webinar on Wednesday, April 29 from 12-1 p.m.

Experts will detail:

- Standard Operating Procedure: What to do in the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive employee
- Standard Operating Procedure: What to do when a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive employee returns to work
- Employer rights and responsibilities
- Government support programs
- Regulatory flexibility

Dairy Food Safety Alliance presenters, including CDR's Marianne Smukowski, DFW's Adam Brock, and WCMA staff, will also field pre-submitted questions.

This free webinar is not open to the media. RSVP to [WCMA Office and Member Services Manager Sara Schmidt](#) with your interest in joining and include any questions you may wish to ask. You'll receive access information to this Zoom webinar (or telephone call-in option) in reply.

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## Coronavirus Headline News

**Wisconsin:**

- *Wisconsin State Journal:* [Democrats blast GOP leaders as protest of Tony Evers' stay at home order gets underway](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal:* [Business association proposal would provide guidelines for reopening Wisconsin economy](#)
  - *News Release:* [Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:* [GOP leaders seeking to overturn Evers'](#)

[coronavirus orders aren't saying what alternatives they want](#)

- *Wisconsin Ag Connection*: [Farm Center mental health vouchers poised to exceed 2019 totals](#)
- *Cap Times*: [Survey of Wisconsin businesses finds millions in lost income, wages, productivity](#)
- *New York Times*: [In Wisconsin, virus crates new front in long-simmering partisan wars](#)

#### National/International:

- *Eater*: [America's artisan cheese industry is struggling to survive without restaurants](#)
- *USA Today*: [19 ways coronavirus has changed what consumers buy \(increased milk sales\)](#)
- *Los Angeles Times*: [Weighing costs of reopening economy or keeping it shut longer](#)
- *USA Today*: ['I don't need this right now': States have reopening plans, but Americans are wary](#)
- *WGN-TV*: [Illinois stay-at-home order extended through May 31](#)
- *CNN*: [Whitmer extends Michigan stay-at-home order through May 15, requires masks in public](#)
- *FOX News*: [U.S. coronavirus death toll passes 50,000](#)
- *CNBC*: [FDA issues warnings on cloroquine and hydroxychloroquine after 'serious poisoning and death' reported](#)
- *FOX News*: [Trump, officials suggest coronavirus weakened by sunlight and humidity](#)
- *Reuters*: [Trump's disinfectant idea shocking and dangerous, doctors say](#)
- *MSN*: [State-by-state coronavirus news](#)

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## Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://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](http://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.

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## 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](mailto:jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org) or 608-225-7130
  - WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney: [rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org) or 608-386-3012
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