

WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

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Coronavirus Information and Resources

Bulletin Distributed: April 6, 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.

WCMA Continues to Push for Commodity Purchase

[WCMA continues to push USDA](#) for direct farmer aid and a massive purchase of dairy commodities, as enabled by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

We're gaining traction via news reports. WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer has talked with reporters from *Associated Press*, *Bloomberg*, and *Yahoo Finance* today, among others. Here's a look at coverage from this past weekend.

- *Politico*: [Food system faces 'tsunami' of changing demand](#)
- *Columbus Telegram*: [Dairy groups call on USDA to expedite emergency assistance](#)
- *New York Post*: [Dairy farms dump milk as coronavirus crisis spoils demand](#)
- *Dairy Reporter*: [U.S. dairy farmers dumping milk due to coronavirus](#)
- *Center Square*: [Wisconsin dairy groups plead for federal help with excess milk](#)
- *KSN-TV*: [Dumping milk: Coronavirus crash takes toll on dairy sales](#)

There are now reports of milk disposal in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Here's a look at some of the most recent headlines.

- *KSAZ-TV*: [Arizona dairy farmers struggle to sell enough milk, dumping over 100K gallons a day](#)
 - *WTHR-TV*: [COVID-19 closures force Indiana farm to dump milk](#)
 - *WNEZ-AM*: [Northern Plains dairy farmers dumping milk](#)
 - *WJW-TV*: [Coronavirus forces Ohio dairy farmers to dump milk while retailers limit purchases](#)
 - *WNEP-TV*: [Processing plant forced to dump milk](#)
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WCMA Calls for End to Wisconsin Waiting Period for Unemployment Benefits

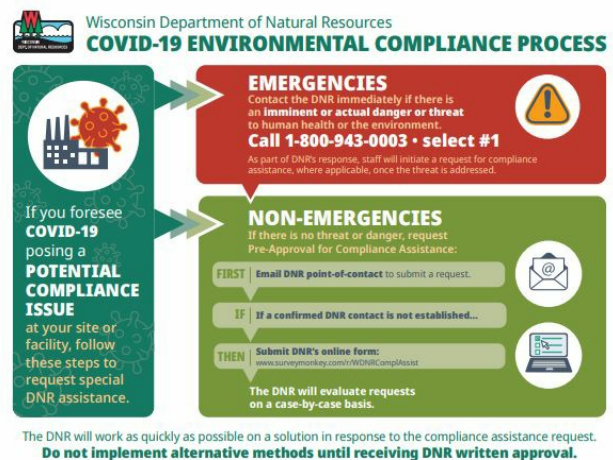
WCMA is calling on leaders of the Wisconsin State Legislature to immediately vote to end the one week waiting period for much-needed unemployment benefits. Governor Tony Evers first called for this policy change on March 17. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) have signaled support for this proposal, but the state Assembly and Senate have not met to pass this crucial policy change in a time of deep economic uncertainty for Wisconsin businesses.

WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer has issued this statement:

“Wisconsin workers faced with the sudden loss of their jobs and income, due to the coronavirus disruptions, deserve the assurance of immediate relief, not a week of waiting. Our lawmakers have the power to help displaced workers in this moment of crisis, and we call on them to take action now.”

WDNR Launches Environmental Compliance Site

WCMA has been working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) on the development of guidance for dairy processors should coronavirus trigger milk disposal from the plant (as opposed to the farm). While this work continues, [WDNR has launched compliance website](#) featuring the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's temporary guidance](#) on noncompliance, and a [step-by-step process](#) for working on necessary flexibility.



Join Free CDR Webinar on Extending Shelf Life

Our partners at the Center for Dairy Research invite you to join a free webinar on Wednesday, April 8, at 2 p.m. (CT) focused on ways you can extend cheese shelf life. Topics include: holding cheese in low temperature storage, freezing cheese for storage, and high pressure processing. CDR experts will take questions during the webinar via chat. [Please register now to join.](#) If you are unable to join live, the webinar will be recorded and available to watch on demand.

Evers Orders April 7 Election Postponed to June

This afternoon, Wisconsin Governor Tony [Evers postponed tomorrow's statewide election](#) until June 9 after Republicans who control the Legislature declined to take action over the weekend to eliminate in-person voting. All ballots already cast (absentee) will remain valid.

State Republicans immediately announced they would go to the Wisconsin Supreme Court to [challenge Evers' order](#).

WDATCP Calls on Public to "Be There" for Farmers

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Interim Secretary Randy [Romanski today issued an op-ed](#) calling on people to "be there" for farmers, urging consumers to shop responsibly, by more Wisconsin dairy products, donate food to those in need, and to show appreciation for the farmers and processors who provide a stable, nutritious food supply.

Coronavirus Headline News

Wisconsin:

- *WTMJ-TV*: [Wisconsin's COVID-19 peak in 3-7 weeks, "safer-at-home" helping](#)
- *WITI-TV*: [2,400+ positive COVID-19 tests, 81 deaths in Wisconsin](#)

National/International:

- *Politico*: [Food goes to waste amid coronavirus crisis](#)
 - *Associated Press*: [Governors plead for food stamp flexibility amid pandemic](#)
 - *NPR*: [Food shortages? Nope. Too much food in the wrong places](#)
 - *CBS News*: [Wells Fargo stops taking small-business relief loan \(PPP\) applications](#)
 - *Brownfield Ag News*: [Tiger tests positive for coronavirus; USDA takes questions](#)
 - *New York Times*: [U.S. deaths near 10K as hospitals run low on supplies](#)
 - *CNN*: [Parts of U.S. will endure a devastating week from coronavirus, but there are signs of hope](#)
 - *USA Today*: [Why nine states refuse to issue stay-at-home orders](#)
 - *MSN*: [State-by-state coronavirus news](#)
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Visit 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 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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