



# WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

EST. 1891

## Coronavirus Information and Resources

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*WCMA distributes member bulletins focused on coronavirus information on Thursdays and as breaking news warrants. WCMA delivers electronic newsletters with broader content on Tuesdays. Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions.*

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### Wisconsin Directing CARES Funding to Ethanol, Dry Ice Production, Essential for Dairy Industry

On Wednesday, WCMA [applauded Governor Tony Evers' plan](#) to direct \$3.25 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act monies to Wisconsin ethanol producers. Ethanol production is critical to the manufacture of dry ice, now in heightened demand as the nation prepares for the super-chilled distribution of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine.

In recent weeks, WCMA has called on [federal and state officials](#) to ramp up dry ice production and preserve the national dairy industry's access to an essential amount – 350,000 pounds per week – for dairy cultures. Three companies, all with manufacturing facilities in Wisconsin, make the majority of the world's supply of dairy cultures, which are vital to dairy manufacturing and must be held at subzero temperatures prior to use.

WCMA continues to educate and inform lawmakers and the general public; for more on these efforts, see the news reports linked below.

- *WDJT-TV:* [Cheese industry threatened by COVID dry ice demand](#)
- *Business Insider:* [The governors of Minnesota and Wisconsin are worried the coronavirus vaccine rollout could hurt the cheese industry](#)
- *Forbes:* [Possible dry ice shortage, crucial for shipping, looms over COVID vaccine distribution](#)
- *WTMJ-TV:* [Wisconsin invests \\$3.25 million in state's ethanol industry](#)
- *WTMJ-AM:* [Dairy processors concerned about future availability of dry ice](#)
- *Inforum:* [Minnesota Governor Tim Walz: COVID-19 vaccine shipping could cause cheese shortage](#)

WCMA will continue to keep members informed of major developments related to industry dry ice access. Please feel encouraged to contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions or concerns.

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# FDA Panel to Vote on Pfizer Vaccine Approval Today

A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) panel is currently [holding a hearing](#) on Pfizer's appeal for emergency use authorization (EUA) of its COVID-19 vaccine, with a vote on that request expected late this afternoon. If the panel recommends the EUA be granted, full FDA approval may come as early as Friday.

Operation Warp Speed Chief Operations Officer General Gustavo Perna told reporters on Wednesday that the federal government plans to [ship 2.9 million doses](#) of Pfizer's vaccine nationwide within 24 hours of FDA approval.

The FDA panel has also scheduled a hearing on [Moderna's EUA request](#) for next Thursday, December 17.

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## WDHS Warns Most Won't Get Vaccine Until Fall 2021

Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services Secretary-designee Andrea Palm Tuesday warned that, while vaccine approval is coming soon, most [Wisconsinites will not be able to get doses](#) until late summer or early fall 2021.

State officials expect to receive about 50,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and about 16,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine, upon approval. That number represents approximately one percent of the state population. The state expects to receive additional vaccine allocations on a weekly basis, with numbers rising in January.

WCMA is advocating for state prioritization of [vaccine availability for dairy manufacturing and processing workers](#).

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## States Issue New Pandemic Restrictions

### California

Governor Gavin Newsom has issued [regional stay-at-home orders](#), closing indoor and outdoor dining, and strictly limiting store capacity for at least the next two weeks.

### Indiana

Governor Eric Holcomb [reimposed restrictions](#) Wednesday limiting social gatherings to 25 people and restaurants to 50 percent capacity. He is also requiring hospitals to postpone non-emergency surgeries to preserve beds.

### Washington

Governor Jay Inslee on Wednesday announced an [extension of restrictions](#) he ordered November 15, which include shutting down indoor dining and gyms and limiting social gatherings, through January 4.

State officials from [Pennsylvania](#) and [Virginia](#) are expected to announce additional restrictions today, as well.

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## Congress Urged to Fix PPP Tax Issue

Business groups are calling on Congress to act quickly to [pass legislation](#) correcting a tax provision in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

In recent weeks, the Internal Revenue Service has stated and reiterated that borrowers can't write off expenses covered by a PPP loan that's forgiven. In essence, this means tax-free loan forgiveness is viewed as taxable income. If not addressed by year's end, this policy will result in higher taxes for business owners.

WCMA is advocating for Congressional action, and will keep members informed of significant developments.

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## Coronavirus Headline News

### Dairy Industry

- *KWBG-AM*: [CFAP 2 sign-up ends Friday](#)

### Wisconsin

- *WKOW-TV*: [Army sending medical help to Wisconsin facilities strained by COVID-19](#)
- *WISC-TV*: [COVID-19 death toll surpasses 4,000 in Wisconsin](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Wisconsin has reported 385 COVID-19 deaths in the last week, including 81 Wednesday](#)
- *Chippewa Herald*: [Chippewa County COVID-19 positivity rates climbs near 50 percent](#)
- *WITI-TV*: [Wisconsin could play key role in COVID-19 vaccine distribution](#)
- *WLUK-TV*: [Economic outlook on when businesses may fully recover from COVID-19](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Senate Republicans considering COVID-19 bills, but passage before end of the year remains unlikely](#)

### National/International

- *FOX News*: [U.S. tops daily coronavirus death toll](#)
- *Associated Press*: [U.S. virus deaths hit record levels with the holidays ahead](#)
- *Reuters*: [As U.S. companies push to get workers vaccinated, some states disagree on who's essential](#)
- *New York Times*: [Find your place in the vaccine line](#)
- *CBS News*: [Pelosi says lawmakers are "close" to reaching deal on COVID-19 relief proposal](#)
- *Washington Post*: [Jobless claims spiked in the U.S. last week, with 853,000 people seeking new benefits](#)

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## Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) for More Resources

WCMA's coronavirus resources page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) is updated daily, featuring 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

Members with pandemic-related questions or concerns should feel encouraged to

contact WCMA staff 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
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