



WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

EST. 1891

Coronavirus Information and Resources

Bulletin Distributed: May 13, 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.

House Coronavirus Relief Bill Includes \$500M in Recourse Loans for Dairy Processors

House Democrats introduced a [\\$3 trillion coronavirus relief package](#) yesterday, and plan a vote on the proposal this coming Friday.

The bill includes \$500 million in funding for a recourse loan program, run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, designed to help support dairy processors, packagers, merchants, marketers, wholesalers and distributors carrying heavier-than-usual inventories due to pandemic pressures. Recourse loans against inventory would cover “eligible dairy products” - whether in base commodity or finished form.

WCMA advocated for the loan recourse program alongside International Dairy Foods Association, and 60 other industry members and organizations.

Here's a look at news coverage of the House proposal:

- *CBS News:* [House Democrats unveil massive new coronavirus relief bill ahead of Friday vote](#)
- *Forbes:* [Massive House bill includes new and improved stimulus checks, expanded jobless benefits, and tax relief](#)
- *AgWeb:* [House COVID-19 relief bill includes changes to Dairy Margin Coverage](#)
- *Roll Call:* [House aid package contains key immigration measures](#)
- *The Hill:* [Eight surprises in House Democrats' \\$3T coronavirus bill](#)

Just-Introduced AG CHAIN Act Would Provide Tax Relief for Dairy Processing Workers

Congressmen Glenn Thompson and Dwight Evans of Pennsylvania have introduced

a bipartisan proposal called the [Assistance and Gratitude for Coronavirus Heroes in Agribusiness who are Invaluable to the Nation - or AG CHAIN - Act](#), providing a federal tax holiday and a payroll tax exemption for all essential employees in the food and agriculture industry.

USDA to Hold Webinar on Direct Producer Relief

The [U.S. Department of Agriculture will host a webinar on Thursday, May 14 at 12 noon \(CST\) for farmers](#) interested in receiving relief payments through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. USDA plans to provide \$16 billion in producer payments, based on their losses.

While this program is not of direct support to processors, many WMCA members - particularly those running cooperatives - have expressed interest in the program.

Note, [advance registration](#) is recommended for webinar participation.

Wisconsin Meets Five of Six Reopening Goals

State officials reported [fewer than 200 new confirmed cases](#) of coronavirus on Tuesday, a [statistic that helped Wisconsin meet five of six criteria](#) set by Governor Tony Evers to begin reopening. The remaining unmet metric is a downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses reported within a 14-day period.

USDA Announces String Cheese Contract Award

The [U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it will purchase string cheese](#) from WCMA member Baker Cheese, as well as Upstate Niagara Cooperative.

USDA Approves Wisconsin Use of SNAP Online

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved a request from the State of Wisconsin to allow the use of [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits online](#). Amazon and Walmart are nationally-approved vendors, and the state can act to provide recipients additional options. Twelve other states already offer this option, and ten more are in the approval process.

Coronavirus Headline News

Dairy Industry:

- *The Fresno Bee*: [Lemoore cheesemaking facility \(Leprino Foods\) confirms coronavirus case](#)
- *Dallas Morning News*: [Dallas dairy producer Borden wins \\$147 million coronavirus relief contract](#)

Wisconsin:

- *WisPolitics*: [Republicans call for more aggressive approach, as Evers OKs](#)

[small business reopening](#)

- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Antibody testing for COVID-19 now available](#)

National/International:

- *WLUK-TV*: [Attorneys General call for CDC guidelines to be mandatory at meatpacking plants](#)
- *Associated Press*: [CDC docs stress plans for more virus flare-ups](#)
- *Business Insider*: [New test shows if you've ever had virus](#)
- *USA Today*: [Layoffs easing but remain at historic levels as millions file for unemployment](#)
- *FOX Business*: [U.S. workers pleased with employers' response, but worry about job security](#)
- *The Hill*: [April deficit sets record at \\$738 billion](#)
- *FOX Business*: [Fed rules out negative interest rates, despite Trump pressure](#)
- *MSN*: [State-by-state coronavirus news](#)

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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