



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.

Evers Announces \$50M in Direct Farmer Payments, \$15M for Food Banks and Pantries

Wisconsin Governor Tony [Evers today announced two key programs](#) to provide aid to the state's agricultural community.

The new Wisconsin Farm Support Program will provide \$50 million in direct payments to Wisconsin farmers, via the Department of Revenue, with payment distribution as early as June.

The Food Security Initiative will provide \$15 million in grants to food banks and pantries combating hunger. Successful grant applicants will be encouraged to partner directly with Wisconsin agricultural producers and food processors, maximizing purchases of Wisconsin products.

More details are expected soon, and WCMA will keep members informed.

WCMA has actively advocated, both for direct aid for dairy farmers and for investments in food aid programs, and this afternoon, [we issued a statement in support of the Governor's announcement](#).

Other Aid Programs Announced

Tuesday afternoon, Gov. [Evers announced he will direct \\$1 billion in federal funding to COVID-19 testing](#), contact tracing, personal protective equipment and resources for local public health departments.

Earlier today, [he also announced a \\$25 million program to provide rental assistance](#) for those impacted by coronavirus job or income losses.

Baldwin Introduces Bipartisan Bill Directing \$1B in

Relief for Agriculture

U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Susan Collins (R-ME) and Angus King (I-ME), together with Representatives Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) and Dusty Johnson (R-SD), today introduced the [Farming Support to States Act](#), directing \$1 billion in federal aid to states for agricultural and food aid.

Under the proposal, the U.S. Department of Agriculture would be charged with allocating funds to all states and territories, with priority given to those more engaged in farming and food processing. Grants could be directed to public, profit, and private entities to offset the increased cost of operations during this pandemic.

WCMA is actively lobbying for this legislation, and thanks members who have contacted lawmakers to urge their support. To get involved in our advocacy work, contact [WCMA staff](#).

USDA Announces Details for Direct Farmer Relief

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released eagerly-awaited [details on direct payments to farms](#) provided under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

There will be a single payment to dairy farms based on two calculations. First, farms will document first quarter milk production, including disposed milk, and multiply this amount by \$4.71 per cwt. Second, an amount “based on a national adjustment to each producer’s production in the first quarter,” multiplied by \$1.47 per cwt., will be given to dairy farms. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which included \$19 billion for farms, will fund these payouts, with assistance from USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation and its \$6.5 billion fund for market disruptions

Farms, structured as family or legal entities, must have average adjusted gross income of less than \$900,000 over the tax years 2016, 2017 and 2018, but if farming accounts for 75 percent of that income, this restriction is waived. Each person or legal entity that owns a farm will face a \$250,000 payment limit. This is twice the limit previously considered by USDA. Corporate entities may receive up to \$750,000 based upon the number of shareholders (not to exceed three shareholders) who contribute at least 400 hours of active person management or personal active labor.

USDA will pay out 80 percent of what each farm is determined to earn, and hold back 20 percent for a later payment as funds remain available. USDA will begin to take applications for this direct relief money on May 26.

USDA and FDA Issue MOU on Agency Interaction

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture today released a [memorandum of understanding](#) determining how USDA could exercise its authority under the Defense Production Act to strengthen the food supply chain. [FDA officials](#) noted that, while they will continue to work with state and local regulators, “further action under the DPA may be taken, should it be needed, to ensure the continuity of our food supply.”

Shredded Cheddar Cheese Bids Due May 27

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today requested [proposals for fulfillment of contracts for cheddar cheese shreds](#). Proposals are due on May 27 by 1 p.m. (CT), with deliveries to be made between July 1 and August 31. Questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

USDA Awards Contracts for Butter, Yogurt & Cheese

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has [awarded contracts](#) for butter, yogurt, cheese slices, pepper jack, and processed cheese to WCMA members Associated Milk Producers, Inc., Dairy Farmers of America, Masters Gallery Foods, and Schreiber Foods.

Coronavirus Headline News

Dairy Industry:

- *Delaware Online*: [How coronavirus is hitting Delaware dairy farmers](#)
- *National Geographic*: [These five foods show how coronavirus has disrupted supply chains](#)
- *WCAX-TV*: [Scott \(Vermont\) proposes \\$400 business relief package](#)

Wisconsin:

- *Green Bay Press Gazette*: [Door County ends safer-at-home order, issues reopening guidelines](#)
- *Sheboygan Press*: [Sheboygan County releases advisory plan to limit virus](#)
- *WCLO-AM*: [Rock County rescinding stay-at-home order](#)
- *WMTV-TV*: [Fewer than 200 cases confirmed, total testing continues to slide](#)
- *WBAY-TV*: [FEMA sending more COVID-19 supplies to Wisconsin](#)
- *WITI-TV*: ['We've had millions of calls': Evers fields questions about unemployment delays](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Face masks becoming a political symbol of COVID-19 era](#)

National/International:

- *Associated Press*: [Reopening: it's back to business, but not business as usual](#)
 - *FOX Business*: [Stocks rally as all 50 states partially reopen](#)
 - *Reuters*: [WHO reports most cases in a day, nearing 5 million](#)
 - *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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