



WCMA Dairy Facts

An Exclusive Newsletter of the WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

May 24, 2019



WCMA Advocates for Industry Boosts in Budget, Legislation

WCMA staff are working to represent industry interests at the Wisconsin State Capitol, as lawmakers consider the budget and stand-alone legislation. Here are a few updates on our policy priorities.

Dairy Innovation Hub

WCMA has partnered with other dairy organizations and University of Wisconsin System officials to champion the Dairy Innovation Hub. This proposal would direct \$7.9 million for training and research and development to UW-Madison, UW-Platteville, and UW-River Falls. First introduced as [stand-alone legislation](#) by Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and Representative Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City), the concept could be included in the state budget. Learn more [here](#).

Capital Access

WCMA is working with a bipartisan group of lawmakers, including Sen. Howard Marklein, Sen. Janet Bewley (D-Mason), Rep. Gary Tauchen (R-Bonduel), and Rep. Don Vruwink (D-Milton) to advance [legislation](#) that would launch a pilot program at the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA). Using existing funds available through the Agribusiness Guarantee Program, \$3 million in loan guarantee authority would support rural development projects, including brick-and-mortar investments, equipment and machinery, marketing and working capital. The proposal was formally introduced on Thursday, May 23 and referred to Marklein's Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions.

Nutrient Management

Last week, WCMA thanked members of the Wisconsin State Senate for their unanimous approval of [Senate Bill 91](#), legislation which would create a nutrient pollution trading clearinghouse. Introduced by Senator Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay) with strong bipartisan support, SB 91 establishes a system through which farmers could receive financial incentives from municipal water treatment plants or dairy processing facilities to reduce the amount of pollutants entering waterways. Trading "credits" for pollution reduction would encourage farm-level solutions and provide options for permit compliance.

WDATCP Budget

Next week, the Joint Finance Committee may take action on the budget section pertaining to the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. [WCMA worked with the Office of Governor Tony Evers](#) to secure a \$200,000 proposed increase in funding for WDATCP's dairy processor grant program and a \$200,000 proposed increase in funding for WDATCP's export

program. WCMA staff is working to communicate these priorities to lawmakers, as well.

To learn more about WCMA's advocacy work or to get involved in WCMA's Policy Committee, please contact [Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney](#).



As WCMA staff advocates for state and federal policies designed to support industry growth, we work to bring lawmakers and members together for direct communication.

On Monday, May 20, WCMA Director Brian Baker of Baker Cheese and Wisconsin State Senator Dan Feyen (R-Fond du Lac) met to discuss dairy industry concerns and needed support for technical education.

Please [contact WCMA staff](#) if you'd like to schedule a meeting with your elected officials. We're here to help!

Mexico Drops Retaliatory Tariffs on U.S. Cheese; Trade Woes Remain

The Mexican government has removed tariffs that had been levied on U.S. cheeses entering Mexico. The end of tariffs of up to 25 percent on U.S. cheeses has been expected since last Friday, May 17, when the United States agreed to cease its tariffs on steel and aluminum products entering the U.S. from Canada and Mexico.



This development is welcome news for WCMA members who accepted all or part of these tariff costs since last June to maintain business with partners in Mexico. The skirmish over imported metals, and the retaliatory tariffs imposed by Mexico and Canada, had essentially stalled any chance for Congressional approval of the broader United States- Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade agreement. Earlier in May, WCMA joined a coalition of dairy and food companies and organization calling for the speedy ratification of the USMCA.

Dairy's tariff woes are not over. U.S. tariff battles with China continue, and sales of American dry dairy ingredients to China have dropped severely. U.S. Dairy Export Council reported May 17 that U.S. dairy exports to China fell 40 percent in the first quarter of 2019 and the initiation of new tariffs on American lactose and infant formula on June 1 could further erode U.S. sales into this important market. On Thursday, May 23, the Trump administration announced it would provide \$16 billion in aid to farmers impacted by the prolonged trade conflict with China.

For more on recent trade developments and their impact, read the news articles linked below.

- *Washington Examiner*: [Canada and Mexico lift tariffs against U.S.](#)
- *New York Times*: [Trump gives farmers \\$16 billion in aid amid prolonged China trade war](#)
- *Agri-Pulse*: [\\$16 billion in trade aid announced](#)
- *PBS*: [Trump says his trade policy is working. To some Wisconsin farmers, it's a 'kick in the teeth.'](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: ['Struggling to tread water': Dairy farmers are caught in an economic system with no winning formula](#)

WCMA will continue to update members as news warrants. Please contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) or [Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney](#) with any questions. Thank you.



Technical Review of CDR Project Now Underway

On Tuesday, May 21, representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Dairy Research (CDR), and dairy processing industry met to discuss the status of the CDR/Babcock Hall Dairy Plant renovation project. As you may recall, vendor

quotes recently came in at approximately \$10 million over the allocated funding level.

The group agreed that DOA and UW-Madison technical staff, working in cooperation with industry experts, will conduct a review, and that no decisions about possible changes to project funding, scope or phasing will be made until that process is completed.

WCMA will continue to advocate for industry interests throughout this process and keep members informed of significant developments via this e-newsletter.

Raw Milk Cheese Production Food Safety Guide Available Now

In partnership with the Center for Dairy Research and thanks to a grant from USDA-NIFA, WCMA is pleased to offer [Food Safety Systems Guide to Raw Milk Cheese Production](#), a document outlining suggested risk mitigation steps for the manufacture of raw milk cheese. This guide was prepared by industry consultants Jim Mueller and Larry Bell.



WCMA also features Food Safety Modernization Act-compliant templates for dairy processors' Standard Operating Procedures and Records on its website, WisCheeseMakers.org.

IN THE NEWS...

- *The Country Today*: [Research, innovation key to Wisconsin's dairy future](#) (Column offered by WDATCP Secretary Brad Pfaff)
- *Pierce County Herald*: ['Dairy Innovation Hub' proposed for River Falls, Madison, Platteville](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: ['Struggling to tread water': Dairy farmers are caught in an economic system with no winning formula](#)
- *Cap Times*: [Wisconsin farms see upturn in women and millennial producers... and goats](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Specialty cheese production rises but becomes less of overall cheese production in Wisconsin](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Osthoff Resort chef puts the state's best cheese forward in a nine-course menu](#) (Featuring Door Artisan Cheese Company, Henning Cheese, LaClare Farms Specialties, Masters Gallery Foods, Sargento Foods, Sartori Company, and Wisconsin Aging & Grading Cheese)
- *Geauga Maple Leaf*: [Great Lakes Cheese breaks ground for massive new addition](#) (Featuring Great Lakes Cheese Company)
- *WMTV-TV*: [The legend of Limburger: known as the world's stinkiest cheese](#) (Featuring Chalet Cheese Cooperative)

WCMA Adds Communications Staffer As Member Services Grow

WCMA welcomes [Claudia Looze](#) as its part-time Communications Assistant, a position which will support the Association's expanding array of member benefits.

Looze will work in partnership with Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney, focusing primarily on WCMA's social media endeavors, video projects, and direct communications with members.

Looze is an Emmy-award winning video producer, director, and editor with more than 25 years of experience, including ten years with WisconsinEye Public Affairs Network. She has been working seasonally with WCMA for the past three months, and officially joins the growing WCMA team on July 1.



#SayCheese with WCMA in June

WCMA invites members to participate in our #SayCheese social media campaign in celebration of June as National Dairy Month. Our Association will be celebrating the people behind our favorite food, and highlighting the diverse career opportunities in dairy processing.

You can participate by applying our #SayCheese frame (shown here) to your profile picture. First, [click here](#) to find the frame on Facebook, and then click the "Try It" button to add it to your photo.

Each day in June, WCMA will also be sharing images and stories of member employees, and direct social media visitors to members' websites that list current job openings. Take a look at a sample graphic below.



Want to participate? It's simple! Just send [WCMA Communications Assistant Claudia Looze](#) the following:

- The name of your employee
- An image of your employee
- Either a quote (max 140 characters) or these details about your employee:
 - Job Title
 - Years of Service
 - Favorite Cheese
 - Favorite Part of Job

We'll take care of the rest, and tag your company in cross-platform posts! Questions? Contact [WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney](#).



WCMA Golf Outing Sold Out; Few Trap Shoot Spaces Remain Available

Thanks go to the 600+ WCMA members who have signed up to participate in the WCMA Golf Outing and Trap Shoot on July 17 in Central Wisconsin. In less than 24 hours, all space in the golf outing was sold out, and just five trap shoot spaces now remain available. To reserve them, [click here](#). To get onto WCMA's golf outing wait list, email Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger.

We also encourage WCMA supplier members to consider supporting these popular events. Opportunities are [listed here](#) and sponsorships will be accepted through Monday, June 3. Questions? Contact [Events Manager Caitlin Peirick](#).

Office Closed for Memorial Day

WCMA offices will be closed on Monday, May 27 in observation of Memorial Day. On this occasion, we remember and honor those who have died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

WCMA will reopen on Tuesday, May 28 at 8 a.m. Thank you for your understanding.



In Brief...

WCMA members are invited to [register now](#) for a free USDA webinar on May 30 focused on successful USDA grant application strategies.

The Center for Dairy Research has opened registration for its [Cheese Grading Short Course](#), which will be June 4-6 in Madison, Wisconsin. Sign up today!

The deadline to enter the Wisconsin State Fair Dairy Products Contest is Tuesday, June 7. For complete rules, regulations, and requirements, [click here](#). The Contest also seeks volunteer support; for more details, [click here](#).

The UW-Madison Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS), in partnership with WIPPS Public Issues Series, will host a free public forum focusing on U.S.-China trade relations and its impact on agriculture in Wisconsin on June 18, 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at the UW Center for Civic Engagement, 625 Stewart Ave. in Wausau. [More info](#).

WCMA members are invited to register now to attend the Wisconsin Association for Food Protection Spring Food Safety Workshop, set for June 19 at the Holiday Inn Madison West. For an agenda, meeting details, and registration information, [click here](#).

STAY CONNECTED:

