



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## GRANTS

### Deadlines Quickly Approaching for Dairy Processing Grant Programs

Secure valuable resources for your dairy business by applying now for grant programs with approaching deadlines.

#### WDATCP Dairy Processor Grants

Wisconsin-based dairy processors are invited to apply by this coming **Friday, October 13** for **Dairy Processor Grants** of up to \$75,000, available via the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP).

Eligible applicants must operate a licensed dairy processing plant in Wisconsin engaged in pasteurizing, processing, or manufacturing milk or dairy products. Awards can be used to address a wide range of needs, such as food safety, staff training, plant expansion or modernization, and professional consulting services. Grant projects may last up to two years in duration.



Processors are required to provide a match of 20 percent of the grant amount, and applications will go through a competitive review process. Successful candidates will be announced in early 2024.

#### Dairy Business Innovation Alliance Grants

Dairy processors and farmers are invited to apply by **Wednesday, October 18** for direct-to-business **grants of up to \$100,000** through the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), a partnership between the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Center for Dairy Research.



DBIA is currently offering two grant opportunities: the **Dairy Business Builder Grant Program** and the **Dairy Industry Impact Grant Program**, open to those operating in an 11-state region, including Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The DBIA [Business Builder Grant Program](#) encourages small- to medium-sized dairy farmers, entrepreneurs, and processors to pursue innovative projects such as dairy farm diversification, on-farm processing, value-added product creation, and dairy exporting. An informational webinar on this opportunity is [available now online](#).

**APPLY NOW**

The DBIA [Industry Impact Grant Program](#) welcomes applications in targeted topic areas that have the potential to positively impact the greater dairy industry. In this grant cycle, applications are being accepted for projects related to dairy export endeavors. An informational webinar on this opportunity is [available now online](#).

**APPLY NOW**

Dairy farmers and processors may apply for both DBIA grant opportunities. Neither grant offering requires matching funds. Complete eligibility details are [available online](#), along with sample applications and scoring criteria. All applications are individually scored and reviewed by a committee. Applications must be received by 5 p.m. (CT) on October 18 to be considered. Successful applicants will be notified of their awards in early December.

Questions about either the WDATCP dairy processor grant program or the DBIA grant offerings? Contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

## ADVOCACY

### USDA Affirms \$23M Commitment to Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives

WCMA last week applauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) commitment of \$23 million in awards to support dairy businesses and producers under the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBI) grant program. The initiatives support small and mid-sized dairy businesses in the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products.



Speaking at World Dairy Expo last week, USDA Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt noted, "Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives have made significant impacts to the dairy industry through the funding of 441 projects. Additional funding will allow the initiatives to continue to provide the dairy industry and its businesses with tools and resources to ensure a steady supply of dairy products is available to consumers across the country."

Funds are being awarded noncompetitively to the four current DBI Initiatives, including the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance run by Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Center for Dairy Research and California State University Fresno, the University of Tennessee, and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets .

WCMA actively lobbies Congress and USDA for approval and allocation of DBI funding, and we welcome your engagement. To join WCMA's Policy Committee, contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

# House Speaker Removal Means Farm Bill Delay; Some Leaders Predict 1-2 Year Extension

With Congressional leaders already having missed the September 30 deadline for the 2023 Farm Bill approval, last week's House ouster of Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA 20) is likely to [set back negotiations](#) further. Agricultural committee chairs have noted their new deadline for action is December 31, but Senate Agriculture Committee member Chuck Grassley (R-IA) noted last week his belief that a one- or two-year extension may be needed.

WCMA continues to advocate for members' [Farm Bill priorities](#), and will keep members apprised of opportunities to engage with Congress.

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## USDA FMMO Hearing to Pause Later This Week & Resume November 27

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) national hearing on Federal Milk Marketing Orders continues this week and will run through October 11, before recessing until November 27. The hearing is running longer than initially expected, and USDA officials believe one final week of testimony and cross examination is required. The event space in Carmel, Indiana was not available for continuous rental, accounting for the extended schedule break. Live testimony is available to view online via this [Zoom link](#). Look for hearing updates in each week's WCMA member newsletter.

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## WCMA NOTES



Offered by:

**John Umhoefer**  
WCMA Executive Director



[www.WisCheeseMakers.org](http://www.WisCheeseMakers.org)

## Here's Where to Set Make Allowances

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) national hearing on Federal Milk Marketing Orders prepares to pause, [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) details the debate to this point in the October edition of [WCMA Notes](#).

Umhoefer writes: "The goal of make allowances should be to support a diverse spectrum of dairy manufacturers, large, medium and small, so that our industry can produce more than high-volume, low-cost commodity products. Specialty cheeses and butters, gourmet artisanal offerings, are the point of the marketing spear for dairy. These products elevate dairy to the timeless craft it has always been and excite consumers to buy foods made from real milk. Dairy farmers and processors will thrive if USDA decides that make

## EDUCATION

### WCMA Launching Employee Safety Trainings



As the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) continues its focus on food processors via a Local Emphasis Program (LEP), WCMA is proud to offer new tools and training to support dairy processors' efforts to keep their valued team members safe on the job.

Beginning today, WCMA is offering a [library of regulatory references and safety plan templates](#) on WisCheeseMakers.org. These resources are free and available to all in the dairy processing industry.

Beginning in December 2023, WCMA will also offer two new employee safety training programs for members, designed with input from WCMA's Health & Safety Group.

The **WCMA Train the Safety Trainer Course** will equip the dairy processing industry's safety trainers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively communicate safety expectations and protocols for maximum compliance.

This course is taught in an interactive style and covers best practices for design and delivery methods used by successful workforce safety trainers. While those attending should have a strong grasp on industry safety practices already, instructors will emphasize training around OSHA's LEP areas of concerns, including machine guarding, lockout/tagout, prevention of slips, trips, and falls, and chemical controls.

Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

- Define training and facilitation in the workplace;
- Conduct a training needs assessment;
- Evaluate their training programs for clarity and efficacy;
- Understand various presentation tools and methods;
- Identify the characteristics of an exceptional trainer;
- Discuss adult learning principles;
- Handle environmental challenges and disruptive participants; and
- Develop vocal, verbal and visual skills to conduct an effective training class.

This course will be offered [in-person at WCMA's training center in Madison, Wisconsin on December 12, 2023](#) and [virtually on January 30, 2024](#). In-person offerings cost \$249 per person, while virtual offerings run \$219.

**Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processing Workers** will teach participants about their rights, employer responsibilities, and - most importantly - how to identify, abate, and avoid job-related hazards they may encounter. The industry-specific curriculum concentrates on safety strategies related to the key focus areas of OSHA's food processor LEP.

This course will be held [six times in 2024](#), with virtual offerings on February 20, May 14, and September 24 and in-person offerings at WCMA's training center in Madison, Wisconsin on April 9, June 4, and October 15. Virtual offerings cost just \$149 per person, while in-person offerings run \$179.

Successful participants in both the WCMA Train the Safety Trainer Course and WCMA Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processing Workers will come away not only with new knowledge, but also with a packet of training materials and a certificate of completion from

Chippewa Valley Technical College and WCMA, that they and their employer can retain as a record of instruction.

Questions? Contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

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## Additional Industry Training Opportunities

WCMA is pleased to share opportunities for industry training and enrichment. Here's a look at upcoming courses hosted by WCMA members and partners:

- October 17-19: [Cheese Grading & Evaluation](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- November 13-14: [HACCP for Food Processors](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- November 15-16: [SQFI Training](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- November 17: [Internal Auditor SQF Short Course](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- December 6: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- On-Demand:
  - [Introduction to Food Safety Principles \(English and Spanish\)](#) - Cornell University
  - [Artisan Dairy Food Safety Coaching](#) - Cornell University
  - [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Good Manufacturing Practices in Food Safety](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors](#) - North Carolina State University
  - [Food Safety Basics For Artisan Cheesemakers](#) - North Carolina State University

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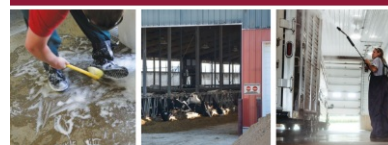
## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### FARM Program Announces Enhanced Biosecurity Initiative with New Training & Tools

The National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Program last week announced the launch of [FARM Biosecurity – Enhanced](#).

The project is a new aspect of the FARM Biosecurity Program that includes training and an online database of tools for writing, implementing, and storing a site plan.

To access protocol templates and training aids, visit [NationalDairyFarm.com](#).



# DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE



## Register Now to Join Dairy Food Safety Alliance Hybrid Meeting October 25

**Register now** to join food safety and quality professionals at the next meeting of the Dairy Food Safety Alliance, set for Wednesday, October 25 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT).

All dairy manufacturers, processors, and industry suppliers are welcome to join this hybrid meeting in-person in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, or online via Zoom.



Here's a look at the meeting agenda:

- Agenda Overview & Introductions
- Inspector Insights Presentation & Panel Discussion: Dairy plant inspectors from Midwestern states have been invited to share key takeaways for plant employees, the most common violations they see, and frequent misunderstandings food safety managers can address.
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Updates
- Root Cause Analysis & Quality Tools, presented by Adam Brock, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- Dairy Recall Tracker & Sanitation Preventive Controls, presented by Alex O'Brien, Center for Dairy Research
- Spanish Language Training Tools, offered by Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy

In-person attendees will enjoy a networking lunch at 11:45 a.m. Please register for in-person attendance by October 17.

The **Dairy Food Safety Alliance**, a partnership between WCMA, the Center for Dairy Research, and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, delivers the latest in food safety news to the dairy processing industry. Participation in Alliance meetings is open to all dairy manufacturers, processors, and related suppliers.

**REGISTER NOW**

Have questions about the Dairy Food Safety Alliance? Please contact [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

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## WDATCP Invites WCMA Members to Exhibit in Gulfood Wisconsin Pavilion

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) invites WCMA members with Wisconsin operations to consider exhibiting in the Wisconsin Pavilion at Gulfood February 19-23, 2024. Some costs are covered by the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports Participating companies will be required to sign up for Food Show Plus! services with Food Export-Midwest. To learn more, contact [WDATCP staff](#).



**WCMA Export Workgroup Meeting**  
**October 26**  
**10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT)**  
**Madison, Wisconsin**  
Join online or in-person!

 WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

**REGISTER NOW:**  
[WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org)

## Join in WCMA Export Workgroup Meeting Focused on Maximizing Trade Show ROI

Effective trade show engagement is crucial for dairy processors' growing their international sales. Learn how to maximize your trade show return on investment at the [next hybrid meeting of WCMA's Export Workgroup](#) on Thursday, October 26 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT). All dairy processors and industry suppliers are invited to join in-person at WCMA's offices in Madison or online via Zoom.

Attendees will gain insights on current dairy export projections and learn more about all the elements involved in a successful trade show visit, including how to select a show, the financial investment involved in attending, what to expect when you arrive, pre- and post-show marketing, effective follow-up, and more.

Here's a look at the meeting agenda:

- Agenda Overview & Introductions
- Trends and Forecasts in Dairy Exporting, presented by Stephen Cain of U.S. Dairy Export Council
- Trade Show Homework: How to Determine Target Markets and the Best Shows to Attend, presented by Dan Durand of Hidalgo Global
- Trade Show Resources, presented by Paul Sorenson of Food Export Midwest and Katie Ujdak of Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- Panel Discussion of Trade Show Homework and Resources, featuring Hidalgo Global, Food Export Midwest and WEDC
- Strategies for an Effective Trade Show, presented by Sartori Cheese
- Panel Discussion of Effective Trade Show Strategies, featuring Sartori Cheese,

Presenters will reserve time to field attendees' questions during the meeting.

**REGISTER NOW**

Have questions about WCMA's Export Workgroup? Please contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Marshfield News-Herald*: [No milk cartons? No problem for Marshfield dairy supplying Wisconsin schools with milk](#) (Featuring WCMA member Nasonville Dairy)
- *Appleton Post-Crescent*: [Cheese, bacon, Skee-Ball, others make top 8 in Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin contest](#) (Featuring WCMA member Cedar Valley Cheese)

### National/International

- *USDairy.com*: [Checkoff's pizza partnerships engage in cheese-growth efforts](#)
- *MagicValley.com*: [At Agropur, Jerome's Martinez leads by example: 'I take pride in what I do'](#) (Featuring WCMA member Agropur)
- *Dodge City Daily Globe*: [Hilmar marks one year of progress](#) (Featuring WCMA member Hilmar Cheese)



## Check Out Photos from World Dairy Expo

Thanks to the many members and friends who joined WCMA staff at World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin last week. We loved the opportunity to connect with staff from Alpinage Cheese, Associated Milk Producers Inc., Foremost Farms, Grande Cheese, Landmark Creamery, Organic Valley, Pine River Pre-Pack, and many of our



Dairy Business Innovation Alliance grant recipients, too! Check out images now on WCMA's [social media channels](#).



## WORKFORCE

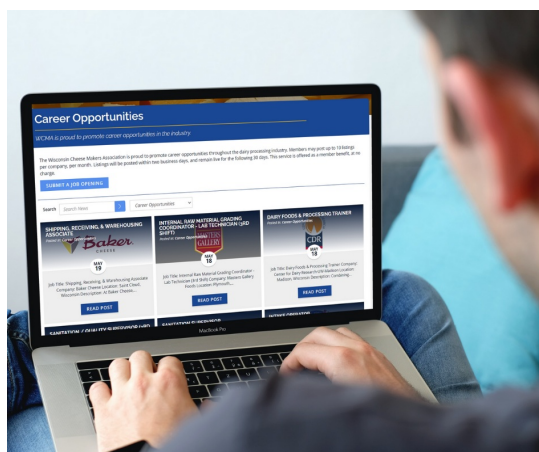


## Save the Date: WCMA Workforce & Education Committee to Meet Virtually November 16

Save the date to take part in WCMA's next Workforce & Education Committee meeting, set for Thursday, November 16 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). This fully virtual meeting will feature a presentation on strategies for effective career opening advertisement, and also include practical conversations about WCMA's Job Fair and Wage & Workforce Survey.

Watch for more details in next week's member newsletter! Have questions or ideas? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

## Post Job Openings on Free WCMA Jobs Board



Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org) today to share your career openings on WCMA's online jobs board, available to members only - for free!

Members can post up to 10 job openings per month. Each posting is published within two business days and remains live on our website for 30 days after submission.

**POST OPENINGS**

This week, the [Jobs Board](#) features opportunities from members Associated Milk

Producers, Inc., CFR, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Center for Dairy Research, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Foremost Farms USA, Masters Gallery Foods, and Specialty Cheese Company.

Have questions about the Jobs Board? Please contact [WCMA Business Operations Manager Ryan Dunn](#).

## SIGNATURE EVENTS

# CHEESE EXPO

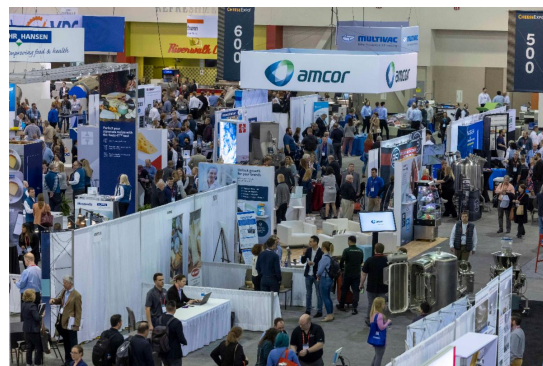
Global Technology for Dairy Processors

April 16-18, 2024 | Baird Center  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Special Events: April 16, 2024

Exhibits & Seminars: April 17-18, 2024

## Act Quickly to Reserve Booth Space and Marketing Opportunities at CheeseExpo



**RESERVE YOUR  
BOOTH SPACE**

**Booth space** is now available at CheeseExpo, North America's premier event for cheese, butter, and whey processors.

Set for April 16-18 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **CheeseExpo** will welcome more than 4,000 attendees, including representatives from hundreds of global dairy manufacturing and processing companies and cooperatives.

Visit the [Exhibitor Information page at CheeseExpo.org](#) to learn priority sign-up times for all WCMA supplier members, and plan your exhibit space for the largest expo in the dairy industry.

Now is also the time to claim [CheeseExpo 2024 sponsorships](#). Learn about all available sponsorships in this [online brochure](#), or click on the links below to find the CheeseExpo sponsorship level and benefits right for your organization.

Platinum Level Marketing Opportunities:

- [Welcome Reception\\*](#)
- [Champions Reception\\*](#)

Gold Level Marketing Opportunities:

- [Wednesday Continental Breakfast\\*](#)

**RESERVE YOUR  
SPONSORSHIP**

#### Silver Level Marketing Opportunities:

- [Wednesday Coffee & Water on Exhibit Floor\\*](#)
- [Young Professionals Event\\*](#)
- [World Championship Cheese Contest Sponsor\\*](#)

#### Partner Marketing Opportunities:

- [Wednesday & Thursday Lunches](#)
- [Registration](#)
- [Floorplan](#)

#### Contributor Marketing Opportunities:

- [CheeseExpo Contributor](#)
- [World Championship Cheese Contest Contributor](#)

*\*Note that these sponsorships are subject to a previous sponsor's first right of refusal.*



## Advertise in CheeseExpo's Official Program



The 2024 CheeseExpo program is a who's who of the dairy processing industry - and it's distributed to attendees. Act quickly to [claim your space](#) in this highly-read, full-color publication.

Consider the following opportunities:

- [Inside back cover](#)
- [Full page advertisement](#)
- [Half page advertisement](#)
- [Quarter page advertisement](#)

Please contact [WCMA Events Director Caitlin Peirick](#) with questions.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Voting by November 3 for WCMA Distinguished Service Award Nominees

[Cast your vote today](#) to help select the individuals that will be honored with the WCMA Distinguished Service Award in April 2024. This award recognizes supplier partner members who have played a significant role in building the success of the U.S. dairy industry.

In 2023, this honor was presented to Debra Cherney, Cherney Microbiological Services and Bob Fassbender, T.C. Jacoby & Co. This fall, nine WCMA members are on the ballot, and your vote will help advance

these candidates to finalists.

**Vote “yes”** to advance as many candidates as you like. Up to 10 individuals can vote from each WCMA member company.



**Debra Cherney**



**Bob Fassbender**

*2023 Honorees, pictured with Recognition Committee member Ted Jacoby*

All votes must be received by Friday, November 3. The finalists selected by industry will be considered by the WCMA Board of Directors at its December meeting, where the 2024 Distinguished Service Award honorees will be named.

**VOTE NOW**

Questions? Please contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).

# WELCOME



*NEW WCMA MEMBERS!*

## Dairy Processor



New WCMA dairy manufacturing member [Nordic Creamery](#) offers handcrafted cheeses and butters made from goat and cow milk. Located in Westby, Wisconsin, Nordic Creamery is run by award-winning artisan Al Bekkum and his family.

## Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Procudan A/S](#) offers ingredients and packaging for dairy manufacturers and processors.



New WCMA supplier member [Tessa Dairy Machinery Inc.](#) designs, manufactures, and installs complete milk processing lines.

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Assn. | 5117 West Terrace Drive, Suite 402, Madison, WI 53718

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