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news@wischeesemakers.org



NEWS

Dairy Coalition Calls on USDA to Reverse DBI Funding Change



A broad coalition, led by WCMA, representing dairy farmers, processors, cooperatives and industry organizations this week is urging U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins to withdraw a new 25% cost-share requirement for Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives and extend the December 1 application deadline, as [detailed in a letter](#) distributed October 12.

For the first time since the program was established, USDA's [FY2026 funding opportunity](#) requires the four existing DBI Initiatives to provide a 25% non-federal match. The coalition, including International Dairy Foods Association, National Milk Producers Federation, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, WCMA, and 24 other organizations, notes the requirement is incompatible with the structure and resources of the existing initiatives and will effectively end the program - and along with it, access to the grants, technical assistance and other services DBI centers deliver to dairy businesses.



The coalition is asking USDA to reissue the funding opportunity without a matching requirement and extend the application deadline to give the four initiatives adequate time to respond to the changes - or to spur Congressional action, post-election. U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), the original champion of the DBI program, also [called on USDA yesterday](#) to eliminate the requirement for matching funds in a letter to agency leaders yesterday, and U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (D-WI 02) is circulating a [bipartisan letter](#) to USDA and OMB for all members of Congress to sign to echo that call.

Since 2018, DBI centers have awarded more than \$106 million in subawards to 911 dairy businesses, and have provided technical support needed to develop new products and markets and to improve

Members Urged to Contact Congress Now



WCMA encourages members to make their voices heard in support of DBI Initiatives, and our e-advocacy system makes outreach easy. [Simply add your name and address](#), and the system will identify your Congressional representatives and prepare a message asking them to urge USDA to:

- Withdraw the new 25% cost-share requirement for DBI Initiatives
- Reissue the FY2026 DBI funding opportunity

CONTACT YOUR LAWMAKERS

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

Trump Order Expands Use of Dyed Diesel; Savings Limited



President Donald Trump announced and signed an [executive order](#) October 5 in Nebraska temporarily allowing red-dyed, tax-exempt diesel to be used on highways through the end of 2026. The order defers the 24.4-cent-per-gallon federal diesel tax and provides penalty relief for on-road use of dyed diesel during the period.

The Administration says the move is intended to provide relief to farmers, truckers and other diesel users amid elevated fuel prices and tight global supplies.

Some states have taken steps to implement or complement the federal action, including Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma and Texas, with measures ranging from expanded agricultural use to temporarily suspending enforcement.

However, the benefit is expected to be limited because state diesel taxes and rules vary; in the case of Wisconsin, for instance, implementation of this change would require state legislative action - at a time when the legislature is not in session. In addition, fuel industry leaders note a limited dyed-diesel supply and distribution infrastructure. [READ MORE...](#)

FDA Finalizes Rule Allowing Salt Substitutes



The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) last week [finalized a rule](#) allowing manufacturers to use safe and suitable salt substitutes in standardized foods where salt is required or permitted. The rule amends 80 standards of identity, including numerous cheese varieties, to provide flexibility for sodium reduction and product innovation. Rather than specifying particular salt substitutes, FDA is allowing manufacturers to use ingredients or combinations of ingredients that meet the agency's definition of a salt substitute.

The rule is set to take effect December 14, 2026. Objections or requests for a hearing on amendments to standards of identity for dairy products in parts 131 and 133 (21 CFR parts 131 and 133) under this final rule are due by November 12, 2026. [READ MORE...](#)

APHIS Confirmed Avian Influenza in Washington Dairy Cattle Herds



On October 8, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratories confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was detected in two Washington state dairy cattle herds. These are the first confirmed cases of HPAI in Washington, and APHIS is working closely with the Washington Department of Agriculture to prevent further disease spread. [READ MORE...](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics Calls for Raw Milk Ban



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has updated its [policy statement](#) on raw milk and other foods made from it, renewing its call to ban raw milk last week. AAP stresses that raw and pasteurized milk provide the same protein, fat, and vitamins, and that raw milk can carry pathogens — the ingestion of which can lead to serious illness or even death, especially in children, pregnant people, and those with weakened immune systems.

The updated statement also includes mention of HPAI, warning that while illness from drinking infected milk has only been shown in animals, the AAP is concerned about the possibility of cows passing the virus to people through raw milk. [READ MORE...](#)

Headlines

Wisconsin

- Wisconsin State Journal: [Cheese-tasting course features rare Alpine cheeses from Switzerland](#)
- WPR: [Wisconsin dairy farm fights license suspension over distribution of raw milk](#)

National & Global

- WSJ: [Arla Foods to invest millions to tap protein-rich dairy demand, CEO says](#)
- DairyHerd: [Protein demand is sustaining dairy, but labor and costs are pinching, Land O'Lakes' Ford says](#)
- UPI: [New York Fed study finds Trump's tariffs drove consumer prices up](#)
- CNN: [A girl nearly died after drinking raw milk. The state did little to punish the unlicensed farmer who sold it.](#)

FEATURED: WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

Learn more about WCMA's programs & services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's workforce and education resources and programming.



Looking for new, skilled talent? [Click the "Play" button](#) to hear from WCMA members Foremost Farms and Nelson-Jameson on why they use WCMA's Jobs Board.

Advertise Dairy Industry Career Opportunities with WCMA

Looking to fill a job opening? WCMA members, including manufacturers, processors, marketers, and suppliers, are invited to submit job openings for listing at any time on [WCMA's Jobs Board](#).

WCMA's Jobs Board is publicly accessible and attracts applicants engaged in the dairy industry — these applicants have unique skill sets and may not be found on other traditional recruiting websites. Members may submit up to 10 openings per company, per month at no cost. Listings are posted within two business days and remain live for the following 30 days.

Join WCMA's Last Fall Front-Line Leadership Training



The last session of [WCMA's three-part Front-Line Leadership training series](#) is coming up next month. "[Part C: Cultivating a Team](#)", is designed for supervisors who want to cultivate a team mentality, communicate better, resolve conflicts, and manage their time and stress. The [virtual Part C training](#) will take place on November 12, while the [in-person training](#) will take place on November 19 at WCMA's offices in Madison, Wisconsin.

Missed Parts A and B? Not to worry — all three parts are offered à la carte and can be taken in any order. Sign-ups for the Spring Front-Line Leadership training series will open soon. Additionally, successful completion of all three parts of WCMA Front-Line Leadership results in a free, full registration to CheeseCon 2027 — a savings of approximately \$600. [Sign up now!](#)



Thanks go to [Nelson-Jameson, Inc.](#) for their generous sponsorship of the in-person training on November 19. Sponsorship of the [virtual meeting](#) on November 12 is still available. Become a sponsor to show your support for the dairy processing industry's next generation of leaders.

Enhance Your Skills with WCMA's Train the Safety Trainer Program



Build your skills as a trainer and enhance your organization's safety culture by engaging in [WCMA's Train the Safety Trainer program](#), set for December 1 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (CT) online. Designed with input from WCMA's Health & Safety Group (HSG), this course is designed to equip the dairy processing industry's safety trainers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively communicate safety expectations and protocols for maximum compliance.

Sponsorships of this meeting are [available now](#). Don't miss this opportunity to reach new audiences and show your support for the dairy processing industry's next generation of leaders.

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Register This Week for WCMA Sustainability Workshop



This Friday, October 16, is the deadline to sign up for WCMA's in-person sustainability workshop, ["Good Data, Better Decisions: Building a Stronger Sustainability Data Strategy,"](#) held in Madison, Wisconsin, October 21-22. Attendees will get an in-depth look at the sustainability reporting landscape, learn how to build sustainability data SOPs, and how to prepare for external scrutiny.

This program, led by industry experts Kaitlyn Harbort, Sushil Rajagopalan (Harbor Environmental, a Terracon company), and dairy processors with extensive experience in this area, will help attendees build confidence in their sustainability data so it can withstand customer and third-party scrutiny while finding new ways to create value for their business. Topics include which data they should collect and why, the importance of data integrity, why sustainability data matters, and how to turn data requests into strategic conversations. After the first day of the workshop wraps up on Wednesday, October 21, attendees are invited to a WCMA-hosted dinner. [Register today!](#)

If registration costs are a barrier to attending the program, please reach out to [WCMA Director of Sustainability & Grants Danica Nilsestuen](#) to discuss financial assistance.

Get the Latest Updates at Next WCMA Dairy Export Group Meeting



Build your network, get updates on the latest dairy export trends, and learn strategies to start or grow your exporting business at the next [virtual meeting of WCMA's Dairy Export Group](#) on December 2, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (CT). The meeting will begin with an update on dairy and cheese exporting, followed by the latest developments in federal trade policy.

The rest of the meeting will be spent on practical guidance on the paperwork and certifications needed to successfully export dairy products to international markets. Sponsorships of this meeting are [available now](#). Don't miss this opportunity to show your support for the dairy processing industry's efforts to stay updated on export trends and grow export knowledge and networks.

Upcoming WCMA Events

October 14	October 20	October 21-22	October 29	November 12
<u>Front-Line Leadership Part B</u> (In-Person)	<u>Health & Safety Group Meeting</u> (Hybrid)	<u>"Good Data, Better Decisions" Sustainability Workshop</u> (In-Person)	<u>Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting</u> (Hybrid)	<u>Front-Line Leadership Part C</u> (Virtual)



For more educational opportunities
from WCMA and our partners, visit:

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