



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## COVID-19 UPDATES



### Business Groups Ask White House to Delay Large Employer Vaccine/Testing Mandate

Citing the [nationwide labor shortage](#), record-high resignations across the U.S. this summer, and global supply chain challenges, the National Retail Federation, the American Trucking Associations, and the Retail Industry Leaders Association are [asking White House officials](#) to give businesses 90 days to comply with the mandate, delaying implementation until late January at the earliest.

The rule was first announced in early September, and was sent to the White House for final approval [two weeks ago](#). Though full details of the rule have yet to be released, it is expected to direct larger U.S. employers with 100+ workers to require their employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 or submit to weekly testing. Goldman Sachs [estimates](#) the new requirements will apply to about 25 million unvaccinated workers in the United States, bringing the total percent of Americans vaccinated to 82 percent by mid-2022.

WCMA will continue to keep members informed of relevant developments and resources

via electronic newsletters and webinars. Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions, or to request additional support.

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## USDA Inspector General Asked to Investigate Food Box Program

Congressman James Clyburn (D-South Carolina), chair of the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, has [requested a formal investigation](#) into the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farmers to Families Food Box Program, launched in May 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The request comes alongside the release of a Congressional [staff report](#) alleging mismanagement, fraud, and abuse in the program.

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## CDC Expands Eligibility for Moderna Boosters

Following approval from the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [expanded the eligibility requirements](#) for booster doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. The decision opens the door for millions more Americans to receive booster shots. Eligible groups now include:

- Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients over the age of 18 who received their last dose at least two months ago
- Pfizer and Moderna vaccine recipients who received their last dose at least six months ago and are:
  - 65 years or older
  - 18 years or older and live in a long-term care setting
  - 18 years or older and have underlying medical conditions
  - 18 years or older and work or live in high-risk settings (this includes dairy processing employees and other food and agricultural workers)

FDA and CDC officials have also approved ["mixing and matching"](#) vaccine brands for booster shots.

[FIND A VACCINE APPOINTMENT](#)

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# Pandemic Market Volatility Assistance Program

Producer Information



[www.ams.usda.gov/pmvap](http://www.ams.usda.gov/pmvap)  
[PMVAP@usda.gov](mailto:PMVAP@usda.gov)

## USDA Seeks Meetings with Processors Joining Pandemic Assistance Program; Plans Producer Education Tools

Dairy manufacturers who purchase milk from dairy farms are encouraged to participate in the [Pandemic Market Volatility Assistance Program \(PMVAP\)](#), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program designed to offer producers a one-time assistance payment for milk marketed on federal orders in July through December 2020.

According to USDA staff, about 200 milk buyers nationwide indicated initial interest in the program in September, and over 140 have conducted one-on-one meetings with USDA. All interested companies and cooperatives are urged to [email program staff](#) to set up a meeting.

WCMA has explored assisting members with meeting the producer education requirement within this new program. In a meeting with WCMA, USDA staff confirmed that the agency will provide video and print materials on the [PMVAP website](#) explaining federal milk marketing orders, classified milk prices, market pooling, and other milk marketing topics. Other forms of education (such as webinars or mailings) will also be accepted, but sharing USDA's materials will be sufficient to meet the education requirement.

For more details on the PMVAP, please view USDA's [webinar](#) and [brochure](#). WCMA members with questions can contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).

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## Coronavirus Headline News

### Wisconsin

- *WBAY-TV*: [COVID-19 in Wisconsin: Cases down, deaths up](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [COVID-19 hospitalizations in Wisconsin drop below 1,000 for the first time since Sept. 6](#)
- *WKOW-TV*: [COVID-19 worsening other healthcare needs across Wisconsin](#)

### National/International

- *MSN*: [Biden sets new COVID rules as U.S. air travel reopens](#)

- [ABC News: Coronavirus gave rural U.S.A. a chance to lure young professionals to save their shrinking towns](#)
- [Reuters: U.S. workers face layoffs as U.S. COVID-19 vaccine mandates kick in](#)
- [USA TODAY: Natural immunity is good. Getting vaccinated after being sick with COVID-19 is better.](#)
- [Reuters: Moderna says its COVID-19 vaccine protective, safe in young children](#)

## ADVOCACY



### Wisconsin Assembly to Vote on Ag Export Bill

Following unanimous approval in the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance last week, Assembly Bill 314 is expected to pass the Wisconsin Assembly later today. The legislation, authored by Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) and Sen. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) would create a new five-year initiative to increase the export of Wisconsin's agricultural products by 25 percent. The bill also specifies that \$2.5 million, or half the total funds appropriated, will be used to increase international sales of milk, cheese, yogurt, whey, and other dairy products.

With the help of our active, engaged Policy Committee members, WCMA has been a strong voice in support of funding and programming for greater export opportunities for Wisconsin dairy processors and manufacturers. Interested in getting involved? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

### USDA to Provide Up to \$1.15B for Rural High-Speed Internet Grants and Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide [up to \\$1.15 billion](#) in loans and grants to expand rural broadband availability through the ReConnect program, the agency announced last week. USDA will also invest an additional \$50 million to help fund distance learning and telemedicine services in 37 states and Puerto Rico.

As a strong advocate for broadband accessibility and affordability, WCMA is pleased to see increased investments to connect businesses, families, and individuals in rural areas.

### Dairy Innovation Hub Releases Annual Report

The Dairy Innovation Hub has released its [second annual report](#), reflecting the Hub's progress, activities, and accomplishments from July 2020-June 2021. Highlights of this year's report include \$2.2 million for equipment to build research capacity, and \$7.8 million total allocated for new dairy initiatives for the 2021 fiscal year.

WCMA was a vocal advocate for the creation of the Dairy Innovation Hub in 2019 and currently serves on the Hub's Advisory Council. Over the past two years, the Hub has funded more than 100 research and outreach projects across three University of Wisconsin campuses and four priority areas.



#### 2021 Annual Report

Reflecting activities from July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

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### USDA Issues String Cheese Solicitation

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is [soliciting bids for string cheese](#) for use in federal food assistance programs. Bids are due November 5 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

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### WEDC Hosts Virtual Trade Mission

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is organizing a [virtual Global Trade Venture](#) December 6-17 to markets throughout Africa to help Wisconsin companies connect with export partners. Registrations are due November 5 and include customized market research, one-on-one appointments, interpreter and scheduling services, and an introductory briefing.

Have questions about this virtual event? Please contact [WEDC staff](#).



## Vote Now for WCMA Distinguished Service Award Nominees

[Voting is now open](#) to help select the individuals that will be honored with the WCMA Distinguished Service Award in 2022. This award recognizes supplier partner members who have played a significant role in building the success of the U.S. dairy industry, contributing innovations in dairy manufacturing.

WCMA members may vote for as many nominees as they like, with up to 10 voters per company. **All votes must be received by Tuesday, November 16.** The WCMA Board will select the 2022 Distinguished Service Award honorees at its December meeting. To view past Distinguished Service Award recipients, please [visit our website](#).

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Caitlin Peirick](#).

## MEMBERSHIP

### Participate in 2022 WCMA Member Directory

Join your colleagues and WCMA in the production of your 2022 Member Directory! In keeping with this year's theme, "Together We Grow," [WCMA seeks your images and stories](#) of professional development throughout the dairy processing industry.

**By close of business on November 5**, please submit photos to [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with a brief description of why the employee or team pictured values their work and/or how WCMA has helped support their career in the dairy industry. Examples of previous featured images are available throughout the [2021 Member Directory](#).

**SUBMIT PHOTOS**

WCMA's Member Directory also offers [exceptional advertising opportunities](#). Placing

an ad in our directory connects your company with over 600 dairy processors, manufacturers, marketers, suppliers, and their employees.

Have questions about directory advertising? Please contact [WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt](#).

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## WCMA Social Media Campaign Highlights Dairy Processing Industry Leaders

WCMA invites you to get to know the 21 enthusiastic industry leaders who serve on our Board of Directors and guide our work each day. We'll profile the Board on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and in this newsletter on a weekly basis. This week, we're pleased to introduce Mike Sipple of Agropur!

### Mike Sipple Agropur

WCMA Second Vice President

#### ***Favorite Cheese***

Agropur Sharp Cheddar

#### ***Proudest Achievement***

I have been blessed to have spent my career working with and for people that I care about and trust. Together, we have accomplished great things including contest awards, plant start-ups, new customers, and new products.

#### ***Why I Support WCMA***

"WCMA is a highly respected, impactful organization that strives to improve the cheese industry in Wisconsin, the Upper Midwest, and coast-to-coast through advocacy and education. It's important to be an active participant in an organization that is doing so much good for the industry."



WISCONSIN  
CHEESE MAKERS  
ASSOCIATION  
EST. 1991



Have an idea for a WCMA social media campaign or other communication? Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).

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## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Dairy Foods*: [Schreiber Foods named U.S. Dairy Exporter of the Year](#)
- *Newsy*: ['Cow power' helps dairy farm run on renewable energy](#) (Featuring WCMA member Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese)
- *WXXQ Radio*: [The very best string cheese in the world is made in Wisconsin](#) (Featuring WCMA member Baker Cheese)
- *WFRV-TV*: [Create your own Halloween cheese board from Dairy Farmers of](#)

**Wisconsin** (Featuring WCMA members Carr Valley Cheese, Cedar Valley Cheese, Decatur Dairy, Henning's Wisconsin Cheese, and Renard's Cheese)

#### National/International

- Reuters: [U.K. and New Zealand strike free trade deal](#)
- Bloomberg: [China meets only half of U.S. trade deal target as talks restart](#)
- Yahoo! Finance: [American cheese is being devoured in Asia, export data show](#)
- Feedstuffs: [Understanding consumer perceptions of dairy industry sustainability](#)
- Bloomberg: [U.S. dairy cows too expensive to feed, causing herd to plummet](#)
- Feedstuffs: [Government help needed to prevent cyberattacks in ag sector](#)
- Dairy Reporter: [Granarolo buys U.S. company Calabro Cheese](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



# WCMA Webinar

*Establishing and Maintaining an Impactful Internship Program*

## Register for WCMA Members-Only Internship Webinar

Don't miss WCMA's [next members-only webinar](#), focused on creating and maintaining an impactful internship program. Learn how to create this hiring pipeline for your business, and ways to make the most of interns' fresh perspectives, energy, and skill on Tuesday, November 16 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (CT).

Following a presentation from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and an industry perspective from Grande Cheese Company, speakers will answer questions from WCMA members. Prefer to submit your questions anonymously? Please send them to [WCMA staff](#) by close of business on Monday, November 15.



**Timothy Strait, PhD**  
Wisconsin Department of  
Workforce Development



**Jill Swanson**  
Grande Cheese Company



**REGISTER NOW**

This webinar is the latest in a [monthly series](#) created by WCMA. Each session offers advanced strategies to grow your dairy processing business, protect your assets, and strengthen your workforce. Offered exclusively to WCMA members at no cost, these concise, one-hour webinars offer both expert insight and a chance to connect with your industry colleagues on a regular basis.

Have an idea for a future webinar offering? Contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#). Thanks for your engagement!

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## **Sign Up Today for DBIA E-Commerce Webinar Featuring Uplands Cheese**

Mark your calendar and register to join the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA) on November 9 at 1:30 p.m. (CT) for an informative, free webinar on [developing an e-commerce platform](#).

Featuring Andy Hatch of WCMA member Uplands Cheese, this webinar in DBIA's "Let's Keep Your Business Going" series will share valuable insight on how to select and start an e-commerce platform for your business. Participants will also learn strategies for extending their brand and maximizing search engine optimization.

**REGISTER NOW**



**DAIRY INNOVATION HUB**

**Make Plans Now to Attend Free Dairy Innovation**

# Hub Events

Reserve your space today at two dynamic events dedicated to sharing the work of the [Dairy Innovation Hub](#):

The second annual virtual [Dairy Summit](#) will be held from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (CT) on November 17. In addition to presentations on new projects and a farmer panel discussing the impacts of the Hub, new faculty will discuss their research and outreach goals. The event will conclude with a collection of virtual facility tours.

On November 18 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (CT), the inaugural [Dairy Symposium](#) will feature thought-provoking plenary sessions, research talks, and poster presentations from Hub-funded projects. The symposium will be held in-person on the UW-Madison campus, with virtual options available.

**REGISTER FOR THE  
SUMMIT**

**REGISTER FOR THE  
SYMPOSIUM**

WCMA was a vocal advocate for the creation of the Dairy Innovation Hub in 2019 and currently serves on the Hub's Advisory Council. Over the past two years, the Hub has funded more than 100 research and outreach projects across three University of Wisconsin campuses and four priority areas.

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## Join WDATCP Dairy Exchange Tomorrow

You're invited to attend the next [Dairy Exchange](#) meeting, hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) tomorrow, October 27, 2021 from 8:30-9:45 a.m. (CT) The event will include a dairy market report and information on the Grassland 2.0 Project.

Attendees may join the meeting in-person at WDATCP's offices in Madison, Wisconsin or [online via Zoom](#). If you plan to attend in-person, an [RSVP is required](#) by 5 p.m. (CT) next Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

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## WORKFORCE



## Sign Up to Attend WCMA Workforce and Education Committee Meeting November 9

All members are invited to [register now](#) for a virtual meeting of the WCMA Workforce and Education Committee, set for Tuesday, November 9 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT).

The meeting agenda will include discussion on the following topics:

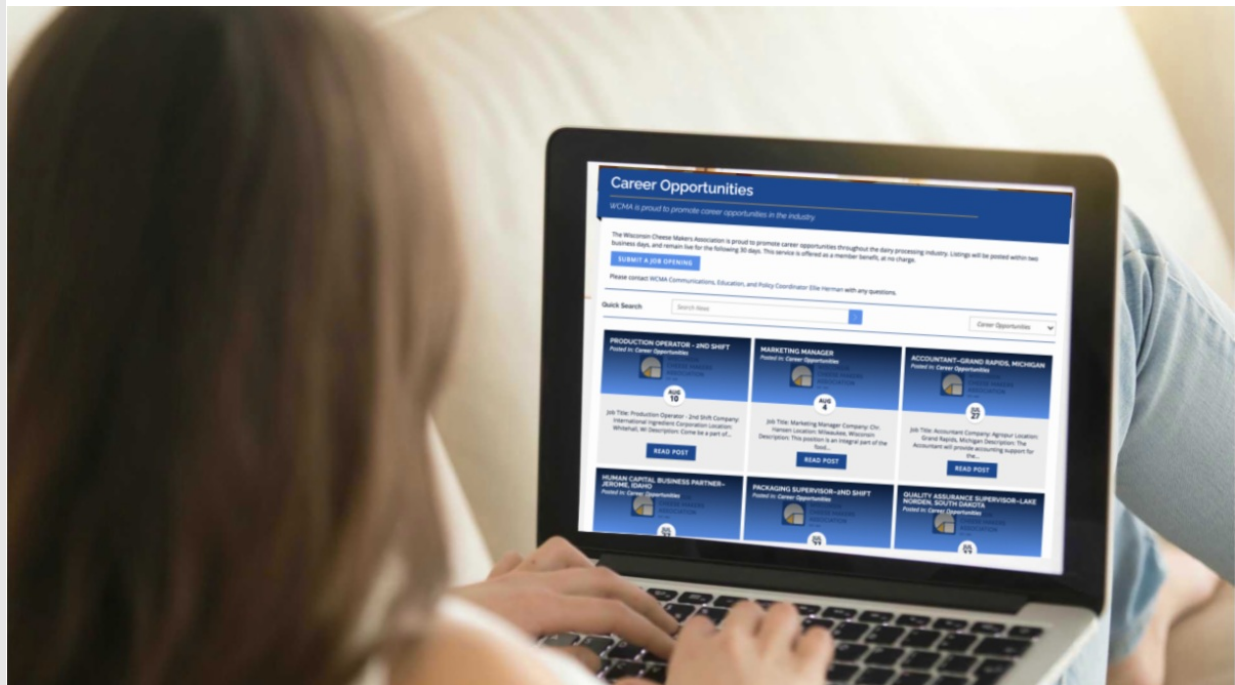
- Federal COVID-19 vaccination mandate for large employers
- Opportunities to employ Afghan refugees
- 2022 WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey
- 2022 WCMA Job Fair at CheeseExpo

- Development of a WCMA onboarding video training series for new dairy processing employees

The meeting will also offer a live polling feature for participants, and members are encouraged to [submit questions](#) they'd like posed to the group in advance. WCMA staff will wrap the meeting with a brief overview of other workforce and education resources available to WCMA members now.

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

**REGISTER NOW**



## View, Share Careers on WCMA Jobs Board

WCMA's [online jobs board](#) currently features industry career opportunities from member companies Baker Cheese, Emmi Roth USA, Masters Gallery Foods, Springside Cheese, and others. WCMA members can [post openings](#) anytime - it's free and easy!

**POST JOB OPENINGS**

## EDUCATION

### Industry Training Opportunities

WCMA is pleased to share opportunities for industry-specific training and enrichment. Here's a look at some upcoming trainings hosted by our partners:

- October 27-29: [Master Short Course: Understanding and Controlling Defects in Cheese](#) | Center for Dairy Research
- November 15-18: [Advanced Cheese Technology](#) | Center for Dairy Research
- November 16: [Cheesemaking 101: What a Licensed Cheesemaker Should Know](#) | Center for Dairy Research
- January 20, 2022: [Certificate in Dairy Processing - Online](#) | Center for Dairy

