



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



ADVOCACY



WCMA Members Push for Boost in Wisconsin Dairy Hauling Limits

WCMA staff and members **testified last week** before the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government in support of **Senate Bill 431**, a proposal that stands to extend an existing permit for overweight hauling (98,000 pounds over six axles) of milk to the hauling of all liquid dairy products, including liquid whey.

SB 431, drafted at WCMA members' request, holds myriad benefits for the dairy industry, including alleviation of the truck driver shortage, increased sustainability through fuel efficiency, increased over-the-road safety, and fair competition with processors in other states that already allow heavier hauls.

Thanks go to members from BelGioioso Cheese, Chr. Hansen, Klondike Cheese Company, and Milk Specialties Global for making their voices heard. WCMA also thanks Wisconsin State Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan), pictured above in red, and State Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) for championing the bill.



Couldn't make the hearing, but ready to show your support? Making your voice heard takes less than a minute, when you use WCMA's [easy online contact form](#)! For more information, contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

WCMA Members Invited to Advocate for Multi-Discharger Variance Extension

Wisconsin regulators are opening a review of the successful Multi-Discharger Variance (MDV) program that has allowed cities, dairy plants, food processors and more to ease into low limits on phosphorus in wastewater. Approved in 2017 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Administration and Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) officials are evaluating currently available information to determine if it is appropriate to extend the MDV beyond 2027.

To offer public feedback on a [summary report on the program](#), WCMA members are invited to take part in one of two upcoming listening sessions:

- **November 10, 2023 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon (CT)**, WDNR GEF2 Building - Room G09, 101 S. Webster Street, Madison
- **November 13, 2023 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon (CT)**, Portage County Annex Building, Conference Rooms 1 & 2, 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point

[Click here to register](#) to attend the Madison-based meeting, either in-person or online. note that the Stevens Point meeting will be held in-person only, and no pre-registration is required. Contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) with your interest in participating in these listening sessions.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE CONTEST

MARCH 5-7, 2024

Mark Your Calendar: Contest Entry Begins Tomorrow

Mark your calendar; WCMA will open entry in the World Championship Cheese Contest tomorrow at WorldChampionCheese.org. The competition features 142 classes of dairy products, welcoming entries of cheese, butter, yogurt, and dry dairy ingredients.



New this year, WCMA is offering a best value rate of \$75 per product when you enter by December 1. After that date, all entries will cost \$90 per product. All entries must be submitted by Friday, January 26, 2024. Judging will occur March 5-7 at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

Complete details are available in the official [Contest Kit](#), now available online. All questions about the 2024 World Championship Cheese Contest may be directed to [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#).



WCMA Webinar

*World Championship
Cheese Contest 101*

Learn How to Enter & Make an Impact with
Your Contest Participation

[Register now](#) for WCMA's next webinar, set for Tuesday, November 14 at 1:00 p.m. (CT), to join in World Championship Cheese Contest 101.

This free program, open to all, offers a "how to" on contest entry, an explanation of the judges' technical evaluation process, and tips on making the most of your participation, whether or not you win the coveted title of World Champion Cheese. Helmed by [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#), our program will also feature a contest judge and past competitor detailing their experiences.

This one-hour webinar will include time for your questions. If you'd like to pose a question in advance, please email [WCMA staff](#) by Monday, November 13 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

CHEESE EXPO

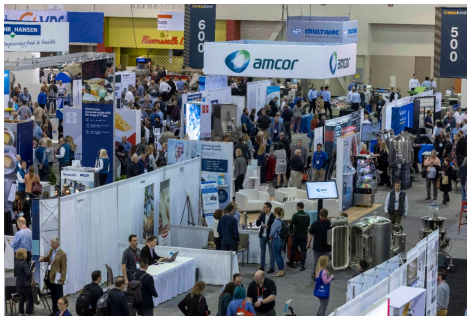
Global Technology for Dairy Processors

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

Special Events: April 16, 2024

Exhibits & Seminars: April 17-18, 2024

CheeseExpo Exhibit Floor Sold Out; Sponsorship Opportunities Now Limited



All booth space in CheeseExpo 2024's [expansive exhibit hall](#) is now sold out! WCMA members may add their company names to a [waitlist](#), should space open as the event nears.

[JOIN WAITLIST](#)

Members are also urged to quickly to claim remaining [CheeseExpo 2024 sponsorships](#)! From high-visibility advertising on the show floor map or program to support for our popular lunches and busy registration area, help us shine a spotlight on your company.

Learn about all available marketing opportunities in our [online brochure](#), or contact [WCMA Events Director Caitlin Peirick](#).

INDUSTRY UPDATES



USDA Announces Export Promotion Investment

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom **Vilsack announced** last week that the agency will direct \$1.3 billion to boost commodity export efforts via the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program and \$1 billion expand international food aid.

USDA officials noted that the current U.S. agricultural trade deficit of \$19 billion is projected to grow to \$27.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2024, highlighting the need for additional export investments. Studies show that for every \$1 invested in export market development, exports are increased by \$24.50.



Export Workgroup Delivers Trade Show Insights

WCMA thanks guest presenters from the U.S. Dairy Export Council, Food Export Midwest, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Sartori Cheese, and MCT Dairies for sharing their insights on how to maximize trade show return on investment at the WCMA Export Workgroup meeting held last week. Thanks also go to our members joining both in person and online, networking and learning new strategies to grow dairy sales abroad.



To get involved in WCMA's Export Workgroup, or to learn more about available grant dollars to support your international sales program, contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).



Dairy Food Safety Alliance Offers Inspector Feedback & New Resources

WCMA, together with its partners at the Center for Dairy Research and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, last week hosted a hybrid Dairy Food Safety Alliance meeting, offering insights from state inspectors, regulatory updates, [new FSMA-compliant procedure and record templates](#), and training resources. Thanks to the many members joining us in-person and online to network and learn!

To engage in Alliance activities, get in touch with [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#).





Sustainability Roundtable Talk



Join in Virtual Sustainability Roundtable

As WCMA establishes a new member group devoted to supporting the U.S. dairy industry sustainability goals, we invite you to join us November 9 at 1 p.m. (CT) for a [virtual roundtable discussion](#).

During this meeting, WCMA will present the results of its recent member sustainability interests survey, and further identify member needs for education, support, and networking, by facilitating conversations about strategies to deliver impactful resources.

REGISTER NOW

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

USDA Seeks String Cheese, High Protein Yogurt, & Kosher Processed Cheese

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting bids for fulfillment of [924,727 pounds of string cheese](#), [656,706 pounds of high protein yogurt](#), and [118,800 pounds of kosher processed cheese](#). Bids are due next week. Complete details on how to become a USDA-approved vendor are [available online](#).

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin State Farmer*: [UW-River Falls takes on short course program to address ag workforce shortage](#)

National/International

- *Feedstuffs*: [Agropur expanding Michigan dairy processing facility](#) (Featuring WCMA member Agropur)
- *Fence Post*: [Stabenow calls for farm bill extension](#)

- *Washington Post*: [Hunger worsened among U.S. households in 2022, report finds](#)
- *Food Safety News*: [More confirmed infected in outbreak linked to raw milk from California dairy](#)
- *New York Times*: [The rigid world of French cheesemaking meets unbound climate change](#)

MEMBERSHIP

Deadline Approaching: Vote by Friday 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 Industry Suppliers

WCMA supplier member [iXAPACK GLOBAL USA](#) designs and manufactures weighing, ultrasonic



cutting, wrapping, and end-of-line equipment, including flexible multiformat cartoning, case packing, and palletizing solutions.



WCMA supplier member **Mini Grip de México S.A. de C.V.** offers flexible packaging for food manufacturers.



WCMA supplier member **ThermOmegaTech** designs and manufactures self-actuating thermostatic temperature control valves and actuators.



WCMA supplier member **Unifide CST Scale Systems** provides testing and calibration service for food manufacturers.

EDUCATION



WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION

2024 Leadership Trainings

Registration Open for Winter/Spring Front-Line Leadership Trainings on WisCheeseMakers.org

Equip your valued employees with the skills they need to excel in leadership roles by registering them in of the next round of WCMA Front-Line Leadership Training leadership training. Registration for these popular sessions is **now open online** to WCMA members.

This engaging series, boasting a cumulative participant rating of 9.5/10, helps both new and seasoned supervisors build critical skills in conflict resolution, communication, stress and time management, and the cultivation of a team mentality.

Here's a look at our fully virtual Winter 2023/Spring 2024 offerings:

- Part A, offered on January 23 and January 24, will focus on developing essential

leadership skills.

- Part B, set for February 26 and February 29, will provide strategies to help supervisors boost staff performance.
- Part C, scheduled for April 2 and April 3, will help trainees learn to foster a collaborative team mindset in their workplace.

Each class is a one-day offering, running from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (CT). Offered a la carte, they may also be taken in any order.

REGISTER NOW

Questions? Please contact [WCMA Membership Director Sara Schmidt](#).



EMPLOYEE SAFETY TRAININGS

New offerings!



Register Now for WCMA's New Safety Trainings

Register now to join in two all-new WCMA trainings designed to support dairy processors' efforts to keep their valued team members safe on the job.

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.



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](#).

REGISTER NOW

WCMA 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 ongoing [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.

REGISTER NOW

Questions or ideas? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

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:

- 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

WORKFORCE



Register Now for Free, Virtual WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Meeting November 16

Register now to join in WCMA's next Workforce & Education Committee meeting, set for Thursday, November 16 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). This free and open committee welcomes both dairy processing and supplier member participants - and is perfect for any leader with human resources responsibilities.



Anne Troka
Sargento Foods

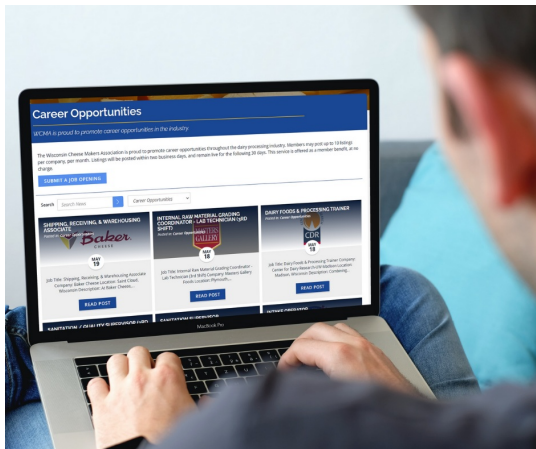
This meeting will feature an engaging guest presentation from Senior Manager of Community and Workforce Development Anne Troka of WCMA member Sargento Foods on strategies for effective career opening advertisement. Learn how to identify your target audience and reach them through the best channels, communicate an accurate and appealing job description, and analyze your outcomes for improvement!

WCMA staff will also facilitate group discussion about WCMA's Job Fair, trainings, and annual Wage & Workforce Survey.

REGISTER NOW

Questions or ideas? Please contact **[WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#)**.

Post Job Openings on Free WCMA Jobs Board



Visit **[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 Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Foremost Farms USA, Masters Gallery Foods, and Specialty Cheese Company.

Have questions about the Jobs Board? Please contact **[WCMA staff](#)**.

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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