



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

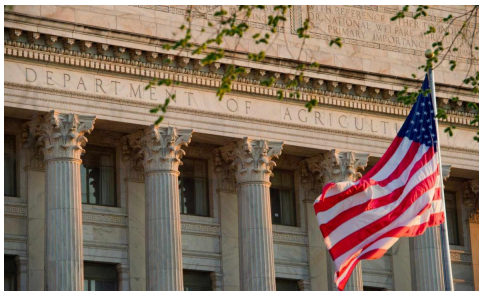
October 6, 2026

news@wischeesemakers.org



NEWS

Take Action Now to Save Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives



[WCMA is urging U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins to reverse a newly imposed 25 percent cost-share requirement for the Dairy Business Innovation \(DBI\) Initiatives](#), warning that mandate will prevent the four existing initiatives from continuing to provide grants and technical assistance to dairy businesses nationwide.

Last week, in agency's [latest request for funding applications](#), USDA added - for the first time ever - a requirement for matching funds from the existing centers – the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, the Pacific Coast Coalition–Dairy Business Innovation Initiative and the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative – to be eligible for a share of the \$12.6 million Congressionally-directed to them.

The initiatives are housed within public universities, a state agency of agriculture and, through partnership, a nonprofit trade association. **These organizations do not directly benefit financially from DBI funding and generally do not have unrestricted resources available to provide a 25 percent match.** Center leaders have met with USDA to explain this, and have since shared a [formal letter](#) detailing the fact that a cost share provision will result in the end of the DBI program.

WCMA is fighting this agency move, noting the impact of DBI programming, first established by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill and launched by USDA during the first Trump Administration with bipartisan support. Since the program's inception, DBI centers have awarded more than \$106 million in grants to 911 dairy businesses – meeting just 35 percent of demonstrated demand through competitive award processes. They serve dairy farmers and processors in 41 states and territories, representing 87 percent of the nation's milkshed.

Members Urged to Contact Congress Now



Take Action Now!

WCMA is also encouraging 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

You can **send the message as written or add a personal appeal** about how DBI has supported your business, your employees, your community or your supply chain partners. Every message counts!

CONTACT YOUR LAWMAKERS NOW

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

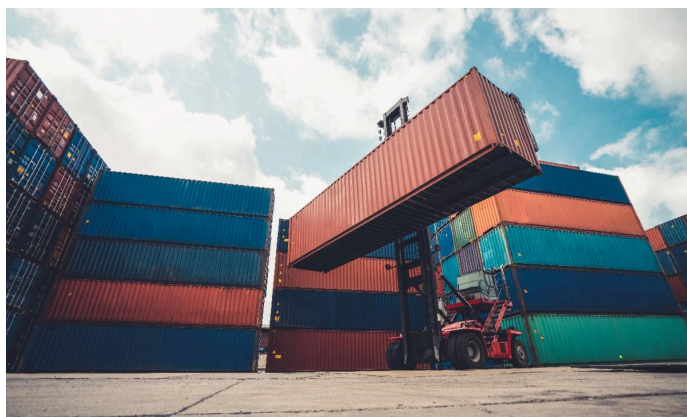
Dairy Margin Coverage Open Now Through December 18



At World Dairy Expo on September 30, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced the opening of the [Dairy Margin Coverage \(DMC\)](#) 2027 sign-up period on October 5. DMC is a voluntary risk management tool that helps dairy producers manage financial risk when milk prices drop or feed costs rise, helping to ensure they have a stable income. The program includes both catastrophic coverage and higher levels of coverage for an annual premium.

To apply, dairy producers must complete and submit an application to their Farm Service Agency (FSA) office during the specified enrollment period. More information can be found on the [FSA website](#).

WCMA to Apply for \$100,000 Award Through DATCP



WCMA is applying for a \$100,000 [export expansion grant](#) through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to continue its successful [free dairy export consultation services](#) and product-to-market program. These grants aim to expedite the growth of Wisconsin dairy, meat, and crop product exports, and applicants must be non-profit organizations located in Wisconsin currently serving, or able to serve, Wisconsin agribusinesses.

To learn more about WCMA's export expansion grant programming or to get involved, contact [WCMA](#)

Open Nomination and Voting Period Begins for WCMA Recognition Awards



The nomination and voting period is now open for the [2027 WCMA Recognition Awards](#), honoring individuals for their outstanding contributions across the dairy industry. WCMA members can vote for Distinguished Service Award nominees through Friday, October 30 and submit nominations for the Babcock, Vanguard, Luminary, and Cheese Industry Champion Awards. WCMA will announce final awardees in January and celebrate them at the WCMA Recognition Breakfast on Thursday, April 22, at [CheeseCon 2027](#).

DATCP Accepting Applications for 2027 Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants Until November 4



DATCP is now accepting [applications for Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin \(BLBW\)](#) Grants until Wednesday, November 4. The BLBW grant program is designed to help businesses and farms more efficiently process, market, and distribute locally grown food products. Projects can receive funding for up to three years, and requests must be between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Additionally, grant recipients must provide a one-to-one match of cash or in-kind support accounting for at least 50% of the total project budget. DATCP will award up to \$200,000 total in BLBW funding in 2026.

Sierra Nevada Cheese Company Recalls Raw Milk Cheese

[Sierra Nevada Cheese Company has recalled all Graziers Raw Milk Cheese](#) due to potential contamination with Escherichia coli O26:H11 (E. coli O26:H11). The FDA and CDC are investigating a multistate outbreak of E.coli with 13 illnesses, including eight hospitalizations, linked to the consumption of Graziers Raw Milk Cheese. The investigation has not yet been associated with a specific date code, lot, or production date. A list of the specific recalled cheese products and other information can be found on the [FDA website](#).

For more information on this significant outbreak, see news coverage below:

- Today: [Cheese recalled nationwide amid E. Coli outbreak](#)
 - Fox: [Nationwide cheese recall: 13 sickened in E. coli outbreak](#)
 - ABC: [E. coli outbreak linked to raw milk cheese brand: CDC, FDA](#)
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Wisconsin

- Wisconsin State Farmer: [Rollins addresses labor, diesel costs, beef imports at World Dairy Expo](#)
- Food Business News: [Sargento acquires La Terra Fina](#)

National & Global

- Idaho Learning News: [50% tariffs, dollar-for-dollar payback: Inside the U.S.-Canada trade war Trump just escalated](#)
- WUKY: [Trump's immigration push has largely spared farms. Idaho dairymen worry it won't last.](#)
- U.S. News: [World food prices near four-year high in September, UN says](#)
- Inc: [Canada's tariffs cost this U.S. cheesemaker nearly \\$1 million in sales. Now its costs are rising at home](#)
- eDairy News: [U.S. milk production expands as national dairy herd grows](#)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Last Day to Sign Up for Next Week's Front-Line Leadership Training



Today is the deadline to sign up for the October 14 in-person session of [WCMA's three-part Front-Line Leadership training series](#) at WCMA's offices in Madison, Wisconsin. [Part B, "Boosting Staff Performance"](#), is designed for supervisors who want to cultivate a team mentality, communicate better, resolve conflicts, and manage their time and stress. Missed Part A? 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 meeting sponsor [Nelson-Jameson, Inc.](#) for its generous support.

Register Now for WCMA Sustainability Workshop



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 of this two-day workshop 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.

This two-day workshop costs \$750 to attend. If an organization sends more than one person, all other registrants after the primary will be \$250. Don't miss this chance to stay up-to-date on recommended sustainability practices and connect with peers and colleagues. [Register today!](#)

Get the Latest on Workplace Safety with Health & Safety Group October 20



[Sign up now for WCMA's Health & Safety Group meeting](#) on Tuesday, October 20, for the latest regulatory updates, peer networking, and lessons on how to prepare for the unexpected. Held online and in-person at Masters Gallery Foods' facility in Oostburg, Wisconsin, attendees will hear from Masters Gallery - WCMA's 2025 Employer of the Year Award winner - about how it has created and sustained its exceptional safety culture.

The first 30 registrants for in-person attendance will enjoy an exclusive tour of Masters Gallery Foods facility in Oostburg, Wisconsin, focused on safety protocols and practices (**only four tour spots remain**). Attendees will also have the opportunity to connect directly with representatives from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), who will cover OSHA's Top Ten Most Frequent Citations, as well as regulatory updates from the agency.

This [meeting](#) will also feature an emergency preparedness panel, with WCMA dairy processor members discussing emergencies they've experienced firsthand, how their teams responded, and the changes they made to emergency plans and procedures afterwards.



Thanks go to meeting sponsors [Kelley Supply, Inc.](#) and [Nelson-Jameson, Inc.](#) Act now to [sponsor this meeting](#)! Connect with safety personnel and show your company's support for dairy processors' efforts to improve their health and safety policies.

Upcoming WCMA Events

October 7	October 14	October 20	October 21-22	October 29
Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)	Front-Line Leadership Part B (In-Person)	Health & Safety Group Meeting (Hybrid)	"Good Data, Better Decisions" Sustainability Workshop (In-Person)	Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting (Hybrid)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Learn Value-Added Dairy Processing Strategies with Penn State Webinar Series



Penn State is currently hosting a [free, five-part webinar series](#) for dairy farmers and entrepreneurs interested in starting a value-added dairy business. The program goes over the latest information, challenges, and strategies for success in the dairy industry. The first webinar, "Is On-Farm Dairy Processing Right for You?" was held on September 29. The other four webinars will be held on the following dates:

- **October 6** - "Milk Quality: The Foundation of Great Products," teaches participants the importance of milk quality and why it's necessary for processing success, as well as how it affects the final product.
- **October 13** - "Food Safety and Regulatory Basics," introduces dairy processors to essential food safety at the local, state, and national levels.
- **October 20** - "Developing Your Product Line," addresses the importance of selecting products that align with a farm's resources while meeting market demand.
- **October 27** - "Considerations for Planning and Building an On-farm Creamery," features guest speakers sharing their experiences with facility construction.

More information can be found on the [Penn State Extension website](#).

Attend CDR's PCQI & HACCP Training Workshop Next Month



The Center for Dairy Research (CDR) is holding a PCQI & HACCP Training Workshop on November 4-6 at the CDR office on UW-Madison's campus. This workshop, conducted by CDR, is both an International HACCP Alliance-approved course and a FSPCA-version 2 approved course.

The class curriculum is designed to teach participants the safe processing, manufacturing, packing, and holding of food products for human consumption. The course agenda and registration information can be found on the [CDR website](#).



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

WisCheeseMakers.org/Events

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