



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## ADVOCACY



## WCMA Calls for Congressional Action on Immigration Reform to Support Industry Growth

As dairy processors face continued labor challenges, [WCMA last week called on Congress](#) to take action to expand legal immigration opportunities before the next legislative session begins in January.

The immigration platform, endorsed by WCMA's Board of Directors, supports eight key policy actions:

- The addition of dairy manufacturing, processing, and related supply chain jobs to the list of those eligible for an agricultural guestworker visa program;
- The elimination of "touchback" provisions requiring agricultural guestworkers to return to their home country periodically, disrupting their work in the United States;
- The provision of temporary legal status to the spouses and minor children of non-seasonal agricultural guestworkers;
- An extension in the length of agricultural guestworker visa terms;
- At-will employment flexibility in an agricultural guestworker program, allowing workers accept any agricultural industry employment for the duration of their work authorization period;
- Incentives to aid the provision of optional employer-provided housing,

- transportation, and other services to agricultural guestworkers;
- An expansion of opportunities for agricultural guestworkers to gain permanent residency; and,
- Strong legal safeguards for employers acting in good faith to determine an individual's eligibility for employment with their organization.

“The \$753 billion American dairy industry relies on immigrants as vital members of its supply chain, from the farm to processing facilities and beyond,” said WCMA President Steve Bechel of Eau Galle Cheese in Durand, Wisconsin. “The nation’s labor crisis will worsen in the years ahead, and legislative action is needed now to provide the workforce that dairy businesses must have to meet the demands of a growing global population.”



## Member Call to Action

As WCMA advocates for immigration reform, we invite you to join us. We will engage in letter and direct contact-based campaigns to make our positions known and to urge Congressional action. If you have interest in this effort, please contact [\*\*WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney\*\*](#).

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### Free Export Consultative Services!

Ten spaces available  
First-come, first-served

Start or expand your export endeavors with up to 30 hours of no-cost consultative services with Ryan Wucherer of MCT Dairies!



## WCMA Accepting Applications for Free Export Consultative Services

With financial support from Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, WCMA is offering free export consultation to ten Wisconsin dairy manufacturers and processors, now through May 2024. Each participating manufacturer/processor will receive up to 30 hours of no-cost assistance with WCMA's consultant, Ryan Wucherer of MCT Dairies.

For new-to-export companies and cooperatives, consultations will include:

- Evaluations of their product line, helping to identify potential global customers;
- Direction to in-depth educational resources, such as ExporTech™;



- Aid in the creation of their export plan; and,
- Aid in the execution of their export plan through the completion of necessary export paperwork and by connecting the business with potential carriers and distributors.

For companies and cooperatives currently engaged in export activities, consultations will include:

- Evaluations and recommendations on refinements in their export business model;
- Identify areas for export growth;
- Aid in the execution of export plans; and,
- Recommendations on improvements in products, packaging, marketing, labeling, sales or distribution.

To participate in this new program, please [complete our one-page application](#) and return it to [WCMA Director of Grants & Business Programs Danica Nilsestuen](#). Services will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

[DOWNLOAD APPLICATION](#)



## Nelson-Jameson Announces Contribution to UW-River Falls Dairy Plant Project

As the opening of the newly renovated University of Wisconsin - River Falls Dairy Pilot Plant approaches in spring 2023, [WCMA member Nelson-Jameson last week announced it will donate an additional \\$150,000](#) to support the project, securing naming rights to the plant's food laboratory. Chairman of the Board Adam Nelson also shared the company's plans to create a scholarship "that will help students be part of this phenomenal program and resource here in Wisconsin."

## Join WEDC Trade Venture to Southeast Asia

Wisconsin dairy manufacturers and processors can [register now through January 13](#) to join the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) in a Global Trade Venture to Thailand and Vietnam from March 31-April 8, 2023. Participation includes customized market research, one-on-one appointments, interpretation services, in-country transportation between cities, hotel accommodations, and some group meals. For more information, please contact [WEDC staff](#).

[VIEW DETAILS](#)

## USDA Seeks Fluid Milk

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a [solicitation for fluid milk](#) to be

used in federal food assistance programs. Bids are due Wednesday, November 30 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

## MEMBERSHIP



*2022 WCMA Student Scholarship recipients, from left: Xiapor Lor, Bryce Gustafson, Stephanie Kraemer, Jenna Jakel, Jamie Feldmann, and Bailee Aisenbrey.*

## Applications Now Open for WCMA Scholarships

Applications are [available now at WisCheeseMakers.org/Scholarships](https://www.wischeesemakers.org/Scholarships) for WCMA's 2023 Student Scholarship program. Students connected to the dairy processing industry, including WCMA member employees and their children, can apply now through February 7, 2023 for these annual scholarship awards.

Two students will be awarded the [WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#), worth \$3,000 each. Any employee or child of an employee at a WCMA dairy manufacturing, processing, or marketing member company may apply. Over 25 years, WCMA has awarded these \$3,000 scholarships to 44 students. In 2022, Bailee Aisenbrey of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery and Jamie Feldmann of Sartori Company received this scholarship.

Employees or children of employees at WCMA supplier member companies may apply for the [WCMA Cheese Industry Supplier Student Scholarship](#). Three students will receive scholarship awards of \$3,000 each. In total, 57 of these scholarships have been awarded over 22 years. The 2022 recipients of these awards were Jenna Jakel of Loos Machine & Automation, Stephanie Kraemer of IFF (Danisco), and Jack Pluta of Excel Engineering.

WCMA will also select two students to receive the [Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship Supporting Skilled Trades in the Dairy Industry](#), worth \$2,000 each. This award, launched in 2021 and named in honor of Championship Cheese Contest Chairman

and generous donor Brian Eggebrecht, is open to students attending any technical school in Wisconsin, or high school students registered to attend a Wisconsin technical school.

Priority consideration for the Eggebrecht Scholarship will be given to applicants pursuing technical certificates, technical diplomas, or associate degrees that may lead to a career in the dairy industry. Unlike other WCMA scholarships, applicants for this award are not required to be connected to a WCMA member company or cooperative. In 2022, Bryce Gustafson and Xiapor Lor of Masters Gallery Foods were selected for this scholarship.

Applicants for all WCMA scholarships must supply school transcripts, a letter of recommendation, and a completed application form. Successful applicants will be announced in March 2023, with awards presented to recipients on April 5 at [CheeseCon](#) in Madison, Wisconsin.

Questions? Please contact [WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt](#).

**APPLY NOW**



## **One Week Remaining to Vote for WCMA Distinguished Service Award**

**[Cast your vote today](#)** to help select the individuals that will be honored with the **[WCMA Distinguished Service Award](#)** in 2023. This award recognizes supplier partner members who have played a significant role in building the success of the U.S. dairy industry. In 2022, this honor was presented to James Manning of EDCO Food Products and Art Zimmer of Caloris Engineering.

WCMA members may vote for as many nominees as they like, with up to 10 individual voters permitted per company. **All votes must be received by Tuesday, November 22.** The WCMA Board will select the 2023 Distinguished Service Award honorees at its December meeting.



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

**VOTE NOW**



## Agropur Hosts WCMA Young Professionals for Plant Tour, Grading Workshop



Many thanks to the team at Agropur's Weyauwega facility for generously hosting WCMA member employees at last week's Young Professionals event! The group enjoyed an informative plant tour followed by an engaging grading workshop generously hosted by Championship Cheese Contest leaders and judges Jim Mueller of Mueller Consulting, Randy Swensen of Wisconsin Aging & Grading Cheese, and Larry Bell of LBell Consulting.

For more information on WCMA's Young Professionals group, please contact [Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

# WELCOME



## NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

# Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Midwest Rubber Service & Supply Co.](#) offers an extensive line of conveyor belting and accessories which includes plastic modular belting, hygienic positive drive belting and European style fabric belts.



New WCMA supplier member [Sanitube LLC](#) provides sanitary-grade stainless steel tube, valves, and fittings for the food, dairy, beverage, and other markets.

Visit WCMA's [online member directory](#) for more information.

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Supermarket Perimeter*: [WCMA names grant, business programs director](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- *WisBusiness*: [WCMA calls for immigration reform to support industry growth](#)
- *Food Processing*: [Place Settings: Chris Gentine on the joys of culinary collaboration and the art \(and science\) of affinage in Wisconsin](#)
- *WEAU-TV*: [Local TV host encourages Wisconsinites to support local dairy farmers](#)
- *La Crosse Tribune*: [Wisconsin holiday campaign to highlight local businesses, products](#) (Featuring WCMA members Carr Valley Cheese, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Marieke Gouda, and Pine River Pre-Pack)

### National/International

- *Dairy Foods*: [2022 State of the Industry: Ingredients: Dairy rockets toward a new galaxy](#) (Featuring WCMA member Agropur)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [U.S. dairy has a big reason for optimism](#)
- *Dairy Herd Management*: [Recession or not: the consumer has reached their breaking point](#)
- *Agri-Pulse*: [Agencies directed to examine national security threats to food, ag](#)
- *New York Times*: [How to make a cheese board](#) (Featuring WCMA members Cabot Creamery Cooperative and Uplands Cheese)
- *The Kitchn*: [Nine essential cheeses to cover all your snacking, cooking, and entertaining needs](#) (Featuring WCMA members Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Emmi Roth USA, Hook's Cheese Company, Prairie Farms Dairy - Caves of Faribault, and Vermont Creamery)
- *Eater*: [Butter is back and better than ever](#) (Featuring WCMA members Dairy Farmers of America, Land O' Lakes, and Vermont Creamery)

## WORKFORCE



**Attend Monday Workforce & Education**

# Committee Meeting

Mark your calendar now for the next meeting of the WCMA Workforce & Education Committee on November 21 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). Topics for the meeting will include the launch of WCMA's dairy industry video onboarding series and the 2023 WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey.

To RSVP for the meeting, ask questions, and share ideas, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**JOIN MEETING**



Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

## Health & Safety Group

### RSVP for December 6 Meeting of WCMA Health & Safety Group

Make plans today to attend the [next meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group](#), set for December 6 from 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (CT).

As requested by WCMA members, this meeting will focus on the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) guidance for the safe storage and use of combustible dust, such as cellulose; an update on OSHA's Local Emphasis Program (LEP) focused on food manufacturers' safety practices; and resources for employee safety training.



*Danica Harrier, ASP*

Here's a look at the meeting agenda:

- 11:00 a.m.: Meeting Call to Order
  - Agenda Overview & Introductions
  - OSHA Combustible Dust Protocols for Dairy Processors
    - Featured Speaker: Danica Harrier, ASP, Consultant and Program Administrator, SHARP and IQAP Coordinator, Wisconsin Safety and Health Consultation Program
- 12:00 p.m.: Networking Lunch
- 12:30 p.m.: Meeting Resumes
  - Progress Report: OSHA Local Emphasis Program for Food Processors
  - Employee Safety Training Resources
  - Group Business
- 2:30 p.m. Adjournment

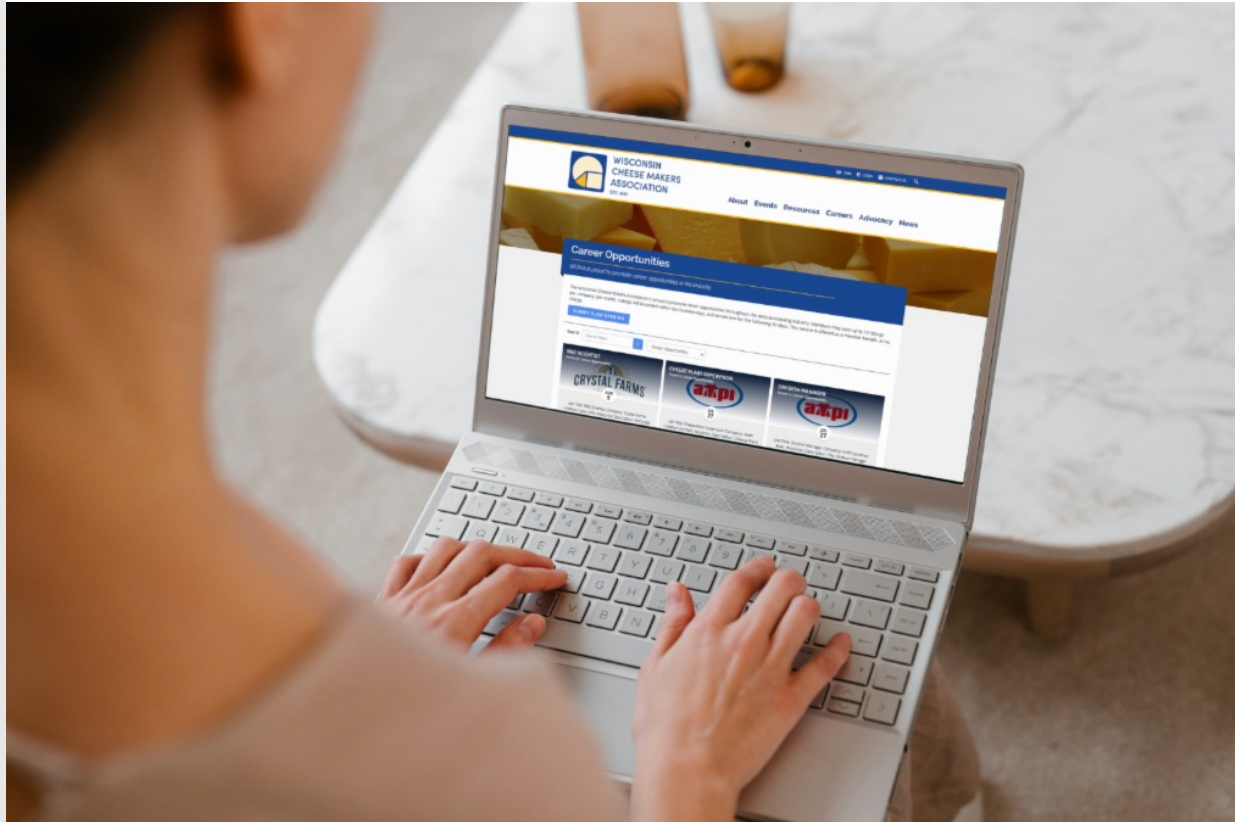
WCMA is offering two ways to participate: in-person at the Hilton Garden Inn (1220 S. Grand Ave., Sun Prairie, Wisconsin) or online via Zoom.

Future meetings will cover a wide range of issues related to worker safety in dairy processing, guided by member feedback. Attendees can expect a platform for discussion, insights from respected industry experts, and opportunities to share ideas with their peers.

Have ideas or questions? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy](#)



RSVP TODAY



## View, Share Career Opportunities on Free WCMA Jobs Board

Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to view current career opportunities at the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and WCMA members Foremost Farms USA, Tetra Pak, and Winona Foods.

Have an opportunity at your company or cooperative? WCMA members may [post up to 10 openings](#) per company, per month on the Jobs Board for free! Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions.

EDUCATION



## Front-Line Leaders Learn Team-Building Tips

Kudos and thanks to this week's Front-Line Leadership trainees from Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Grassland Dairy, Great Lakes Cheese, Integrity Cheese Packaging of Wisconsin, Klondike Cheese Company, Meister Cheese, Nelson-Jameson, Schuman Cheese, and WOW Logistics! These engaged WCMA member employees completed Part C of the training series this week, focused on cultivating a team mentality.

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## Additional Industry Training Opportunities

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

- November 16: [Dairy Ingredients Fundamentals \(Online, Self-Study\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- Rolling Admission:
  - [Online HACCP Training](#) - 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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**GRANTS**

## Two Guernsey Girls

Freedom, Wisconsin

DBIA Grant Recipient  
2022



### #DBIADelivers Spotlights Grant Recipients

Since the creation of the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance \(DBIA\)](#) in the 2018 Farm Bill, WCMA and CDR have partnered to administer over \$3.7 million in 79 grants across two programs to dairy farmers and processors in participating states.

WCMA's newest social media series, DBIA Delivers, highlights the successes of dairy entrepreneurs that have taken their businesses to the next level thanks to DBIA grants.

Next in the weekly series is Two Guernsey Girls Creamery, a small farmstead creamery in Freedom, Wisconsin with a thriving milk bottling and cheese curd making business. Recognizing demand among their customers for more products, the company plans to use its Dairy Business Innovation Alliance grant to support additional cheesemaking training and equipment needed to expand into block cheese production.

Follow along on WCMA's [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) for more inspiring stories, and use the hashtag #DBIADelivers to share how DBIA has helped support your business!

WisCheeseMakers.org  
(608) 286-1001



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