

WCMA News

Your source for the latest in dairy processing

November 17, 2026
news@wischeesemakers.org

NEWS

Trade Policy Continues to Develop with Mexico and China



Recent developments involving China and Mexico underscore continued uncertainty surrounding U.S. trade policy and its implications for key dairy markets.

China

The United States and China held their first bilateral **Joint Trade Council meeting** on November 13, discussing potential tariff reductions and agricultural trade.

Talks included a proposed reciprocal $60 billion tariff-reduction package, with approximately $17 billion in U.S. agricultural goods among the products under consideration. Chinese purchases of U.S. agricultural products remain below anticipated levels.

Trade discussions continue this week as President Donald Trump travels to China for the APEC Summit and a scheduled meeting this coming Thursday with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Tariffs, existing trade commitments and agricultural purchases are again expected to be key topics.

China purchased approximately $523 million in American dairy products in 2026, ranking it the U.S.'s fourth-largest global customer.

Mexico

Last week, President Trump **threatened to double tariffs** on Mexican imports if Mexico does not stop migrant caravans reportedly moving toward the United States. Trump did not specify a timeline or explain how the proposed increase would be implemented. The legality of additional tariff increases is also uncertain following a Supreme Court decision earlier this year that curtailed presidential tariff authority.

Mexico purchased approximately $2.57 billion in U.S. dairy products in 2025, making it the industry's largest export market.

For more on WCMA's export-related advocacy, contact **WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney**.

California Establishes Nation's First "Non-Ultraprocessed Certified" Seal for Food Products



California Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2244, **establishing the nation's first "Non-Ultraprocessed Certified" seal for food products** that meet established standards for not being ultra-processed. Modeled after the USDA Organic label, the program will be overseen by the California Department of Public Health and will allow manufacturers to apply for certification through accredited agents.

As food labeling legislation, particularly related to ultra-processed foods, gains momentum across the country, WCMA will continue monitoring state-by-state proposals and developments to keep members informed of emerging legislation and potential impacts on the dairy processing industry.

USDA Announces Renewed Availability of Credit Guarantees for Fiscal Year 2027



USDA has announced **renewed availability of credit guarantees for fiscal year 2027** through the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102), supporting exports of U.S. agricultural commodities to eligible international markets. The funding includes $425 million for Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia; $475 million for Asia; and $1.6 billion for Latin America, with approximately $2.3 billion still available.

Exporters can apply for credit guarantees on a first-come, first-served basis to help facilitate sales and expand access to eligible foreign markets. The program provides payment guarantees to approved foreign banks, helping reduce financial risks for U.S. exporters and support agricultural export opportunities. **READ MORE…**

Headlines

Wisconsin

- WXOW: **Bird flu confirmed in northern Wisconsin backyard flock**

National & Global

- Food Safety News: **Family Farmstead recalls more raw cheese; this time because of Listeria**
- USA Today: **Go inside the cheese factories impacted by US-Canada tariffs**
- eDairy News: **US dairy exports face critical absorption test as cow numbers approach 30-year highs amid trade policy uncertainty**
- dvm360: **Bird flu hits Oregon dairy cattle for the first time as Washington's infected herds climb into the dozens**
- The Atlantic: **Bird flu could become a terrible feature of fall**

FEATURED: SIGNATURE EVENTS

Learn more about WCMA's programs & services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's signature events, offering exceptional opportunities for member connection and growth.

CheeseCon Show Floor Sold Out!



It's official: CheeseCon's largest-ever tabletop **exhibit floor** is **sold out!** Looking for ways to promote your business to thousands of dairy professionals? Impactful sponsorships and marketing opportunities are still available. Explore exciting **sponsorship opportunities** to make meaningful connections with our biggest crowd ever. Sponsorships must be reserved by January 12, so don't delay!

Register for CheeseCon Now to Receive Discounted Rate



Join thousands of dairy processing professionals at CheeseCon 2027, hosted by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research, the nation's premier cheese, butter, whey, and cultured dairy products event, set for April 20-22 in Madison, Wisconsin! Attendees can choose from a **Full Registration pass** or a **Single Day Registration Pass** for April 21 or April 22 — additional **add-ons** are also available. Register now to receive special early-bird registration savings offered for a limited time; full details can be found at **CheeseCon.org**.

REGISTER NOW

Enter United States Championship Cheese Contest Now



Dairy manufacturers and processors can enter their products now for evaluation in the **2027 United States Championship Cheese Contest**, the nation's premier dairy product competition. Entries across a total of 122 categories will be judged on characteristics such as flavor, body, texture, salt, color, finish, and packaging.

ENTER THE CONTEST

WCMA, host of the Contest, is offering a special entry discount on all submissions of cheese, butter, yogurt, sour cream, and dry dairy ingredients now through December 11. All entries must be submitted by February 5. Entry information is available at **uschampioncheese.org**.

Sponsor the United States Championship Cheese Contest



Reach cheesemakers on a national level by **sponsoring** the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. A variety of high-impact sponsorships are still available, including **Silver Sponsorship of Judge & Volunteer Continental Breakfasts**, and **Silver Sponsorship of Judge & Volunteer Lunch**.

BECOME A SPONSOR

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Learn What's Ahead for Dairy Pricing in 2027 on December 10



Wondering what to expect from dairy markets in the coming year? Join Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) on December 10 at 1:00 p.m. (CT), for a **free, members-only webinar** focused on what's ahead for dairy pricing in 2027.

This meeting features an expert look into the dairy industry's economic forecast — covering domestic and international dairy buying power; protein trends; milk, cheese, and non-fat market updates; as well as the industry's continued processing capacity growth and what that means for milk demand. This webinar will include time for a live Q&A with presenters. Questions can be submitted in advance to **WCMA Senior Director, Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney**.

bW PACKAGING

Thanks go to meeting sponsor **BW Packaging**. Additional **sponsorships** of this meeting are available now through December 7, and include written mention in a promotional email to WCMA members, mention in a social media post, and access to the webinar attendee list. **Act now** to reach new audiences and show your support for dairy processors.

Sign Up Now for Next Slate of Front-Line Leadership Trainings



WCMA is happy to announce the next slate of its popular **Front-Line Leadership** trainings coming this upcoming winter and spring! This three-part series is designed for supervisors who want to communicate better, resolve conflicts, manage their time and stress, and cultivate a team mentality. All parts are virtual and offered à la carte and may be taken in any order:

- **January 20** or **January 27**: Part A - Essential Leadership Skills
- **February 10** or **February 24**: Part B - Boosting Staff Performance
- **March 17** or **March 24**: Part C - Cultivating a Team

Complete all three to receive a free, full registration to **CheeseCon 2027** - a savings of approximately $600! Questions about Front-Line Leadership can be directed to **WCMA Membership Director Sara Schmidt**.

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.

Upcoming WCMA Events

November 19	December 1	December 2	December 10	January 20
Front-Line Leadership Part C (In-Person)	**Train the Safety Trainer Course** (Virtual)	**Dairy Export Group Meeting** (Virtual)	**WCMA Webinar: 2027 Dairy Market Forecast** (Virtual)	**Front-Line Leadership Part A** (Virtual)



news@wischeesemakers.org
(608) 286-1001

All content contained in this newsletter is protected by U.S. copyright law and may not be forwarded, reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published, or broadcast without the prior written permission of Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Assn. | 5117 West Terrace Drive Suite 402 | Madison, WI 53718 US

Unsubscribe | Constant Contact Data Notice

Try email marketing for free today!