



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



ADVOCACY



Member Action Alert: Voice Opposition to Wisconsin Raw Milk Bill

Please join Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) in [voicing opposition to a new proposal in Wisconsin](#) that would allow broad sales of raw milk, including at retail establishments.

**CONTACT
LAWMAKERS**

WCMA continues to advocate against efforts to lift the state's current restriction on raw milk sales, as the product can contain dangerous disease-causing bacteria that pasteurization is designed to kill. While our advocacy was successful in delaying a proposal to legalize the sale of raw milk, last week a draft bill was circulated by Rep. Elijah Behnke (R-Oconto) and Sen. Duey Stroebel (R-Saukville) for co-sponsorship in the Wisconsin State Legislature.

Legalizing the advertisement and broad sale of raw milk creates a significant food safety risk for consumers - with no scientifically proven benefit to their health - and threatens economic losses for dairy producers and processors in America's Dairyland. Earlier this fall, WCMA members and staff met with Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester), Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg), and Governor Tony Evers, all of whom expressed a strong understanding of our Association's opposition, and provided some assurance that the bill, if introduced, would not become law.

Email your state lawmakers today using WCMA's [easy-to-use advocacy tool](#). It automatically sends a strong message, with any thoughts you'd like to add, to your state representatives and senators. For more information, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



L to R: Jeff Montsma, Agropur; Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc); Scott Potts, BelGioioso Cheese

WCMA, Members Advocate for Wisconsin Dairy Hauling Bill in State Assembly

WCMA thanks members from Agropur and BelGioioso Cheese, who joined Association staff in speaking today before the Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Agriculture in support of [Assembly Bill 440](#). The bipartisan proposal - already unanimously approved by the State Senate - would 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. The change would alleviate pressure from a truck driver shortage, support greater fuel efficiency and overall sustainability, improve road safety, and bring Wisconsin in line with higher hauling limits allowed in other key dairy states.



WCMA also thanks Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) and Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) for championing the bill.

Interested in sharing your support for this legislation? Contacting your lawmakers takes less than a minute with WCMA's [quick, simple, advocacy tool](#). For more information, please contact [Rebekah Sweeney](#).

Wisconsin Food Security Bill Introduced



WCMA is advocating in support of newly-introduced [Wisconsin Assembly Bill 645/Senate Bill 539](#), which would enable county governments to appropriate money to nonprofit organizations that operate a food bank or food pantry. This is designed to help counties continue versions of the Food Security Initiative, which allowed Hunger Task Force and Feeding Wisconsin to purchase more Wisconsin-made dairy products during and immediately following the pandemic.



Federal Government Shutdown Averted; Biden, Congress Approve Farm Bill Extension

President Biden last Thursday [signed a federal stopgap funding bill](#) into law, averting a government shutdown. The package, which was approved with bipartisan support in both the House and Senate earlier in the week, provides an extension of funding for certain priorities – agriculture, veterans’ affairs, transportation, housing, energy, and military construction – until January 19, and all other federal activities until February 2.

The government funding bill also included an extension for the 2018 Farm Bill, which expired this past September, through September 30, 2024. This welcome extension provides certainty while committee work continues on a full reauthorization package; neither the House nor Senate agriculture committees has yet released their drafts of a 2023 Farm Bill. It should be noted that benefits for recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are preserved with this extension, but the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program is only set for continuation through January 19, as it is funded apart from the Farm Bill.

WCMA will continue to share updates on federal funding for agricultural and food programs in this e-newsletter. Members with questions may contact [Rebekah Sweeney](#).

USDA FMMO Hearing to Resume Monday

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) national hearing on Federal Milk Marketing Orders paused, as previously announced, on October 11. USDA officials plan to resume their work on FMMO reform next Monday, November 27 and expect several weeks of testimony and cross examination will be required to complete the hearing. WCMA will keep members apprised of developments and decisions via this e-newsletter, and questions may be directed to [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).

CDR Receives Federal Grant for Dairy Co-Product Technology



The Center for Dairy Research (CDR) is one of 60 organizations - and the only one in Wisconsin or in the food industry - to [receive a “Build to Scale” \(B2S\) grant](#) from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The grant awards \$1.2 million to CDR, matched by partner organizations, to support inventors, entrepreneurs, and businesses that are developing methods to convert dairy co-products such as permeate and acid whey into higher value products like bioplastics, organic acids, and food ingredients.

As part of the grant, selected applicants will receive access to the CDR pilot plant for the development of these technologies. There will also be a technical workforce component to this program, making sure future labor is aware of the opportunities and skills needed for these emerging industrial biorefinery jobs.

CDR will be posting a solicitation calling for interested applicants to apply. Visit [CDR's website](#) and watch this e-newsletter for updates.

Register Now for Special Discount on Vermont Cheese Council Educational Opportunities

Expand your knowledge with two new offerings from the Vermont Cheese Council (VCC) - available at a discount exclusively for WCMA members!



VCC's [Artisan Cheesemakers Winter Conference](#), set for February 15-16, 2024, will feature topics such as risk management, solutions for cheese production issues, how cheesemakers can get the most out of working with a distributor, a virtual tour with a cheese producer in Brazil, team management, and more. Registration costs \$95 through December, or \$110 after that.



VCC's six-week [Business Miniversity](#) is suitable for new (or up-and-coming) business owners/managers AND those who have run/managed businesses for a while – but never had training in these areas. The course is designed to equip participants with helpful, actionable information in 12 virtual sessions. Registration costs \$100 for the full series.

Use code **WI20PCG** to receive 20 percent off your registration for either of these upcoming offerings. For more information, please contact [VCC staff](#).

IN THE NEWS

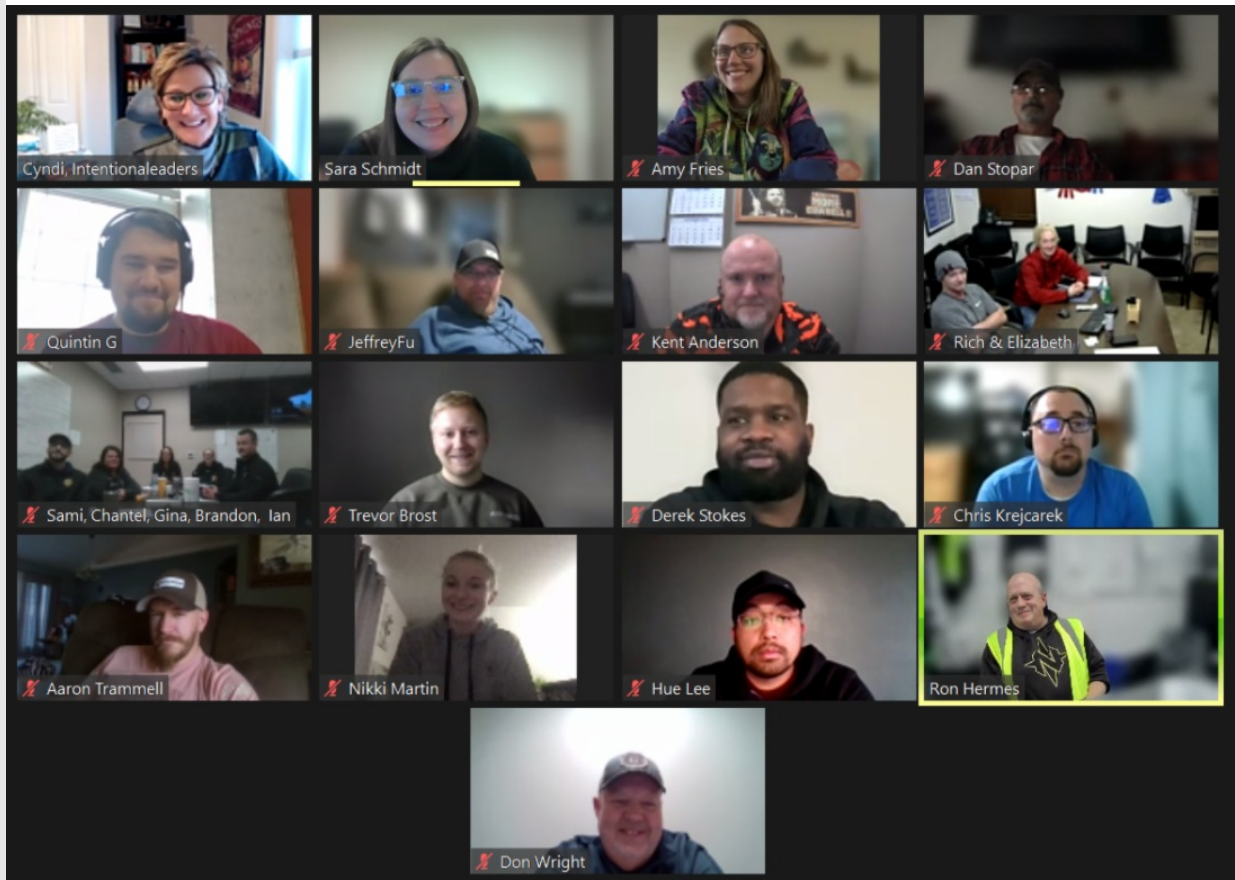
Wisconsin

- *Dairy Processing*: [Organic Valley names new EVP of sales](#) (Featuring WCMA member Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative)
- *NPR*: [Is eating cheese on your resume? In Wisconsin, it could be](#)
- *Sheboygan Press*: [Sargento celebrates 70 years of cheesemaking, community and family](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)

National/International

- *Dairy Processing*: [A new chapter for Hilmar](#) (Featuring WCMA member Hilmar Cheese Company)
- *TIME*: [Land O'Lakes CEO Beth Ford named to TIME100 Climate 2023](#) (Featuring WCMA member Land O'Lakes)
- *The New School*: [Rogue Creamery and Crux Fermentation collaborate on Lambic style ale brewed with blue cheese](#) (Featuring WCMA member Savencia Cheese - Rogue Creamery)

EDUCATION



WCMA Front-Line Leaders Focus on Cultivating Team Mentality

Kudos go to this week's participants in WCMA's Front-Line Leadership course, who gathered virtually to learn strategies to build a team mentality in their workplaces. The class featured valued employees of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Emmi Roth, Great Lakes Cheese, Schuman Cheese, Winona Foods, and WOW Logistics.

Future offerings of this top-rated training are open for registration now! Visit



EMPLOYEE SAFETY TRAININGS

New offerings!



Act Quickly for WCMA Safety Trainings

Reserve space now in WCMA's all-new safety trainings, designed to support dairy processors' efforts to keep their team members safe on the job. Two courses are available, offered virtually and in-person in a convenient one-day format.

WCMA's interactive **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. Attendees are welcome **in-person** at WCMA's training center in Madison, Wisconsin on December 12, 2023 or **virtually** on January 30, 2024. Don't wait - just six spaces remain for the December session!

For safety education geared toward all dairy processing employees, register your team members for **Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors**, set for either in-person or virtual delivery six times throughout the year ahead. Designed with input from WCMA's Health & Safety Group (HSG), this new course will teach participants about their rights, employer responsibilities, and - most importantly - how to identify, abate, and avoid job-related hazards they may encounter. The curriculum concentrates on safety strategies related to machine guarding, lockout/tag out, prevention of slips, trips, and falls, chemical controls, and control of hazardous energy - the key focus areas of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's ongoing Local Emphasis Program for food processors.

Please contact **WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney** with your questions and ideas.



Reserve Seats Now in Top-Rated WCMA Front-Line Leadership Trainings

Empower your valued employees by helping them gain the skills they need to excel in leadership roles. Register them in of the next round of WCMA's popular [Front-Line Leadership Trainings](#).

With a participant rating of 9.5/10, this engaging series 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). All Front-Line Leadership classes are offered a la carte and may be taken in any order.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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

Additional Industry Educational Opportunities

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

- December 6: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- On-Demand:
 - [Introduction to Food Safety Principles \(English and Spanish\)](#) - Cornell University
 - [Online Dairy Science and Sanitation \(English and Spanish\)](#) - 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

MEMBERSHIP



Happy Thanksgiving!

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours from your WCMA team! In observation of the holiday, please note that WCMA offices will be closed on Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24. We wish you a warm, restful, and happy holiday.



WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

Share WCMA Scholarship Details with Students

Encourage the students in your life to apply today for WCMA's [annual student scholarships](#) - and mark your calendar for April 17, when a total of \$19,000 in scholarship awards will be presented at [CheeseExpo](#) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Applicants for all WCMA scholarships must supply school transcripts, a letter of recommendation, and a completed application form. All applicants will be notified of their application status in March.

APPLY NOW



Seven awards are available across WCMA's three scholarships:

- 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. In 2023, this scholarship was awarded to Lizzette Lopez of Great Lakes Cheese and Tyler Schroeffer of Sartori Company.
- 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 2023, this scholarship was awarded to Josie Boyle of Chr. Hansen, Rainna Simone of Roehl Transport, and Samantha Hawkey of Kelley Supply.
- 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, named in honor of long-time Championship Cheese Contest Chairman and generous donor Brian Eggebrecht, who passed away last year, is open to students attending any technical school in Wisconsin, or high school students registered to attend a Wisconsin technical school. In 2023, this scholarship was awarded to Kaitlyn Rydzewski of ProActive Solutions and Nathan Nikolay of Nelson-Jameson.

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.

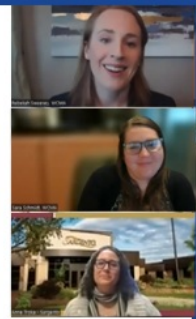
Have questions about WCMA scholarships? Please contact [WCMA's Grace Atherton](#).

WORKFORCE



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Workforce & Education Committee Meeting

November 16, 2023

WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Talks Job Advertising Strategies

Many thanks to the members of WCMA's Workforce & Education Committee for their engagement in last week's virtual meeting. Special thanks go to guest presenter Anne Troka of Sargento Foods for sharing her expertise on effective job advertisement strategies!

Save the date now for the next quarterly meeting of the Workforce & Education Committee on Wednesday, March 20 via Zoom. Questions may be directed to [Rebekah Sweeney](#).



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JOBS BOARD



WCMA Jobs Board Features Member Career Opportunities

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) today to share your career openings on WCMA's online jobs board - 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. This week, the [Jobs Board](#) features opportunities from members Bassett Mechanical, Crystal Farms, Grande Cheese, Masters Gallery Foods, and Organic Valley.

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

POST OPENINGS

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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