



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



ADVOCACY

USDA Awards Another \$22.9M for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has **awarded another \$22.9 million** to four **Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives** (DBII), including \$7 million to the **Dairy Business Innovation Alliance** (DBIA), run in partnership by the Center for Dairy Research and Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.

Half of all DBII funds are allocated for direct-to-business grants, with other monies supporting industry research and development projects, marketing studies, technical education, and business development assistance.

WCMA thanks U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (pictured at right with USDA Undersecretary Jenny Moffitt and George Crave of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese) for championing the creation of the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives and its ongoing funding. To learn more about the projects DBIA has supported, [visit our website](#) or view grant recipient stories on [WCMA's YouTube channel](#) and look for "DBIA Delivers" entries.



Funding for DBII was first included in the 2018 Farm Bill, which runs through mid-2023. WCMA will keep members updated on opportunities to advocate for the continuation of this impactful program.

Action Alert: Join WCMA's Call for Congressional Action on Immigration Reform

As dairy processors face continued labor challenges, [WCMA last week outlined its position on immigration reform](#). Now, WCMA members are invited to take action to urge Senate leaders to address pressing workforce challenges through action on the Farm Workforce Modernization Act before the end of this year.

All WCMA members - dairy manufacturers, processors, and suppliers, are invited to sign on to [WCMA's letter](#) to U.S. Senators. Simply email [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) by 5 p.m. (CT) on Monday, November 28 to be included in this

appeal.

Thank you, in advance, for your industry advocacy!

Some of USDA's Proposed Changes to WIC Stand to Limit Dairy Access

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced its **proposed revisions** to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, also known as WIC. The revisions incorporate recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025.

Proposed changes include:

- Reducing the amount of dairy recommended from 85-128 percent currently provided to 71-96 percent,
- Providing more non-dairy substitution options such as soy-based yogurts and cheeses – and requiring lactose-free milk to be offered,
- Adding more flexibility in the amount of formula provided to partially breastfed infants to support individual breastfeeding goals, and
- Expanding options for eligible yogurt and cheese varieties and for a wider variety of product package sizes commonly found in grocery stores.

WCMA will advocate against proposals to limit WIC access to nutritious dairy products, and will keep members informed on opportunities to join in this effort.

INDUSTRY UPDATES



Grassland Dairy, Wuethrich Family Boost Support to \$1M for UWRF Dairy Plant Project

The Wuethrich Family Foundation and WCMA member Grassland Dairy Products, Inc. **announced last week** an additional \$475,000 commitment toward the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) Dairy Pilot Plant Renovation Project, bringing their cumulative support to \$1 million, earning naming rights for the facility. The plant will now be known as the Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence.

“For the future of dairy processing in Wisconsin to advance, innovation and modernization

are essential,” said Trevor Wuethrich, president of Grassland Dairy Products, Inc. “We regard our donation as an investment in UWRF – and the future of our industry – by providing students with real life experiences. We are honored to have our names associated with this facility, which has earned its status as a dairy center of excellence.”

This gift, combined with the support of state and university resources and many other dairy industry partners, will allow UWRF to complete the four-year, \$8 million plant renovation, providing its students with state-of-the-art, hands-on learning experiences in the development, production and marketing of cheeses, ice cream and other dairy products.

WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer, a champion for the UWRF project from its inception noted at the announcement event, “Our members understand and appreciate the value of the renovated dairy plant and cheer the establishment of the Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence. This is an investment in our industry’s future, and UWRF has earned industry support through focused leadership in the Chancellor’s and Dean’s offices, tireless execution by dairy plant manager Michelle Farner, and creative collaboration from Julie Stucky and the UWRF Advancement and Foundation teams. UW-Rivers Falls is a place where things get done.”

UWRF's Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence is set to launch operations in Spring 2023.

USDA Issues Solicitations to Buy \$1B of Food for Hunger Relief Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced plans to purchase [\\$1 billion in protein products, including cheese](#), for use by emergency food providers like food banks. Detailed solicitation notices are available now through [USDA's Web-Based Supply Chain Management site](#), with bids due December 1 at 2:00 p.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

USDA Seeks Cheese, Butter for School Lunches

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a solicitation for bids on [cheese and butter contracts](#), with products to be used in the national school lunch program and in other federal food assistance programs. Bids are due November 28 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

FDA Advances Final Rule on Food Traceability

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration last week [advanced the final rule](#) to establish additional food traceability recordkeeping requirements. Foods subject to the final rule requirements appear on the FDA's [Food Traceability List](#), and include many fresh, soft, and semi-soft cheeses. The rule takes effect on January 20, 2023.



Renard's Cheese Breaks Ground on New Facility

Congratulations go to WCMA member Renard's Cheese, as it broke ground Friday on a new production facility in Algoma, Wisconsin. The first phase of the project is scheduled for completion in Spring 2023, and the second phase will wrap in 2025. WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer joined in this special event to celebrate Renard's growth.

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!

WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION

Limited Space: 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. **Five spaces in this program have now been claimed, and services are first-come, first-served.**

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](#).

[DOWNLOAD APPLICATION](#)




DAIRY
INNOVATION HUB

**DAIRY
SUMMIT**

NOVEMBER 16

hosted by:
UW-River Falls
& live streamed

Dairy Innovation Hub Shares Summit Insights

The [Dairy Innovation Hub](#) held its third annual Dairy Summit on Wednesday, November 16, on the University of Wisconsin–River Falls campus, with nearly 300 people participating in the hybrid event.

The Hub, funded through a \$7.8 million per year investment by the State of Wisconsin, harnesses research and development at UW–Madison, UW–Platteville and UW–River Falls campuses to keep Wisconsin’s \$45.6 billion dairy community at the global forefront in producing nutritious dairy foods in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. Since its launch in 2019, the Hub has funded more than 130 projects and 15 faculty positions across the three campuses. WCMA is a proud advocate for Hub funding.

Through poster sessions, research presentations and panel discussions, the Dairy Summit highlighted examples of the Hub’s newest research and facilitated discussions about how this work can help meet the challenges facing today’s dairy community. WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer led a panel discussion focused on industry innovation, partnerships, and regional economic development, with Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery CEO Paul Bauer, Nasonville Dairy president Ken Heiman and State Senator Rob Stafsholt

(R-New Richmond) sharing their perspectives

Video recordings of the Dairy Summit sessions are available on the [Hub's YouTube channel](#). Umhoefer's panel discussion is also linked below.



SIGNATURE EVENTS



Enter U.S. Championship Cheese Contest by December 1 for Special Rates

Take advantage of special early entry rates for the 2023 United States Championship Cheese Contest®, [available now at available now at USChampionCheese.org.org](#). Enjoy a \$10 per entry discount on fees now through December 1. For full requirements, including a list of all 118 classes offered, please consult the [Official Contest Entry Kit](#).

The 21st biennial U.S. Championship Cheese Contest will be hosted by WCMA February 21-23 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Entries of cheese, butter, yogurt, and dry dairy

ingredients will be evaluated by a team of expert judges before the nation's Top 20 cheeses - and the 2023 U.S. Champion - will be announced in a special livestream event.

ENTER THE CONTEST

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).



Act Now to Reserve CheeseCon Exhibit Space

Exhibit space is filling quickly on CheeseCon's largest-ever trade show floor, with booths nearly 80% sold out. Don't wait - check your email for your access code and [visit CheeseCon.org](#) to secure your space!

[CheeseCon](#) is your opportunity to connect with 3,000 dairy industry CEOs, marketers, distributors, plant managers, and more. Our 75,000-square-foot exhibit floor [features hundreds](#) of the industry's most trusted supplier companies.

There's simply no better place to grow your business than at the nation's largest gathering of dairy processors. [Reserve your exhibit space today](#) and join us April 4-6, 2023 in Madison, Wisconsin.

RESERVE YOUR BOOTH

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

WORKFORCE

New Date: Workforce & Education Committee

WCMA's Workforce & Education Committee will meet on Wednesday, December 7 from 11:00 a.m.-12:30 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.

[JOIN MEETING](#)

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



Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

Health & Safety Group

Register Now to Join in December 6 Meeting of WCMA Health & Safety Group

Make plans today to attend the [next meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group](#), set for Tuesday, 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 other resources for employee safety training.

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
 - Employee Safety Training Resources
 - 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
 - Featured Speaker: David Schott, MS, CSP, Occupational Safety & Health Administration
 - Other Resources for Employee Safety Training
 - Group Business

- 2:30 p.m.: Adjournment



Danica Harrier, ASP
Occupational Safety & Health Administration



David Schott, MS, CSP
Occupational Safety & Health Administration

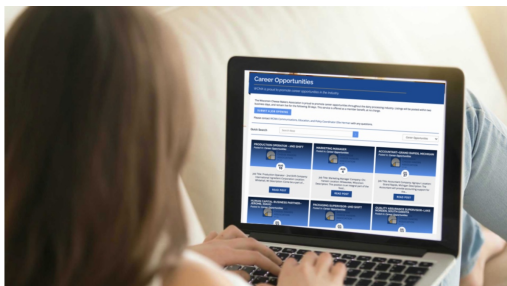
WCMA is offering two ways to participate: in-person at the Hilton Garden Inn (1220 S. Grand Ave., Sun Prairie, Wisconsin) or online via Zoom.

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.

RSVP TODAY

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

Share Career Openings on WCMA Jobs Board



Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to view current industry career opportunities.

Openings with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and WCMA members Foremost Farms USA, Tetra Pak are featured this week.

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.

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Limburger cheese gets a store of its own in Green County](#) (Featuring WCMA member Chalet Cheese Co-Op)

- WEAU-TV: [Shoppers urged to look for 'Something Special from Wisconsin'](#)

National/International

- Lancaster Farming: [Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf OKs \\$15M dairy processing tax credit](#)
- Hoard's Dairyman: [Will government purchases send prices higher?](#)
- KSAL-AM: [Kansas dairy industry gets boost](#) (Featuring WCMA member Hilmar Cheese Company)
- Albany Times Union: [State issues Listeria warning for raw milk](#)
- Phys.Org: [QR codes on milk cartons to offer window into livestock health and welfare](#)
- Saveur: [Chris Gentine on the joys of culinary collaboration and the art \(and science\) of affinage in Wisconsin](#)
- Pioneer Press: [Cheese is the perfect food to bring to Thanksgiving. Here are a cheese expert's top Midwestern picks.](#) (Featuring WCMA members Roelli Cheese and Uplands Cheese)

EDUCATION



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

Apply 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.

APPLY NOW

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



Front-Line Leaders Learn Strategies to Boost Staff Performance

Thanks to this week's Front-Line Leadership trainees, who energetically explored strategies to boost staff performance, including delegation and coaching practices.

Kudos also go to their employers Associated Milk Producers, Inc., Milk Specialties Global, Nelson-Jameson, Inc., V&V Supreme Food Products, and Winona Foods for supporting their employees' continued learning!

MEMBERSHIP

Distinguished Service Award Ballots Due Today



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 the end of the day (Tuesday, November 22).** The WCMA Board will make final selections, based on member votes, for the 2023 Distinguished Service Award honorees at its December meeting.

VOTE NOW

Questions? Please contact **WCMA Events Manager Caitlin Peirick**.

Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday



Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours from your Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association staff. We wish you a warm, restful, and happy holiday.

In observation of Thanksgiving, WCMA offices will be closed on Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25. Staff will return at 8 a.m. (CT) on Monday, November 28. Thank you for your understanding.

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001





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