



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## ADVOCACY



### USDA Sec. Vilsack Describes Support for DBIA to Spur Dairy Farm, Processor Innovation



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack addressed top dairy issues following a tour at a Wisconsin dairy farm on December 16. Vilsack urged producers to sign up for Dairy Margin Coverage and deflected questions about federal milk order reform back on a regionally-divided dairy industry. In a town hall format, WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer thanked Vilsack for his ongoing support of the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives program, including the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#) (DBIA).

Administered by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research and funded by USDA, the DBIA offers direct-to-business grants and technical assistance for dairy farmers and processors in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

On February 1, 2022, DBIA will begin accepting applications for its [next round of Dairy Business Builder grants](#), designed to help recipients diversify their business models and become more resilient to market changes.

---



## FDA Nominee Supports Labeling Enforcement

During a [Senate confirmation hearing](#) last week, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner-nominee Dr. Robert Califf noted his support for enforcement of the agency's own labeling standards. In response to questions from U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin), Dr. Califf said there is "almost nothing more fundamental about safety than people understanding exactly what they're ingesting, so I am committed to making this a priority if I am confirmed."

Baldwin is the author of the DAIRY PRIDE Act, which would require the FDA to issue guidance for nationwide enforcement of mislabeled imitation dairy products within 90 days of the bill's passage. WCMA is a strong proponent of the DAIRY PRIDE Act, and advocates for truth-in-food labeling at the federal and state level.

---

## Healthy WI Producer Security Fund May Keep Assessment Holiday in 2022



Dairy processors purchasing milk in Wisconsin enjoyed an "assessment holiday" - that is, no assessments or fees paid into the Wisconsin Agricultural Producer Security Program - in 2021. Continuing robustness in funds for the program indicates a similar holiday is likely in 2022. The program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

The advisory council to the producer security program, a group which includes WCMA,

learned December 9 that the pool of funds for the program now holds \$12.5 million, including \$7.7 million for dairy. The program pays dairy producers and grain and vegetable producers a portion of losses in case of a buyer default on payment.

The dairy fund pool grew modestly in the year ending June 30, 2021, gaining \$167,000. Growth slowed due to the assessment holiday. This pause in assessments is triggered when dairy funds exceed \$6 million (and the entire fund holds more than \$11 million). If dairy continues to exceed these trigger levels in March, the assessment holiday will continue throughout 2022. The holiday is offered to milk buyers who have been active in the producer security program for five years or longer.

A [complete report on the program](#), issued annually, notes that 96 organizations purchased milk from dairy farms in Wisconsin in the most recent fiscal year, compared to a peak of 120 organizations in 2014 and 2015. In 2021, the pool of funds benefited when a milk buyer that defaulted in 2019 paid back 100% of the default – \$164,896 – to the producer security program.



## POLICY COMMITTEE

### Sign Up Now to Attend January Meeting of WCMA Policy Committee

From Washington, DC to Wisconsin, WCMA is an impactful advocate for dairy processors and their supplier partners. In 2021, we've helped deliver millions of dollars in pandemic aid and business development grants to dairy processors, along with favorable tax policies and regulatory changes, \$5 million to boost Wisconsin agricultural exports, and \$8 million for industry research and education.

**Now, we invite you to join our advocacy efforts!** [Register today](#) to join in the next WCMA Policy Committee meeting, set for Wednesday, January 12 from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT) in Madison, Wisconsin or live, online.

#### Special Guests:



WDATCP Secretary  
Randy Romanski



State Senator  
Joan Ballweg

This hybrid meeting will feature special guest speakers **Secretary Randy Romanski** of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and **State Senator Joan Ballweg**, who serves as a member of the powerful Joint Finance Committee and as Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture.

WCMA's Policy Committee will also discuss federal and state efforts to enforce federal labeling regulations, protect common food names, and reform milk pricing and immigration policy.

Use your valuable voice to shape WCMA's advocacy agenda, and to effect meaningful change.



[SIGN UP NOW](#)

## RECOGNITION



### WCMA Recognizes Outstanding Industry Professionals

The WCMA Board of Directors has [selected 12 individuals to be recognized](#) next year at CheeseExpo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for their outstanding work in the dairy processing industry. WCMA is proud to announce the following honorees:

- **WCMA Life Member Award:** Andy Dederich of Chr. Hansen, Inc.
- **WCMA Babcock Awards:** Dr. Mark Johnson of the Center for Dairy Research and Dr. Paul Kindstedt of the University of Vermont
- **WCMA Cheese Industry Champion Awards:** Jeff Giffin of Masters Gallery Foods, Inc. and Bob & Richard Wagner of Weyauwega
- **WCMA Distinguished Service Awards:** James Manning of EDCO Food Products and Art Zimmer of Caloris Engineering
- **NEW - WCMA Luminary Awards:** Van Salmans of Salmans and Associates and Cathy Strange of Whole Foods Market
- **WCMA Vanguard Awards:** Steve Ottiger of Alpine Alpa/Guggisberg Cheese and Steve Yeager of Hilmar Cheese Company



# 2022 WCMA RECOGNITION AWARD RECIPIENTS



**Andy Dederich**  
Chr. Hansen, Inc.



**Dr. Mark Johnson**  
Center for Dairy Research



**Dr. Paul Kindstedt**  
University of Vermont



**Jeff Giffin**  
Masters Gallery Foods



**Bob & Richard Wagner**  
Weyauwega



**James Manning**  
EDCO Food Products



**Art Zimmer**  
Caloris Engineering



**Cathy Strange**  
Whole Foods Market



**Van Salmans**  
Salmans & Associates



**Steve Ottiger**  
Alpine Alpa/Guggisberg Cheese



**Steve Yeager**  
Hilmar Cheese

## CHEESE EXPO

Global Technology for Dairy Processors

April 12-14, 2022 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

[www.CheeseExpo.org](http://www.CheeseExpo.org)

Awards will be presented to all honorees during CheeseExpo, scheduled for April 12-14, 2022 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. For more information and to register to attend CheeseExpo, visit [CheeseExpo.org](http://CheeseExpo.org).

## COVID-19 UPDATES



## Federal Court Lifts Stay on Vaccine-or-Test Mandate; OSHA Extends Compliance Deadlines

On Friday, December 17, a three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals **lifted a stay** of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) for employers of 100 or more people.

While the ETS will take effect January 4, OSHA has issued **new enforcement deadlines**

to ensure employers have sufficient time to come into compliance with the rule. Under OSHA's new guidance, by **January 10, 2022**, employers must determine the vaccination status of each employee and keep related records, provide specific information about vaccines, and develop and implement written vaccination and testing policies. The ETS also allows large employers to permit employees to undergo weekly testing as an alternative to vaccination and, under the new OSHA deadlines, testing must begin on or before **February 9, 2022**.

Multiple plaintiffs have [filed emergency applications](#) for an immediate stay of the ETS with the U.S. Supreme Court, and their applications will be reviewed by Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who is assigned to hear petitions from the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Justice Kavanaugh could stay the ETS pending review of the entire Court, refer the applications to the full Court for a decision, or take no action pending the full Court's review. WCMA will keep members informed of all relevant developments.

WCMA has posted FAQs, sample workplace policies, employee educational materials required by OSHA, and more on its [COVID-19 resources page](#) on WisCheeseMakers.org, and [WCMA staff](#) are here to help members with questions related to the OSHA ETS.

## Coronavirus Headline News

### Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [COVID-19 surge could further overwhelm health care system, Wisconsin officials say](#)
- *WMTV-TV*: [Wisconsin high court to hear lawsuit challenging Dane Co. COVID-19 orders](#)
- *WDJT-TV*: [Gov. Evers: More than 20K Wisconsin farmers received aid through 2021 Farm Support Program](#)

### National/International

- *Outsider*: [Agriculture department announces \\$1.5 billion school meals program amid supply chain issues](#)
- *KLBK-TV*: [Where's the eggnog? Supply chain issue impacts holiday drink](#) (Featuring WCMA member Organic Valley)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Agriculture Secretary Vilsack says small dairy farms have an improved safety net and more aid coming](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



# WCMA Webinar

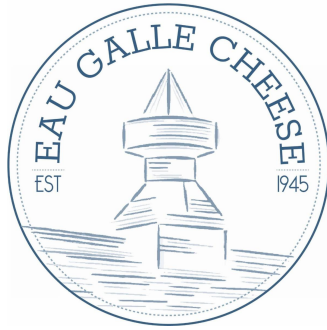
---

## Achieve Cost Savings Through Energy Efficiencies

### Sign Up for WCMA January Webinar on Cost Savings through Energy Efficiencies

Make plans today to join WCMA on Tuesday, January 11 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (CT) for a [free, members-only webinar](#) focused on cost savings that dairy processors can realize via energy efficiency - and the resources available to help get projects moving.

Mark Stover, Operations Manager for the [Focus on Energy](#) program in Wisconsin will detail the incentives available to manufacturers to upgrade existing facilities – or start new construction projects.



WCMA members Sargento, Sartori Company, Great Lakes Cheese Company, Meister Cheese Company and Eau Galle Cheese have worked with Focus on Energy in recent years to enhance energy efficiencies. We'll also welcome Eau Galle Cheese's Steve Bechel and Dan Sabelko to share their experiences.

Following formal presentations, WCMA staff will facilitate a question-and-answer session with presenters. Members who prefer to submit questions anonymously may send them to WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney at [rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org) by close of business on Monday, January 10.

This offering is the latest in WCMA's [monthly webinar series](#). Webinar topics are driven by WCMA member feedback and will cover a range of themes such as business development, communication strategies, and industry resources.

**REGISTER NOW**

---

## Join WCMA Young Professionals in Marshfield



**SIGN UP TODAY**

Act now to reserve your space in WCMA's next Young Professionals event on Friday, January 21!

We'll start with a tour of Nasonville Dairy in Marshfield, Wisconsin, followed by a networking lunch at nearby Rose Bowl Lanes Bowling Alley.

Registration includes both lunch and activities, and costs \$30 per person. Only 11 spots are left, so don't delay!

Have questions or ideas for future Young Professionals gatherings? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

---

**INDUSTRY UPDATES**





## WCMA Shares Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Resources in December Webinar

WCMA members received a wealth of practical tips and useful answers to their questions during last week's exclusive webinar: [Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Resources to Grow Your Dairy Business](#). Our expert speakers from the DFW leadership team also shared the following helpful resources:

- [WisconsinCheese.com](https://www.wisconsincheese.com)
- [Facebook.com/WisconsinCheese](https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinCheese)
- [Instagram.com/WisconsinCheese](https://www.instagram.com/WisconsinCheese)
- [Instagram.com/Cheeselandia](https://www.instagram.com/Cheeselandia)
- General Contacts: <https://www.wisconsincheesemakers.com/Dairy-Companies>
- To determine your DCC Representative, contact Kirk Scott at [kscott@wisconsincheesemakers.com](mailto:kscott@wisconsincheesemakers.com) or via (608) 203-7229.

This webinar was part of WCMA's monthly webinar series, offered to members at no cost. Reserve your space today for our [January session](#) focused on achieving cost savings through energy efficiencies!

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

---

## USDA Soliciting Butter Products

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting bids for [butter products](#) for use in federal food assistance programs. Bids are due **January 4** at 9:00 a.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

---





## Apply by January 7 for Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants

WCMA members operating in Wisconsin can apply now for [Dairy Processor Grants](#) of up to \$50,000, available via the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP). **Thanks to WCMA's lobbying efforts, the available funding for this program has been doubled to \$400,000 for 2022!** Applications are due January 7, with successful applicants to be announced in February.

Eligible applicants must operate a licensed dairy processing plant in Wisconsin that is engaged in pasteurizing, processing, or manufacturing milk or dairy products. Awards can be used to address a wide range of dairy business needs, such as food safety, staff training, plant expansion or modernization, and professional consulting services. Projects must increase capacity or production, and processors are required to provide a match of 20 percent of the grant amount.

Applications must be received by [WDATCP staff](#) by 5:00 p.m. (CT) on Friday, January 7, 2022. For assistance with your application, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**APPLY TODAY**

## EDUCATION



# WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

**Students: Apply Now for WCMA Scholarships**

Do you know a student who's pursuing a degree and/or career in the dairy industry? Remind them to apply by February 16 for a [WCMA student scholarship!](#)

Seven scholarships worth a total of \$19,000 will be granted in March 2022, with awards presented on April 13 during CheeseExpo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Two students will be selected for the [WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#), worth \$3,000 each. Any employee or child of an employee of a WCMA dairy manufacturing, processing, or marketing member company or cooperative may apply.

Three students will receive the [WCMA Cheese Industry Supplier Student Scholarship](#), also worth \$3,000 each. Any employee or child of an employee of a WCMA supplier member company may apply.

WCMA will also select two students to receive the [Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship](#), worth \$2,000 each. This award, named in honor of Championship Cheese Contest Chairman and generous donor Brian Eggebrecht, aims to support students pursuing technical certificates, technical diplomas, or associate degrees that may lead to a career in the dairy industry. Unlike other WCMA scholarships, applicants are not required to be connected to a WCMA member company or cooperative.

For more information or to download an application, visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) or contact [WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt](#).



## Reserve Space in WCMA Leadership Classes

Research shows a [clear link between training and worker retention](#) – and WCMA members know from firsthand experience the value of keeping skilled team players. WCMA is here to help with a fresh line-up of our popular leadership trainings. By member request, all trainings will be offered in a hybrid format, allowing participants to join in-person in Madison, Wisconsin, or online via Zoom.



Our Front-Line Leadership classes, designed specifically for new and seasoned supervisors, can be taken in any order:

- February 10: Front-Line Leadership - [Part A: Developing Essential Leadership Skills](#) - four spaces left
- March 17: Front-Line Leadership - [Part B: Positively Impacting Staff Performance](#) - five spaces left
- April 7: Front-Line Leadership - [Part C: Cultivating a Team](#) - four spaces left

WCMA's [Next Step Leadership](#) course also returns Thursday, March 31 for established leaders who have completed any of our Front-Line or Advanced Leadership trainings. In this unique session, we'll review basic leadership concepts and take a deep dive into talent retention strategies.

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

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

## WORKFORCE



## Six Booths Remaining at WCMA Job Fair at CheeseExpo 2022

Recruit the best and brightest at the [WCMA Job Fair](#), set for Tuesday, April 12 from 3:00-5:00 p.m., just ahead of CheeseExpo 2022 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin!

[RESERVE YOUR BOOTH](#)

**Only six spaces remain** for exhibiting member companies and cooperatives, and both dairy processors and industry suppliers are invited to participate. A booth cost of just \$200 includes your table, skirting, chairs, passes for up to four representatives from your



organization to staff the Job Fair, as well as a full buffet of snacks and beverages. Space is first-come, first-served, so act now to reserve your booth!

This special event offers an exclusive opportunity for WCMA members to connect with students participating in the Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest, which will also be held at CheeseExpo. Students hail from 15 colleges and universities across the U.S. WCMA is also working with representatives from the University of Wisconsin System, the Wisconsin Technical College System and various high school agricultural program coordinators to bring in more prospective interns and employees for your businesses!

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

---

## Share Job Openings on WCMA Jobs Board



Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to see and share career opportunities from members Caloris Engineering and Savencia Cheese - Kolb-Lena, Inc.

Have an opportunity at your company or cooperative? WCMA members can [post openings](#) on the Jobs Board anytime - it's free and easy!

**POST JOB OPENINGS**

---

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin Public Radio:* [Food prices have gone up in the last year. But Wisconsin producers aren't necessarily being paid more.](#)
- *Brownfield Ag News:* [Vilsack says he's not for opening FMMOs until dairy industry reaches consensus](#)
- *Wisconsin State Farmer:* [Late in your gift giving? Cheeses purchases will save the day](#) (Featuring WCMA members Arena Cheese and Decatur Dairy)

### National/International

- *DairyBusiness:* [Global milk output is slowing](#)
- *Dairy Herd Management:* [Canada's demand for U.S. dairy soars](#)
- *The Hill:* [Biden administration unveils efforts to add to trucking workforce](#)
- *Associated Press:* [Horizon Organic to extend Northeast milk contracts six month](#)
- *Cheese Market News:* [Mike Durkin: Failure isn't an option when it comes to dairy sustainability](#)
- *WXIN-TV:* [Purdue dashboard shows "Achilles heel" of food supply chain](#)
- *NNY 360:* [Philly cream cheese this Christmas: Production, demand are up and dairy producers are happy](#)
- *Farm Progress:* [Butter supplies ready for holiday baking](#)

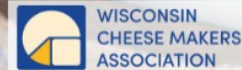
---

## MEMBERSHIP



*Merry  
Christmas*

*From all your friends at WCMA,  
wishing you and your loved ones  
happiness and health!*



## **Merry Christmas from WCMA!**

Please note that WCMA offices will be closed on Friday, December 24 and Monday, December 27, in observance of Christmas. We wish you a happy and safe holiday, and thank you for your ongoing support of WCMA!

---

## **WCMA Social Media Campaign Highlights Dairy Processing Industry Leaders**

WCMA invites you to get to know the 21 enthusiastic industry leaders who serve on our Board of Directors and guide our work each day. We'll profile the Board on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and in this newsletter on a weekly basis. This week, we're pleased to introduce Jeff Gentine of Masters Gallery Foods, Inc.!

## Jeff Gentine Masters Gallery Foods, Inc.

### **Favorite Cheese**

Spanish Manchego or extra aged Wisconsin cheddar

### **Proudest Achievement**

Taking the reins as CEO of Masters Gallery five years ago, knowing I'm helping to realize the dreams my late father (who founded Masters Gallery in 1974) had for the company.

### **Why I Support WCMA**

"WCMA does a great job in bringing the industry together, giving us a forum to discuss common issues and advocate for important state and federal legislation. Plus, it's just a good group of people!"



Have an idea for a WCMA social media campaign or other communication? Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).

---

## WCMA Welcomes New Supplier Members

Join WCMA as we welcome two new supplier members this week: [DSO Fluid Handling](#) and [Pure Bioscience, Inc.](#) Primary contacts for the company can be found in WCMA's [online member directory](#).

For 130 years, WCMA has served as the voice of cheese and dairy manufacturers, processors, marketers, and suppliers to the industry. Today, WCMA represents 110 dairy processing companies and cooperatives operating across the U.S. and around the world, and more than 575 supplier companies. Thanks for your engagement and support.

---

WisCheeseMakers.org

