



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## SIGNATURE EVENTS



## Enter U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Today

2023 UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP  
**CHEESE  
CONTEST**  
21<sup>st</sup> BIENNIAL

Enter the [United States Championship Cheese Contest](#) by January 18 to receive [valuable technical feedback](#) on your products from the country's top dairy product experts - and a chance at national recognition.

For a list of all 118 Contest classes available in 2023, rules, shipping information, and deadlines, please consult the [2023 Contest Entry Kit](#).

The nation's premier dairy product competition is set for February 21-23 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, with two days of evaluation by a team of expert judges, followed by the exciting Championship Round to determine the nation's Top 20 cheeses. The Contest culminates in the livestreamed announcement of the 2023 U.S. Champion Cheese.

Questions may be directed to [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

**ENTER NOW**



## Register Now for CheeseCon 2023



Less than one month remains to enjoy the best available rates on all registrations for [CheeseCon](#), set for April 4-6 in Madison, Wisconsin! Act quickly: early bird discounts expire January 18.

Featuring our [largest-ever exhibit floor](#), [world-class educational seminars](#), a wealth of [networking opportunities](#), and exciting [celebrations of industry excellence](#), CheeseCon is the must-attend event of the year for CEOs, dairy plant managers, human resources professionals, marketers, and more.

Visit [CheeseCon.org](#) today to reserve your space at the dairy processing industry's premier event! Questions may be directed to [events@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:events@wischeesemakers.org).

[REGISTER NOW](#)

[MEMBERSHIP](#)



## Happy New Year from WCMA!

Please note that our offices will be closed Friday, December 30, in observance of New Year's Eve. We wish you a happy and safe holiday, and thank you for your ongoing support of WCMA!



## Register Now to Join WCMA Young Professionals' January Gathering



Join WCMA member employees under 40 for a [facility tour, hands-on learning opportunity, and networking lunch](#) Friday, January 27 in Madison, Wisconsin.

The event begins at 9 a.m. and includes a cheese sensory activity with CDR's Sensory Coordinator, Brandon Prochaska, a tour of the new CDR building and pilot plant, and lunch sponsored by C.D. Smith Construction.

Registration is \$25 per person and is only open to the first 30 attendees, so early registration is encouraged. Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager](#)

SIGN UP TODAY

# WELCOME



## NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

### Dairy Industry Suppliers



**Total Energy Systems, LLC**

New WCMA supplier member [Total Energy Systems, LLC](#) has provided power solutions for over 60 years to a wide variety of industries.

**#HowToRobot**

*Connecting the World of Robots*

New WCMA supplier member [HowToRobot](#) connects buyers, whether looking for specific solutions or to get started with robotics, to a large network of robot suppliers.



**WATLOW**  
Powered by Possibility

**Eurotherm**

New WCMA supplier member [Eurotherm/Watlow](#) is a global supplier of industrial thermal electric solutions.

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

ADVOCACY



## WCMA Members Discuss 2023 Lobbying Efforts

Many thanks to the members of WCMA's Policy Committee who met today to set a robust advocacy agenda for 2023! The group determined a list of key policy priorities including federal milk pricing reform, immigration reform, continued funding for dairy industry grants and research, food labeling accuracy, broadband expansion, and more.

As WCMA continues to serve as a strong voice for dairy manufacturers and processors and their supplier partners at the state and federal levels, we appreciate members' support and engagement. To share your ideas, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



# POLICY COMMITTEE

## Register to Join WCMA Policy Committee January 17 at Wisconsin State Capitol

Register now to join the WCMA Policy Committee in an [engaging day of advocacy](#) at the Wisconsin State Capitol on Tuesday, January 17. Members may participate in-person at the Concourse Hotel in Madison or virtually via Zoom.

Members will have the opportunity to hear from federal and state lawmakers about the session ahead, and to advocate for industry priorities. Don't miss this valuable chance to make your voice heard through direct advocacy!

Speakers and legislative meetings are still being confirmed. To share questions and ideas, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**RSVP TODAY**

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *WBAY-TV*: [Sargento makes Touchdowns for Hunger donation](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)
- *UpNorthNews*: [From Wisconsin to the White House: How a Badger State dairy got its cheese served at Biden's first state dinner](#)

### National/International

- *Reuters*: [U.S. expands dispute settlement consultations over Canadian dairy tariff policies](#)
- *Agri-Pulse*: [Congress expands liability protection for donated food](#)
- *Dairy Reporter*: [Cheesemaker leverages the power of AI to improve cheese quality, yield](#)
- *KSRO Radio*: [Redwood Empire Food Bank gets large donation from Marin French Cheese Company](#)

## EDUCATION



## Save the Date: Joint Industry Meeting with Wisconsin DNR March 16

WCMA members are encouraged to mark their calendars for March 16 and [register now](#) for the popular annual gathering of industry environmental staff and regulators from Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources.

This live, in-person meeting, with a live online option, covers hot topics in environmental regulation and WPDES permitting, with joint presentations by agency staff and industry experts. The meeting, beginning with 9:30 a.m. (CT) registration and closing at 2:30 p.m., at the Hilton Garden Inn in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, provides continuing education credits for certified wastewater operators.

Registration is \$45 for in-person attendance and \$25 for online participation. Any WCMA member is welcome to attend, but space is limited, so sign up today! For more information, contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).



# WCMA Webinar

## Strategic Social Media for Dairy Businesses

### RSVP for Free WCMA Webinar Focused on Social Media Strategies

Mark your calendar now for Tuesday, January 24 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) and make plans to join [WCMA's next free, members-only webinar](#) focused on social media strategies for dairy manufacturers and processors!

Learn the basics of building your following, crafting an impactful social media plan, and connecting with consumers. Hear directly from WCMA members on how they've leveraged social media to drive sales and build their brand, and learn ways WCMA can help support and amplify your efforts. Speakers will be announced in January.

Presenters will reserve time to field audience questions during the webinar. If you'd like to share a question in advance, please email [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by Monday, January 23 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

**REGISTER NOW**



### Limited Space Remaining in 2023 WCMA Leadership Trainings

Seats are filling quickly in WCMA's highly rated Front-Line and Advanced Leadership trainings, beginning in January. [Act now](#) to reserve space for yourself or your valued team members in these popular courses!

[Front-Line Leadership](#) is designed to help new and experienced supervisors build critical skills in conflict resolution, communication, stress and time management, and cultivation of a team mentality. Since 2017, over 500 trainees have graduated from this popular program. The three-part series is offered a la carte and may be taken in any order. Each part costs just \$135 per person.

Open to mid-level managers and employees transitioning to management positions, the [Advanced Leadership Series](#) pushes participants to take initiative in driving positive change for their companies through creative problem-solving techniques and strategies for collaboration. guest speakers from industry, group discussions, and a final project designed to help participants showcase their new knowledge. Tuition is just \$495 per person, and enrollment is limited to 20 individuals who undergo the training as a cohort.

Members with questions about WCMA's educational offerings may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**SIGN UP NOW**



## WCMA Scholarship Applications Due February 7



### WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

Students pursuing degrees or careers related to the dairy processing industry, including WCMA members and their children, can apply now through Tuesday, February 7 for [WCMA's annual student scholarships](#).

In 2023, a total of \$19,000 will be distributed to seven recipients across three scholarships:

- The [WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#), worth \$3,000 each, will be awarded to two students. Any employee or child of an employee at a WCMA dairy manufacturing, processing, or marketing member company may apply. 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. The 2022 recipients of



these awards were given to Jenna Jakel of Loos Machine & Automation, Stephanie Kraemer of IFF (Danisco), and Jack Pluta of Excel Engineering.

- Two students will 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 this scholarship will be given to students pursuing technical certificates, technical diplomas, or associate degrees that may lead to a career in the dairy industry. 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.

Winners will be announced in March, with awards presented to recipients on Wednesday, April 5 at [\*\*CheeseCon\*\*](#) in Madison, Wisconsin.

All applicants must include school transcripts, a letter of recommendation, and a completed application form. Questions may be directed to [\*\*WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt\*\*](#).

**APPLY TODAY**

## Additional Industry Training Opportunities

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

- January 24: [\*\*BRCGS for Food Safety Issue 9: Conversion for Sites Short Course\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 15: [\*\*Internal Auditing Principles\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 15-16: [\*\*Master Cheesemaker Short Course - Exploring and Investigating Cheese Defects \(In-Person\)\*\*](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- February 16: [\*\*Supplier Auditing Principles\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 28: [\*\*Dairy Plant Food Safety Workshop Hosted by Hilmar Cheese and Leprino Foods\*\*](#) - Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
- March 7-8: [\*\*Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(In-Person\)\*\*](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 8: [\*\*BRCGS for Food Safety Issue 9: Conversion for Sites Short Course\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 21-24: [\*\*Cheese Grading, Evaluation & Judging \(In-Person\)\*\*](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 27: [\*\*Prerequisite Programs Course\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 28-29: [\*\*HACCP Training for Processors\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 30: [\*\*Advanced HACCP: Verification and Validation\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- April 25-27: [\*\*FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food \(PCQI\) Training\*\*](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- 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



## Apply Now for New WCMA Collaborative Market Access Grants

WCMA is **now accepting applications** from new and experienced Wisconsin dairy exporters for funding to help bring their world-class products to the global marketplace.

By completing a **simple, one-page application**, companies and cooperatives are eligible for reimbursable grants of up to \$15,000 to be awarded through a non-competitive process. Applicants are not required to be members of WCMA. A 30 percent grant match is required. Costs incurred prior to a company or cooperative's application for funds are not eligible for reimbursement.

WCMA gained funds from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's Collaborative Market Access Grants. Companies that sign on to accept these grant funds will be allowed to participate in any of the following industry trade shows in 2023:

- **Gulfood**, February 20-24
- **SIAL America**, March 28-30
- **Food&HotelAsia**, April 25-28
- **SIAL Canada**, May 9-11
- **Food & Hospitality China**, May 10-12
- **Anuga**, October 7-11
- **Food&HotelVietnam**, November 21-23

Awards may be used for the following trade show expenses:

- Registration and booth expenses for an international trade show/exhibit
- Registration for international conferences/meetings where the company is presenting and having business meetings to increase its international exports
- Shipping charges to and from the show for booth, display, samples, literature and/or equipment
- In-country interpreter services during an approved trip
- Costs associated with foreign-language translation of brochures and supporting materials at a trade show
- Design services, printing, marketing and advertising associated with trade show participation

Completed applications and questions may be directed to **[WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#)**.



## WCMA Grants Library Showcases Industry Funding Opportunities

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org/Grants](https://www.wischeesemakers.org/grants) today for a new library of grants and financial resources available to dairy manufacturers and processors in Wisconsin and across the United States. Refer back to this list for key information including grant amounts and matching requirements, eligibility details, application deadlines, and helpful links.

Questions about grants and other funding opportunities may be directed to [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

## Bennett Valley Cheese

Gilmanton,  
Wisconsin

DBIA Grant Recipient  
2020



Since the creation of the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance \(DBIA\)](#) in the 2018 Farm Bill, WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research have partnered to administer over \$3.7 million in 79 grants 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 #DBIADelivers, we're pleased to showcase [Bennett Valley Cheese](#). The Gilmanton, Wisconsin company is using Dairy Business Innovation Alliance grant funding to build an artisan cheese plant and on-site storefront near a small Jersey dairy farm where they are sourcing their milk. They will make cheese curds for sale in their store, as well as in local restaurants, taverns and convenience stores.

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  
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