



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### 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!



## Reserve Free Export Consultative Services

Just **five spaces are available** for up to 30 hours of export consultative services with Ryan Wucherer of MCT Dairies, offered through WCMA at no cost to dairy processors thanks to funding from the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports. Both new and experienced dairy exporters are encouraged to **act now to reserve their spot** in this valuable program.

Businesses new to exporting will receive assistance in evaluating their product line, identifying potential customers, creating and executing an export plan, and more. Those already engaged in export activities will benefit from an evaluation of their export business model with suggestions for refining their plan, recommendations on how to improve their export offerings and techniques, and support in executing their export plans.

Have questions or need assistance? Please contact **WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen**.

**DOWNLOAD APPLICATION**



## FDA Extends Comment Period on "Healthy" Food Labeling Definition

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has [set a new deadline of February 16, 2023](#) for comments on its proposed rule to revise its definition of the word "healthy," requiring products using this designation to contain a meaningful amount of certain ingredients such as dairy, fruits, vegetables, and others.

As WCMA shared in a previous newsletter, industry advocates have urged FDA to take into account the health benefits of dairy products when calculating nutrient limits such as fat content. Comments may be [submitted online](#). WCMA will also submit comments on members' behalf.

[SUBMIT COMMENTS](#)

### ADVOCACY

## WCMA Notes: Champion Practical Immigration Reform as Workforce Solution

Despite dairy processors' best efforts to attract new employees with competitive compensation packages, flexible schedules, and new technology and equipment, WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney writes, members large and small nationwide still struggle to find workers to meet the growing global demand for their products.



One solution WCMA members recommend? Practical, meaningful immigration reform. Read more about the specific policy actions members support and how you can make your voice heard in [this month's WCMA Notes column](#).

[READ NOW](#)



## POLICY COMMITTEE

### Help Shape WCMA Advocacy Efforts at December Policy Committee Meeting

Register now to join the next virtual meeting of the WCMA Policy Committee on Tuesday, December 20 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). As the 2023 federal and state legislative sessions approach, members will discuss and set WCMA's 2023 policy advocacy agendas. An online survey will be distributed in advance of this meeting, to help gauge priorities ahead of our discussion and to ensure more members can provide input in our process.

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

[ATTEND MEETING](#)

**SIGNATURE EVENTS**



## Showcase Your Company at CheeseCon 2023

Connect with thousands of dairy industry CEOs, marketers, distributors, plant managers, suppliers, and more as [an exhibitor at CheeseCon 2023](#), set for April 4-6 in Madison, Wisconsin.

CheeseCon's biggest-ever trade show floor, [featuring hundreds](#) of the industry's most trusted supplier companies, is already **over 80% sold out**. Don't miss out on the nation's largest gathering of dairy processors. Reserve your booth space today!

[REGISTER TO EXHIBIT](#)

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## U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Leaders Plan 2023 Event



On December 1, the WCMA Contest Committee, industry volunteers who lead the development and execution of our Championship Cheese Contests, toured the new Resch Expo facility in Green Bay, Wisconsin, site of the [2023 United States Championship Cheese Contest](#).

The facility offers excellent logistics for the event, set for February 21-23, and ample room for the public to watch the Contest live, in-person and sample delicious dairy products.

Contest entry forms are arriving at a record pace - the final deadline to enter the Contest is January 18, 2023. For Contest information and easy online entry, visit

ENTER NOW

EDUCATION



# WCMA Webinar

## Expanded Education for Dairy Processors

### Explore New Learning Opportunities in WCMA December Webinar

Join us on Tuesday, December 13 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) for a [free webinar focused on new, upcoming educational programming](#) for dairy processors.

Plan your 2023 professional development with presentations chock-full of learning opportunities from the Center for Dairy Research, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and WCMA. Our featured guest speakers include:

- Andrea Miller; Outreach Program Manager, Education & Training; Center for Dairy Research
- Adam Brock; Vice President of Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Compliance; Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- Michelle Farner, Dairy Pilot Plant Manager, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
- Rebekah Sweeney, Senior Director of Programs & Policy, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association



**Andrea Miller**  
Center for Dairy  
Research



**Adam Brock**  
Dairy Farmers of  
Wisconsin



**Michelle Farner**  
University of  
Wisconsin-River Falls

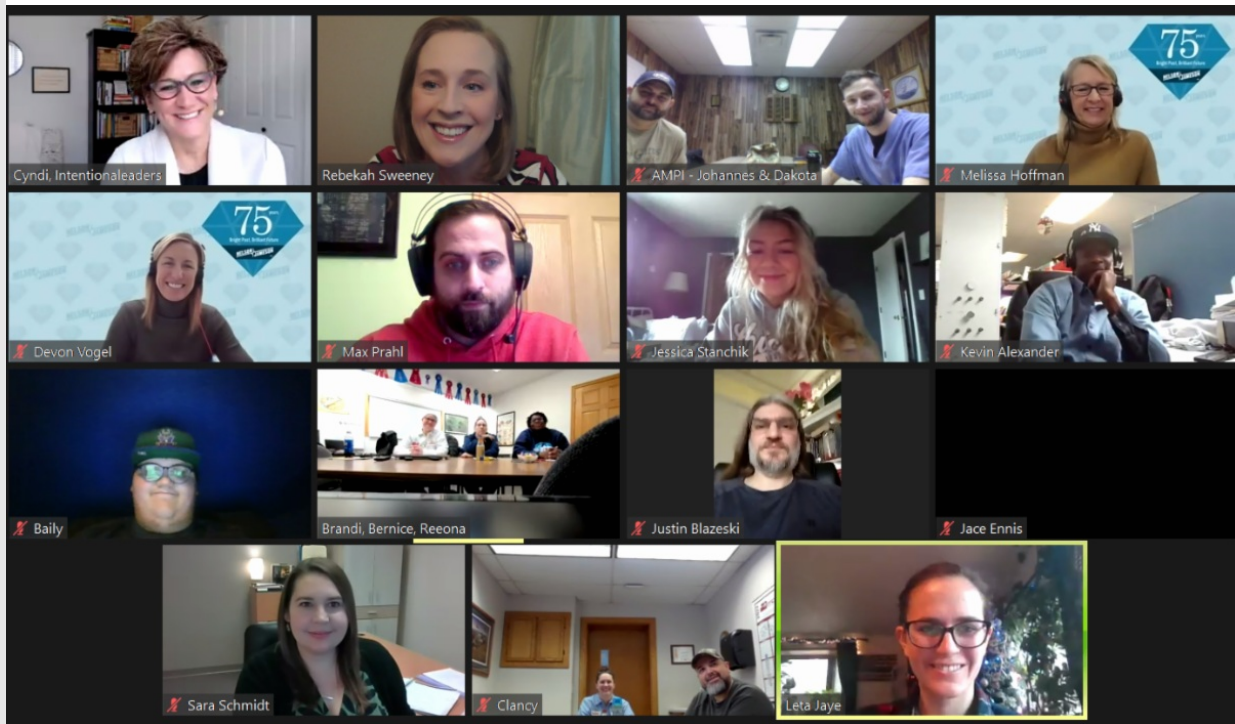


**Rebekah Sweeney**  
Wisconsin Cheese  
Makers Association

Presenters will also reserve time to field audience questions during the webinar. Advance questions may be emailed to [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by Monday, December 12 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

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

REGISTER NOW



## WCMA Member Employees Conclude Front-Line Leadership Training

Kudos to the most recent group of trainees from Associated Milk Producers Inc., Milk Specialties Global, Nelson-Jameson, V&V Supremo, and Winona Foods. These member employees this week completed Part C of WCMA's Front-Line Leadership course, focused on building a successful team mentality.



# WCMA Industry Education

## Invest in Valued Team Members with 2023 WCMA Leadership Trainings

Act now to take advantage of the next round of WCMA's highly rated Front-Line and Advanced Leadership trainings, beginning in January. Registration is **now open online** to all WCMA members. Classes in 2023 will be delivered virtually, allowing participants to join the interactive trainings live online from anywhere in the world.

**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](#).

**REGISTER NOW**



## Apply Today for WCMA Scholarships

Students connected to the dairy industry, including WCMA member employees and their children, are encouraged to [apply now through February 7](#) for WCMA's annual student scholarship program.

A total of \$19,000 will be distributed to seven recipients across three scholarships. Winners will be announced in March, with awards presented to recipients on Wednesday, April 5 at [CheeseCon](#) in Madison, Wisconsin.

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 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.

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](#).

**SUBMIT APPLICATION**

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## Applications Open for CWCBA Scholarships

The Central Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association (CWCBA), in partnership with the Marshfield Area Community Foundation, is [now accepting applications](#) for its 2023 scholarships. All applications are due Sunday, February 5.

Two scholarships of \$1,500 each will be awarded: one to an applicant from a CWCBA cheese or butter member plant, and the second to an applicant from a CWCBA supplier member company. Students must be enrolled full-time in any program of study, with an emphasis given to those pursuing degrees related to dairy or food science.

Applicants are encouraged to [apply online](#), but a [paper application](#) is also available. Questions may be directed to [CWCBA staff](#).

**APPLY NOW**

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## 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:

- 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
- 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



## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin Ag Connection*: [State cheese production falls slightly in October](#)
- *Tasting Table*: [Muenster cheese's path to the U.S. ends in Wisconsin](#)
- *Topeka Capital-Journal*: [Toppers Pizza will bring its Wisconsin cheese to Topeka](#)
- *Wisconsin State Farmer*: [Cheese: A perfect gift for the holidays or anytime](#) (Featuring WCMA members Arena Cheese, Decatur Dairy, and Henning's Cheese)

### National/International

- *Agri-Pulse Daybreak*: [China extends tariff exclusion for U.S. whey](#) (starts at 4:53)
- *Dairy Processing*: [A solid year for cheese sales](#)
- *Albuquerque Journal*: [Cheese company's NM expansion finishes years ahead of schedule](#) (Featuring WCMA member Saputo Dairy USA)
- *Reuters*: [Farm, consumer groups urge U.S. to block Kroger's planned \\$25B buy of Albertsons](#) (Featuring WCMA member Kroger)
- *POLITICO Pro*: [Congress unlikely to extend baby formula tariff relief before looming deadline](#)
- *Brownfield Ag News*: [Michigan Farm Bureau outlines next dairy policy steps](#)

## WORKFORCE



### WCMA Gathers Experts for OSHA Updates, Resources at Health & Safety Group Meeting

Many thanks to the WCMA member employees who joined today's meeting of the Health & Safety Group. WCMA also thanks expert guest speakers Danica Harrier of WisCon, David Schott of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Matthew Lind of Chippewa Valley Technical College for their insights and helpful resources on safe storage and use of combustible dust; OSHA's Local Emphasis Program (LEP) focused on food manufacturing; slip, trip and fall prevention; and employee training.

WCMA's Health & Safety Group is dedicated to developing resources to help members assess and improve their health and safety policies, prepare for future inspections, and connect with their peers in industry. Its [next hybrid meeting](#) is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1.

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

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## Join WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Meeting Tomorrow

All WCMA members are welcome to join the next virtual meeting of the Workforce & Education Committee on Wednesday, December 7 from 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (CT). The December meeting agenda includes the launch of WCMA's industry onboarding and recruitment videos, the 2023 WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey, and other WCMA workforce tools.

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

[JOIN MEETING](#)

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WISCONSIN  
CHEESE MAKERS  
ASSOCIATION  
EST. 1891

## JOBS BOARD



## View, Share Industry Career Opportunities

Have an open position at your company or cooperative? Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to view and post career opportunities across the dairy processing industry.

WCMA members may [post up to 10 openings](#) per company, per month on the Jobs Board - for free! This week features postings from WCMA, the Center for Dairy Research, and members Foremost Farms USA and Tetra Pak.

Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions.

**POST OPEN POSITIONS**

**GRANTS**



## View, Apply for Funding Opportunities in New WCMA Online Grant Library

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org/Grants](https://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](#).

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## Apply for Dairy Processor Grants by January 30



Wisconsin dairy manufacturers and processors can [apply now through January 30](#) for a new round of Dairy Processor Grants administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP).

The program, which aims to strengthen Wisconsin's dairy processing industry, saw its [funding doubled in the state budget](#) following successful advocacy efforts by WCMA.

In 2023, grants of up to \$50,000 each will be awarded following a competitive review process. Recipients will be required to match at least 20 percent of their grant amount. Questions may be directed to [WDATCP staff](#).

**APPLY TODAY**

## Associated Milk Producers Inc.



DBIA Grant  
Recipient  
2021

Paynesville,  
Minnesota

### #DBIADelivers Spotlights Grant Recipients: Associated Milk Producers, Inc.

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.

This week in #DBIADelivers, we're pleased to showcase [Associated Milk Producers Inc.](#) This dairy farmer-owned cooperative won a DBIA grant in 2021 to invest in equipment to standardize milk received from area farms at its Paynesville, Minnesota plant. Driven by customer demand for additional varieties of cheese, the investment also supports the co-op's mission to maximize member returns.

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](http://WisCheeseMakers.org)  
(608) 286-1001



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