



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS



Deadline Approaching: Enter 2022 World Champion Cheese Contest Today!

Just over **one week remains** to visit WorldChampionCheese.org and enter your cheese, butter, yogurt, and dry dairy ingredients in the 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest. All entries are due by next Wednesday, January 26, so enter now! [Watch our new video](#) to hear more about why entrants value the technical feedback they receive at the Contest from our team of expert judges.

Following the January 26 deadline, entrants will package and ship their products to the WOW Logistics warehouse in Little Chute, Wisconsin. There, a team of cheese industry volunteers, led by Contest Logistics Director Randy Swensen from Wisconsin Aging & Grading Cheese Inc., will devote days to sorting and preparing the entries for judging.

This arrangement marks the 20th year that WOW Logistics; Wisconsin Aging and Grading Cheese, Inc.; and Preferred Transit, Inc. have generously partnered with WCMA to process Contest entries.

The 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest will be held March 1-3 in Madison, Wisconsin, with the World Champion Cheese named at 2:00 p.m. (CT) on Thursday, March 3. In lieu of public admission, WCMA will bring all the exciting action to the global cheese community via social media and WorldChampionCheese.org.

Have questions about the Contest? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten](#)

ENTER TODAY



CheeseExpo Fosters Next Generation of Dairy Processing Professionals

Young and emerging dairy processing professionals will find a wealth of opportunities for connection and growth at [CheeseExpo](#), scheduled for April 12-14 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Registration is open now at [CheeseExpo.org](#). [Watch our video](#) to hear more from attendees on why they appreciate CheeseExpo's many networking opportunities.

Attendees under 40 will appreciate the chance to catch up with existing colleagues and forge new connections at WCMA's Young Professionals event. Following the Tetra Pak Welcome Reception on Tuesday, April 12, join us at 7:00 p.m. (CT) for an evening of fun and networking at Drink Wisconsinly Pub (320 W. Highland Ave., Milwaukee).

On Wednesday, April 13, watch as teams of undergraduate students test their skills in the Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest. In this 106-year-old competition, dairy products are evaluated by a group of industry experts, followed by students using the same methods. Students who score closest to the expert evaluations are honored with awards. The Collegiate Contest helps students showcase their training, achieve recognition alongside their peers, and connect with the larger dairy processing industry.

With over 600 supplier booths on the sold-out exhibit floor, innovative seminars led by top experts, and celebrations honoring industry excellence, [CheeseExpo](#) is the must-attend event of the year for dairy processing professionals worldwide. For the best rates, register by February 1!

REGISTER TODAY



Supreme Court Blocks OSHA Vaccine-or-Test Mandate for Large Employers

The Supreme Court last Thursday [issued a ruling](#) blocking a mandatory vaccine-or-test rule for employers of 100 or more workers.

The court's majority, in an [unsigned opinion](#), said the Biden Administration didn't have the unilateral power to broadly impose a mandate on employers requiring that they ensure their workers were vaccinated or tested every week for COVID-19.

More than 80 million people would have been impacted by the rule, issued in November as an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A separate vaccine mandate for federal contractors has not yet been considered by the Supreme Court.

Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions.



Biden Orders 1B Free Rapid Tests, Directs Insurers to Cover At-Home Testing Costs

Americans will now have access to free at-home rapid coronavirus tests as the Biden administration **ramps up efforts** to increase access to at-home testing amid a surge of cases driven by the Omicron variant.

Starting tomorrow, January 19, U.S. households will be able to **order up to four** at-home COVID tests at no cost through www.COVIDtests.gov. Following President Biden's commitment to purchase one billion at-home rapid tests for distribution, officials have reportedly already awarded contracts to deliver more than 420 million of the tests.

The Biden administration has also **directed private health insurers** to cover the cost of up to eight at-home testing kits per person, per month. This requirement took effect on January 15 and does not include rapid or PCR tests ordered by a healthcare provider.

Coronavirus Headline News

Wisconsin

- *WBAY-TV*: [**COVID-19 in Wisconsin: 1.2 million in Wisconsin tested positive**](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [**Wisconsin reports more than 35,000 COVID-19 cases**](#)
- *WSAW-TV*: [**Unvaccinated in Wisconsin hospitalized at 10x higher rate, died at 14x higher rate in December**](#)

National/International

- *New York Times*: [**Supply chain woes could worsen as China imposes new lockdowns**](#)
 - *The Hill*: [**At least 20 percent of Americans have been infected with COVID-19, data show**](#)
 - *USA TODAY*: [**It's an "open question" whether Omicron is final wave, Fauci says**](#)
-



WCMA Policy Committee Discusses 2022 Advocacy Priorities, Meets with State Leaders

Many thanks to the members of WCMA's Policy Committee, which met last week to look back on WCMA's successful advocacy efforts in the past year, discuss current and future lobbying opportunities, and meet with key state leaders including State Senator Joan Ballweg and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary Randy Romanski.

Interested in joining the WCMA Policy Committee? Please contact [WCMA Senior Directory of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

WCMA Technology Committee Sets March 16 Meeting with Wisconsin DNR

The WCMA Technology Committee will host its annual Information Meeting with Wisconsin DNR and Midwest Food Products Association on Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at the Hilton Garden Inn Sun Prairie, 1220 S. Grand Ave., Sun Prairie, WI. The meeting will begin with registration and networking at 10:00 a.m. and will adjourn by 2:30 p.m. WCMA members can attend live, in-person or live online during the meeting.

WCMA is building a program of environmental and wastewater related issues with Wisconsin DNR, and speakers from industry and the state agency will present together on multiple topics. A \$35 meeting fee is planned to defray meal and room costs.

WCMA NOTES

Creative HR Solutions Essential to Ending "The Great Resignation"

The dairy industry hasn't been spared from "The Great Resignation," but [WCMA's Rebekah Sweeney finds](#) that human

resources leaders in the industry are approaching the challenge with optimism and a flexible mindset.

Read more about the creative ways WCMA member companies and cooperatives are working to attract and retain a modern workforce in this month's [WCMA Notes](#).



WORKFORCE



Support New WCMA Video Onboarding Series

When it's challenging to find job applicants, it's critical for dairy processors to do all they can to retain valued employees. One key component to that effort is an effective onboarding program – and WCMA is here to help.

With direction from WCMA's Workforce & Education Committee, WCMA is producing a series of five onboarding videos – offered in English, Spanish, and Hmong – focused on key messages for all new dairy processing employees. We'll overview the dairy processing industry and its essential mission, highlight opportunities for ongoing education and career growth, explain dairy processing from intake to product distribution, deliver key food safety and sanitation messages and highlight the culture of dairy processing and its commitment to excellence, inclusivity and growth. More details are available [here](#). Videos will be available to WCMA members at no cost, and to other members of industry for a fee.

WCMA asks dairy processors and industry suppliers to [consider a sponsorship or contribution to this project](#) before January 31. Three of four sponsorships are already claimed, and WCMA thanks **Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery**, **Great Lakes Cheese**, and **Wapsie Valley Creamery** for their participation! One sponsorship space is left, as well as contribution opportunities. Be recognized in this series for your support – and for your

commitment to the success of the U.S. dairy processing industry.

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

Share Input in WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey

WCMA members are invited to participate now in the [2022 WCMA Wage and Workforce Survey](#)! This **free**, annual survey helps WCMA provide critical data that employers need to successfully attract and retain top talent.



New this year are questions regarding sign-on and referral bonuses, team-based incentives, and greater detail on weekend premiums. By member request, automation managers and electro-mechanical technicians have also been added to the wage data collection portion.

The full survey is available in [PDF format](#) for members who prefer to review the questions before submitting their answers.

TAKE THE SURVEY

Survey responses are due **Friday, February 11**. Individual responses are held in confidence, and participants will not be identified. Participating companies and cooperatives will receive a summary report from WCMA detailing current industry wage ranges and benefits packages, as well as comparative data on non-industry wages in their region.

Questions may be directed to [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



Save the Date for WCMA Workforce & Education Committee February Meeting

[Register now](#) to join in a virtual meeting of the WCMA Workforce and Education Committee, set for Tuesday, February 8 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). The meeting agenda will include discussion on the following topics:

- COVID-19 challenges and resources
- 2022 training opportunities for dairy processing employees
- Progress report on WCMA video onboarding series
- 2022 WCMA Job Fair at CheeseExpo

The meeting will also offer a live polling feature for participants, and members are encouraged to [submit questions](#) they'd like posed to the group in advance. WCMA staff

will wrap the meeting with a brief overview of other workforce and education resources available to WCMA members now.

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



Recruit Bright Minds 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**

Just three spaces are left 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!

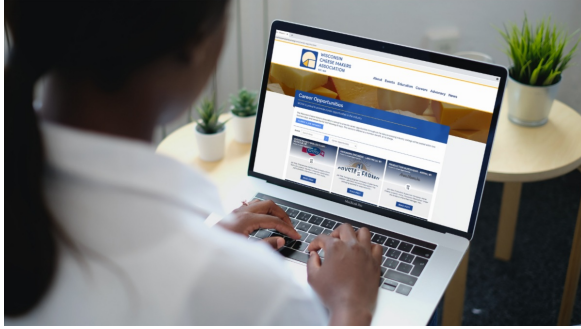
This special event offers an exclusive opportunity for WCMA members to connect with students participating in the Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest, which will also be held at CheeseExpo. Students hail from 15 colleges and universities across the U.S. WCMA is also working with representatives 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 view more than two dozen job openings from members Agropur, Arena Cheese; Associated Milk Producers, Inc.; and Ron's Wisconsin Cheese, LLC.

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

INDUSTRY UPDATES

The image shows a webinar title slide. On the left is the WCMA logo, which consists of a blue square containing a white circle and a yellow triangle. To the right of the logo, the text "WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION" is written in blue. Below this, the title "Cost Savings for Dairy Processors Via Energy Efficiencies" is written in white. At the bottom, the date "JANUARY 11, 2022" is displayed in white. On the right side of the slide, there is a small inset image showing four people in a video conference. The background of the slide is dark.

Members Learn Helpful Tips, Resources in WCMA Energy Efficiency Webinar

Thanks to the members and featured speakers from Focus on Energy and Eau Galle Cheese who joined us last week to share information on the reasons to implement energy efficiencies at dairy processing plants, and the resources available to help jump-start projects.

A recording of this program is available to WCMA members via [this link](#). Key resources and contacts referenced in the webinar include:

- **[Focus on Energy](#)**
- Focus on Energy: **[Getting Started](#)**
- Focus on Energy: **[Program Catalogs](#)**
- Focus on Energy: **[Energy Advisor Map](#)**
- Focus on Energy: **[Rural Industrial Offerings](#)**
- Focus on Energy: **[Business Customer Competitive Incentive Request for Proposals](#)**
- General Questions: Mark Stover, Program Operations Manager with Focus on Energy at **mark.stover@focusonenergy.com** or (608) 819-9041
- **[Federal Tax Deductions for Energy Efficiency](#)**
- **[U.S. Small Business Administration State and Local Energy Efficiency Program Directory](#)**
- **[U.S. Department of Energy Better Plants Program](#)**

USDA Seeks Butter Products

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a solicitation for [butter products](#) to be used in federal food assistance programs. Bids are due Tuesday, January 25, at 9:00 a.m. (CT). Questions can be directed to [USDA staff](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Space Available in DBIA Grant Webinar



Register now to attend a [grant preparation webinar](#) hosted by the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA) on Thursday, January 27, 2022! With the next grant application period opening on February 1, potential applicants are encouraged to join the January webinar to better understand the program and learn how to submit a more competitive application.

The webinar will provide a wealth of useful information, including:

- DBIA Overview
- Eligibility
- Grant funding information
- Application format and components
- "Helpful hints" when writing your application
- Q&A

The DBIA, a partnership between the Center for Dairy Research and WCMA, will open its new, \$1 million Dairy Business Builder grant competition on February 1, with completed applications due March 31. Eligible projects will include dairy farm diversification and on-farm processing, the creation of value-added dairy products, and efforts to market dairy products for export. Reimbursement grants of up to \$50,000 each will be awarded through a competitive review process. Small- to medium-sized dairy processors in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin can prepare their applications now by attending the January DBIA webinar, developing business plans, securing vendor quotes, and taking advantage of more DBI resources [now available online](#).

The DBIA is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Since its inception as part of the 2018 Farm Bill, the DBIA has administered nearly \$1.5 million in 38 grants to dairy farms and businesses in all five participating Midwestern states. The program also offers technical assistance and education to dairy farmers and processors in the region.



WCMA Webinar

*New Resources to Support
Wisconsin Dairy Exports*

Access New Export Resources through WCMA's

February Webinar

Make plans today to join the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) in February for a [free, members-only webinar](#) focused on new resources to support Wisconsin dairy processors' exporting endeavors.

On **Tuesday, February 15 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (CT)**, WCMA will bring you expert insight from Mark Rhoda-Reis, Director of the International Agribusiness Center at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP). Mark will share information on WDATCP's new Wisconsin Initiative on Agricultural Exports (WIAE), a \$5 million, five-year program designed to boost Wisconsin businesses via increased sales abroad.

Half of all program monies are devoted to dairy exporting endeavors, with DATCP planning trade missions, reverse buyers' missions, social media marketing campaigns - and direct grants to processors. Learn how to get involved and grow your business with WIAE!



Mark Rhoda-Reis
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Following the program, 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](#) by close of business on Monday, February 14.

REGISTER NOW

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. Have an idea for a future webinar topic? Please contact [Rebekah Sweeney](#).

DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE



Register for Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting

Make plans today to [join the Dairy Food Safety Alliance](#) on Thursday, February 17 at 11:00 a.m. (CT) for a meeting at the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center in Manitowoc, Wisconsin and a facility tour of Pine River Pre-Pack, Inc. Registration costs just \$35 per attendee and includes a catered lunch. Registrants should arrive for check-in starting at 10:45 a.m. (CT). Those who wish to attend the meeting virtually can register for \$25.

Together with the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin (DFW), the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) leads the Dairy Food Safety Alliance, a group designed to deliver the latest in food safety news to the dairy processing industry. Participation in Alliance meetings is open to all dairy manufacturers, processors, and related suppliers. Questions may be directed to WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger at kstrohmenger@wischeesemakers.org.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT

IN THE NEWS



Widmer's Cheese Cellars Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Congratulations are in order for WCMA member Widmer's Cheese Cellars on celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2022! President and Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Joe Widmer (pictured here at center with WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer, left, and Plant Manager Joey Widmer, right) is the third generation to lead the family operation.

Wisconsin

- *Green Bay Press-Gazette*: [How Wisconsin cheese is helping put the first Indigenous-owned distillery in the country on the map](#) (Featuring WCMA member Burnett Dairy Cooperative)
- *WLUK-TV*: [Gruyere is still Gruyere, even if it's from Door County](#) (Featuring WCMA member Renard's Cheese)
- *SwimSwam*: [Elmbrook Swim Club members become cheese champs in Wisconsin meet](#) (Featuring WCMA member Clock Shadow Creamery)

National/International

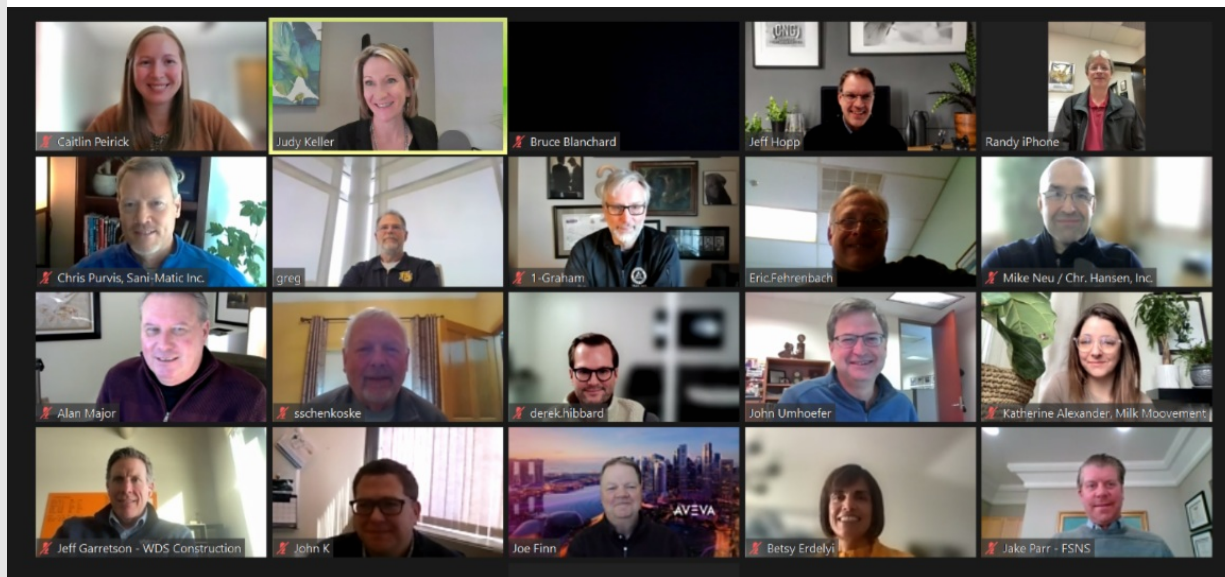
- *Roll Call*: [Senate Health panel advances Calif to lead FDA](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [Living in a manufacturing world](#)
- *Quartz*: [Why most Americans see the rise in food prices more than they feel it](#)
- *Bloomberg Law*: [Sargento "no antibiotics" cheese label suit voluntarily dropped](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)

MEMBERSHIP

WCMA Welcomes New Dairy Processor Member: Cheese Merchants of America

WCMA is pleased to welcome new dairy processor member **Cheese Merchants of America**. Founded in 1998 and currently led by president Bob Greco, the company specializes in converting a variety of cheeses for foodservice, industrial, and retail applications.

Learn more at CheeseMerchants.com. Primary contacts for the company can be found in WCMA's [online member directory](#).



WCMA Supplier Committee Discusses Upcoming Signature Events

Our thanks go to the members of WCMA's Supplier Committee, which met last week to discuss a full slate of exciting upcoming events. This committee's leadership helps drive our signature events, including CheeseExpo and the WCMA Golf Outing & Trap Shoot. We appreciate their engagement and support!

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 Tayt Wuethrich of Grassland Dairy Products!

Tayt Wuethrich Grassland Dairy Products

Favorite Cheese

Muenster

Proudest Achievement

Serving in an industry with such a rich history, and helping to carry on my own family business into its sixth generation.

Why I Support WCMA

"I appreciate the opportunities WCMA offers to connect with all kinds of dairy processing leaders and build our industry for the future. I'm just one of many Wuethrichs that have served on the WCMA Board, and it's an honor to continue that tradition."



WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION
EST. 1991



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

EDUCATION



WCMA Advanced Leadership Participants Learn Collaboration, Conflict Resolution Strategies

Kudos to the participants of WCMA's Advanced Leadership Series, who today discussed strategies and tools for resolving workplace conflict and fostering collaboration in their final session. Special thanks to our guest speaker, Tim Omer of Emmi Roth USA, for sharing his time and insights with the group!

Our thanks also go to participants' companies for investing in their development: Cybertron Engineering; Dairy Connection, Inc.; Emmi Roth USA; Grande Cheese Company; Henning Cheese; Klondike Cheese Company; Meister Cheese Company; Organic Valley; Sartori Company; Valley Queen Cheese; Wapsie Valley Creamery, Inc.; and Wisconsin Dairy State Cheese Company.

WCMA will again offer the three-part [Advanced Leadership Series](#) beginning in September of 2022. Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



Retain Top Talent with WCMA Next Step Leadership Class

Dairy processors know from firsthand experience the value - and challenge - of retaining skilled team players. WCMA is here to help with a new [Next Step Leadership](#) session Thursday, March 31. This one-day course is geared toward established leaders who have completed any of our Front-Line or Advanced Leadership trainings. The program will feature a review basic leadership concepts and a deep dive into talent retention strategies.

By member request, Next Step Leadership will be offered in a hybrid format, allowing participants to join in-person in Madison, Wisconsin, or online via Zoom.

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

[REGISTER TODAY](#)



WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply for WCMA Scholarships By February 16

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 or contact [WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt](#).

Other Industry Training Opportunities

WCMA is pleased to share opportunities for industry-specific training and enrichment. Here's a look at some upcoming trainings hosted by our partners:

- January 26: [Internal Auditing Principles](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 16: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals - On Demand](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- February 21: [Prerequisite Programs](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 22-23: [HACCP for Processors](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 22-24: [Process Cheese Course - In-Person](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- February 24: [Advanced HACCP: Verification and Validation](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 25: [Dairy Ingredients Fundamentals - Online](#) - Center for Dairy Research