

# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS



## Ship World Championship Cheese Contest Entries Now to Ensure Timely Arrival

With just two weeks remaining before the 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest kicks off, WCMA reminds entrants to ship their entries as soon as possible. Products must be received at the WOW Logistics Little Chute warehouse by tomorrow, Wednesday, February 16. The deadline for fresh products is next Wednesday, February 23. More information on shipping requirements is available in the [2022 Contest Entry Kit](#).

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

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## Register by March 1 for Best CheeseExpo Rates

Act today to take advantage of a special 10 percent discount on all [CheeseExpo](#) registrations! This offer ends March 1, so don't delay. Register now to join thousands of cheese industry colleagues and friends at the event of the year!

**REGISTER TODAY**

## INDUSTRY UPDATES



# USDA Releases Cost of Processing Study Key to Federal Order Make Allowances

On Monday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released long-anticipated [cost of processing research](#) for dairy plants from Dr. Mark Stephenson of the University of Wisconsin. The study will play a key role in developing updated make allowances for cheese, butter, whey and nonfat dry milk used in federal milk pricing formulas.

Stephenson reports that 42 cheddar plants were solicited and 10 participated in this cost study. Fourteen of 40 butter plants participated as well as 29 of the nation's 45 nonfat dry milk plants and eight of the 41 dry whey plants. Together, this included eight plants from the northeast U.S., 25 from the Midwest and 24 in western states.

The cost of processing includes categories for Processing Labor, Utilities, Packaging, General and Administrative and Other Non-Labor and Non-Utility Processing costs. Expenses related to sales and marketing — which vary widely among dairy products — were excluded from this cost study. Labor costs in a plant with multiple products, such as cheddar and whey, were apportioned between the products.

Return on investment (ROI) is the final element in each processing cost calculation in the study. Participants were asked to provide their “market value of assets.” A rate of return for the ROI was pegged at Moody's Baa corporate bond index over the last three years: 4.62 percent.

## **Cheddar Cost of Production**

The study produced an average cost of processing for low-cost plants and an average cost of processing for high-cost plants. For cheddar, low-cost plants pegged total costs at \$0.1454 per pound and high-cost plants at \$0.3792, and the all-plants average was \$0.2476 per pound. The current federal order make allowance, set in 2008, is \$0.2003 per pound. The study notes that high-cost plants spend more than 2 times on the cost of labor, indicating lower automation in these generally smaller operations.

## **Butter Cost of Production**

Butter manufacturers in lower cost plants averaged a cost of processing at \$0.1151 per pound while higher cost operations averaged \$0.2289. Together, all butter plants in the survey faced a cost of processing of \$0.1411 per pound. The current federal order make allowance, set in 2008, is \$0.1715.

## **Dry Whey Cost of Production**

Dry whey is produced for \$0.1895 by lower costs plants in the study and higher cost plants averaged \$0.3502 per pound. The average for all plants in the survey was \$0.2650 per pound. The current federal order make allowance, set in 2008, is \$0.1991 per pound.

## **Nonfat Dry Milk Cost of Production**

Nonfat dry milk was produced for \$0.2128 by low-cost plants in the survey while higher cost plants averaged \$0.4323 per pound. Overall, the plants averaged \$0.2933 per pound to make a pound of nonfat dry milk. The current federal order make allowance, set in 2008, is \$0.1678 per pound.

The [complete report](#) is available [online](#). For more information, please contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).

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## Discover Opportunities at SIAL Paris

WCMA members based in Wisconsin may [register now](#) for a free webinar set for Tuesday, February 22. Beginning at 3:00 p.m. (CT), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Culture magazine will host presentations covering:

- Overview of the European cheese market and emerging trends
- Programs available to support US cheese makers in Europe
- USA Pavilion package at SIAL Paris

Registrations are accepted until this Friday, February 18.

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## USDA Awards Cheddar Solicitations

WCMA members Dairy Farmers of America and Winona Foods have been [awarded contracts to supply cheddar cheese](#) for federal food assistance programs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said last week.

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### Submit DBIA Grant Applications by March 31



Submit an application today for a [new, \\$1 million round](#) of Dairy Business Builder Grants administered by the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance! All applications are due by March 31 at 5:00 p.m. (CT).

Small- to medium-sized dairy farmers, processors, and other in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin are eligible to apply. Grants of up to \$50,000 will be awarded through a competitive process. Eligible projects will include dairy farm diversification, on-farm processing, the creation of value-added dairy products, and efforts to market dairy products for export.

**APPLY NOW**

The application form is available on the [DBIA website](#), as well as a webinar offering information on the program, an overview of the application process, and tips for a competitive application.

The DBIA is a partnership between WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research, 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.

Questions about DBIA or the Dairy Business Builder grant can be directed to [DBIA staff](#).

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## COVID-19 UPDATES

### Coronavirus Headline News

#### Wisconsin

- *WBAY-TV*: [COVID-19 in Wisconsin: Average falls below 2,000 cases per day](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Dane County COVID-19 mask mandate to expire March 1](#)
- *Wisconsin Examiner*: [High court hears arguments over access to workplace COVID numbers](#)

#### National/International

- *Wall Street Journal*: [U.S.-Canada bridge reopens following weeklong trucker protests](#)
- *USA TODAY*: [CDC warns U.S. travelers to avoid 135+ destinations due to 'very high' COVID-19 levels](#)
- *USA TODAY*: ['Full blown' pandemic could be ending soon, Fauci says](#)

## ADVOCACY

### U.S. Senate Set to Confirm FDA Commissioner

Members of the U.S. Senate are [expected to confirm](#) Dr. Robert Califf today as Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In his December 14 confirmation hearing, in response to a question from Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin), asking him whether and when the FDA will begin enforcing its own labeling standards, [Dr. Califf said](#) he would make the issue a priority should he be confirmed as FDA commissioner. 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,” Dr. Califf noted.



### WCMA Applauds Progress on Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports

WCMA has [applauded the unanimous action](#) taken by three Wisconsin legislative committees last week to fully fund the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports (WIAE). This new initiative, signed into law by Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, targets raising dairy, meat, and other agricultural product exports by 25 percent. Half the total funds will be used specifically to increase the export sales of Wisconsin cheese, yogurt, whey, and other dairy products.

The Joint Finance Committee voted to release initial funding for the first year of the WIAE. In separate action, Assembly Bill 882 authored by Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) passed in the Assembly Committee on Agriculture. Kurtz’s bill applies unused federal loan funds at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to provide maximum funding for the first two years of the WIAE. An identical companion bill in the state Senate, authored by Sen. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan), received unanimous approval by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Tourism last week.

Governor Evers first proposed investments in agricultural exports in the 2019-21 biennial budget and WCMA has championed this export legislation to its successful launch in

## WCMA, Ag Groups Secure Additional Extension, Agricultural Staff Positions

The Wisconsin legislature's Joint Finance Committee last week [unanimously approved](#) funding for eight additional statewide county outreach specialists in the University of Wisconsin - Madison Division of Extension, and three additional extension faculty specialist positions in the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. The approval comes after WCMA and 16 other Wisconsin agricultural groups advocated for the funding in a [letter to lawmakers](#) last week.

### EDUCATION



### Final Days: Apply Now for WCMA Scholarships



**WCMA  
SCHOLARSHIPS**

Students pursuing a degree and/or career in the dairy industry have until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 16 to apply for a [WCMA student scholarship](#).

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

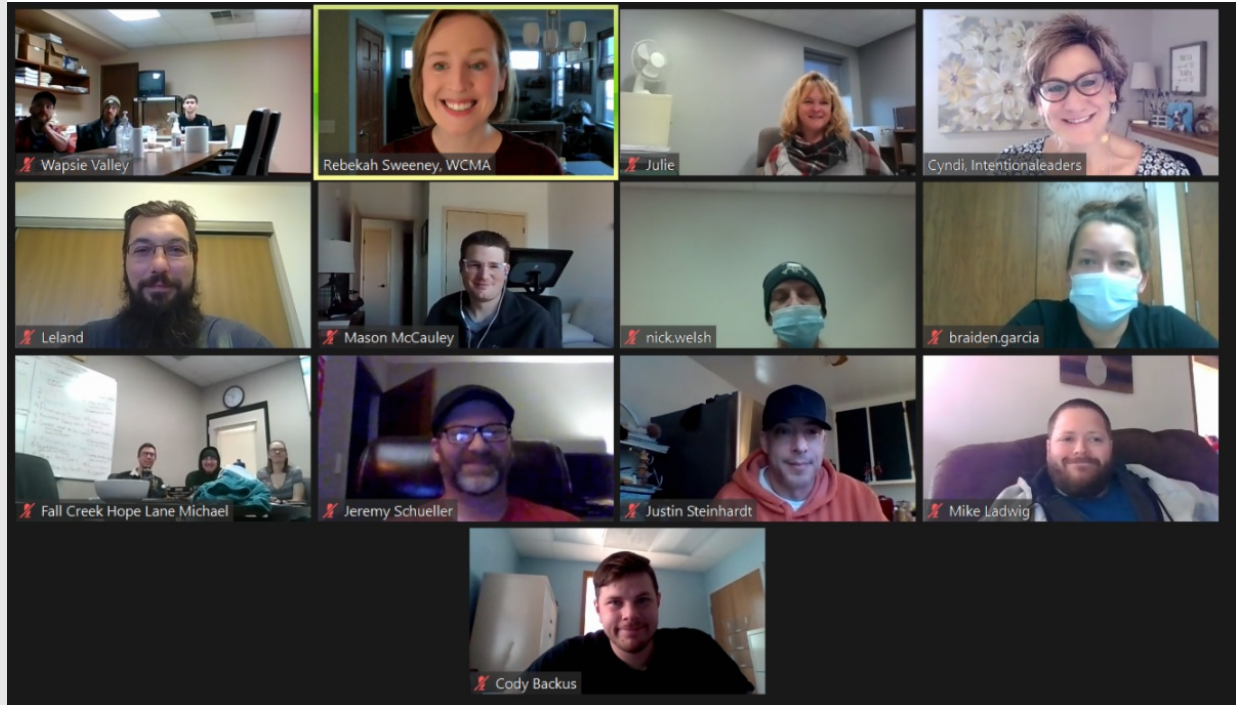
Two students will be selected for the [WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#), worth \$3,000 each. Any employee or child of an employee of a WCMA dairy manufacturing, processing, or marketing member company or cooperative may apply.

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](http://WisCheeseMakers.org) or contact [WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt](#).



## Register Now for Bonus Offerings of WCMA Front-Line Leadership Trainings

[Register now](#) for bonus offerings of WCMA's popular Front-Line Leadership trainings, newly added in virtual format this spring by member request! These sessions are designed for new and seasoned supervisors of focused teams, and will help build their skillset in the areas of conflict resolution, communication, stress and time management, and the cultivation of a team mentality. Classes are offered à la carte, and may be taken in any order. The spring offerings are as follows:

- [Part A: Essential Leadership Skills](#) - Tuesday, April 19
- [Part B: Boosting Staff Performance](#) - Wednesday, May 18
- [Part C: Cultivating a Team](#) - Tuesday, June 14

Tuition for each course is \$135 per person. Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) with questions.

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

## Additional 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:

- February 21: [Prerequisite Programs](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

- February 22-23: [HACCP for Processors](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- February 24: [Advanced HACCP: Verification and Validation](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 15: [Buttermaking Fundamentals - Online](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 15: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals - On Demand](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 22-24: [Cheese Grading - In Person](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- April 20: [Advanced Preventive Controls - In Person](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- April 25-29: [World of Cheese from Pasture to Plate](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- Rolling Admission: [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
- Rolling Admission: [Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry](#) - North Carolina State University
- Rolling Admission: [Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors](#) - North Carolina State University
- Rolling Admission: [Food Safety Basics For Artisan Cheesemakers](#) - North Carolina State University

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- WMTV-TV: [These are the best big companies to work for in Wisconsin, according to Forbes](#) (Featuring WCMA members Amcor and Rockwell Automation)

### National/International

- *Powder & Bulk Solids*: [Saputo investing \\$169M to modernize cheese plants](#) (Featuring WCMA member Saputo Cheese USA)
- *DairyReporter*: [Bel announces carbon reduction commitment](#) (Featuring WCMA member Bel Brands)
- *DairyReporter*: [Dairy Dialog podcast 168: AVE UK, World Championship Cheese Contest](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- *Feedstuffs*: [USDA's Southeast Dairy Business Innovation expands to 12 states](#)
- *Agri-Pulse Daybreak*: [USTR: Negotiations with China ongoing](#)
- WMAR-TV: [Cabot Creamery Cooperative - Valentine's Day](#) (Featuring WCMA member Cabot Creamery Cooperative)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



# WCMA Webinar

## *New Resources to Support Wisconsin Dairy Exports*

### Register to Access Exclusive WCMA Dairy Export Webinar Today

Sign up now for today's [free, members-only webinar](#) hosted by WCMA and focused on new resources to support Wisconsin dairy processors' exporting endeavors.





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



**Aaron Zitzelsberger, J.D.**  
*Wisconsin Economic Development  
Corporation*

From 1:00-2:00 p.m. (CT), Mark Rhoda-Reis, Director of the International Agribusiness Center at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) will share information on WDATCP's new Wisconsin Initiative on Agricultural Exports (WIAE).

Aaron Zitzelsberger, Director of Global Trade & Investment at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, will also present information on the International Market Access Grant program, and detail how our members can receive direct-to-business grants of between \$10,000-\$25,000 to support their export initiatives. Additional monies are being added to this program, with the approval of the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports.

This \$5 million, five-year program, championed by WCMA, is designed to boost Wisconsin businesses via increased sales abroad. Half of the program funds are devoted to dairy exporting endeavors, including trade missions, reverse buyers' missions, social media marketing campaigns, and direct grants to processors.

Following the program, WCMA staff will facilitate a Q&A session with presenters. Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) with questions.

**REGISTER NOW**

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## DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE

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**Space Available in Thursday Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting and Tour**

Sign up today to [join the Dairy Food Safety Alliance](#) this 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. Here's a detailed look at the day's agenda:

- 9:45 a.m. Sign-in & network at Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center
- 10:00 a.m. Welcome from Alliance partners
- 10:15 a.m. Introduction by Pine River Pre-Pack staff
- 10:45 a.m. Tour of state-of-the-art Pine River Pre-Pack facility in nearby Newton
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch at Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center
- 12:30 p.m. Updates on food safety projects from Tim Stubbs, Senior Vice President of Product Research & Food Safety, Dairy Management Inc.
- 1:00 p.m. News & updates from Tim Anderson, Dairy Services Section Manager, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
- 1:45 p.m. Common food safety challenges for dairy manufacturers and processors with increased automation and solutions from Joel Cook, Sr. Technical Manager, & Spencer Lightfield, Technical Manager, Hydrite Chemical Co.
- 2:30 p.m. Discussion and open forum
- 3:00 p.m. Adjourn

Registration costs just \$35 per attendee and includes a catered lunch. 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), 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 about the Dairy Food Safety Alliance may be directed to [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

**RESERVE YOUR SPOT**



## Join WCMA Technology Committee, WDNR, and MWFP for March 16 Annual Industry Meeting

[Register now](#) to participate in the WCMA Technology Committee's annual Information Meeting with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the Midwest Food Products Association (MWFP) on Wednesday, March 16 in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. The meeting will begin with registration and networking at 10:00 a.m. and will adjourn by 2:30 p.m. WCMA members may join the meeting in-person or live online.

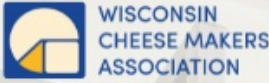
The program will cover environmental- and wastewater-related issues with WDNR, and speakers from industry and the state agency will present together on multiple topics. A \$35 meeting fee is planned for in-person attendees, with a reduced rate of \$25 for virtual attendees.

**REGISTER TODAY**

## MEMBERSHIP

# Together We Grow: WCMA Celebrates Member Employee Growth and Advancement

WCMA members know that growth involves more than product sales. A focus on the potential, satisfaction, and development of team members helps build a foundation for long-term success. That's why WCMA is pleased to celebrate the many opportunities for collaborative employee advancement in dairy processing through our newest social media campaign: Together We Grow.



*Together*  
WE GROW

This week, **Andy Hatch, Owner/Cheesemaker at Uplands Cheese** (pictured here at right with cheesemaker Eric Johnson), notes that "Through training programs, policy advocacy, and networking, WCMA helps our team feel connected to the larger dairy industry in Wisconsin."

Follow along on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) each week for more inspiring stories of growth from WCMA members!

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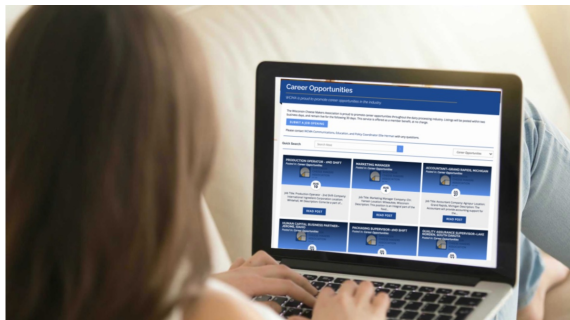
## Sign Up Colleagues for WCMA E-Newsletters

Thanks for subscribing to WCMA's weekly e-newsletter! WCMA extends this benefit to all member employees. Let us know if we should [add your colleagues](#) to our mailing list, or if you'd like to share feedback on our communications.

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### WORKFORCE

## Share Job Opportunities on WCMA Jobs Board



Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to view job openings from members Agropur, Arla Foods, Burnett Dairy Cooperative, Door Artisan Cheese Company, Emmi Roth USA, Lactalis American Group, and Ron's Wisconsin Cheese.

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

**POST OPENINGS**

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WisCheeseMakers.org

