



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS



JOHN EPPRECHT
Great Lakes Cheese

Act Fast for CheeseExpo Registration Savings, Sponsorships, Advertisements

Today marks the final day to lock in a 20 percent savings on all [CheeseExpo](#) registrations. Registering for this must-attend event unlocks full access to:

- Well-attended networking events, like the action-packed Championship Cheese Auction, the popular WCMA Recognition Breakfast, WCMA's Young Professionals event, and more
- More than 600 industry supplier and processor booths on the sold-out exhibit floor
- Complimentary lunches and refreshments right on the exhibit floor, making it even easier to connect with thousands of your colleagues and friends in dairy processing
- Engaging educational seminars hosted by WCMA, the Center for Dairy Research, and leading industry partners, where you'll gain timely, exclusive insights and analysis from top experts
- Opportunities to foster the next generation of dairy processing and recruit the best and brightest for your business

Don't miss out - take advantage of the best rates today!

REGISTER NOW

Limited sponsorships and ad placements are also available for one more day, through

Wednesday, February 2.

Sponsoring the eye-catching [Championship Cheese Cooler Display](#) places your business in the middle of the busy exhibit floor.

[Advertising](#) in the full-color, full-size CheeseExpo Official Program offers an impactful way to connect with thousands of dairy processing professionals.

**SECURE YOUR
SPONSORSHIP**

**PLACE YOUR
ADVERTISEMENT**

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Caitlin Peirick](#).



Volunteer for Contest Entry Check-In

[Sign up today](#) to join WCMA's team of valued volunteers supporting the World Championship Cheese Contest! Individuals working in the cheese industry are needed to help with entry check-in at the WOW Logistics warehouse in Little Chute, Wisconsin. Shifts are available on February 22, 23, 24, and 25.

SELECT YOUR SHIFT

Prepare Contest Entries for Shipment

All entries for the World Championship Cheese Contest must be shipped to ensure receipt at their destination by Wednesday, February 16 (or Wednesday, February 23 for fresh products). Entrants will receive an email from [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#) with full shipping details.

COVID-19 UPDATES



OSHA Reminds Large Employers of Previous COVID-19 Guidance After Supreme Court Ruling

In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's January 13 decision blocking the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) vaccine-or-test rule for employers of 100 or more workers, [OSHA is directing employers](#) to its [most recent guidance](#) on mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh has [indicated](#) OSHA will proceed with enforcing COVID-19 workplace safety measures under the [COVID-19 National Emphasis Program](#) and the [General Duty Clause](#).

WCMA will continue to share relevant updates on OSHA guidance and enforcement with members as they develop. Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions.

Coronavirus Headline News

Wisconsin

- *WTMJ-TV*: [New COVID variant, BA.2, detected in Wisconsin](#)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Steep decline in new Wisconsin COVID-19 cases predicted by Mayo Clinic computer modeling](#)
- *WISC-TV*: [Two years on, the fight against COVID in Wisconsin continues](#)

National/International

- *Wall Street Journal*: [U.S. COVID-19 hospitalizations retreat, but deaths keep rising](#)
 - *Reuters*: [U.S. CDC warns against travel to Mexico, Brazil, Singapore over COVID-19](#)
 - *Associated Press*: [U.S. gives full approval to Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine](#)
-

ADVOCACY



Public Hearing

Assembly Committee on Agriculture

Assembly Bill 882

February 1, 2022
9:48 AM

Grants for Dairy Exports Promotion

WCMA Calls for Approval of Ag Export Boost

WCMA staff is testifying in support of [Wisconsin Assembly Bill 882](#) (AB 882) and [Senate Bill 827](#) (AB 827) in legislative hearings this week in a continued push to launch the Wisconsin Initiative on Agricultural Exports (WIAE). AB 882 and SB 827 are designed to repurpose unused federal loan monies to boost funding for WIAE in its first two years of operation.

Half of the \$5 million allocated to WIAE, a five-year program run by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP), will be reserved to increase dairy exports. In a [report](#) issued to the Legislature on December 31, WDATCP officials detailed their plans to use WIAE funding to engage in more international trade shows and add Wisconsin booths at those shows, host more reverse buyers' missions, and support social media sales campaigns.

Financial support and export education will be realized in a new Export Expansion Grant, designed to support collaborative industry projects. Funds will also support increased participation in ExporTech, a 12-week exporter training program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's International Market Access Grant, which provides funds that companies use for trade promotion activities, marketing, translation and consultants. For more information, sign up for WCMA's upcoming [members-only webinar](#) on this topic.

Interested in joining WCMA's advocacy efforts? Please contact [Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

INDUSTRY UPDATES



USDA Helps Fund Port Capacity Increase

In the midst of [continued supply chain issues](#) affecting dairy and other food processors, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [will partner](#) with the Port of Oakland in California to increase port capacity and improve service for shippers of U.S.-grown agricultural commodities.

A new 25-acre “pop-up” site will provide space for companies to prepare empty containers beginning in early March. The project will also offer a dedicated gate with the ability to pre-cool refrigerated shipping containers to receive perishable commodities and avoid bottlenecks in the main area of the port.

Apply Now for Dairy Business Builder Grant



[APPLY NOW](#)

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.

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](#).

Become a USDA Qualified Food Vendor

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will host a live, interactive webinar Tuesday, February 15 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) on [becoming an approved USDA food vendor](#). Presenters will share information on USDA's Commodity Procurement Program, provide tips on becoming a qualified vendor, and answer questions submitted by attendees.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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 February 3 by 9:00 a.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

EDUCATION



WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

Two Weeks Left: WCMA Scholarship Applications Due February 16

Students pursuing a degree and/or career in the dairy industry have just two more weeks to apply for a [WCMA student scholarship](#). All applications are due Wednesday, February 16. 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](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) or contact [WCMA Business & Membership Manager Sara Schmidt](#).



Sign Up for WCMA Next Step Leadership Focused on Talent Retention

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



Register for Newly-Added WCMA Spring Front-Line Leadership Trainings

Sign up today for the second round of WCMA's popular Front-Line Leadership trainings, offered again 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

All spring 2022 Front-Line classes will be held virtually. Tuition for each course is \$135 per person. Please contact **[WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#)** with questions.

SIGN UP NOW

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:

- 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
- 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

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Brownfield Ag News*: [Stephenson: Watch for USDA to release dairy make allowance study](#)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Wisconsin Energy Institute takes on dairy research](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [Brody Stapel re-elected president of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative](#)

National/International

- *Politico*: [‘The White House isn’t supporting him’: Biden’s FDA pick left in limbo](#)
- *Dairy Processing*: [Hilmar Cheese's Travis picks up IDFA Food Safety Leadership Award](#) (Featuring WCMA member Hilmar Cheese Company)
- *Food Processing*: [Mullins and Zagzebski given dairy award](#) (Featuring WCMA members Prairie Farms Dairy and Great Lakes Cheese)
- *Food & Wine*: [24 cheeses these chefs always have in their fridges](#)



Westby Cooperative Creamery Hosts 118th Annual Meeting

Kudos to WCMA member Westby Cooperative Creamery, which held its [118th annual meeting](#) January 20. Farmer-owners re-elected the seven members of the cooperative's Board of Directors and honored six farmer-owners for their exceptional milk quality.

UPCOMING EVENTS



WCMA Webinar

*New Resources to Support
Wisconsin Dairy Exports*

Space Available in WCMA February Member Webinar on New Dairy Export Initiative

Sign up now for WCMA's next [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), 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).

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.



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

Following the program, WCMA staff will facilitate a Q&A 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

Access Exclusive Content and Resources in WCMA Webinar Library

Thanks to member feedback and interest, WCMA's free, monthly member-only webinars have brought top experts together to share valuable insights, practical strategies, and helpful resources. Now, logged-in members can access recordings, links, and information from these popular sessions anytime via WCMA's new [online webinar library](#). WCMA staff will continue to update the library following each monthly webinar.

For assistance accessing the webinar library or to share ideas for a future webinar topic, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE



WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION
EST. 1891



Register Now for February 17 Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting and Tour

Sign up 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. Here's a 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



**WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION**

Join WCMA Technology Committee, WDNR, and MWFP for Annual Joint 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

Contribute to Industry Video Onboarding Series Produced by WCMA

Dairy processors and industry suppliers have until February 11 to [sponsor or contribute to a new series](#) of five onboarding videos produced by WCMA. The series will be made available to WCMA members at no cost, and to other members of industry for a fee.

At the direction of WCMA's Workforce and Education Committee, the videos will be available in English, Spanish, and Hmong and will cover key messages for all new dairy processing employees.



This new series will 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](#).

WCMA thanks Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Great Lakes Cheese, and Wapsie Valley Creamery for their participation! One sponsorship space is left. 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](#).



Plan Ahead for WCMA Workforce & Education Meeting February 8

[Register now](#) to join in a virtual meeting of the WCMA Workforce and Education Committee next 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.

Submit Responses to WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey by February 11

Share your input 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.

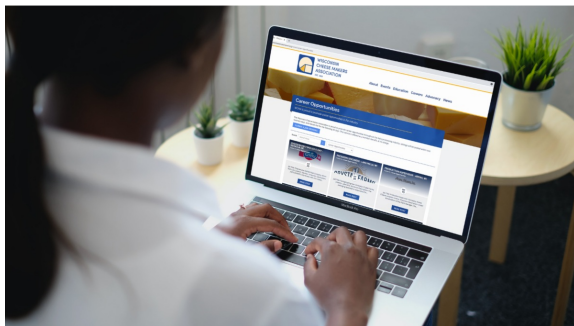
The full survey is available in [PDF format](#) for members who prefer to review the questions before submitting their answers.

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](#).

View Career Openings on WCMA Jobs Board



Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to view job openings from members Agropur; Associated Milk Producers, Inc.; and Lactalis American Group.

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

SHARE OPPORTUNITIES

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member **HGA** is a national interdisciplinary design firm rooted in architecture and engineering.



New WCMA supplier member **Micronic Technologies** is a startup focused on commercializing a patented wastewater concentration technology.



New WCMA supplier member **Sika Corporation** offers FSMA-compliant resinous floor and wall systems for food and beverage manufacturers.



New WCMA supplier member **Stainless Products Inc.** is a full-line manufacturer of pumps, valves, and fittings.

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

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.