



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS



Tune In Next Week for the Announcement of the 2022 World Champion Cheese!

Only one week remains until dozens of internationally renowned dairy experts unite in pursuit of one shared goal: finding the 2022 World Champion Cheese. Don't miss out on this exciting announcement! Mark your calendar now and plan to join the global cheese industry **LIVE online** at 2:00 p.m. (CT) Thursday, March 3 to find out the winner of this year's honor.



CheeseExpo Tackles Workforce Challenges

It's no secret: recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce is a challenge. Refresh your strategies and meet new talent at [CheeseExpo](#), April 12-14 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin! [Act by March 1](#) to secure a special early-bird registration discount.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

This year's workforce offerings begin with the bustling [WCMA Job Fair](#) on Tuesday, April 12. WCMA member companies and cooperatives will have the exclusive opportunity to build their workforce by meeting career-ready students hailing from 15 colleges and universities across the country. Later, CheeseExpo attendees under 40 are invited to [join WCMA's Young Professionals](#) group for an evening of fun and networking.

Throughout CheeseExpo, a wealth of professional development opportunities await you, from networking events to 600+ supplier booths to educational seminars. On Wednesday, April 13, join WCMA for a deep dive into current workforce issues and strategies for change. This unique seminar track includes:

- **Human Resources Panel**, where professionals from the dairy processing industry's leading employers share how they're navigating the labor shortage, engaging employees, and embracing diversity and flexibility to attract and retain top talent.
- **Leading Through Change Mini-Workshop**, where Cyndi Wentland, MBA, Certified Coach, and Founder of Intentionaleaders, LLC shares new strategies to work with your employees to successfully implement change in your workplace policies, processes, and technologies.

Don't miss out on these inspiring, interactive opportunities. [Register now](#) to receive your 10 percent discount!

ADVOCACY



Senate Approves Funding for Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports

The Wisconsin State Senate last week approved maximum funding for the first two years of the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports (WIAE). The State Assembly is expected to do the same when it convenes on Wednesday, February 23, clearing the way for Governor Tony Evers' approval.

This new initiative, signed into law by Governor Evers in December 2021, aims to raise the state's 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. Governor Evers originally proposed the idea of boosting Wisconsin's agricultural exports in the 2019-2021 biennial budget. WCMA has championed this export legislation to its successful launch in 2022.

WCMA Urges FDA Labeling Enforcement Under New Commissioner

Following the U.S. Senate's confirmation of Dr. Robert Califf, the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), WCMA [urged Califf](#) to move quickly to enforce the agency's own standards on the labeling of imitation dairy products, remedying years of inaction. In response to questions from U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) during his confirmation hearing in December, Califf said that he would commit to ensuring transparency in labeling. WCMA has been a strong advocate for enforcement of FDA food labeling standards at the state and federal levels.

Apply for WEDC Cooperative Feasibility Grants

Individuals actively working towards legal cooperative status in Wisconsin are invited to [apply today](#) for a [Cooperative Feasibility Grant](#) from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). The grant program, which was secured as part of the 2021-2023 biennial budget, is designed to support the success of current and future cooperatives by allowing them to explore all facets of their business before large investments are made. Eligible projects include comprehensive feasibility studies and partial feasibility study elements.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Coronavirus Headline News

Wisconsin

- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Patients hospitalized with COVID-19 drop below 700 for the first time since last summer](#)
- *WFRV-TV*: [Total COVID-19 boosters administered in WI near 2M](#)
- *WBAY-TV*: [COVID-19 in Wisconsin: How low will it go?](#)

National/International

- *NBC News*: [CDC could change mask guidance as COVID cases decline](#)
- *Reuters*: [U.S. FDA considers approving a second COVID-19 booster shot](#)
- *Reuters*: [U.S. Supreme Court rejects challenge to Maine COVID-19 vaccine mandate](#)
- *CNN*: [Growing number of states, major cities lift COVID-19 restrictions](#)
- *New York Times*: [Biden extends the national pandemic emergency first declared in March 2020](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



WCMA Webinar

Training Resources for Dairy Manufacturers and Processors

Sign Up Today for WCMA March Webinar Showcasing Industry Training Resources

You're invited to [register today](#) for WCMA's March members-only, free webinar, providing a look at the technical trainings available to dairy manufacturers and processors coast-to-coast.

WCMA is pleased to welcome guest presentations during this webinar from:

- Andrea Miller, Outreach Program Manager at the Center for Dairy Research at the University of Wisconsin - Madison
- Michelle Farner, UW-River Falls Dairy Pilot Plant Manager
- Adam Brock, Vice President of Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Compliance for Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Following guest speakers' presentations, WCMA staff will share information about



additional training opportunities at Cornell, the University of Idaho, North Carolina State University, and South Dakota State University.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
River Falls



The webinar will also include a question-and-answer session. Members who wish to submit questions in advance may send them to [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) by close of business on Monday, March 14.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT



WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION

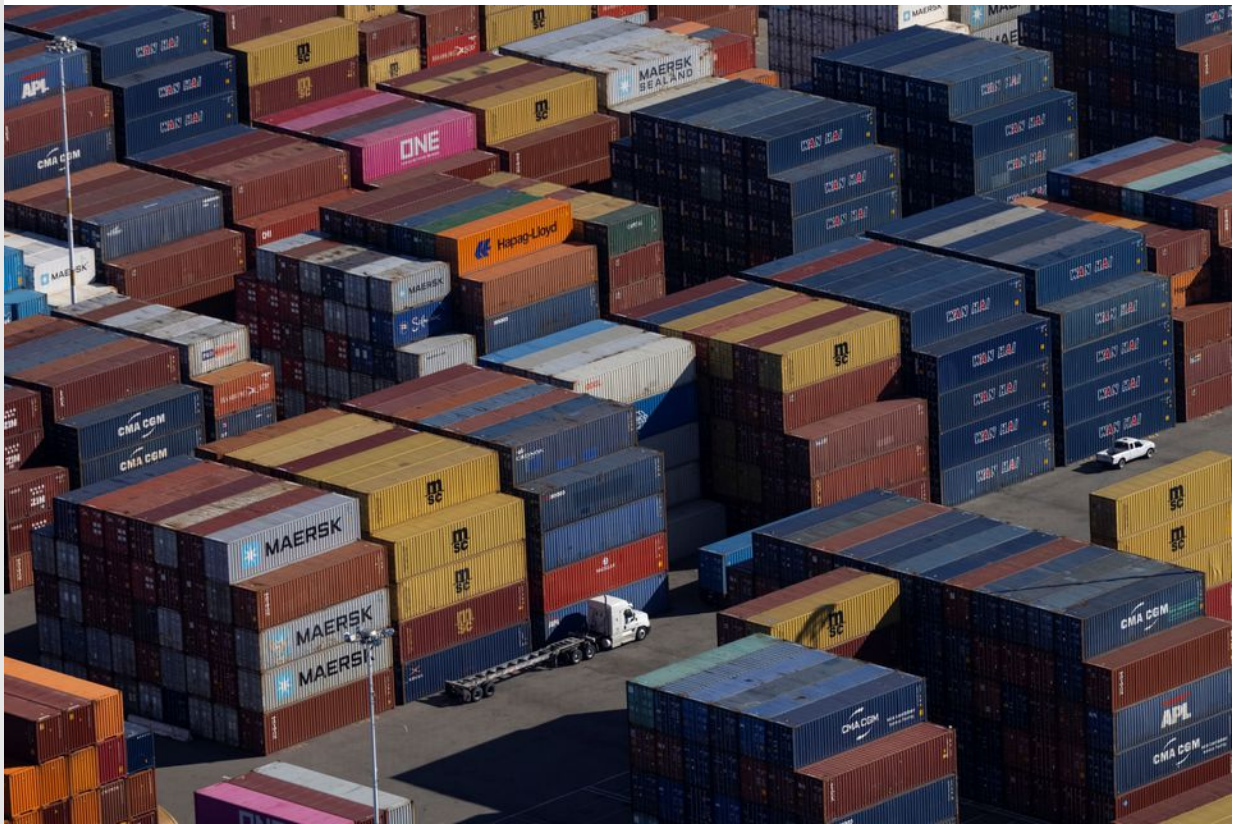
Join WCMA Technology Committee, WDNR, and MWFPA March 16 for Annual Industry Meeting

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 (MWFPA) 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. WCMA has applied for continuing education credits for this meeting.

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

INDUSTRY UPDATES



U.S. Dairy Exports Reach All-Time High in 2021

U.S. dairy exports reached a second consecutive volume record in 2021 and a new record in value, according to new data from the U.S. Dairy Export Council. [Dairy Foods reports](#) that export volumes increased 10 percent over 2020 to over 2.3 million metric tons (MT) milk-solid equivalent, while value climbed to \$7.75 billion, an increase of 18 percent over 2020.

Additionally, for the first time, U.S. cheese exports exceeded 400,000 MT in 2021, and they reached nearly 614,000 MT. The rise in cheese shipments was led by demand from Latin America, while whey exports were driven primarily by China. Southeast Asia remained the second-largest market by value for U.S. dairy exports at a total of nearly \$1.4 billion.

Increasing dairy export opportunities has been a focus of WCMA's advocacy efforts, yielding successes such as the \$5 million [Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports](#), signed into law by Governor Tony Evers in 2021.

USDA Soliciting Cheddar Cheese

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a solicitation for [cheddar cheese](#) to be used in federal food assistance programs. Bids are due February 25 by 1:00 p.m. (CT). Please contact [USDA staff](#) with questions.

Submit Applications by March 31 for Dairy Business Builder Grants

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](#).

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin Public Radio:* [Wisconsin sets record high for agricultural exports in 2021](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:* [The World Championship Cheese Contest is coming up. Where else? Wisconsin](#)
- *Fond du Lac Reporter:* [What's in a name? Wisconsin cheesemakers find their own way around territorial claims](#) (Featuring WCMA and members BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.; Carr Valley Cheese Company; and Marieke Gouda)
- *WFRV-TV:* [WI dairy producers to compete in global cheese contest](#)
- *WTMJ-TV:* [Wisconsin cheesemakers to compete in 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest](#) (Featuring WCMA members Cascade Cheese Company; Cedar Valley Cheese, Inc.; Clock Shadow Creamery; Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, LLC; CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley; Great Lakes Cheese; Masters Gallery Foods; Saputo Cheese USA; Sartori Company; Specialty Cheese Company, Inc.; and Widmer's Cheese Cellars)

National/International

- *Dairy Processing:* [Dairy processors appealing to consumers through sustainability](#)
- *Bloomberg:* [U.S. Agriculture Secretary criticizes price exploitation](#)
- *Gusto Buen Vivir:* [Jessica Fernández López represents Latin America as a judge at the World Championship Cheese Contest in 2022](#)
- *Dairy Processing:* [Tillamook picks up Gold Anthem Awards for diversity, equity and inclusion](#)

EDUCATION



Limited Space Available in WCMA Next Step Leadership Focused on Talent Retention

Only eight spaces remain available in WCMA's [Next Step Leadership](#) class, scheduled for 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 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 - six spaces left
- **Part B: Boosting Staff Performance** - Wednesday, May 18 - six spaces left
- **Part C: Cultivating a Team** - Tuesday, June 14 - six spaces left

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:

- 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



WCMA Thanks Generous Sponsors of Industry Onboarding Video Series

Many thanks to WCMA partners and members for their generous support of a new series of industry onboarding videos. With direction from WCMA's Workforce & Education Committee, WCMA is producing a series of five 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. Financial supporters of this new series include:

Champion Sponsors:

Dairy Business Innovation Alliance
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Partner Sponsors:

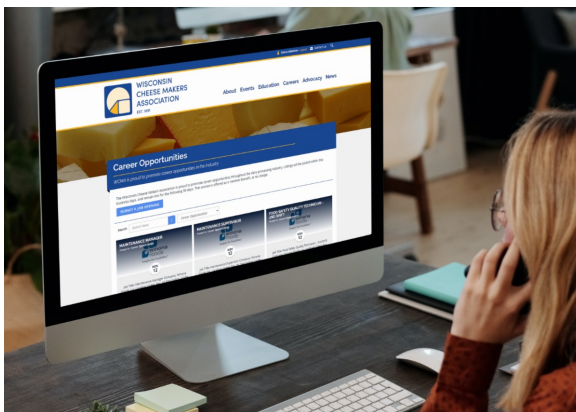
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
Emmi Roth
Great Lakes Cheese
Wapsie Valley Creamery

Contributor Sponsors:

Specialty Cheese Company
Westby Cooperative Creamery

Thanks to member contributions, the onboarding videos are currently in production and slated for release this spring.

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, 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

MEMBERSHIP

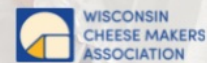
Together We Grow: WCMA Celebrates Member Employee Growth and Advancement

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, we're pleased to highlight Cellar Team Lead **Alex Koprowski of Emmi Roth USA in Platteville**. Alex says WCMA's Advanced Leadership course "has helped me set clear expectations within my team and create an environment where ideas become reality. This has really helped build relationships, confidence, and an environment of strategic thinking."

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

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Atlas Copco Vacuum](#) offers energy efficient vacuum solutions for industrial applications.



New WCMA supplier member [Heron Innovators, Inc.](#) manufactures water treatment systems for industrial use, including dairy processing.

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.

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