



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS



World Championship Cheese Contest Underway

The 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest is officially underway! In the coming days, nearly 3,000 cheese, yogurt, butter, and whey entries will be evaluated by a team of internationally renowned dairy industry experts. The event culminates in the exciting announcement of the 2022 World Champion Cheese live on WorldChampionCheese.org at 2:00 p.m. (CT) Thursday, March 3.

Here's a look at early media coverage of the Contest:

- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Watch now: A carousel of cows and hopes for a title at the World Championship Cheese Contest](#) (Featuring WCMA member Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Welcome to the 'cheese Olympics'](#) (Featuring WCMA members Emmi Roth USA and Hook's Cheese)
- *WXOW-TV*: [Mindoro cheese plant is sending its cheese to the World Championship Cheese Contest](#) (Featuring WCMA member Prairie Farms Dairy)
- *Watertown Daily Times*: [World Championship Cheese Contest coming to Wisconsin](#) (Featured WCMA members Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Hoard's Dairyman Farm Creamery, Specialty Cheese Company, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars)
- *Cap Times*: [Q&A: Cheese expert Marianne Smukowski judges the funky stuff](#)
- *WKBT-TV*: [Westby creameries prepare for World Championship Cheese Contest in Madison](#)
- *WIFR-TV*: [Rockford area dairy makers to compete in cheese world championship](#)

- [WREX-TV: Local dairy companies vying for world championship in Madison](#)

You're also invited to follow along on WCMA's Contest social media platforms:

- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [Twitter](#)

Share your own posts using #WorldChampionCheese and #TheBigCheese so we can amplify your content!



Final Day to Save on CheeseExpo Registration

Today, Tuesday, March 1, marks the last day to save 10 percent on all CheeseExpo registrations! [Register now](#) to join the industry's biggest event.

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

ADVOCACY



WCMA Applauds Legislative Approval of Maximum Funding for Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports

WCMA last week applauded the Wisconsin State Assembly's [unanimous approval](#) of Senate Bill 827, legislation authored by Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) and Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan), which repurposes \$880,000 in unused federal monies to direct full funding of \$1 million in 2022 for the newly-launched [Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports \(WIAE\)](#). The Wisconsin State Senate approved the bill on February 15, meaning that the legislation now advances to Governor Tony Evers, who first proposed export investments in his 2020 State of the State address. WCMA has been a strong advocate for the WIAE since its inception.

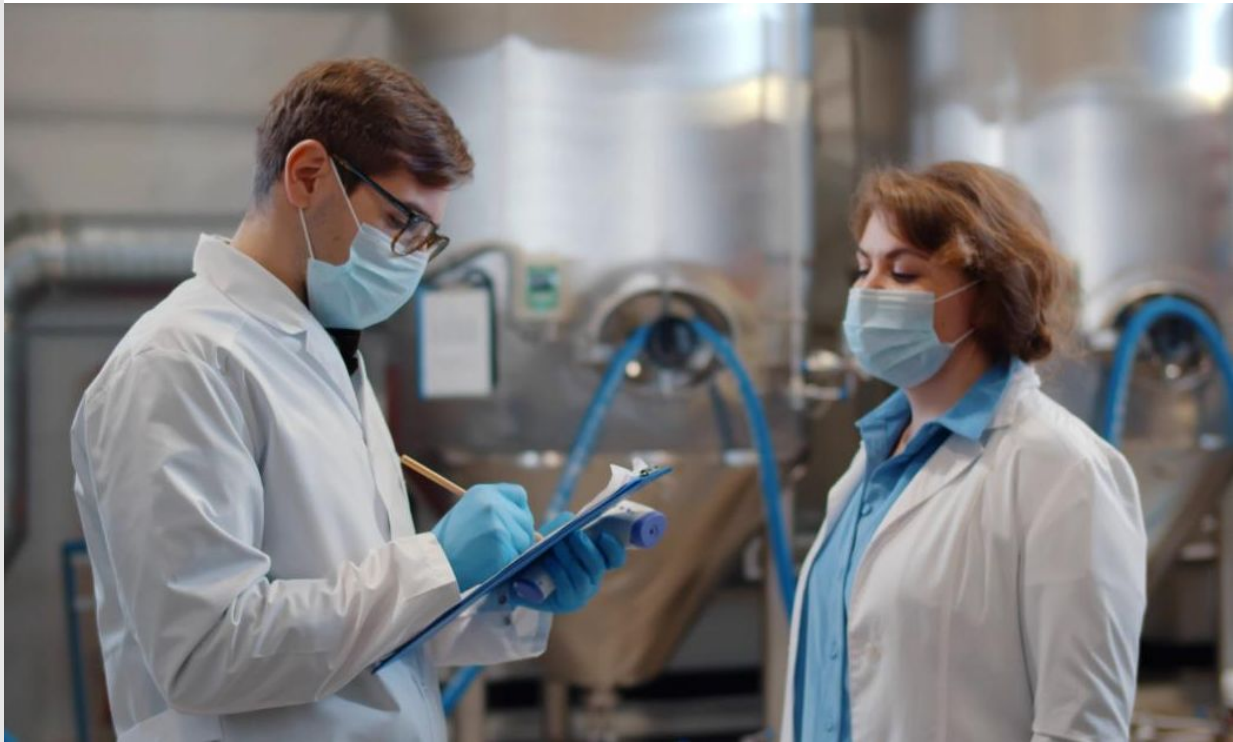


Join March 16 Industry Meeting with WCMA Technology Committee, WDNR, and MWFPFA

[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 (MWFPFA) 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.

COVID-19



CDC Updates Mask Wearing Guidance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last week [updated its guidance](#) on mask wearing, stating that healthy Americans who live in areas where COVID-19 poses a medium or low risk to hospitals are no longer required to wear masks in indoor public spaces. The guidance comes as state and local governments across the U.S. begin to lift indoor mask mandates.

EDUCATION



CDR Holds First Classes in New Building

A group of 30 dairy industry professionals enrolled in the Process Cheese short course hosted by the Center for Dairy Research last week kicked off the first in-person sessions in CDR's new building on the UW-Madison campus. Congratulations to CDR and the current and future dairy leaders who are sure to benefit from this advanced facility!



WCMA Webinar

*Training Resources for Dairy
Manufacturers and Processors*

Join WCMA March 15 for Free, Members-Only Webinar Focused on Training Resources

You're invited to [register today](#) for WCMA's next webinar on Tuesday March 15, offering a look at the technical trainings available to dairy manufacturers and processors across the country.

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



Sign up for WCMA Next Step Leadership Course

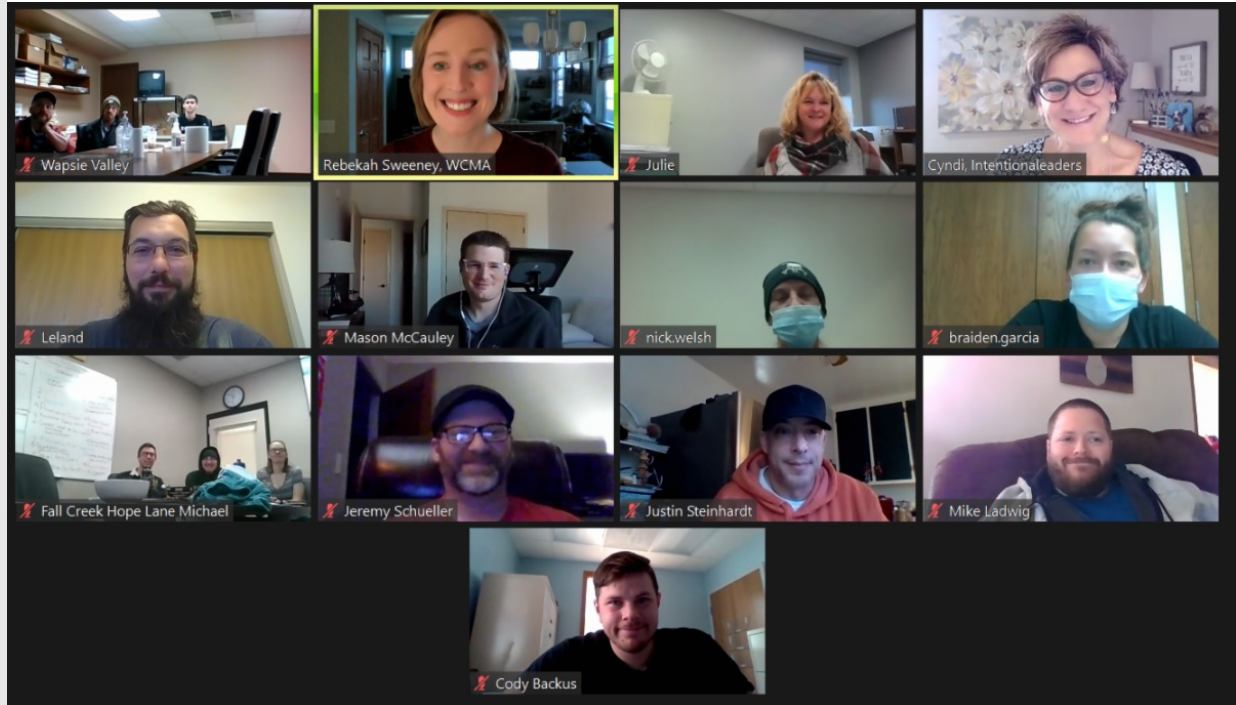
Only eight spaces remain available in WCMA's [Next Step Leadership](#) class, scheduled for Thursday, March 31. This one-day course is geared toward established leaders who have completed any of our Front-Line or Advanced Leadership trainings. The program will

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 WCMA Front-Line Leadership Sessions

[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 - one space left
- [Part B: Boosting Staff Performance](#) - Wednesday, May 18 - two spaces left
- [Part C: Cultivating a Team](#) - Tuesday, June 14 - four 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

INDUSTRY UPDATES

WDATCP Accepting Applications for Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants

Dairy processors based in Wisconsin are [invited to apply](#) by April 2 for a total of \$300,000 in Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) grants through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP). Qualified applicants include individuals, groups, or businesses involved in Wisconsin production agriculture, food processing, food distribution, food warehousing, retail food establishments, or agricultural tourism operations. Projects may include collaborations or partnerships.

Projects can receive grant funds for up to three years in duration. Grant requests must be between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Eligible project expenses include compensation for personnel, consultant services, materials, and supplies. Projects must show a one-to-one match of cash or in-kind support accounting for at least 50 percent of the total project budget. Please contact [WDATCP staff](#) with questions.

Apply by March 31 for DBIA 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

National/International

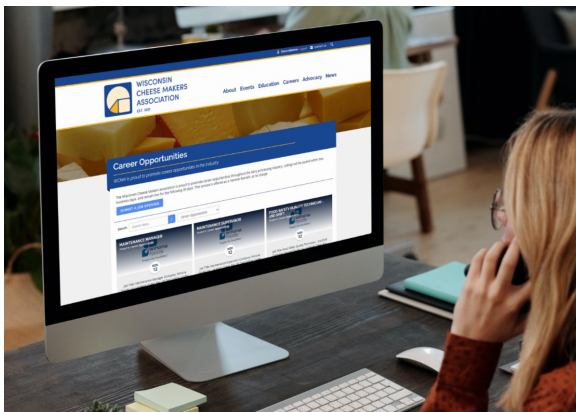
- *Reuters*: [U.S. trade relationship with China "getting more difficult" - USTR](#)
- *Agri-Pulse*: [Dairy on edge over Canada TRQ dispute](#)
- *NECN-TV*: [Sen. Leahy spotlights developments in dairy](#)
- *The Business Journal*: [Saputo Cheese plans to close one Tulare plant, expand others](#)

WORKFORCE

Wisconsin Launches Refugee Hiring Portal

With nearly 2,000 refugees from Afghanistan, Burma and the Democratic Republic of the Congo expected to resettle in Wisconsin by spring 2022, the state has launched an [online portal](#) with resources for employers interested in offering these individuals work opportunities. Included under the "Employment" tab on the website are links to the three jobs boards which resettlement agencies use to direct refugees to appropriate job opportunities. Most recent refugees speak English, and already have work authorization from the federal government. Some WCMA members are already employing Afghan refugees, and members with questions on how to engage in this workforce resource in any state may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

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

IN MEMORIAM

In Memoriam: Gary Renard



WCMA mourns with the family and friends of Gary Renard, who **passed away** February 26 at the age of 73.

Gary exhibited great passion throughout his career as a dairy processor, leading Renard's Cloverleaf Dairy and serving as a lifetime member of the Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association.

MEMBERSHIP

WCMA Board of Directors Seeks Nominees for Supplier Member Seat

WCMA Supplier Members are invited to nominate themselves, or another Supplier Member, for the ballot to select a Supplier Member to the WCMA Board of Directors. This seat on the Board of Directors is an opportunity to join the Board for a two-year term beginning on July 1, 2022. This call for nominees will remain open through March 11, 2022. Nominees must be the designated key contact from a **WCMA supplier member company**.

This is an open Board seat – no incumbent – because Tetra Pak has graciously completed a full six years on the Board (three, two-year terms). The final ballot will be placed before the WCMA Board of Directors on April 12, 2022 and the Board will vote on a single, new Supplier representative. Thank you for throwing your hat in the ring for this opportunity to join the WCMA Board of Directors!

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 **Aron Schilsky, Procurement Manager - Operations at Masters Gallery Foods** (pictured above right with his colleague Eric Vorpahl). "From my first WCMA World Championship Cheese Contest in 2018, WCMA's annual contests, golf outing, and Young Professionals events have provided me with many new connections and friends," Aron says.

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 **Hixson Architecture, Engineering & Process** specializes in the design of corporate workplace; retail, food and beverage manufacturing facilities; and more.



New WCMA supplier member **VIRESKO Renewable Energy** transforms food waste streams into renewable energy (electricity and natural gas) with zero carbon footprint.

New WCMA supplier member **Wayland Industries** provides stainless steel sanitary fittings, valves, and tubing to distributors throughout North America.

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.

WisCheeseMakers.org

