



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



ADVOCACY



WCMA Pushes Back on FDA Draft Guidance for Plant-Based Product Labeling

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) last week released [draft guidance](#) noting that plant-based imitation milk products may now be labeled as “milk.” FDA officials also noted that they do not plan to mandate nutrient statements on imitation milk product labels, but instead suggest such statements could be voluntarily added for consumer reference.

WCMA is opposed to the use of milk and other dairy terms, including cheese, for plant-based products. Research consistently shows that when plant-based imitation dairy manufacturers use words like “milk” and “mozzarella” on their product labels, nearly a quarter of consumers believe those products contain real dairy ingredients — and the protein, calcium and vitamins only real dairy foods can deliver. FDA’s disappointing draft guidance will only result in more consumer confusion.

WCMA will submit a comment to FDA, detailing its opposition to the agency’s new, draft labeling guidance. **Individual members may also submit their own comments by April 24, 2023**, either [via the online portal](#) or via postal mail to:

Dockets Management
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061

Rockville, MD 20852



WCMA Member Action Alert

For help with this effort, members may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

WCMA is also working with members of Congress to push back on the new FDA guidance. Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) and a bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers led by Senators Jim Risch (R-Idaho), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Peter Welch (D-Vermont) have [reintroduced the DAIRY PRIDE Act](#), which would compel FDA to enforce existing regulations, defining dairy products as made from the milk of dairy animals.



“Wisconsin’s dairy farmers produce second-to-none products with the highest nutritional value and imitation products have gotten away with using dairy’s good name without meeting those standards,” said Senator Baldwin. “The Biden Administration’s guidance that allows non-dairy products to use dairy names is just wrong, and I’m proud to take a stand for Wisconsin farmers and the quality products they make. Our bipartisan DAIRY PRIDE Act will protect our dairy farmers and ensure consumers know the nutritional value of what they are purchasing.”

WCMA members are invited to encourage their members of Congress to sign on to this legislation via our new, easy-to-use advocacy tool. Just [click here](#) and enter your name and address to send a message to your elected officials.

WCMA will keep members informed of developments related to FDA’s draft labeling guidance for plant-based dairy imitation products, and on ways to advocate. To get involved in WCMA’s active Policy Committee, contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

WCMA Members Invited to Join Meeting with New WDNR Secretary-Designee

You’re invited to join WCMA staff as they meet with new [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary-designee Adam Payne](#) on Wednesday, March 8 at 2:00 p.m. (CT) at the agency headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. Our goal for this initial meeting is to share the interests and needs of the Wisconsin dairy processing community, and to foster a spirit of partnership for the term ahead. Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) if

you'd like to take part in this event. Space is limited to the first ten members to get in touch.



Engage with Wisconsin Regulators at March 16 Joint Industry Meeting

Register now to join WCMA, Midwest Food Products Association, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) on March 16 for the opportunity to connect with dairy industry environmental staff and regulators.

All WCMA members are welcome to attend, but space is limited, so sign up today!

Join in-person in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin or live online for discussions covering hot topics including:

- Phosphorus multi-discharger variance reauthorization by EPA,
- PFAS regulation and standards,
- WPDES permitting,
- Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Tests,
- Land Application Siting and Permitting,
- Fertilizer Opportunities for Industrial Sludge, and more

Featured speakers include experts from WDNR, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and industry. On-site registration and networking begins at 9:30 a.m. (CT), with the meeting beginning at 10:00 a.m. for all participants and concluding at 2:30 p.m. This meeting provides continuing education credits for certified wastewater operators.

Registration is \$45 for in-person attendance and \$25 for online participation. For more information, contact **[WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#)**.

RSVP TODAY



Respond to Make Allowance Survey by April 14

As approved by the WCMA Board of Directors, and in collaboration with International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), WCMA intends to petition the U.S. Department of Agriculture in March for a hearing on federal order reform, focused on adjusting make allowances. We will recommend that a hearing cite up-to-date economic analysis, rather than absolute values based on older cost data.

WCMA and IDFA have commissioned Dr. Mark Stephenson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison to update his most recent cost of processing study to capture manufacturing data from 2021-2022. Dr. Stephenson is ready to collect updated cost information from **any company or cooperative that manufactures cheddar cheese; dry whey; nonfat dry milk; and butter as all or part of their production**. He has recently updated his data collection software to make it easier for industry members to participate. In addition, Dr. Stephenson will treat all submitted data confidentially and protect it from disclosure in the same way that he has previously protected past survey responses, and only blinded and aggregated data will be shared with USDA.

To ensure that the cost data are as robust as possible, both from a plant size and a geographic perspective, we urge all WCMA members that manufacture these products to submit their data to Dr. Stephenson using [this link](#). Instructions for completing the survey are [available online](#). Please check with your team to ensure that the appropriate person on your staff is tasked with filling out the survey. **All responses must be received by April 14, 2023.**

TAKE THE SURVEY

WDATCP Updates Requirements for Pasteurizer Broken Seal Reports

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) has updated the requirements for [completing and submitting a Pasteurizer Broken Seal Report](#). These reports now must be submitted as soon as verifications have been completed on the pasteurizer system and prior to the scheduled reseal of the system. The agency has also made minor changes to the report itself, including formatting changes for ease of use and the addition of a paragraph outlining legal authority. This revised form should be used for reporting pasteurizer broken seals effective February 24, 2023.

Have questions? Please contact [WDATCP staff](#) or [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).

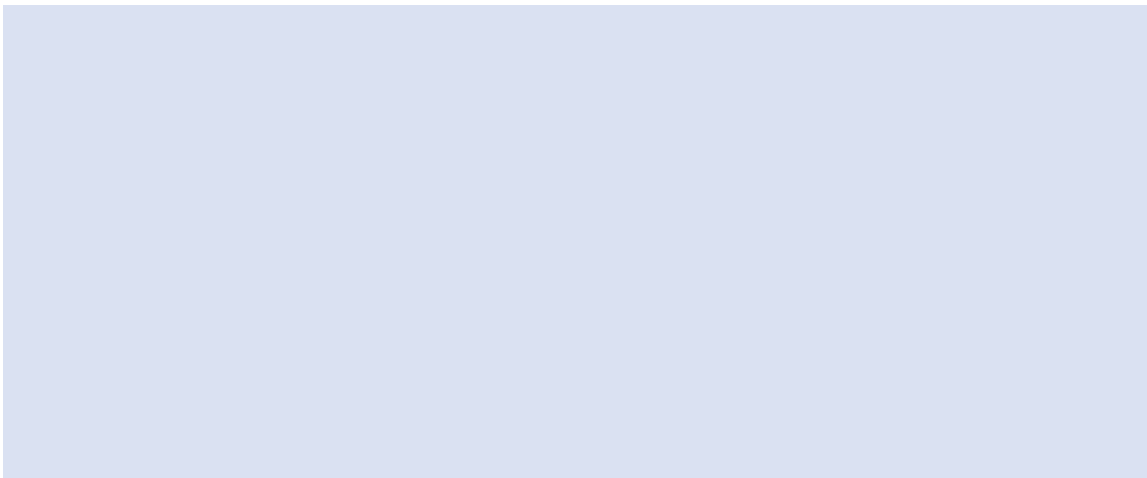
SIGNATURE EVENTS



WCMA Members Win Big at United States Championship Cheese Contest

WCMA congratulates and thanks all competitors in the 2023 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, held last week in Green Bay, Wisconsin! Special kudos go to the many WCMA members who were awarded gold medals for their outstanding dairy products, including: Agropur, Arena Cheese, Associated Milk Producers Inc., BelGioioso Cheese, Burnett Dairy Cooperative, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Caputo Cheese, Carr Valley Cheese, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Decatur Dairy, Gilman Cheese, Glanbia Nutritionals, Great Lakes Cheese, Guggisberg Cheese, Henning Cheese, Hilmar Cheese Company, Kingston Creamery, Klondike Cheese Company, Lactalis, LaGrander's Hillside Dairy, Landmark Creamery, Land O'Lakes, Marieke Gouda, Milk Specialties Global, Mosaic Meadows-La Clare Creamery, Mexican Cheese Producers, Narragansett Creamery, Pine River Dairy, Pine River Pre-Pack, Prairie Farms Dairy, Roelli Cheese, Schuman Cheese, Specialty Cheese Company, The Farm at Doe Run, V&V Supremo Foods, Valley Queen Cheese, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars. Complete results are available at USChampionCheese.org.

A collection of high-resolution photos from the Contest is available on our [Facebook page](#), along with a [full recording](#) of the announcement of the Top 20 cheeses and the 2023 U.S. Champion Champion. Be sure to also check out our coverage on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [TikTok](#)!





Thank You, B-Team!

WCMA thanks the dozens of volunteers who gave generously of their time, talent, and muscle to make the 2023 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest possible. We are grateful for your essential support!



Each year, awards are given to volunteers and judges who have made outstanding contributions to the World and U.S. Championship Cheese Contests. These honors, named after Chief Judges Emeriti Bob Aschebrock and Bill Schlinsog and Contest Chairman Brian Eggebrecht, recognize incredible friends and colleagues for supporting the competition with enthusiasm and skill.

That's certainly the case with this year's awardees: judge Michael Pederson, volunteers Dave and Glenda Buholzer and Gary and Corie Grossen, and the Neumeier family. Congratulations to all of these exceptional leaders! Read more about the Contest Leadership Awards at [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.WisCheeseMakers.org).

CHEESE CON

Register by March 1 for Best Value Rates

Act now to enjoy the best value rates for [CheeseCon 2023](#)! Unlock the impactful educational seminars, ample networking opportunities, and access to CheeseCon's largest-ever tabletop exhibition hall - all at a savings of 10 percent, but only through March 1. Learn more about North America's largest gathering of dairy processors and their most trusted suppliers at [CheeseCon.org](#).



REGISTER & SAVE NOW

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *WQOW-TV*: [Dutch cheese shop 'House of Gouda' opening Tuesday in Eau Claire](#) (Featuring WCMA member Marieke Gouda)

National/International

- *Time*: [Want lower grocery prices? Pass immigration reform, says Land O'Lakes CEO Beth Ford](#). (Featuring WCMA member Land O'Lakes)
- *CBS News*: [The FDA wants to change what counts as "healthy" food. Big food makers say that's unfair.](#)
- *Food Safety News*: [FDA doubles down on import alerts for cheese, mahi mahi, shrimp, and honey](#)
- *Des Moines Register*: [After rapid inflation in 2022, what will happen to food prices this year? Here's the USDA's forecast](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [Dairy farm departures moved faster in 2022](#)

WORKFORCE



WCMA WAGE & WORKFORCE SURVEY

Deadline Extended: Respond to WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey by Friday, March 3

WCMA invites members to participate in the [2023 WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey](#) this week. By member request, the deadline for responses has been extended to close of business this Friday, March 3.

This free, annual online survey helps WCMA provide critical data employers need to successfully attract and retain top talent. Members are encouraged to review the survey questions in [PDF format](#) first, as responses may not be saved in the online form.

All responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Survey respondents will receive a summary report from WCMA in March containing blinded and aggregated data. Some broad, topline data (such as overall industry wage growth year-to-year) may also be shared for the purposes of industry advocacy.

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

[TAKE SURVEY](#)



Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association
Health & Safety Group

Experts to Cover Hot Topics in Worker Safety at

WCMA Health & Safety Group Meeting

Register now to join the next hybrid meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group tomorrow, Wednesday, March 1 from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT)! Join us in person in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, or online from anywhere in the world. In-person attendees will enjoy a networking lunch. All WCMA members - both dairy processor and supplier members - are welcome.

This meeting will focus on lockout/tagout best practices; a new machine guarding risk assessment tool; the development of a workplace safety culture, including a peer panel on practical applications; updates on OSHA's food processor LEP and increased enforcement measures; and discussion of new training opportunities for safety officers. Featured speakers include:

- Dan Trocke, WisCon Consultant
- John Brengosz, R&R Insurance Loss Control Specialist
- Mark Bonovetz, BelGioioso Cheese
- Zach Thayer, Emmi Roth
- George Jerome, Schreiber Foods

REGISTER TODAY

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

WCMA Industry Onboarding Videos Now Available in Spanish & Hmong

Visit WisCheeseMakers.org.org today to view and share WCMA's free onboarding videos, now available in Spanish and Hmong! This series of five videos, free to dairy manufacturers and processors, provides new employees with key information on food and personal safety, growth opportunities in the industry, and more.

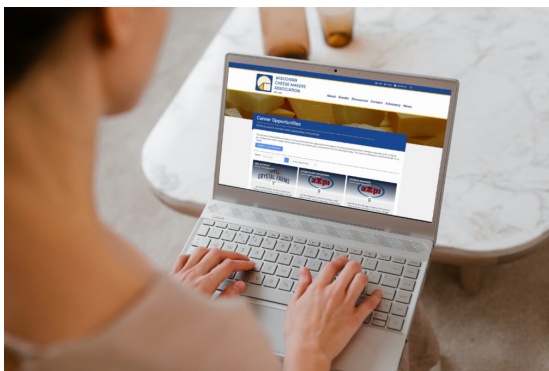


Thank you!



This free resource is brought to you by WCMA with generous support from our partners the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin; sponsors Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Emmi Roth, Great Lakes Cheese, and Wapsie Valley Creamery; and contributors Specialty Cheese Company and Westby Cooperative Creamery. Thank you!

View, Share Career Opportunities on Free WCMA Jobs Board



Looking for motivated individuals to fill your open positions? Visit WCMA's [online jobs board](#) to post up to 10 career opportunities per company or cooperative, per month - free! This week features postings from the Center for Dairy Research and members Foremost Farms USA, Lactalis American Group, Masters Gallery Foods, and Tetra Pak. Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions.

SHARE OPENINGS



WCMA Grant Program Supports WCMA Members' Export Success in Dubai

Thanks in part to new grants available through WCMA with support from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, many WCMA members increased their presence at Gulfood, the world's largest food exhibition held last week in Dubai.



Associated Milk Producers Inc., BelGioioso Cheese, Hoard's Dairyman Farm Creamery, Masters Gallery Foods, MCT Dairies, Meister Cheese, Mosaic Meadows-La Clare Creamery, Prairie Farms Dairy-Shullsburg Creamery, Renard's Cheese, Widmer's Cheese Cellars, and others had their products on display for international buyers.

To learn more about how grants can support your dairy export endeavors, contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

Apply Now for DBIA \$100K Grants

A new round of [Dairy Business Builder grants](#) administered by the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA) is now open for small- to medium-sized dairy farmers, manufacturers, and processors in 11 Midwestern states. Businesses in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio,

DBIA

Dairy Business Innovation Alliance

South Dakota, and Wisconsin may apply for the funding, which is administered by the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) and WCMA.

The reimbursement grants of up to \$100,000 each aim to support recipients in diversifying on-farm activity, creating value-added products, enhancing dairy byproducts, and creating or enhancing dairy export programs. **Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. (CT) on April 13.** Successful applicants will be notified by May 19.

The DBIA is supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was created in the 2018 federal Farm Bill. Since then, the DBIA has administered over \$7 million to 88 dairy farms and businesses within its 11-state service area. The program also offers technical assistance to dairy farmers and processors in participating states.

APPLY NOW

Apply Now for Wisconsin Buy Local Grants



The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection is accepting applications for **Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin** grants of up to \$50,000 now through Friday, March 31 at 5:00 p.m. (CT). This program is designed to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products locally. Grant applicants must provide a cash or in-kind match of 50 percent to receive this state support. Complete details, and informative webinar, and the application form are [available online](#).

EDUCATION



Dive into Diversity and Inclusion with WCMA Next Step Leadership Training

A fresh new line-up of [WCMA's popular leadership trainings](#) is available now for spring and fall 2023! Spaces fill quickly, so register now.

WCMA's [Next Step Leadership Training](#) offers established industry leaders an opportunity to reconnect with their peers and to refresh and remind themselves of the essentials, while providing a deeper dive on a key topic. On May 30, this one-day session will focus on diversity and inclusion strategies to build and strengthen teams. Session objectives include:

- Exploring the complexity of diversity and inclusion changes
- Understanding how our mind affects our actions
- Defining best practices for leveraging diversity and fostering an inclusive workplace.
- Learning about psychological safety and its importance to diversity and inclusion, and innovation

Next Step Leadership costs just \$135 per person and will be offered virtually in 2023, allowing participants to join live online from anywhere in the world.

SIGN UP TODAY

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



Final Reminder: Register Today for CDR Cheesemaking Fundamentals in Spanish

Registration closes today, February 28, for a [new course offering](#) from the Center for Dairy Research designed to help your Spanish-speaking employees build a strong cheesemaking foundation and learn the basics of cheese science. CDR's Cheesemaking Fundamentals course covers basic cheese manufacturing science, principles of moisture and pH, basic mathematical calculations commonly used by cheesemakers, and common government regulations. As an added bonus, this class offers test prep for those planning to take the Wisconsin cheesemakers' licensing exam.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Additional Industry Training Opportunities

WCMA is pleased to share opportunities for industry training and enrichment. Here's a look at courses hosted by WCMA members and partners:

- March 6-10: [Short Course - Cheesemaking](#) - University of Wisconsin - River Falls
- March 7-8: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 8: [BRCGS for Food Safety Issue 9: Conversion for Sites Short Course](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 21-23: [Cheese Grading, Evaluation & Judging \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 27: [Prerequisite Programs Course](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 28-29: [HACCP Training for Processors](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 30: [Advanced HACCP: Verification and Validation](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- April 25-27: [FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food \(PCQI\) Training](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- Rolling Admission:
 - [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Good Manufacturing Practices in Food Safety](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors](#) - North Carolina State University

- [Food Safety Basics For Artisan Cheesemakers](#) - North Carolina State University

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Manufacturers



New WCMA dairy manufacturing member [KDI Cheese](#) makes and markets ultrafiltered concentrated milk products, American-style, Italian-style, Hispanic-style cheese and European-style cheese and butter.

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [4FRONT Engineered Solutions](#) supplies dock levelers, dock seals and shelters, impactable dock doors, dock and yard management software and other aftermarket products.



New WCMA supplier member [Bioscan LTD](#) provides provides non-destructive inspection services for crack detection of stainless steel equipment for processors within the food and beverage industry.



New WCMA supplier member [Detectamet Metal Detectable Products](#) designs and provides metal and X-ray detectable products used by food factories, pharmaceutical factories and other processing environments.

New WCMA supplier member [Nutek Natural Ingredients](#) provides cost



effective, clean label ingredient solutions for its industry partners.



New WCMA supplier member **Rovema** builds and provides machinery to protect, transport and sell food products.



New WCMA supplier member **SOMIC Packaging, Inc.** provides multi-functional end of line case packing equipment to North American manufacturers.

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



Nominations Due March 10 for WCMA Board of Directors' Open Supplier Seat

WCMA Supplier Members are invited to nominate themselves, or another Supplier Member, for the ballot to select a Supplier Member Representative 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, 2023. This call for nominees will remain open through March 10, 2023. Nominees must be the designated key contact from a [WCMA supplier member company](#).

This is an open Board seat – no incumbent – because Chr. Hansen's Mike Neu has graciously completed six years on the Board (three, two-year terms) and has reached our term limit. The nominees we receive from our Supplier community will be contacted for

their interest in serving. Those interested will placed on a ballot handed to the WCMA Board of Directors on April 4, 2023. The Board will vote on a single, new Supplier Representative. That appointed Supplier Representative will serve from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025 and can seek to run for further terms. Note that the Board of Directors meets four times each year, in April, June, September and December.

Select your nominee from the [WCMA Supplier Member company list](#) and email your choice to [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) by end of day on Friday, March 10. Thank you!

Share WCMA News with Colleagues

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

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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