



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



ADVOCACY



WCMA Petitions USDA for Make Allowance Updates in Federal Milk Marketing Orders

WCMA today petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a public hearing and rulemaking to update make allowances in federal milk marketing orders.

WCMA's action follows more than a year of member committee action, discussions with USDA and dairy industry organizations, and deliberations by WCMA's Board of Directors. WCMA thanks its members for their engagement, resulting in today's filing. The WCMA petition is [now available to view online](#).

WCMA's petition requests USDA adjust make allowances using up-to-date data on cost of production for cheddar cheese, whey, butter, and nonfat dry milk. Make allowances were last changed in 2008 and costs to produce dairy products have increased dramatically since that time.

In recent weeks, WCMA member cheese producers responded to a WCMA survey seeking percent changes in business costs, reflecting the timeframe 2019 to 2022. A simple average was taken of the replies from 18 WCMA member manufacturers, and the data included:

- The base wage level at these cheese manufacturing sites rose an average of 20.2% from 2019 to 2022;
- The cost of natural gas per MMBtu rose an average of 68.9% from 2019 to 2022;
- The cost of plastic packaging (bulk cheese bags) used in cheese production rose

an average of 36% from 2019 to 2022.

These and additional data points are included in the [petition from WCMA](#). WCMA has, in partnership with the International Dairy Foods Association, commissioned Professor Mark Stephenson, recently retired from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to update a more formal survey he conducted for USDA in 2018, and is petitioning the agency to consider this data as it considers adjustments to make allowances. Members may participate in Dr. Stephenson's survey [via this link](#), with responses due April 14.

WCMA looks forward to swift and decisive action from USDA regulators, and to the open forum of ideas that a USDA public hearing offers on this topic. The U.S. dairy industry is ready for a long-overdue update of federal milk marketing order milk pricing formulas.



Baldwin, Johnson Reintroduce CURD Act

Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Ron Johnson (R-WI), together with Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), [re-introduced the Codifying Useful Regulatory Definitions \(CURD\) Act](#), a bipartisan bill that would codify a formal definition of “natural cheese”.

“The dairy processing industry has used the term ‘natural cheese’ for decades to help differentiate cheese made with fresh milk and dairy ingredients from pasteurized processed cheese,” [said WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer in a news release](#). “We thank Senators Johnson and Baldwin for codifying the definition of this commonly-used term in the CURD Act, and demonstrating their support of the dairy industry and transparency in the marketplace.”

Wisconsin Legislators Urge FDA to Reconsider Draft Labeling Guidance

WCMA applauds Wisconsin State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), who together with Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) recently led a bipartisan group of state legislators in urging the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to reconsider its draft guidance related to the labeling of plant-based imitation products as milk.



A copy of the lawmakers' letter to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf is [available online](#).

SIGNATURE EVENTS



**ADVANCE REGISTRATION
ENDS MARCH 29!**

CHEESECON.ORG

CheeseCon Pre-Registration Extended

Online pre-registration for [CheeseCon 2023](#) has been extended for a limited time! [Register at CheeseCon.org](#) by end of day tomorrow, **Wednesday, March 29**. After March 29, all registrations must take place on-site April 4-6 at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

At CheeseCon, you'll find the world-class expertise of the Center for Dairy Research, over 300 trusted suppliers, insights from key industry partners, valuable networking, and exciting special events - all in one place. There's no better resource to grow and strengthen your business.

Don't miss your opportunity to join the nation's largest gathering of dairy processors. [Act now](#) to join this one-of-a-kind event!

REGISTER NOW

EDUCATION



WCMA Webinar

Retail Demos: Put Your Best Product Forward

Get Tips for Great Retail Demos in Free Webinar

Mark your calendar and register now for [WCMA's next free, members-only webinar](#) on Tuesday, April 18 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) offering strategies to put your best product forward at retail. Learn the importance of a great retail demo and gain top tips on how to boost sales by showcasing your products directly to consumers. Here's a look at our agenda:

- Introduction to Retail Demos and Why a Great Demo Matters
 - Speaker: Tim Multerer, Vice President - Dairy Company Communications, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- Do's, Don'ts, and Expert Tips
 - Speaker: Shannon Berry, Cheese Specialist, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- WCMA Member Experiences and Suggestions



Tim Multerer
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin



Shannon Berry
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Presenters will reserve time to field audience questions during the webinar. If you'd like to share a question in advance, please email [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by Monday, April 17 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

This offering is the latest in WCMA's [monthly webinar series](#). Webinar topics are driven by WCMA member feedback and cover a range of themes such as business development, communication strategies, and industry resources.

Have ideas or suggestions for future webinars? Please contact [Grace Atherton](#).

RSVP TODAY

DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE



RSVP for Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting

Save the date to [join the Dairy Food Safety Alliance](#) on Tuesday, May 2, for a tour, updates from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP), presentations on food safety culture and electronic HTST, and a chance to reconnect with your peers in dairy processing. Participation in Dairy Food Safety Alliance meetings is open to all dairy manufacturers, processors, and related suppliers.

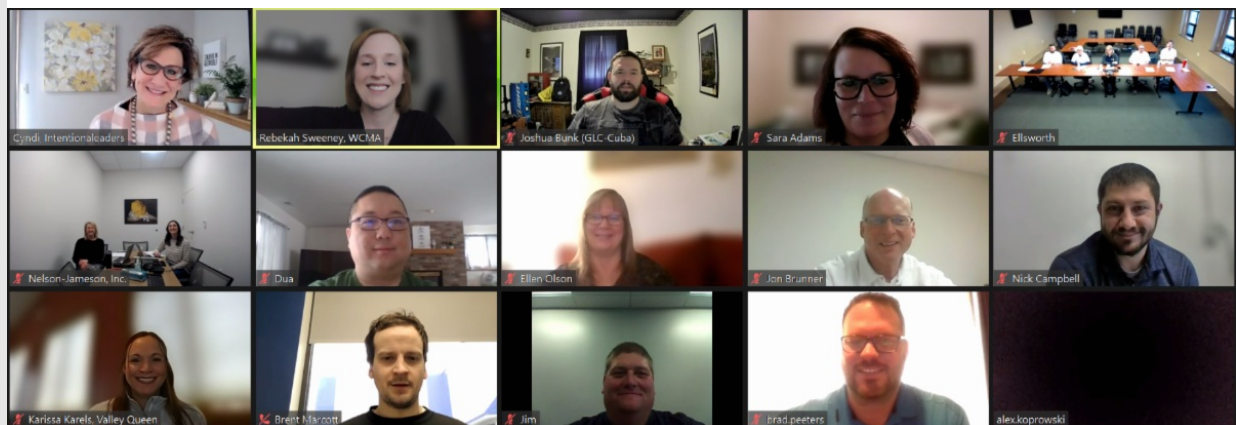
The Alliance, a partnership between WCMA, the Center for Dairy Research, and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, will offer three ways to participate in the meeting:

- In-Person: Tour, Lunch & Meeting (limited to 20 registrants) - 10:00 a.m.
- In-Person: Lunch & Meeting - 11:00 a.m.
- Virtual - 12:00 p.m.

All in-person registrants are asked to pay a \$45 fee to attend, which includes a catered lunch. Those who wish to attend virtually can register for the meeting at a reduced rate of \$30. Virtual attendees will receive an individual Zoom link and are welcome to join the programming beginning at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

Registration for in-person attendees will close on Monday, April 24. Please contact [WCMA's Kirsten Strohmenger](#) with any questions.

REGISTER NOW



Join WCMA Next Step Leadership May 30

Register now for the next installment of WCMA's engaging [Next Step Leadership Training](#)! Each year, this concise program 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.

Set for May 30, our one-day virtual 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

At just \$135 per person, Next Step Leadership is a low-cost, highly effective way to engage your team members in practical, productive conversations about important topics.

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

SIGN UP TODAY

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:

- April 12: [Buttermaking Fundamentals \(Self-Study\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- April 12: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(Self-Study\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- April 20-June 29: [Certificate in Dairy Processing \(Online, Live\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- April 25-27: [FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food \(PCQI\) Training](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- May 2-4: [Advanced Cheesemaking: American-Style Varieties](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- May 11-12: [HACCP Certification \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- May 23-25: [Processed Cheese \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- Rolling Admission: [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
- Rolling Admission: [Good Manufacturing Practices in Food Safety](#) - 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



FDA Offers Flexibility on Sodium Reduction Rule

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) **announced Friday** that it will propose a rule allowing the use of salt substitutes in foods for which salt is a required ingredient, such as cheese and canned vegetables. The text of the proposed rule, which has not yet been submitted to the Federal Register for official publication, is **available online**.

The rule is part of the Biden administration's National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, released last September in conjunction with the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health. WCMA will continue to update members on the proposed rule as it develops.

AMPI Secures USDA Contract

WCMA member Associated Milk Producers Inc. has been awarded a contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide **up to 67.2 million pounds of shredded Cheddar cheese**, the department announced Friday.

All open USDA dairy product solicitations are **available online**, along with information on how to **become an approved vendor**.

Complete Dairy Innovation Hub Export Survey

With the support of the Dairy Innovation Hub and the **Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports**, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are conducting a research study on the current degree of participation by Wisconsin dairy companies in export markets and the most important barriers to entering or expanding presence in dairy export markets.

To address these issues, UW-Madison's Dr. Chuck Nicholson and Dr. Mark Stephenson have developed an **online survey** that asks about companies' current involvement—or lack thereof - in dairy product export markets and the opportunities and challenges associated with it. Sharing companies' experiences with dairy export markets will provide information helpful to the development of future programs to support the expansion of Wisconsin's dairy product exports.

The survey should take 10-20 minutes to complete. All information provided will be held in

the strictest confidence and will not be made available or reported to any individual or organization other than the researchers. No individual company data will be reported in any form, only aggregated survey results.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to [Dr. Nicholson](#) and [Dr. Stephenson](#).

PARTICIPATE NOW

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Brownfield Ag News*: [Wisconsin milk production up slightly](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Cheese curd sign in Oregon vs. Wisconsin game has social media talking](#)

National/International

- *Reuters*: [Exclusive: Danone sources whey from Asia as costs in Europe rise](#)
- *Spectrum News NY1*: [Lawmakers seek to stop non-dairy alternatives from being called "milk"](#)
- *Agri-Pulse Daybreak*: [Biden asked to intervene in West Coast port labor negotiations](#)
- *Politico*: [FDA knew of positive test months before latest infant formula recall](#)
- *Dairy Foods*: [How to shrink dairy shrinkage](#)
- *McKinsey & Company*: [Top priorities for dairy executives in 2023](#)
- *Dairy Foods*: [Cheese processor invests \\$200M to expand plant and product capacity](#) (Featuring WCMA member First District Association)

GRANTS



Apply for \$100K DBIA Grants by April 13

Dairy businesses in 11 Midwestern states can apply now through Thursday, April 13 at 5:00 p.m. (CT) for a new round of [Dairy Business Builder grants](#) from the Dairy

Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA). The funding is administered by the Center for Dairy Research and WCMA and is available to businesses in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

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. [Watch the video above](#) to hear from WCMA member Widmer's Cheese Cellars about how DBIA grant funds helped take their business to the next level!

[APPLY TODAY](#)



**BUY LOCAL
BUY WISCONSIN**

[Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant Application Period Closes Friday](#)

Applications are due this Friday, March 31 at 5:00 p.m. (CT) for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's [Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin](#) grants. Awards of up to \$50,000 each are available. Grant applicants must provide a cash or in-kind match of 50 percent to receive this state support.

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin is designed to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products locally. Complete details, including an informational webinar and the application form, are [available online](#).

[VIEW DETAILS](#)

WORKFORCE



Post Job Openings on Free WCMA Jobs Board

Recruitment can be difficult. WCMA's [online jobs board](#) is here to help. Members may post up to 10 career opportunities per company or cooperative, per month - for free!

This week, the Jobs Board features postings from WCMA members Arla Foods, Foremost Farms USA, Land O'Lakes, Masters Gallery Foods, Milk Specialties Global, Mohawk Technology, Wapsie Valley Creamery, and Wisconsin Aging & Grading Cheese.

Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions.

SUBMIT LISTINGS NOW

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME

NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Crown Engineering, LLC](#) specializes in auditing existing control systems, machine integration, machine programming, motor control center design, and electrical control enclosure design and assembly for factory automation.



New WCMA supplier member [Hydro Solutions, Inc.](#) manufactures wastewater treatment and odor remediation products, and provides laboratory services and on-site consultation.



New WCMA supplier member [Klockner Pentaplast of America, Inc.](#) offers thermoformed trays, rigid films for form, fill and seal applications as well as flexible barrier and stretch films to protect food products.



KNOBELSDORFF

New WCMA supplier member [Knobelsdorff](#) provides specialty contracting services, including electrical, automation, renewable energy, and power services to a variety of industries including food and beverage, industrial and manufacturing, and more.



New WCMA supplier member [LG Water Solutions](#), a division of LG Chem, manufactures NanoH2O™ seawater and brackish water reverse osmosis (RO) membrane elements based on Thin-Film Nanocomposite (TFN) technology.



New WCMA supplier member [tec5 USA](#) is a designer and manufacturer of tailored in-line process spectrometers (UV/Vis, Near Infrared/NIR, and Raman).



New WCMA supplier member [Unison Process Solutions](#) manufactures and supplies machinery and systems specializing in pasteurizers, homogenizers, separators, heat exchangers, pumps, and valves.

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

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.

[Unsubscribe kstrohmenger@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:kstrohmenger@wischeesemakers.org)

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