



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## ADVOCACY

### USDA Reopens Comment Period on Draft of Plant-Based Product Labeling Guidance



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced late last week that it will reopen the comment period for its draft guidance entitled “[Labeling of Plant-Based Milk Alternatives and Voluntary Nutrient Statements; Draft Guidance for Industry](#)” to allow more time for submissions. The new deadline for comments will be determined when the reopening notice publishes, and WCMA will keep members informed of developments.

Members may recall, the FDA's draft guidance notes that plant-based imitation milk products may be labeled as “milk.”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 FDA’s disappointing draft guidance will only result in more consumer confusion.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, either [via an online portal](#) or via postal mail to:

Dockets Management  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

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

### Make Allowance Survey Deadline Extended

Dairy manufacturers and processors now have through Friday, May 12 to [complete a confidential Cost of Processing survey](#) to inform industry efforts to update make allowances in federal milk marketing orders.

In partnership with the International Dairy Foods Association, WCMA has commissioned Dr. Mark Stephenson, former Director of Dairy Policy Analyses at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to update a 2018 survey he conducted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As part of a [recent petition to update make allowances](#), WCMA is asking the agency take into account the data collected in Dr. Stephenson's new survey.

Members with questions about the survey may contact [Dr. Stephenson](#).

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## USDA Announces \$20M Investment in Rural Broadband Expansion

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced April 19 it will use \$20 million from a bipartisan infrastructure investment law to expand rural broadband access via grants. The [USDA Broadband Technical Assistance Program](#) is aimed at supporting technical assistance projects including feasibility studies, network designs, and the development of broadband financial assistance applications. Grant applications are due June 20, 2023.

WCMA members have made affordable rural broadband a key policy priority at both the federal and state level, and advocate for programs to expand access. To learn more about WCMA's Policy Committee and its work, contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

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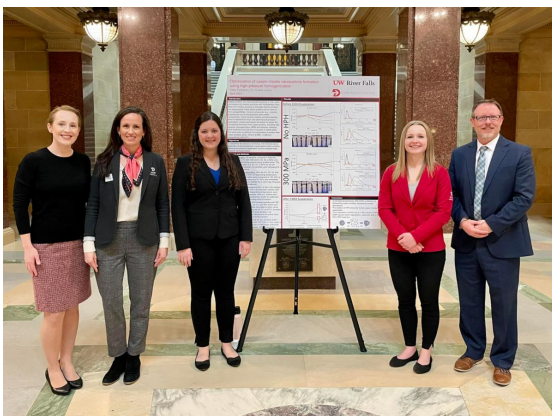
## Romanski Confirmed as WDATCP Secretary



WCMA applauded the Wisconsin State Senate action last week to again confirm Randy Romanski as Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. Romanski has partnered with industry to boost dairy processors' growth via modernization grants, new export programs, the Food Security Initiative, and regulatory change, and WCMA advocated for his continued agency leadership.

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## Dairy Hub Presents Research in Capitol as WCMA Advocates for Funding



[Dairy Innovation Hub](#) staff presented their latest research results at the Wisconsin State Capitol last week, as lawmakers continue work on the budget. WCMA proudly champions funding of \$7.8 million annually to continue the Hub's work, including technical training and research projects at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, and University of Wisconsin-River Falls designed to support economical, environmentally-conscious, and socially sustainable dairy production.

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# Dairy Processors Invited to Join in WDATCP Trade Mission to UK

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) invites dairy processors to consider taking part in a trade mission to the United Kingdom, slated for June 10-16. This UK mission will include buyer meetings, store visits, market briefings, and meetings with regulatory entities.

Funding from the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports, a new five-year, \$5 million program for which WCMA lobbied, will support the cost of in-country contractors providing partner searches, business meeting facilitation services, meeting costs, transportation, and market reports for up to six Wisconsin companies.

Interested WCMA members should contact [WDATCP Economic Development Consultant Shirley Acedo](#).

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## USDA Seeking Yogurt & Butter

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is [seeking bids](#) for the fulfillment of contracts for yogurt and butter for domestic distribution. Bids are due May 15 by 1:00 p.m. (CT). Questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

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## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Seehafer News*: [City of Plymouth sells Cheese Counter and Dairy Heritage Center for \\$1](#) (Featuring WCMA members Masters Gallery Foods, Sargento Foods, and Sartori Cheese)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [From dairy pricing to private well testing, Wisconsin farmers, lawmakers have eye on next farm bill](#)

### National/International

- *Food Safety News*: [Legislatures are acting mostly with caution when it comes to raw milk](#)
  - *Dairy Herd Management*: [Dairy leaders against Iowa raw milk bill](#)
  - *Lancaster Farming*: [Reforming Pennsylvania's dairy over-order premium: What you need to know](#)
  - *Reuters*: [U.S. food banks warn of strain as Republicans seek food aid cuts](#)
  - *AdWeek*: [Got wood milk? Aubrey Plaza's artisanal venture spoofs plant-based alternatives to dairy.](#)
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## EDUCATION



## WCMA Front-Line Leaders Focus on Team Building Strategies

Kudos to the WCMA member employees who today are engaged in [Front-Line Leadership Training-Part C](#), focused on building stronger teams. Participants from Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Great Lakes Cheese Company, Mosaic Meadows-La Clare Creamery, Pine River Cheese Spread, Sartori Cheese, Schuman Cheese-Imperia Foods, VV Supremo, and Winona Foods showed up ready to learn strategies to build a team mentality for maximum productivity and talent retention. We applaud these individuals and their employers for their investment in continuing education.

## Register Now for WCMA Next Step Leadership

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 Tuesday, 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**

# DAIRY FOOD SAFETY ALLIANCE

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WISCONSIN  
CHEESE MAKERS  
ASSOCIATION  
EST. 1891



## Learn Timely Updates at Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting

Register now to join the [next hybrid meeting of the Dairy Food Safety Alliance](#), set for Tuesday, May 2. Enjoy practical presentations on the latest in food safety regulations and research, as well as a tour of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (WDATCP) Bureau of Laboratory Services.

The [Alliance](#) is a partnership between the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), the Center for Dairy Research, and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. Alliance meetings offer useful updates on timely food safety topics - and opportunities for participants to reconnect with their peers and colleagues.

In-person attendees will gather in Madison at 10 a.m. (CT) for a tour of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (WDATCP) Bureau of Laboratory Services, limited to the first 20 registrants.

After a networking lunch, all attendees will enjoy informational presentations from 12:00-3:00 p.m. (CT), including:

- Food Safety Regulatory Updates: Laura Traas, WDATCP
- Bridging the Gap - Effectively Communicating Food Safety Risk: Jen Pino-Gallagher and Ben DuCharme, M3 Insurance
- Peer Perspectives Panel: Corporate Buy-In to Food Safety Culture: Jeff McSherry, Emmi Roth; Jim Natzke, Natzke Consulting; and Jen Pino-Gallagher, M3 Insurance
- Electronic HTST Pilot Program Report: Bob Wills, Cedar Grove Cheese and Rick Jarrell, Watlow
- Other Updates & Current Events: Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Center for Dairy Research, and WCMA

Registration costs just \$45 per in-person attendee, and \$30 per virtual attendee. Have questions about the Dairy Food Safety Alliance? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**REGISTER TODAY**

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## WCMA Export Workgroup Meeting

May 23  
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT)

Join online or in-person!



REGISTER NOW:  
[WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org)

## Join WCMA Export Workgroup May 23 for Practical Trade Show Tips

Make plans now to join [WCMA's Export Workgroup in-person or online for its spring meeting](#) focused on building an effective presence at trade shows, set for Tuesday, May 23 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT).

Attendees will gain insights on current dairy export projections and learn more about the elements involved in a successful trade show visit, including: how to select a show, the financial investment involved in attending, what to expect when you arrive, pre- and post-show marketing, effective follow-up, and more. Here's a preview of our expert guest speakers, with more to be announced:

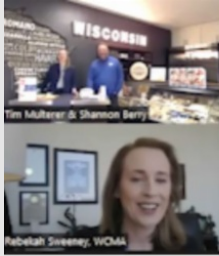
- U.S. Dairy Export Council
- Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- Sam Allison, Director of Global Sales, Sartori Cheese
- Ryan Wucherer, Global Director of Sales and Supply Chain, MCT Dairies
- Shirley Acedo; Economic Development Consultant; Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Presenters will reserve time for Q&A during the meeting. In-person attendees will also enjoy a networking lunch.

WCMA welcomes all dairy manufacturers and processors to take part in this event, regardless of their membership status with the Association. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Have questions or suggestions? Please contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

**REGISTER NOW**



WISCONSIN  
CHEESE MAKERS  
ASSOCIATION

## Retail Strategies: Putting Your Best Product Forward

April 18, 2023

### WCMA April Webinar Detailing Dairy Retail Demo Best Practices Now Available Online

WCMA is pleased to share a recording of the April members-only webinar focused on [Strategies for Effective Product Demos](#).

Thanks go to the program's featured presenters, [Tim Multerer](#) and [Shannon Berry](#) of Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, who share their thoughts on the impact of a strong retail demo program and tips on how to boost sales by showcasing your dairy products directly to consumers.

Resources and contacts referenced in this webinar include:

- [Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Merchandising Resources](#)
- [Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Sampling Event Resources](#)

As a reminder, recordings of all of WCMA's monthly webinars are available to logged-in members anytime at [WisCheeseMakers.org/Webinars](https://www.wischeesemakers.org/webinars).



## WCMA Webinar

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### Cutting-Edge Concepts in Dairy Plant Construction

### Save the Date for Free WCMA Webinar Focused on Dairy Plant Construction

Make plans now to attend [WCMA's next free, members-only webinar](#) Tuesday, May 9 at 1:00 p.m. (CT)! Hear from top suppliers in the dairy construction space about cutting-edge concepts in plant construction. Participating suppliers to date include C.D. Smith Construction and ISG Inc.

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, May 8 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.

[VIEW DETAILS](#)

## 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:

- 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
- May 23-24: [Dairy Plant Food Safety Workshop Hosted by Glanbia Nutritionals & Agropur](#) - Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
- May 24: [Labeling Regulations for Dairy Products Short Course](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- June 6-8: [Buttermaking Comprehensive \(In-Person\)](#) - 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

## MEMBERSHIP



## Register for WCMA Annual Meeting

Hear the latest WCMA updates, network with fellow members, and get a preview of the year ahead at [WCMA's 2023 Annual Member Meeting](#), set for Wednesday, May 24 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

Check-in and networking will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by a catered luncheon at noon. Afterward, members will applaud legislative leaders and hear updates on WCMA's programs and plans for the coming fiscal year. Attendance for this in-person event costs



just \$75, including lunch, and all WCMA members are welcome to attend. Speakers and honorees will be announced in the coming weeks.

Please note, WCMA has set up a room block with special rates at the [Hilton Garden Inn](#) for those who wish to stay the night; simply note that you are part of our group when you contact the hotel. The cut-off for this offer is Sunday, May 7.

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

## VIEW DETAILS



## Show Your Support for WCMA: Sponsor the Annual Meeting!

WCMA welcomes members to consider sponsoring our Annual Meeting. [Sponsorships of \\$500](#) offer the following benefits:

- One free meeting registration;
- Recognition during the WCMA Annual Meeting;
- Your organization's full-color logo on the WCMA Annual Meeting event webpage; and
- Signage with your organization's full-color logo at the WCMA Annual Meeting Logo and recognition in all advanced meeting notices.

Please consider a sponsorship of this event by Friday, May 12.

## BECOME A SPONSOR

WCMA thanks supplier member [Blackhawk Bank](#) for its generous sponsorship of the 2023 Annual Member Meeting.



# WELCOME



*NEW WCMA MEMBERS!*

## Dairy Industry Suppliers

New WCMA supplier member [Fireline Sprinkler LLC](#) specializes in the design, fabrication, installation and maintenance of



New WCMA supplier member [Milport Enterprises, Inc.](#) is a chemical distributor that also provides custom compounding of both dry and liquid formulations, contract packaging, and quality assurance services.

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

## GRANTS

# DBIA Delivers

*Success Stories from the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance*

## Prairie Homestead Creamery

Cottonwood, MN

DBIA Grant Recipient  
2022



## DBIA Delivers: Prairie Homestead Creamery

Since the creation of the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#) in the 2018 Farm Bill, WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research have partnered to administer approximately \$7 million in grants to 88 dairy farms and processors. The Alliance now serves an 11-state region including Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

WCMA's newest social media series, DBIA Delivers, highlights the successes of dairy entrepreneurs that have taken their businesses to the next level thanks to DBIA grants.

This week in our #DBIADelivers series, we highlight Prairie Homestead Creamery, a Cottonwood, Minnesota business making goat milk gelato. With funding from a Dairy Business Innovation Alliance grant, the farm is diversifying its revenue streams and supporting growth in the goat dairy industry.

Follow along on WCMA's [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) for more inspiring stories, and use the hashtag #DBIADelivers to share how DBIA has helped support your business!

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Assn. | 5117 West Terrace Drive, Suite 402, Madison, WI 53718

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