



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



SIGNATURE EVENTS



CheeseCon Begins Today

CheeseCon 2023 kicks off today in Madison, Wisconsin with special networking events! Plan your visit now with the official CheeseCon mobile app, available for Android and iPhone. Sponsored by WCMA supplier member Cybertrol Engineering, the app provides access to complete exhibitor information, a map of the exhibit floor, a list of educational seminars, and schedule alerts.

GOOGLE PLAY

APP STORE

All CheeseCon registrations must now take place on-site. CheeseCon's registration desks will be open at the Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall throughout the conference:

- Tuesday, April 4 from 12:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 5 from 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, April 6 from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Hard copies of the 2023 CheeseCon Official Program will be available at registration. A full schedule and additional information is [available online](#).

Wisconsin DNR Establishes Nation's First Water Quality Trading Clearinghouse



Wisconsin Water Quality Trading Clearinghouse

Following extensive involvement by WCMA and its members, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources **last week announced** that the state has contracted with Resource Environmental Solutions to establish **Wisconsin Clearinghouse**, the nation's first market-based water quality trading clearinghouse.

WCMA played an important role in lobbying for passage of this legislation in 2020, and later sat on the industry steering committee that aided in the construction of the clearinghouse design and informed the Request for Proposals used for discovering the contracted partner.

Municipalities and industries throughout Wisconsin that own and operate wastewater treatment plants can now contract with the **Wisconsin Clearinghouse** to find and obtain water quality trades to help them meet their wastewater permit requirements. This approach allows treatment plant owners to protect local water quality while saving money on costly treatment upgrades. The clearinghouse model also encourages farmers and landowners to adopt pollution-reducing practices on their land in exchange for monetary compensation.

Questions may be directed to admin@wiclearinghouse.org or (608) 844-3691.



Wisconsin Leaders Propose \$150M Investment in Rural Road Improvements

WCMA thanks Wisconsin State Representative Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City) and State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), who **last week circulated legislation** to

invest an additional \$150 million in the state's rural roads. The bill creates a state-funded program to provide money for local governments to upgrade local roads and bridges used by farmers, dairy processors, and rural communities. For more, see related news coverage of the legislation:

- *Telegraph Herald*: [Wisconsin lawmakers propose grant program for rural road improvement projects](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [Will Wisconsin rebuild its rural roads?](#)
- *Brownfield Ag News*: [Wisconsin Ag Coalition seeks road funding & more in budget](#)

WCMA staff will keep members informed of opportunities to advocate on this and other state budget priorities.



IDFA Supports WCMA Petition for USDA Make Allowance Hearing

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) has [joined WCMA in petitioning the U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) for a public hearing and rulemaking to update make allowances in federal milk marketing orders.

WCMA's petition, filed last week, 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](#). In partnership with IDFA, WCMA has 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 next Friday, 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.

Complete Wisconsin 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

- *Appleton Post-Crescent*: [Grande Cheese purchases former Northeastern Wisconsin cheese plant](#) (Featuring WCMA members Foremost Farms USA and Grande Cheese)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Wis. lawmakers reintroduce bill preventing non-dairy products being labeled as milk](#)
- *Eagle Herald*: [Same cheese, new owner: Seguin's Cheese owners retire](#)
- *FoodSided*: [Wisconsin Cheese's Wedgewater Spa offers the ultimate cheesy rejuvenation](#)

National/International

- *Agri-Pulse Daybreak*: [Senators want USDA to protect against misleading food labels](#) (Starts at 7:22)
- *Associated Press*: [Immigration reform stalled decade after Gang of Eight's big push](#)
- *USA TODAY*: [USDA wants to cut the amount of milk provided to low-income families. Many say they're concerned.](#)
- *The Week*: [The surprisingly heated fight over what makes 'milk' milk](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [Real milk is this pediatrician's pick](#)
- *Supermarket Perimeter*: [How the cheese industry is innovating with packaging](#)

GRANTS



Apply for \$100K DBIA Grants by April 13

Dairy businesses in 11 Midwestern states can apply now through next 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 members Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Landmark Creamery, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars about how DBIA grants helped take their businesses to the next level!

[APPLY NOW](#)

EDUCATION



WCMA Webinar

Retail Demos: Put Your Best Product Forward

Learn Tips for 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



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](mailto:Grace.Atherton@wcma.com) 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

Don't miss out on the [next meeting of the Dairy Food Safety Alliance](#), set for Tuesday,

May 2. Registration is now open at [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org).

The **Alliance**, a partnership between the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), the Center for Dairy Research, and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, offers practical presentations on the latest in food safety research and regulatory practices - and a chance for participants to reconnect with their peers and colleagues in dairy processing.

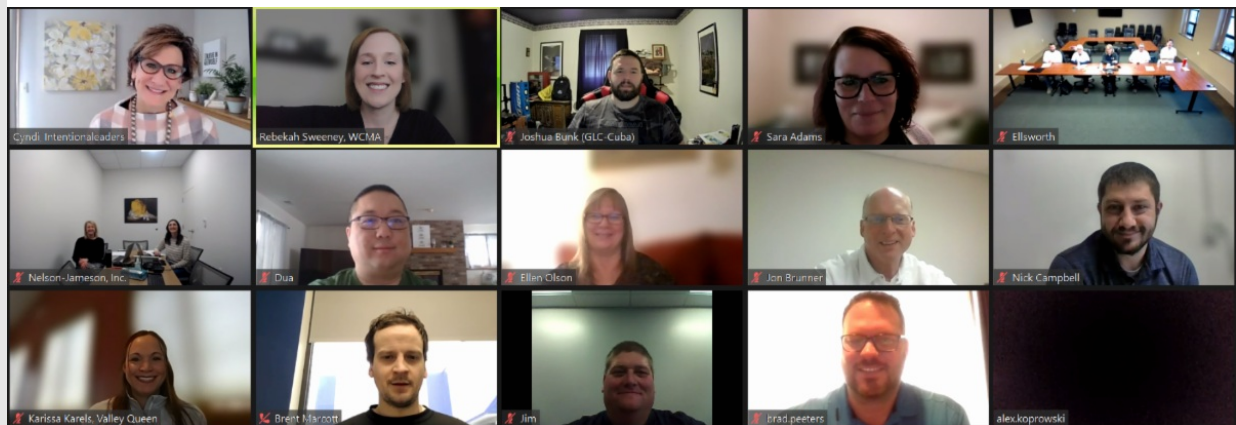
All dairy manufacturers, processors, and industry suppliers are welcome to join this hybrid meeting. In-person attendees will gather in Madison, first at 10 a.m. (CT) for a tour of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (WDATCP) Bureau of Laboratory Services, followed by a networking lunch. All attendees, including those joining in the meeting virtually, will enjoy informational presentations from 12:00-3:00 p.m. (CT). Here's a look at the topics and speakers slated for that portion of our meeting:

- **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 (Additional speakers invited)
- **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. Please note, registration for in-person attendees will close April 24.

Have questions about the Dairy Food Safety Alliance? Please contact [WCMA Events Manager Kirsten Strohmenger](#).

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](#).

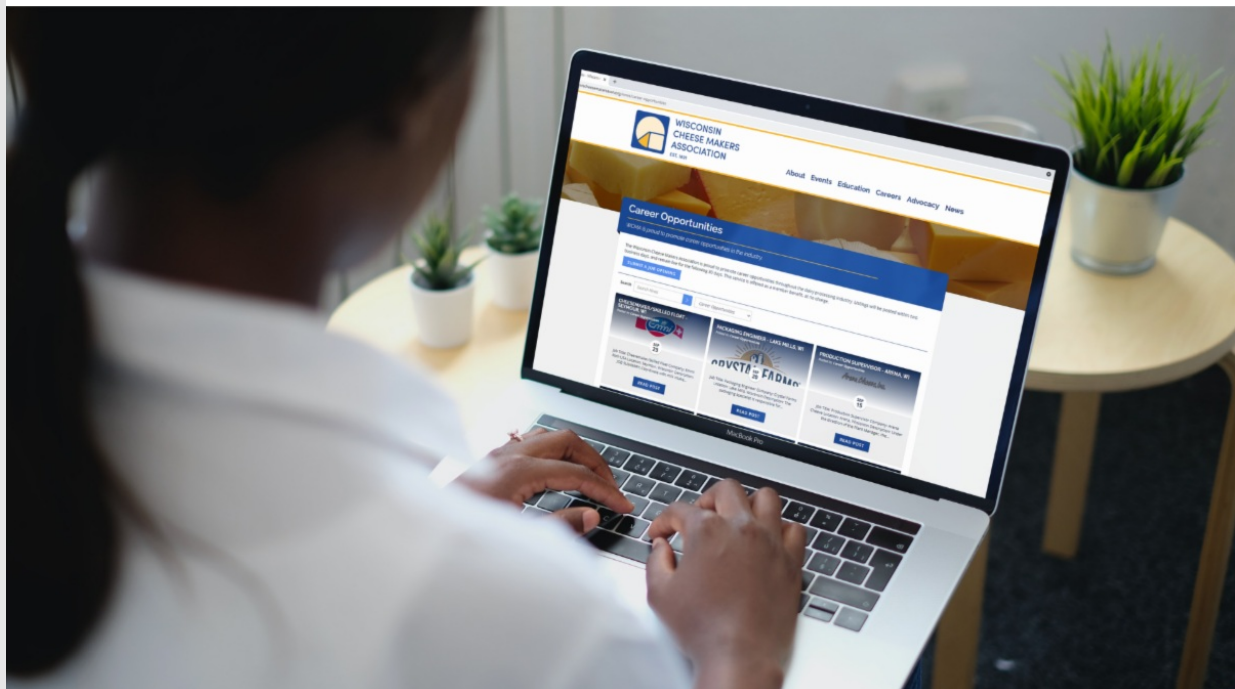
SIGN UP TODAY

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 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

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 Agropur, Arla Foods, Foremost Farms USA, Land O'Lakes, Masters Gallery Foods, Milk Specialties Global, Mohawk Technology, Sigma Foods, Wapsie Valley Creamery, and Wisconsin Aging & Grading Cheese.

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

SUBMIT OPENINGS

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Adapa Group](#) specializes in customized high-barrier packaging solutions for the food (dairy, meat, poultry), tobacco, hygiene, and pharmaceutical industries.



New WCMA supplier member [Advance Fittings](#) is a manufacturer of stainless steel fittings and custom components for the dairy industry.



New WCMA supplier member [Sure Controls](#) provides industrial distribution, engineering, integration, repair, service, education and training solutions.



New WCMA supplier member [TLC Ingredients](#) is a food ingredient distributor serving customers in various sectors of the food and wellness industry.



New WCMA supplier member [WestRock](#) works with brands and manufacturers to provide a variety of equipment, paper, and packaging products.

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.

WisCheeseMakers.org
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