

# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## ADVOCACY



### Baldwin Proposes \$36M Boost for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives



WCMA applauds U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tennessee), who together with co-sponsor Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vermont), introduced the [Dairy Business Innovation Act of 2023](#) last week, authorizing funding of \$36 million per year for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII), up from the \$20 million annual authorization provided by the 2018 Farm Bill.

DBII centers – including the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#), run by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research – provide technical assistance and direct-to-business grants supporting the production of value-added dairy, industry modernization, and dairy export endeavors. WCMA called for the increase in annual funding late last year, and has been working closely with the Baldwin office on this proposal.

WCMA will host Sen. Baldwin this Friday, July 21 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. at a farm in Columbus, Wisconsin for a media event related to the introduction of the Dairy Business Innovation Act of 2023. Members interested in attending may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) for details.



## WCMA Comments on FDA Draft Labeling Guidance for Plant-Based Products

WCMA last week [submitted official comments on FDA's draft guidance](#) related to the labeling of plant-based products mimicking dairy. The agency reopened the comment period in late April to allow more time for submissions on this draft guidance.

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 FDA's disappointing draft guidance will only result in more consumer confusion.



### Submit Feedback to FDA

WCMA members are encouraged to submit their own individual comments on FDA's draft guidance by July 31, either by using [WCMA's template](#) or drafting their own remarks.

Comments may be [submitted electronically](#) or sent via postal mail to: Dockets Management, Food and Drug Administration 5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. For assistance, please contact [WCMA's Rebekah Sweeney](#).



## WCMA Advocates for Wisconsin Dairy Processors in New USDA Hunger Relief Program

In May, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the creation of a \$420 million [Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program \(RFSI\)](#), with funding for each state department of agriculture to support projects that expand capacity for the collection, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of food products, including dairy.

Now, WCMA is engaging in advocacy to ensure Wisconsin's RFSI program includes support for dairy processors and their partners in hunger relief. Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) is set to receive a \$28 million share of RFSI monies, and DATCP officials are currently preparing plans for its formal application, due August 23. At a listening session held last week, WCMA staff expressed support for grant offerings of between \$100,000 and \$3 million for dairy processors to modernize their facilities and build production capacity, and for hunger relief organizations that purchase locally processed dairy products.

WCMA members interested in providing direct input on RFSI applications should contact their state department of agriculture. For advocacy assistance, please contact [Rebekah Sweeney](#). WCMA will keep members informed of relevant updates on RFSI opportunities.

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## Dairy Innovation Hub Announces New UW-Platteville Fellowships

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville recently [awarded five faculty research fellowships](#) to help increase dairy research capacity through the Dairy Innovation Hub. The fellowships aim to leverage the university's existing expertise to provide timely results supporting the goals of the Dairy Innovation Hub. A full list of the new fellows and their research is [available online](#).

WCMA has been an outspoken advocate for the Dairy Innovation Hub since its inception. Funded through \$7.8 million in annual state funding, the Hub harnesses research and development at UW-Madison, UW-Platteville and UW-River Falls campuses to keep Wisconsin's \$45.6 billion dairy community at the global forefront in producing nutritious dairy foods in an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner. Since its launch in 2019, the Hub has funded over 160 projects across the three campuses.

# View WCMA Golf Outing & Trap Shoot Participant List



Course assignments and an updated list of participants are now available for tomorrow's sold-out WCMA Golf Outing and Trap Shoot in central Wisconsin.

WCMA will host golfers for a scramble tournament at four courses: Lake Arrowhead's Lakes and Pines Courses, Bullseye Golf Club Course, and the Northern Bay Resort Course, all near Nekoosa, Wisconsin.

The tournament will begin at 10:00 a.m. at Northern Bay and Bullseye Courses and 11:00 a.m. at the Lake Arrowhead courses. Golfers will enjoy the BMO Harris Bank lunch at their assigned course starting at 9:30 a.m. or at the turn.

Trapshooters will start their day at 11:00 a.m. at the Wisconsin Trapshoot Association (WTA) Homegrounds facility. The BMO Harris Bank lunch will be served at 11:00 a.m. at the WTA facility.

After golf and trap shooting, all attendees will meet at the Lake Arrowhead Clubhouse to enjoy the Amcor Social Hour and a buffet dinner.

The deadline for advance name changes was Friday, July 14. All changes to the participant list must be made on-site tomorrow, Wednesday, July 19.

*Thank you, sponsors!*



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Premier Dinner Sponsor**

## EDUCATION



## WCMA Webinar

**Cutting-Edge Innovations  
in Dairy Automation**

# Join Free WCMA Webinar August 1 for Cutting-Edge Innovations in Dairy Automation

Join leaders in dairy plant automation technology at [WCMA's next free member webinar](#) on Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Three industry presentations will explore new solutions in processing automation. Our featured guest speakers are:

- Todd Stertz, Cheese & Powder Services Sales Support Manager, Tetra Pak
- Greg Alberts, President, Kelley Supply
- Brady Hoes, Vice President, Loos Machine & Automation



**Todd Stertz**  
*Tetra Pak*



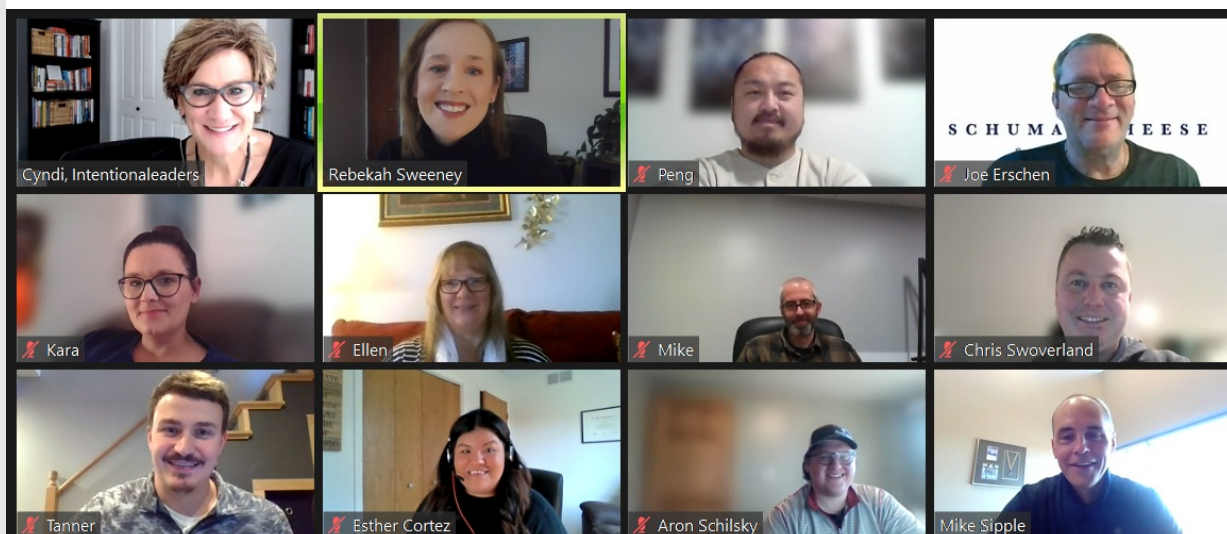
**Greg Alberts**  
*Kelley Supply*



**Brady Hoes**  
*Loos Machine & Automation*

This one-hour webinar includes three, 15-minute talks from these leaders in dairy automation and time for your questions. If you'd like to pose a question in advance, please email [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) by Monday, July 31 at 12:00 p.m.

**REGISTER NOW**



**Build Strong, Productive Teams with  
WCMA Leadership Trainings**

The fall offerings of WCMA's popular leadership courses are filling quickly! [Register now](#) to join more than 600 individual WCMA member employees that have graduated from these practical, engaging trainings.

[Front-Line Leadership](#) is designed for new and seasoned supervisors in the dairy processing industry. The three modules are offered a la carte and may be taken in any order for just \$159 per participant for in-person offerings. This fall's virtual Front-Line tracks are already sold out, and only a few seats are left in the in-person track:

- September 11: [Part A - Essential Leadership Skills](#)
- October 17: [Part B - Boosting Staff Performance](#)
- November 28: [Part C - Cultivating a Team](#)

The three-part [Advanced Leadership Series](#) is designed for mid-level managers and employees transitioning to these positions. This virtual course features guest speakers from industry, group and partner discussions, and a project to demonstrate attendees' new knowledge. The series costs \$549 per person and is limited to a cohort of just 22 individuals to foster valuable networking.

- Part 1 on **Tuesday, September 19** pushes participants to take initiative in driving change and generating positive results for their company.
- Part 2 on **Wednesday, November 1** focuses on the development and application of a creative and collaborative problem-solving process.
- Part 3 on **Wednesday, January 10, 2024** details the tools and strategies leaders can use to foster collaboration and resolve workplace conflict.

Don't wait - visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org) today to sign up.

**REGISTER NOW**



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***The Business Case for Sustainability***

July 11, 2023

## **View Free WCMA Sustainability Webinar**

A recording of WCMA's latest free webinar, focused on the business case for dairy sustainability, is [now available for viewing online](#). Resources and contacts that were mentioned during the webinar include:

- [Full PowerPoint presentation](#)
- [U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment](#)
- [Video: U.S. Dairy Stewardship Commitment](#)
- [Innovation Center Research & Resources](#)

- [Video: What is Sustainability?](#)
- Webinar Presenters:
  - [Eric Hassel](#), Director of Sustainability Measurement & Reporting, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, (847) 627-3715
  - [Holly Jones](#), Director of Global Sustainability, Agropur, (920) 810-8919
  - [Bob Wills](#), Owner & President, Cedar Grove Cheese, (608) 220-2505
  - [Danica Nilsestuen](#), Grants & Business Programs Director, WCMA, (608) 673-5547

As a reminder, information on all of WCMA's past monthly webinars is available to logged-in members anytime at [WisCheeseMakers.org/Webinars](https://www.wischeesemakers.org/Webinars). Suggestions for future webinars are always welcome! Please send your ideas to [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).

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## Additional Industry Educational Opportunities

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

- August 22-23: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 6: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(Online Self-Study\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 7: [Dairy Ingredient Fundamentals \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 12-13: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 14: [Cultured Dairy Products \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 19-21: [Advanced Cheesemaking: Italian Varieties \(In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 26-27: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals \(Spanish, In-Person\)](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- On-Demand:
  - [Introduction to Food Safety Principles \(English and Spanish\)](#) - Cornell University
  - [Artisan Dairy Food Safety Coaching](#) - Cornell University
  - [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

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**MEMBERSHIP**



## Join WCMA Young Professionals in Milwaukee



All WCMA member employees are invited to [join the WCMA Young Professionals on Wednesday, August 23](#) at American Family Field in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for an afternoon of fun and networking! Our group will gather at the Miller Lite Landing as the Milwaukee Brewers take on the Minnesota Twins, at 1:10 p.m. Registration is just \$35 and includes an admission ticket. Members may also purchase tickets for guests (significant others and friends are welcome).

The deadline to sign up is Friday, August 11. Please contact [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#) with questions.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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## Act by July 31 to Keep WCMA Member Benefits

WCMA is proud to be your resource, advocate, information hub, and connector. Your membership keeps you connected with peers and trusted suppliers and supports WCMA's work to help dairy manufacturers and processors nationwide grow their businesses.

With WCMA's new fiscal year underway as of July 1, **please check your inbox for a message from [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) with details on how to renew your WCMA membership.** Once you receive this information, simply follow the instructions in the email by July 31 to ensure your continued access to our ever-growing array of member benefits.

If you've already received your renewal message and taken action, thank you! If you have not received your renewal message or have any questions about WCMA membership, please contact [Membership Director Sara Schmidt](#).

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Appleton Post-Crescent*: [Union Star Cheese Factory's legacy through the years](#) (Featuring WCMA member Union Star Cheese Factory)
- *Slate*: [The great parmesan cheese debate](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sartori Company)
- *Dairy Processing*: [Art of Cheese festival to debut this fall](#)

### National/International

- *The Food Institute*: [Analyzing the dairy industry's imbalance issue](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- *Dairy Foods*: [Dairy processors make great sustainability strides](#) (Featuring WCMA members Agropur, Dairy Farmers of America, and Land O'Lakes)
- *Sun-Gazette*: [Valley dairies have opportunity for grant money](#)
- *Dairy Herd Management*: [Madison, Wisconsin will remain World Dairy Expo's home through 2028](#)

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

# Hilmar Unveils Rebrand, Unifying Cheese & Whey Businesses



WCMA member Hilmar Cheese Company is now [Hilmar](#), bringing its cheese and whey businesses together under one brand. In a [statement released last week](#), Hilmar CEO David Ahlem said, "The new identity aligns with the company's expanding role in the markets it serves...Whether it's cheese or ingredients, our intent is to build on our heritage and find innovative, new ways to use the power of dairy to improve lives."

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## USDA Seeking Cheddar; Awards Milk Contracts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting [cheddar cheese](#) to be used in domestic food distribution programs. Bids are due Tuesday, July 25 by 1:00 p.m. (CT). Questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

USDA also [awarded approximately \\$1.6 million in contracts](#) to procure fluid milk from vendors including WCMA members Dairy Farmers of America and Prairie Farms Dairy.

All open USDA dairy product solicitations are [available online](#), along with information about how to [become an approved vendor](#).

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## Join WDATCP to Promote WI Cheese in Thailand



Sign up today to join the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Thailand January 29-February 2, 2024. The trip will include a Wisconsin cheese brand awareness seminar and product showcase, as well as meetings with importers, site visits to retailers and food service providers, and more.

Members who are interested in participating should contact [WDATCP staff](#) to sign up.

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## WORKFORCE



## Register Now to Attend WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Hybrid Meeting August 15

Register now to network and learn at the [next meeting of WCMA's Workforce &](#)

[Education Committee meeting](#) on Tuesday, August 15 from 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT).

Network and engage with industry peers in-person at the offices of WCMA member M3 Insurance in Madison, Wisconsin, or online via Zoom. In-person attendees will enjoy a networking lunch. The meeting will feature engaging presentations on:

- Proper Use (and Preventing Abuse) of FMLA
  - Speaker: Alex O'Connor, Compliance Attorney, M3 Insurance
- Peer Perspectives: Strategies for Successful Hybrid Workforce Management
- Methods to Measure HR Effectiveness
  - Speaker: Marla Rybowskiak, Director of Operations, The Employer Group



***Alex O'Connor***  
***M3 Insurance***



***Marla Rybowskiak***  
***The Employer Group***

[RSVP today](#) to join this opportunity to grow your network and your knowledge base! Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) with questions or suggestions.

**REGISTER NOW**

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## JOBS BOARD



## View, Share Career Opportunities on Free WCMA Jobs Board

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) today to share your career openings on WCMA's online jobs board, available to members only - for free! Members can post up to 10 job openings per month. Each posting is published within two business days and remains live on our website for 30 days after submission.

This week, the [Jobs Board](#) features opportunities from members Associated Milk Producers Inc., BelGioioso Cheese, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, Crystal Farms, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Emmi Roth, Foremost Farms USA, Grande Cheese Company, Grassland Dairy Products, Great Lakes Cheese, KDI Cheese Co., Klondike Cheese Co., Lactalis American Group, Leprino Foods, Masters Gallery Foods, Saputo Cheese USA, Wapsie Valley Creamery, and Westby Cooperative Creamery.

Have questions about the Jobs Board? Please contact [WCMA Manager of Business Operations Ryan Dunn](#).

**POST OPENINGS**

**GRANTS**



## Limited Trade Show Grant Funding Available

Showcase your products in Germany and Vietnam this fall with a **Collaborative Market Access Grant** through WCMA! These reimbursement grants of up to \$15,000 each may be applied to certain trade show expenses at:

- Anuga in Cologne, Germany on October 7-11
- Food&HotelVietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on November 21-23

Grant funds may be used for the following expenses:

- Registration and booth expenses for an international trade show/exhibit
- Registration for international conferences/meetings where the company is presenting and having business meetings to increase its international exports
- Shipping charges to and from the show for booth, display, samples, literature and/or equipment
- In-country interpreter services during an approved trip
- Costs associated with foreign-language translation of brochures and supporting materials at a trade show
- Design services, printing, marketing and advertising associated with trade show participation

These awards are made possible through funding from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. Applicants are not required to be members of WCMA. A 30 percent grant match is required. Costs incurred prior to a company or cooperative's application for funds are not eligible for reimbursement. Questions may be directed to **[WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#)**.

**APPLY TODAY**

## Specialty Cheese Company

Reeseville, WI

DBIA Grant Recipient  
2021, 2022, 2023



### DBIA Delivers: Specialty Cheese Company

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 over \$9.4 million in grants to 103 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 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 #DBIADelivers, join us as we spotlight WCMA member [Specialty Cheese Company](#). Thanks in part to DBIA grant funding, this award-winning maker of specialty cheeses from around the world has formed a consortium to increase exporting opportunities for small cheese producers and explored strategies to automate some of its processes.

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

WisCheeseMakers.org  
(608) 286-1001



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

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