



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



ADVOCACY



WCMA Advocates for Increased Dairy Hauling Capacity in Wisconsin

WCMA applauded this week as Wisconsin State Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) and State Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) circulated a [bill draft](#) designed to boost dairy hauling capacity in Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin already allows haulers to move 98,000 pounds of raw milk over six axles, and this proposal would extend those higher weight limits to all liquid dairy products, including liquid whey. This bill offers myriad benefits, including:

Increased Sustainability

- Hauling full tanks, processors can reduce the dairy industry's carbon footprint via fuel savings and decreased emissions.

Labor Shortage Solution

- The American Trucking Associations (ATA) reported a shortage of 80,000 drivers in 2022, an all-time high projected to double by 2030. This poses challenges for the dairy industry, which must operate fleets continuously. In maximizing the use of liquid hauling vehicles, this bill can alleviate some of the strain caused by the ongoing labor shortage.

Competitiveness

- Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Utah have opted

to accommodate heavier liquid truck shipment limited to dairy product transportation, reducing freight and labor costs and thereby offering a competitive advantage for dairy processors operating in those states. Following suit will help to ensure the long-term strength of Wisconsin processors and provide opportunities for their growth in Wisconsin.

Public Safety

- While milk haulers always make safety their top priority, fewer trips would mean less truck traffic, reducing the risk of accidents. Studies have revealed the superior safety of hauling full liquid tanks over partial tanks.



Sen. Joan Ballweg
(R-Markesan)



Rep. Tony Kurtz
(R-Wonewoc)

WCMA has been working on this legislation for months, and we thank Sen. Ballweg and Rep. Kurtz for their commitment to the process and our industry.

We also thank members BelGioioso Cheese and Milk Specialties Global for their early advocacy on this proposal, sharing data on their hauling routes and considering the economic impact of this proposed change.

Member Action Alert: Ask Wisconsin Lawmakers to Support Dairy Hauling Bill



Wisconsin-based WCMA members are invited to make their voices heard on this issue, and call or email their state lawmaker using [WCMA's easy contact form](#) today.

All you have to do is enter your home or business address and click a button to ask lawmakers to co-sponsor LRB 4167 and LRB 3220. Don't delay; the deadline for co-sponsorship is August 30!

TAKE ACTION NOW

Have questions about the bill, or want to talk with your elected leaders about it? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

FMMO Hearing to Start Tomorrow

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is set to convene a national hearing on milk pricing formulas in Federal Milk Marketing Orders tomorrow in Carmel, Indiana. WCMA first called for this hearing in March, detailing in June a [plan to adjust make allowances](#) for cheddar cheese, dry whey, butter, and nonfat dry milk for the long-term strength and stability of the dairy industry.

WCMA is actively seeking members to testify as early as next week Wednesday, August 30 regarding their increased make costs including but not limited to labor, utilities, packaging, raw materials, and transportation. If you have interest, please contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#). Note that WCMA has secured experienced attorneys who will fully prepare members to testify.

WCMA will keep members informed of FMMO hearing developments via this weekly communication.



WCMA Members Advocate for Farm Bill & Federal Policy Priorities



WCMA staff and members from Mullins Cheese, Organic Valley, and Westby Cooperative Creamery last week joined in advocating for 2023 Farm Bill and other federal policy priorities at a listening session in La Crosse, Wisconsin hosted by Congressman Derrick Van Orden with special guest, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn Thompson.

WCMA shared input on a host of issues, from dairy access via SNAP benefits to forward pricing, and emphasized the need for continued and increased funding for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives.

To engage in federal advocacy efforts, consider joining WCMA's active and impactful Policy Committee. Contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) to get involved today.

GRANTS



DBIA Now Offering \$100,000 Grants

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), a partnership between WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) has reopened the application period for two grant opportunities: the Dairy Business Builder Grant Program and the Dairy Industry Impact Grant Program. Both offerings feature awards of up to \$100,000, following a competitive review process.

The **Dairy Business Builder Grant Program** aims to encourage small- to medium-sized dairy farmers, entrepreneurs, and processors in the Midwest to pursue innovative projects such as dairy farm diversification, on-farm processing, value-added product creation, and efforts to market dairy products for export.

The **Dairy Industry Impact Grant Program** welcomes applications in targeted topic areas that have the potential to positively impact the dairy industry. In the upcoming grant cycle, applications will be accepted for projects related to new or expanded dairy export endeavors.

Applicants may apply for both the Dairy Business Builder Grant and the Dairy Industry Impact Grant, if they have two separate projects related to DBIA goals. Companies are eligible to receive awards from both offerings in the same grant cycle. Online application forms are posted to www.cdr.wisc.edu/dbia. The deadline for submissions is October 18 at 5 p.m. (CT), and applicants will be notified of results in early December.

The DBIA is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Including the awards listed above, since its inception as part of the 2018 Farm Bill, the DBIA has administered over \$9.4 million in grants to 103 dairy businesses in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The program also offers technical assistance and education to dairy farmers and processors in the region.

Sign Up Now for Grant Webinars



Interested in applying for a DBIA grant? Please sign up now to attend one of the Alliance's free informational webinars. These concise programs review application components, FAQs, and offer advice for successful applications.

- **Dairy Business Builder Grant "Helpful Hints" Webinar**: Today, August 22, 1 p.m. (CT)
- **Dairy Industry Impact Grant FAQ Webinar**: August 29, 11 a.m. (CT)

Members with questions may contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

DBIA Delivers

Success Stories from the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance



Hill Valley Dairy

East Troy, WI

DBIA Grant Recipient
2022

DBIA Delivers: Hill Valley Dairy

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. Next in our weekly #DBIADelivers series is [Hill Valley Dairy LLC](#). Hill Valley utilizes locally sourced milk from Romari Farms to produce specialty cheeses and unique flavored cheeses such as Black Pepper Cheddar and Whiskey Gouda. The company plans to use its recent Dairy Business Builder grant to make and market new products such as small-sized, soft-ripened cheeses. Learn more at HillValleyDairy.com.com.

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!



Wisconsin Export Monies Support Food Influencer Visits to Cheesemakers

Last week, WCMA joined with members from Carr Valley Cheese, Organic Valley, and Sartori Cheese, and with leaders from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, in welcoming a group of international chefs and food influencers to learn about Wisconsin dairy products. Search for the hashtag **#MyFoodStoryWI** on social media to see more from the tours.



The events were supported in part by funding from the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports, a state budget priority championed by WCMA in the past two budget cycles.

To learn more about WIAE and related funding available for your dairy processing business, contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

INDUSTRY UPDATES

USDA Warns of Fraudulent Phishing Emails to Program Vendors

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is warning vendors who participate in USDA food purchase programs of a **possible phishing scheme** using fraudulent email messages. The fake emails look like they are solicitations for bids sent by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which manages USDA's food purchase programs.

A version of the fake email has the subject line: "Invitation to Bid," and instructs the recipient to download an attachment, click buttons and register in their "Procurement portal." The scam message was sent from an email address ending with "@radiantbloominc.com" and requests any questions be directed to an address ending with "@usda-govus.com," neither of which are USDA email accounts. If you receive an

email like this, you are urged to immediately delete the message; do not respond to it or click on any of its links.

All information regarding USDA acquisitions will be published through the Web-Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) system, through GovDelivery, and on the [AMS website](#). USDA will not use any other system to receive bids. For more information, contact the Commodity Procurement Program at (202)-720-4517.

IN THE NEWS

National/International

- *Reuters*: [Global dairy prices fall to five-year low on soft Chinese demand](#)
- *Associated Press*: [Biden administration announces more new funding for rural broadband infrastructure](#)
- *Green Queen*: [‘Unprecedented and Unnecessary’: Industry responds to FDA’s proposed plant-based milk labeling guidance](#)
- *Feedstuffs*: [Seven states voice opposition to Kroger, Alberstons merger](#)
- *CNBC*: [Aldi to acquire Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket stores in Southern expansion](#)
- *CBS News*: [Italian cheesemakers microchip parmesan in bid to fight copycats](#)

WORKFORCE



Workforce & Education Committee Explores FMLA, Remote Work & HR Effectiveness

Thanks go to WCMA member M3 Insurance for hosting last week's hybrid meeting of the WCMA Workforce & Education Committee, featuring presentations on FMLA use and compliance, remote workforce management strategies, and methods for measuring HR effectiveness. WCMA was pleased to welcome 40 members, and to highlight expert insight from Land O'Lakes, M3 Insurance, Masters Gallery Foods, Inc., and The Employer Group.



WCMA's Workforce & Education Committee is an open group, and welcomes new members on a rolling basis. To get involved, or to sign up your HR leader, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association Health & Safety Group

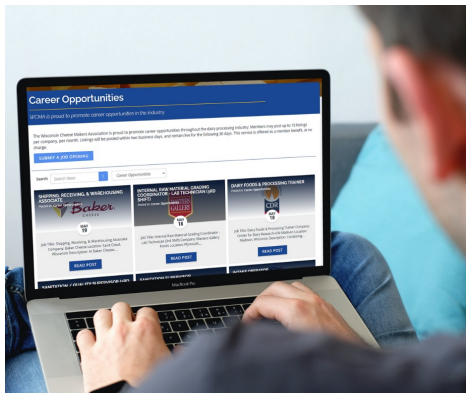
Save the Date: Next Meeting September 27

Save the date and register now for [WCMA's Health & Safety Group meeting](#) on Wednesday, September 27 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. (CT). This meeting will focus on workplace emergency preparedness and dairy plant ergonomics, and provide the latest updates on OSHA's Local Emphasis Program for Food Processors. Additional presentations and speakers will be announced soon!

WCMA is offering two ways to participate: in-person at WCMA's offices in Madison, Wisconsin or online via Zoom. In-person attendees will enjoy a networking lunch.

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

Post Job Openings on Free WCMA Jobs Board



Visit 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.

POST OPENINGS

This week, the [Jobs Board](#) features opportunities from members Bassett Mechanical, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, KDI Cheese Co., Kelley Supply, Masters Gallery Foods, Mohawk Technology, Saputo Cheese USA, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars.

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

Showcase STEM Careers in Dairy Processing via Wisconsin Science Festival Event

[Wisconsin Science Festival](#) invites WCMA members in Wisconsin to connect



with the emerging workforce via participation in its new "How It's Made in Wisconsin" event, October 16-22. This new feature of the annual festival will bring students into manufacturing facilities to learn more about STEM career opportunities. There is no cost to participate, beyond expenses related to a hosted tour. [Complete details](#) are available now online.

EDUCATION



Join in Cheesemaking Short Course this September at UW-River Falls

WCMA members are invited to [register now](#) to join in a cheesemaking short course, set for September 25-29 at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. This hands-on class offers instruction on basic dairy chemistry and composition, milk microbiology, starter cultures, sanitation, and the manufacture of a variety of cheeses, as well as key industry regulations. Course completion offers credit equivalent to six months of apprenticeship experience for the purpose of obtaining a Wisconsin cheesemaker's license.

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER NOW](#)



Register Now for WCMA Advanced Leadership Series, Beginning in September

Help your team leaders build management skills and broaden their network via [WCMA's Advanced Leadership Series](#), beginning September 19! Just **five spaces remain open** in this highly-rated series, designed for mid-level managers and those transitioning into such roles with dairy processors or industry suppliers.

REGISTER NOW

The series requires participants to complete an implementation project showcasing their new knowledge, and features special guest speakers from industry. Here's a look at what's in store for this three-part series:

- **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. Guest speaker **Mike Sipple of Agropur** will share insights from his successful career as a leader in the dairy processing industry.
- **Part 3 on Wednesday, January 10, 2024** details the tools and strategies leaders can use to foster collaboration and resolve workplace conflict. **Tim Omer of Emmi Roth** will join students to share his leadership story and lessons learned over decades of management experience.



Mike Sipple
Agropur



Tim Omer
Emmi Roth

The virtual format of [**Advanced Leadership**](#) allows participants to join from anywhere in the world and fosters robust small group and partner discussions. A cohort of just 22 individuals also encourages meaningful connection. Registration is \$549 per person for the entire series, and a computer with webcam capabilities is required.



BONUS: Successful completion of Advanced Leadership earns participants **complimentary full registration** to [**CheeseExpo**](#) in April 2024, a savings of at least \$480, where they will be recognized, along with your organization, for their commitment to lifelong learning and career excellence.

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

Additional Industry Training 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:

- 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 14-15: [**Pasteurization Short Course \(In-Person\)**](#) - UW-River Falls
- September 19: [**HACCP Training \(In-Person\)**](#) - M3 Insurance & WMEP Manufacturing Solutions
- September 19-21: [**FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food PCQI Training \(In-Person\)**](#), Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- September 19-21: [**Advanced Cheesemaking: Italian Varieties \(In-Person\)**](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- September 19-21: [**FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food \(PCQI\) \(In-**](#)

- [Person](#)) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- September 25-29: [Cheesemaker's Short Course](#) - UW-River Falls
- 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

MEMBERSHIP



WCMA Webinar

Making the Most of Your WCMA Membership

[Register now](#) to join WCMA staff on Tuesday, September 12 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) for a free webinar focused on ways you can make the most of your WCMA membership. Staff will cover opportunities for you and your valued team members to engage in advocacy, industry networking, educational experiences, and more!

REGISTER NOW

This one-hour program will include 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, September 11.

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Supplier

IN MEMORIAM

In Memoriam: Leo Zehren

WCMA joins in remembering [Leo A. Zehren](#), 88, who passed away August 18. Leo earned a degree in Dairy & Food Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison before becoming plant manager for Lake to Lake Dairy, and later Land O' Lakes, in Denmark, Wisconsin. He earned gold in the World Championship Cheese Contest in 1992, followed by silver and bronze medals for cheddar in the 1995 and 1997 United States Championship Cheese Contests, respectively. Leo was honored with the 2017 WCMA Vanguard Award, presented to cheesemakers who blaze new trails in dairy processing. A [visitation and mass](#) will be held August 24.



SIGNATURE EVENTS



Register Now for CheeseExpo 2024

[Register now](#) and enjoy best-value rates for CheeseExpo 2024, the industry's premier cheese, butter, and whey processing event, set for April 16-18, 2024 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

WCMA, together with co-host the Center for Dairy Research, will welcome over 4,000 dairy processing industry leaders to enjoy CheeseExpo's educational seminars, networking events, and expansion trade show.



Companies interested in exhibiting will find useful information at [CheeseExpo.org](#) on WCMA's ranked order Priority Points reservation system and the sign-up process, which begins September 20. The site also offers lodging details, as hotel bookings at exclusive CheeseExpo prices are available now.

LEARN MORE & REGISTER NOW

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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