

WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

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NEWS

FDA Issues Draft Guidance on Plant-Based Product Labeling



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is [accepting comments](#) now through May 10 on its newly-released [draft guidance](#) on the naming and labeling of certain plant-based foods, including imitation dairy products. [READ MORE...](#)

WCMA has advocated for transparency in labeling for these products, and will file a comment with FDA on members' behalf. Members with input can contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

DBIA Launches New Organic Grant Program



Organic dairy processors can [apply now through February 21](#) for new federal grants to help distribute their products to students and young adults (ages 0-25) in institutional settings such as schools, colleges and youth organizations. A total of \$3.75 million in funding will be administered by the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), a partnership between WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research. Members with questions may contact [WCMA Director of Sustainability & Grants Danica Nilsestuen](#). [READ MORE...](#)

H5N1 *Response*

Cornell Raw Milk Study Shows H5N1 Inactivation in Five Seconds at 60°C/140°F and Above



A [recent study](#) by Cornell University researchers found that efficient and rapid inactivation (i.e., within five seconds) of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) virus can be achieved by heat treating raw milk at temperatures of 60°C/140°F or above. While the study is not yet peer-reviewed, samples containing active H5N1 virus were heat treated at varying temperatures for varying time durations. Efficient inactivation of the virus was observed in all tested conditions, except for thermization at 50°C for 10 minutes. [READ MORE...](#)

Researchers said [the preliminary findings](#) reaffirmed the effectiveness of pasteurization in inactivating the H5N1 virus, and suggested that "the use of thermized milk treated at 60°C and above for 15-20 seconds to produce cheeses would reduce the risk of human exposure" to products containing active virus.

USDA Announces New States in H5N1 Milk Testing Program



Twenty-eight states are now participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Milk Testing Strategy for H5N1, [the agency said last week](#). California and Texas are currently the only states with known active detections of H5N1 in dairy herds. USDA noted its program has so far not led to new detections of the virus in other states. [READ MORE...](#)

Wisconsin has not yet enrolled in USDA's program. WCMA continues to share members' input regarding this program in direct conversation with Wisconsin agricultural leaders, and will share updates as national testing progresses.

USDA Raises Import/Export Fees



and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on Friday [announced the implementation of adjusted user fees](#) for certain services. The new fees, which were first proposed in November 2024, include veterinary services for the [import and export](#) of live animals and animal products. [READ MORE...](#)

USDA Seeks Cheddar; Awards Mozzarella Bids

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a [solicitation for cheddar cheese](#) to be used in federal food distribution programs, with bids due January 22 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

USDA has also announced it has [awarded contracts](#) to WCMA member Saputo Cheese USA to provide over 1.8 million pounds of mozzarella cheese for child nutrition and other related federal food programs.

A list of [open USDA solicitations](#) and information on how to [become an approved vendor](#) is available [online](#).

Apply by Friday for Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants



Apply by Friday, January 17 for the [next round of Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants](#) through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP). A total of \$200,000 is available to support projects of up to \$50,000 and up to two years in duration. Recipients must provide a match of 20 percent of the grant amount. Complete details and the grant application are [available online](#).

[Hear from WCMA member Nasonville Dairy about the impact of Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants on their business and community!](#)

[APPLY NOW](#)

Headlines

Wisconsin

- Morning Ag Clips: [Wisconsin DATCP, USDA award \\$23.2 million in RFSI grants](#) (Featuring WCMA member Nasonville Dairy)
- Supermarket Perimeter: [2025 cheese trends call for a 'global cheese renaissance'](#) (Featuring Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin)
- Green Bay Packers: [Packers, Sargento Foods continue 'Touchdowns for Hunger' during playoffs for Wisconsin Hunger Relief](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)

National & Global

- Dairy Herd Management: [Cheese prices and Class III futures finish strong](#)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: [Consumption of cheese is key for U.S. dairy](#)

- Wall Street Journal: [We grew up hating cottage cheese. Now we're all eating it.](#)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Final Days for CheeseCon, Contest Marketing Opportunities



Act now through **Thursday, January 16** to reserve [impactful marketing opportunities](#) at CheeseCon 2025, the dairy processing industry's must-attend event of the year, and the prestigious U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. [Download our marketing flyer](#) or visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](#) to explore all available opportunities!

SECURE SPONSORSHIPS & ADS NOW

Enter U.S. Championship Cheese Contest by January 31



[Submit your best dairy products now](#) through January 31 for evaluation in the [2025 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest!](#) Entries of cheese, butter, yogurt, sour cream, and dry dairy ingredients will be evaluated March 4-6 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. [Enter now](#) to gain expert feedback on your products, boost brand recognition, and compete for the coveted title of U.S. Champion Cheese.

ENTER TODAY

Join WCMA Health & Safety Group February 6



Register now to join the [next hybrid meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group](#), set for Thursday, February 6 from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT). Connect with industry peers and gain insights from experts on topics including legal do's and don'ts for drug testing practices, OSHA 300 reporting, and leveling up your health and safety program.

RSVP NOW

Many thanks to meeting sponsor [Nelson-Jameson](#) for their generous support! Additional sponsorship opportunities are [available online](#).

RSVP Now for WCMA Dairy Sustainability Group Meeting



Whether your business is just beginning its sustainability efforts or an experienced trailblazer in the field, you're invited to join the [inaugural hybrid meeting of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association's \(WCMA\) Dairy Sustainability Group](#) on Tuesday, February 18.

RSVP NOW

Agenda topics include a data-driven look at dairy's environmental impact, discuss strategies for securing leadership buy-in for sustainability initiatives, and share tips for communicating dairy's sustainability successes.

Many thanks to meeting sponsors [Nelson-Jameson](#) and [Amcor](#) for their generous support! Additional sponsorship opportunities are [available online](#).

Register for WCMA Young Professionals Outing in Monroe



WCMA members under 40 are invited to join the WCMA Young Professionals on Friday, February 21 in Monroe, Wisconsin. Participants will enjoy a tour of [Alpine Slicing & Cheese Conversion](#), a networking lunch, and curling education and friendly competition at the Alpine Curling Club! Only 30 spaces are available, so act now. Sponsorships for this event are also [available online](#).

RSVP NOW

Upcoming WCMA Events

January 16	January 21	January 22	February 6	February 13
Free Webinar: AI for Sales & Marketing	Front-Line Leadership Part A (Virtual)	Workshop: Meeting WET Test Challenges	Health & Safety Group Meeting	Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)
February 13	February 18	February 20	February 21	February 26
Free Webinar: AI for Dairy Processing	Dairy Sustainability Group Meeting	Train the Safety Trainer (Virtual)	Young Professionals Outing	Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)

VIEW ALL & REGISTER

EDUCATION

Apply by February 14 for WCMA Student Scholarships



Know a student interested in pursuing a career in the dairy industry? **Just one month remains** to apply for [WCMA's Student Scholarships](#). Awards totaling \$19,000 will be presented to seven deserving students across WCMA's three scholarship offerings. Complete details are [available online](#). All application forms must be submitted by February 14.

APPLY TODAY

Limited Space Remaining in January WCMA Front-Line Leadership



Act now to join the upcoming virtual offerings of [WCMA Front-Line Leadership](#), set for this January, February, and March. New and seasoned supervisors alike will learn to strengthen their leadership skills, boost staff performance, and cultivate a positive team mentality.

Participants who complete all three parts of Front-Line Leadership will receive a free Full Registration for [CheeseCon 2025](#), valued at approximately \$600!

REGISTER NOW

For more educational opportunities from WCMA and our partners, visit:

WisCheeseMakers.org/Events

news@wischeesemakers.org
(608) 286-1001





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