

# WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest  
in dairy processing

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## NEWS

### Tariffs on Canada, Mexico Delayed; Tariffs on China Move Forward



On Monday, the Trump Administration [announced it would delay imposing 25 percent tariffs](#) on Canadian and Mexican goods for at least 30 days, following negotiations over border security.

Trump's discussions with Chinese leaders continue, following his Friday announcement that 10 percent tariffs would be placed on products from that country. That plan took effect today, with the White House noting levies could become "very, very substantial" if no agreement is reached. China has announced retaliatory tariffs, including 15 percent on coal and natural gas, and 10 percent on crude oil and agricultural machinery.

Canada, Mexico, and China are the top three markets for U.S. agricultural businesses, importing a total of \$94 billion in goods in 2023. U.S. dairy exports to these nations comprise over 40 percent of total U.S. dairy exports. Retaliatory tariffs during President Trump's first term cost approximately \$27 billion in lost ag exports for the U.S.

WCMA has advocated and will continue to push for members' interests, supporting greater opportunity for international trade.

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### Federal Judge Extends Block on Grant & Loan Freeze

A U.S. district judge Monday [extended a temporary block](#) on President Donald Trump's federal aid freeze, issuing a [ruling citing concerns](#) for "irreparable harm" to the operations of hundreds of nonprofits across the country. The judge first blocked the freeze last week, shortly after the Trump Administration issued it, causing confusion



over trillions of dollars in the future of federal loans, grants, and other assistance programs, including the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII).

In light of Trump's executive order, the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance, one of four DBII centers, has postponed the start of its spring grant offering to industry. Alliance leaders from WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research are seeking additional guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on how to proceed. Current grant recipients may still submit reimbursement requests and should contact [WCMA Sustainability & Grants Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

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## Rollins Approved Unanimously in Senate Committee



Members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee Monday [voted unanimously](#) in support of President Trump's nominee, Brooke Rollins, to head up the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), clearing a path for a full vote on the Senate floor later this week. Rollins, who served as a White House aide during Trump's first administration and then as the president and CEO of the America First Policy Institute, is viewed as a noncontroversial nominee.

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## Senate Committee Advances RFK, Jr. Nomination



Members of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee this morning [voted 14-13](#) to advance Robert F. Kennedy Jr. through the confirmation process as President Donald Trump's nominee to serve as Department of Health and Human Services Secretary. A full Senate vote is the final step in the process for the controversial Trump pick, who has voiced support for [raw milk consumption](#) and an [overhaul of nutrition guidelines](#), in line with the values of the "Make America Healthy Again" movement.

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## Join WCMA Washington Fly-In and State Advocacy Day

From Washington to Wisconsin, WCMA's advocacy makes an impact. Join our effort with two upcoming opportunities to engage at the state and federal level.

WCMA will host a fly-in to Washington, D.C. March 3-4, enabling members to advocate for time-sensitive [federal priorities](#), including Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives. Congressional visits will be scheduled involving lawmakers from the Agriculture and Appropriations Committees. Members interested in participating in WCMA's Washington trip may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

WCMA's [Policy Committee Meeting & State Advocacy Day](#) will now be held Tuesday, March 18. Our agenda includes state budget updates, a legislative leadership panel, and visits to Capitol offices to directly lobby for dairy industry priorities. Thanks go to meeting sponsors [Nasonville Dairy](#), [Compeer Financial](#), and [Sargento Foods](#) for their generous support! Limited sponsorships for this meeting are [available online now](#).

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## Headlines

### Wisconsin

- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Wisconsin could see higher prices under Trump tariffs on Mexico, Canada, China](#)
- Wisconsin State Journal: [Raw milk fans say Wisconsin's dairy industry is too powerful](#)

### National & Global

- Dairy Foods: [Dairy processors face a food safety threat](#)
- AgWeek: [\\$9.5 million awarded to food supply chain projects in Minnesota](#) (Featuring WCMA member Bongards Creameries)
- Nation's Restaurant News: [California cheese offers menu diversity](#)
- The Press Democrat: [Sonoma Cheese Factory opens new coffee bar](#) (Featuring United States Championship Cheese Contest)

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## FEATURED: WCMA NOTES

*Learn more about WCMA's programs and member services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's monthly column, WCMA Notes, sharing insights and ideas for the dairy processing industry.*

## Modeling Changing Times for Dairy



With a new Administration in Washington comes change, and with change comes inherent business certainty. The antidote? Data, says [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#). In this month's [WCMA Notes column](#), Umhoefer dives into Dr. Chuck Nicholson's analysis of modeled impacts of potential new federal policies, delivered at the Renk Agricultural Outlook Forum at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on January 21.

[READ THE COLUMN](#)

## EVENTS & CONNECTION

### Network, Learn at WCMA Dairy Sustainability Group Meeting



Register today to connect with peers and grow your knowledge at the upcoming [hybrid meeting of WCMA's Dairy Sustainability Group](#) on Tuesday, February 18 from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT). 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.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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

### Explore the Latest in Dairy Processing at CheeseCon 2025



Concise, useful insights on hot topics await you this spring at [CheeseCon 2025](#). As you explore [nearly 400 tabletop exhibits](#), make sure to stop by the two [Ideas Showcase](#) stages located right on the trade show floor. Hear from trusted industry suppliers about their latest innovations and ideas - in presentations of just 20 minutes each. Visit [CheeseCon.org](#) to see the complete speaker lineup - and act now to save 10 percent on most registrations!

[Click "Play"](#) to hear from CheeseCon attendees about what it's like to connect with industry suppliers on our 75,000-square-foot exhibit floor!

**REGISTER NOW**

## U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Announces 2,414 Entries



With one month remaining until the renowned [2025 United States Championship Cheese Contest®](#), WCMA is pleased to [announce that dairy businesses representing 31 states submitted 2,414 entries](#) of cheese, butter, cultured products, and dry dairy ingredients across 117 classes for evaluation.

All entries will be evaluated March 4-6 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Preliminary Rounds of judging will be open to the public from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on March 4-5. Championship Round Judging and a ceremony announcing the 2025 U.S. Champion and Runners-Up will be closed to the public, but all are welcome to watch the event live online at [USChampionCheese.org](#) and on [Facebook](#) at 2:00 p.m. (CT) on Thursday, March 6. Mark your calendars now!

## Upcoming WCMA Events

February 6	February 13	February 13	February 18	February 20
<a href="#">Health &amp; Safety Group Meeting (Hybrid)</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)</a>	<a href="#">Free Webinar: AI for Dairy Processing</a>	<a href="#">Dairy Sustainability Group Meeting (Hybrid)</a>	<a href="#">Train the Safety Trainer (Virtual)</a>
February 21	February 25	February 26	March 4-6	March 13
<a href="#">Young Professionals Outing</a>	<a href="#">Policy Committee Meeting &amp; Advocacy Day (In-Person)</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)</a>	<a href="#">U.S. Championship Cheese Contest</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part C (Virtual)</a>

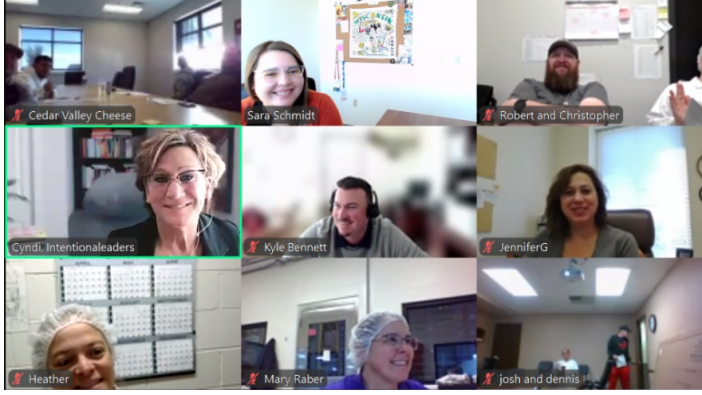
**VIEW ALL & REGISTER**

## EDUCATION

### Gain Performance-Boosting Tips in WCMA Front-Line Leadership

Just a few spaces remain available in the February 26 virtual offering of [WCMA Front-Line Leadership: Part B](#). New and seasoned supervisors alike will learn ways to boost staff performance in this one-day session. Don't miss this opportunity to build new skills and confidence. Register yourself

or your team members now.



**REGISTER NOW**

Exclusive sponsorship of this class is available for a limited time. Show your support for industry education and connection - [secure your sponsorship today!](#)

## VCC Opens Registration for Business Miniversity Virtual Course



Expand your knowledge with the Vermont Cheese Council's (VCC) [Business Miniversity virtual course](#) - available now at a discount exclusively for WCMA members. This six-week course is suitable for new business owners as well as established managers who have never received business training. WCMA members can use code **wicheese** to receive 20 percent off their registration.



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