



# WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest  
in dairy processing

February 11, 2025

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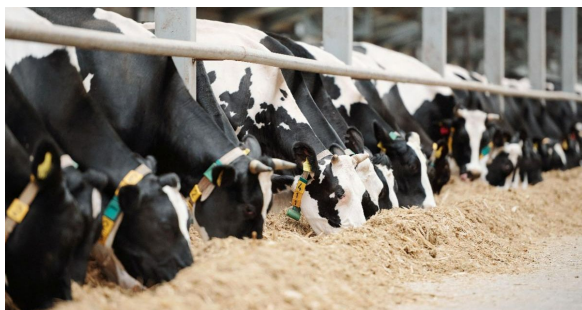


## NEWS



# H5N1 *Response*

## USDA Confirms New H5N1 Genotype in Nevada Cows



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has [confirmed the first detection](#) of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) clade 2.3.4.4b genotype D1.1 in dairy cattle. (All previous detections in dairy cattle have been clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13.) USDA officials said in a call last Friday that studies on the transmissibility of this genotype are ongoing.

In a [technical brief](#) on the topic, USDA also noted that this is the first instance where sampling of milk at processing plants rather than individually or directly on farm has detected a high consequence disease, demonstrating silo monitoring as an efficient method to monitor the virus among U.S. dairy cattle. WCMA will continue to share relevant updates with members.

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## Baldwin, Van Orden Introduce DBII Bills

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Congressman Derrick Van Orden (R-WI 03) have introduced legislation to fully fund the successful Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII), including the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance run by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research. The [Senate bill](#) is co-sponsored by Sen. Marsha



Blackburn (R-TN), and the [House version](#) is co-sponsored by Congressman Salud Carbajal (D-CA 24).

WCMA and members have and will continue to advocate for fully funding DBII to continue the grants, technical assistance, and research offered through DBIA and its partners nationwide.



## Add Your Voice Now for DBII Funding

In the next month, Congress is expected to finalize plans for 2025 appropriations - that is, funding for key federal programs, including the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII). As all federal funding is scrutinized, it is essential that you [advocate now for continued DBII funding](#). With just a few clicks, you can message your elected officials, letting them know you want to see them support this program.

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

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## WCMA Praises Gov. Evers Budget Proposal



WCMA members last week [praised Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers' efforts](#) to use his 2025-2027 state budget proposal to invest in dairy innovation, agricultural exports, food security, and rural infrastructure; and to ensure transparency in food labeling. Evers' proposal includes funding for the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports, \$1.2 million for the popular Dairy Processor Grant program, a prohibition on labeling non-dairy products as "milk" or "dairy," funding for rural infrastructure, and more. [READ MORE...](#)

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## WCMA Applauds Dairy Impact of Ag Roads Improvement Program

Last week, WCMA [applauded investments of \\$77.8 million](#) in rural road improvement projects benefiting Wisconsin dairy processors and farmers. The amount, which is part of the second round distributed through the state's Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP), represents approximately 77 percent of the \$101 million in total funding awarded in this



phase. [READ MORE...](#)

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## WCMA Launches Exciting New Marketing Opportunities



Dairy manufacturers, processors, and suppliers to the industry now have [more options than ever](#) to promote their businesses. Introducing: new WCMA sponsorship opportunities for educational trainings, member committees & groups, and monthly webinars!

Complete details including pricing, benefits, and purchasing information, are available online now. [READ MORE...](#)

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## USDA Cancels Solicitation; Awards Contracts to WCMA Members

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has [awarded contracts](#) to WCMA members Associated Milk Producers Inc., Great Lakes Cheese, Masters Gallery Foods, and Winona Foods to provide over 176,000 pounds of cheddar cheese for federal food distribution programs.

The agency also announced it has [cancelled a previous solicitation](#) for bids to purchase cheddar cheese under the Commodity Credit Corporation.

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

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## Headlines

### Wisconsin

- WLUK-TV: [Press conference: Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wisconsin, on Dairy Business Innovation Act of 2025](#) (Featuring WCMA and member Pine River Pre-Pack)
- WKOW-TV: [How a Wisconsin cheese business made a Super Bowl commercial](#)

### National & Global

- Dairy Herd Management: [Cheese market scores big gains as Class III prices stay strong](#)
  - WCCO-TV: [Over 2,000 entries submitted to compete in Wisconsin for best U.S. cheese](#) (Featuring WCMA)
  - Financial Times: [‘We’ll all have to go vegan’: Wisconsin dairy farmers fret over immigration crackdown](#)
  - NJ.com: [New Jersey Syrian cheese maker revels in the country’s new found freedom](#)
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## FEATURED: WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

Learn more about WCMA's programs and member services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's offerings to support members' efforts to attract, train, and retain a high-quality workforce.

### Learn Strategies to Navigate Workplace Diversity Amid Political Change in New CheeseCon Seminar



Industry human resources leaders should make plans now to join WCMA at [CheeseCon 2025](#) on Thursday, April 17 for a just-added seminar, "[Navigating Inclusion: Supporting Dairy's Diverse Workforce Post-Executive Order 14173.](#)" Following [President Donald Trump's order](#) limiting private organizations from conducting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility programs, many dairy processors are working to determine how to navigate both liability concerns and a necessity to support their workforce.

Join legal experts and industry leaders for an engaging conversation about this hot topic, including strategies to uphold a welcoming, equitable workplace and attract top talent, while ensuring long-term success in a changing regulatory environment. [Register for CheeseCon today](#) to attend!

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### Complete WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey by March 11



Participate now through Tuesday, March 11 in [WCMA's 2025 Wage & Workforce Survey](#) to gain fresh insights to inform your recruitment and retention efforts. This free, annual online survey helps WCMA compile critical data employers need to successfully attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive labor market. Thanks to member feedback, [this year's survey](#) includes questions related to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Personnel and Marketing Personnel.

[TAKE SURVEY](#)

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### WCMA Launches New Human Resources Workshop May 27

Register now to join WCMA on May 27 for a day-long [workshop designed to boost your human resources leaders' impact](#) in your organizational success. This program will cover how effective collaboration drives business achievement and how embracing constructive conflict enhances team dynamics and fosters innovation.



**RSVP NOW**

Participants will conduct conflict assessments of their work environments and learn best practices to foster growth mindsets and lead collaborative conversations. They'll also have opportunities to practice those skills in interactive exercises. See complete details on registration and sponsorship [online now](#), and contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) with any questions.

## Apply by Friday for WCMA Student Scholarships



Know a student interested in pursuing a career in the dairy industry? Encourage them 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 **this Friday, February 14**.

**APPLY NOW**

## EVENTS & CONNECTION

### Two Weeks Remaining for CheeseCon Savings



The deadline to take advantage of special early bird registration rates for [CheeseCon 2025](#) is quickly approaching. [Act by February 25](#) to save 10 percent on most registrations! Join the dairy processing industry's must-attend gathering of the year to experience valuable networking, exciting celebrations of industry excellence, unparalleled educational opportunities, nearly 400 tabletop exhibits, and more.

**REGISTER NOW**

**RSVP for Feb. 18 Meeting of WCMA Dairy Sustainability Group**



Join next week's [hybrid meeting of WCMA's Dairy Sustainability Group](#), set for Tuesday, February 18 from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT). Our agenda includes a data-driven look at dairy's environmental impact, helpful strategies for securing leadership buy-in for sustainability initiatives, and tips for communicating dairy's sustainability successes. [RSVP today](#) to participate in-person or online!

**REGISTER NOW**

Many thanks to meeting sponsors [Nelson-Jameson](#), [Amcor](#), and [KDV Label](#) for their generous support! Additional sponsorship opportunities are [available online](#) until February 16.

### Upcoming WCMA Events

<b>February 13</b>	<b>February 13</b>	<b>February 18</b>	<b>February 20</b>	<b>February 21</b>
<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>	<a href="#">Young Professionals Outing</a>
<b>February 26</b>	<b>March 3-4</b>	<b>March 4-6</b>	<b>March 13</b>	<b>March 18</b>
<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)</a>	<a href="#">WCMA Washington, D.C. Fly-In</a> (email link)	<a href="#">U.S. Championship Cheese Contest</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part C (Virtual)</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part C (Virtual)</a>

**VIEW ALL & REGISTER**

## EDUCATION

### Limited Space Available in WCMA Train the Safety Trainer Class



[Act now](#) to help ensure a safe work environment for all with WCMA's live, virtual [Train the Safety Trainer class](#), set for next Thursday, February 20. Participants in this [interactive course](#) gain the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively communicate safety expectations and protocols for maximum compliance.

**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!](#)

## Join Free WCMA AI Webinar Thursday

# WCMA Webinar

## AI for Dairy Processing

Join WCMA's next [free, members-only webinar](#) this Thursday, February 13 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) to hear from leading suppliers in the automation space on ways dairy processors can modernize and improve their operations using artificial intelligence.

**REGISTER NOW**

Topics and presenters include:

- Identifying Patterns and Correlation with AI
  - Speaker: Erik Søndergaard; Divisional Director, Sales; Au2mate
- Using Industrial AI to Address Process Challenges
  - Speaker: Chris Barnes; Senior Manager, Data Science & Artificial Intelligence, Kalypso; Rockwell Automation
- AI Solutions for Dairy Operations
  - Speaker: Crystal Cristescu; Automation & Digital Sales Enablement Leader; Tetra Pak

Presenters will also reserve time for Q&A at the end of the webinar. To submit a question in advance, email [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by 12:00 p.m. (CT) on February 12.



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