



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

February 18, 2025

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NEWS



H5N1 *Response*

Trump Administration Impacting H5N1 Response



President Donald Trump's efforts to cut government spending are changing federal efforts to stem the spread of H5N1. This week, one-quarter of the staff in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Animal Health Laboratory Network, managing bird flu response, [were fired](#). Smaller staffing cuts are reported at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The USDA and CDC did, however, last week [resume some communications](#) with state and public health officials about H5N1, after weeks without regular updates.

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) on Friday [called on the Trump administration](#) to take stronger action to address the current H5N1 outbreak. In response, the White House pointed to comments by newly-confirmed USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, saying the administration was pursuing "all possible approaches" against the outbreak.

Wisconsin to Engage in National Milk Testing Strategy

In a meeting with WCMA and other industry stakeholders yesterday, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP)



announced it is finalizing a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to engage in its [National Milk Testing Strategy](#). WDATCP Secretary Randy Romanski noted he expects that the agreement process, which is a required step prior to testing, is likely to take "a few weeks" to complete.

Romanski noted the agency plans to use farm milk quality samples already sent to private labs, directing those labs to send a portion of each sample to the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for H5N1-specific testing. WDATCP yesterday shared a [document providing on-farm protocol](#) in the event of a positive H5N1 detection, which notes that "bulk milk intended for pasteurization will not be restricted under quarantine."

The agency expects to share messaging directly with industry, including a complete description of the testing process and any related notifications, in the near future. Members with questions may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

USDA Identifies Third H5N1 Spillover in Arizona Cows



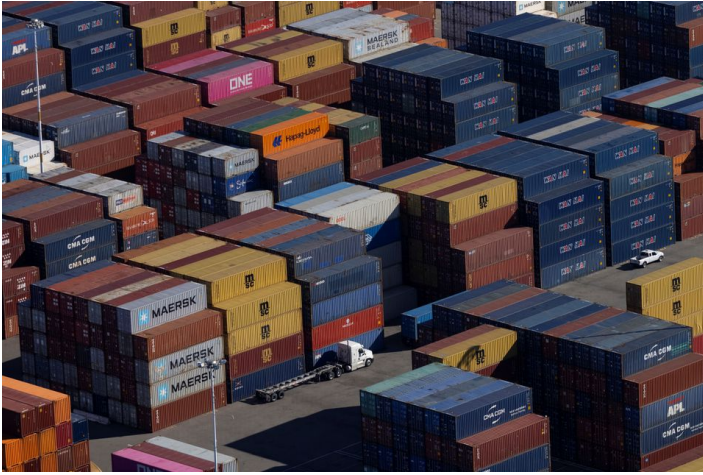
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on Friday [confirmed a new detection](#) of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) clade 2.3.4.4b genotype D1.1, this time in Arizona dairy cattle. This new genotype was first detected earlier this month in Nevada cows. (All previous detections in dairy cattle had been clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13.) In an email to stakeholders, USDA officials said a technical brief on the findings would be shared this week, and reemphasized the importance of enhanced biosecurity measures on dairy farms.

House Republicans Propose \$230B in Cuts to USDA Funding



House Republicans last week Wednesday released their [budget resolution bill](#), calling for \$2 trillion in cuts to federal spending, including a direction to reduce U.S. Department of Agriculture funding by \$230 billion. On Friday, House Agriculture Committee Chair G.T. Thompson clarified that he does not expect reductions to the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), though some Republican House members, including Representatives Frank Lucas of Oklahoma and David Valadao of California, expressed concerns about the potential for SNAP cuts in the proposed budget reconciliation. SNAP helps to feed 42 million low-income Americans.

Trump Dismisses EU's Reported Food Import Limits



President Donald Trump Sunday [downplayed reports](#) of expected action by the European Union to limit imports of certain U.S.-made food products that adhere to different health and safety standards from the EU, such as soybeans.

The European Commission is reportedly exploring the ban following Trump's [announcement last Thursday](#) of sweeping "reciprocal tariffs," the latest in a series of tariffs on [Canadian, Mexican, and Chinese goods](#) as well as [steel and aluminum](#).

Senate Confirms Kennedy to Lead Health and Human Services



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. was sworn in Thursday as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, following a close confirmation vote of 52-48 in the U.S. Senate. Kennedy has become known for his support for [raw milk consumption](#) and an [overhaul of nutrition guidelines](#) and skepticism of vaccines, in line with the values of the "Make America Healthy Again" movement. [READ MORE...](#)

Rollins Confirmed, Takes Office as USDA Secretary



Last Thursday, Brooke Rollins was confirmed as the 33rd U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by a Senate vote of 72-28. A [statement](#) released the day after her swearing-in alludes to Rollins' pledge to implement "an aggressive plan to optimize [USDA's] workforce by eliminating positions that are no longer necessary," in keeping with President Trump's directive across the federal government. [READ MORE...](#)

House Committee Passes Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act

The House Education and Workforce Committee last week approved the [Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act](#), a proposal which would allow schools to offer both whole and 2% milk to students via nutrition programs. In the House, Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA 15) serves as the lead



author, with committee Ranking Member Angie Craig (D-MN 02) co-sponsoring. [In the Senate](#), Sens. Roger Marshall (R-KS) and Peter Welch (D-VT) are leading the effort.

This bill was approved in the House of Representatives on bipartisan vote of 330-99 in December 2023, but failed to receive consideration on the Senate floor. WCMA will work to build on previous success, and continue to advocate for its full passage and enactment.

Wisconsin Ag Coalition Releases State Budget Priorities



WCMA last week [joined a broad coalition of Wisconsin agricultural groups](#) in releasing its priorities for the 2025-2027 biennial state budget. The group's areas of focus include several items supported and championed by WCMA and its members, such as funding for the Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP) and investments in workforce support programs. [READ MORE...](#)

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.



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

Members can also register now to join WCMA's [Policy Committee Meeting & State Advocacy Day](#) on Tuesday, March 18, in-person in Madison, Wisconsin. 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](#).



WCMA Invests in Dairy's Future with New UW-River Falls Gift

WCMA proudly announced today that, thanks to the generosity of Championship Cheese Auction bidders, it is directing \$90,000 to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UW-RF) to establish a fund investing in dairy operations, training, and research and development initiatives at the University's Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence. As pictured above, WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer presented University leadership with the Association's contribution alongside Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin (DFW) Senior Vice President of Industry Relations Ben Miller. DFW is matching WCMA's gift, bringing total funding for UW-RF's dairy operations to \$180,000. [READ MORE...](#)

USDA Seeks Yogurt; Awards Mozzarella Contracts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued a [solicitation for yogurt](#) and rice to be used in federal food distribution programs, with bids due Friday, February 21 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

USDA also awarded [contracts](#) to provide approximately 15.1 million pounds of mozzarella cheese without natamycin and other mozzarella products to WCMA members Agropur, Dairy Farmers of America, Leprino Foods, and Saputo Cheese USA.

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

Headlines

Wisconsin

- International Business Times: [Dairy farmers worry Americans might have to 'go vegan' as Trump's mass deportations threaten farming workforce](#)
- WSAU-TV: [DATCP announces Lassa as Administrator](#)
- Wisconsin State Farmer: [What did some ag-related organizations spend on lobbying in 2024?](#)

National & Global

- Farm Progress: [Farmers demand answers on funding freeze](#)
- The Independent: [Top Canadian lawmaker vows to "go after" Wisconsin dairy farmers in "surgical" reprisals to future Trump threats](#)
- Global Data: [Lactalis plans to buy dairy maker Granja Pocha in Uruguay](#)

- The Arizona Republic: [Sen. Mark Kelly warns about Trump tariffs after tour of Arizona dairy facility](#)
- Los Angeles Times: [Bird flu infections in dairy cows are more widespread than we thought, according to a new CDC study](#)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

CheeseCon Early Bird Savings End February 25



Build the right connections and create new business opportunities at [CheeseCon](#) 2025! Register by next Tuesday, February 25 to lock in special early-bird rates with savings of 10 percent, and join thousands of dairy processing professionals April 15-17 in Madison, Wisconsin.

REGISTER NOW

Save the Date for WCMA, WDNR, MWFPFA Joint Industry Meeting



Mark your calendar and join WCMA and Midwest Food Products Association (MWFPFA) Thursday, March 20 for the [12th annual joint meeting](#) with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Discuss environmental issues of the day with state regulators and network with peers and colleagues. Speakers and agenda items will be announced soon. [RSVP now!](#)

REGISTER NOW

Upcoming WCMA Events

February 20	February 21	February 26	March 3-4	March 4-6
Train the Safety Trainer (Virtual)	Young Professionals Outing	Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)	Washington, D.C. Fly-In (email link)	U.S. Championship Cheese Contest
March 13	March 18	March 18	March 20	March 20
Front-Line Leadership Part C (Virtual)	Front-Line Leadership Part C (Virtual)	Policy Committee Meeting & State Advocacy Day	Technology Committee Joint Industry Meeting	Free Webinar: Setting and Reporting GHG Goals

EDUCATION

WCMA Student Scholarship Deadline Extended



Know a student interested in pursuing a career in the dairy industry? Encourage them to apply by **this Friday, February 21** 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](#).

APPLY NOW

Final Opportunity: Join 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 this 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!](#)

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

WisCheeseMakers.org/Events

FEATURED: WEBINARS

Learn more about WCMA's programs and member services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's free, monthly members-only webinars.

Register Now for March 20 Sustainability Webinar

WCMA Webinar

Setting and Reporting GHG Goals

Understanding and addressing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are important steps in dairy processors' efforts to meet demands for a more sustainable supply chain. Join WCMA's [next free webinar on Thursday, March 20](#), focused on setting and reporting GHG goals, for guidance from trusted experts from the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and Harbor Environmental.

This webinar will also include time for Q&A. To submit a question in advance, email [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by 12:00 p.m. (CT) on Wednesday, March 19.

Our thanks go to WCMA member [Nelson-Jameson](#) for their generous sponsorship of this webinar! [Limited sponsorships](#) remain available until March 18.

Watch Free WCMA Webinar on AI for Dairy Processing

WCMA Webinar

AI for Dairy Processing

A recording of WCMA's latest free webinar, focused on applications of AI technology in dairy processing, is [now available online](#). This session features presentations from WCMA members Au2mate, Rockwell Automation, and Tetra Pak, as well as a Q&A with presenters.

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)

Information on all past WCMA webinars is available to logged-in members anytime at [WisCheeseMakers.org/Webinars](#). Our webinars are driven by member feedback, so please feel free to contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions or ideas.

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