



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION & RESOURCES

WCMA has been distributing regular bulletins alerting members to information and resources related to industry operations and coronavirus (COVID-19). We will continue sharing these messages as often news and needs warrant. Today's bulletin comes as part of WCMA's regularly scheduled Tuesday e-newsletter, so that we may also bring you other relevant industry information.

Dairy Food Safety Alliance to Host Webinar Wednesday, April 29 at 12 noon

WCMA, together with its partners at the Center for Dairy Research and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, will host a **free** Dairy Food Safety Alliance webinar on Wednesday, April 29 from 12-1 p.m.

Experts will detail:

- Standard Operating Procedure: What to do in the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive employee
- Standard Operating Procedure: What to do when a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive employee returns to work
- Employer rights and responsibilities
- Government support programs
- Regulatory flexibility

Dairy Food Safety Alliance presenters, including CDR's Marianne Smukowski, DFW's Adam Brock, and WCMA staff will also field pre-submitted questions.

This free webinar is not open to the media. RSVP to [WCMA Office and Member Services Manager Sara Schmidt](#) with your interest in joining and include any questions you may wish to ask. You'll receive access information to this Zoom webinar (or telephone call-in option) in reply.

USDA Solicits Bids for Butter and Cheddar Shreds

USDA officials have issued a [solicitation for butter and cheddar cheese shred bids](#), as fulfillment of part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Bids are due next Monday, with determinations to be announced on April 30. Deliveries of product will be expected in June 2020. Please direct questions about this opportunity to [USDA's Jenny Babiuch](#).

This solicitation is in addition to the USDA [request for bids on process cheese](#), which WCMA highlighted in yesterday's bulletin. Questions about process cheese contracts may be directed to [USDA's Caroline Russell](#).

USDA Previews New Food Box Distribution Program

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service today announced details of a [Food Box Distribution Program](#), beginning with a Request for Proposals (RFP) on April 24. This program will fulfill USDA's promise to buy \$100 million per month of dairy products (and fresh produce and meats) during 2020. This is a new program, and USDA will contract with partners in the dairy industry to offer to prepared boxes that hold consumer-ready dairy products for distribution "from truck to consumer's car trunk" at food banks and nonprofit feeding sites.

Dairy participants can reply to the solicitation with one or more natural or processed cheeses, butter, yogurt or gallons of fluid milk, placed in boxes ready for distribution to consumers at feeding sites. USDA will expect dairy participants ("Offerers") to describe a relationship with a distributor and non-profit feeding sites in their proposal. Retail labeling is not required, and details regarding box content and product sizes are to be worked out between the dairy offerer and their nonprofit feeding program partner(s). USDA will divide the nation into seven regions, and offerers can promise to deliver in one or more regions.

For the first round of USDA contracting, the [RFP will appear on April 24](#); bids from offerers will be required by May 1, with delivery beginning May 8 and completed by June 30. Additional two-month RFPs will be offered throughout 2020. USDA will award contracts for the purchase of the agricultural products, the assembly of commodity boxes and delivery to identified non-profit organizations that can receive, store and distribute food items. Offerers that win this award invoice USDA upon delivery and are paid via the U.S. government's System for Award Management (SAM) program.

Congress Reaches Deal on \$450B Relief Package

Congress has reportedly reached agreement over a [\\$450 billion coronavirus relief package](#), with Senate action expected later today. The package includes an infusion of \$310 billion in additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which ran out of the initial allotment of \$350 billion in less than two weeks.

PPP has come under fire for [directing funds to larger corporations](#), including [\\$300 million to publicly-traded companies](#). The new legislative package reserves at least \$125 billion for rural, minority-owned, and other very small businesses. **WCMA encourages all members to speak with an SBA-approved lender, to determine if they may be eligible for PPP aid.**

The new Congressional relief package also provides an additional \$75 billion in hospital funding and \$30 billion for national coronavirus testing.

President Donald Trump has signaled support for the next round of relief, following this package, to address state and local government funding shortfalls, infrastructure investments, tax incentives for restaurants, entertainment venues, and sports, and additional payroll tax cuts.

Republicans Sue Evers to Lift Safer at Home Order

Moments ago, Wisconsin Republican leaders filed a lawsuit challenging Governor Tony Evers' extension of the Safer at Home order through 8 a.m. on May 26th. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) ask the Supreme Court to block the extension beyond Friday, April 24.

This is breaking news, and WCMA will keep members informed of developments. For more information, see these initial media reports:

- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Republican Legislature asks Wisconsin Supreme Court to suspend stay at home order](#)
 - *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Wisconsin GOP lawmakers ask Supreme Court to block Evers' order to stay home](#)
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Coronavirus Headline News

Dairy Industry

- *WXOW-TV*: [Government aid now a reality for struggling dairy farmers](#)
- *ABC News*: [Dairy farmers dumping milk amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- *WCCO-TV*: [Lake Country Dairy donates food to pantries](#)

Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Demand for food assistance doubles in Wisconsin amid coronavirus economic slump](#)
- *Associated Press*: [Officials link seven Milwaukee virus cases to in-person voting](#)
- *WAOW-TV*: [Local businesses frustrated with lack of available aid](#)
- *U.S. News & World Report*: [States work to keep meat plants open, despite outbreaks](#)

National/International

- *FOX News*: [Trump to 'suspend immigration into the United States' by executive order amid coronavirus](#)
- *Politico*: [Farm workers to be exempt from Trump's immigration ban](#)
- *Politico*: [Restaurants' bailout problem: Unemployment pays more](#)
- *New York Times*: [Hot spots emerge as Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina move to reopen](#)

Other Coronavirus Resources

WCMA will continue to provide links to both new and essential coronavirus resources for members in bulletins. We have also created a page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](#) with links to materials detailing employee safety best practices, operations guidance, federal and state support programs, and state orders impacting the dairy industry.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact WCMA staff. We are always here for you.

Key Contacts

- WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer: jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org or 608-225-7130
- WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney: rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org or 608-386-3012

WCMA SIGNATURE EVENTS

Register to Bid: Championship Cheese Auction Live, Online Friday, April 24

Challenging times due to the coronavirus pandemic have brought change and delay for CheeseExpo, but WCMA aims to keep one tradition alive: the WCMA Championship Cheese Auction.

[Join WCMA Friday, April 24 for a live, online auction](#) of the champion cheeses. WCMA will recognize the great effort of the mastery of cheesemakers and Gold Medal winners of the 2020 World Championship Cheese Contest. Interested bidders need to [register on the bidding website](#), and will have a pre-sale opportunity to place silent bids beginning 1 p.m. CDT on Wednesday, April 22.



The auction provides crucial support to the World Championship Cheese Contest, WCMA scholarships, and WCMA supervisor and manager training programs. In past years, it has served as a

chance for supplier partners and processors to thank and support the cheese companies that make this industry famous.

WCMA staff will supplement the auctioneer's live action with commentary and thanks in real time at the event center over [Facebook Live on the World Championship Cheese Contest page](#).

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS AUCTION WEBSITE](#)

CHEESE EXPO

Memo and Action Form Due Thursday

WCMA staff asks that CheeseExpo Memo and Action Forms distributed to all exhibitors, sponsors, and advertisers be returned no later than Thursday, April 23. The form outlines all options available for 2020 CheeseExpo engagement.

[Please direct questions to WCMA Events Manager Caitlin Peirick.](#)

OTHER NEWS

- *Brownfield Ag News:* [Part of Dean Foods deal derails](#)
- *Harvard Business Review:* [CEO of Cabot Creamery on beating sustainability benchmarks](#)
- *Dairy Reporter:* [The popularity of prebiotics in dairy](#)



Grossen Awarded UW Recognition

WCMA congratulates Master Cheesemaker Gary Grossen, one of just ten University of Wisconsin-Madison staff members to receive the [2020 University Staff Recognition Award](#).

Grossen, who has more than 60 years of experience in the industry, spent 15 years crafting more than 20 cheese varieties at the Babcock Hall Dairy Plant. Now working as a Research Cheesemaker at the Center of Dairy Research, Grossen oversees the processes of all milk and dairy ingredients.

WisCheeseMakers.org

