

# WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest  
in dairy processing

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## NEWS

### USDA Final Decision Adjusts FMMO Make Allowances Upward



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today issued its [final decision](#) on milk pricing reforms for federal orders, including additional small increases in make allowances. This final decision, nearly two years in the making, awaits official publication in the *Federal Register*, likely in late November. Immediately after publication, USDA will execute dairy farmer referendums in each federal milk marketing order to learn if farmers (and their cooperatives) will accept the new milk pricing orders or reject their order entirely.

Dairy farmers will be required to return referendum votes postmarked by December 31, 2024. Ballots received at USDA by January 15, 2025, will be counted. It is reasonable to assume the agency will attempt to release a Final Ruling before a change in government Administration on January 20, 2025. In that final ruling, USDA will announce the results of producer referenda and state the implementation date for all new, accepted orders. Orders will likely take effect in the second quarter of 2025.

As requested by WCMA in its public comments on the Proposed Rule, USDA improved the make allowance for nonfat dry milk, raising it from \$0.2268 to \$0.2393 per pound by removing old 2016 California data that USDA initially proposed. In addition, USDA added back the \$0.0015 marketing allowance to all four dairy product allowances, having removed them in the Proposed Rule.

These changes result in the following final make allowances:

	Final Decision	Proposed Rule	Current
<b>Cheese</b>	\$0.2519	\$0.2504	\$0.2003
<b>Butter</b>	\$0.2272	\$0.2257	\$0.1715
<b>Dry Whey</b>	\$0.2668	\$0.2653	\$0.1991
<b>Nonfat Dry Milk</b>	\$0.2393	\$0.2268	\$0.1678

USDA also made changes to certain proposed county-level Class 1 milk price differentials and reduced the proposed delay in implementation of the revised skim milk composition factors from 12 months out to six months after implementation.

A [news release](#) offers a useful summary of USDA's changes made in today's final decision. USDA has also released a 20-minute video "[FMMO Final Decision Contents Webinar](#)" as well as additional videos, maps and "Explainer" documents easily accessed on USDA's [National Federal Milk Marketing Order Price Formula Hearing website](#).

In addition, USDA will host three public webinars regarding the order amendments and producer referendum process. Webinars are planned for 11:00 a.m. (ET) on November 19; 3:00 p.m. (ET) on November 21; and 11:00 a.m. (ET) on November 25. A link to access the webinars will be provided in advance on the [Hearing website](#).

Please contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) with any questions.



## USDA Advances New H5N1 Testing Program



As cases of [H5N1 in dairy herds](#) continue to rise in California, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is moving ahead with a [mandatory milk testing program](#), designed to gauge the prevalence of the disease with the goal of eliminating it.

In a meeting on November 8 with USDA, WCMA staff pressed agency leaders for information, learning USDA will offer flexibility in the first phase of the program.

In Phase One, states may opt to test bulk milk tanks at farms or choose to test milk silos at processing facilities. If results in Phase One are negative for H5N1, a state would ease back to occasional testing. If positive samples are discovered in a state, regulators move to Phase Two – testing at the farm level. Phase Three is biosecurity and biocontainment at the farm level. USDA describes Phase Four as a "holding pattern," with states continuing a lighter load of ongoing testing. Phase Five is demonstration that the disease is no longer detectable anywhere, an effort that requires three months of negative test results nationwide.

USDA officials expect testing to begin within the next three weeks but the agency must first amend a federal order to provide states with the authority to execute the program.

USDA is not prescribing who should collect samples; this determination is for state-level regulators. States will have the opportunity to enter into cooperative agreements with USDA to access funding both for overtime staffing and for the hiring of temporary employees to execute testing. USDA can also cover the cost of shipping samples through cooperative agreements, and the agency will continue to cover the cost of testing.

USDA indicates that it has the right to hold private test results and can extend that power to states. WCMA inquired about USDA's plan to release aggregated test results to the public. USDA did not offer information on the frequency or method of information release.

Confusing matters, USDA (along with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments) earlier announced a different, voluntary dairy plant silo testing program. USDA continues to support that milk silo testing program. Some states, including Wisconsin, have paused their participation as they await information on possible synergies with USDA's new mandatory testing program.

Processors should expect some communication from their state departments of agriculture as their sampling effort continues or is launched. WCMA will continue to stay in regular contact with federal and state leaders, advocating for industry interests, and will update members on developments. Questions can be directed to [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

For more of the latest on H5N1, see related news coverage:

- Visalia Times Delta: [Bird flu spreads across California raising labor, trade concerns](#)
- University of Minnesota: [CDC expands avian flu testing for farm workers, notes 7 percent infection rate in those exposed to infected cows](#)
- Forbes: [Canada reports first human case of H5N1 bird flu](#)

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## GOP Sweeps Federal Elections; Dems Make Gains in Wisconsin



Donald Trump will become the 47th President of the United States after winning [last week's contentious election](#). Trump has [already announced](#) former Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY) as his pick to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, and WCMA is closely watching conversations around Trump's potential appointees to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food & Drug Administration, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

In Congress, Republicans won control of the Senate and the House. Senator John Boozman (R-AK) is the likely successor to current Senate Agricultural Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), who is retiring. In Wisconsin, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D) [claimed victory](#) over challenger Eric Hovde (R).

Republicans retained majorities in both the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly, though Democrats narrowed the margins significantly following redistricting. In the Senate, the party control split is now 18-15, eliminating the Republican supermajority – and the party's ability to override a gubernatorial veto. Notable results include former Caucus Vice Chair and Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Joan Ballweg's (R-Markesan) loss to newcomer Sarah Keyeski (D-Lodi). In the Assembly, the party control split is now 54-45, compared to the 64-35 split in the 2023-24 cycle. WCMA is speaking with legislative leaders regarding Joint Finance and ag committee chairs and membership.

Given significant changes following the election, key pending issues at the federal level, and new expected policy pushes at the state level, WCMA intends to engage even earlier with legislators than in previous cycles. Interested in participating in WCMA's advocacy efforts? Contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#)

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## EWCSA Honors Kerry Henning

WCMA congratulates Kerry Henning of Henning's Cheese, who asked his wife Barb to share in the celebration of a Life Membership from the Eastern Wisconsin



Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association at its annual meeting.

WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer and Membership Director Sara Schmidt addressed the meeting. WCMA also honored Chris Renard for his service on the WCMA Board, representing Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association.

## Headlines

### Wisconsin

- Milwaukee Community Journal: [A special holiday feature: Wisconsin's must-visit markets & fan-favorite gifts](#) (Featuring WCMA member Ron's Wisconsin Cheese)
- Plymouth Review: [Sargento purchases 66-acre property; no plans as yet](#)

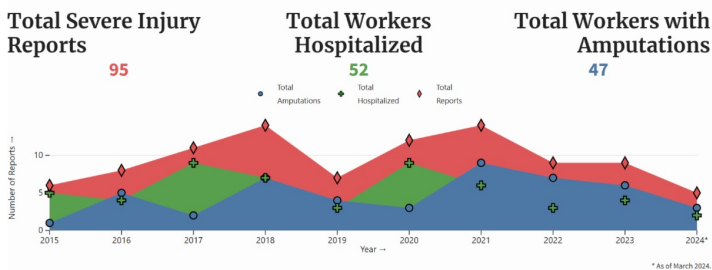
### National & Global

- Dairy Foods: [Milk sales swirl like fall winds](#)
- Dairy Processing: [Challenge Dairy phasing in EV trucks](#)
- BBC: [Why luxury cheese is being targeted by black market criminals](#)

## FEATURED: EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY

Learn more about WCMA's programs and member services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's employee health & safety resources and related news.

### New OSHA Dashboard Shows Industry Effort, Success



The Occupational Safety & Health Administration's (OSHA) new [Severe Injury Report \(SIR\) Dashboard](#), including nearly a decade of data, shows a downward trend in incidents in dairy processing plants, following the launch of the agency's Local (now Regional) Emphasis Program for Food Processors. [READ MORE...](#)

### Heat Safety Rule Pending; Future Uncertain



This summer [OSHA published a proposed rule](#) for heat safety, requiring employers to implement a Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Plan when workers are subjected to certain temperatures. [Public comments](#) on the rule are open through December 30, though safety experts speculate that the new Trump Administration may abandon the effort.

## Take Advantage of Free WCMA Health & Safety Resources



WCMA is proud to support members' efforts to keep their valued employees safe on the job. Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) for a library of resources on a range of topics from combustible dust protocols to warehouse safety and much more!

WCMA also offers an active, engaged Health & Safety Group, meeting three times each year. This group welcomes all interested members for information, discussion, and networking.

Here's a preview of Health & Safety Group meeting dates and topics for 2025:

### February 6

- Drug Testing Practices
- Member Spotlight: Temp Worker Safety Solutions
- Leveling Up Your Health & Safety Program

### May 1

- Recordkeeping 101
- Member Spotlight: Third Shift Safety Solutions
- Preventing & Addressing Human Trafficking

### October 8

- Annual WCMA-OSHA-WisCon Alliance Meeting
- Member Spotlight: Communicating Safety Standards to Non-English Speaking Workers
- Confined Space Safety

To get involved, or to share ideas, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

## EDUCATION

### Enroll Now in WCMA Train the Safety Trainer



Act now to join the next in-person offering of [WCMA's Train the Safety Trainer class](#) on Thursday, December 5 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (CT), sponsored by [Nelson-Jameson](#). Designed with input from WCMA's Health & Safety Group, this interactive session aims to equip the dairy processing industry's safety trainers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively communicate safety expectations and protocols for maximum compliance. Don't wait for safety concerns to arise - [register now](#).

## Build Stronger Teams in 2025 with WCMA Front-Line Leadership

Help your valued team leaders hone their skills and take your business to the next



level in 2025 with WCMA's low-cost, highly-rated [Front-Line Leadership courses](#). New and seasoned supervisors alike will learn to strengthen essential leadership skills, boost staff performance, and cultivate a positive team mentality. Details and registration for two virtual tracks of these popular classes are [available now!](#)

**RESERVE SPACE**



## EVENTS & CONNECTION

**Limited CheeseCon Booth Space Remaining - Reserve Now!**



Don't miss your opportunity to reach thousands of dairy processing professionals in just one day with a tabletop exhibit at [CheeseCon 2025](#). **Over 90 percent** of booth space on CheeseCon's [expanded trade show floor](#) is already sold. Reserve your space now at [CheeseCon.org!](#)

**SECURE YOUR BOOTH**



### Exhibitor Kit Coming Soon

Registered CheeseCon exhibitors: watch this week for our comprehensive Exhibitor Service Kit. This guide will be [available online](#) and emailed to exhibitor planning contacts, offering all the information and resources you need for a successful show - including a brand-new Exhibitor Marketing Guide!

## RSVP Now for Free WCMA Webinar on 2025 Milk Pricing

Wondering what to expect from dairy markets in the coming year? Make plans now to join WCMA for our [next free member webinar](#) on Tuesday, December

# WCMA Webinar

## 2025 Milk Pricing Forecast

10 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). This one-hour session will offer a milk pricing forecast for 2025, and include time for Q&A. [RSVP today!](#)

### Save the Date for Virtual WCMA Policy Committee Meeting



Join WCMA's active Policy Committee for its next [free, virtual meeting](#) on Monday, December 2 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. (CT). Discussion will focus on WCMA's federal and state advocacy priorities for the 2025-26 cycle, with committee recommendations to be shared with the WCMA Board of Directors for final evaluation. From the Farm Bill to immigration, and from export strategy to business aids, WCMA will make an impact!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

### Upcoming WCMA Events

December 2	December 5	December 10	January 14	January 21
<a href="#">Policy Committee Meeting (Virtual)</a>	<a href="#">Train the Safety Trainer Course (In-Person)</a>	<a href="#">Free Webinar: 2025 Milk Pricing Forecast</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part A (Virtual)</a>	<a href="#">Front-Line Leadership Part A (Virtual)</a>

[VIEW ALL & REGISTER](#)

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