

# WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest  
in dairy processing

November 19, 2024

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## NEWS

### Senate Farm Bill Proposal Introduced



On Monday, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) released the Senate Agriculture Committee's [Farm Bill draft](#) in a late bid to move the legislation forward during the lame-duck session of Congress. Funding for many key USDA programs will run out on December 31, but it remains to be seen if lawmakers can complete their work on a new Farm Bill package or will opt to extend the 2018 Farm Bill again. Negotiations between the Senate and House have been unproductive thus far, with major disagreements over funding for farm safety net support, conservation efforts, and nutrition programs.

The Senate version of the Farm Bill includes an increase in funding for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives to \$36 million per year, up from \$20 million. The [House version](#), which was approved in May, simply maintains that level of support.

Also critical to the dairy processing industry, the Senate version expands the existing Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives Projects program to yogurt and cheese offerings, authorizing \$20 million over five years in funding; mandates that USDA execute a biennial cost of production survey to ensure accurate make allowances in federal orders; continues the Dairy Forward Pricing Program through 2029; and adjusts the Dairy Products Donation Program to allow for broader participation.

WCMA is lobbying for member interests as the Farm Bill process continues, and we encourage members to make their voices heard, too. Engage in [WCMA's email advocacy campaign](#) this week to join our call for action.

### RSVP Now 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). [Help shape WCMA's federal and state advocacy priorities](#) for the 2025-26 cycle on a broad range of issues, from the Farm Bill to immigration, and from export strategy to business aids. The committee's recommendations will be shared with the WCMA Board of Directors for final evaluation. [RSVP today!](#)



# H5N1 Response

## USDA Mandatory Milk Testing to Begin in December



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.

On a recent call with WCMA staff and other agricultural stakeholders, USDA officials said they expect some mandatory testing to begin in December, continuing into January and February. Some states will be early adopters of the mandatory program, and may be announced as early as this week.

The program will be executed through cooperative agreements, which will include privacy protections to ensure no inappropriate disclosure of business information. USDA will report results at the state level, similar to its current reporting of H5N1 positives, and does not anticipate offering more granular information. The agency can also cover the cost of shipping samples through cooperative agreements and will continue to cover the cost of testing.

USDA (along with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments) is also continuing a different, voluntary dairy plant silo testing program. Officials expect that study to be complete in December, likely before the bulk of mandatory testing begins.

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](#).

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## New Report Shows \$52.8B Economic Impact of Wisconsin Dairy

Wisconsin's dairy industry contributed an impressive \$52.8 billion and 120,700 jobs to the state's total industrial revenue, with dairy processing accounting for much of those numbers, according to [a new University of Wisconsin report](#). The report also explores the environmental impacts of Wisconsin's agricultural industries, estimating that the dairy category (both on-farm and processing) contributed seven million metric tons of CO2 equivalent in greenhouse gas emissions in 2022, or approximately five percent of the state's total emissions.

[READ MORE...](#)



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## WCMA Launches 2025 Scholarship Applications



Applications are open now for [WCMA's annual student scholarships](#), worth a total of \$19,000. Two of the programs, the [Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#) and the [Cheese Industry Supplier Student Scholarship](#), target WCMA member employees and their children. The third, known as the [Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship Supporting Skilled Trades in the Dairy Industry](#), is open to any student attending or registered to attend a Wisconsin technical school. [READ MORE...](#)

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## USDA Awards Cheddar, Butter Contracts to WCMA Members

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has [awarded contracts](#) to WCMA members Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) and Great Lakes Cheese to provide over 138,000 pounds of cheddar cheese for use in federal food distribution programs. AMPI also [secured a contract](#) to provide over 82,000 pounds of butter to USDA.

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

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## Headlines

### Wisconsin

- OnMilwaukee: [Elegant new Milwaukee Cheese Bar by Hill Valley Dairy opens Nov. 20](#) (Featuring WCMA member Hill Valley Dairy)
- Sheboygan Press: [Retiring Sargento VPs reflect on innovations](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)

### National & Global

- Supermarket Perimeter: [Kerry Co-Op to acquire Kerry Group's dairy business](#)
- EatingWell: [Cheese sold at Aldi, Market Basket and more recalled due to Listeria contamination](#)
- MSN: [September cheese recall updated as E.coli warning issued for separate product](#)
- San Luis Obispo County Tribune: [Gouda as it gets? Watch Cal Poly students craft gourmet cheese from scratch at the Creamery](#)



### Act Now to Secure CheeseCon Sponsorships



Limited opportunities remain available to [promote your business](#) to thousands of dairy industry professionals at CheeseCon 2025. Reserve yours today!

Consider one of just three remaining [Lunch Partner Sponsorships](#) and reach attendees as they enjoy lunch on the exhibit floor. Or, choose the [brand-new, exclusive Seminar Q&A Sponsorship](#) to showcase your support for industry growth through ongoing education.

Don't wait - these and more [exciting opportunities](#) are only available until January 16.

**BECOME A SPONSOR**

### Grow Your Business: Enter the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest



Build your business with valuable expert feedback, exposure to new customers, and a chance at national recognition at the [2025 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest](#), now accepting entries. [Hear about the value participants find in entering](#), and [submit your products today](#) to secure special early entry pricing!

**ENTER NOW**

### Take Advantage of New Contest Marketing Opportunities

Show your commitment to industry excellence with a [sponsorship of the 2025 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest](#). Promote your business to dairy processing professionals as a sponsor of [Continental Breakfasts](#) for Contest judges and volunteers. Or, connect with the public by sponsoring the [popular Cheese Sampling](#) or [Consumer Demonstration Stations](#). These opportunities and more are available now - don't delay!

### 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](#)

## EDUCATION

### Reserve Space in WCMA Train the Safety Trainer Class



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 course](#) 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. Registration closes December 2, so [act now!](#)

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

[WisCheeseMakers.org/Events](https://www.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.*

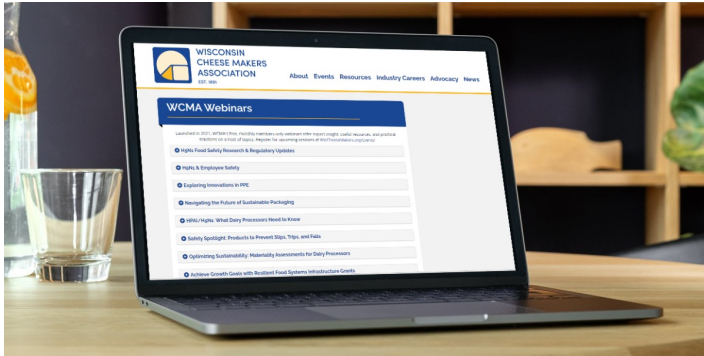
### RSVP Now for Free WCMA Webinar on 2025 Milk Pricing

**WCMA Webinar**  
**2025 Milk Pricing Forecast**

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

Milk price forecasts are crucial for managing risk and planning your business moves. Learn what to expect in 2025 in WCMA's [next free member webinar](#) on Tuesday, December 10 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Featuring dairy market analyst Kathleen Noble Wolfley of Ever.Ag, this one-hour session offers an expert look ahead at milk prices for 2025 and will include time for Q&A. [Register now to join us.](#)

## NEW: Sponsor WCMA Member Webinars in 2025



Show your support for ongoing learning and connection in the dairy processing industry as a sponsor of WCMA's free member webinars. Sponsorships are [available now for our January session](#), focused on ways members can use artificial intelligence tools to improve their marketing.

**SPONSOR NOW**

WCMA's monthly webinars are offered live and [on-demand](#) to all 800+ WCMA member businesses and their thousands of employees operating across the U.S. and around the world. Sponsorship benefits include written and verbal recognition, your company logo displayed during the webinar, access to the attendee list for follow-up after the webinar, and more. To secure your sponsorship, [visit WisCheeseMakers.org](#) or contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).

## Learn U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Basics in Free Webinar



A recording of WCMA's latest free webinar, covering everything dairy manufacturers & processors need to know about participating in the [2025 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest](#), is [now available online](#). This session features presentations from WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger, Contest Judge Eric Vorpahl, and entrant perspectives from Mike Sipple of Agropur and Orphee Paillotin of Alpiange Artisan Cheese - plus a live Q&A with presenters.

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