

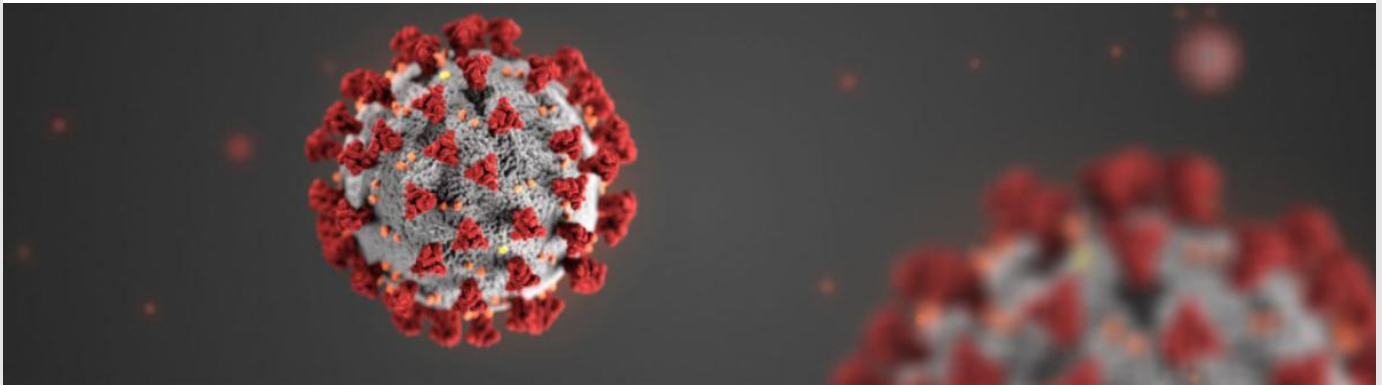


WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



COVID INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



U.S. Begins Nationwide Rollout of COVID-19 Vaccine

A New York critical care nurse was the first person to receive [Pfizer's newly-authorized COVID-19 immunization](#) in the United States on Monday, as the vaccine rollout began nationwide. The federal government expects that 40 million doses - enough for 20 million Americans - will be available from pharmaceutical companies by the end of this year.

[Moderna's vaccine candidate](#) is slated for Food and Drug Administration review on Thursday, with a panel expected to approve a request for emergency use authorization.

For more on the vaccine rollout across the United States, see these news articles:

- *FOX News*: [Fauci says first COVID-19 vaccine rollout amid rising virus death toll 'bittersweet' moment](#)
- *Reuters*: ['Race against time': First Americans vaccinated as U.S. death toll passes 300,000](#)
- *Washington Post*: [U.S. death toll tops 300,000 as second vaccine nears approval](#)

Wisconsin Joins in On-Site Vaccination Drives

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers announced Monday that the state has [joined a federal pharmacy program](#), a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and national pharmacy chains Walgreens and CVS. This program is designed to offer on-site vaccination services, beginning with drives in Wisconsin's long-term care facilities on December 28.

WCMA Continues Advocacy Push for Industry Dry Ice

WCMA continues to advocate for the [dairy industry's essential dry ice needs](#), as vaccine distribution has increased demand. This campaign includes broad public education via news reports,

and WCMA has been successful in that effort, as evidenced by news reports linked below.

- *Marketplace (NPR)*: [Dry ice makers pressed to meet demand for vaccine distribution](#)
- *WBAY-TV*: [Dairy industry worried about dry ice shortage with COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- *WITI-TV*: [Vaccine ramps up dry ice production, concerning cheesemakers](#)
- *WEAU-TV*: [Cheese makers in Wisconsin worried about possible dry ice shortage](#)
- *WIZM-AM*: [Vaccine dry ice demands could impact Wisconsin's signature cheese industry](#)

WCMA has received some assurances that the dairy industry is considered an essential consumer of dry ice, and will be prioritized in dry ice distribution. Throughout this period of heightened demand, WCMA will monitor industry access and alert members to pressing developments.

Congressional Coalition Unveils New Relief Packages

A bipartisan coalition of U.S. senators on Monday shared legislative [drafts for two new coronavirus relief proposals](#).

The first bill, a \$748 billion proposal, includes common ground concepts, including additional support for the Paycheck Protection Program, schools and unemployment insurance, as well as more money for vaccine development and distribution, coronavirus testing and contact tracing. The second bill addresses more controversial issues, including \$160 billion for state and local governments, a priority for Democrats, and coronavirus liability shields for businesses, a priority for Republicans.

House and Senate [leadership plan to meet](#) later today to continue negotiations on a coronavirus relief package and on a broader spending package.

WCMA Calls for Liability Protection in Wisconsin

WCMA, in partnership with other trade and business associations, has delivered [a letter](#) to Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers and members of the the Wisconsin State Legislature calling for the passage of protections from frivolous COVID-19 liability lawsuits. A total of 13 states, including Michigan and Iowa, have now approved similar legislation.

CFAP2 Reports \$12.47 Billion in Payments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports it has [distributed \\$12.47 billion](#) in direct relief payments to farmers via the second round of its Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), including \$1.13 billion to dairy farmers. The application period for CFAP 2 ended last Friday.

WCMA/WDATCP Webinar on COVID-19 Inspection Protocols Now Available Online

In a [webinar](#) held exclusively for WCMA members late last week, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protections (WDATCP) staff detailed COVID-19 inspection protocols and regulatory flexibilities the agency has secured from the federal government.

Tim Anderson, Manager of WDATCP's Division of Food and Recreational Safety, stated that the agency's primary goal is to assure nonstop continuity in the dairy supply chain, and as such, inspectors are not enforcing mask mandates or reporting plants for noncompliance with COVID-19 safety protocols.

To help ensure uninterrupted services, WDATCP requests that plant staff wear face masks, practice social distancing, and limit group sizes around inspectors on-site. WDATCP staff are

currently calling ahead to Grade B plants prior to inspections, and request that plant managers share information regarding COVID-19 outbreaks at that time. WDATCP staff self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, wear PPE during inspections, and will only visit one full plant inspection per day to reduce the risk of transmission. Staff quarantine for 14 days if they are exposed to COVID-19 at any facility.



Coronavirus Headline News

Dairy Industry

- *WXOW-TV*: [Up and down year ripples across America's Dairyland](#) (Featuring WCMA member Westby Cooperative Creamery)

Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Seven-day average of daily COVID-19 cases is lowest it's been since late October](#)
- *WFRV-TV*: [Fox Valley community COVID-19 testing extended to 2021](#)
- *WQOW-TV*: [Free COVID-19 testing in Eau Claire extended to March](#)
- *Capital Times*: [Get a COVID vaccine, toss the mask? Not so fast, experts say](#)
- *WEAU-TV*: [Survey paints grim future for state restaurants without federal aid](#)
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [DWD waited weeks to seek info to resolve UI claims, new audit says](#)

National/International

- *NPR*: [FDA authorizes first home coronavirus test that doesn't require a prescription](#)
- *WMAQ-TV*: [COVID vaccine: Does Pfizer's coronavirus shot prevent you from infecting others?](#)

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](https://www.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
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ADVOCACY



Vilsack Tapped to Again Lead USDA

President-elect Joe Biden formally introduced Tom Vilsack on Friday as his [nominee to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA), calling him the "best secretary of agriculture I believe our country has ever had." Vilsack had served as USDA Secretary during the Obama Administration, the only member of the Cabinet to keep his role for two full terms.

Vilsack is currently working as president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, and has been a strong advocate for the dairy industry. USDEC COO [Krysta Harden will assume leadership](#) of USDEC, should Vilsack be confirmed.

Biden to Nominate Katherine Tai for USTR

President-elect Joe Biden is nominating [Katherine Tai to serve](#) as the U.S. Trade Representative in his administration. Tai has worked as chief counsel for China trade enforcement at the World Trade Organization and currently serves as chief lawyer on trade for the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee. Her nomination is viewed as a sign Biden will continue to work for more favorable trade agreements with China. Biden has already stated he will not immediately remove U.S. tariffs on Chinese products.

USTR Files Dairy Case Against Canada

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) last week filed its first-ever enforcement action under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement over Canada's noncompliance with dairy market access provisions.

The first step in USMCA dispute settlements is a request for consultations, which was officially made by USTR Robert Lighthizer on Wednesday, December 9.

WCMA has joined in calls to enforce the USMCA. In August, more than 125 bipartisan members of Congress signed a [letter to USTR](#) Robert Lighthizer asking him to "ensure compliance."

Take a look at these news clips to learn more:

- *Dairy Reporter*: [USTR takes action against Canada for 'undermining US dairy farmers'](#)
- *Capital Press*: [USTR addresses Canada's limited access for U.S. dairy](#)
- *Brownfield Ag News*: [USTR taking action on Canadian dairy](#)

INDUSTRY UPDATES



CDR, Babcock Hall Dairy Plant Construction Update

Following a December 2 briefing for the WCMA Board of Directors on the construction of the new Center for Dairy Research (CDR) at Babcock Hall in Madison, three industry members on the project Steering Committee walked the construction site on December 11, 2020. Tom Hedge, Senior Vice President, Foth Production Solutions, John Umhoefer, Executive Director, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, and Lou Gentine, Chairman, Sargento Foods (all pictured above) viewed the three floors of research, application and education space.

The building exterior is now completely enclosed and most interior finishes are complete in the ground floor auditorium and food application kitchens, as well as the second floor cheesemaking, curing and packaging spaces. By year end, sanitary process design will be complete and installation of piping, equipment and automation will begin in January 2021.

The CDR will be complete and commissioned in mid-2021, and renovation and reconstruction of the Babcock Hall Dairy Plant, adjacent to CDR, will follow.

WDATCP Dairy Processor Grant Period Open



Consumer Protection (WDATCP) Secretary-designee Randy Romanski invites Wisconsin dairy processors to [apply for Dairy Processor Grants](#) of up to \$50,000, now through January 15, 2021.

Grants may be used to support food safety projects, staff training, plant expansion or modernization, and professional consulting services. Matching funds are required at 20 percent of the grant request. Funds will be awarded in February 2021, following a competitive review process.

In 2020, [WDATCP awarded 11 grants](#) totaling \$200,000 in industry support.

DBIA Webinar 6

Food Safety and Quality



DBIA "Let's Get Started" Webinar Series Continues

The [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#) (DBIA), a partnership between the Center for Dairy Research and WCMA, invites you to join in its continuing series of free webinars focused on business diversification, increased sales of value-added dairy products, and dairy exports.

A [recording](#) of the December 8 webinar centered on food safety and quality is now available online.

Here's a look at the upcoming webinar schedule:

- [Understanding and Accessing Economic Development Financing | Tuesday, January 5, 2021, 1:30 p.m. \(CST\)](#)
- [Exporting Dairy Products | Tuesday, January 19, 2021, 1:30 p.m. \(CST\)](#)

Each webinar offers a combination of general information presentations, breakout sessions and interviews with farmers and processors who will share their experiences and lessons learned. Recordings of previous webinars are [available online](#).



IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Brownfield Ag News*: [Online cheese sales are way up](#)

- *WXPR Radio*: [Ag, conservation groups step up drive to tackle climate change](#)
- *WDJT-TV*: [Packers, Sargento surpass \\$100K in donations for hunger relief](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods, Inc.)

National/International

- *Roll Call*: [Roberts leaves Senate with warning about attacks on food supply](#)
- *The Hill*: [FCC announces billions in subsidies to provide broadband access in rural areas](#)
- *Reuters*: [U.S., Ecuador ink mini-deal on trade; U.S. Chamber says more work ahead](#)
- *Kansas City Business Journal*: [DFA joins Starbucks, Unilever in coalition to reduce food waste, increase organics recycling](#) (Featuring WCMA member Dairy Farmers of America)

EDUCATION



WCMA Opens Registration for Leadership Trainings

WCMA this week opened registration for early 2021 offerings of its popular Front-Line Leadership Training program. All trainings will be offered remotely via a digital platform facilitating small group and partner discussions, interactive polling features and participant chat.

WCMA Front-Line Leadership Training - Part A, which offers a self-assessment on essential leadership skills and practical methods for improvement, will be held on Tuesday, February 23.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

WCMA Front-Line Leadership Training - Part B is set for Thursday, March 18, and will focus on ways to positively assess and impact staff performance.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

WCMA Front-Line Leadership Training - Part C focuses on how to build a team, and will be held Thursday, April 15.

REGISTER NOW

Classes are limited to 22 participants. They are offered à la carte, and may be taken in any order. Tuition for each course is \$135 per person.

Other Industry Trainings

WCMA is proud to host and promote opportunities for industry-specific training and enrichment. Here's a look at some of those upcoming events:

- February 1-5, 2021: [Food Defense and FSPCA Vulnerability Assessment Training | Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin](#)
 - February 10-12, 2021: [HACCP Workshop | UW-River Falls](#)
 - February 18-19, 2021: [Pasteurization Short Course | UW River-Falls](#)
 - March 1-5, 2021: [Cheesemaker's Short Course | UW-River Falls](#)
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WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply for WCMA Scholarships Totaling \$15,000

WCMA is now accepting applications for five student scholarships worth a total of \$15,000.

In 2021, two students will be awarded the [WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#), worth \$3,000 each. Any employee or child of an employee of a WCMA dairy manufacturing, processing, or marketing member company may apply.

Employees or children of employees at WCMA supplier member companies may apply for the [WCMA Cheese Industry Supplier Student Scholarship](#). Three students will receive scholarship awards of \$3,000 each.

Applicants must supply transcripts, a letter of recommendation, and a completed application form by Wednesday, February 17, 2021. Forms may be found at WisCheeseMakers.org, or can be directly requested from [WCMA Office & Member Service Manager Sara Schmidt](#).

Successful applicants will be announced in March 2021, with awards made in September.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

CHEESE EXPO

GLOBAL ONLINE

APRIL 6 - 8, 2021

Join Us Virtually to Explore North America's Largest
Cheese, Butter and Whey Processing Expo

Hosted By



WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION
EST. 1891

Register Now for CheeseExpo Global Online

Gain practical insights, connect with dairy industry partners and expand your network at CheeseExpo Global Online 2021, April 6-8. Registration is now open at CheeseExpoGO.org!

WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research are proud to partner in delivering the industry's leading experts addressing the hottest topics, from dairy policy and pricing, to COVID-era learnings, cheese quality, workforce solutions and more!

Technical and marketing seminars present news you can use to grow and strengthen your dairy processing business, and new exhibitor spotlight videos offer a deep dive into dairy technology, ingredients and services.

CheeseExpo Global Online also features the lively Championship Cheese Auction, a salute to industry titans via WCMA's Recognition Awards program, and many networking events - including one just for young professionals!

For a limited time only, CheeseExpo Global Online is offering \$100 off full registration rates. Dairy manufacturers and processors also enjoy free access to all exhibits and Ideas Showcase.

**REGISTER
NOW**

Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities

Opportunities abound for you to connect with dairy manufacturers and processors at CheeseExpo Global Online.

Join in CheeseExpo Global Online's [virtual Ideas Showcase](#) to present your company's goods and services in our main Schedule of Events. Reservations must be made by January 5.

Engage with loyal customers and budding

prospects via a **virtual exhibit!** CheeseExpo Global Online's clean, intuitive platform supports a rich user experience, featuring video demonstrations, live chat, key contacts and a quick snapshot of company information. All exhibitors will enjoy extensive analytical reports, facilitating long-term follow-up with contacts.

High-impact CheeseExpo Global **sponsorships** are also available now - while they last - at **CheeseExpoGO.org**.

WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

Sponsor

Description

The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association serves dairy processors and their industry supplier partners as a strong policy advocate, networking hub, and trusted source of education and information. WCMA proudly hosts the renowned U.S. and World Championship Cheese Contests, as well as CheeseExpo and Cheese Industry Conference.

Conversations

Files

- 2020 WCMA Membership Directory
- 2020-2021 WCMA Board of Directors

Video

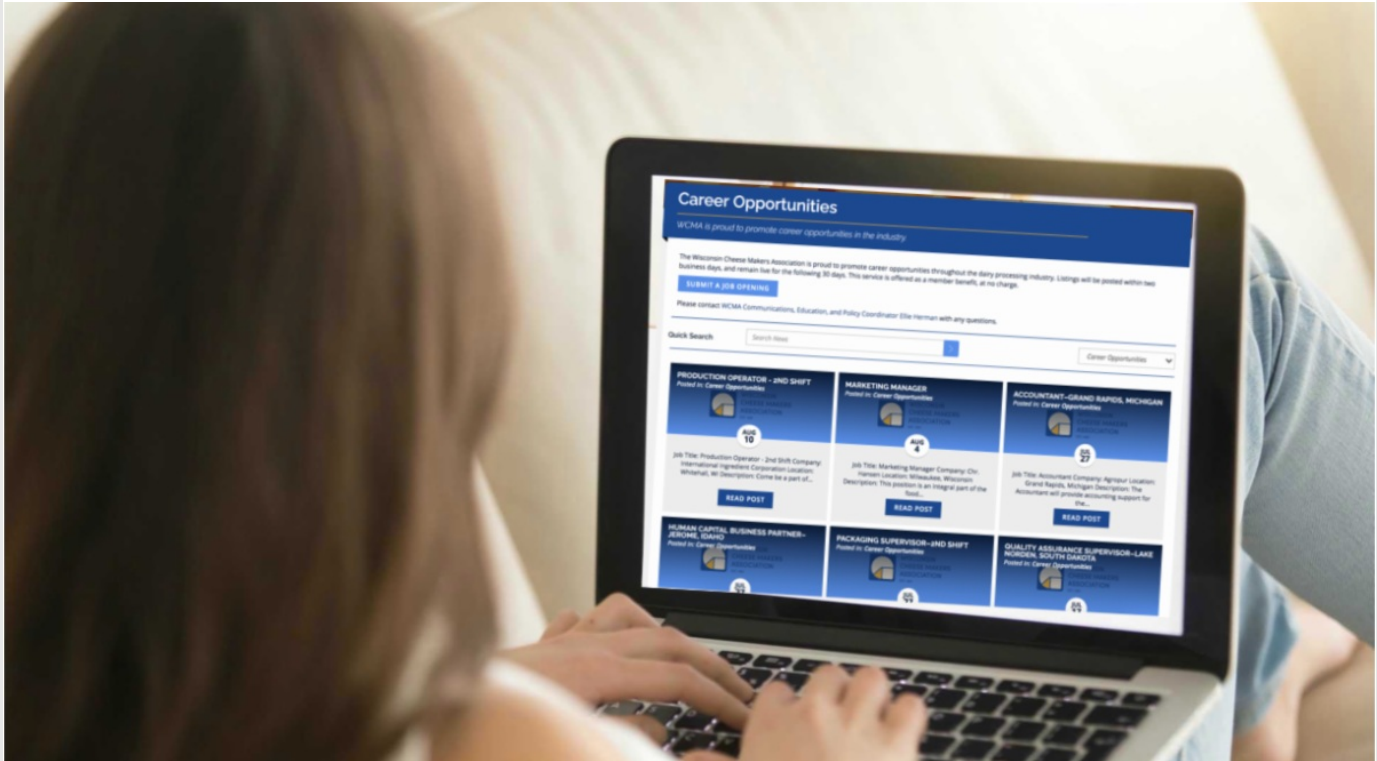
Our Year in Images 2019-2020

Exhibitor Keywords

MARKETING & PROMOTION | DAIRY CONSULTING | REGULATIONS | NEWS & PUBLICATIONS
EQUIPMENT | RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT | DISTRIBUTION/STORAGE

SAMPLE EXHIBIT

WORKFORCE



Career Opportunities Featured on WCMA Jobs Board

WCMA's **online jobs board** is featuring 14 new industry career opportunities this week from member companies Agropur and Westby Cooperative Creamery. Check out listings for content writers, cheesemaking supervisors, electromechanical technicians, HR technologists, and more!

All WCMA members are invited to **post openings**. It's free and easy! Questions may be directed to **[WCMA Communications, Education and Policy Coordinator Ellie Herman](#)**.

ADD JOB OPPORTUNITIES

MEMBERSHIP

Sign Up Colleagues for WCMA E-Newsletters

Thanks for subscribing to WCMA's weekly electronic communications! Please note, WCMA extends this benefit to all member employees. Let us know if we should **add your colleagues** to our mailing list, or if you'd like to share feedback on this or other communications products.

WisCheeseMakers.org

