



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

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news@wischeesemakers.org



NEWS



HPAI *Response*

First Case of HPAI Detected in Wisconsin Dairy Herd



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) on Sunday announced [Wisconsin's first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza \(HPAI\) in a dairy herd](#) in Dodge County. WDATCP officials noted the farm's processing partner had been notified, and both WDATCP and USDA reiterated that there is no concern about the safety of the commercial milk supply or consumer health.

For more on Wisconsin's HPAI detection, see the related news coverage below:

- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [Bird flu detected in dairy cattle for first time in Wisconsin](#)
- WMTV-TV: ['It'll be just fine': Wisconsin dairy experts say milk prices, safety not a concern despite confirmed bird flu case](#)
- Mid-West Farm Report: [Pasteurization keeps dairy products safe after HPAI detection](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- Wisconsin State Farmer: [Bird flu found for first time in Wisconsin after Dodge County dairy herd tests positive](#)

Dairy cattle in a total of 18 states have been infected since the start of the outbreak in March 2024, but USDA has noted [very limited cases in a small number of states this year](#). A host of HPAI informational resources, including a guide to using personal protective equipment in processing facilities and an on-farm biosecurity plan, is available to WCMA members at [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org).

Multiple States Tighten SNAP Restrictions in 2026



Beginning in 2026, a growing number of states will tighten restrictions on the types of foods consumers can purchase using their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has so far [approved waivers for 18 states](#) including Idaho, Iowa, Indiana, South Dakota, and Texas, allowing them to restrict SNAP purchases of items such as soda, candy, and other processed foods.

Wisconsin lawmakers last month [proposed similar restrictions](#) in [Assembly Bill 180/Senate Bill 154](#). WCMA is working on an [amendment](#) with the bill authors to safeguard dairy ingredients from possible unintended consequences of restrictions on candy in SNAP. WCMA language would assure that protein bars with dairy ingredients would not be categorized as candy.

Wisconsin legislators are also considering amending this proposed legislation to address the federal government's decision in July to increase the share that states will pay for SNAP administrative expenses from 50 percent to 75 percent. In Wisconsin, raising administrative costs will require a state investment upwards of \$30 million more per year. Members with questions may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

House Passes Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act



The U.S. House has passed the [Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025](#), sending the bill to President Trump's desk. The bill restores the option for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to once again serve whole milk and 2% milk. The bill also clarifies that fluid milk no longer needs to be included in the overall saturated fat calculation for school meals. WCMA has advocated in support of this legislation. [READ MORE...](#)

Domestic Organic Investment Act Introduced in Congress

U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Susan Collins, along with U.S. Representatives Andrea Salinas and Derrick Van Orden (pictured at far left with Adam Warthesen, Vice President of Government & Industry Affairs for WCMA member Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative) [introduced the Domestic Organic Investment Act](#) last week. This bipartisan, bicameral bill would create competitive grants for organic producers and manufacturers to invest in increased storage, processing, aggregation, and distribution capacity. In a news release, Shawna Nelson, CEO of Organic Valley, called the bill "a positive step toward ensuring more organic food reaches



American families". [READ MORE...](#)

Trump Signs Executive Order to Investigate Food Price-Fixing



Amid rising food costs nationwide, President Trump last week [signed an executive order](#) directing the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission to investigate potential price-fixing in the U.S. food supply chain, particularly by foreign-controlled companies. The order singles out the meat processing, seed, fertilizer, and equipment industries - but not dairy - as being especially vulnerable to anti-competitive practices. [READ MORE...](#)

WCMA Commends Reps. for CURD Act Support



WCMA and the International Dairy Foods Association today [applauded](#) U.S. Reps. Bryan Steil (R-WI), Jim Costa (D-CA), Mark Pocan (D-WI), and Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-MI) for their testimony and letters in support of the [CURD Act](#), which would create a federal definition for "natural cheese". In a joint news release, WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer noted that the Association "stands ready to work with Congress to...secure enactment of this long-standing, commonly used definition - delivering greater transparency in the marketplace and certainty for the dairy industry." [READ MORE...](#)

USDA Awards Contracts to WCMA Members; Seeks Cheddar

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) last week announced plans to [purchase over \\$13.6 million](#) worth of cheddar products from WCMA members Associated



Milk Producers Inc., Bongards Creameries, Dairy Farmers of America, Masters Gallery Foods, and Winona Foods. USDA is also [seeking bids](#) for additional cheddar products, with a submission deadline of December 22 at 1:00 p.m. (CT). Questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

Headlines

Wisconsin

- Wisconsin Agriculturist: [World looks to U.S. for dairy growth](#) (Featuring WCMA member CoBank)
- Food & Wine: [This seasonal cheese is so creamy it doubles as a dip — and chefs love it](#) (Featuring WCMA member Uplands Cheese)

National & Global

- Brownfield Ag News: [USDA dairy report shows higher cheese, butter production in October](#)
- CNBC: [Kraft Heinz taps former Kellanova CEO Steve Cahillane to lead company ahead of breakup](#)
- Food Safety News: [Legislators seek one agency for food safety](#)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Save the Date for WCMA State Advocacy Day



Register now to take part in the [WCMA Policy Committee Meeting and State Advocacy Day](#) on February 11, in Madison, Wisconsin. This in-person event will feature presentations from state regulators and lawmakers, followed by an afternoon of lobbying visits at the State Capitol. [Make your voice heard](#) on key issues impacting dairy processors, including food labeling and ingredient restrictions, wastewater regulation, export expansion efforts, and more. Impactful, affordable sponsorships of this event are also [available now at WisCheeseMakers.org](#).

Secure CheeseExpo & Contest Sponsorships by December 19

The deadline to secure [CheeseExpo](#) and [World Championship Cheese Contest](#) sponsorships is **this Friday, December 19**. Don't miss your chance to promote your business to dairy professionals and cheese-focused consumers alike. WCMA offers a wealth of ways to reach new audiences and elevate your brand, from [eye-catching](#)



[signage](#) to [innovative digital options](#). Act now to claim these high-impact marketing opportunities at two of the industry's most influential [events](#)!

EDUCATION

Apply for WCMA Student Scholarships by February 20



[Applications are now open for WCMA's student scholarships](#), totaling \$29,000. WCMA offers three scholarship programs for current college, university, and technical school students, or high school seniors planning to enroll next fall. Awards are available for students connected to WCMA [dairy manufacturer](#) and [supplier](#) members, as well as students at [Wisconsin technical schools](#), with preference given to those pursuing dairy-related careers. Applications are due February 20. [READ MORE...](#)



FEATURED: WEBINARS

Dive into 2026 Milk Pricing in Free WCMA Webinar

A recording of WCMA's latest free webinar, focused on projections for dairy markets in 2026, is [now available online](#). During this session, members heard from WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer and Ever.Ag Market Intelligence Director Kathleen Noble Wolfley on the evolving landscape of regulated milk pricing - shaped by years of industry advocacy - along with expert



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2026 Milk Pricing Forecast

December 11, 2025



insights and forecasts for the year ahead. For a list of helpful contacts and resources shared during the session, [visit our website](#).

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