



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

December 17, 2024

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NEWS

Tell Congress: Extend the Farm Bill, Avoid the "Dairy Cliff"



As a critical December 20 federal funding deadline approaches, Congressional leaders are considering a deal to prevent a government shutdown and avoid the "dairy cliff". The bill text is expected later today and is reported to include \$10 billion in economic aid to farmers and a one-year extension of the Farm Bill.

What is the "dairy cliff"?

If Congress fails to act on a Farm Bill proposal by January 1, 2025, a policy called parity – also known as permanent law – will take effect. Under this policy, the U.S. Department of Agriculture would be required to buy dairy products at levels **117 percent higher than the current all-milk price, an amount equivalent to more than \$49.43 per hundredweight.**

**CONTACT YOUR
LAWMAKERS NOW**

Agreement on a federal funding package is still tenuous. WCMA will continue to advocate for bipartisan support, and strongly encourages members to contact their lawmakers directly [through this link](#) and urge their support for a package that delivers a Farm Bill continuance. Questions may be directed to [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



H5N1

Response

FDA to Launch National Raw Milk Cheese Testing Program



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is set to begin a new testing effort to determine whether domestic aged raw milk cheeses carry viable, active H5N1 virus. An earlier sampling study of raw milk cheeses found no active virus, but FDA officials are seeking more comprehensive data as the H5N1 outbreak in dairy herds continues.

In a call with WCMA on Monday, December 16, Dr. Steven Grube of the FDA noted that the agency will collect approximately 300 samples from warehouses and distribution centers, not retail outlets, for testing. Collection will begin as early as the end of this month and will continue through March 2025.

Sampling will occur nationwide, with no more than five products collected per site, with two samples per product of at least a quarter-pound of cheese. All samples must have been manufactured after February 1, 2024.

FDA will not require or request that distributors hold raw milk cheeses from the market while testing is underway, but only promised to share negative results with distributors that had placed product on a voluntary hold. Negative results are likely to be determined within a week of testing. If the H5N1 virus is detected in the first PCR test, the product will then be sent to a Level 3 biosafe laboratory for a two-week-long test determining whether the virus is active or inactive. FDA has not yet committed to a plan on what action would occur, should a product be found to carry live virus; Grube noted the agency would, however, “notify all partners and conduct an investigation, taking action based on the circumstances.”

WCMA is advocating for timely notification of any results to both distributors and manufacturers of impacted products. FDA expects to publish materials detailing this project next week, and WCMA will work to keep members informed of all related developments.

California H5N1 Dairy Herd Cases Surge



Last week, California officials reported [13 additional outbreaks](#) of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) in dairy cattle, [two new, probable human cases in dairy farmworkers](#), and a [second recall of commercially sold raw milk](#) contaminated with the virus. This brings California's total number of infected dairy cattle to 630, an increase of nearly 50 percent in the past 30 days. Nevada has also reported its [first presumptive case](#) of H5N1 in dairy cattle, and Wisconsin [identified a case in poultry](#) in Barron County, a dairy-heavy area.

A complete listing of confirmed H5N1 cases among dairy cattle in the U.S. can be found on the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's website](#). WCMA members can also visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](#) for information and resources related to the H5N1 outbreak in cattle and ways to protect their workers.

Apply by January 17 for WDATCP Dairy Processor Grants



Take action now through **January 17** to [apply for the next round of Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants](#) through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP). A total of \$200,000 is available to support projects of up to \$50,000 and up to two years in duration. Recipients must provide a match of 20 percent of the grant amount. Complete details and the grant application are [available online](#).

[Hear from WCMA member Nasonville Dairy](#) about the impact of Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants on their business and community!

APPLY NOW

Headlines

Wisconsin

- WisPolitics: [WisBusiness: The Podcast with Suzanne Fanning, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin](#)
- WBAY-TV: [Touchdowns for Hunger gives payment to Paul's Pantry](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)

National & Global

- Dairy Herd Management: [Schreiber Foods announces new expansion to Missouri cheese plant](#) (Featuring WCMA member Schreiber Foods)
- USDA Foreign Agricultural Service: [Everyone say cheese at SIAL Paris 2024](#) (Featuring WCMA members Sartori Company and Savencia Cheese USA - Rogue Creamery)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Expand Your Knowledge at CheeseCon 2025



Access a wealth of educational opportunities tailored to the dairy processing industry - only at CheeseCon 2025. Co-hosts WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research today [announced an exciting line-up](#) of seminars and workshops on a broad range of topics, from change management and sustainability, to technical advancements and food safety, and more. View them all and secure [special early registration rates](#) at [CheeseCon.org](#).

[Click to hear from attendees](#) about the valuable educational opportunities available at CheeseCon!

VIEW ALL SEMINARS

CheeseCon Exhibits Sold Out; Select Marketing Opportunities Remain Available

It's official: CheeseCon's largest-ever tabletop [exhibit floor](#) is **sold out!** Looking



for ways to promote your business to thousands of dairy professionals? Impactful sponsorships and marketing opportunities are still available. Download our [sponsorship flyer](#) to explore exciting possibilities like the [Exclusive Sponsorship of CheeseCon's Opening Keynote](#) address. Sponsorships must be reserved by January 16, so don't delay!

BECOME A SPONSOR

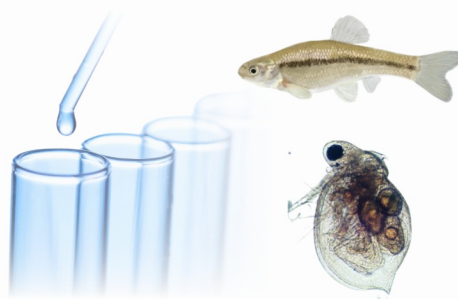
Upcoming WCMA Events

January 14	January 16	January 21	February 6	February 13
Front-Line Leadership Part A (Virtual)	Free Webinar: Marketing with AI	Front-Line Leadership Part A (Virtual)	Health & Safety Group Meeting	Front-Line Leadership Part B (Virtual)

VIEW ALL & REGISTER

EDUCATION

Register Now for Workshop on Meeting WET Test Challenges

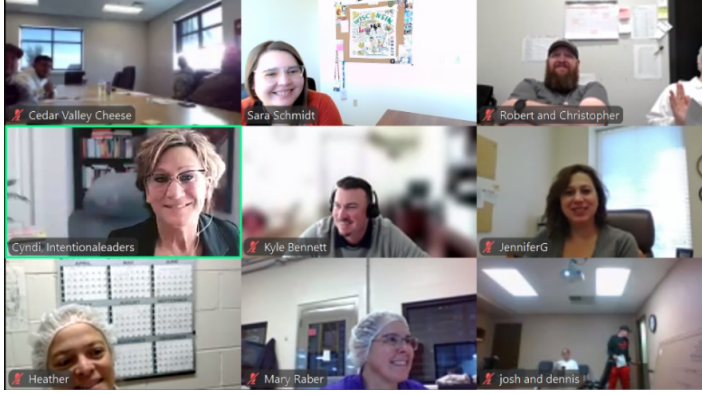


Join the WCMA Technology Committee January 22 for a [live, hybrid workshop focused on the Whole Effluent Toxicity \(WET\) test](#) for water quality compliance. At the request of members, WCMA has organized this deep dive into the challenges this test has posed for wastewater engineers and leaders in recent years, as well as solutions some members have found to explain WET test failures.

Managing water quality is a team effort, so WCMA has gathered dairy processors, expert consultants, chemical company technicians, and regulatory staff for a candid look at managing the WET test, with the goal of wastewater processing that's safe for the environment and keeps our dairy manufacturers productive.

This in-person and live online workshop is open to all WCMA members for a small fee. Our thanks to Agropur for hosting this gathering!

Act Now to Reserve January WCMA Front-Line Leadership Spaces



January is almost here, and that means an all-new line-up of WCMA's popular [Front-Line Leadership classes](#) is starting soon. Two virtual offerings of Part A, focused on essential leadership skills, will be held on [January 14](#) and [January 21](#). New and seasoned supervisors alike will learn to strengthen essential leadership skills, boost staff performance, and cultivate a positive team mentality. Those who complete all three parts of WCMA Front-Line Leadership receive a free Full Registration for [CheeseCon 2025](#), valued at approximately \$600. [Register yourself](#) or your team members today!

REGISTER TODAY



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.

Watch Now: Free Webinar Shares 2025 Milk Pricing Forecast



**WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION**



2025 Milk Pricing Forecast

December 10, 2024



A recording of WCMA's latest free webinar, offering a forecast of milk prices and dairy markets in 2025, is [now available online](#). This session features presentations from WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer, Ever.Ag Market Intelligence Director Kathleen Noble Wolfley, and a live Q&A.

Information on all past WCMA webinars is available to logged-in members anytime at [WisCheeseMakers.org/Webinars](#). Our webinars are driven by member feedback, so please feel free to contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) with questions or ideas.

VIEW WEBINAR

RSVP for WCMA January Webinar on AI in Sales & Marketing

The future of sales and marketing is here, with artificial intelligence (AI) tools gaining traction in many industries - including dairy

WCMA Webinar

AI for Sales & Marketing

processing. Join WCMA Thursday, January 16 at 1:00 p.m. (CT) for a [free, members-only webinar](#) focused on ways dairy processors can leverage AI in their sales and marketing efforts. [Register now](#) and join us for this thought-provoking session!

[REGISTER TODAY](#)

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