

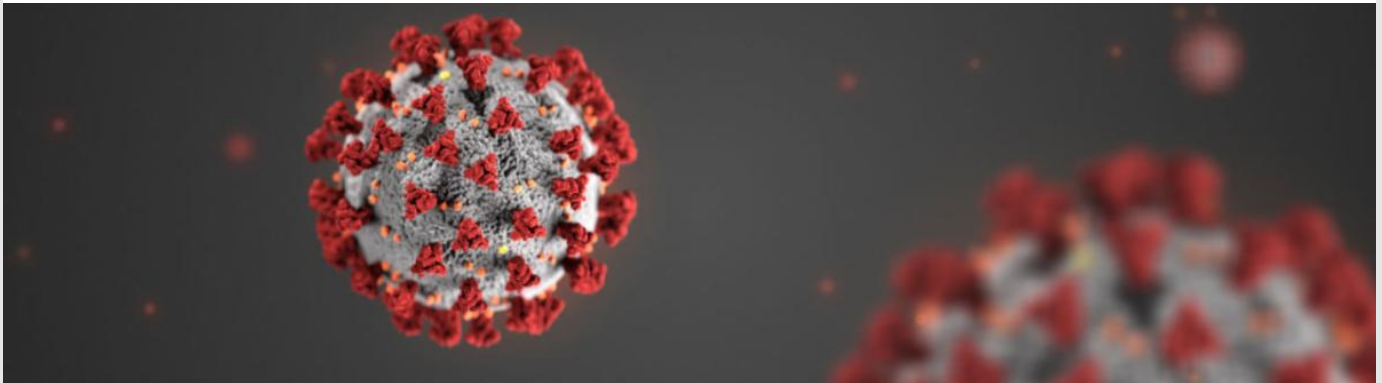


# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## COVID INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



### CDC Panel Recommends Essential Front-Line Workers Next in Line for COVID-19 Vaccine

A Centers for Disease Control advisory panel Sunday **voted to recommend** that 30 million "front-line essential workers" and seniors aged 75 or older be next in line for COVID-19 vaccines, following the Phase 1a group of health care workers and long-term care residents currently receiving doses.

The CDC panel included manufacturing, food, and agricultural workers in the **sectors approved** for the next wave of vaccinations, as well as first responders, correctional staff, teachers and daycare providers, and postal and public transit workers. Updated CDC vaccine distribution timetables show that group is likely to be vaccinated between late January and late March.

While states have authority to set their own distribution plans, the majority are expected to follow CDC recommendations. Thus far, only **Texas has notably rejected** the CDC recommendations, instead choosing to first vaccinate all senior citizens.

In a briefing provided to WCMA on Friday, Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary-designee Andrea Palm noted an advisory panel will soon make recommendations regarding the state's next distribution phase. WCMA has lobbied for dairy manufacturing and processing **workers' priority access**. Palm also noted it will take nine or ten weeks - or until early February - for everyone in Wisconsin's Phase 1a group to be vaccinated.

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### Congress Approves Sweeping \$892B Aid Package

Just before midnight last night, Congress approved a **\$892 billion COVID-19 aid package** with strong bipartisan support. President Donald Trump is expected to **sign the bill** into law today.

The **compromise proposal**, which took months of negotiations to reach, was combined with a \$1.4 trillion 2021 federal budget bill, numerous tax incentive extensions and energy and national security

proposals. Here's a closer look at key elements of the COVID-19 relief portion of package.

### **Business Aid**

The package includes \$325 billion in small business aid, including \$284 billion for a second round of the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) (PPP). Businesses may receive a second PPP loan of up to \$2 million, if they have fewer than 300 employees and can prove that their revenue has fallen by 25 percent. PPP loans are forgivable if the borrower spends at least 60 percent on payroll costs.

### **EIDL and PPP Tax Deductions**

The package overturns an Internal Revenue Service determination, and explicitly allows business owners to claim tax deductions for expenses covered by Paycheck Protection Program loans. WCMA advocated for Congressional action on this item. The package also notes that recipients of Economic Injury Disaster Loans will no longer have to deduct the advance from their PPP loan forgiveness amount.

### **Unemployment Boost**

The package includes a \$300-per-week [unemployment enhancer](#) for the next 11 weeks, and extends programs expanding unemployment eligibility and lengthening the duration of benefits. The relief bill also provides \$1.7 billion in tax credits for employers providing paid leave.

### **Direct Relief Payments**

The package includes direct relief payments of \$600 per adult and \$600 per child under the age of 16. Payments will begin to phase out when individual adjusted gross income exceeds \$75,000, when head-of-household income exceeds \$112,500, and when income for married couples filing jointly exceeds \$150,000. Treasury Secretary Steven [Mnuchin told reporters](#) Monday that some checks could be delivered as early as next week.

### **Food Purchasing and Processor Support**

The package provides a total of \$1.5 billion to purchase food through existing U.S. Department of Agriculture programs, including Section 32. Details are forthcoming, but a portion of this funding will also support grants or loans for small or mid-sized food processors and distributors to cover some of the costs of their COVID-19 response and endeavors to protect workers, as initially proposed in the [Food Supply Protection Act](#), which WCMA supported.

### **Dairy Donation Program**

The package includes \$400 million for an all-new [Dairy Donation Program](#), patterned off a 2018 Farm Bill pilot program for milk donations. This new program will reimburse dairy processors for dairy products donated to food banks and other feeding assistance programs, so long as the processor has a plan in place with the food bank or program for product donation and distribution.

### **Other Nutrition Assistance Programs**

The package includes a 15 percent increase in the monthly allowance for recipients of Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through June 30, 2021. It directs \$400 million in the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) through September 30, 2021, with up to 20 percent of those funds eligible for use in commodity distribution. It also directly provides \$13 million to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

### **Agricultural Aid**

The package holds \$13 billion in agricultural aid, including a third round of payments under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. Up to \$3 billion would be directed to cattle producers, contract livestock and dairy farmers forced to euthanize animals due to processing disruptions. Small and mid-size dairy producers also would receive supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage payments.

A [summary of all nutrition and agricultural aids](#) in the COVID-19 package is available from the House Agricultural Committee.

### **Pandemic Provisions**

The plan would direct \$8 billion to COVID-19 vaccine distribution and \$20 billion to ensure Americans can get the vaccine for free. It directs \$20 billion to states for COVID-19 testing and tracing campaigns.

### **Other Key Provisions**

The COVID-19 relief package also offers \$82 billion in school aid, with \$54 billion for K-12 schools and \$23 billion for higher education, \$25 billion in rental assistance, \$10 billion in child care support,

and \$7 billion to expand rural broadband access. It extends the moratorium on evictions.

For more on the relief package, see these news articles:

- *The Hill*: [Congress passes \\$2.3T coronavirus relief, government funding deal](#)
  - *Reuters*: [After months of inaction, U.S. Congress approves \\$892 billion COVID-19 relief package](#)
  - *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*: [Wisconsin Republicans vote against coronavirus relief plan, with Ron Johnson joining five other senators opposing bill](#)
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## Evers Offers Compromise COVID-19 Bill

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers shared a [pared-back COVID-19 bill](#) on Monday, calling on Republicans leading the Senate and Assembly to [act "without delay"](#) to approve it. The proposal, which comes one month after he introduced a more ambitious - and more controversial - plan, would allow pharmacy students to administer the COVID-19 vaccine, ensure SeniorCare could cover vaccine costs, extend unemployment insurance call center hours, and grant the Joint Finance Committee more authority to move state funds to meet public health expenses.

Evers also shared a [second COVID-19 proposal](#) Monday which would direct \$500 million in state monies to cover the costs of COVID-19 testing and tracing, and provide additional small business grants.

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## Coronavirus Headline News

### Dairy Industry

- *Spectrum News*: [Dry ice producers confident they can still supply dairy industry with COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#)
- *WIZM-AM*: [A look at how the pandemic impacted consumer dairy demands and future paths for the industry](#)

### Wisconsin

- *WISC-TV*: [‘This is unacceptable’: Wisconsin receives nearly 15K fewer doses of COVID-19 vaccine than expected](#)
- *Racine Journal Times*: [Wisconsin receiving 14,625 fewer Pfizer vaccine doses in first round of distribution than expected](#)
- *WBAY-TV*: [Wisconsin to receive first Moderna vaccine shipment this week](#)
- *WMTV-TV*: [Wisconsin reports second fewest new cases of COVID-19 since September](#)
- *WSAW-TV*: [CDC issues new guidance on COVID-19 vaccine for people with allergies](#)
- *WLUK-TV*: [Wisconsin Restaurant Association: 46 percent of restaurants could close until pandemic passes](#)

### National/International

- *CNBC*: [U.S. slashed vaccine numbers for several states due to confusion over FDA requirement](#)
  - *MarketWatch*: [U.S. COVID-19 cases, deaths and hospitalizations fall again, as vaccine reinforcements are coming](#)
  - *NPR*: [Vaccines are coming, but the U.S. still needs more testing to stop the surge](#)
  - *FOX News*: [U.S. deaths in 2020 top 3 million, by far the most ever counted](#)
  - *CNN*: [Pfizer and Moderna testing their vaccine against UK variant](#)
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## 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](#) 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](mailto:jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org) or 608-225-7130
- WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney: [rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org) or 608-386-3012

## ADVOCACY



# DBIIA

## Dairy Business Innovation Alliance

### Congress Approves \$22M for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives



As part of the omnibus federal spending package approved last night, U.S. Senator Tammy [Baldwin has secured \\$22 million in support](#) for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives in Fiscal Year 2021, a funding increase of \$2 million over the previous year.

WCMA, in partnership with the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, leads one of three regional DBII centers. The WCMA/CDR project, called the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#), provides direct-to-business grants to dairy farmers and processors in Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois, and offers free workshops and consultative services to grow the dairy industry.



# POLICY COMMITTEE

## Join in WCMA Advocacy Meetings January 11



Plan to [join WCMA for virtual meetings](#) with both of the Wisconsin State Legislature's agricultural committee chairs on Monday, January 11 from 9:45-11:00 a.m. (CST). The meeting will begin with a brief review of WCMA members' policy priorities, followed by discussions with [Senator-Elect Joan Ballweg \(R-Markesan\)](#) from 10:00-10:30 a.m. and with [Representative Gary Tauchen \(R-Bonduel\)](#) from 10:30-11:00 a.m. Your perspective is essential to productive and impactful advocacy!

REGISTER TO JOIN

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### Apply Now for WDATCP Dairy Processor Grants



Wisconsin dairy processors may [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](#) worth a total of \$200,000.

### FDA Extends Traceability Rule Comment Period

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has extended the comment period for its proposed rule, ["Requirements for Additional Traceability Records for Certain Foods"](#) through February 22. The proposed rule would require food processors on the Food Traceability List to establish and maintain records containing Key Data Elements in order to prevent and mitigate foodborne illness outbreaks. Comments may be submitted through the [Federal Register Journal](#).

### 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.

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

- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Dairy industry, environmental groups seek common ground on clean water](#)
- *Milwaukee BizTimes*: [Shrinking labor force helps cut Wisconsin unemployment to five percent](#)
- *WFRV-TV*: [Online sales of Wisconsin cheese skyrocket in 2020](#)
- *WXPR-AM*: [Dairy and environmental groups hope to improve water quality](#)

### National/International

- *Dairy Herd Management*: [Milk markets dive as milk production increases three percent over 2019](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [International demand looks to keep up](#)

## 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](https://www.cheeseexpoGO.org)**.

The screenshot displays the virtual exhibit interface for the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association. At the top, the association's logo and name are visible, along with a 'REGISTER HERE' button. Below the header, there is a 'Sponsor' section with a 'VIEW SPONSOR' button. The main content area includes a 'Description' section with a paragraph about the association's role in the industry, a video player showing a person in a cheese factory, and a 'Links' section with URLs for the website and Facebook page. A 'Conversations' sidebar on the right shows a chat window with a user named Kirsten Stralinger. Below the chat, there are sections for 'Files' (listing '2020 WCMA Membership Directory' and '2020-2021 WCMA Board of Directors') and 'Video' (featuring 'Our Year in Review 2019-2020'). At the bottom, there is a 'What is your favorite WCMA hosted event to attend?' poll and a 'NEW!' badge. The entire exhibit is set against a blue background with the text 'SAMPLE EXHIBIT' at the bottom.

## EDUCATION



## WCMA Opens Registration for Leadership Trainings

WCMA has 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.

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## 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](http://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.

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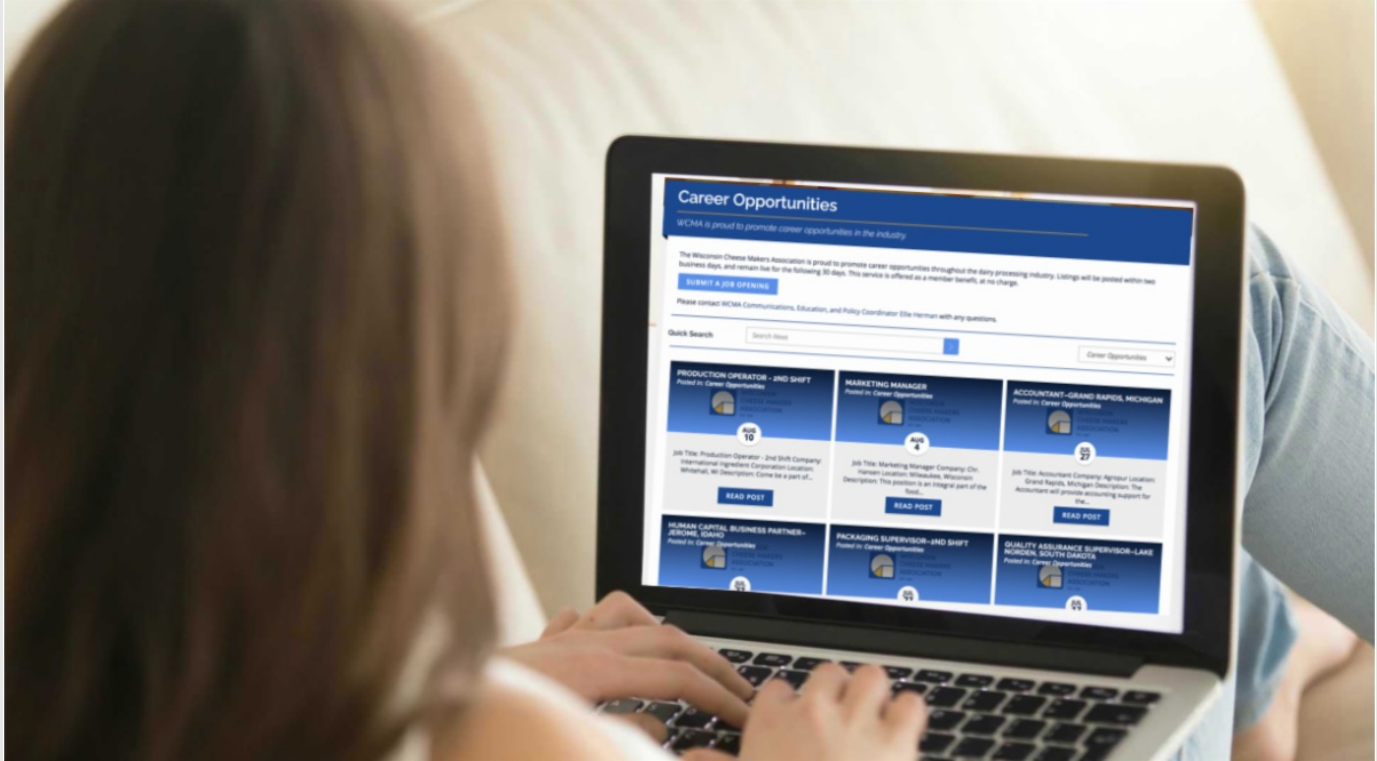
## CWCBA Now Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Central Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association is accepting [applications](#) for two educational scholarships worth \$1,500 each. Applications are due March 31, 2021.

One scholarship will be awarded to an applicant from a cheese or butter plant member of CWCBA enrolled full-time in a program of study toward any degree with an emphasis given to students pursuing a degree in dairy science, food science or a related degree. The second scholarship will be awarded to a student from a member company supplying equipment, ingredients, services, etc. who is enrolled full-time in a program of study toward any degree with an emphasis given to students pursuing a degree in dairy science, food science, or related degree.

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**WORKFORCE**



## Career Opportunities Featured on WCMA Jobs Board

WCMA's [online jobs board](#) is featuring 13 new industry career opportunities this week from member companies Agropur and Westby Cooperative Creamery. Check out listings for content writers, cheesemaking supervisors, electromechanical technicians, 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](#)

# Merry Christmas + Happy Holidays!



From all your friends at



## Notice of Holiday Office, Communications Plan

Please note that WCMA offices will be closed on Thursday, December 24 and Friday, December 25, in observance of holidays, and no COVID-19 member bulletin will be distributed on Thursday, December 24.

We wish you a happy and safe Christmas, and thank you for your ongoing support of WCMA!

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## Welcome New Member

This week, WCMA welcomes new supplier member [Nasco Sampling/Whirl-Pak](#).

WCMA membership includes more than 650 companies operating in 39 states and around the world, employing tens of thousands of people.

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## Sign Up Colleagues for WCMA E-Newsletters

Thanks for subscribing to WCMA's weekly electronic newsletter! 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.

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WisCheeseMakers.org

