



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



SIGNATURE EVENTS



Dave Buholzer
Klondike Cheese
Company



Dave Leonhardi
WMMB/Nasonville Dairy



Mike Pederson
WI Department of
Agriculture, Trade and
Consumer Protection



Ted Jacoby Jr.
T.C. Jacoby & Company



Fritz Leeman
Brewster Cheese



Gary Starkson
APT



Reda Yacoub
Solecta Inc./Kelley Supply



Roger Schroeder
Agropur



Richard Wold
Associated Milk
Producers Inc.



Dr. Vikram Mistry
South Dakota State
University



Dr. Andy Novakovic
Cornell University

WCMA Announces Industry Leaders to be Honored at 2024 CheeseExpo



Eleven dairy leaders will be **recognized for their outstanding contributions** to the dairy processing industry during the WCMA Recognition Breakfast exclusively sponsored by dsm-firmenich at **CheeseExpo** on April 18, 2024.

[VIEW HONOREES](#)

WCMA has selected honorees in six categories, each winner a trailblazer in their career:

- **WCMA Life Member Award:** Dave Buholzer of Klondike Cheese Company
- **WCMA Luminary Award:** Dave Leonhardi of Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board/Nasonville Dairy and Mike Pederson of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- **WCMA Cheese Industry Champion Award:** Ted Jacoby Jr. of T.C. Jacoby & Company and Fritz Leeman of Brewster Cheese
- **WCMA Distinguished Service Award:** Gary Starkson of APT and Reda Yacoub of

Solecta Inc./Kelley Supply

- **WCMA Vanguard Award:** Roger Schroeder of Agropur and Richard Wold of Associated Milk Producers Inc.
- **WCMA Babcock Award:** Dr. Vikram Mistry of South Dakota State University and Dr. Andy Novakovic of Cornell University

Congratulations to all honorees! Join friends, colleagues, and peers next April in Milwaukee to celebrate these professionals and explore all of CheeseExpo's unbeatable networking and educational opportunities. Visit CheeseExpo.org by January 30 to receive our best available registration rates. Questions about CheeseExpo may be directed to the [WCMA Events team](#).

REGISTER NOW

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE CONTEST

MARCH 5-7, 2024

**Enter World Championship Cheese Contest by
January 26**



Visit WorldChampionCheese.org by January 26 to enter the 2024 World Championship Cheese Contest! Join dairy product manufacturers worldwide in gaining expert technical feedback, reaching new potential customers, and competing for the venerated title of World Champion Cheese. Thousands of entries in 142 classes of cheese, butter, yogurt, and dry dairy ingredients will be evaluated by an internationally renowned judging team March 5-7 in Madison, Wisconsin.

SUBMIT ENTRIES

INDUSTRY UPDATES



WDATCP Offers \$27 Million in Food Infrastructure Grants

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is accepting applications now until 5:00 p.m. (CT) Wednesday, March 6 for the [Wisconsin Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure \(RFSI\) Program](#).

The program aims to expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally- and regionally-produced foods, including dairy products. Funding for the grants is provided through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A total of \$27 million will be awarded through a competitive grant process. The RFSI Program has two grant tracks: the Infrastructure Grant and the Equipment-Only Grant. Applicants may only apply for one track.

Infrastructure Grants will range from \$100,000 to \$3 million. This grant can fund:

- Capital investments such as construction, equipment (e.g. delivery vehicles, frozen or refrigerated storage, value-added food processing equipment, or other equipment for middle-of-the food supply chain activities);
- Building renovations;
- Facility design or engineering;
- Staff time;
- Modernizing systems (e.g. tracking, storage, information technology, etc.);
- Plan development (e.g. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plan); and
- Market development.

A match is required for Infrastructure Grants and starts at 50% of the total project cost. However, if the main applicant qualifies as underserved, the match requirement will be reduced to 25% of the total project cost.

Equipment-Only Grants will range from \$10,000 to \$99,999. This grant can only fund equipment, per the examples provided above. Equipment may be new, used, or refurbished. No match is required for Equipment-Only Grants.

An informational webinar about the RFSI program will be held at 11:00 a.m. (CT) on

Friday, January 9. [Registration is required](#). Questions about the program can be emailed to RFSI@wisconsin.gov.



Join Wisconsin Pavilion at Gulfood 2024

Wisconsin-based WCMA members may contact the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) now to exhibit in the Wisconsin Pavilion at [Gulfood](#), set for February 19-23, 2024 in Dubai. With attendees worldwide, Gulfood is the place to meet and connect with food product buyers. Members interested in participating should contact [WDATCP staff](#).

This opportunity is supported in part by funding from the [Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports](#), championed by WCMA in the past two state budget cycles.

Apply Now for ExporTech Program



The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) invites new and experienced exporters in the state to apply now for [ExporTech™](#), WEDC's export acceleration program. Over the course of three full-day sessions, CEOs, presidents and senior leaders in sales/marketing, finance, and operations join with non-competing companies to determine their top three export markets and develop an actionable, strategic plan.

ExporTech™ graduates realize between \$600,000 and \$1,000,000 in average incremental export growth one year after completing the program. WCMA members interested in participating should contact [ExporTech™ program staff](#) for more information.

This opportunity is supported in part by funding from the [Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports](#).

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin State Farmer*: [Wisconsin cheese is sure to please during the holidays](#) (Featuring WCMA members Arena Cheese and Decatur Dairy)
- *Dairy Reporter*: [Anyone for cheese? Wisconsin Cheese reveals top five trends for 2024](#)

National/International

- *Dairy Processing*: [The great alternative milk labeling debate](#)
 - *Dairy Processing*: [Future planning: Dairy processors focus on modernization](#)
 - *Deli Market News*: [Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association's Grace Atherton discusses World Championship Cheese Contest® highlights](#) (Featuring WCMA)
 - *Point Reyes Light*: [Local cheese companies win grants—and Oprah mention](#)
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MEMBERSHIP



Happy New Year from WCMA!

Please note that **WCMA offices will be closed Friday, December 29, and Monday, January 1.** We wish you a happy and safe holiday, and we look forward to serving you in the new year. Thank you for your ongoing support of WCMA!



WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications Due February 7 for \$19,000 in WCMA Student Scholarships



2023 WCMA Student Scholarship Winners

Apply by February 7 for WCMA's [annual student scholarships](#) - and mark your calendar for April 17, when a total of \$19,000 in scholarship awards will be presented at [CheeseExpo](#) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin!

Seven awards are available across three scholarships:

- The [WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship](#), open to WCMA dairy processor and manufacturer member employees and their children;
- The [WCMA Cheese Industry Supplier Student Scholarship](#), open to WCMA supplier member employees and their children; and
- The [Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship Supporting Skilled Trades in the Dairy Industry](#), open to all students attending or registered to attend a technical school in Wisconsin.

Applicants for all WCMA scholarships must supply school transcripts, a letter of recommendation, and a completed application form. Applicants will be notified of their application status in March. Full details on all WCMA scholarships are [available online](#).

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Suppliers

New WCMA supplier member [Adhesive Compounders Inc.](#) is a veteran-owned manufacturer of adhesives used in the

Visit WCMA's [online member directory](#) for more information.

EDUCATION



Limited Space Remaining in WCMA Front-Line Leadership Classes

Join the ranks of over 1,000 WCMA member employees who have sharpened their leadership skills and expanded their networks through WCMA's popular [Front-Line Leadership Trainings](#)! These courses fill quickly, so register now to secure your space.

SIGN UP ONLINE

Each class is a one-day offering, running from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (CT). All Front-Line Leadership classes are offered a la carte and may be taken in any order. Here's a look at our fully virtual offerings in the coming months:

- Part A will focus on developing essential leadership skills.
 - [January 23](#) - **Two seats left!**
 - [January 24](#)
- Part B will provide strategies to help supervisors boost staff performance.
 - [February 26](#)
 - [February 29](#)
- Part C will help trainees learn to foster a collaborative team mindset in their workplace.
 - [April 2](#) - **Three seats left!**
 - [April 3](#)

Questions? Please contact [WCMA Membership Director Sara Schmidt](#).



Join New WCMA Safety Trainings

Limited space remains available in a series of all-new safety trainings - designed with input from WCMA's Health & Safety Group - to help support dairy processors' efforts to keep their team members safe on the job.

Train the Safety Trainer

WCMA's interactive **Train the Safety Trainer Course** will equip the industry's safety trainers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively communicate safety expectations and protocols for maximum compliance.

Taught in a **convenient virtual format on January 30** by instructors from Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) with significant experience in dairy processing plants, this interactive class covers best practices for design and delivery methods used by successful workforce safety trainers.

For \$219 per person, participants will come away with a wealth of new skills and strategies, a packet of training materials, and a certificate of completion from Chippewa Valley Technical College and WCMA that they and their employer can retain as a record of instruction.

Each class is limited to just 24 participants, so sign up today!

**REGISTER
NOW**

Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors

For safety education geared toward all dairy processing employees, register your team members for **Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors**.

Offered six times in the coming year both **in-person and virtually**, **Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors** will teach attendees about their rights; employer responsibilities; and how to identify, abate, and avoid job-related hazards. The curriculum concentrates on the key focus areas of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's ongoing Local Emphasis Program for food processors: machine guarding, lockout/tag out, prevention of slips, trips, and falls, chemical controls, and control of hazardous energy.

In-person classes cost \$179, including lunch and snacks. Virtual sessions are offered at just \$149. These classes are capped at 24 attendees, so don't wait!

**REGISTER
NOW**

Register by January 3 for 2024 NCCIA Pasteurization and Sanitation Short Course



Registration is open now for North Central Cheese Industries Association's next [Basic Milk Pasteurization and Dairy Plant Sanitation Short Course](#), set for January 9-10 at the University of Minnesota. This course is limited to 30 participants, and registration closes on January 3. Please contact [NCCIA staff](#) to sign up.

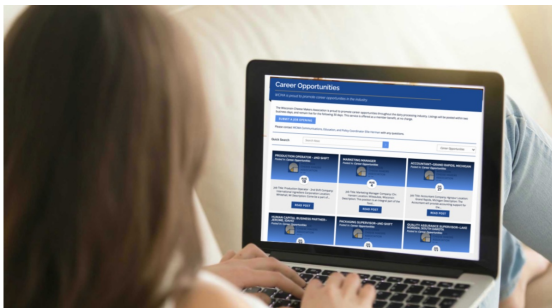
Additional Industry Educational Opportunities

WCMA is pleased to share opportunities for industry training and enrichment. Here's a look at upcoming offerings from WCMA partners:

- On-Demand:
 - [Introduction to Food Safety Principles \(English and Spanish\)](#) - Cornell University
 - [Online Dairy Science and Sanitation \(English and Spanish\)](#) - Cornell University
 - [Artisan Dairy Food Safety Coaching](#) - Cornell University
 - [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Good Manufacturing Practices in Food Safety](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors](#) - North Carolina State University
 - [Food Safety Basics For Artisan Cheesemakers](#) - North Carolina State University

WORKFORCE

Post Career Opportunities on Free, Online WCMA Jobs Board



Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](#) today to share your career opportunities on WCMA's free online jobs board! Members can post up to 10 job openings per month. Each posting is published within two business days and remains live on our website for 30 days after submission.

Have questions about the Jobs Board? Please contact [WCMA staff](#).

SHARE YOUR OPENINGS

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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