

# WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest  
in dairy processing

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## EVENTS & CONNECTION

### WCMA Announces CheeseExpo Keynote Speaker and Seminars



Tom Tench, CEO of Glanbia Dairy Nutrition, will offer the Opening Keynote address on Wednesday, April 15 at 2026 CheeseExpo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, igniting [two days of educational seminars](#) to complement the show's largest exhibit floor ever. Special early registration rates are available now at [CheeseExpo.org](https://CheeseExpo.org) for the event, hosted by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research (CDR).

**REGISTER NOW**

Following the Opening Keynote on Wednesday, April 15, WCMA and leading industry education partners will offer three concurrent seminars, focused on the latest ideas and innovations tailored to dairy processors:

- Leveraging Policy Change for Dairy Business Growth
- Cutting Edge Cheese Research
- Cutting Edge Food Safety: Environmental Monitoring & Pathogen Research

On Thursday, April 16, CheeseExpo attendees can choose from three additional sessions, covering a fresh slate of hot topics:

- Navigating the New Milk: Milk Components and Profitability Through the Supply Chain
- High Protein Yogurts and Beverages
- Dairy Sustainability: Evolving Conversations, Persistent Demand, and Strategic ROI

View the complete seminar lineup and register today at [CheeseExpo.org](https://CheeseExpo.org).

### Early Contest Entry Savings End Friday, Dec. 12

It's the final week to save on entries in the [World Championship Cheese Contest](#)! Enter through Friday, December 12 and [save \\$15 per entry](#) on your participation in



the world's premier technical dairy product competition. After December 12, all submissions cost \$95 per entry. All entries must be submitted by January 30, 2026.

**ENTER NOW**

# NEWS

## Trump Administration Considering Exiting USMCA



Following three days of hearings in Washington, D.C. last week, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative must now prepare a report to deliver to Congress in January outlining its position on an extension of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). According to [reporting from Politico and other outlets](#), U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer says he's spoken with President Donald Trump about the possibility of ending USMCA and instead negotiating separate trade deals with Canada and Mexico.

Both markets are key to the strength of the American dairy industry. In 2024, U.S. dairy exports reached \$8.2 billion, with Mexico buying \$2.47 billion and Canada \$1.14 billion worth of products — together accounting for roughly 44 percent of all U.S. dairy export value. WCMA will continue to advocate for members' export interest, as detailed in its member-developed [trade policy platform](#).

## WCMA, CDR Award \$4.6 Million in DBIA Grants



*Click the "Play" button to hear how DBIA grant funding has helped WCMA member Hidden Springs Creamery grow and strengthen their business!*

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), administered by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research, has [awarded \\$4.6 million in grants](#) to 42 dairy companies and cooperatives. The group includes 15 WCMA members: Burnett Dairy Cooperative, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Foremost Farms USA, Harmony Cheese, Henning Cheese, Hidden Springs Creamery, Marieke Gouda, Moulin Rouge, Moundview Dairy, Nordic Creamery, Organic Valley – CROPP Cooperative, Pine River Dairy, Uplands Cheese, Westby Cooperative Creamery, Weyauwega Star Dairy, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars. A complete list of grant recipients and project summaries is [available online](#).



## WCMA Members Receive Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grants



*Click the "Play" button to learn more about the impact of Wisconsin's Dairy Processor Grants on businesses like WCMA member Uplands Cheese!*

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers and the state's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection [announced last week](#) that they are awarding \$600,000 in grant funding - an increase championed by WCMA - to 13 Wisconsin dairy businesses. Among the awardees are 12 WCMA members: Actus Nutrition, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Hidden Springs Creamery, Hill Valley Dairy, Marieke Gouda, Organic Valley - CROPP Cooperative, Pine River Dairy, Pine River Pre-Pack, Renard's Cheese/Rosewood Dairy, Uplands Cheese, Westby Cooperative Creamery, and Widmers Cheese Cellars. Congratulations to all! [READ MORE...](#)

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## Join Wisconsin-Mexico Trade Mission in March



WCMA members operating in Wisconsin can register now for a [trade mission to Mexico City and Puerto Vallarta](#), hosted March 2-6 by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Food Export. This charcuterie-focused mission offers a valuable opportunity to build relationships and expand your international reach, featuring a chef-crafted display of products during a sensory workshop where buyers will explore ideal food and beverage pairings. Early-bird registration is open through December 19. [LEARN MORE...](#)

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## ARIP Grant Applications Due December 15



Applications close December 15 for the latest round of funding through the Wisconsin [Agricultural Roads Improvement Program \(ARIP\)](#), proudly championed by WCMA. ARIP grants equip local governments to repair and rebuild the vital agricultural roads that keep milk, dairy products, and other goods moving safely and efficiently. Many WCMA members are already seeing the impact of their ARIP projects, with upgraded roadways improving hauling efficiency and strengthening operations around their facilities. [READ MORE...](#)

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## USDA Awards Dairy Product Contracts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has [awarded contracts](#) to purchase a total of over 4 million pounds of processed cheese from WCMA members Bongards Creameries and Great Lakes Cheese, to be used in federal food distribution programs. Information on how to become an approved USDA vendor is [available online](#).

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## Headlines

### Wisconsin

- WITI-TV: [Packers' Matthew Golden, Sargento present Hunger Task Force donation](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)
- Milwaukee Community Journal: [Baldwin says Trump's bailout is no fix for trade war damage to Wisconsin farmers](#)

### National & Global

- MLive: [Big Michigan dairy firm eyes new milk, cottage cheese markets with \\$122M expansion](#)
  - ABC News: [Shredded cheeses voluntarily recalled from Target, Walmart and more due to possible metal contamination](#)
  - Dairy Processing: [Artisanal varieties comprise 12 Days of Cheese collection](#) (Featuring WCMA members Land O' Lakes - Vermont Creamery and Marieke Gouda)
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## EDUCATION

### Sign Up Now for 2026 WCMA Safety Trainings



Registration is now open for the 2026 offerings of WCMA's popular safety trainings for dairy processing employees! In WCMA's in-person [Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors](#), participants will learn about their rights, employer responsibilities, and how to identify, abate, and avoid job-related hazards. WCMA's virtual [Train the Safety Trainer](#) course will equip industry safety trainers with the knowledge, skills, and strategies. Sponsorships are also available for these trainings, with high-visibility benefits including advance and day-of recognition and access to class lists. [READ MORE...](#)



## FEATURED: SUSTAINABILITY



Learn more about WCMA's programs and member services in this special rotating section! This week, we spotlight WCMA's sustainability offerings and related news.

## Explore the Shifting Landscape of Sustainability at CheeseExpo



[Register now](#) for CheeseExpo and gain access to an engaging conversation focused on dairy sustainability. In a new seminar, "Dairy Sustainability: Evolving Conversations, Persistent Demand, and Strategic ROI," WCMA will explore the shifting language of sustainability, re-prioritized expectations, and the increasing emphasis on the link between sustainability initiatives and tangible business ROI. [READ MORE...](#)

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## Save the Date for WCMA Dairy Sustainability Group Meeting



Mark your calendar for the next hybrid meeting of [WCMA's Dairy Sustainability Group](#), set for Wednesday, February 4 at WCMA's offices in Madison, Wisconsin. All WCMA members are welcome to join this engaging gathering for networking with industry peers, the latest news and updates in dairy sustainability, and informative presentations on key topics. [Reserve your space now](#) and watch this newsletter for updates on agenda topics and speaker information.

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## WCMA Members Learn to Track, Improve GHG Impact in Workshop



Thanks go to all who joined WCMA's second annual sustainability workshop, "Carbon Clarity: How to Measure, Benchmark, and Improve your Company's GHG Impact." The two-day, in-person session was led by WCMA and experts from The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, Dairy Management Inc., and Harbor Environmental (a Terracon company), with guest speakers from Idaho Milk Products and the National Milk Producers Federation. Attendees focused on the process of determining their business' GHG inventory, establishing emissions baselines, and how to track and report progress in alignment with existing frameworks.

Interested in participating in future WCMA sustainability workshops? Contact [WCMA Director of Sustainability & Grants Danica Nilsestuen](#).

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