



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

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news@wischeesemakers.org



NEWS

Trump Signs Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act



WCMA is proud to announce the federal [Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act](#) was signed into law last week by the president. WCMA strongly advocated for this legislation, which allows schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to offer whole and 2% milk alongside skim and low-fat options. The law expands student access to nutritious, high-quality dairy products and aligns with the newly released [2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), which recognize full-fat dairy as an important part of a healthy diet. [READ MORE...](#)

WCMA Wins for Wisconsin Dairy on School Lunches, PFAS



WCMA actively monitors and advocates on legislation that directly impacts members' operations - including a host of notable bills now advancing in the Wisconsin Legislature. Today, we share updates on just a few of those successful advocacy efforts, and a look at what's on the horizon as lawmakers seek to finish their work for 2026. To receive regular updates on state and federal legislation that could impact your business, join WCMA's active, engaged Policy Committee by contacting [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 226](#) would prohibit certain ingredients in free and reduced-price meals served by school boards and independent charter schools. WCMA successfully advocated for the removal of titanium dioxide from the list of banned ingredients. The bill passed the Assembly last week and is currently awaiting scheduling for a vote in the Senate.

[**AB 131**](#) and its companion bill, [**Senate Bill \(SB\) 128**](#), aim to ensure that responsibility is appropriately assigned to parties that intentionally manufactured or used PFAS in production. WCMA worked with the bill authors and Gov. Tony Evers' office on an amended version of the bill that clearly protects food processors - including those in dairy - and their third-party vendors from liability. The bill will be heard in committee tomorrow, Wednesday, January 21, taken up in the Assembly on Thursday, and is expected in the Senate next week.

[**AB 664**](#) would require schools to serve and cook with butter and prohibit the use of margarine as a substitute, while including exemptions to accommodate students with specific dietary needs. The bill was heard in the Assembly Committee on Agriculture last week.

[**AB 283**](#) would expand the Business Development Task Credit to include additional employer-supported childcare options. The bill is currently awaiting scheduling for a vote in the Assembly.



Make an Impact at WCMA State Advocacy Day

Sign up now for [WCMA's Advocacy Day](#) on Wednesday, February 11, from 10:45 a.m.–3:30 p.m. in Madison, Wisconsin. This action-packed event offers a unique opportunity to engage directly with policymakers and help shape solutions to key industry issues.

The day will begin with a dynamic panel featuring legislative leaders from the agriculture committees, followed by direct conversations with lawmakers at the State Capitol on WCMA's legislative priorities. Advocacy Day will conclude with a visit to the Governor's Office, offering attendees the chance to connect directly with Governor Tony Evers.

Don't miss this meaningful day of dialogue and advocacy to help strengthen the dairy industry, [register now!](#) Thanks go to [Christensen Group Insurance](#) and [CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley](#) for their generous sponsorship of this meeting.

USDA to Host Free HPAI Biosecurity Webinar January 28



Registration is open now for a [free U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) webinar](#) on Wednesday, January 28 at 1:30 p.m. (CT), focused on [biosecurity best practices for dairy producers](#) to help prevent the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The webinar will cover practical steps to protect animal health, and financial incentives for dairy operations to enhance biosecurity measures. [READ MORE...](#)

USDA Seeks Cheddar, String Cheese, Process Cheese



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued solicitations for a variety of cheese products to be used in domestic food distribution programs:

- [Cheddar and Mozzarella String Cheese](#) – Due January 29 at 1:00 p.m. (CT)
- [Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity \(IDIQ\) Cheddar Cheese](#) – Due January 30 at 1:00 p.m. (CT)
- [IDIQ Processed Cheese Products](#) – Due January 30 at 1:00 p.m. (CT)

As a reminder, effective September 18, 2025 USDA also released an [updated Master Solicitation for Domestic Commodity Procurements](#), which provides general guidance for potential bidders.

[READ MORE...](#)

WI Ag Export Council Hosts Webinar Jan. 21 on Risk Management



Wisconsin dairy exporters can [register now for a free webinar](#) hosted by the Wisconsin Agricultural Export Advisory Council tomorrow, January 21 at 9:00 a.m. (CT), focused on ["Export Growth in a Tariff-Driven World: Managing Risk Without Losing Momentum"](#). Roxanne Baumann, global business strategist and architect of Wisconsin's ExporTech™ program, will discuss why global revenue growth remains essential, how to mitigate tariff exposure in the short term, and what strategic shifts are required if trade barriers persist. [READ MORE...](#)

Headlines

Wisconsin

- WFRV-TV: [Public invited to visit World Championship Cheese Contest in Wisconsin this March](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- WISC-TV: [Wisconsin dairy farmers celebrate return of whole milk to school cafeterias](#)

National & Global

- BBC: [Europe to suspend approval of U.S. tariffs deal](#)
- FoodBev Media: [Bel Group invests €16.7m to double cheese production capacity in Vietnam](#)
- Red River Farm Network: [MN agriculture faces ripple effects from immigration enforcement](#)
- CityBiz: [Tropical Cheese names Ivonne Balsinde Chief Growth Officer](#)
- Yahoo! News: [The global brand behind store-bought Cracker Barrel cheese](#) (Featuring WCMA member Lactalis American Group)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Final Days for Best Rates on CheeseExpo Registration



Just **one week** remains to secure the best available rates on most registrations for CheeseExpo! [Register at CheeseExpo.org](https://CheeseExpo.org) now through January 27 to save 20 percent on your ticket to the dairy processing industry's must-see event of the year.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Set SMART Goals at WCMA Dairy Sustainability Group Meeting



Register now to connect with peers and expand your knowledge at the [next hybrid meeting of WCMA's Dairy Sustainability Group](#) on Wednesday, February 4, from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT). This [engaging gathering](#) offers an overview of attainable sustainability goals for small to medium-sized companies, along with insights from fellow WCMA members on how they set those goals and successfully implemented their plans. Attendees will enjoy a networking lunch, small- and large-group discussions, and an update from the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. Thanks go to [BIOIONIX](#) for their generous sponsorship of this meeting. [READ MORE...](#)

EDUCATION

Learn, Connect at March 12 Food & Dairy Joint Industry Meeting



Join the WCMA Technology Committee, Midwest Food Products Association, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for the [Annual Food & Dairy Joint Industry Meeting](#) on March 12 in Madison, Wisconsin. This unique meeting pairs regulators and industry professionals in talks designed to advance the technology and regulation of environmental systems in dairy and food. WCMA will apply for continuing education credits for this meeting. [READ MORE...](#)



For more educational opportunities from WCMA and our partners, visit:

WisCheeseMakers.org/Events

FEATURED: FOOD SAFETY

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

Mindy Brashears Rejoins USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service



Dr. Mindy Brashears was [sworn in on January 14](#) as head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), a position she also held from 2020-2021 under the first Trump Administration. Brashears is a professor of food microbiology and food safety in the department of animal and food sciences at Texas Tech University and the director for the International Center for Food Industry Excellence. [READ MORE...](#)

WHO Updates Foodborne Illness Outbreak Manuals



The World Health Organization last week [released updated manuals](#) for national authorities, designed to strengthen foodborne illness surveillance and response at all stages - including the investigation of food processing plants. The documents offer practical examples, strategies, and templates for food safety regulators to help improve the quality and timeliness of their response to foodborne illness outbreaks. [READ MORE...](#)

Mark Your Calendar for Spring Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting



Make plans now to join WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research for the next [hybrid meeting of the Dairy Food Safety Alliance](#) on Wednesday, May 27, from 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CT). This meeting, open to all interested dairy farmers, manufacturers, and processors, includes a tour of Kerry Group's Beloit, Wisconsin location and networking lunch for in-person attendees, as well as an afternoon of informative presentations for both in-person and virtual participants. [READ MORE...](#)

Sign Up Now for PCQI Course at Center for Dairy Research



Registration is open now for a newly-updated [Preventive Controls for Human Food \(PCQI\) Course](#), administered by the Center for Dairy Research. This course features interactive class exercises, an extensive review of food safety plans, and a dairy emphasis. Completion of the course is one way to meet the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's requirement for a Preventive Controls Qualified Individual under federal regulations. [READ MORE...](#)

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