



# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## SIGNATURE EVENTS



Click the "Play" button to hear what it's like to experience the **thrill of a win** at the World Championship Cheese Contest!

## Final Days to Enter 2024 World Championship Cheese Contest

Just days remain to enter the 2024 World Championship Cheese Contest. Visit [WorldChampionCheese.org](https://WorldChampionCheese.org) by Friday, January 26 to join this prestigious competition, offering valuable technical feedback, increased brand exposure, and the chance to win the coveted title of World Champion Cheese.

**ENTER NOW**

Entries of cheese, butter, yogurt, and dry dairy ingredients may be submitted across 142 distinct categories for just \$90 per entry.

All products will be evaluated by a team of skilled technical judges March 5-7 at the Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Starting from a maximum possible 100 points, judges will make deductions for defects found



related to flavor, body and texture, salt, color, finish, and packaging. Complete entry details can be found in the [2024 Contest Entry Kit](#).

[DOWNLOAD ENTRY KIT](#)

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#).



## Deadline Today for CheeseExpo Sponsorships

A limited amount of high-visibility [sponsorships and advertising opportunities](#) are available to market your company to the global dairy processing community at the World Championship Cheese Contest and [CheeseExpo](#), North America's premier event for cheese, butter, and whey processors. Don't wait: sponsorships and advertisements close TODAY, Tuesday, January 23!

Support outstanding dairy craftsmanship - and double your impact - as a [Silver](#) or [Contributor Sponsor](#) of the World Championship Cheese Contest. Winners are celebrated each year during the World Champions Awards Banquet at CheeseExpo. Your company logo will be displayed at both CheeseExpo and the Contest, held March 5-7 in Madison, Wisconsin. **Just three Silver and two Contributor spaces remain - act now to secure yours!**

[BECOME A SPONSOR](#)

Limited full-, half-, and quarter-page ad spaces are still remaining View a complete list of

sponsorship and advertising opportunities [online now](#). For more information, please contact [WCMA Events Director Caitlin Peirick](#).

## One Week Remaining for Best CheeseExpo Rates



Take advantage of the best rates on CheeseExpo registrations - only available now through January 30! [Register online now](#) to unlock access to engaging seminars, valuable networking opportunities, a sold-out exhibit floor, and exciting celebrations of industry excellence.

**SAVE NOW**

## ADVOCACY



## Connect with Lawmakers at WCMA Policy Committee Meeting & Advocacy Day

You're invited to join WCMA's open Policy Committee for an [in-person meeting](#) at the Concourse Hotel and State Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin on Tuesday, February 6 from 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CT)!

[Register now at WisCheeseMakers.org](#) to hear from federal and state lawmakers about the session ahead - and to advocate for industry priorities. Our meeting will begin with an overview of WCMA's advocacy efforts, followed by guest speakers on key federal and state topics:

- Federal funding, the Farm Bill, and the Food & Drug Administration
  - Speaker: Congressman Derrick Van Orden (WI-03)
- Strengthening Wisconsin Dairy Infrastructure
  - Speakers: Leaders from the Wisconsin Departments of Agriculture, Trade

After a networking lunch, attendees will enjoy an insightful panel discussion with legislative leaders:

- Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), Co-Chair of Joint Finance Committee
- Sen. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan), Chair of Senate Committee on Agriculture & Tourism, Member of Joint Finance Committee
- Sen. Brad Pfaff (D-Onalaska), Member of Senate Committee on Agriculture & Tourism
- Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc), Member of Joint Finance Committee
- Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo), Member of Assembly Committee on Agriculture



Sen. Howard Marklein  
(R-Spring Green)



Sen. Joan Ballweg  
(R-Markesan)



Sen. Brad Pfaff  
(D-Onalaska)



Rep. Tony Kurtz  
(R-Wonewoc)



Rep. Dave Considine  
(D-Baraboo)

WCMA staff will then brief members on current policy priorities before accompanying the group to the Wisconsin State Capitol for legislative meetings.

Additional speakers will be announced as they are confirmed. Have questions? Contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**RSVP NOW**

## Limited Sponsorships Available for WCMA Policy Committee Meeting & Advocacy Day

Looking to expand your advocacy impact? Act now to secure a [low-cost, high-visibility sponsorship](#) of WCMA's Policy Committee Meeting & Advocacy Day event. Sponsorship benefits include:

- Two complimentary registrations for your staff to attend
- Company logo on event sponsor signage and agenda
- Company logo on registration page on WisCheeseMakers.org
- Company logo in WCMA e-newsletter the week prior and the week following event, acknowledging sponsorship
- Company tag in social media posts on Facebook and Twitter the day of the event, acknowledging sponsorship

Only a few of these unique opportunities are available, so don't delay! Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) with questions.

**SECURE SPONSORSHIP**

## Federal Government Shutdown Averted

Late last week, Congress [passed another stopgap government funding bill](#) to maintain federal government



programs and operations until early March, as U.S. Senators and Representatives continue to negotiate appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024.

The agreement funds programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, and other agencies until March 1. Funding for the remainder of the federal government would expire March 8. WCMA will continue to share relevant updates as they develop.

## GRANTS



### WDATCP Accepting Applications for Food Infrastructure Grants

Wisconsin dairy manufacturers and processors have until Wednesday, March 6 at 5:00 p.m. (CT) to apply for the state's **Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI)** grant program, offering a total of \$27 million in awards.

**APPLY FOR FUNDING**

The RFSI program is all new, created to expand capacity and infrastructure for the production, processing, and distribution of locally- and regionally-produced foods, including dairy products. Funding for the grants is provided through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Businesses may apply for one of two grant tracks:

- **Infrastructure Grants** range from \$100,000 to \$3 million each. The funding can be used for building design, renovation & construction, equipment, staff time, plan development, market development, and system modernization. A match is required, and may be as low as 25 percent for applicants who qualify as underserved.
- **Equipment-Only Grants** range from \$10,000 to \$99,999 each. This funding may only be used for new, used, or refurbished equipment. No match is required for Equipment-Only Grants.

Questions can be emailed to [RFSI@wisconsin.gov](mailto:RFSI@wisconsin.gov). Members may also contact [WCMA](#)



## Learn More in Free WCMA Webinar February 13

Get an inside look at the RFSI Program and learn how to submit your best application in [a free webinar for WCMA members](#) on Tuesday, February 13 at 1:00 p.m. (CT)!

Register today and make plans to join WCMA and WDATCP staff for an informative, concise session. Bring your questions, or submit them in advance to [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).



**RSVP NOW**

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Dairy Processing:* [Platform features Sargento's social, sustainability efforts](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)
- *Dairy Processing:* [Crave Brothers' president, VP retiring](#) (Featuring WCMA member Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese)
- *WMTV-TV:* [Smile and say cheese for National Cheese Lover's Day](#) (Featuring WCMA members Burnett Dairy Cooperative, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Decatur Dairy, Hook's Cheese Company, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars)

### National/International

- *POLITICO:* [Lawmakers clash over farm bill future](#)
- *Morning Ag Clips:* [Cornell announces Dairy Processing Bootcamp](#) (Featuring WCMA member Great Lakes Cheese)
- *Dairy Foods:* [Cheese judging versus grading in cheese competitions](#)
- *Wisconsin Ag Connection:* [UW research melts borders](#)

## MEMBERSHIP



## Apply By February 9 for \$19,000 in WCMA Student Scholarships

Undergraduate, graduate, and technical students - including WCMA member employees and their children - have until February 9 to apply for WCMA's [annual student scholarships](#). On April 17, WCMA will present a total of \$19,000 in scholarship awards 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. All applicants will be notified of their application status in March. Full details on all WCMA scholarships are [available online](#). Please contact [WCMA Business Coordinator Carah Maier](#) with questions.

**APPLY NOW**

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## Limited Space Remaining in WCMA Young Professionals February Event

WCMA members under 40 can [register now](#) to join a day of networking and education at Meister Cheese in Muscoda, Wisconsin on Thursday, February 8, hosted by WCMA's

Young Professionals group.

The event kicks off at 10:00 a.m. (CT) and will include lunch, in addition to tours of the company's cheese and whey plants and wastewater treatment facility.

Registration costs just \$25 per person. Only 30 spaces are available, so sign up now!



**RSVP TODAY**

Please contact [WCMA Contest Director Kirsten Strohmenger](#) with questions.

# WELCOME



*NEW WCMA MEMBERS!*

## Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [AIT Worldwide Logistics](#) is a global transportation provider offering logistics and distribution services including customs clearance, warehouse management and white glove services to a variety of industries.



New WCMA supplier member [Central States Industries](#) provides sanitary processing equipment, maintenance, design, installation, and repair to dairy processors and other industries.

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

## EDUCATION





## WCMA Member Employees Talk Foundational Leadership Skills

WCMA applauds today's Front-Line Leadership cohort, featuring participants from Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Emmi Roth, Great Lakes Cheese, Holmen Cheese, Nelson-Jameson, Pine River Pre-Pack, Schuman Cheese, Stickney Hill Dairy, Wapsie Valley Creamery, and Winona Foods. Many thanks to their employers for investing in their continued professional growth!

### Sign Up Now for Front-Line Leadership Trainings

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](#).



The course is offered in a la carte in three parts that can be taken in any order. Part A covers essential leadership skills, while Part B offers strategies to boost staff performance. Part C helps participants learn to cultivate high-performing, positive teams. Space is available now for classes in February and April.

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



# WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

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## Research Recap: Identifying Dairy Export Barriers

January 9, 2023

### Watch Free WCMA Export Webinar On-Demand

View WCMA's [latest webinar online now](#) for a deep dive into the barriers dairy exporters face, and what it means for the future. Thanks go to our featured speaker, [Chuck Nicholson](#) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation used during this webinar, as well as helpful contacts and resources, are [available online to logged-in WCMA members](#).

Have questions or ideas for future webinars? Please contact [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).



### Registration Now Open for UW-River Falls Short Courses

Dairy manufacturers and processors can [sign up now](#) for short courses offered beginning in February at the new Wuethrich Family/Grassland Dairy Center of Excellence at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UW-RF). Course topics include Hazard Analysis of

## VIEW COURSES

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## 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:

- February 12-April 22: [Certificate in Dairy Processing](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- February 22-23: [Short Course - Pasteurization](#) - UW-River Falls
- March 4-8: [Short Course - Cheesemaking](#) - UW-River Falls
- March 19-21: [Cheese Grading & Evaluation](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 22: [Cheese Judging](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- April 3-4: [Cheesemaking Fundamentals](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- May 7-9: [Advanced Cheesemaking: American Varieties](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- 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
  - [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

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## WORKFORCE



# WCMA WAGE & WORKFORCE SURVEY

## Complete WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey by March 1

Participate now through Friday, March 1 in the [2024 WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey](#) to gain insight on the latest industry trends in wages, benefits, and training. This free, annual online survey helps WCMA compile critical data employers need to successfully attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive labor market. Thanks to member feedback, this year's survey features additional careers including EHS positions, comptroller, and supply chain analyst.

Members are encouraged to [review the questions](#) before beginning the survey, as responses may not be saved if the online form is closed while in progress.

All responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Survey respondents will receive a summary report from WCMA later in March containing blinded and aggregated data. Some broad, topline data (such as overall industry wage growth year-to-year) may also be used in industry advocacy efforts.

[TAKE SURVEY](#)

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

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## JOBS BOARD



### View, Share Career Opportunities on WCMA Jobs Board

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org) today to share your career openings on WCMA's online jobs board, available to members only - for free!

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.

This week, the [Jobs Board](#) features opportunities from members Agropur, Bassett Mechanical, Dairyfood USA, Foremost Farms, and Masters Gallery Foods, as well as the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Have questions or need assistance? Please contact [WCMA Business Coordinator Carah Maier](#).

**POST OPENINGS**

[WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org)  
(608) 286-1001



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