

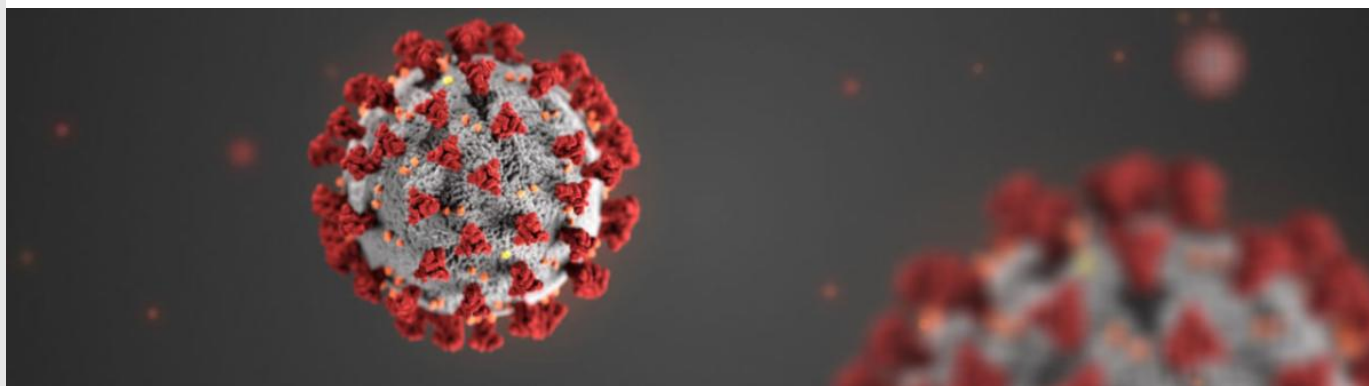


# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## COVID INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



### Shipping, Staffing Logistics Delay Vaccinations

More than two-thirds of the 15 million coronavirus vaccines shipped within the United States have gone unused, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officials said Monday, with logistical challenges including shipping delays and medical staff shortages largely to blame.

The White House and Operation Warp Speed officials had recently stated their goal was to have 20 million people receive their first shot by the end of 2020, but the CDC reported that just 2.8 million, or 1.3 percent of the U.S. population, have gotten a dose of the vaccination, thus far.

For more on nationwide vaccination delays, see the news articles linked below.

- *USA Today*: [COVID-19 vaccine doses have been delivered but are sitting on pharmacy shelves. Longer delays could prolong the pandemic](#)
- *New York Times*: [Here's why distribution of the vaccine is taking longer than expected](#)
- *KKGO-TV*: [California doctor says vaccine distribution not going as planned, doses delayed for vulnerable communities](#)
- *WCAU-TV*: [Doctor explains vaccine delays](#)

### Wisconsin Mirrors Phase 1B Vaccination Plan

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS) published preliminary information on its [Phase 1B vaccination plan](#) online on December 30, mirroring a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation to next offer the vaccine to persons over 75 years of age and non-health care essential workers, including food processing supply chain personnel. Detailed recommendations from the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee are expected within weeks.

Wisconsin is currently in Phase 1A, administering vaccine doses to the state's 320,000 health care workers and 22,000 long-term care residents. As of today, approximately 85,600 Wisconsinites had received their first of two doses. WDHS is reporting vaccination totals on a weekly basis, with updates each Tuesday afternoon, on a [webpage](#) it launched last week.

WDHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm told WCMA staff on December 18 that, at that time, she expected it to take at least until early February for everyone in Wisconsin's Phase 1A group to be vaccinated. However, Wisconsin depends on federal allocations of vaccines, with officials learning each Friday how many doses they will receive the following week. Wisconsin is currently **10th out of the 12 Midwestern states** in the number of vaccines it has been allocated per capita.

WCMA maintains open lines of communication with state officials, and will continue to keep members posted on vaccine availability and expected timetables.

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## USDA Announces Fifth Round of Food Box Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Monday announced the launch of the **fifth round** of its Farmers to Families Food Box program, with plans for \$1.5 billion in food purchases.

In this round, USDA has emphasized that other hard, semi-firm or semi-soft cheese, including but not limited to Blue, Brick, Colby, Edam, Gorgonzola, Gouda, Gruyere, Monterey, Muenster, Parmesan, Provolone and Romano are acceptable dairy products for inclusion in good boxes, in addition to cheddar and other cheeses specified in the solicitation.

Solicitations are being issued to the **240 organizations** that have previously received Basic Ordering Agreements, with contract awards to be announced on January 19. Deliveries will begin before the end of this month and run through April 2021.

USDA officials report the Farmers to Families Food Box program has distributed **132 million boxes**, or 3.3 billion meals, to Americans since the start of the pandemic.

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## SBA Urges PPP Application Prep Now

The new federal coronavirus stimulus package included \$284.5 billion for U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) forgivable loans, with most earmarked for the **Paycheck Protection Program** (PPP). SBA officials are this week urging business owners who have never received a PPP loan before or who are interested in a "second draw" of PPP monies to speak to their lender now and prepare to apply.

In order to receive a PPP "second draw" loan businesses must employ 300 or fewer employees, as opposed to the 500-employee threshold in the first round. They also must have used or will use the full amount of their first PPP loan, and demonstrate at least a 25 percent reduction in gross receipts in the first, second or third quarter of 2020, relative to the same quarter in 2019.

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## Wisconsin Assembly Fast-Tracking Coronavirus Bill

The Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Health is today hearing and voting on a bill introduced Monday aimed at addressing a number of coronavirus-related issues. **Assembly Bill 1** is being fast-tracked, with Speaker Robin Vos (R-Burlington) expecting **floor passage** on Thursday, and Senate consideration to follow. The bill includes some items negotiated by Governor Tony Evers and Republican legislative leaders, but differs on several significant points from Evers' proposals.

Most notably for business owners, the bill provides broad COVID-19 civil liability protection. While immunity does not apply if "reckless or wanton conduct" or "intentional misconduct" is involved, an entity's noncompliance with any national, state, or local order requiring closures or limited capacity is expressly protected.

The bill also limits local health orders to close or restrict capacity of businesses to control COVID-19 outbreaks for a maximum of 14 days, unless extensions are approved by votes of the local unit of government, and prohibits a health officer from mandating COVID-19 vaccinations, a practice currently allowed under state law during a state of emergency.

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# Coronavirus Headline News

## Dairy Industry

- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Despite challenges, Wisconsin farmers projected to end 2020 with higher average income](#)
- *Associated Press*: [Federal checks salvage otherwise dreadful 2020 for U.S. farms](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [The past year will leave a milk pricing legacy](#)
- *WAOW-TV*: [Dairy products become popular during pandemic](#)

## Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [COVID-19 test-positivity rate continues to rise in Wisconsin](#)
- *WLUK-TV*: [New coronavirus cases in Wisconsin on Sunday double Saturday's newly confirmed cases](#)
- *U.S. News & World Report*: [Evers administration plans to simplify unemployment claims](#)
- *WBRC-TV*: [Wisconsin resources aid families in 'child care deserts'](#)
- *WSAW-TV*: [Over 950,000 people have activated COVID-19 exposure app](#)

## National/International

- *Washington Post*: [As coronavirus death toll surpasses 350,000, Trump calls U.S. count 'far exaggerated'](#)
- *CBS News*: [U.S. COVID death toll tops 350,000 as hospitals fill up and vaccine rollout struggles to keep up](#)
- *USA Today*: [Haven't received your second stimulus yet? IRS says don't call](#)
- *KARE-TV*: [Minnesota's new COVID-19 cases rise, vaccine distribution 'on track'](#)
- *Politico*: [WHO: 2nd dose of BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine can be delayed](#)
- *CBS News*: [FDA warns U.K. plan to delay second doses of Pfizer vaccine could create "significant risk" to public health](#)

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**WCMA Salutes Critical and Essential Workers**



*Salute*  
TO THE DAIRY PROCESSING  
INDUSTRY'S CRITICAL  
& ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE

Masters Gallery Foods' dedicated Research and Development Team in Plymouth, Wisconsin provided around-the-clock grading of every vat of cheese that came through their doors.

Throughout 2021, WCMA will salute its members' essential and critical workforce, daily demonstrating their dedication to the mission of feeding the world delicious, nutritious dairy products, even in this challenging time.

This week, we begin our campaign with a nod to the hardworking research and development team at Masters Gallery Foods. Thank you for your important work!

Watch for WCMA salutes in Tuesday e-newsletters, our printed membership directory (coming soon!), and on our Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages. Have a person or team you'd like us to celebrate? Just contact [WCMA staff](#).

## 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

**INDUSTRY UPDATES**



## New Dietary Guidelines for Americans Uphold Importance of Dairy in Daily Diet

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services released the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGAs) on December 29, highlighting the importance of low-fat and fat-free dairy products in a daily diet. The 2020-2025 DGAs continue previous recommendations that Americans consume three servings of dairy each day, and that dairy remains as its own, healthy foods category alongside fruit and vegetables. For the first time, the DGAs include recommendations for children younger than two years of age, encouraging dairy foods are made an important part of a healthy diet for young children from 6-24 months of age.

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## 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.

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## Register Now for Free DBIA Exporting Seminar



WCMA invites you and valued members of your team to join in a [free Dairy Business Innovation Alliance seminar](#) on Tuesday, January 19, focused on [how to launch and grow an dairy exporting initiative](#). The seminar will feature general information, breakout sessions, and interviews with processors who will share their experiences and lessons learned. [Register today!](#)



# POLICY COMMITTEE

## Join in WCMA Advocacy Meetings January 11



Make plans now 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

## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *La Crosse Tribune*: [State Sen.-elect Pfaff says he is 'uniquely situated' to bridge partisan gap](#)
- *WEAU-TV*: [Large dairy co-op asks Congress for more milk options for school children](#)

### National/International

- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [What could be next for FARM?](#)
- *The Spoon*: [Fresh Idea: Milk vending machines on dairy farms in the U.K.](#)
- *Hoard's Dairyman*: [Ahh, the power of cheese](#)

## SIGNATURE EVENTS

# CHEESE EXPO

# GLOBAL ONLINE

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](https://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**

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## Ideas Showcase Space Now Limited

**Space is now very limited** in CheeseExpo Global Online's [virtual Ideas Showcase](#), a unique opportunity for exhibitors to present their company's goods and services as part of the main Schedule of Events. The deadline to express interest has been extended to January 26, with reservations to be made on a first come, first served basis.

Ideas Showcase presentations, which may be live or prerecorded, may be up to ten minutes in total running time, with content to be technical or promotional in nature, and can allow for questions from the live audience. Contact [WCMA Events Manager Caitlin Peirick](#) today to learn more!

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**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.

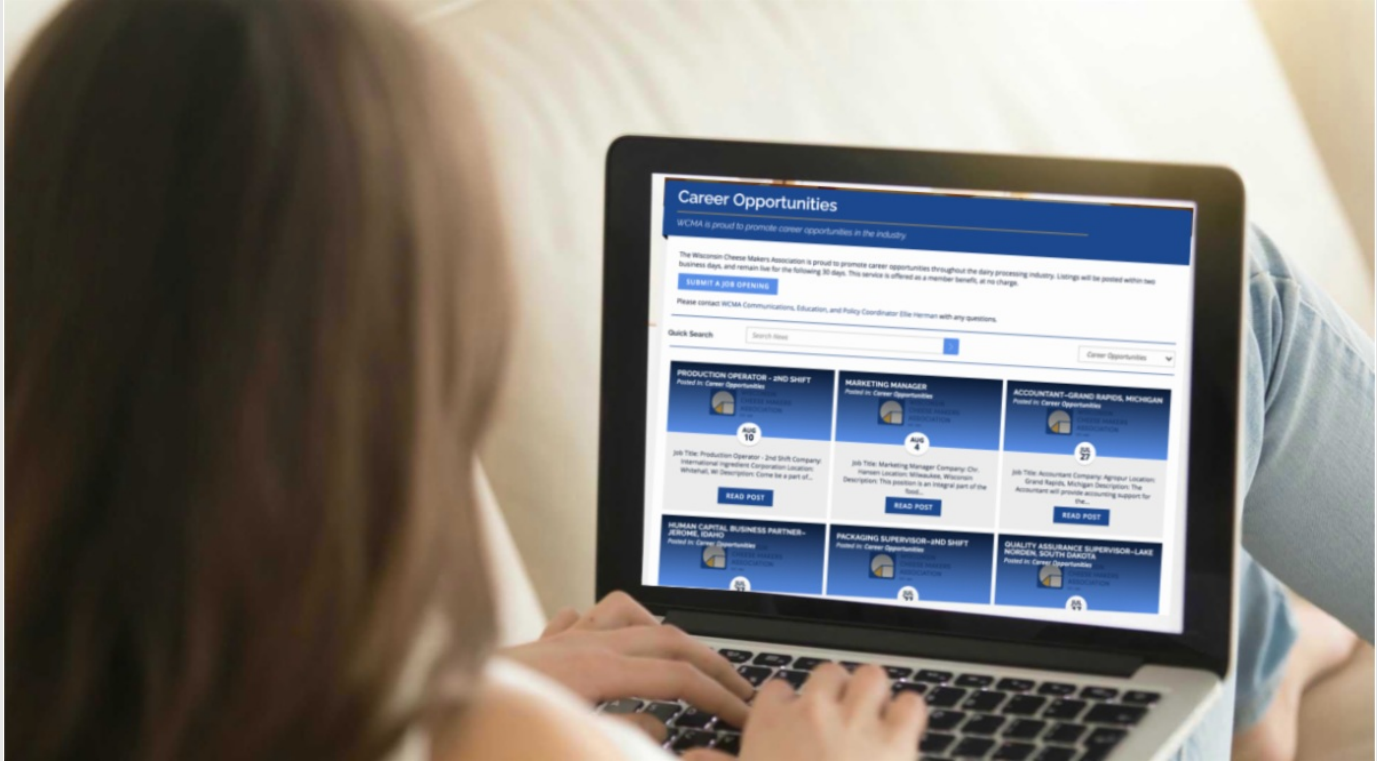
Employees or children of employees at WCMA supplier member companies may apply for the [WCMA Cheese Industry Supplier Student Scholarship](#). Three students will receive scholarship awards of \$3,000 each.

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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**WORKFORCE**



## Career Opportunities Featured on WCMA Jobs Board

WCMA's [online jobs board](#) is this week featuring 14 new industry career opportunities with the Center for Dairy Research and member companies Agropur and Westby Cooperative Creamery. Check out listings for cheesemakers, content writers, 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

### 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.