

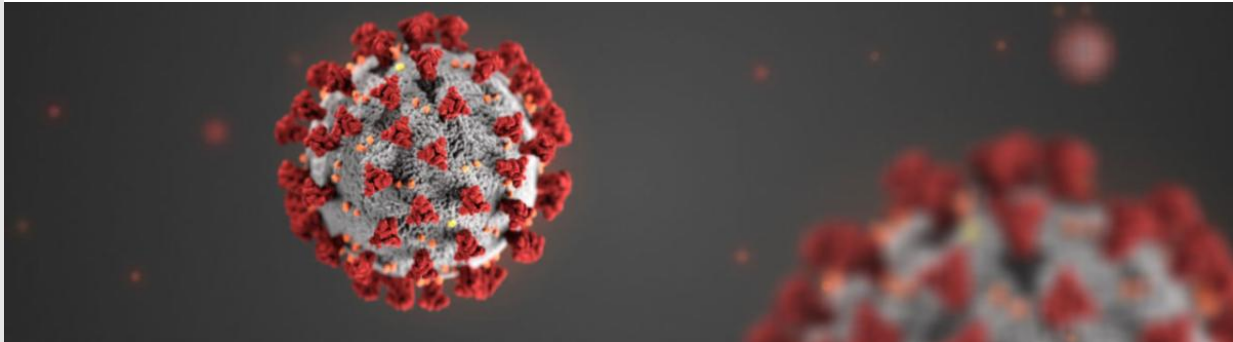


# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## COVID-19 UPDATES



### Wisconsin Lawmakers Set to Approve PPP Fix

Wisconsin lawmakers in the State Assembly and Senate are today expected to approve a [WCMA-backed bill](#) to ensure companies that received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans aren't taxed on the expenses they covered with the money. Federal lawmakers approved a similar legislative fix in December, but separate legislation was necessary for state filings.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates the bill, if signed into law, will save Wisconsin business owners \$419 million through 2023.

The bill also includes a change to the Earned Income Tax Credit, pushed by Governor Tony Evers, to increase the benefit for low-income families by \$30 million.

WCMA proudly advocates for member interests, and will offer updates on the progress of this bill in Thursday's member bulletin.

### Walz Extends Emergency Order, While GOP Lawmakers Seek Limits

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has [extended his emergency powers](#) through March 15, to coordinate pandemic response efforts. Emergency powers permit Walz to issue mandates, including one which requires mask-wearing statewide.

Minnesota Republicans who control the State Senate have introduced [a number of bills](#) to curtail Walz's powers, but have not yet scheduled the proposals for floor votes.

### Feds Announce Vaccine Distribution Boost

White House officials today announced a major [boost in vaccine distribution](#), saying that states will receive 13.5 million doses for administration this week, a number that represents a 23 percent increase over last week's allocation. Officials also announced they would be doubling the number of doses - to two million - shared via the Federal Pharmacy Partner Program this week.

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## Wisconsin Approaches 1M Vaccine Mark

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS) officials today announced the state has now administered [996,591 doses](#) of COVID-19 vaccines, putting it on track to top one million doses administered later today or tomorrow. Approximately 250,000 Wisconsinites have received both doses, completing their vaccine series.

Wisconsin's critical and essential dairy plant workers are expected to be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines on March 1.

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## Register Now for WCMA Vaccination Webinar

Vaccine communication and education strategies are the focus of a free webinar **Thursday, February 18 from 1:00-1:45 p.m. (CT)**. [Registration is open now](#), and available exclusively to WCMA members.

WCMA is pleased to present featured speaker Jeff Christensen, Director of Communications at M3 Insurance, as part of this webinar. Join as Jeff walks through the fundamentals business leaders should consider and apply while talking about organizational decisions regarding COVID-19 vaccines while communicating with employees about their organization's COVID-19 vaccination plan.

Wisconsin's Green County Public Health Director RoAnn Warden, RN, BSN, will share her knowledge regarding the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as practical experiences from those who have already received full doses.

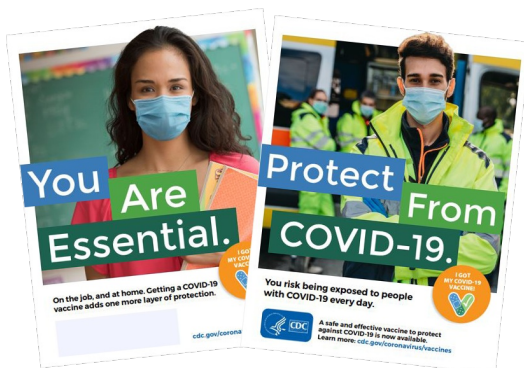
WCMA staff will also present the latest information on Wisconsin's Phase 1B vaccine rollout, set to begin March 1.



Jeff Christensen  
Director of Communications

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## CDC Adds to Essential Employer Toolkit



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week added [new tools](#) for essential employers communicating with their team members about COVID-19 vaccines. Resources now include:

- a COVID-19 vaccines fact sheet
- printable posters
- a sample letter/newsletter content
- social media posts
- vaccine fotonovela
- vaccine web widget



Throughout 2021, WCMA is saluting its members' essential and critical workforce, people who daily demonstrate their dedication to the mission of feeding the world delicious, nutritious dairy products.

This week, we are shining a spotlight on Jason Grissmeyer, who has served as a Second Shift Lipase Operator at DSM Food Specialties USA, Inc. for 22 years. Jason works to make cultures and lipase available for the industry. Thank you for your important work!

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

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## Coronavirus Headline News

### Wisconsin

- *WKOW-TV*: [Democrats seek to take up COVID-19 relief items as separate bills](#)
- *WISN-TV*: [President Biden to push \\$1.9T COVID-19 relief package in Milwaukee](#)
- *WQOW-TV*: [Wisconsin COVID-19 numbers at lowest level in five months](#)

### National/International

- *Washington Post*: [Focus on Capitol Hill turns to passing Biden's \\$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill](#)
- *Washington Post*: [Four reasons why coronavirus cases are dropping in the United States](#)
- *New York Times*: [COVID-19: The U.S. has its own new worrisome variants](#)
- *Associated Press*: [CDC: Strong evidence in-person schooling can be done safely](#)

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## 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 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

# Evers' Budget to Include Agriculture, Broadband, and Business Investments

Tonight at 7 o'clock, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers is set to deliver his 2021-23 Budget Message. The address will be delivered virtually, and can be streamed on [YouTube](#).



Evers is expected to propose investments of **\$43 million in the state's agricultural economy**, including support for the following **WCMA policy priorities**:

- \$20 million to support food banks and pantries partnering with Wisconsin food processors;
- The creation and funding of the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports to boost sales of cheese and other value-added dairy products in emerging global markets;
- A \$1.2 million boost for the dairy processor grant program, bringing total funding to \$1.6 million over the biennium; and
- The creation and funding of a Value-Added Agricultural Grant Program.

Evers will also announce support for the Farm-to-School Grant Program, the Farm-to-Fork Program, the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Program, and Something Special from Wisconsin™, a branded marketing program.

Governor Evers is also expected to propose investments of **\$200 million in the state's broadband infrastructure** (see more below), and **\$300 million to support the "Badger Bounceback."** Evers plans to direct \$200 million to small businesses affected by the pandemic and \$100 million to a venture capital program to jumpstart innovation and startups in Wisconsin.

WCMA will share additional budget proposal details in the days ahead, and will continue to advocate for member interests.

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## WCMA Leads Coalition in Broadband Push

WCMA is leading a coalition of dozens of agricultural advocacy organizations pushing for investments in broadband access and affordability in Wisconsin. Today, the groups released **public statements** in support of Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers' budget proposal to direct \$200 million to expand the state's broadband infrastructure.

Approximately 394,000 Wisconsinites lack broadband access, with 98 percent of them living in rural parts of the state, according to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 2021 Broadband Deployment Report. Still more rural residents face the challenge of inadequate internet speeds and unreliable connections.

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## WCMA Applauds Baldwin Appointment

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin has been appointed Chair of the federal Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. The committee is responsible for writing the legislation that allocates federal funding to numerous government agencies, departments, and organizations each year.





WCMA has enjoyed a strong, productive working relationship with Sen. Baldwin, which has resulted in the creation and funding of the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance. On Monday, WCMA released this [statement](#) applauding her appointment.

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## Vilsack Confirmation Vote Coming February 23



The U.S. Senate has scheduled a vote on Tuesday, February 23 to confirm Tom Vilsack's nomination to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Vilsack served as USDA Secretary during the Obama Administration, the only member of the Cabinet to complete two full terms. Most recently, he served as president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, and has been a strong advocate for the dairy industry.

WCMA has supported Vilsack nomination, urging his confirmation in a [letter](#) delivered earlier this month.

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## Wisconsin Truth-in-Dairy Labeling Bills Advance

A Wisconsin State Senate Committee has unanimously approved [two WCMA-backed bills](#) requiring truth in dairy labeling.

Thanks go to WCMA President Dave Buholzer (pictured) and WCMA Past President Kim Heiman for their testimony on the bills at a hearing in the Wisconsin State Capitol last week. WCMA will continue to work to shepherd the bills through the legislative process.



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## Wisconsin Cooperatives' Meeting Bill Advancing

A WCMA-backed bill to allow Wisconsin cooperatives to [hold meetings virtually](#) during periods of emergency, including pandemics, is expected to be approved in both the State Assembly and Senate this afternoon. The proposal has bipartisan support and is expected to be signed into law by Governor Tony Evers.

# WCMA



# JOB FAIR

## Register Now for WCMA Virtual Job Fair

Find the career or the team member that's right for you at the [2021 WCMA Virtual Job Fair](#)! Set for **Wednesday, March 24 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT)**, event registration is open now through March 17 at [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org). This event is free for prospective employees and WCMA member employers.

WCMA is partnering with Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest organizers to invite participation from students from throughout the country pursuing dairy-related degrees, though the event is open to all job seekers, including those just graduating from high school or seeking a career change. Employers may highlight all openings, including hourly or salaried full-time, part-time, or internship positions.

The 2021 WCMA Virtual Job Fair will be held via Zoom on March 24, but WCMA will post basic profiles on each participant to a password-protected page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org), one week in advance of the event. Employers and prospective employees may preview those joining in the job fair and contact them for an in-depth interview or information after it is held.

[JOB SEEKER REGISTRATION](#)

[EMPLOYER REGISTRATION](#)



## Workforce Survey Responses Due Friday

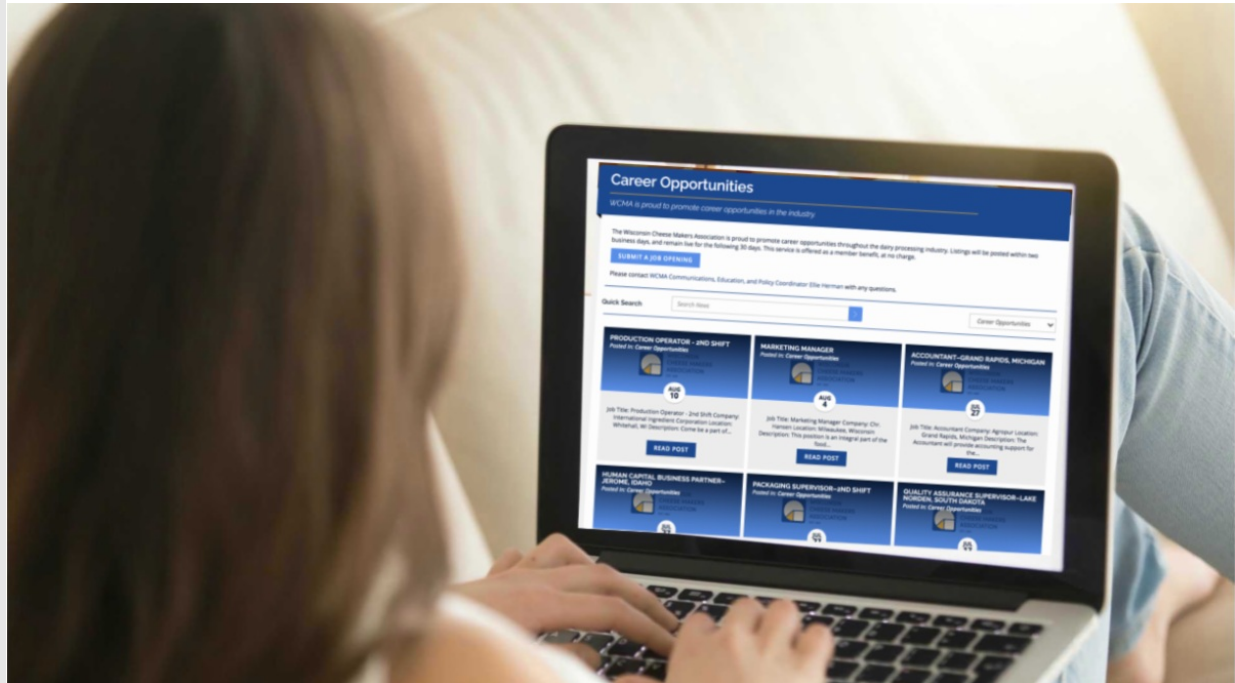
Members are invited to participate now in the [2021 WCMA Wage and Workforce Survey](#)! This free annual members-only survey helps WCMA provide critical data employers need to successfully attract and retain top talent.

**Survey responses are due Friday, February 19.** Individual responses are held in confidence, and participants will not be identified.

Participating member companies and cooperatives will receive a **free summary report** from WCMA in early March detailing current industry wage ranges and benefits packages, as well as comparative data on non-industry wages in their region.

Questions may be directed to [WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney](#).

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)



## View Career Opportunities on WCMA Jobs Board

WCMA's [online jobs board](#) is featuring 14 industry career opportunities from member companies Agropur, Klondike Cheese Company, Sartori Company and Winona Foods. Check out listings for processing line attendants, maintenance technicians, quality assurance supervisors 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](#)

**EDUCATION**





# WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

## WCMA Scholarship Applications Due Tomorrow

Applications are due **tomorrow, Wednesday, February 17** for five WCMA 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**, 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.



## Limited Space Left in WCMA Leadership Series

Space is now limited in early 2021 offerings of WCMA's 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.



Just **one** seat remains open in **WCMA Front-Line Leadership Training - Part B**, which is set for Thursday, March 18, and will focus on ways to positively assess and impact staff performance.

**REGISTER  
NOW**

Just **three** seats remain available in **WCMA Front-Line Leadership Training - Part C**, which 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 18-19: [Pasteurization Short Course | UW-River Falls](#)
- February 23-24: [Process Cheese Course On Demand | Center for Dairy Research](#)
- March 1-5: [Cheesemaker's Short Course | UW-River Falls](#)
- March 2: [Cheesemaking 101 What a Licensed Cheesemaker Should Know On Demand | Center for Dairy Research](#)
- March 8-11: [Implementing SQF Systems Virtual Short Course | Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin](#)
- March 9: [Process Cheese Course On Demand | Center for Dairy Research](#)
- March 17: [Certificate in Dairy Processing | Center for Dairy Research](#)
- March 23: [Process Cheese Course On Demand | Center for Dairy Research](#)
- March 30: [Cheesemaking 101 What a Licensed Cheesemaker Should Know On Demand | Center for Dairy Research](#)

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## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### USDA Solicits Bids for Butter Contracts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it is accepting bids for contracts to provide **15 million pounds of salted butter**, for nationwide distribution via Section 32 programs. Bids are due March 2 at 1 p.m., and questions may be directed to [USDA staff](#).

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### USDA Awards Butter, Yogurt, Cheese Contracts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture this week announced it has **awarded** butter, yogurt and pepper jack cheese contracts to Chobani LLC, Darigold, Inc., Select Mik Producers, Inc., and WCMA member Winona Foods, Inc.

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## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin:

- *Country Today*: [Program manager brings small dairy perspective to Dairy Innovation Hub](#)
- *Spectrum News 1*: [Cheesy love story: How a 40-year love story started with Wisconsin dairy](#) (Featuring WCMA member Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese)
- *WKOW-TV*: [What causes a Wisconsin cheese curd's iconic squeak?](#) (Featuring WCMA member Arena Cheese)

### National/International:

- *Delish*: [The FDA is investigating a Listeria outbreak that may be linked to cheeses like queso fresco](#)
- *FOX Business*: [Trade deals key to lifting demand for agricultural products, farmers say](#)
- *Brownfield Ag News*: [How long before growing dairy herd peaks?](#)

## SIGNATURE EVENTS

# CHEESE EXPO

## GLOBAL ONLINE

### CheeseExpo Global Online Savings End March 1

The 2021 CheeseExpo Global Online [lineup](#) offers dairy processors and marketers free access to live Ideas Showcase offerings, exhibits and spotlight networking events. Upgrade by March 1 to save \$50 on [Full Registration](#) to add a host of keynote presentations and live seminars!

**REGISTER  
NOW & SAVE**

## MEMBERSHIP

### Welcome New WCMA Member

WCMA warmly welcomes new supplier member [Hood Packaging Corporation](#) this week. WCMA membership now includes nearly 700 companies operating in 39 states and around the world, employing tens of thousands of people.

### 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 our communications

products.

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WisCheeseMakers.org

