

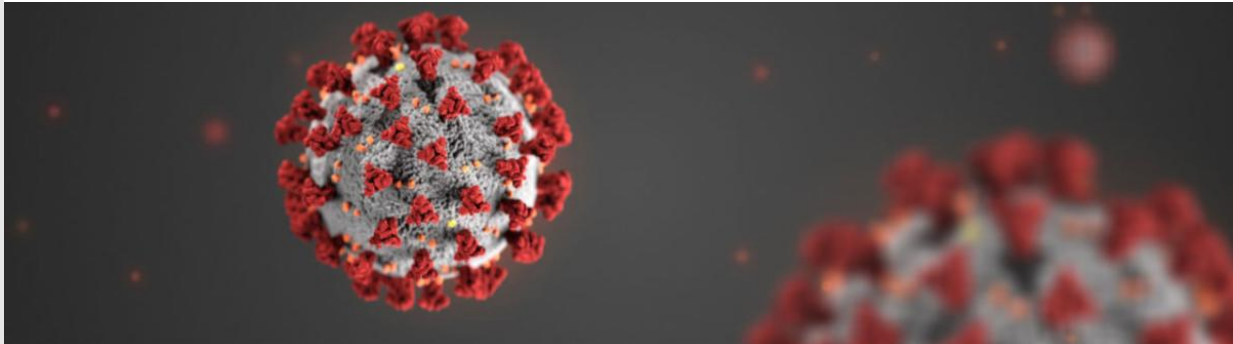


# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## COVID-19 UPDATES



### COVID-19 Transmission From Food, Food Packaging Highly Unlikely, Say Feds

There is "no credible evidence" that people can contract COVID-19 from food or food packaging, U.S. officials again affirmed in a [joint statement](#) released late last week.

Officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention acknowledged that recent scientific studies have identified COVID-19 particles on food packaging but emphasized the fact that researchers have found only the genetic fingerprint of the virus, not live virus that can result in infection.

### CDC Adds Info on Vaccine Mandates and Exceptions to Essential Employer Toolkit



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week posted [new tools](#) for essential employers, including information about [vaccine mandates and exceptions](#).

Resources also include:

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

### Wisconsin Lawmakers Add COVID-19 Liability

# Protection to Unemployment Aid Bill

Wisconsin lawmakers are on track to approve [WCMA-backed COVID-19 liability protections](#) for businesses, after successfully tacking the measure onto a special session bill from Governor Tony Evers, aimed at modernizing the state's unemployment insurance system. The State Assembly approved the measure with bipartisan support earlier today, and quick Senate action is expected. Evers has signaled his support for the bill, too.

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## Wisconsin Prepares for Phase 1B Vaccination, Beginning March 1

Wisconsin is preparing to [launch Phase 1B](#) of its COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan on March 1, allowing some essential workers - including dairy plant personnel - access to vaccines. Those in the Phase 1B group have numerous paths to vaccination, including access via traditional health care providers, pharmacies, community-based clinics, and - in some cases - employer-supported on-site clinics.

Here's a round-up of relevant developments and resources for Wisconsin-based WCMA members included in Phase 1B.

### Online Vaccine Registry Coming March 1

On March 1, Wisconsin will launch an [online vaccine registry](#), designed to help people find appointments. A call center will also be opened, to assist those without access to a computer or internet. The state has already begun testing the system, allowing certain public health departments early access. Those testing the system this week include Green County Public Health, Marathon County Public Health, St. Croix County Public Health, where many members operate. Contact your [county public health office](#) for more information.

### Verifying Phase 1B Status Simplified

Wisconsin is requesting vaccinators attempt to verify that an individual is eligible for Phase 1B vaccination. This can be achieved by an individual showing a work badge or ID card, pay stub, or letter from an employer to a vaccinator. However, Wisconsin will also allow individuals to simply sign a self-attestation form, made available to them by their vaccinator.

### Federal Retail Pharmacy Partner Gets Boost

Wisconsin has selected Walgreens as its partner in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, and the chain continues to expand its vaccination capacity statewide. This week, 178 Walgreens locations in Wisconsin will be receiving a total of 35,350 vaccine doses, double the amount it received last week. To schedule a vaccination appointment, call 1-800-Walgreens or visit the Walgreens [online registration website](#).

### New Community-Based Clinics Opening

Wisconsin officials today [announced plans](#) to open four new community-based COVID-19 vaccination clinics in La Crosse County, Marathon County, Racine County, and a location yet to be determined to serve both Barron and Douglas Counties. Clinics will be open within two months. Last week, the state opened its first community-based vaccination clinic in Rock County, and that location will remain open. Locations were selected to address gaps in vaccine access caused by local health care capacity, pharmacy concentration, and population demographics.

### WCMA Offering Vaccine Eligibility Status Reports Each Thursday

WCMA is tracking vaccine developments in key dairy states nationwide, including California, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, South Dakota. Watch for status reports and links to resources each Thursday in WCMA's COVID-19 Member Bulletins.

# WCMA Salutes Critical and Essential Employees



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 Linda Rodriguez, an integral team member at Hilmar Cheese Company. Linda works tirelessly to ensure the production of safe, wholesome and high quality cheese products. 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](#).

## Coronavirus Headline News

### Dairy Industry

- *Feedstuffs*: [USDA staff to help distribute COVID-19 vaccines](#)

### Wisconsin

- *WTMJ-TV*: [Wisconsin reports no COVID-19 deaths for the second day in a row](#)
- *WISC-TV*: [600K more Wisconsinites could become eligible for a vaccine next week. But there are still a lot of people eligible now who haven't gotten a shot](#)
- *WEAU-TV*: [Wisconsin Restaurants endorse new safety program for safe dining](#)
- *WMTV-TV*: [Study: Only seven of nearly 5,000 Wood County students caught COVID-19 in school](#)

### National/International

- *Associated Press*: [Half a million dead in U.S., confirming virus's tragic reach](#)
- *Bloomberg*: [COVID death outlook improves as drop in U.S. exceeds forecasts](#)
- *USA Today*: [Where does the \\$1.9T COVID-19 relief bill go from here? And, when can you expect help? Here's what we know.](#)
- *The Hill*: [Johnson & Johnson ready to provide doses for 20M Americans by end of March](#)
- *National Public Radio*: [Why the Johnson & Johnson vaccine has gotten a bad rap — and why that's not fair](#)



## 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](https://www.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

## ADVOCACY

### WCMA Members Continue Push in Wisconsin for Truth in Dairy Labeling

WCMA continues to lobby lawmakers to support two bills designed to protect consumers from misleading labels on imitation “dairy” products.

[Senate Bills 81 and 83](#), authored by Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and Representative Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City), would ban the labeling of products as milk or as a dairy product or ingredient, if the food is not made from the milk of a cow, sheep, goat, or other mammals.



As part of this effort, WCMA President Dave Buholzer of Klondike Cheese Company wrote a [editorial for Wisconsin-based newspapers](#) acknowledging Sen. Marklein's leadership on this issue. WCMA members who wish to meet with their elected officials - or give voice to this issue in media reports or via editorials - may [contact WCMA staff](#) for support.

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### DBIA Plans \$1M in Grant Awards in Spring 2021; Application Period Opens March 1



Mark your calendars! The [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#), a partnership between the Center for Dairy Research and Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association will open a [new grant application period](#) March 1. DBIA is planning total awards of \$1 million in direct-to-business grants this spring, with individual awards of up to \$50,000.

Dairy processors and farmers in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin are eligible to apply for grants to support dairy farm diversification, the creation of value-added dairy products, and dairy product exporting.

WCMA will share additional information on this grant opportunity next week.

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## Apply Now for Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants



The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection today opened the application period for Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants, designed to support the purchase of Wisconsin-made products in Wisconsin. Wisconsin-based dairy processors and farmers are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$50,000 through 12 noon (CT) on March 26. WDATCP has a total of \$300,000 to award through the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program.

Complete details and application forms are [available online](#). Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with questions.

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## IN THE NEWS

### Wisconsin

- *Wisconsin State Farmer*: [World wants more of Wisconsin's award-winning cheeses](#)
- *Wisconsin State Farmer*: [Two dairy farms, cheese plant assessed \\$190,000 penalty for violations](#)
- *WGBA-TV*: [As 500 Wisconsin farms disappear, a Fremont family battles to keep theirs running amid declining sales](#)

### National/International

- *Wired*: [Great news, America: Cheese isn't bad for you](#)
- *Daily Hornet*: [17 queso fresco cheese products recalled after Listeria outbreak](#)
- *Politico*: [Politico Pro Q&A: Rep. David Scott, the first Black House Ag chair](#)

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## WORKFORCE

# 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.

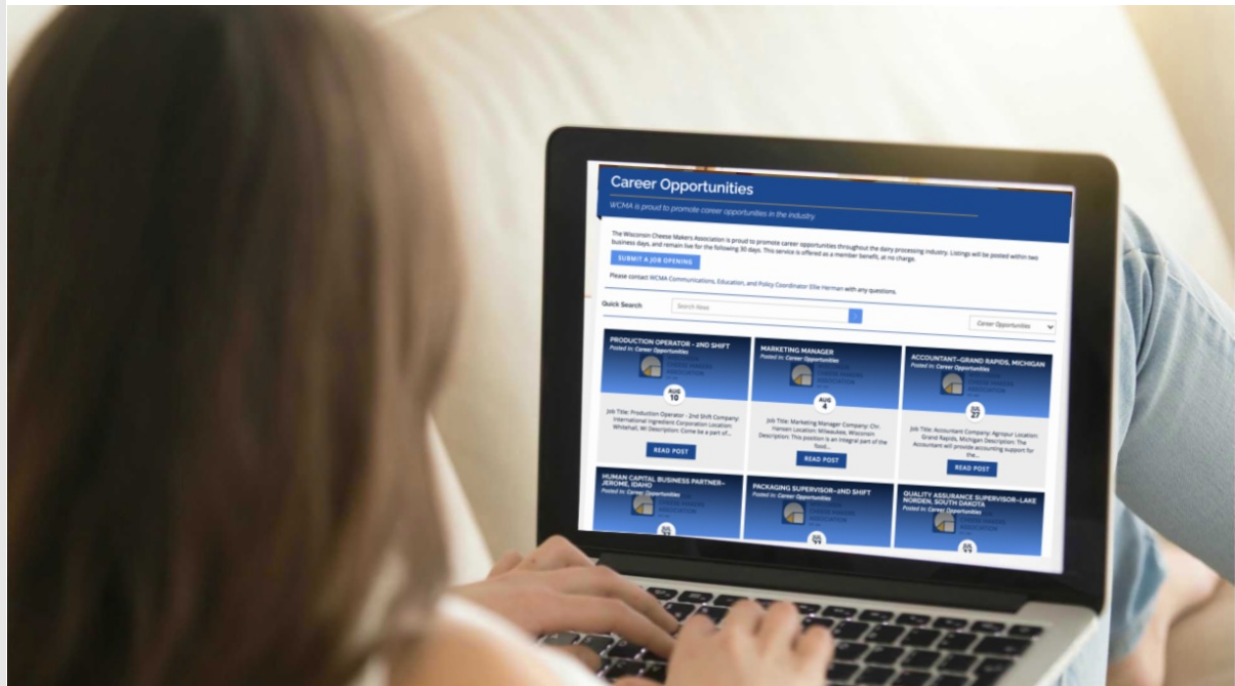
WCMA is partnering with Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest organizers to invite

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](https://www.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](#)



## View Career Opportunities on WCMA Jobs Board

WCMA's [online jobs board](#) is featuring 14 industry career opportunities from member companies Agropur, Arena Cheese, Baker Cheese, Klondike Cheese Company, LaClare Family Creamery, LLC, Lactalis American Group, Sartori Company and Winona Foods. Check out listings for processing line attendants, HR generalists, 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 hosted a virtual offering of Front-Line Leadership Part A: Owning Your Role as a Leader online Tuesday for staff from Alpine Slicing and Cheese Conversion, Carr Valley Cheese Company, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Great Lakes Cheese Company, Schuman Cheese, Specialty Cheese Company, Springside Cheese Corporation, V&V Supremo Food Products-Chula Vista Cheese Company, Wapsie Valley Creamery, and Wisconsin Dairy State Cheese.

Thanks go to all of the participants for their engagement and effort – and kudos go to their employers for investing in leadership development!

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## 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 **two** 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.

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.

**REGISTER  
NOW**

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## Register for CDR's Certificate in Dairy Processing Series by March 7

The deadline to register for the Certificate in Dairy Processing series, offered by the Center for Dairy Research, is fast approaching! [Sign up by March 7](#) to join in this live, online dairy industry training program.

The Certificate in Dairy Processing is focused on providing promising plant workers and operators with a clear understanding of dairy plant processes. This course features a ten week series of modules covering key aspects of dairy processing through online sessions and other learning opportunities. In addition, each participant completes a short, hands-on project of their choosing with the assistance of a mentor.

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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:

- 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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## SIGNATURE EVENTS





JOIN WCMA FOR A 2021



# CONTEST CELEBRATION

[WorldChampionCheese.org](http://WorldChampionCheese.org)

March 2 & 3

WCMA is pleased to announce an online celebration of the World and U.S. Championship Cheese Contests, with free, original programming set to stream on [WorldChampionCheese.org](http://WorldChampionCheese.org) next week.

On Tuesday, March 2, join WCMA as we look back on the tradition of excellence set by our Contests over the past six decades, and as we look with excitement to what's ahead for these competitions! WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer moderates a lively, insightful conversation with Contest Chief Judge Jim Mueller and Contest Chief Judge Emeriti Bill Schlinsog and Bob Aschebrock.

Also on March 2, dive into the minds of cheese judges! Jill Allen of Tillamook Creamery and Craig Gile of Cabot Cheese detail challenges - and joys - of evaluating world-class cheddars. Gurth Pretty of Lakeview Cheese and Chad Galer of Dairy Management Inc. bring new knowledge and laughs, as they walk through cheese curd judging methods. John Jaeggi and Dean Sommer of the Center for Dairy Research venture beneath the smear, to show us their evaluation process for ripened soft cheeses. And Mariana Marques de Almeida of Ms. J & Co., also an Assistant Chief Judge, and Dominique Delugeau of Saputo Cheese explain how you can find a gold medal-worthy Manchego.

Then, on Wednesday, March 3, meet ten of the world's premiere cheesemakers, as WCMA unveils the exciting line-up for the 2021 Auction of Championship Cheeses. No spoilers - but this is a 'can't miss' event!

Programs will stream live both days at 3 p.m. (CT), with viewers invited to join in live chat on our [World Championship Cheese Contest Facebook page](#) during each broadcast. Programs will also be available to stream later on-demand at [WorldChampionCheese.org](http://WorldChampionCheese.org).

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# CHEESE EXPO

## GLOBAL ONLINE

Join the Salute to Industry Excellence at  
CheeseExpo Global Online

Celebrate a year of industry excellence during the virtual awards banquet at 2021 CheeseExpo Global Online. Sign up now at [CheeseExpoGO.org!](https://www.CheeseExpoGO.org)

Three days of educational seminars and networking opportunities caps off on April 8 with a special program saluting the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) Life Member Honorees, 2020 World Championship Cheese Contest top winners and volunteers and Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers™.



Roger Krohn



Mark Schleitwiler

Tune in April 8 at 3 p.m. (CT) for the virtual banquet, which will begin by honoring the 2020 and 2021 WCMA Life Member Award recipients, Roger Krohn of Agropur and Mark Schleitwiler, an industry consultant and former leader at BelGioioso Cheese, Wolft Cheese and Churny Company. The highest honor WCMA award, the Life Member Award recognizes people who have played a significant role in the success of the Association through leadership, support and service to the institution and its activities.

Attendees will hear from the producers of the 2020 World Championship Cheese Contest's top three cheeses. In 2020, a gruyere called Gourmino Le Gruyère AOP, made by Michael Spycher of Mountain Dairy Fritzenhaus for Gourmino AG was named the Champion Cheese. First Runner-Up in the contest was Gallus Grand CRU, a hard cow's milk cheese made by Hardegger Käse AG of Jonschwil, St. Gallen, Switzerland.



Lutjewinkel Noord Hollandse Gouda PDO, a mature gouda aged four to 10 months, made by Royal FrieslandCampina-Export earned the Second Runner-Up trophy. WCMA will also salute the industry members who make the Contest possible, including expert judges, volunteers and competitors.



The virtual banquet will also celebrate the talent of the 2020 and 2021 graduating classes of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker™ program, administered by CDR experts and funded by the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. CDR will also unveil the latest updates to the Babcock Hall renovation project, including a three-story addition to house the latest cutting-edge technology for dairy processors.

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## 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**

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## 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 our communications products.

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[WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org)

