



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

March 10, 2026

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NEWS



WCMA Members Bring Strong Showing to World Championship Cheese Contest

WCMA congratulates and thanks all competitors in the [2026 World Championship Cheese Contest](#), held last week in Madison, Wisconsin. Special congratulations go to the many WCMA members whose outstanding dairy products won gold medals in their classes: Agri-Mark, Agropur, Arena Cheese, Arla Foods, Associated Milk Producers Inc., Beecher's Handmade Cheese, BelGioioso Cheese, Biery Cheese, Blakesville Creamery, Burnett Dairy Cooperative, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Caputo Cheese, Carr Valley Cheese, Cedar Valley Cheese, Cowgirl Creamery, Dairy Farmers of America, Decatur Dairy, Deer Creek Cheese, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Glanbia Nutritionals, Great Lakes Cheese, Guggisberg Cheese, Hilmar Cheese, Kingston Cheese Cooperative, Klondike Cheese Co., Lactalis, Land O'Lakes, Landmark Creamery, Maple Leaf Cheese, Marieke Gouda, Masters Gallery Foods, Meister Cheese, Nasonville Dairy, Pine River Pre-Pack, Prairie Farms Dairy, Schuman Cheese

- Lake Country Dairy, V&V Supremo Foods, Vermont Creamery, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars. Complete results for all classes are available at WorldChampionCheese.org

News of the 2026 World Championship Cheese Contest - and this year's winner, Beemster Royaal Grand Cru made by CONO Kaasmakers in the Netherlands - has already spread far and wide! To date, hundreds of stories have appeared in media outlets across the country. Here are just a few highlights:

- DutchNews: [Dutch cheese from Beemster is voted best cheese in the world](#)
- Beaudesert Bulletin: [Summer Land Camels scores 99.6 at World Championship Cheese Contest](#)
- KOIN-TV: [Three Oregon creameries take home awards at the World Championship Cheese Contest](#)
- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [VIDEO: Judges evaluate cheeses at 2026 World Championship Cheese Contest](#)
- Mid-West Farm Report: [Labneh: A new contender at the World Championship Cheese Contest](#)

A collection of high-resolution photos from the Contest is available on our [Facebook page](#). Visit our YouTube channel for a [recording](#) of the livestreamed announcement of the Top 20 cheeses and 2026 World Champion. Also, check out our coverage on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#)!

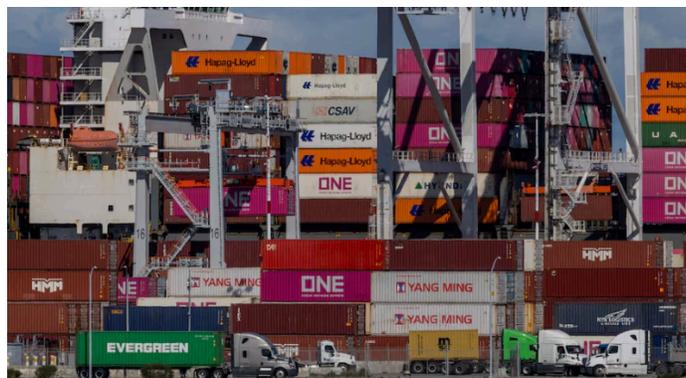
Thank You, Contest Volunteers and Judges!

Our thanks go to the 100+ B-Team volunteers who generously gave their time, talent, and muscle to make the 2026 World Championship Cheese Contest possible. We are grateful for your essential support!

Congratulations and thanks are also in order for the Kolroser family, Contest judge Samir Kalit, volunteers Dan Stearns and Steve Stettler. These exceptional leaders earned recognition for their outstanding contributions to support and grow WCMA's Championship Cheese Contests. [READ MORE...](#)



Federal Court Orders Tariff Refunds



A [federal trade court](#) on Wednesday ordered the U.S. government to begin issuing refunds to importers who paid tariffs that were later ruled unlawful. Customs officials say the scale of the task is unprecedented, potentially involving more than 70 million import entries and affecting more than 300,000 businesses. The government has collected over \$130 billion through the tariffs, which were a central element of the trade policy implemented by President Donald Trump.

The court has scheduled additional hearings as U.S. Customs develops a plan to process the refunds, while thousands of companies continue to pursue reimbursement through pending cases before the trade court. [READ MORE...](#)

U.S. Trade Rep Submits 2026 Trade Policy Plans



The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) last week submitted its [2026 Trade Policy Agenda and 2025 Annual Report](#) to Congress. The report summarizes USTR's trade actions for the year and lays out USTR's plans to "double down on the America First Trade Policy" through six core focus areas - including reviewing the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), and managing trade with China "for reciprocity and balance". [READ MORE...](#)

Mexican Farm Groups Plan Second Protest



Mexican farm organizations [announced this week](#) they are planning a new wave of nationwide highway and rail blockades, beginning March 20. The demonstrations are intended to pressure the federal government to address previously negotiated demands related to food market regulation, crop marketing, and broader agricultural policy.

The protests could disrupt key transportation corridors and logistics routes across Mexico, potentially slowing the movement of goods to processing facilities and export points. In [late November 2025](#), a similar blockade at the Ciudad Juárez–El Paso Port of Entry - one of the busiest commercial border crossings between Mexico and the U.S. - stranded tens of thousands of trucks and halted an estimated \$1.45 billion in exports, creating significant supply chain challenges. [READ MORE...](#)

House Approves Farm Bill Draft



The U.S. House Committee on Agriculture on Thursday [approved its draft](#) of the next United States Farm Bill on a 34-17 vote, with support from all Republicans and several Democrats. The bill is now eligible for House floor consideration. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is expected to develop its own proposal in the coming months.

Key dairy-related provisions in the House draft include:

- A broadening of the current Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives initiative into Dairy Nutrition Incentive Projects, encouraging purchases of milk, cheese, yogurt, and other cultured dairy products, while increasing the program's authorized funding from \$20 million to \$50 million;
- Permanent authorization for Mandatory Cost Surveys used in Federal Milk Marketing Orders;
- An extension of the Dairy Forward Pricing Program;
- Clarification that whole and 2% milk may be served in the School Breakfast Program following enactment of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act; and,
- A shift in administration of the Food for Peace to the United States Department of Agriculture.

The bill is now eligible for House floor consideration. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is expected to develop its own proposal in the coming months. [READ MORE...](#)

PFAS Remediation & Liability Legislation Advances in Wisconsin



Last week, a Wisconsin Senate Committee unanimously approved [Assembly Bill 131](#), moving the bill to the State Senate floor for consideration.

The bill establishes new programs and funding to assist in PFAS contamination response efforts, while also updating how Wisconsin's environmental remediation law, or "Spills Law," is applied.

Throughout negotiations, [WCMA has advocated](#) for common-sense exemptions to ensure dairy farmers, processors, and third-party vendors that operate in compliance with the applicable state permits are not unfairly held liable for PFAS contamination they did not cause. The bill now includes exemptions for agricultural and residential property owners where PFAS-contaminated wastewater or industrial waste was land-applied under a valid license or permit. The legislation was unanimously approved by the State Assembly last month. The State Senate is expected to vote on the bill next week.

Wisconsin Returns to Unaffected Gold Status on HPAI for Dairy



As of February, Wisconsin has returned to [unaffected Gold Status](#) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Milk Testing Strategy. The state first earned unaffected Gold Status and reduced testing frequency in September 2025, but later increased that frequency to 100 percent in December 2025, after the state's first HPAI detection in a dairy herd. All quarantines associated with that premises have since been lifted, and no additional positive farms have been detected. Milk samples will continue to be collected through existing, routine testing programs. [READ MORE...](#)

Final Day to Respond to WCMA Wage & Workforce Survey



Today, March 10, is the final day to respond to WCMA's [2026 Wage & Workforce Survey](#). This free, confidential online survey helps WCMA compile critical data employers need to successfully attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive labor market. Survey respondents will receive a summary report from WCMA after the survey concludes containing blinded and aggregated data. **These results are only available to those who participate in the survey, so [submit your responses today](#).**

Headlines

Wisconsin

- Wisconsin Public Radio: [Opponents blast CAFO's plan to expand in Pierce County](#)
- Spectrum News 1: [Wisconsin leads the nation when it comes to dairy goats](#)

National & Global

- CNN: [Diesel prices are climbing even faster than gas prices](#)
- Food & Wine: [The 25 essential American cheeses to try right now](#) (Featuring WCMA members Blakesville Creamery, Land O'Lakes - Vermont Creamery, Roelli Cheese Co., and Uplands Cheese)
- New York Public News: [More funding sought for Cornell program that supports dairy farms](#)
- eDairyNews: [Michigan raw milk bill fuels new dairy industry divide](#)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Take Advantage of World-Class Education at CheeseExpo



[Click the "Play" button](#) to hear why CheeseExpo's educational offerings are second to none!

Learn from the brightest minds in dairy at [CheeseExpo 2026](#)! Experts from the Center for Dairy Research and leading industry organizations share cutting-edge research, diverse perspectives, and practical strategies. CheeseExpo covers everything you need to stay ahead of the curve, with acclaimed speakers on topics ranging from trade volatility and the "Make America Healthy Again" movement, to the reframing of dairy sustainability efforts, to food safety and much more. Get the latest on speakers and seminar topics - and register - at [CheeseExpo.org](#).

REGISTER NOW

March 12	March 17	April 14-16	May 27
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[Food & Dairy Joint Industry Meeting with Wisconsin DNR \(Hybrid\)](#)

[Health & Safety Group Meeting \(Hybrid\)](#)

[CheeseExpo 2026](#)

[Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting \(Hybrid\)](#)

EDUCATION

Grow Your Safety Knowledge at March 17 Meeting



Build your safety knowledge base at the [next meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group](#) next Tuesday, March 17. Join in-person or online for the annual meeting of the Dairy Processing Safety Alliance, a deep dive into confined space safety, and recommendations for communicating safety standards to workers with limited English.

[RSVP NOW](#)

Interested in connecting with industry safety professionals?

Sponsorships of this event are [available now through March 13](#), including complimentary registration and recognition. Don't miss this opportunity to reach new audiences and show your support for the dairy processing industry!

[BECOME A SPONSOR](#)

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

[WisCheeseMakers.org/Events](https://www.wischeesemakers.org/Events)

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