



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



SIGNATURE EVENTS



WCMA Members Win Big at World Championship Cheese Contest

WCMA congratulates and thanks all competitors in the 2024 World Championship Cheese Contest, held last week in Madison, Wisconsin!

Special kudos go to the many WCMA members whose outstanding dairy products won gold medals in their classes: Agropur, Arla Foods, BelGioioso Cheese, Bongards Creameries, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Caputo Cheese, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, Dairy Farmers of America, Dairyfood USA, Decatur Dairy, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Foremost Farms USA, Glanbia Nutritionals, Guggisberg Cheese, Henning Cheese, Hook's Cheese Company, Kingston Cheese Cooperative, Klondike Cheese Co., Mosaic Meadows - LaClare Creamery, Lactalis, Land O'Lakes, Marieke Gouda, Masters Gallery Foods, Meister Cheese, Nasonville Dairy, Nordic Creamery, Pasture Pride Cheese, Pearl Valley Cheese, Pine River Pre-Pack, Prairie Farms Dairy, Renard's Cheese/Rosewood Dairy, Saputo, Schuman Cheese - Lake Country Dairy, V&V Supremo Foods, and Widmer's Cheese Cellars. Complete results for all classes are available at WorldChampionCheese.org.

News of the Contest - and this year's winner, Hornbacher by Michael Spycher for

Gourmino AG in Switzerland - has already spread far and wide! To date, **over 230 stories** have appeared in media outlets in Germany, the United Kingdom, India, Singapore, and the United States. Here are just a few highlights:

- *Finanzen*: [Spycher wins record fourth World Champion title with Gourmino's Hornbacher](#)
- *CBS News*: [World Championship Cheese Contest underway in Madison](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [Watch as the gooey goodness of raclette is judged at the World Championship Cheese Contest](#)
- Door County Daily News: [Renard's, Agropur take home top prizes from World Championship Cheese Contest](#) (Featuring WCMA members Agropur and Renard's Cheese/Rosewood Dairy)
- *Dairy Reporter*: [What's Hornbacher, the 2024 World Champion Cheese?](#)

A full collection of high-resolution photos from the Contest is available on [Facebook](#), along with a [full recording of the announcement](#) of the Top 20 cheeses and the 2024 World Champion. Be sure to also check out WCMA's Contest coverage on [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), and [Instagram](#).



Thank You, Contest Leadership Awardees!

WCMA thanks the 120+ B-Team volunteers who gave generously of their time, talent, and muscle to make the 2024 World Championship Cheese Contest possible. We are grateful for your essential support!

Each year, awards are given to volunteers and judges who have made outstanding contributions to the World and U.S. Championship Cheese Contests. These honors, named after Chief Judges Emeriti Bob Aschebrock and Bill Schlinsog and Contest Chairman Brian Eggebrecht, recognize incredible friends and colleagues for supporting and growing the competition with enthusiasm and skill.

That's certainly true of this year's awardees: judge Russell Smith, volunteers Kevin Thome and Bruce Workman, and the Danish Dairy Board. Congratulations and sincere thanks to all of these exceptional leaders! Read more about the Contest Leadership Awards at [WisCheeseMakers.org](#).

CHEESE EXPO

Global Technology for Dairy Processors

April 16-18, 2024 | Baird Center | Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Secure Your Spot at CheeseExpo

Just weeks remain to [register in advance for CheeseExpo 2024!](#) Join over 4,000 friends, colleagues, and peers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin April 16-18. Attendees will enjoy valuable networking, exhibits featuring cutting-edge dairy technology, thought-provoking educational offerings, and energetic celebrations of industry excellence.

Advance registration ends April 8, so [act now!](#) After April 8, all registrations must take place on-site.

ADVOCACY



Congress Advances Dairy Industry Priorities in FY2024 Appropriations Bill

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives last week [passed an appropriations bill for Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2024](#), providing funding for agencies including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

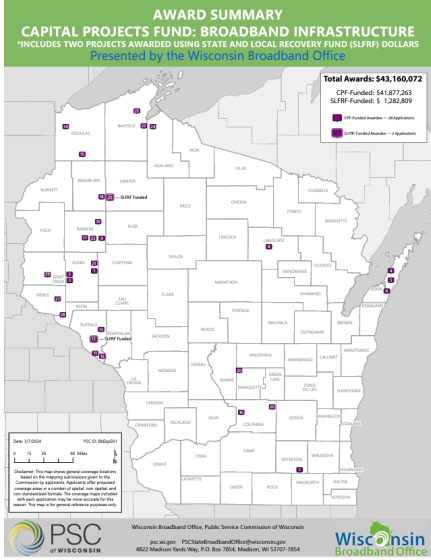
Under the new funding bill, USDA will receive an additional \$3 million - on top of \$9 million in FY2023 - to fund Healthy Fluid Milk Incentives projects, which aim to encourage SNAP recipients to purchase low-fat and fat-free milk.

The bill also directs USDA to maintain milk and dairy benefit levels at their current maximum monthly allowance in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food distribution program. The agency has previously proposed to cut the amount of dairy provided through WIC by up to six quarts per month.

Additionally, the FY2024 legislation withholds funding for new FDA sodium reduction guidelines or regulations until the agency completes a survey on the impact of short-term sodium reduction targets.

\$43M Awarded for Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Projects

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers and the state's Public Service Commission (PSCW) have awarded a total of \$43.2 million in grants to



expand high-speed internet to approximately 16,000 homes and businesses. A [complete listing](#) and [map](#) of the projects receiving awards is available online. WCMA members operating in Wisconsin can also see current broadband speeds in their area using the [PSCW's interactive broadband map](#).

WCMA has made broadband expansion one of its key policy priorities at the state and federal levels. To get involved, please contact [Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

EDUCATION



Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors

Training Spotlight: Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors

Registration is now open for WCMA's all-new [Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors](#) - designed with input from the Health & Safety Group - to help support members' efforts to keep their valued employees safe on the job. Our [next offering](#), exclusively sponsored by [Nelson-Jameson](#), is set for April 9, so act now!

This course will teach attendees about their rights; employer responsibilities; and how to identify, abate, and avoid job-related hazards they may encounter. The curriculum concentrates on the key focus areas of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's ongoing Local Emphasis Program for food processors: machine guarding, lockout/tag out, prevention of slips, trips, and falls, chemical controls, and control of hazardous energy.

Can't join in April? WCMA will offer this class four additional times this year, both virtually and in-person:

- May 14 [\(Virtual\)](#)
- June 4 [\(In-Person\)](#)
- September 24 [\(Virtual\)](#)
- October 15 [\(In-Person\)](#)

In-person classes cost \$179, including lunch and snacks. Virtual sessions are offered at just \$149. Each class is capped at 24 attendees, so don't wait!

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

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:

- March 19-21: [Cheese Grading & Evaluation](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 22: [Cheese Judging](#) - Center for Dairy Research
- March 25: [Prerequisite Programs Course](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 26-27: [HACCP for Dairy Processors](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- March 28: [Advanced HACCP: Verification and Validation Training](#) - Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
- 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
- On-demand: [Online Dairy Science and Sanitation \(English and Spanish\)](#) - Cornell University
- On-demand: [Artisan Dairy Food Safety Coaching](#) - Cornell University
- On-demand: [Online HACCP Training](#) - North Carolina State University
- On-demand: [Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry](#) - North Carolina State University
- On-demand: [Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors](#) - North Carolina State University
- On-demand: [Food Safety Basics For Artisan Cheesemakers](#) - North Carolina State University

WORKFORCE



Join in Workforce & Education Committee Meeting March 21

Make plans now to join WCMA's active [Workforce and Education Committee](#) for its next quarterly meeting, set for Thursday, March 21 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT). This free meeting, open to all WCMA members, will be held virtually.

WCMA is pleased to bring members two special presentations during this meeting. We'll begin with a look at **financial literacy resources for your employees**, with a guest speaker from the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.

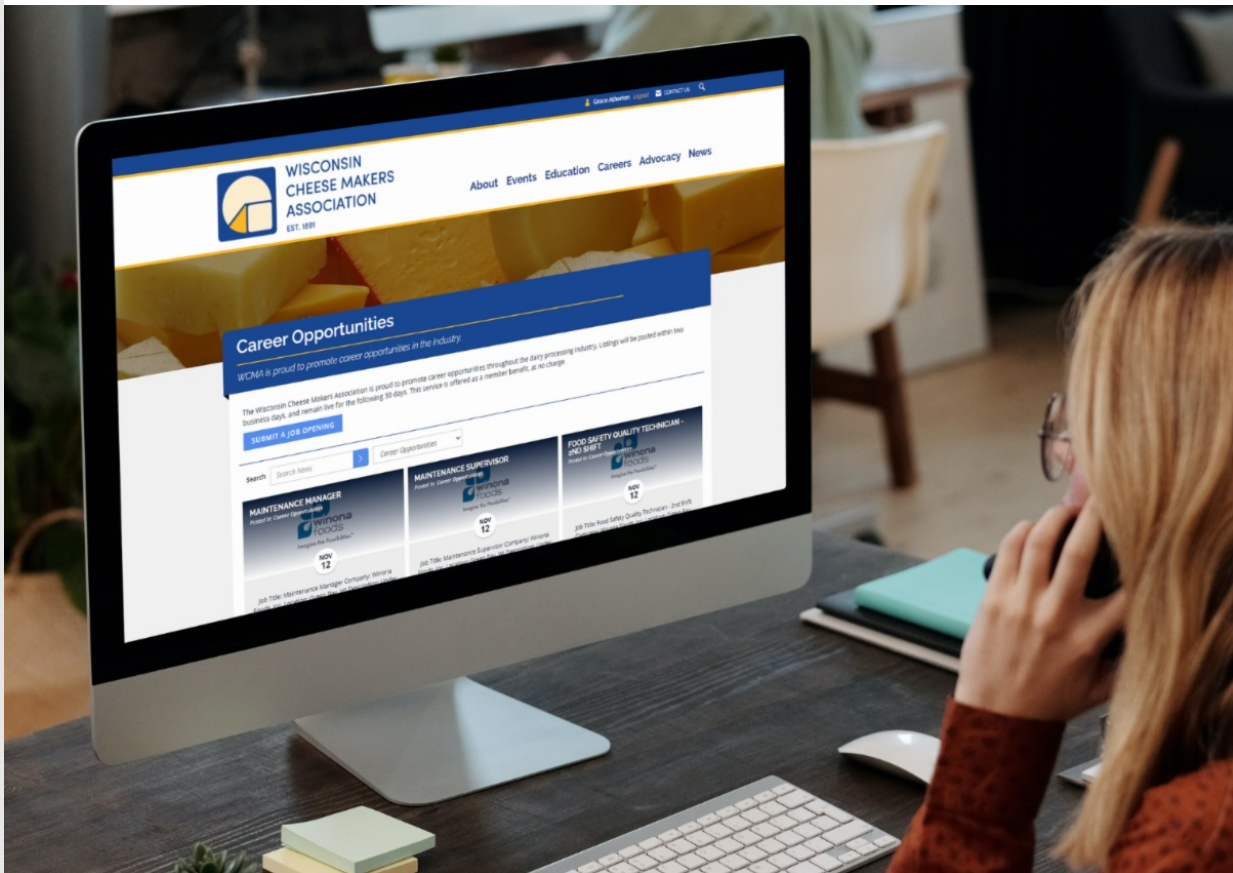
Then, we'll explore opportunities to **enhance your training programs with grant dollars**; we'll have a deep dive into Wisconsin Fast



Forward offerings, but information about available federal grant monies, too.

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

REGISTER NOW



Share Career Opportunities on Free, Online WCMA Jobs Board

Visit 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, Foremost Farms USA, and Masters Gallery Foods.

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

GRANTS

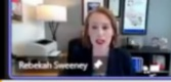


Apply by April 4 for Dairy Business Innovation Alliance Grants

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance, administered by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research, is accepting applications now through April 4 for its Dairy Business Builder grants. The reimbursement grants of up to \$100,000 each are available to dairy farmers and processors in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Full award details, an [informational webinar](#), and a link to the application platform is [available online](#).

Funding for DBIA grants is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The DBIA was first created by U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) and championed by WCMA as part of the 2018 Farm Bill.

[APPLY ONLINE](#)



ARIP Resources for Dairy Processors



Support ARIP Applications to Improve Wisconsin's Rural Roads

Limited time remains to help Wisconsin local government leaders apply for grant funding to improve their agricultural roads. Championed by WCMA and other agricultural groups, the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP) is accepting grant applications from local governments now through April 5. Up to \$50 million in funds will be awarded in this first round, followed by another round of up to \$100 million later this year.

WCMA members can take action now to support agricultural road improvements in their communities: simply complete [WCMA's two-page form](#) and share it with local government leaders. Villages, towns, and other municipalities are the primary applicants for ARIP grants, but they will need information from local businesses to be successful. Dairy processors' assistance is essential for a strong submission!

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation recently released a recording of an [informational webinar](#) detailing Wisconsin's new [Agricultural Roads Improvement Program \(ARIP\)](#). Presenters from the agency, WCMA, and municipal organizations shared information about ARIP eligibility, application procedures, and more.

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

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- **WISN-TV:** [Wisconsin cheese company says its products were not affected by a listeria outbreak](#) (Featuring WCMA member Sargento Foods)

National/International

- **RFD-TV:** [Insights into the 2024 outlook for the U.S. dairy sector](#)
- **Dairy Processing:** [New facilities could shift cheese market](#)
- **Dairy Foods:** [Midwest Dairy names new CEO](#)
- **WMFJ-TV:** [Irish company closing Lawrence County cheese plant; 66 jobs impacted](#)

USDA Awards Cheddar Contracts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has **awarded contracts** to WCMA members Bongards Creameries and Masters Gallery Foods, to deliver more than 14 million pounds of cheddar cheese for federal nutrition programs. To learn how to become a USDA-certified vendor and vie for federal contracts, find **[complete details online](#)**.

MEMBERSHIP



Support Industry Initiatives with New WCMA Sponsorship Opportunities

Show your support for industry education and connection with low-cost, high-visibility sponsorship of **[WCMA trainings](#)** and **[committee meetings](#)**. These new opportunities put your company or cooperative in the spotlight at WCMA's popular educational offerings and active member committees and workgroups.

Exclusive sponsorship opportunities are **[available online now](#)** for WCMA's Front-Line Leadership Trainings, Advanced Leadership Series, Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors, Train the Safety Trainer Program, and more. Throughout the year, **[check WisCheeseMakers.org](#)** for ways to support WCMA's Health & Safety Group, Young Professionals, Workforce & Education Committee, Policy Committee, Technology Committee, Export Workgroup, or Dairy Food Safety Alliance.

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

WELCOME



NEW WCMA MEMBERS!

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member **CERMER Ceramic Food Packaging** specializes in the conception and production of customized ceramic containers for the food industry.



New WCMA supplier member **General Films** manufactures custom high barrier flexible packaging film solutions for the institutional cheese market, from 40 lb. blocks and 500 lb. barrel liners to 640 sheets and sleeves.



New WCMA supplier member **Goodin Company** is a plumbing, HVAC and industrial wholesaler.



New WCMA supplier member **Perry Construction Management** offers capital project and construction management solutions for complex projects in the food and beverage industry.

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

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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