



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



SIGNATURE EVENTS



Build the Future with Dairy's Next Generation at CheeseExpo 2024

Register online today to meet emerging leaders of the global dairy processing industry at CheeseExpo, April 16-18 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Advance registration is open now through April 8 at [CheeseExpo.org](https://www.cheeseexpo.org).

**REGISTER
NOW**



Attendees under 40 will enjoy the chance to catch up with friends and build new connections at **WCMA's Young Professionals gathering**. On Tuesday, April 16, join WCMA at 7:00 p.m. (CT) for an evening of fun and networking at Drink Wisconsinly Pub. Please note: tickets for this gathering must be purchased separately during CheeseExpo registration.

On Wednesday, April 17, take a moment to stop in and observe the **Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest**, where teams of promising undergraduates test their skills in grading cheese, butter, yogurt, milk, and ice cream. Since 1916, the Collegiate Contest has helped students across the U.S. showcase their training, achieve recognition alongside their peers, and connect with the larger dairy processing industry.



On Wednesday evening, celebrate the deserving recipients of WCMA's Student Scholarships and the graduates of WCMA's top-rated industry education programs at the lively [Novonesis Reception & Championship Cheese Auction](#). Join this inspiring salute to the up-and-coming leaders benefiting from the Association's annual industry [scholarships](#) and [educational offerings](#) – funded in part by the auction that follows!

With nearly 300 exhibits showcasing the latest in dairy processing technology, innovative seminars led by the industry's brightest minds, and valuable opportunities to grow your network, [CheeseExpo](#) is the must-attend event of the year for dairy processing professionals worldwide. Have questions? Please contact [WCMA's Events team](#).

INDUSTRY UPDATES



Unknown Illness Affects Texas Dairy Cattle

Dairy producers last week reported a [disease outbreak of unknown origin](#) in the Texas panhandle from Dalhart to Lubbock. The outbreak has impacted several large Texas dairy farms, with cows exhibiting both sudden decreases in milk production of up to 30 pounds per day and a thick, gel-like consistency to their milk, reduced feed intake, and changes in

manure consistency. Few animals have died because of the as-yet undiagnosed condition, but some have been culled. The cause of the disease is currently under investigation, with some industry experts pointing to a potential toxin exposure or a bacterial respiratory disease.

Veterinarians across the country, [including in Wisconsin](#), are urging producers to be vigilant and report any abnormal symptoms in herds to state departments of agriculture.



USDA leaders Xochitl Torres Small (center left) and Jenny Lester Moffitt (center right) joined WCMA member employees from CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley at Natural Products Expo West 2024, where USDA announced winners of \$40.5 million in Organic Market Development Grants.

USDA Awards Organic Market Development Grants to 60 Projects

Sixty grant projects nationwide [will receive a total of approximately \\$40.5 million in funding](#) through the federal Organic Market Development Grant program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced last week. Projects are expected to benefit more than 31.8 million consumers and more than 27,000 producers through the development of new and existing organic markets, boost processing capacity, and explore emerging technologies for promoting organic commodities. A complete list of awarded projects is [available online](#).

Join Wisconsin Trade Ventures to Canada and China Dairy Expo

WCMA members operating in Wisconsin can sign up now for upcoming trade missions hosted by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP).

Connect with potential customers in Toronto and Winnipeg



April 7-12. Registration includes market research, customized one-on-one appointments, hotel accommodations and ground transportation, interpreter fees as needed, and some group meals. Please contact [WDATCP staff](#) to sign up.

Mark your calendar and contact [WDATCP staff to register](#) for the China Dairy Expo, set for mid-June to early July (exact dates coming soon). WDATCP offers a turnkey, furnished, and shared booth package at this event. Participants are responsible for airfare, hotel, and meals. This venture is funded by the [Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports](#), championed by WCMA and other state agricultural groups.

EDUCATION



Register Now for April 9 WCMA Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors

Registration is now open for WCMA's all-new [Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors](#) 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 in Madison, Wisconsin, so act now!

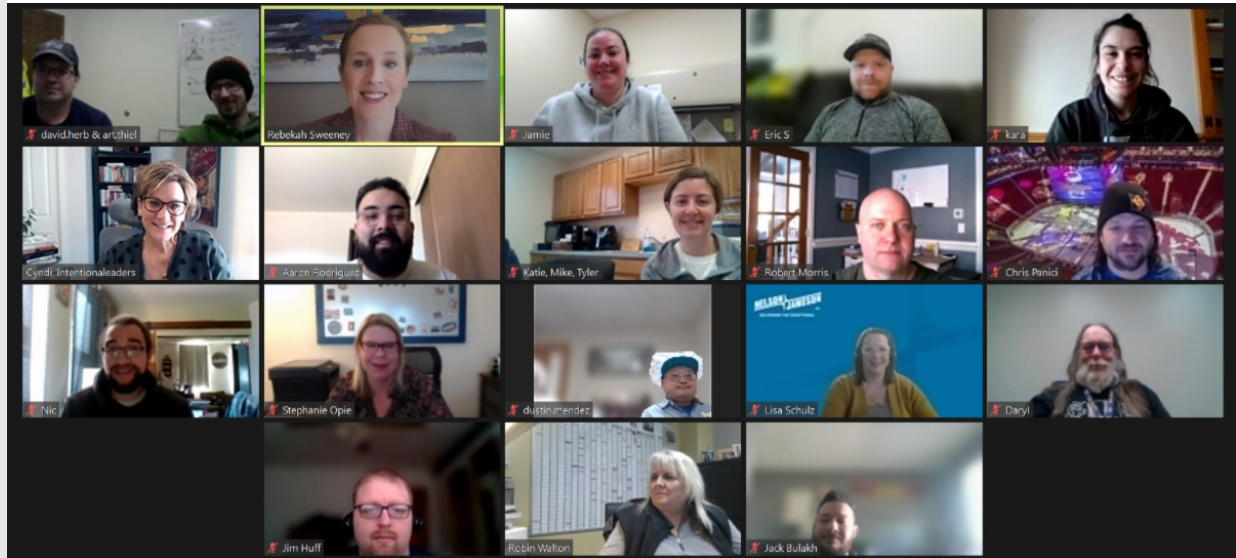
Designed with input from WCMA's Health & Safety Group, this course will teach attendees about their rights; employer responsibilities; and how to identify, abate, and avoid job-related hazards they may encounter. The curriculum concentrates on the key focus areas of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's 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? This class will be offered 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](#).



Join WCMA Front-Line Leadership April 3 for Strategies to Cultivate a Team Mentality

[Register now](#) for the next offering of [WCMA's Front-Line Leadership-Part C on April 3](#), focused on how your plant leaders can foster a team mentality at work by solving conflict collaboratively and setting goals to motivate others. This virtual, one-day course is designed for new and seasoned supervisors of focused teams.

Over 1,000 WCMA member employees have sharpened their leadership skills and expanded their networks through our top-rated [Front-Line Leadership training series](#). The course is offered à la carte in three parts that may be taken in any order. Tuition is \$135 per person, per course for virtual offerings, and \$159 for in-person offerings. Part A covers essential leadership skills, while Part B offers strategies to boost staff performance. Part C helps participants learn to cultivate high-performing, positive teams. All three parts are offered in both in-person and virtual tracks.

Have questions? Please contact [WCMA Membership Director Sara Schmidt](#).

Optimizing Sustainability: Materiality Assessment Workshop for Dairy Processors

May 7-8, 2024
Madison, Wisconsin

Space limited to just 15 businesses – act now!



REGISTER NOW:
[WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.WisCheeseMakers.org)

RSVP for WCMA Materiality Assessment Workshop May 7-8

Sign up now at [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.WisCheeseMakers.org) for an exciting new opportunity from WCMA: **[Optimizing Sustainability: Materiality Assessment Workshop for Dairy Processors.](#)** Space in this hands-on workshop is **limited to 15 businesses**, so don't delay!

**SECURE YOUR
SPACE NOW**

This insightful new offering is designed to help dairy processors create and complete a materiality assessment for their company or cooperative. As a first step in mapping out a sustainability strategy, a well-conducted materiality assessment can help businesses identify key sustainability priorities and answer customer-driven questions while also helping processors meet the growing demands of measuring and reporting their sustainability goals and practices.

Participants in this workshop will experience a comprehensive exploration of key sustainability topics, materiality assessment development steps, stakeholder engagement, data collection and analysis, and more. Supported by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and other relevant industry standards, workshop content will be delivered by WCMA partners and sustainability leaders **[Harbor Environmental](#)** and **[Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.](#)**

In addition to this in-person offering, attendees will have access to two virtual group follow-up sessions and up to three hours of 1:1 consulting time with Harbor Environmental. Participants should expect to complete their materiality assessment within six months of the initial workshop.

Questions about this workshop or WCMA's sustainability programming can be directed to **[WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen.](#)**



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Optimizing Sustainability with Materiality Assessments

March 12, 2024



Brush Up on Materiality Assessment Basics in Free WCMA Webinar

Looking for an introduction to materiality assessments before registering for WCMA's new workshop? Watch our latest [members-only webinar online now](#) to learn the basics. This one-hour session, recorded March 12, features expert guest speakers from Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and Harbor Environmental - plus a firsthand perspective from member cooperative **Foremost Farms USA**.

[VIEW WEBINAR](#)



WCMA Members Hear Environmental Updates at Annual Joint Industry Meeting



WCMA thanks the dozens of members who participated both in person and virtually at last week's 11th Annual Joint Industry Meeting with Wisconsin DNR. This gathering allows for candid and productive dialogue between WCMA members, food industry processors and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Interested in building your network and staying up-to-date on environmental, regulatory, and technical topics? Join WCMA's Technology Committee - free and open to all members. Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org/Committees](https://www.wischeesemakers.org/committees) for details.

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 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
- May 8: [Comprehensive HACCP Training for Wisconsin Food Processors and Manufacturers](#) - M3 Insurance
- 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 Virtual WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Meeting March 21

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

Attendees will hear from David Mancl, Director of the Office of Financial Literacy at the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, on financial literacy resources available to your dairy processing employees. Sara Tupper, Program & Policy Analyst at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and Ellen Olson, HR Manager of Westby Cooperative Creamery, will also share information on grant opportunities available to help members enhance their in-house training programs.

As always, WCMA staff will preview a wide variety of upcoming opportunities for member learning and connection. Have questions or ideas? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

RSVP TODAY



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JOBS BOARD



Add Free, Online WCMA Jobs Board to Recruitment Toolbox

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, Bassett Mechanical, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, Foremost Farms USA, and Masters Gallery Foods.

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

SUBMIT JOB OPENINGS

Wisconsin

- *Brownfield Ag News:* [Winning cheese wins more business](#) (Featuring WCMA member Emmi Roth)
- *Green Bay Press-Gazette:* [Fresh. Buttery. Soapy. Astringent. Enter the world of professional cheese tasting.](#)
- *Dairy Foods:* [LaClare Creamery develops distinctly delicious goat cheese with 100 percent Wisconsin milk](#) (Featuring WCMA member Mosaic Meadows - LaClare Creamery)

National/International

- *Dairy Processing:* [Association insights: Advocating for dairy industry, public safety](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- *Dairy Foods:* [Women in dairy are forging their own path to success](#) (Featuring WCMA members International Food Products Corporation, Nelson-Jameson, and Sargento Foods)
- *Olean Times Herald:* [New Great Lakes Cheese plant on schedule](#) (Featuring WCMA member Great Lakes Cheese)

GRANTS



Proposals Due April 4 for \$100,000 DBIA 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.

Members with questions may contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#).

[APPLY ONLINE](#)

ARIP Resources for Dairy Processors



WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

Wisconsin Agricultural Road Improvement Program
Dairy Manufacturer Processor Application Support Form

Name of Agricultural Producer (Dairy Manufacturer or Processor) _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Address _____
Primary Government Sponsor (Municipality) _____
Name of Project Application Road, Street, or Highway _____

1. How many full-time employees do you have? (Place an X by the option that best describes your operation.)

- 1-25
- 26-50
- 51-100
- 101-500
- 500+

2. Please provide your operation's annual gross sales. (Show a five-year average is preferred.)

3. What types of products are produced at your facility? (Place an X by the option that applies.)

- Dairy (Milk)
- Dairy (Cheese)

Please question? Please contact WCMA's Senior Director of Programs & Policy Services, Secretary at secretary@wisconsincheesemakers.org or 608-785-5816. Thank you!



Access Support Form at
WisCheeseMakers.org

Help Wisconsin Local Governments Apply for Ag Road Improvement Grants

Limited time remains to support Wisconsin's local governments in their applications for grant funding to improve their agricultural roads. The state's Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP), championed by WCMA and other agricultural groups, is accepting applications now through April 5 for an initial funding round of up to \$50 million. Another round of funding totaling \$100 million will launch later this year.

WCMA members in Wisconsin can take action now by completing our simple, [two-page form](#) and sharing it with their 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.

For more information about ARIP eligibility, application procedures, and more, watch the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's [informational webinar](#) featuring presenters from the agency, WCMA, and municipal organizations.

MEMBERSHIP



Connect with Industry as a WCMA Training and Meeting Sponsor

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 Manufacturers, Processors, & Marketers



New WCMA dairy processor member [Oceanside Dairy](#) is a global food ingredients supplier with focus on specific bulk and specialty dairy products whose founders have over fifty years of combined experience in distributing, marketing and sourcing dairy ingredients.

Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [High Point Logistics](#) is a dairy industry partner for moving and storing temperature-controlled proteins, produce, and products.



New WCMA supplier member [Precision Process and Control](#) specializes in process design, project management, and controls & automation in the food & beverage industry.



New WCMA supplier member [Consumer Physics](#) is the developer of SCiO, the world's first pocket-sized connected micro-spectrometer.



New WCMA supplier member [Timken](#) provides engineering expertise in friction management, power transmission, and materials science for the food & beverage industry.

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