



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



INDUSTRY UPDATES



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Detected in Southwest Dairy Herds

Dairy cows on farms in Texas and Kansas have tested positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), the [U.S. Department of Agriculture said March 25](#). The agency confirmed there is no threat to human health. Milk and dairy products remain safe to consume thanks to pasteurization, routine testing, and well-established state and federal safety protocols.

In a [joint statement issued Monday](#), national dairy organizations including International Dairy Foods Association shared additional information on HPAI, pasteurization, and U.S. dairy exports. The statement also offered resources to help dairy producers protect their herds and businesses.

WCMA is working with Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin and other industry partners to stay apprised of the situation and will keep members informed of relevant updates. Members with questions or incoming media inquiries on this topic should contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) or [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#).



WCMA SCHOLARSHIPS

WCMA Announces Scholarship Winners to be Celebrated at CheeseExpo

WCMA is pleased to [announce the seven winners of our annual scholarship awards](#) supporting emerging dairy industry leaders. Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org/Scholarships](https://www.wis cheesemakers.org/scholarships) to learn more about this year's awardees:

- The WCMA Myron P. "Mike" Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarships, worth \$3,000 each, will be awarded to **MaKenzie Skibbie** of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery and a junior at University of Wisconsin-River Falls, as well as **Gabrielle Renard** of Renard's Cheese/Rosewood Dairy and a junior at University of Minnesota.
- The WCMA Supplier Scholarships, worth \$3,000 each, will be awarded to **Jacob Kirsling** of R.W. Baron Process Equipment and attending University of Wisconsin-River Falls in the fall, **Danielle Mauhar** of Novonesis and a freshman at the University of Wisconsin - Platteville, and **Elijah Ronsman** of HART Design & Manufacturing, a junior at University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.
- The Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship Supporting Skilled Trades in the Dairy Industry, worth \$2,000 each, will be awarded to **Kendall Luzinski** studying at North Central Technical College and Aaron Schulz of Sargento Foods, studying at Lakeland University.

[Register now](#) to join in celebrating these exceptional students - and raising funds for industry education - during the Novonesis Reception & Championship Cheese Auction at [CheeseExpo 2024!](#)

[REGISTER NOW](#)



WCMA ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

Save the Date for Annual WCMA Member Meeting May 22

Mark your calendar and make plans now

to gather with dairy peers Wednesday, May 22 in Madison, Wisconsin for WCMA's Annual Member Meeting! Our concise program will be packed with information and time to network with colleagues and friends.



REGISTER NOW

We'll recognize legislative champions for the dairy industry and preview what's next for WCMA, in addition to our featured presentation: Cybersecurity Strategies for Dairy Processors. The risk of cyberattacks on dairy processors, large and small, is higher than ever. Gain essential knowledge from industry leaders and issue experts as they share case studies and – more importantly – steps to guard against costly data breaches and operations disruptions.

Have questions about the 2024 Annual Member Meeting? Please contact [WCMA Business Coordinator Carah Maier](#).

Show Your Support as an Annual Meeting Sponsor

Connect with WCMA members and show your support for WCMA's programs and services as a [sponsor of the Annual Member Meeting](#). Sponsorships of \$500 include the following benefits:

- One free meeting registration
- Recognition during the WCMA Annual Meeting and in all advance meeting promotions
- Your organization's full-color logo on the event webpage
- Signage with your organization's full-color logo displayed at the meeting

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](#) and secure your sponsorship no later than Tuesday, May 14. Thank you for your support!

BECOME A SPONSOR



WCMA Announces Cheese Technology Tour in Portugal in Fall 2024

WCMA is pleased to announce a [Cheese Technology Tour in Portugal](#), set for September 27 to October 6, 2024 – an opportunity for members to visit cheese factories, markets and enjoy the culture of this great nation.

WCMA can welcome up to 33 travelers for this special event, which includes four days in and around Lisbon, three days in the Douro Valley region and three days in Porto, with four cheese factory visits in all.

Registration and deposits are due April 15, 2024. Per person pricing includes airfare, hotel accommodations for eight nights, ground transportation, daily buffet breakfast, group dinners, and more. [View the tour brochure](#) for complete information and a link to register for the trip.

[DOWNLOAD BROCHURE](#)

WCMA reserves the right to apportion availability to assure that active dairy processors and young professionals have opportunities to register, as well as legacy (retired) professionals.

For any questions related to the tour or payments, please contact both jaumetours@gmail.com and teresa@rift-valley.com. For other questions, please contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#).

ADVOCACY



Wisconsin Dairy Hauling Bill Signed Into Law

WCMA last week [applauded Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers' action to sign Senate Bill \(SB\) 431 into law](#), raising dairy hauling capacity on the state's roads. Authored by Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) and Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc), SB 431 extends the state's current allowance for milk hauling of 98,000 pounds over six axles to include all liquid dairy products, including liquid whey. Many thanks go to members of WCMA's active Policy Committee who advocated for the bill.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation will create and offer a new permit, inclusive of all liquid dairy products, available to haulers within the next three weeks. Haulers' current permits remain unchanged. All existing permit holders will be contacted directly, but if you'd like more information, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



WCMA Advocates for 2025 Dairy Business

Innovation Initiatives Appropriation

WCMA last week submitted a [Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations request](#) of \$40 million to federal lawmakers for the [Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives \(DBII\)](#). These initiatives support direct-to-business grants and industry research and education via four centers, including the [Dairy Business Innovation Alliance](#) run by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research. Since DBII was launched in the 2018 Farm Bill, championed by U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin), it has directed \$165 million in federal funding to support farmers and processors.

WCMA's appropriations request is an important initial step, but our Association must continue to work to build Congressional awareness of DBII and to earn long-term funding for the program in the Farm Bill as well. WCMA will keep members informed of opportunities to engage in federal advocacy.

GRANTS

Applications Due April 4 for Dairy Business Builder Grants



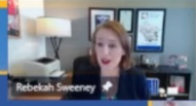
The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance, administered by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research, is accepting applications now through April 4 for its Dairy Business Builder grants. The reimbursement grants of up to \$100,000 each are available to dairy farmers and processors in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, 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](#)

Have questions about applying for a DBIA grant? Contact [WCMA Grants & Business Programs Director Danica Nilsestuen](#) by Friday, March 29.

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 approximate annual gross sales. (Show a few year average is preferred.)

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

- Dairy (Milk)
- Dairy (Cheese)

Please contact WISCONSIN State Director of Programs & Policy Services Secretary at WISCONSIN@wisconsincheesemakers.org or 608-785-5856. Thank you!



Access Support Form at
WisCheeseMakers.org

Help Wisconsin Local Governments Apply for Ag Road Improvement Grants by April 5

Act now 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.

EDUCATION



Space Available in April 3 WCMA Front-Line Leadership Class

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 both 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. 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. Tuition is \$135 per person, per course for virtual offerings, and \$159 for in-person offerings.

RSVP NOW

Have questions? Please contact **WCMA Membership Director Sara Schmidt**.



Register for New WCMA Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors

Registration is now open for WCMA's all-new [Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors](#), helping to 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.

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.

REGISTER TODAY

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](#).



Limited Space Remaining in New WCMA Materiality Assessment Workshop

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 remains for **just seven more companies or cooperatives to join**, 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**.

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 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

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- De Daily Dutchman*: [Gouda Glorie: Marieke is wereldkampioen Goudse kaasmaker](#) (Featuring WCMA member Marieke Gouda)
- Baldwin Bulletin*: [Successful cheddar production means UW-River Falls dairy plant is up and running](#)

National/International

- Dairy Foods*: [CheeseExpo returns in April](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- Dairy Processing*: [Association insights: Advocating for dairy industry, public safety](#) (Featuring WCMA)
- Food & Wine*: [It's official: Ina Garten's favorite butter is the best in the world](#) (Featuring WCMA)

WORKFORCE



WCMA Workforce & Education Committee Shares Financial Literacy, Training Resources

Thanks go to all who joined last week's quarterly meeting of WCMA's Workforce & Education Committee. During the meeting, representatives from Wisconsin's Department of Financial Services (WDFI) presented on [ELEVATE Wisconsin](#), a financial literacy tool that employers can share with their workforce. A recording of their presentation is [now available online](#). Members with questions may contact [WDFI staff](#).

Committee members also learned about the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) [Fast Forward Training Grants](#), designed to reimburse the costs of customized occupational training for unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. The next grant opportunity is expected to open this summer, and members can [sign up online now](#) to receive updates. A recording of this presentation is also [available online](#). Members with questions may contact [DWD staff](#) or [Ellen Olson](#) of WCMA member Westby Cooperative Creamery (a recent grant recipient).

Interested in joining future meetings of the Workforce & Education Committee? Please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).



WCMA Webinar

Safety Spotlight: Products to Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

Join Free WCMA Webinar April 9 on Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

Register now for WCMA's [next free, members-only webinar](#) on Tuesday, April 9 at 1:00 p.m. (CT), spotlighting products to prevent slips, trips, and falls.

Our featured speakers Tony Lee of Key Resin Company/Flow Resin, Courtney Boeger of Nelson-Jameson, and Jim Miller of Saldesia will deliver educational presentations focused on solutions in flooring, footwear, lifts & ladders, and more to help dairy processors keep their team members safe on the job.



JOIN WEBINAR

Presenters will reserve time to field audience questions during the webinar. If you'd like to share a question in advance, please email [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by Monday, April 8 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

This offering is the latest in WCMA's [monthly webinar series](#). Webinar topics are driven by WCMA member feedback and cover a range of themes such as business development, communication strategies, and industry resources. Suggestions for future webinars are [welcome anytime](#).

MEMBERSHIP



Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Clayco](#) is a full-service, turnkey real estate development, master planning, architecture, engineering, and construction firm.



New WCMA supplier member [Evapco](#) is a provider of evaporators, hygienic air handlers, condensers, controls and other industrial and HVAC refrigeration equipment.



New WCMA supplier member [One Source Risk Management](#), a division of Alliant Insurance Services, is an insurance consultancy specializing in trade credit insurance, political risk insurance, and working capital solutions.



New WCMA supplier member [PCL Construction](#) is a full-service construction firm offering services at all scales and under all procurement models.



New WCMA supplier member [Placon](#) is a designer and manufacturer of stock and custom-designed plastic thermoforming and injection molded packaging.

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

Stay Connected with WCMA

Thanks for subscribing to WCMA's weekly e-newsletter! This benefit - as well as communications about WCMA's programs, services, and signature events - is available to all WCMA member employees at no extra cost.

You can customize your subscriptions anytime by [logging in at WisCheeseMakers.org](#) and selecting the communications you'd like to receive. If you haven't created a login yet,

simply click "Join," then "Create an Account" in the top right corner of our homepage.
Need help? Check out our [short video tutorial](#).

WisCheeseMakers.org
(608) 286-1001



Wisconsin Cheese Makers Assn. | 5117 West Terrace Drive, Suite 402, Madison, WI 53718

[Unsubscribe news@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:news@wischeesemakers.org)

[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by news@wischeesemakers.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!