

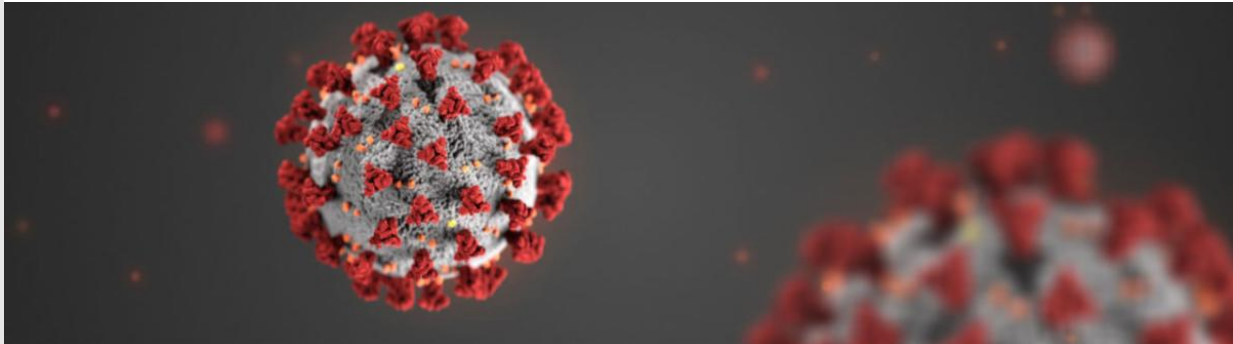


# WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



## COVID-19 UPDATES



### Wisconsin Begins Vaccination of Phase 1B; Dairy Processors May Seek Appointments

The State of Wisconsin on Monday [opened COVID-19 vaccination eligibility](#) to its Phase 1B population, including essential employees in Wisconsin dairy manufacturing and processing plants.

Eligibility does not guarantee an immediate vaccination appointment, and Wisconsin is urging vaccinators to continue to prioritize appointments for members of the Phase 1A population and for educators and child care providers in the Phase 1B population. State officials anticipate vaccination of the Phase 1B population will take several months.

#### How to Get an Appointment

There are many ways for a person in the Phase 1B population to secure a vaccination appointment. Here are the primary options:

- Call your health care provider.
- Call 1-800-Walgreens or visit [www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19](http://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19) to find a Walgreens pharmacy that is scheduling vaccine appointments nearest to you. Walgreens is Wisconsin's selected Federal Retail Pharmacy Partner, and received vaccine doses directly from the federal government, in addition to the state's official allocation.
- Make use of the [Wisconsin Vaccine Registry](#), expected to launch in early March. The registry will allow individuals to fill out a questionnaire determining their eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine and then walk them through the appointment scheduling process. If an individual is not yet eligible to get the vaccine, or no appointments are currently available, they can be placed on a wait-list.
- Participate in a community-based vaccination clinic. To determine if, when and where a clinic is being held, [contact your county public health officer](#).
- Participate in an employer-supported on-site vaccination clinic. Employers who wish to host a clinic should [contact their county public health officer](#) to be connected with a vaccinator.

#### Verification of Phase 1B Status

Wisconsin officials note that employers are welcome to provide a letter that their employees could present at the time of vaccination to verify their status as a member of

Phase 1B. WCMA has prepared a [sample, fillable letter](#) for your use. An employee's pay stub or work ID can also be used to verify status. Self-attestation forms will also be available for Phase 1B employees to sign when they are vaccinated, if they do not have another way to verify their status.

Note, a person cannot be asked to show any government-issued ID when receiving the vaccine.

### Additional Resources

The State of Wisconsin has shared the following resources for essential employers:

- A [map of Wisconsin vaccinators](#) with contact information
- A [two-page Phase 1B fact sheet](#) for essential employers
- A [state-specific FAQ](#) on vaccine eligibility
- Printable [posters and graphics](#) to share fact-based information on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines

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## Minnesota Likely to Begin Essential Worker Vaccination in Late March

Minnesota officials today confirmed the state will [begin vaccination of essential workers](#), including dairy processing workers, as well as those individuals deemed medically vulnerable, once 70 percent of its senior population are vaccinated, perhaps by the end of March. State health officials say many front-line essential workers will be vaccinated at their workplace.

### WCMA Offering Vaccine Eligibility Status Reports Each Thursday

WCMA is tracking vaccination 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.

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## One-Dose Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Approved; 4M Doses Immediately Distributed

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration [approved Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine](#) for emergency use on Sunday. Unlike the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one dose, and can be kept in a refrigerator for up to three months, easing shipping and distribution concerns.

Johnson & Johnson is now distributing 4 million doses of the vaccine, and plans to distribute 20 million doses by the end of March. Wisconsin will receive 47,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine next week, an amount Governor Tony Evers called a "game changer."

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## Senate Set to Consider \$1.9T Relief Package

The U.S. Senate is set to take up President Joe Biden's [\\$1.9 trillion coronavirus aid package](#) this week, following House approval on Saturday. Democrats are working to get the package approved by March 14, when many unemployment aids are set to expire. Vice President Kamala Harris will likely have to break a tied Senate vote, as the outcome is expected to fall on party lines in the 50-50 chamber.

Here's a look at what's in the package.

### **Direct Relief Payments**

The legislation provides \$422 billion for a tax rebate amounting to \$1,400 for a single taxpayer, or \$2,800 for a married couple that files jointly, plus \$1,400 per dependent. Individuals earning up to \$75,000 would get the full amount, as would married couples with joint incomes up to \$150,000, with decreasing amounts of aid until the program's cut-off at \$100,000 for a single taxpayer and \$200,000 for married couples.

### **Child Tax Break**

The package will increase the federal child tax credit to \$3,000 for each child aged 6-17 and to \$3,600 for each younger child; the current tax credit per child is \$2,000. Families would receive the full credits, regardless of how much they make in a year.

### **Business Aid**

The bill provides another \$7.25 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, and establishes a new \$25 billion program to support restaurants and bars hurt by the pandemic.

### **Unemployment Aid**

The bill extends expanded federal unemployment benefits, with an increase to \$400 per week over and above current state offerings.

### **Pandemic Initiatives**

The bill provides \$46 billion to expand COVID-19 testing and contact tracing, and offers \$14 billion to expedite distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

### **School Aid**

The bill calls for \$130 billion in aid for K-12 schools, with monies to be used to reduce class sizes, facilitate social distancing, install ventilation systems and purchase personal protective equipment. Colleges and universities stand to receive \$40 billion, to be used to defray pandemic-related losses incurred and to provide more direct aid to students for food, housing and technology.

### **State and Local Government Aid**

The legislation would send \$350 billion to state and local governments to offset hits to their tax base, and to support pandemic-related initiatives.

The bill also initially contained a provision to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour by June 2025, but it is not expected to be included in the final package.

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## **New Wisconsin Law Grants Co-ops More Flexibilities in Times of Emergency**

Late last week, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers signed a [WCMA-backed bill](#) into law, allowing cooperatives to hold their annual member meetings and special meetings, and conduct votes, remotely. Wisconsin Act 5 also allows a cooperative's board of directors to adopt by laws that are effective only in an emergency.

WCMA is proud to advocate for legislative changes that support our members' work. To get involved in WCMA's active Policy Committee, please contact [WCMA staff](#).

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## **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 the whole team at Marieke Gouda, which continues to work diligently throughout the pandemic to produce their award-winning cheeses for the public. 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](#).

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## Coronavirus Headline News

### Dairy Industry

- *WisPolitics.com*: [U.S. Reps. Kind and Fortenberry: Introduce bipartisan legislative fix to make more farmers and ranchers eligible for Paycheck Protection Program loans.](#)
- *Oregonian*: [As federal food box program nears its end, agricultural and anti-hunger groups seek extension](#)

### Wisconsin

- *WLUK-TV*: [Wisconsin reports fewest new COVID-19 cases since August, no new deaths](#)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [Survey: Nearly half of Wisconsin manufacturers say business still down](#)

### National/International

- *Associated Press*: [CDC: Ten percent of U.S. adult population fully vaccinated for COVID-19](#)
- *Politico*: [U.S. poised to have 3M vaccine doses available per day by April](#)
- *BBC News*: [COVID-19 variants pose 'real threat' to vaccine progress, CDC warns](#)
- *Associated Press*: [States easing virus restrictions despite experts' warnings](#)

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## 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](#) 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

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### Apply Now for DBIA Dairy Processor Grants

Dairy processors and farmers are invited to [apply now](#) for direct-to-business grants of up to \$50,000 through the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), a partnership between the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Center for Dairy Research. This spring, DBIA will award a total of \$1 million in grants.



Dairy processors and farmers in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin are eligible to apply. Projects must focus on dairy farm diversification, the development of value-added dairy products, or dairy product exporting. Applications are due April 30. Complete details are available [online](#).

Applicants are encouraged to attend a free [DBIA webinar](#) on Tuesday, March 9 at 1:30 p.m. CT to gain a better understanding of the reimbursement grant program and tips for submitting a competitive application. Additional details can be found in the [DBIA grant guide](#).

Questions? Contact [WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney](#).

**APPLY NOW**

## ADVOCACY

### Vilsack Confirmed as U.S. Agriculture Secretary



Tom Vilsack was sworn into office Wednesday, beginning his second appointment as U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary. The Senate voted overwhelmingly to confirm him on Tuesday.

Vilsack served as USDA Secretary during the Obama Administration, the only member of the Cabinet to complete two full terms. Most recently, he served as president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, and has been a strong advocate for the dairy industry.

WCMA has supported the Vilsack nomination throughout the process, previously urging his confirmation in a [letter](#) delivered in early February.

# IN THE NEWS

## Wisconsin

- Dairy Stream Podcast: [Attention cheese lovers: Check out Cheeselandia](#)

## National/International

- Brownfield Ag News: [January milk production still rising, U.S. loses seven percent of dairies](#)
- Hoard's Dairyman: [Dairy-based sports drink launches with industry support](#)
- Dairy Reporter: [Good Culture partners with Dairy Farmers of America with Path To Pasture program](#)
- Capital Press: [Krysta Harden named USDEC chief](#)
- Yahoo Finance: [The worldwide cheese industry is expected to reach a value of \\$105.9 billion by 2026](#)

# SIGNATURE EVENTS



JOIN WCMA FOR A 2021  
**CONTEST  
CELEBRATION**

[WorldChampionCheese.org](http://WorldChampionCheese.org) March 2 & 3

## Online Contest Celebration Today & Tomorrow

Join an online celebration of the World and U.S. Championship Cheese Contests, with free, original programming streaming on [WorldChampionCheese.org](http://WorldChampionCheese.org) today, Tuesday March 2 and tomorrow, Wednesday, March 3.

Today at 3 p.m. (CT), WCMA is looking 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.

Then, dive into the minds of cheese judges. Jill Allen of Tillamook Creamery and Craig Gile of Cabot Cheese, veteran judges from World and U.S. competitions, detail the challenges - and joys - of evaluating world-class cheddars. Gurth Pretty of Lakeview Cheese and Chad Galer of Dairy Management Inc., rising stars in the expert judging community, bring new knowledge and laughs, as they walk through cheese curd judging methods. Legendary experts 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 valued specialists 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.

On Wednesday, March 3 at 3 p.m. (CT), meet 10 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!

Viewers are 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](#).

# CHEESE EXPO

## GLOBAL ONLINE

### Register Now for CheeseExpo Global Online

CheeseExpo Global Online offers three days of educational programming, networking, interactive online exhibits and celebrations of industry excellence April 6-8.

CheeseExpo Global Online is a great value for dairy processors, offering FREE access to Virtual Exhibits, live Ideas Showcase offerings and Spotlight Events that will bring industry together. By upgrading to [Full Registration](#), attendees gain exclusive access to a host of Keynote presentations and educational seminars.

[Keynote presentations](#) will kick off each day's official programming, offering attendees an in-depth look at timely industry opportunities, challenges and consumer trends. Attend the RELCO® Opening Keynote, DSM Keynote Event: WCMA Recognition Awards and the Amcor Flexibles North America Keynote Address to learn from dairy industry CEOs and top marketing experts.

A dozen seminars at CheeseExpo Global Online offer the latest in dairy processing technology and the science behind dairy quality, insights on opportunities in market sectors and sales abroad, practical guidance for crisis management, workforce development and much more.

CheeseExpo Global Online features unique business opportunities for industry suppliers, including personalized [virtual exhibits](#). Exhibiting supplier companies can connect directly with attendees via messaging, video, or audio during exhibit hours, allowing for maximum interaction. Live or prerecorded Ideas Showcase presentations, included in the main program agenda, create a platform for suppliers to highlight their businesses to a high-volume audience.

Cap off each day of CheeseExpo Global Online with special Spotlight Events, including the Tetra Pak Spotlight Event, the Chr. Hansen Championship Cheese Auction and the WCMA Awards Banquet Highlights. Don't miss out! Access everything CheeseExpo Global Online has to offer and register for Full Registration now at [CheeseExpoGO.org](#).

**REGISTER  
NOW**

**EDUCATION**



## Register Now for WCMA Leadership Training

Just **two** seats remain available in WCMA's popular Front-Line Leadership Training - Part C, which focuses on how to build a team. This class will be held Thursday, April 15. This training will be offered remotely via a digital platform facilitating small group and partner discussions, interactive polling features and participant chat. Tuition is \$135 per person.

**REGISTER  
NOW**

## 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 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](#)

**WORKFORCE**



# WCMA



# JOB FAIR

## Register Now for WCMA Virtual Job Fair

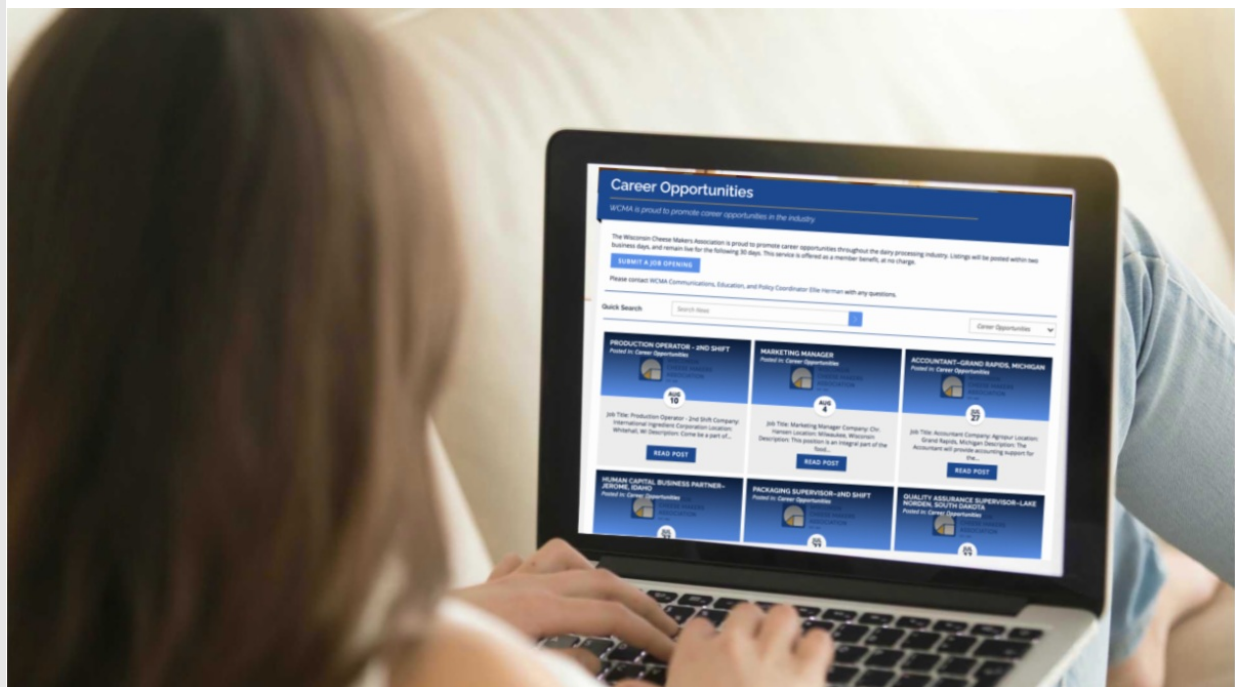
Find the career or the team member that's right for you at the [2021 WCMA Virtual Job Fair](#)! Set for **Wednesday, March 24 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. (CT)**, event registration is open now through March 17 at [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org). This event is free for prospective employees 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](http://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 30 industry career opportunities from member companies Agropur, Arena Cheese, Baker Cheese, Great Lakes Cheese Company, 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](#)

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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)

