



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

March 3, 2026
news@wischeesemakers.org



EVENTS & CONNECTION

World Championship Cheese Contest Kicks Off in Madison



The World Championship Cheese Contest is now underway in Madison, Wisconsin! Experience the action in-person during [public hours](#) today and tomorrow, Wednesday, March 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (CT). [Refresh our website](#) for live results from the competition. Then, join us online at WorldChampionCheese.org or on [Facebook](#) for the exciting livestreamed announcement of the World Champion, held on Thursday, March 5 at 2:00 p.m. (CT). [READ MORE...](#)

March 3-5	March 12	March 17	April 14-16
2026 World Championship Cheese Contest	Food & Dairy Joint Annual Meeting with Wisconsin DNR (Hybrid)	Health & Safety Group Meeting (Hybrid)	CheeseExpo 2026

NEWS

USDA Seeks Input on Manufacturing Cost Survey by March 30



USDA last week issued an [advance notice](#) of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) seeking stakeholder input on the development of mandatory dairy manufacturing cost and product yield surveys, as authorized by the "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act of 2025. The new program will apply to plants already reporting under the Dairy Products Mandatory Reporting Program (DPMRP) and will require USDA to collect, verify, analyze, and aggregate cost and yield data for products including cheddar (40-lb blocks), butter, dry whey, and nonfat dry milk.

AMS will use information from the surveys, which WCMA advocated for during the Federal Milk Marketing Order debate, to publish a biennial Manufacturing Cost and Product Yield Report, with all released data subject to strict confidentiality standards.

AMS is requesting detailed feedback on what cost categories and data points should be collected, how expenses should be allocated across product lines, appropriate survey timeframes, reporting frequency, yield calculations, and verification procedures. Comments are due by March 30, 2026, via [Regulations.gov](#).

WCMA will submit a comment on behalf of members, but those with questions in need of support to file their own comments, may contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

Senate Ag Signals Farm Bill Timeline as House Process Begins



U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman (R-AR) now says his committee will consider [its own farm bill](#) draft in late Spring 2026, with specific timing dependent in part on how quickly the [House Agriculture Committee moves on its proposal](#), now under consideration. Congress has not approved a farm bill since 2018, and Capitol insiders note any new proposal will have a challenging path to passage, with Republicans holding only a slim majority and Democrats decrying cuts to nutrition programs.

Appeals Court Rules Against Pause in Tariff Refund Process



A federal appeals court on Monday [declined to delay implementation](#) of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision striking down most of the Trump-era global tariffs. The Trump Administration on Friday had requested a 90-day pause in legal proceedings, following a [Supreme Court ruling](#) on February 20 that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) did not authorize the president to impose sweeping duties last year.

This week's ruling means U.S. Court of International Trade can now begin determining how refunds will be processed for businesses that challenged the tariffs. The Administration has previously stated it would issue refunds, with interest, if the tariffs were ultimately found unlawful, though federal officials have cautioned in recent days that the process could take years.

USDA Extends Dairy Forward Pricing Through September 30



In a final [rule published Monday](#), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reauthorized the Dairy Forward Pricing Program (DFPP) through September 30, 2026. This program, for which WCMA advocates, permits farmers to voluntarily establish forward price contracts with milk handlers for pooled milk utilized in Class II, III, or IV manufacturing under the Federal Milk Marketing Orders. Via DFPP, handlers may compensate farmers according to the negotiated contract price rather than the minimum federal order blend price that would otherwise apply to pooled milk.

Headlines

Wisconsin

- PBS Wisconsin: [Wisconsin Foodie features Kingston Creamery](#)

National & Global

- Southern Living: [Cottage cheese sold in 24 states recalled due to "significant health risk"](#)
 - Dairy Herd Management: [USDA to buy \\$148 million in dairy products, but will it be a market mover?](#)
 - Watertown Daily Times: [Dairy industry asks lawmakers not to cut Cornell research funding](#)
 - Yahoo: [Dairy checkoff launches "Dairy Does More" campaign](#)
 - The Independent: [The TikTok trend fueling a new cottage cheese boom](#)
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FEATURED: WCMA NOTES

Wisconsin Shows Dairy's Statehouse Playbook



In the March edition of WCMA Notes, WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney outlines how coordinated advocacy delivered major wins in Wisconsin on nutrition funding, PFAS liability protections, and dairy access at school - safeguarding both dairy demand and processor balance sheets. At a time when state capitols are driving consequential decisions on nutrition policy and environmental regulation, this piece offers a look at how engagement, coalition-building, and strategic compromise can shape outcomes for dairy manufacturers nationwide. [READ MORE...](#)

Learn New Safety Communication Strategies March 17



Reconnect with your peers and grow your knowledge at the [next meeting of WCMA's Health & Safety Group](#) on Tuesday, March 17. Join us 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 skills.

RSVP TODAY

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

Join WCMA Cheese Technology Tour in Denmark, Sweden



You're invited to join in the 2026 WCMA Cheese Technology Tour, set for August 26-September 6 in Denmark and Sweden. This trip offers an opportunity for members to visit cheese factories and key supplier research facilities while enjoying the culture of Scandinavia. WCMA can welcome up to 30 travelers for this special event, which includes five days in and around Aarhus and Copenhagen, Denmark, and five days in Sweden, including Stockholm.

RSVP TODAY

Five cheese factory tours are planned, including a rare stop at Bornholm Island to see World Champion blue cheese production at St. Clemens Dairy. In addition to cheese factory visits, Arla Foods, Novonesis, and Tetra Pak will open their technology centers to our group.

[Download the tour brochure](#) for complete information. Prior to registering or making a deposit for the tour, interested parties must contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) by March 20, 2026, to express interest in registering for the tour. Initial deposits from travelers are sought by March 31, 2026. 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 payment, please contact [John Umhoefer](#) or tour partner [Jaume Romera](#) or [Flavio Duz](#) at Pangea Tours.



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

WisCheeseMakers.org/Events

news@wischeesemakers.org
(608) 286-1001



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

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