



WCMA NEWS

AN EXCLUSIVE UPDATE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION



INDUSTRY UPDATES

FDA Issues Raw Milk Cheese Guidance Amid New HPAI Outbreaks, One Human Infection

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last week issued [guidance on the manufacture of milk and other dairy products](#) amid an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in U.S. dairy cattle. Regarding [raw milk cheese](#), FDA said, "Because of the limited information available about the transmission of HPAI in raw milk, the FDA recommends that industry does not manufacture or sell raw milk or raw milk cheese products made with milk from cows showing symptoms of illness, including those infected with avian influenza or exposed to those infected with avian influenza." HPAI has now been identified in cows in Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, and Texas.

Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also reported a person in the U.S. has tested positive for HPAI following exposure to dairy cattle in Texas presumed to be infected with the virus. This infection does not change the HPAI human health risk assessment for the U.S. general public, which CDC considers to be low. However, people with close or prolonged, unprotected exposures to infected animals are at greater risk of infection. CDC has [interim recommendations](#) for prevention and monitoring of HPAI viruses.

Here's a look at recent news coverage of this developing situation:

- *Associated Press*: [Person is diagnosed with bird flu after being in contact with cows in Texas](#)
- *NBC News*: [Bird flu confirmed in Texas worker who had contact with dairy cows](#)
- *The Telegraph*: [U.S. alert as H5N1 bird flu reported in person exposed to cattle](#)

WCMA members with questions may contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) or [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

USDA Warns Food Vendors of Phishing Emails

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [last week notified vendors](#) who wish to participate in its food purchase programs of a possible phishing scheme using fraudulent email messages. The fake emails appear to be bid solicitations sent by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which manages USDA's food purchase programs.

All information regarding federal food program solicitations will be published through USDA's Web-Based Supply Chain Management system, through official emails via GovDelivery, and on [AMS' website](#). If you receive an email like the one described above, USDA advises immediately deleting the original email without responding or clicking on any of the links.

WCMA Files Final FMMO Brief

WCMA yesterday [submitted a final brief](#) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) reforms. This submission is the culmination of over two years of active engagement by WCMA and members in current FMMO reform discussions. At optimal pace, USDA could make a final recommendation to farmers in November, with a vote possible before the end of the year and implementation possible in early 2025.

Members with questions may contact [WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer](#) or [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

SIGNATURE EVENTS



Support Dairy's Future at Novonesis Championship Cheese Auction at CheeseExpo

Register now at [CheeseExpo.org](#) to join a packed crowd of friends and colleagues in support of dairy industry education at the exciting Novonesis Reception & Championship Cheese Auction! This highlight of CheeseExpo takes place Wednesday evening, April 17, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A complete bid sheet is [available now](#).

Enjoy a friendly competition while bidding on gold medal-winning products from the World Championship Cheese Contest. Auction proceeds help fund the future of the industry through WCMA's long-standing scholarships and popular training programs. Monies raised at the Auction have also helped grow WCMA's Championship Cheese Contests and fuel donations to build world-class dairy infrastructure at the Center for Dairy Research, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and South Dakota State University.

DOWNLOAD BID SHEET

Full registration for CheeseExpo, April 16-18, includes access to hundreds of supplier exhibits, two full days of educational seminars led by dairy processing experts, ample networking opportunities, and celebrations of cheese industry excellence.



Have questions? Please contact [WCMA's Events Team](#).



WCMA ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

Connect with Industry, Learn Cybersecurity Tips at WCMA Annual Member Meeting May 22

Mark your calendar and make plans now to gather with your peers in dairy processing on Wednesday, May 22 in Madison, Wisconsin for WCMA's Annual Member Meeting.



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](#).

Act by May 14 for Annual Meeting Sponsorships

Connect with WCMA members and show your support for the dairy processing industry 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](https://www.wis cheesemakers.org) to secure your sponsorship no later than Tuesday, May 14. Thank you for your support!

BECOME A SPONSOR



Join WCMA Technology Tour in Portugal

Act now to join WCMA's [Cheese Technology Tour in Portugal](#), 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](#).



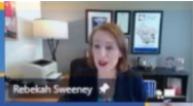
DBIA Grant Submissions Due Thursday, April 4

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance, administered by WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research, is accepting applications through Thursday, 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



WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

Wisconsin Agricultural Road Improvement Program
Dairy Manufacturer/Processor Application Support Form

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

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

- 1-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-50
- 50+

2. Please provide your operation's annual gross sales. (Use a five-year average if certified.)
\$ _____

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

- Dairy (Milk)
- Dairy (Cheese)

Please remember! Please contact WDMA Sector Director of Programs & Policy Services (sweeney@wisconsincheesemakers.org or 608-268-1055) Thank you!



**Access Support Form at
WisCheeseMakers.org**

Contact Wisconsin Local Governments Today to Support ARIP Grant Applications

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 through Friday, 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.

IN THE NEWS

Wisconsin

- *Green Bay Press-Gazette*: [Take a cheese-loving road trip through west-central Wisconsin](#) (Featuring WCMA members Burnett Dairy Cooperative - Cady Cheese, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Marieke Gouda, and Nasonville Dairy)
- *Telegraph-Herald*: [Cheese manufacturing facility in SW Wisconsin nearing permanent closure](#)

National/International

- *Aol.com*: [Initiative helps New Mexico remain one of the top cheese making states](#)
- *Olean Times Herald*: [CTE culinary arts students train at Franklinville cheese facility](#) (Featuring WCMA member Great Lakes Cheese)

EDUCATION



WCMA Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors Kicks Off April 9

Space remains available in the in-person offering of WCMA's all-new [Basic Safety Training for Dairy Processors](#) on April 9, exclusively sponsored by [Nelson-Jameson](#). Register now and join us 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 more times throughout the 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](#).



Reserve Seats Now for May 7-8 WCMA Materiality Assessment Workshop

[Sign up now at 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**

As a first step in mapping out a sustainability strategy, a well-conducted materiality assessment can help businesses identify key sustainability priorities, answer customer-driven questions, and 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 one-on-one 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](#).



WCMA Front-Line Leaders Explore Team-Building Strategies

WCMA salutes the member employees today engaged in Front-Line Leadership Training-Part C, focused on team-building strategies. Participants hail from Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Emmi Roth, Great Lakes Cheese, Holmen Cheese, Organic Valley, Pine River Pre-Pack, Schuman Cheese, Wapsie Valley Creamery, Winona Foods, and WOW Logistics.

Learn more about upcoming WCMA leadership trainings on [WisCheeseMakers.org](#), and contact [WCMA Membership Director Sara Schmidt](#) with any questions.

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:

- 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

MEMBERSHIP



Dairy Industry Suppliers



New WCMA supplier member [Brainerd Chemical, Inc.](#) is a privately owned chemical manufacturer & distributor with six manufacturing facilities in the U.S.



New WCMA supplier member [JP Cullen](#) is a full-service construction management company operating in Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and northeast Iowa and nationwide.

*Lacteos Mi
Paisana, LLC*

New WCMA supplier member [Lacteos Mi Paisana LLC](#) is a supplier of dry mixes for the dairy industry.



New WCMA supplier member [Plastopil Inc.](#) is a global supplier of high barrier packaging films for the cheese and dairy market.



New WCMA supplier member Suncor Stainless is a manufacturer of stainless steel hardware and components for a variety of markets.

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



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 safeguard your valued workforce by preventing 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](#).



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 the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and WCMA members Bassett Mechanical, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, Foremost Farms USA, Klondike Cheese Co., Masters Gallery Foods, Springside Cheese, Uplands Cheese, and Wapsie Valley Creamery.

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

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