

WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

September 16, 2025

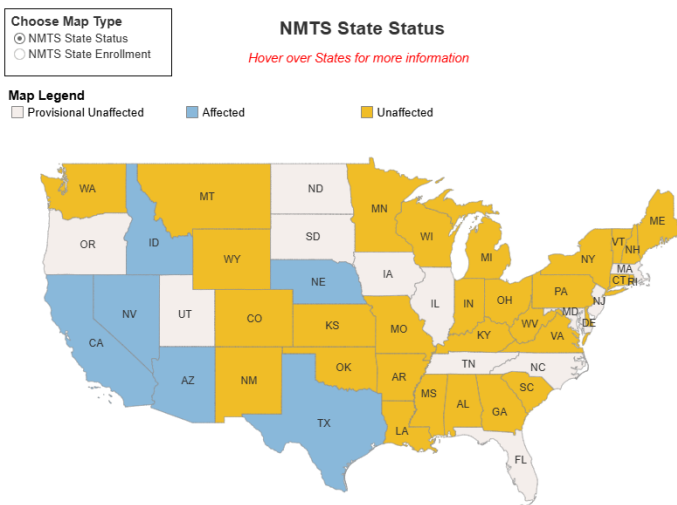
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NEWS

H5N1 *Response*

30 States Deemed Unaffected in National Milk Testing Strategy



Thirty states have [achieved Unaffected Status](#), also called Gold Status, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [National Milk Testing Strategy](#) (USDA NMTS) for highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1), the agency announced last week. Unaffected Status means no H5N1 has been detected in any of the milk samples collected from that state, and qualifies the state for less-frequent testing, the details of which are still to be defined by USDA. [Wisconsin is one of the 30 states that has achieved this Unaffected Status](#), with no H5N1 detected in more than 14,000 milk samples tested to date.

An additional 12 states are in Provisional Unaffected Status, meaning they are enrolled in the NMTS, but cannot yet be declared Unaffected. One state, Nebraska, moved to Affected Status as it confirmed its [first case of H5N1](#) in dairy cattle yesterday. [READ MORE...](#)

Second MAHA Report Released

The "Make America Healthy Again" (MAHA) Commission, led by Health and Human



Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., last week released its [latest report](#), noting steps the Trump Administration may take to improve children's health and shift food policy. The report aims to build on the [first MAHA report](#), released in May. The new document contains 128 proposals, including 15 that could impact dairy (listed below).

• **Regulatory/Guidance Recommendations**

- Create a first-ever federal definition for ultra-processed foods
- Update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Consider adjustments to proposed Front-of-Pack nutrition labeling rule
- Implement a mandatory “Generally Recognized as Safe” (GRAS) notification program for food additives
- Develop and implement a process for the post-market assessment of chemicals in food, including food additives, color additives, GRAS substances, substances used in contact with food, and chemicals present as unintentional
- Limit or prohibit the use of petroleum-based food dyes (FD&C certified colors) in all food products approved in the U.S.
- Modernize nutrient requirements for infant formula and increase testing for heavy metals and other contaminants
- Reform “outdated and unnecessary food standards of identity that stifle innovation and no longer protect consumer interests”
- Streamline organic certification processes and reduce costs for small farms transitioning to organic

• **Nutrition Aid Recommendations**

- Boost whole milk offerings in schools
- Improve access to healthy foods in schools, prisons, and veteran programs
- Develop “MAHA Boxes” offering additional whole, healthy foods for SNAP recipients

• **Other Recommendations**

- Launch educational campaign to promote new national dietary guidelines
- Limit advertising “unhealthy” foods to children

There is also a vague recommendation that the federal government “remove barriers preventing small dairy operations from processing and selling their own milk products locally.” WCMA will continue to seek additional details on this and other measures, and advocate in WCMA members' interests. To discuss the report or share your thoughts, please contact [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#).

USDA Extends Comment Period on Proposed Reorganization



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has [extended the comment period](#) for its proposed agency reorganization plan to September 30. Announced in early August, the plan would relocate staff resources from Washington, D.C. to five regional hubs in Colorado, Indiana, Missouri, North Carolina, and Utah. WCMA will submit a comment on members' behalf. To share input on the reorganization for inclusion in WCMA's comment, contact [Rebekah Sweeney](#).

Wisconsin Offers Commercial Driver Training Grants



WCMA members operating driver training programs in Wisconsin can apply now for a new round of [Commercial Driver Training Grants](#) from the state's Department of Workforce Development. Applications are due October 28. Reimbursement grants of \$10,000-\$30,000 will be awarded in December. [READ MORE...](#)

Registration Open for EWCBA Annual Convention

Registration is open now for the Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association's (EWCBA) [Annual Convention](#) on November 12 at Waverly Beach in Menasha, Wisconsin. The meeting will include remarks from WCMA and featured guest speaker Erica Maedke, VP of Insights for WCMA member Ever.Ag. Questions, [registration](#), and payment may be directed to [EWCBA staff](#).

Headlines

Wisconsin

- WKOW-TV: [Art of Cheese Festival returns to Madison later this month. Here's what you can expect](#) (Featuring Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin)
- Mid-West Farm Report: [Cheese strike highlights larger immigration issue](#) (Featuring WCMA)

National & Global

- Cowboy State Daily: [Wyoming ranch family builds a 6,200-cow mega-dairy on Eastern plains](#) (Featuring WCMA member Leprino Foods)
- POLITICO: [‘The whole thing is screwed up’: Farmers in deep-red Pennsylvania struggle to find workers](#)
- The Oregonian: [Oregon festival celebrates famous Rogue River Blue cheese and other fermented foods, drinks, sweets](#) (Featuring WCMA member Savencia Cheese - Rogue Creamery)
- South Dakota Searchlight: [State board awards \\$10 million loan to cheese factory](#) (Featuring WCMA member Bel Brands)

EDUCATION

Boost Collaboration, Build Networks with New WCMA Workshop



Sign up now for a [special WCMA educational event](#) on Tuesday, October 28. Learn the ins and outs of true collaboration with this [new in-person workshop](#) - and grow your network with a [meeting](#) of WCMA's active, engaged Workforce & Education Committee. This affordable offering is designed to help the dairy processing industry's human resources leaders strengthen their organizations through collaboration and connection. [READ MORE...](#)

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

WisCheeseMakers.org/Events

FEATURED: WEBINARS

Mark Your Calendar for Free WCMA Packaging Webinar

WCMA Webinar

Emerging Trends in Dairy Packaging

GET THE LINK

Register now to join WCMA's [next free members-only webinar](#) on Thursday, October 9, spotlighting emerging trends in dairy product packaging. Hear from trusted industry suppliers and get your questions answered in our live Q&A. More details and speakers will be announced soon, but registration and sponsorships are [open now](#). Thanks go to webinar sponsors [Nelson-Jameson](#) and [BW Flexible Systems](#) for their support!

Watch Now: Discover the Power of WCMA Membership

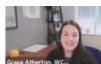


WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION



*Discover the Power of Your
WCMA Membership*

September 11, 2025



A recording of WCMA's latest free webinar, focused on unlocking the full benefits of your WCMA membership, is [now available online](#). In this session, members gained an inside look at their trade association from WCMA's John Umhoefer, Sara Schmidt, Rebekah Sweeney, and Grace Atherton. For a list of helpful contacts and resources shared during the session, visit [our website](#). [READ MORE...](#)

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Save the Date for Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting

Mark your calendars now for the [next hybrid meeting](#) of the Dairy Food Safety Alliance on Thursday, October 23 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (CT). Join WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) on Zoom or in-person for insights from dairy



plant inspectors, an update on the Alliance's free FSMA-compliant templates, and more. Thanks go to [Nelson-Jameson](#) and [ProActive Solutions USA](#) for sponsoring this meeting. [READ MORE...](#)

Upcoming WCMA Events

September 17	October 8	October 9	October 22	October 23
Front-Line Leadership Part A: Essential Leadership (In-Person)	Health & Safety Group Meeting (Hybrid)	Free Webinar: Emerging Trends in Packaging	Annual Member Meeting and Awards Ceremony	Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting

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