



WCMA NEWS

Your source for the latest
in dairy processing

September 30, 2025

news@wischeesemakers.org



NEWS

Federal Government Shutdown Expected Tonight



The federal government is expected to shut down at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, October 1, following stalled spending negotiations between Congress and the White House. This shutdown may be different from past government closures, as the Trump Administration is [threatening mass firings](#) and a use of the lapse in funding to downsize the federal government. Operational plans amid shutdowns have historically been available for weeks prior to a funding lapse, but many agencies only released their plans in the past 24 hours.

As of the distribution of this newsletter, the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) is poised to continue food safety inspections and grading services, certifications, contract procurement and execution, and federal milk marketing orders (FMMOs) during a shutdown. Staffing at the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), and [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) will be reduced, impacting inspections and response times. Payments under the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food assistance program [could run out of funding this month](#). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits [could still be sent out as expected in October](#), as monthly benefits have already been conveyed to states, but November aid is in jeopardy. The school breakfast and lunch programs have limited-term contingency funds, so these nutrition programs would not be immediately impacted by a shutdown.

WCMA Submits Comment on USDA Reorganization

WCMA today submitted comments to USDA on its proposed reorganization. In the [letter](#), drafted with WCMA member input, [Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) notes that while WCMA supports the goals of fiscal discipline, efficient operations, and continued accountability within USDA, disruption of certain agency services pose a threat to the viability, competitiveness, and growth of our industry.



[READ MORE...](#)

California Passes Real Food, Healthy Kids Act



On September 16, the California legislature passed the [Real Food, Healthy Kids Act](#), which aims to phase out certain "ultra-processed foods" from K-12 schools by 2035. The law specifically exempts key dairy products from this definition, including California Class I milk (whole and flavored), infant formula, and yogurt and cheese provided through the [USDA Foods for School program](#). These exemptions ensure that milk, yogurt, and cheese can continue to be part of school meals despite broader product restrictions. Governor Gavin Newsom is expected to either sign the bill or allow it to automatically become law in October. [READ MORE...](#)

Advocacy Alert: Take Action to Oppose Wisconsin Labeling Bill



On September 22, two Wisconsin lawmakers circulated a bill draft, [LRB-2577](#), that would impose duplicative, costly new ingredient disclosure and labeling mandates on food manufacturers. The following day, WCMA sent a strong message to lawmakers in opposition to LRB-2577. Since then, WCMA has contacted every Wisconsin legislative office and built a [broad coalition of food and agricultural groups](#), urging lawmakers not to support this bill.

At this stage, your voice is critical: if you have any operations in Wisconsin, please [contact lawmakers today](#) and urge them not to sign on to LRB-2577. Have questions or concerns? Contact [Rebekah Sweeney](#).

ICE Arrests Wisconsin Dairy Farm Workers

Late last week in Wisconsin, U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers [arrested 24 people](#) suspected of being in the country illegally. It has been reported that many of them were dairy farm workers, and [ICE has said](#) one individual has a history of sexual assault. WCMA has alerted processors with any connection to the impacted farms, providing communications support. [READ MORE...](#)

Free WCMA Webinar to Cover ICE Preparedness

In light of this incident, and renewed national attention on immigration enforcement throughout 2025, [WCMA's free October 9 webinar](#) will now focus on Immigration Enforcement & Preparedness.

This one-hour session will include the latest news and updates, an overview of WCMA's [Immigration Action Preparedness tool](#), and best practices for external communication.

Featured speakers are:

- Rebekah Sweeney, Senior Director of Programs & Policy, WCMA
- Kelly Fortier, Partner, Michael Best & Friedrich LLP
- Eric Davis, Vice President, Food and Consumer Trust; MorganMyers

This webinar will include time for audience Q&A. To submit a question anonymously in advance, please email [WCMA Communications Director Grace Atherton](#) by Wednesday, October 8 at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

REGISTER NOW

New Wisconsin ARIP Grants Open October 6



Applications open October 6 for the latest round of grant funding through the [Wisconsin Agricultural Roads Improvement Program](#) (ARIP), championed by WCMA. ARIP grants help local governments repair and rebuild vital agricultural roads, ensuring safe, efficient transportation of milk, dairy products, and other goods. Many WCMA members have already seen the benefits of ARIP projects, with improved roadways boosting the efficiency of hauling and operations near their facilities. [READ MORE...](#)

USDA Awards Processed Cheese Contracts, Updates Master CRD

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) this morning announced it has [awarded a contract to WCMA member Bongards Creameries](#) to provide more than 158,000 pounds of processed cheese for use in federal food distribution programs. USDA also said it has updated its [Master Commodity Requirements Document \(CRD\) for Domestic Programs](#). The new CRD, as well as information on becoming a USDA approved vendor, is [available online](#).

Headlines

Wisconsin

- Marshfield Hub City Times: [Nasonville Dairy is inaugural 'WCMA Culture of Excellence](#)

- [Award' recipient](#) (Featuring WCMA member Nasonville Dairy)
- WKOW-TV: [Cheese lovers flock to Madison's Cheese Fair to savor Wisconsin's finest flavors](#) (Featuring Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin)
- Wisconsin State Journal: [World Dairy Expo to make Madison the center of the bovine world](#)

National & Global

- Morning Ag Clips: [U.S.-Taiwan dairy partnership advances shared growth](#)
- Bloomberg: [Is yogurt healthy? RFK Jr.'s assault on ultra-processed foods puts companies on edge](#)
- RFD-TV: [Butterfat surge challenges balance for U.S. cheesemakers](#) (Featuring WCMA member CoBank)
- Dairy Processing: [Capacity boom: \\$8B-plus invested in dairy processing infrastructure](#)

FEATURED: WCMA NOTES

UPF Definition Threatens Dairy Consumption, Consumer Health



As America faces rising rates of chronic diseases, policymakers are right to seek nutrition-based solutions. And, as [WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy Rebekah Sweeney](#) notes, the latest report from the Make America Healthy Again Commission includes some proposals dairy leaders can applaud. But the report also shares some misguided ideas - such as a strong push for a federal definition of "ultra-processed foods" (UPFs). Read more about the risks of defining UPFs in [this month's WCMA Notes column](#).

EVENTS & CONNECTION

Register by Oct. 6 for WCMA Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony



**WISCONSIN
CHEESE MAKERS
ASSOCIATION**

**Annual Member
Meeting &
Awards Ceremony**

Featuring:



Shawna Nelson
Organic Valley/
CROPP Cooperative



Brenda Dehart
Foremost Farms USA



Kevin Pieh
Ellsworth Cooperative
Creamery



Tim Omer
Emmi Roth

Less than one week remains to register for the [WCMA Annual Member Meeting & Awards Ceremony](#) on October 21 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. [RSVP today](#) to enjoy connection with fellow members, an engaging panel discussion with executive dairy leaders, a celebration of WCMA's Member Impact Awards winners, and updates from your Association.

REGISTER BY OCT. 6

Thanks go to meeting sponsors [Proaction International](#), [Tweet Garot](#), [Grande Cheese Company](#), [BIOIONIX](#), [Fromagex](#), [M3 Insurance](#), [KK Integrated Logistics](#), [Cornerstone Business Services](#), and [Kinsa Group](#) for their support!

Join Dairy Food Safety Alliance on October 23



Join the [Dairy Food Safety Alliance on October 23](#) in-person in Madison, Wisconsin or online for valuable networking, timely industry updates, and informative presentations. Attendees will hear inspector insights, allergen updates, a look at radiological hazards, and more. [Register today!](#) Thanks to [Nelson-Jameson](#) and [ProActive Solutions USA](#) for sponsoring this meeting. Additional sponsorships are available until October 21.

Upcoming WCMA Events

October 8	October 9	October 22	October 23	October 28
Health & Safety Group Meeting (Hybrid)	Free Webinar: Immigration Enforcement & Preparedness	Annual Member Meeting and Awards Ceremony	Dairy Food Safety Alliance Meeting	Workforce & Education Committee Meeting and HR Workshop

EDUCATION

Learn Employee Safety Strategies on October 8



Register today for WCMA's next hybrid [Health & Safety Group meeting](#) on Wednesday, October 8, from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. (CT). Gain strategies for communicating safety standards to non-English speaking workers, discuss confined space standards, and participate in the annual WCMA-OSHA-WisCon meeting. Thanks go to [Nelson-Jameson](#) for sponsoring this gathering. Additional sponsorships are available through October 6. [READ MORE...](#)

CDR, T.C. Jacoby to Talk Milk Composition, Cheese Profitability

At the request of WCMA, experts from Center for Dairy Research and T.C. Jacoby & Co. will present a special discussion on Milk Composition, Milk Standardization and Cheese Plant Profitability on Thursday, Oct. 2 at 4:00 p.m. at the Southwestern Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association (SWCMA) annual meeting in Monroe. CDR technologists Dean Sommer, John Jaeggi



and Mike Molitor will be joined by Mike Brown, VP Dairy Market Intelligence at T.C. Jacoby & Co. for this analysis of the economic impact and product quality impact of higher levels of milk components in cheesemilk. Contact [SWCMA's Linda Lee](#) for more information.

This discussion will also be held at the Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers & Buttermakers Association annual meeting November 12 in Menasha, Wisconsin.

Vermont Cheese Council to Host Autumn Conference



WCMA members in Vermont can register now to join the [Vermont Cheese Council's Autumn Conference](#) on Friday, October 24. This in-person event will include a sensory evaluation, roundtable discussion on supply chain engagement, and a technical session on minerals in cheesemaking. For a limited time, WCMA members can use the promo code **wicheese** to receive a 20 percent discount on their registration. [READ MORE...](#)



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

[WisCheeseMakers.org/Events](https://www.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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