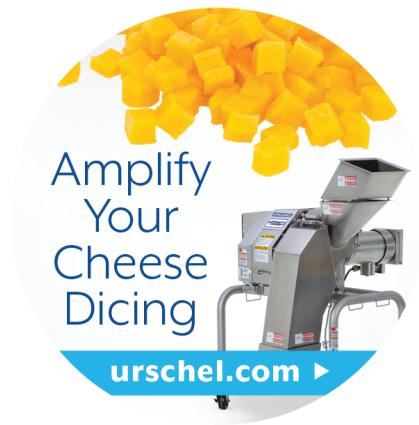




CHEESE REPORTER

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FDA Budget Request Includes \$43 Million More For Food Safety

Funding Will Allow FDA To Enhance Traceability; Final Traceability Rule Due Out In Late Fall 2022

Washington—The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Monday announced it is requesting a total budget of \$8.4 billion as part of President Biden's fiscal year 2023 budget, an increase of almost 34 percent (\$2.1 billion) over the agency's fiscal 2022 appropriated funding level, for investments in core food safety programs and other public health infrastructure.

The fiscal year (FY) 2023 request, which covers the period from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023, includes \$43 million in additional investments in food safety modernization, including animal food safety oversight.

The budget builds on the successes of human and animal food safety modernization activities and supports the agency's continued implementation of the New Era of Smarter Food Safety and other core food safety efforts to enable the FDA to strengthen data-driven approaches to protecting consumers, allocating regulatory oversight resources based on

risk and improving FDA's capacity to quickly respond to ongoing and evolving public health challenges, the agency said.

Building on the modernized food safety regulatory framework created by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), this funding will allow the agency to improve prevention-oriented food safety practices, strengthen data sharing and predictive analytics capabilities and enhance traceability to more quickly respond to outbreaks and recalls for human and animal food, according to FDA.

The budget request advances mutual reliance efforts as part of the New Era of Smarter Food Safety by providing significant funding to state animal food programs. In partnership with states, FDA will expand efforts to modernize, harmonize and transform the US animal food inspection system to become more comprehensive and prevention oriented.

The purpose of FDA's Foods Program is to protect and pro-

mote human health by ensuring the safety of the US food supply, dietary supplements, and cosmetics, and the proper labeling of food and cosmetics. In collaboration with the Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA), the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) administers the Foods Program.

The fiscal year 2023 proposed budget for the Foods Program is \$1.2 billion, of which \$420.8 million is for CFSAN and \$811.1 million is for ORA.

The budget includes an increase of \$10.9 million for CFSAN and \$9.4 million for Office of Regulatory Affairs to advance goals of the New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint.

Of the \$20.2 million requested by the Foods Program in FY 2023 for New Era of Smarter Food Safety, the request includes \$7.3 million for CFSAN and \$6.6 million for ORA of the food safety component of the Data Modernization and Enhanced Technologies initiative that will bolster many FDA priorities.

• See **FDA's Budget**, p. 14

EU Strengthens Geographical Indications To Preserve Quality, Reinforce Protection

Brussels, Belgium—The European Commission (EC) on Thursday adopted its proposal to review the geographical indications (GIs) system for agricultural products, wine and spirit drinks.

The new measures should increase the uptake of GIs across the European Union (EU) to benefit the rural economy and achieve a higher level of protection, especially online, the Commission said. The aim is to maintain the EU's high food quality and standards and ensure that its cultural, gastronomic and local heritage is preserved and certified as authentic within the EU and around the world.

The Commission is proposing the following measures to strengthen and improve the existing system of geographical indications:

Shortened and simplified registration procedure: The different technical and procedural rules on geographical indications will be merged, resulting in a single simplified GI registration procedure for EU and non-EU applicants. Because this harmonization will result in a shorter time between the submission of the application and the registration, it is expected to increase the attractiveness of the schemes for producers.

• See **Strengthening GIs**, p. 42

USDA Now Expecting Retail Dairy Prices To Rise 4-5% In 2022

Washington—The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for dairy products is forecast to rise 4.0 to 5.0 percent in the latest "Food Price Outlook," released last Friday by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS).

That's the third straight month in which ERS increased its forecast for retail dairy product prices.

Starting last July and continuing through December, the ERS forecast for 2022 retail dairy prices ranged from a decline of 0.5 percent to an increase of 0.5 percent.

Then in January, ERS raised its forecast for the dairy products CPI to an increase of 1.5 to 2.5 percent. February's forecast was for retail dairy product prices to rise 2.5 to 3.5 percent. And now ERS is

• See **Retail Dairy Prices**, p. 51

Baked Cheese Snack Segment Wins Fans With Clean Labels, New Flavors

Plant-Based Diets, Inflation Are Hurdles

Madison—A significant new cheese product emerged during the 1990s, ideally suited for the millions of consumers following the popular high-protein, low-carbohydrate Atkins Diet – baked cheese.

Since then, category sales have mirrored eating habits, falling out of favor with dwindling Atkins followers, only to soar 20 years later with introduction of the similar high-fat, low-carb ketogenic diet.

The genesis of baked cheese can be traced back to Paul Scharfman of Specialty Cheese Company, Reeseville, WI. His "Just the Cheese" crispy, baked cheese product was first to mar-

ket, and quickly developed a sizable following.

Scharfman set out to make the new snack based on crispy bits of excess cheese left over from a grilled cheese sandwich. He and his team were able to figure how to replicate Just the Cheese, but it was clear early on that the recipe needed tweaking.

"It didn't really taste that good on its own," said David Scharfman, Paul's son and current co-owner of Specialty Cheese. "Because it's the Nineties and nobody cares, you can just dump artificial flavoring on it. Deep-fried potato chips that have no salt or flavoring on them really aren't that great."

Betting on flavor, Just the Cheese was soon available in

• See **Cheese Crisps**, p. 38

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EDITORIAL COMMENT



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It's A Great Time For Dairy Innovation

The US Department of Agriculture's announcement in early March of an additional investment of \$80 million in the Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives led us to conclude that this is a great time for innovation in the dairy industry.

In fact, it's always a pretty good time for innovation in the dairy industry. This can be illustrated by the simple fact that one of the oldest dairy companies in the US, Borden, got its start way back in the 1850s, when Gail Borden received a patent for his process of condensing milk.

The dairy industry has been inventing and reinventing itself, and its products and processes, ever since.

Still, there's something about the current era of dairy innovation that seems to stand out compared to the past. Perhaps it's USDA's DBI Initiatives program, which was established under the 2018 farm bill and, last fall, awarded \$18.4 million to three current Initiatives at the University of Wisconsin, University of Tennessee and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and \$1.8 million to a new initiative at California State University Fresno.

That money, in turn, helps fuel innovation in at least two ways, as illustrated by activities of the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance, which is led by the Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association and the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research.

First, the DBIA provides numerous resources for dairy entrepreneurs and small businesses, including market research and technical assistance. And second, it offers two different grant programs to dairy farmers and dairy processors in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and South Dakota.

Keep in mind that this is just one of the DBI programs. The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center serves a 10-state region,

and the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (SDBII) program recently expanded to cover all 12 southeastern states. And the new Fresno State initiative will serve California, Oregon and Washington.

In short, USDA's DBI Initiatives is providing a lot of money to help boost dairy innovation at the regional and state levels. And results so far, in the form of grant applications, indicates that there is very high demand for funds that will help fuel dairy innovation in the years ahead.

But this is far from the only broad-based effort to increase dairy innovation. A number of dairy organizations, cooperatives and companies have in recent years also launched "accelerator" programs, aimed at fueling innovation using dairy products and/or dairy ingredients.

For example, the California Milk Advisory Board offers the Real California Milk Excelsior, which focused in 2020 and 2021 on innovation in snack formulations and functional dairy product development, respectively.

Meanwhile, Dairy Farmers of America launched its Accelerator program, now known as the DFA CoLab Accelerator, several years ago. Over the years, through this program, DFA has worked with more than two dozen startups in the ag-tech and dairy food product verticals.

And 301 INC—which describes itself as an energetic and enthusiastic team looking to collaborate with emerging food brands; to roll up its sleeves and work together to create breakthrough innovations and build successful businesses—is a subsidiary of General Mills.

This is indeed a very good time to be a dairy innovator, which is a good thing, because it also seems to be a very good time to be a non-dairy innovator. That is, while the dairy industry continues to innovate in any number of ways, its competitors are also innovating at

DBI Initiatives is providing a lot of money to help boost dairy innovation at the regional and state levels. And results so far, in the form of grant applications, indicates that there is very high demand for funds that will help fuel dairy innovation in the years ahead.

a rate that's perhaps unprecedented in dairy industry history.

This "non-dairy" or "dairy alternative" or "animal-free dairy" innovation is taking place in at least a couple of different areas. First, the number of companies producing plant-based "dairy" products has skyrocketed in recent years.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to note that the Plant Based Foods Association was founded just six years ago and represented 52 companies (not all of whom made plant-based dairy alternatives) Today, the PBFA has 225 company and ingredient supplier members, along with 86 organizational affiliate members and nine organization investors.

Oh, and as reported on our front page just last week, according to new data from the PBFA, the Good Food Institute and SPINS, sales of many plant-based "dairy" products continue to increase. Just to cite a couple of examples: in 2021, plant-based "milk" dollar sales grew 4 percent to reach \$2.6 billion; and plant-based cheese sales grew 7 percent last year to \$291 million.

The other non-dairy innovation sector, perhaps best referred to as cellular agriculture, might not be attracting all that many consumers at this time (due in part to the fact that the sector isn't really targeting consumers yet), but it certainly is attracting a lot of money.

Just to cite one of many examples: last September, Perfect Day, Inc., the creator of what it claims is the world's first animal-free milk protein, announced a \$350 million Series D funding round intended to fuel the company's expanded focus across biological engineering, ingredient innovation, and consumer products.

Innovation has always been a key to dairy industry growth, and that's going to continue in the future. What might be different now is that innovation may also be more tied to industry survival than ever before.

House Members Want Ag To Be Priority In Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

Washington—A bipartisan group of over 80 members of the US House on Wednesday urged US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to make agriculture a priority in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework as the Biden administration works to intensify economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

During the East Asia Summit last October, President Biden announced plans for a US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), the Congressional Research Service (CRS) noted in a recent report. In November, Tai and US Commerce Secretary Gina M. Raimondo, who are to co-lead the initiative, held exploratory talks with Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea during overseas visits, but no official negotiations have been launched yet.

At a House Ways and Means Committee hearing Wednesday that focused on the Biden administration's trade agenda, Tai commented that the administration is "committed to economic engagement with partners in the Indo-Pacific," which she called "one of the most dynamic regions" in the world.

"By working closely with allies and partners to bolster our economic engagement in the Indo-Pacific, we can establish a new path forward that supports the global competitiveness of American workers and businesses and further the shared interests of our allies in the years to come," Tai said.

In their letter to Tai and Vilsack, the House members noted that, while the "nation's sustainability prowess in the global market is undeniable," US agricultural exports "unfortunately continue to face major tariff and non-tariff barriers to entry to many nations" in the Indo-Pacific region.

"The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework offers an excellent opportunity to address these barriers to US agricultural exports throughout the region," the letter stated. "We understand that the Framework will work to set standards in several areas, and we urge the inclusion of high standard Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, including certification and inspection rules. Coordination with our trading partners on such regulations and measures will help facilitate trade and protect consumers."

The House members said they also "strongly support efforts to create mutually agreed-upon regulatory reforms, guidelines or exchanges of letters that could improve the ability of US farmers

and food manufacturers to reliably and easily export to key markets throughout the Indo-Pacific region."

The Framework should also include efforts to reduce tariffs on US agricultural exports "to improve our competitiveness in the region," the letter continued.

"While we understand the Framework will not initially be a comprehensive trade agreement that deals broadly with tariffs, this should not preclude efforts to increase agricultural market access by reducing our trading partners' tariffs, both in the interest of US exporters and our trading partners' interest in enhancing their access

to high quality, affordable agricultural products," the letter added.

The NMPF and USDEC praised the bipartisan House letter. Southeast Asia is one of the largest export destinations for US dairy exports, and sales to that region grew by 11 percent last year despite headwinds caused by supply chain issues and tariff disadvantages in key markets, the dairy organizations noted.

"These members of Congress have their fingers on the pulse of the agricultural economy, which in turn supports so much of rural America," said Krysta Harden, USDEC's president and CEO. "Dairy farmers and manufacturers need a framework that lives up to the recommendations laid out in this letter, ensuring America's dairy industry — from farmers to

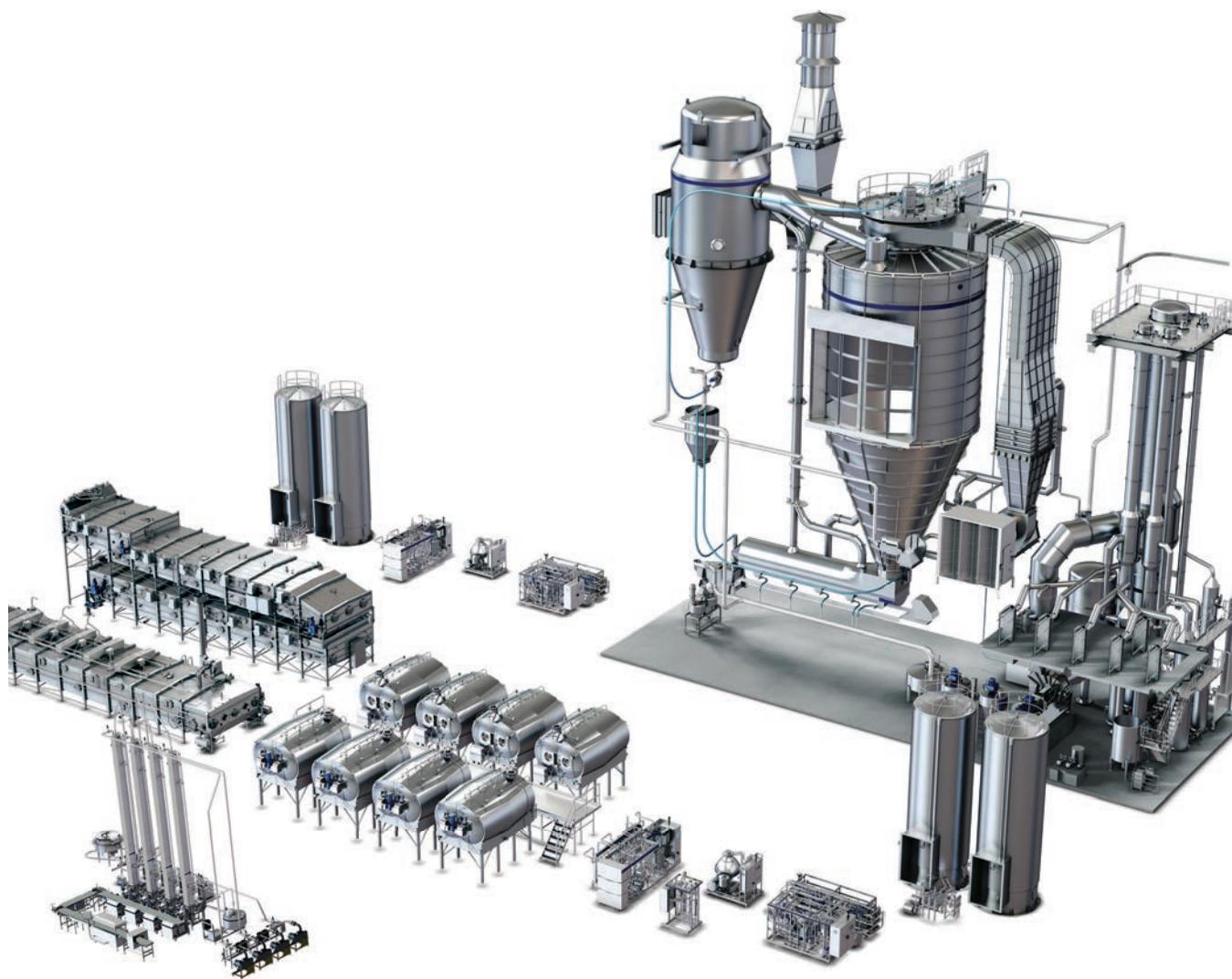
workers to manufacturers — are able to compete fairly and efficiently in the fast-growing markets across Asia and the Pacific."

"America's dairy farmers and their cooperatives are strongly reliant on exports, which is why it's essential that the Biden administration focus on tackling global barriers that stand in the way of our high-quality products," said Jim Mulhern, NMPF's president and CEO.

"Consumers around the world are hungry for dairy and our industry is eager to better meet that demand, unburdened by trade barriers and tariffs," Mulhern continued. "But for that to happen, we need effective economic engagement with key trading partners, just as these members of Congress envision."

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There's no event in the dairy industry like CheeseExpo – combining multiple cutting-edge education topics and adding a massive display of equipment, automation, packaging and ingredient solutions. It's the all-in-one tool for dairy processors.

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buyers, technology suppliers will meet plant managers, quality assurance staff will hear the latest food safety research – it will be a frenzy of activity that builds business relationships and sparks opportunities.

Can't wait.

The super-sized successor to the former International Cheese Technology Expo, CheeseExpo continues to anchor itself in education – in multiple tracks of morning seminars, and extraordinary, hands-on displays on the exhibit floor.

It draws the best educators – Center for Dairy Research, Innovation Center for US Dairy, US Dairy Export Council, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association – and looks to the future, hosting the

Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest, WCMA's Young Professionals cohort, an onsite Job Fair and the Artisan Track seminar for entrepreneurs.

It draws a breadth of exhibitors beyond any dairy exposition in North America – 327 companies offering solutions ranging from software to new packaging, robotics to processing equipment, construction to sanitation supplies.

CheeseExpo begins April 13 with a US Dairy Export Council (USDEC)-led panel of CEOs describing global marketing opportunities, and USDEC immediately follows that powerhouse panel with a deeper dive into export market data, navigating international regulations, and USDEC's own programs to help processors succeed.

At the same time on April 13, Center for Dairy Research (CDR) offers the latest cheese research on extending cheese shelf life and optimizing manufacturing efficiency when handling and converting curd.

Artisan dairy producers have their own session April 13, with CDR and industry specialists examining artisan cheese manu-

facturing equipment, cheese molds, curing room environments and specialty cheese cutting and packaging equipment.

There's also focus on the crucial issue of finding and retaining great employees. A Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association workforce seminar offers a peer-to-peer panel of dairy processors who are innovating in employment policies and diversity goals to build a loyal workforce. And a highlight: a "Leading through Change" interactive workshop is embedded right in this workforce seminar.

The morning closes with a general session: Krysta Harden, president and CEO of USDEC, has the final word on arguably dairy's largest opportunity – the globalization of dairy sales. The winners in exporting will be the nations that embrace sustainable milk production and dairy processing.

And that's just the first day.

April 14 opens with a celebration available to all attendees – the WCMA Recognition Breakfast. There you'll learn the secret that sets the dairy industry apart: the extraordinary leaders, educators, suppliers, marketers and cheese makers honored here exemplify the dairy industry's passion and caring far beyond "doing the job." They display the expertise and quiet pride that makes the dairy industry special.

This uplifting breakfast is the perfect introduction for the morning seminars that follow. For example, the food safety session led by Innovation Center for US Dairy and CDR typifies dairy's long tradition of leading the food industry in product safety. An industry panel addresses the Innovation Center's focus on building a food safety culture in dairy plants, and another panel discusses prevention of foreign material in products. Dr. Kathy Glass, the nation's top food safety researcher, closes this seminar with a look at pathogen control in fresh cheeses and brine.

At the same time on April 14, CDR will fill their seminar room with manufacturers eager to hear CDR cheese experts discuss cheese quality. Bitterness and acidity control in cheese, crystal formation in aged products, and brine and phage control are all on the agenda for this must-attend session for cheesemakers.

Grading and marketing staff will enjoy another CDR seminar April 14: Creating an Effective Cheese Grading Program.

This session will lay out the building blocks of an effective grading program, then shift to a workshop with hands-on grading for everyone in attendance.

Look for details at www.cheese-expo.org. And join an event built to help a great industry find new heights.^{ju}

CHEESE EXPO

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

50 YEARS AGO

March 31, 1972: Madison—*Cheese Reporter* can honestly list – as one declared category of reader – a subscriber who classified themselves as "Cheese Freak, Lover & Eater." *Cheese Reporter* welcomes the new subscriber-reader-cheese freak to its mailing list and in the interest of anonymity, promises the real name will never be divulged.

Monroe, WI—Dean Perry has been named district procurement manager at Kraft Foods here, succeeding the late Marvin Zabel, who died recently. Perry has worked for Kraft since joining the firm in 1956.

25 YEARS AGO

April 4, 1997: Green Bay, WI—Rickey Rufer of Bresse Bleu, Watertown, WI, was introduced as the US Champion Cheese Maker here for his Classic Montrachet Soft Goat's Milk Cheese in Oil, which earned a score of 99.32 in the US Championship Cheese Contest final round of judging.

Green Bay, WI—Four Wisconsin cheese makers were honored as the first graduates of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Program. They include Thomas Jenny, Old Wisconsin Cheese, Platteville; Randy Krahenbuhl, Prima Kase, Monticello; Doug Peterson, Foremost Farms, Arena; and Terry Lensmire, Land O'Lakes, Denmark and Kiel.

10 YEARS AGO

March 30, 2012: Washington—The National Milk Producers Federation said it will now manage the licensing and use of the REAL Seal, an announcement that was criticized by the Cheese Importers Association of America. The CIAA said it was disappointed the REAL Seal will continue to be used to promote domestic dairy products against imports, even though importers are paying substantial amounts of money to US dairy promotion programs.

Milwaukee—Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker will officially kick off fund-raising efforts to renew the University of Wisconsin-Madison's venerable, 60-year-old Babcock Hall with a special address here next week at the International Cheese Technology Expo.

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Unexpected Events Hiking Farm Prices, Production Costs, Consumer Prices

Columbia, MO—Unexpected events such as trade disputes, the COVID-19 pandemic and now the war in Ukraine have added great uncertainty and volatility to agricultural markets; farm commodity prices, production costs and consumer food prices are higher than would have been expected a few months ago.

Economists from the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri prepare the US Agricultural Outlook annually in the spring with an update each August. The report gives policymakers, farmers, agribusinesses and the public an overview of the state of the US farm economy. The report summarizes baseline projections for agricultural and biofuel markets.

The latest report, released last week, was prepared using market information that was available in January 2022, noted Patrick Westhoff, FAPRI director. “We recognize that much has happened since then and some of the possible implications are discussed throughout the report.”

Macroeconomic assumptions are based on January forecast by IHS Markit (S&P Global), many of which would be affected by recent events, Westhoff stated. FAPRI uses their models to develop a range of projected market outcomes that consider major sources of uncertainty about future supply and demand conditions. Several key results were found in the report.

Prices have been pushed higher for some major crops due to the global economic recovery, as well as an increased demand from China, some weather-induced reductions in crop supplies and now by the war in Ukraine.

“Based on the available information in January 2022, we were projecting lower prices for most crops in the 2022/23 marketing year,” Westhoff commented. “A weather-reduced soybean crop in South America and the war in Ukraine have both pushed oilseed and grain prices higher, at least in the near term.”

Farm production expenses increased sharply in 2021 with another large increase expected in 2022, FAPRI noted. Higher prices for fertilizer and feed raise costs for crop and livestock producers. The Ukraine war has resulted in a large increase in price for crude oil and is likely to result in even higher farm production expenses.

Livestock prices have been supported by strong consumer and export demand. High production costs and other factors have limited growth in supplies of milk and

meat. Projected milk and cattle prices are expected to increase sharply in 2022, while prices for hogs and poultry remain well above the 2020 pandemic levels.

Ad hoc programs to respond to trade disputes and the pandemic pushed government payments to farmers to record levels in 2020. In this current-policy baseline, payments drop back to less than \$7 billion in 2023. Crop insurance accounts for about half of projected outlays on farm-related programs over the next 10 years, Westhoff said.

FAPRI’s report shows that net farm incomes increased in 2021, as higher crop and livestock receipts

more than offset reduced government payments and increased production expenses. Projected net income declines in 2022.

Recent events add uncertainty to the outlook, as both receipts and expenses could exceed projected levels.

Farm asset values have increased with land prices in recent years, with another increase projected for 2022. Given assumptions of the outlook, lower farm income and higher interest rates restrain farm real-estate values in subsequent years.

Consumer food price inflation increased 3.9 percent in 2021. The CPI for food rose 7.9 percent in February 2022 from a year earlier.

“Even if food inflation slows in the months ahead, the annual rate for 2022 is likely to be the highest

since 2008,” Westhoff said. “Higher farm commodity and energy prices caused by the Ukraine war could make it more difficult for consumer food price inflation to return to normal levels in the near term.”

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates soybean production in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay were reduced by 669 million bushels between January and March.

This is equivalent to more than 30 percent of US soybean exports. This resulted in a sharp increase in soybean prices.

While USDA estimates only a modest impact on 2021/22 US soybean export quantities, reduced South American supplies will support US exports and prices well into the 2022/23 marketing year, FAPRI said.

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Classic Comfort Food, International Flavors Top IDFA Ice Cream Contest

Bonita Springs, FL—Comfort food flavors like Fluffernutter and Honey Bun won over judges here this week at the International Dairy Foods Association’s (IDFA) annual Innovative Ice Cream Flavor and Innovative Cultured Dairy Product competitions.

The competitions took place in conjunction with IDFA’s annual Ice Cream Technology Conference, and the Yogurt & Cultured Innovation Conference.

Purple Daze by The Ice Cream Club, Inc. earned top honors in the Most Innovative Ice Cream Flavor competition; Strawberry Cheesecake Twist Cone by Wells Enterprises, Inc. was awarded Most Innovative Ice Cream Novelty; and Monkey Bread from Hudsonville Ice Cream was named Most Innovative Prototype Ice Cream Flavor.

In the Innovative Cultured Dairy Product competition, Peach Apricot Whole Milk French Style Yogurt by Fruitcrown Products Corporation was named Most Innovative Cultured Dairy Product, and Mango-Carrot Licuado from LALA US, Inc. won Most

Innovative Cultured Dairy Prototype Flavor.

“Consumption of ice cream and cultured dairy products is on the rise, and that’s because dairy companies continue to innovate and adapt quickly to meet consumer’s expectations and preferences,” said Joseph Scimeca, IDFA senior vice president of regulatory and scientific affairs.

“What we’ve seen over the past two years of the pandemic includes a marked shift back to comfort foods that bring us joy,” Scimeca said.

Flavors dominating the ice cream contest were innovative takes on comfort food – Strawberry Rhubarb Cobbler, Brown Sugar Apple-Berry Hand Pie, Monkey Bread, Summer Berry Cream Cake, and Buttered Corn Bread.

Botanical flavors like Blue Jasmine Tea and Lavender Blue with Lemon were popular, along with international flavors such as Ube Coconut Swirl, Thai It All Together, and Peanut Butter Miso Cookie.

International influence was center stage in the cultured contest,



From left: Luke Slojkowski and Robin Waite, Perry’s Ice Cream Company; Corey Ramer and Kevin Mitchell, Kemps LLC; Ashley Vaiana, Kinsey MacDonald and Taylor Pierson Hudsonville Creamery & Ice Cream; Elizabeth Brennan and Chad Pravecek, Wells Enterprises; Michael Scott, Coleman Kelleher and Jim Cummins, The Ice Cream Club, Inc.; and Michelle Le Goues, Fruitcrown Products Corporation.

with Fresas Con Crema Dessert and Mango-Carrot Licuado, organizers states.

This year’s Ice Cream Technology Conference hosted a record 178 ice cream industry professionals, where they tasted, judged and selected winners from a record total of 35 entries.

The International Dairy Foods Association said, for each class, the top finishers in the Innovative Cultured Dairy Product, Ice Cream Competitions were:

Most Innovative Ice Cream Flavor

- First place:** Purple Daze, The Ice Cream Club, Inc.
- Second place:** Fluffernutter, Barry Callebaut
- Third place:** Honey Bun, Hudsonville Ice Cream

Top Innovative Ice Cream Novelty

- First place:** Strawberry Cheesecake Twist Cone, Wells Enterprises, Inc.

- Second place:** Yellow Cake Sundae Crunch Ice Cream Bar, Perry’s Ice Cream Company, Inc.

- Third place:** Strawberry Rhubarb Cobbler, DFA Dairy Brands

Most Innovative Prototype Ice Cream Flavor

- First place:** Monkey Bread, Hudsonville Ice Cream

- Second place winner:** Blackberry Pretzel Cheesecake, DFA Dairy Brands

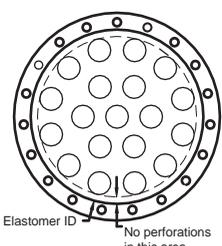
- Third place:** Lavender Blue with Lemon, Fruitcrown Products Corporation

A Peach Apricot Whole Milk French Style Yogurt made by Fruitcrown Products Corporation earned the title for Most Innovative Cultured Dairy Product.

LALA US, Inc. won the award for Most Innovative Cultured Dairy Prototype Flavor for its Mango-Carrot Licuado.

USDA News

A New Product that is officially accepted for use in Dairy Plants inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the Dairy Plant Survey Program. *USDA Project Number 13377*

TC Strainer Barrier	TC Elastomer Gasket	TC Strainer Gasket
 <p style="font-size: small;">Elastomer ID No perforations in this area</p>		
<p style="font-size: x-small;">The Strainer Barrier can be, but is not limited to, Stainless Steel Grade 304, 304L, 316 and 316L and is bonded to an elastomer to form a Strainer Gasket. The Strainer Barrier consists of a circular disk with a plurality of perforations of various diameters** in a specific pattern that are completely within a specific sized circle that is concentric to the OD of the disk. The circle diameter is less than that of the ID of the elastomer gasket portion so there can be no chance of the elastomer migrating into any particular perforation during the molding process which would create crevices. In addition, there are a plurality of specific sized holes in a radial pattern between the OD of the disk and the cylindrical ID of the elastomer gasket. In the molding process, the elastomer will fill in these holes from both sides yielding a much more secure adhesion between the strainer disk and the elastomer gasket portion. **The holes could also be oblong, rectangular or square in various dimensions. Fluoropolymer is also available, e.g. PTFE, Strainer Barrier/Gasket and any other 3-A Strainer Barrier/Gasket Material. TC = Tri-Clover®, formerly Tri-Clamp®, Style shown. BSI, DIN & ISO Styles are also available.</p>		
<p style="font-size: x-small;">Product Materials are compliant with the following applicable 3-A Sanitary Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42-02 In-Line Strainers for Milk and Milk Products. • 63-03 Sanitary Fittings. • 18-03 Multiple Use Rubber and Rubber-Like Materials. • 20-17, currently 20-27, Multiple-Use Plastic Materials. <p style="font-size: x-small;">Product Materials are also compliant with the following applicable Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASTM A240/A240M, Stainless Steel AISI 300 Series. • US FDA 21CFR177.2600, Rubber Articles Intended for Repeated Use. • US FDA 21CFR177.1550, Fluoropolymers For Use as Basic Components of Single and Repeated Use. • USP Class VI Tests, 2004: USP 27, NF 22, 2004, <88> Biological Reactivity, In Vivo. • USP MEM Elution Cytotoxicity, 2004: USP 27, NF 22, 2004, <87> Biological Reactivity, In Vitro. • EU 1935/2004(3)EC, Food Contact Regulations. • EU 2011/65/EC, ReCast of EU 2002/95/EC RoHS Directive 		
<p style="font-size: x-small;">Patent Pending: B1527.101.101, August 17, 2016 Licenses issued by the Provisional Patent Holder for the manufacturing, marketing and sale of the Strainer Barrier and Strainer Gasket to:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <h2 style="margin: 0;">G-M-I, INC.</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">G-M-I, Inc.®</p> <p style="margin: 0;">4822 East 355th Street, Willoughby, Ohio 44094-4634 USA</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Fon/Fax: 440-953-8811/-9631</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Email: gmiinc@msn.com • Url: www.gmigaskets.com Rev 20161128</p> </div>		



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Cheese Merchants Boost Services To Supply Growth In Hard Italian Cheese Category

Adds 100-Million Pound Aging Facility, Conversion Offerings; Celebrates 25th Year

West Chicago, IL—Cheese Merchants has capitalized on the growth of private label in the hard Italian cheese market and has recently strengthened its conversion services to include a 100-million-pound aging facility.

Entering its 25th year, the company has rather humble beginnings, yet has grown to be one of the top converters of hard Italian cheese in the US.

Pasquale Greco immigrated to the US in the 1950s. He had a number of jobs that included making sausage, selling cheese, and working in a deli before he and his son, Eddie, successfully launched Greco and Sons in 1990.

“Greco and Sons was selling a lot of imported cheeses,” said Bob Greco, president of Cheese Merchants. “Then Dad bought a cheese grater and began converting imported Parmesan and Pecorina Romano eventually becoming a significant part of the business through distribution channels.”

In March of 1998, the family split the distribution and grating businesses, with the conversion side becoming Cheese Merchants of America. Bob Greco became the first general manager under the tutelage of his father, Pasquale.

“We were small and had seven employees at the time, but we had good relationships with both distributors and manufacturers; built on the reputation of quality,” Greco said. “Based on that reputation, we were able to leverage some of those relationships with our grating services.”

The domestic cheese industry had just a few hard Italian cheese manufacturers when Cheese Merchants first started, Greco recalled.

“There were regional cheese makers here and there. Not many.

There were a few national players,” Greco said.

With little domestic product available, and demand from customers growing, the company needed to import 90 to 95 percent of their cheese from South America, Australia, and Italy.

“That was the hard Italian business in the 1990s. The gold standard 25 years ago was Argentina,” Greco said. “If there were domestic producers they were small, couldn’t handle the volume, or didn’t want to max out.”

To grow their business, Cheese Merchants knew their objectives could not be reached strictly with imported cheese.

“We still import a lot of cheese,” Greco said. “They make outstanding products. But it’s changed domestically. Some of the best hard Italian cheese in the world is now made here.”

Greco said that a growth of a domestic market was badly needed.

“When we started growing at scale, we couldn’t trust some of these countries. If they had better opportunities elsewhere, they might take those and leave you high and dry. It’s much easier to control your supply domestically because you’re not worried about consistency in quality and consistency in supply.”

Cheese Merchants is currently buying hard Italian cheese from about nine or 10 plants in the US based on their specifications.

“For some of these plants here in the US, hard Italian cheese is now their growth vehicle,” Greco said. “In some plants, we are their largest customers.”

Suppliers to Cheese Merchants, Greco said, are aligned with Cheese Merchants’ demand for quality.

In 2021, Cheese Merchants

formed a strategic partnership with Eau Galle Cheese in Durand, WI.

Steve Bechel, a Master Cheesemaker certified in making Parmesan and Romano, agreed to stay on as a partner and continues to make award-winning cheese including Asiago for Cheese Merchants.

“Eau Galle continues to make world-class cheese,” Greco said. “With a few other CapEx projects, we will be able to deliver 100 percent of the cheese wheels needed at Cheese Merchants.”

Parmesan, at 72 percent, makes up the largest portion of Cheese Merchants’ inventory while Asiago, Romano, and Fontina make up the remaining portion.

“Most of the companies we work with are like-minded partners,” Greco said. “It starts with quality.”

Within quality, you’ll find good management with clear objectives, clean facilities, and a good workforce, Greco said.

“Most of the companies we like to work with or acquire have similar growth plans,” Greco said. “Because the category continues to grow, and we want and will continue to grow, we will look at more strategic acquisitions within our business disciplines.”

According to USDA, in 1998 when Cheese Merchants started, domestic production of Parmesan was 129 million pounds. Preliminary USDA figures for 2021 shows that Parmesan will smash production records for the category with a total of approximately 487 million pounds.

In December 2021 and in January 2022, Parmesan production topped 47 million pounds, the first time that’s ever happened.

Could domestic Parmesan production be on pace to reach over 550 million pounds in 2022?

“We are counting on it, Greco said. “We’ve grown significantly over the past 25 years. We like the conversion business, we like the hard Italian business, we see continued growth in it.”

“You’re seeing an explosion of hard Italian cheese growth in all segments, retail, foodservice, and home meal replacement. As these segments flourish, I believe we are well-positioned and able to serve all our customers’ needs.”

Greco thinks Cheese Merchants has about 30 percent of the category.

“I’m not sure the exact numbers, but we are a healthy player,” he said. “We are proud of that accomplishment. 30 percent is a lot. We are growing at a larger percentage

than the market does annually, we will continue to grow, and make that our number one goal,” Greco said.

Private Label

Jim Smart is the executive vice president of Cheese Merchants. He came to the company in 1999 with the direction to grow the business.

“We made a strategic decision early on and we bet on private label becoming a huge thing,” Smart said. “Not only because it was expensive to build a brand, but because that’s where national distributors were heading and, frankly, we were really good at private labeling.”

Smart described that the popular thing for food distributors to do at that time was

for them to have their own brand of Parmesan.

“Distributors were private labeling everything, tomatoes, sauces, oils, you name it,” Smart said. “Cheese was a natural add-on in the Italian food sector. We private labeled for many businesses and that gave us a huge foot-in-the-door.”

In nearby Bartlett, IL, Cheese Merchants’ conversion plant processes 170 million pounds of hard Italian cheese a year.

“You’re seeing an explosion of hard Italian cheese growth in all segments, retail, foodservice, and home meal replacement. As these segments flourish, I believe we are well-positioned and able to serve all our customers’ needs.”

— Bob Greco,
Cheese Merchants

Smart said about 60 percent of that production goes into the foodservice industry, while 20 percent goes into the food ingredient market and the other 20 percent serves the retail marketplace.

While Greco expects all of the segments to continue growing, he’s highest on retail.

“Retail is going to continue to grow and grow the fastest,” Greco said. “The grocery stores have gotten bigger and smarter. They want their label to be the legacy brand. We’re in there with private label. That’s our cheese.”

Smart said the shelf-stable market has provided a tremendous growth platform.

“If you go back to 2008, when we first began drying, there really was no dominant player investing in this space. So we did, and it has

• See **Cheese Merchants**, p. 9



Jim Smart (left) and Bob Greco of Cheese Merchants have been working together since 1999 to make Cheese Merchants one of the largest converters of hard Italian cheese. The company converts nearly 180 million pounds of Parmesan, Asiago, Romano and Fontina a year.

Cheese Merchants

Continued from p. 8

allowed us to diversify our product categories and expand our customer base," Smart said.

Aging Facility Centralizes Product

In July of 2021, Cheese Merchants opened a new 300,000-square-foot aging warehouse that houses 100 million pounds in three fireproof aging coolers.

The new facility, with 54 docks and 125,000-square-foot finish-good cooler space, will also serve as the new shipping hub and allow the Bartlett conversion facility to expand upon its services.

To fill the new aging warehouse, Cheese Merchants took all of their cheese being stored in eight Wisconsin and a New Jersey cold storage facility and moved all of that product to West Chicago, IL.

Taking 100 million pounds of cheese out of those cold storages didn't sit too well for some companies, Greco admitted.

"Let me be fair. They all do a tremendous job. As an industry, we are lucky to have them. But we recognized an efficiency problem. We age 100 million pounds of cheese. 100 million," Greco repeated. "Outside warehousing that much cheese was a tremendous expense. We eliminated that, we gained more control of the process, we've centralized our shipping, and it allowed us to expand our conversion services in Bartlett."

He said Cheese Merchants was pulling 60 to 70 loads of cheese a week from the nine cold storages.

"Our cheese suppliers are now shipping to one centralized area and we now have a better idea where our cheese is," Greco said. "This is unique. We are the only player in this category who is aging, converting, labeling, and shipping our cheese. We control the entire process."

Moving the shipping out of the conversion plant in Bartlett frees up space to expand the company's conversion services.

"We are adding retail cup and shaker lines which have seen over double-digit growth in foodservice recently," Greco said. "Moving our shipping services out of there freed up a lot of space."

To fill a great part of that newly adjusted space will be the addition of a plant-based process room.

"The one thing we pride ourselves in doing, is we keep reinvesting," Greco said. "Most other conversion companies don't or can't touch plant-based because you have to segregate the product and it can't come across any allergens. This will be a unique room built specifically for plant-based. It's not going to see a piece of cheese."

In 2021, Cheese Merchants invested in Holman Cheese, a

plant-based, process cheese business located in Holmen, WI.

"We believe in Holmen Cheese as a long-term strategy," Greco said. "The plant-based industry has a lot of upside. We are excited for the many different facets this space will offer us as it grows."

One-Stop-Shop Conversion Facility, Countless Services

"Our goal is to be a one-stop-shop. And that's how we built and designed this plant," said Greco with a noticeable, and deservedly so, sense of pride in the operation.

The conversion plant features nine high-speed grating and shredding lines, two high-speed cup fillers, four cheese-canister lines, and 22 state-of-the-art cheese dryers.

The company purchases all new equipment, said Rob Arko, plant manager of Cheese Merchants' Bartlett conversion operation.

"That's the thing about these guys," Arko said. "They don't spare any expense. They're not afraid to put money back into the business. That makes my job fun."

A lot of the facility was designed to create efficiencies, adding automation wherever possible.

Greco said he thinks Cheese Merchants may be the only facility in this category with as many services and by automating, allows employees to be more versatile.

"We grate, shred, and shave, we have three cup lines, multiple shaker lines, exact weight wedging, we black wax wheels, and also dry our own cheese," Greco said. "So we have to be nimble, focused, and as efficient as possible whenever possible."

About four years ago we started feeling the labor crunch, Greco said. Marchant Schmidt with its converting lines and Haden & Custance LTD, with its deboxing equipment, helped us do some things on the front end and some on the back that saved us through tough labor shortages.

Most of the converting equipment was manufactured, designed and/or integrated by Marchant Schmidt, Fond du Lac, WI.

"Marchant Schmidt does a lot of work for us," Greco said. "They make great equipment, you might pay a little more but it lasts, it's efficient; the way it conveys and integrates throughout the process is outstanding. We ask a lot of them and they usually come through. And the Parmesan barrel cutter is one of a kind."

Cheese Merchants has a new and unique barrel cutter collaboratively designed by Rob Arko and Marchant Schmidt.

"We have to get as much cheese out of our barrels as we can, Arko said. "We thought if we could eliminate some of the surface cutting area on the barrel, we could increase our yield."

"Cheese Merchants challenged us to come up with a better solu-



Cheese Merchants opened this 300,000 square-foot aging warehouse in West Chicago, IL, in July 2021. The facility is the company's shipping hub and centralizes 100,000,000 pounds of US and imported Parmesan and similar hard Italian cheese, prior to conversion.

tion to their hard-cheese cutting needs," said Rick Schmidt, president of Marchant Schmidt. "We worked closely with Rob and Cheese Merchants and through that collaboration, we were able to develop a high capacity system that had no product loss."

The barrel cutter also includes servo-controlled cutting, wire break detection, and is ergonomically friendly to the operator.

"We ask a lot from Marchant Schmidt," Arko said. "They are a good company to work with."

"We have developed a great partnership over the past several years," Schmidt said. "They are a great company to work for. Thanks in part to their rapid growth, we've been fortunate to work with them to develop innovative solutions that focus on improving line efficiency and optimization."

Future of Cheese Merchants

Greco predicts consolidation will continue in the hard Italian cheese business.

"Most of the products will be made stateside by fewer companies," Greco said. "We like our position in the Midwest and having the conversion plants and the aging facility will suit our continued growth. We like our space."

With the Eau Galle partnership and the investment in Holmen Cheese, Greco said the company continues to take significant steps to ensure quality and growth opportunities continue to exist.

Cheese Merchants has several other growth strategies in the process including vertically integrating more of the business that will position the company well for generations to come.

"You have already seen it with our aging warehouse, our partnerships, and investments," Greco said. "We'll have more of those multiple integrations coming along. That's where the company sees growth."

Greco and Smart say that may include ownership in some more cheese plants but they mostly want to stay in their lane.

"We are a privately-held company," Greco said. "I'm generation two, we have generation three coming up. We keep building for generation four and five. We can get there. That's our goal. We have great, quality partnerships based on trust, with both our buyers and our suppliers. We like to work. We work hard. That's the Pasquale Greco model."

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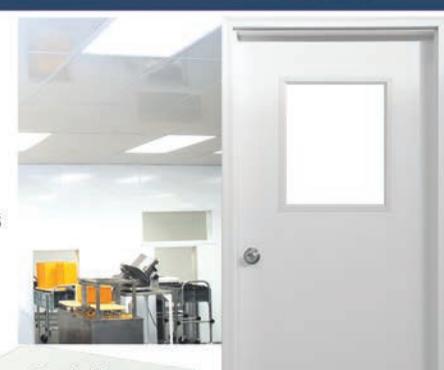
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Per Capita Milk Production Rose 1.2% In 2021; WY, SD Had Largest Increases

Shawnee Mission, KS—Per capita US milk production in 2021 was 681.7 pounds, up 1.2 percent, or 8.1 pounds, from 2020, according to the February 2022 edition of the Central federal milk marketing order's *Marketing Services Bulletin*.

Per capita milk production is a data series presented in the Central order's *Bulletin*. A comparison of per capita production to per capita consumption data may reflect the aggregate supply and demand balance for individual states and regions throughout the US.

A map included in the *Bulletin* depicts per capita milk production by state for 2021. The 300- and 600-pound levels of per capita production are arbitrary divisions selected for the map. The 600-pound level roughly approximates annual per capita consumption of all dairy products on a milk equivalent basis, while the 300-pound level reflects average annual consumption of Class I and Class II products, plus reserve requirements.

In 2021, 19 states reported annual per capita milk production increases, with Wyoming's 16.4 percent increase the largest gain, followed by South Dakota's 14.4-percent increase. No other state posted a double-digit percentage increase in per capita milk production last year, although the combined states of Alaska and Hawaii (their information was combined due to data confidentiality), which together rank last in per capita milk production at just 2.5 pounds, posted a 13.6-percent increase.

Delaware's 2021 per capita milk declined by 27.1 percent, which was

the largest decline. Five additional states recorded declines of 10 percent or more in 2021 compared with 2020: Mississippi, down 19.0 percent; South Carolina, down 15.7 percent; West Virginia, down 15.3 percent; Alabama, down 12.5 percent; and New Jersey, down 11.0 percent.

Per Capita Output Since 2016

Between 2016 and 2021, per capita milk production increased by 3.7 percent (24.2 pounds). Sixteen states record increases in per capita milk production, led by Wyoming's 59.3 percent gain.

Five additional states increased per capita milk production by 10 percent or more comparing 2021 with 2016: South Dakota, up 36.5 percent; Kansas, up 22.2 percent; Colorado, up 28.1 percent; Texas, up 36.9 percent; and Nevada, up 13.9 percent.

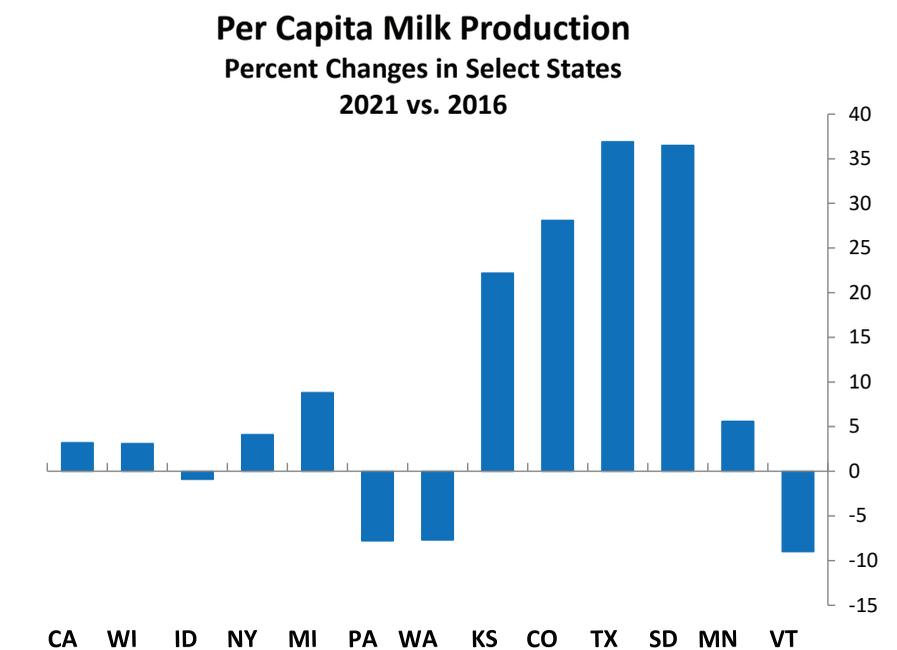
Alaska and Hawaii combined recorded the largest decline in per capita milk production between 2016 and 2021, at 85.9 percent.

Thirteen additional states posted declines of more than 20 percent between 2016 and 2021, while six states reported declines between 10 percent and 20 percent.

Top States In Per Capita Output

A total of 19 states had per capita milk production above 600 pounds in 2021, led by perennial leader Idaho, at 8,633.7 pounds, down 1.7 percent from 2020 and down 0.9 percent from 2016.

Four other states had per capita milk production above 3,000 pounds in 2021, including Wisconsin, 5,376.9 pounds, up 3.0 per-



cent from 2020 and up 3.1 percent from 2016; South Dakota, 4,024.0 pounds, up 14.4 percent from 2020 and 36.5 percent higher than in 2016; Vermont, 3,974.8 pounds, down 1.9 percent from 2020 and down 9.0 percent from 2016; and New Mexico, 3,688.3 pounds, down 4.4 percent from 2020 but up 0.1 percent from 2016.

Also in 2021, five states had per capita milk production above 1,000 pounds, including Minnesota, 1,848.1 pounds, up 3.7 percent from 2020 and 5.6 percent higher than in 2016; Iowa, 1,734.4 pounds, up 2.9 percent from 2020 and up 7.9 percent from 2016; Kansas, 1,396.5 pounds, up 1.8 percent from 2020 and 22.2 percent higher than in 2016; Michigan, 1,189.2 pounds, up 2.5 percent from 2020 and up 8.8 percent from 2016; and California, 1,066.9 pounds, up 2.0 percent from 2020 and 3.2 percent higher than in 2016.

And nine other states had per capita milk production above 600 pounds in 2021: Colorado, 906.9 pounds, up 1.9 percent from 2020 and up 28.1 percent from 2016;

Washington, 840.5 pounds, down 4.8 percent from 2020 and down 7.7 percent from 2016; New York, 783.4 pounds, up 3.2 percent from 2020 and 4.1 percent higher than in 2016; Pennsylvania, 780.2 pounds, down 1.4 percent from 2020 and down 7.8 percent from 2016; Nebraska, 724.7 pounds, down 2.6 percent from 2020 and down 1.2 percent from 2016; Utah, 666.0 pounds, down 2.0 percent from 2020 and down 3.2 percent from 2016; Indiana, 665.9 pounds, up 4.3 percent from 2020 and up 6.4 percent from 2016; Arizona, 662.1 pounds, down 2.8 percent from 2020 and down 4.9 percent from 2016; and Oregon, 617.5 pounds, down 0.7 percent from 2020 and down 2.5 percent from 2016.

Texas is the only state that ranked in the top 10 in milk production in 2021 (it ranked fourth) that had per capita milk production of less than 600 pounds.

Specifically, the state's 2021 per capita milk production was 528.3 pounds, up 3.9 percent from 2020 and up 36.9 percent from 2016, according to the report.

At the other end of the spectrum, 15 states (including the combined Alaska and Hawaii) had per capita milk production below 100 pounds last year, including Florida, 99.6 pounds; North Carolina, 86.9 pounds; Tennessee, 72.8 pounds; Delaware, 51.8 pounds; West Virginia, 42.1 pounds; Mississippi, 35.9 pounds; South Carolina, 30.6 pounds; Massachusetts, 28.2 pounds; Louisiana, 27.2 pounds; Arkansas, 19.8 pounds; New Jersey, 9.7 pounds; Rhode Island, 9.2 pounds; Alabama, 7.7 pounds; and Alaska/Hawaii, 2.5 pounds.

With the exception of North Carolina, all of those states posted per capita milk production declines of more than 10 percent between 2016 and 2021, with Delaware (down 48.5 percent), West Virginia (down 42.4 percent) and Alabama (down 59.3 percent) posting decreases of more than 40 percent and Alaska/Hawaii posting a drop of 85.9 percent. North Carolina's milk output fell 8.5 percent during the period.

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Bipartisan Senate Bill Would Extend School, Summer Meal Flexibilities

Washington—Bipartisan legislation introduced Thursday in the US Senate would extend USDA school meal flexibilities from June 30, 2022, to Sept. 30, 2023.

The legislation was introduced by US Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), along with 50 of their colleagues.

At the onset of the pandemic, Congress gave USDA flexibility to issue a number of waivers so that schools and meal program operators could have the flexibility they need to continue to feed children. Congress has previously extended these flexibilities to address ongoing challenges.

Without further congressional action, these flexibilities are slated to expire on June 30, 2022.

The “Support Kids Not Red Tape Act” would:

- Extend USDA’s authority to issue waivers from June 30, 2022 to September 30, 2023. This is a continuation of the authority USDA has had and exercised throughout the coronavirus pandemic. It would cover this summer, as well as the full 2022-2023 school year, and summer of 2023, and create a transition plan to help schools adjust back to normal school meal operations starting Oct. 1, 2023.

- Direct states to submit a transition plan to USDA so that schools will be prepared and supported when transitioning back to normal National School Lunch Program operations after the increased flexibilities end.

- Direct the secretary of agriculture to provide technical assistance to states on drafting transition plans and to school food authorities on meeting meal standards during the waiver period.

According to a summary of the legislation provided by Stabenow, the most immediate impact of this legislation will be on the summer meals program this summer. Operators are already trying to make decisions about whether to move forward with summer sites. Without flexibilities, many sites across the country will no longer be able to serve all children in the community.

“We should make it easier for kids to get the meals they need – not harder. Our bill cuts red tape and keeps the priority on giving children the healthy meals they need and deserve,” Stabenow said “As we come out of this pandemic, schools are doing their best, but it takes time for them to transition back to their operations before Covid.

“We can’t let hungry kids get caught in the middle. Without this support, up to 30 million kids who get food at school will see

their essential breakfast and lunch meals disrupted. And millions of hungry kids who rely on summer meals may have nowhere to go to get food,” Stabenow added.

“For many students, the meals served at school, and in summer or afterschool programs, may be the only meals they can count on,” Murkowski commented. “Following the widespread disruptions caused by Covid, life is beginning to feel more ‘normal’ for some.

“However, many Alaskans are still working to overcome the economic fallout from the pandemic and many schools continue to struggle with supply shortages and higher prices,” Murkowski continued. “That’s why I’m glad to join Senator Stabenow and my Senate colleagues in a push to allow

USDA to extend vital support for school nutrition programs and preventing barriers that may prevent students from receiving a healthy meal.”

“School meal programs, a crucial source of nutritional support for millions of families nationwide, face tremendous immediate and long-term challenges in the absence of these child nutrition waivers,” said Beth Wallace, president of the School Nutrition Association. “Acute supply chain disruptions, persistent labor shortages and escalating costs make it impossible for these programs to return to normal operations next school year.

“This legislation is absolutely critical to sustaining school meal programs, ensuring children have access to nutritious school meals and preventing substantial financial losses for schools nationwide,” Wallace added.

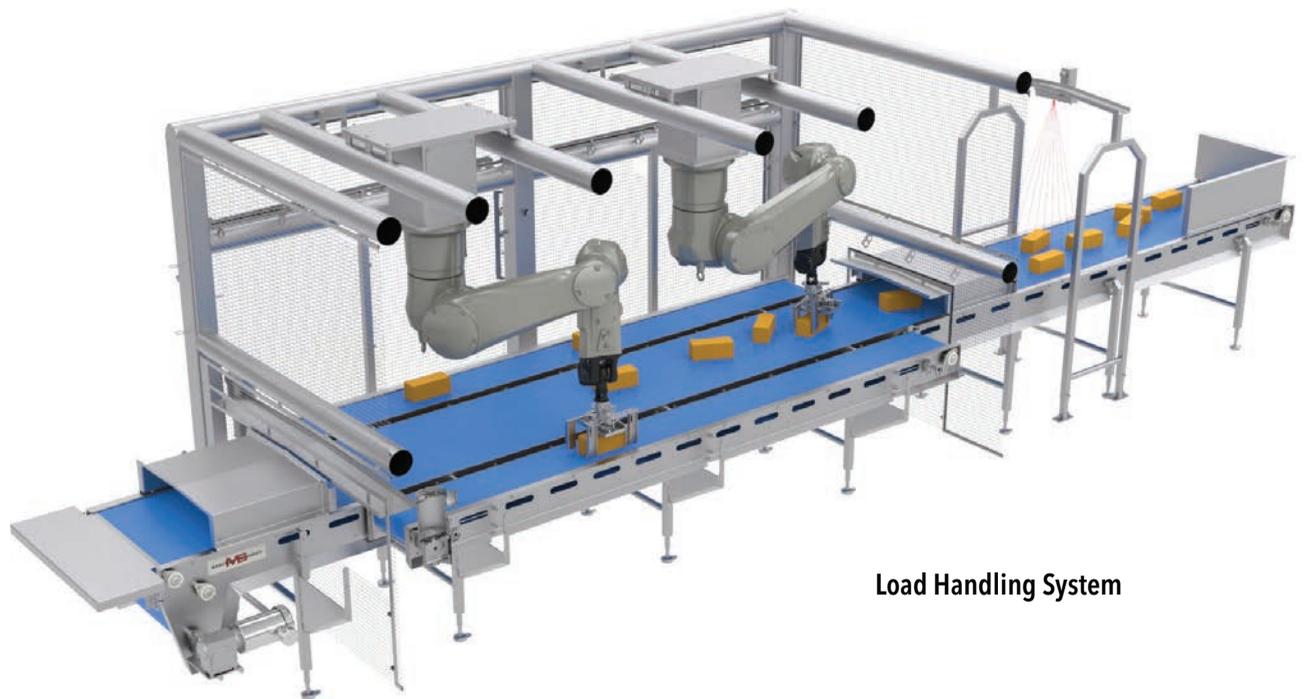
“Without congressional action, the child nutrition waivers will end on June 30, 2022, causing millions of children to face a hunger cliff when they lose access to summer and school meals. Furthermore, schools and community-based organizations that feed our nation’s children need time to recover from the impact of the pandemic,” said Luis Guardia, president of the Food Research & Action Center. “We applaud Senator Stabenow for her leadership on this issue and strongly endorse this bill which would extend waiver authority through September 30, 2023. Hungry children can’t wait.”

“As our country continues to experience challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including supply chain and labor shortages as well as increased food costs, access to healthful school meals remains

• See **Summer Meals**, p 40

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Mailbox Milk Price Averaged \$17.69 In 2021, Up 73 Cents From 2020

Washington—Mailbox milk prices for selected reporting areas in federal milk marketing orders averaged \$17.69 per hundredweight in 2021, up 73 cents from 2020's average, according to figures released recently by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

That marks the seventh consecutive year in which the mailbox milk price averaged under \$18.00 per hundredweight. The last time it averaged above that level was in 2014, when it averaged a record \$24.04 per hundred.

The mailbox milk price is defined as the net price received by dairy producers for milk, including all payments received for milk sold, and deducting costs associated with marketing the milk.

Included in all payments for milk sold are: over-order premiums; quality, component, breed, and volume premiums; payouts from state-run over-order pricing pools; payments from super pool organizations or marketing agencies in common; payouts from programs offering seasonal production bonuses; and, monthly distributions of cooperative earnings. Annual distributions of cooperative profits/earnings or equity repayments are not included.

Included in costs associated with marketing milk are: hauling charges; cooperative dues, assessments, equity deductions/capital retains, and re-blends; the federal order deduction for marketing services; federally mandated assessments such as the National Dairy Research and Promotion Program and budget deficit reduction; and advertising/promotion assessments

above the national program level. Other deductions, such as loan, insurance or feed mill assignments, are not included.

For all markets, the mailbox milk price is reported at the handlers' average butterfat test (i.e., no adjustment to 3.5 percent).

During 2021, average mailbox milk prices for the selected reporting areas ranged from a low of \$15.70 per hundredweight in February to a high of \$20.87 per hundred in December, or a difference of \$5.17 per hundred between the lowest and highest prices.

By comparison, in 2020, mailbox prices ranged from a low of \$12.90 per hundred in May to a high of \$19.15 per hundred in November, a difference of \$6.25 per hundred.

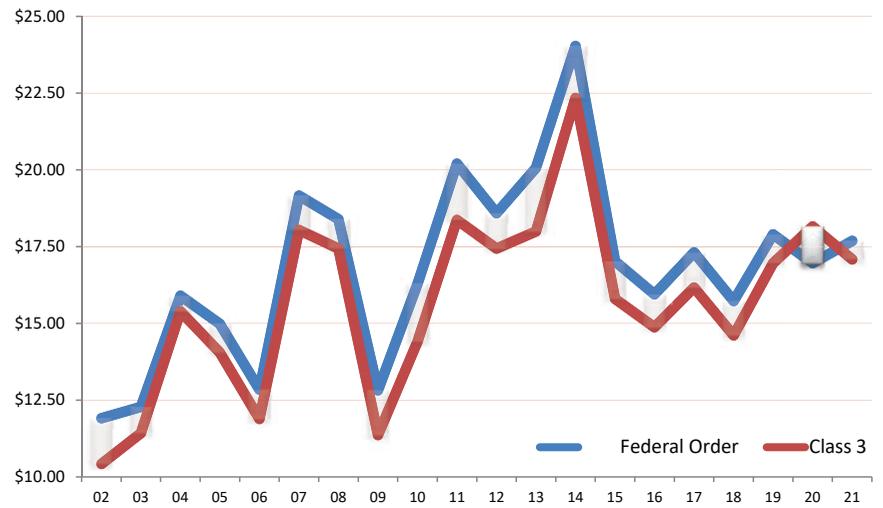
Among all federal order areas reported by AMS in its mailbox milk price report, mailbox price averages in 2021 ranged from a high of \$20.18 per hundredweight for Florida to a low of \$15.38 per hundred for New Mexico.

By comparison, in 2020, mailbox price averages ranged from a high of \$19.42 per hundred in Florida to a low of \$15.42 per hundred in Michigan.

Last year, in addition to Florida, other reporting areas that had average mailbox milk prices above the 2021 national average of \$17.69 per hundredweight were: New England states (Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island), \$18.73 per hundred; New York, \$17.96 per hundred; Eastern Pennsylvania, \$17.77 per hundred; Appalachian states (Kentucky,

Average Mailbox Milk Prices

2002 – 2021 All Federal Orders vs Class 3



North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia), \$18.66 per hundred; Southeast states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi), \$18.67 per hundred; Southern Missouri, \$18.03 per hundred; Western Pennsylvania, \$17.97 per hundred; Ohio, \$18.06 per hundred; Indiana, \$17.70 per hundred; Wisconsin, \$18.52 per hundred; Minnesota, \$18.34 per hundred; Iowa, \$18.12 per hundred; Illinois, \$18.31 per hundred; Northwest states (Oregon and Washington), \$17.87 per hundred; and California, \$17.76 per hundred.

In addition to New Mexico, other reporting areas that had average 2021 mailbox milk prices below the national \$17.69 per hundredweight average were: Michigan, \$16.72 per hundred; Corn Belt states (Kansas, Nebraska, and northern Missouri counties), \$16.28 per hundred; and Western Texas, \$16.86 per hundred.

Last year was the third full year in which the California federal order was in effect, and thus was the third year for which mailbox

milk prices are available for a full year for the California federal order. As noted, California's 2021 mailbox milk price averaged \$17.76 per hundredweight, or seven cents above the national average for all reporting areas.

By comparison, California's 2020 mailbox milk price had averaged 21 cents below the average for all reporting areas, while its 2019 mailbox milk price averaged two cents higher than the average for all reporting areas.

USDA Announces Four More Trade Missions For 2022

New Orleans, LA—As part of its commitment to expanding and diversifying global market opportunities for US agriculture, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) will sponsor four additional international trade missions in 2022, US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced recently at the Commodity Classic here.

Vilsack recently returned from the United Arab Emirates, where he led USDA's first overseas trade mission since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. He was joined by representatives from more than 40 US businesses, farm organizations, and state departments of agriculture, who connected with potential customers from across the Middle East and North Africa.

Those connections resulted in more than \$7.6 million in projected 12-month sales to date.

While final dates are subject to confirmation, the remaining trade missions scheduled for 2022 are:

June 20-23: London.

July 18-21: Manila.

Oct. 31-Nov. 3: Nairobi, Kenya

Nov. 29-Dec. 3: Madrid, Spain

US agricultural exports in 2021 reached a record high, topping \$177 billion. There were 28 markets around the globe where those exports exceeded \$1 billion.

For more information about USDA trade missions, visit www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-missions.

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USDA Publishes Final Rule On Origin Of Livestock For Organic Dairy Animals

Washington—USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) on Tuesday published a final rule that amends the origin of livestock requirements for dairy animals under the USDA organic regulations.

USDA's organic regulations dictate how and when nonorganic dairy animals may be transitioned, or converted, to organic production.

The final rule specifies that a nonorganic dairy may transition to organic production on a one-time basis, and once the transition is complete, the operation must not transition additional nonorganic animals to organic production or source transitioned animals.

This action is intended to facilitate and improve compliance with and enforcement of the USDA organic regulations the agency explained.

The final rule takes into account current practices and stakeholder input to ensure a policy option that minimizes disruptions, while protecting the value of the organic label, AMS said. This final rule will improve AMS's ability to effectively administer the National Organic Program (NOP) and improve AMS's oversight of

the USDA-accredited certifying agents that inspect and certify organic dairy operations.

AMS noted that the final rule is also intended to maintain consumer trust in the organic seal by assuring consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent and uniform standard—a stated purpose of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA).

AMS is making these changes, following consultation with the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and following notice and public comment, to provide additional details for the USDA organic regulations governing the production of organic livestock products, and at the direction of Congress.

The final rule updates the origin of livestock regulations, first published in December 2000, by explicitly requiring that milk or milk products labeled, sold, or represented as organic be from dairy animals organically managed from the last third of gestation onward, with a one-time exception for newly certified organic livestock operations to convert (or "transition") nonorganic dairy animals to organic milk production.

This exception allows an eligible operation to transition nonorganic dairy animals to organic milk production one time by managing animals organically for 12 months rather than from the last third of gestation. The transition must occur over a single 12-month period and all transitioning animals must end the transition at the same time.

After the transition to organic production is complete, an operation is not allowed to transition additional nonorganic animals to organic milk production, and the certified operation may not source animals transitioned by other operations. After the transition, an operation replacing culled dairy animals and/or expanding its number of dairy animals must add dairy animals that have been under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation.

In the final rule, AMS clarifies that breeder stock must be managed organically during the period that breeder stock are nursing their organic offspring, from the last third of gestation through the end of the nursing period. Breeder stock that are not certified organic may not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.

The final rule reiterates that nonorganic breeder stock may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at

any time, but they must be brought onto the organic operation no later than the last third of gestation if their offspring are to be raised as organic livestock.

"This action demonstrates the USDA's strong commitment to America's organic dairy farmers," said US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. "The origin of livestock final rule provides clear and uniform standards about how and when livestock may be transitioned to organic dairy production, and how transitioned animals are managed within the organic dairy system.

"Now, all organic dairy livestock producers will have the confidence and certainty they are operating in a fair and competitive market," Vilsack added.

"Consumers of dairy that carry the USDA Certified Organic Seal can trust that those products meet their expectations for how organic dairy products are produced," said Jenny Lester Moffitt, USDA under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs.

The final rule will be effective 60 days after the date of publication in the *Federal Register*, which has not yet been scheduled.

Certified organic operations must comply with all provisions of the final rule by 365 days after the date of publication in the *Federal Register*.



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FDA's Budget

(Continued from p. 1)

Coupled with the Data Modernization and Enhanced Technologies initiative, the request for New Era of Smarter Food Safety funding will enable CFSAN to leverage new and emerging technologies and data-driven approaches to strengthen its predictive capabilities, accelerate prevention, and speed traceback when contaminated foods are identified.

With this funding, FDA said it will enhance preparations for implementation of the food traceability final rule, to be issued in late 2022, which establishes requirements for industry to keep additional records to reduce the time it takes to identify the recipients of certain commodities to prevent or mitigate foodborne illness. FDA released its proposed traceability rule for certain cheeses and other foods in September 2020.

FDA said it will prepare for implementation of the final rule by developing an internal product tracing system to receive traceability information. As required under the FSMA, FDA will enhance existing information technology systems to receive traceback data directly from stakeholders in circumstances such as outbreaks in order to expand the agency's capacity to process data quickly.

This effort will also support FDA's collaboration with federal, state, local, tribal and territorial partners on new ways of conducting accelerated tracebacks and trace forwards in a tech-enabled food traceability world to identify contaminated foods more quickly.

FDA said it will also conduct outreach to the food industry, international partners, and non-

traditional stakeholders (e.g. financial industry, technology firms, insurance companies) that can support and amplify FDA's efforts to extend tracing throughout the food supply.

With strengthened traceback capabilities, FDA's ability to conduct root-cause analyses will be greater, and findings from this work can be used to better inform the prevention-based framework that FSMA established and can provide more robust data for predictive analytics, the agency stated.

Root-cause analyses will also provide more robust data for predictive analytics to detect future problems sooner, FDA said. Working with industry and regulatory partners, the agency will incorporate root cause data to develop commodity-specific prevention plans, expanding on its experience with targeted, action-oriented initiatives, and improve prevention-oriented food safety practices to better avoid identified risks. The FY 2023 budget will also strengthen data sharing and predictive analytics capabilities to better prevent foodborne illnesses.

As more data streams and tools for rapidly analyzing data become available, FDA will evaluate how it can best use predictive analytics tools to identify when and where contamination might be likely to occur, to prevent contaminated products from entering the food supply, and target efforts to remove potentially contaminated product from the market.

FDA said it will begin developing requirements for user-friendly IT platforms to better analyze data and better share data with stakeholders, including industry, academia, and regulatory partners. FDA will adapt its oversight frame-

work to help ensure the safety of foods produced and distributed using new business models (e.g., e-commerce).

The agency will conduct outreach with stakeholders and complete an evaluation of the regulatory landscape to assess needs for additional guidance documents, education and outreach efforts, and compliance activities to support new food business models. For more traditional business models, FDA will conduct an independent review of the traditional retail food safety program's effectiveness in preventing foodborne illness.

Budget Proposal For USDA

Biden's budget requests \$28.5 billion in discretionary funding for the USDA, a \$4.2 billion, or 17.1 percent, increase from the 2021 enacted level.

Among other things, the budget proposal includes \$22 million for the Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives, which supports dairy businesses in the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products.

The proposal also supports a strong nutrition safety net, USDA said. The budget provides \$6.8 billion for critical nutrition programs, including \$6 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to help vulnerable families put healthy food on the table and address racial disparities in maternal and child health outcomes. The budget also proposes \$111 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a budget level that supports 43.5 million Americans per month.

And the budget proposes \$1.177 billion in funding to address climate change across private, working agricultural land.

Wilk Is First Cell Cultured Dairy Member Of Cellular Agriculture Europe

Rehovot, Israel—Wilk, a developer of cell-based human and animal milk and milk components, recently announced that it has joined Cellular Agriculture Europe.

Launched in December 2021, Cellular Agriculture Europe was founded with a mission to bring together producers of cultivated meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, and other animal-based cultivated products with stakeholders to find common ground and speak with a shared voice for the good of the industry, consumers and regulators.

Having launched operations in 2020, Wilk is introducing laboratory production processes that replicate the milk-producing cells of humans and other mammals to create real milk and milk components in laboratory settings. Wilk, which was formerly known as Bio-milk, holds a patent from the US Patent and Trademark Office for systems, compositions and methods for in-vitro production of milk using an array of mammary organoids seeded on tertiary-branched, resilient duct scaffolding.

"We are honored to be the first dairy company to receive membership to this important organization, whose mission is so closely aligned with our own to introduce new technologies that facilitate the sustainable cell-based production of high-quality food products," said Rachelle Neumann, Wilk's chief marketing officer.

"We are excited to collaborate with like-minded visionaries and innovators of Cellular Agriculture Europe to make a difference in the way society perceives the cell-based industry, advance regulations around cell-based foods and ingredients and lead us all to a better, more ecological future," Neumann added.

"We are delighted to welcome Wilk into our ranks of entrepreneurs and innovators working to bring cellular agriculture products to European consumers," said Helene Miller, vice president at Cellular Agriculture Europe. "With the addition of Wilk, we now total 14 companies united in a shared vision to develop an alternative to the current food production process and create a more sustainable future for the planet."

"Addressing the role the food system plays in the climate crisis is a pressing need. Cellular agriculture will add a powerful tool to the collective effort to create a healthier and greener food system in Europe," said Robert E. Jones of Mosa Meat, president of Cellular Agriculture Europe's board.

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Listeria Survives Better At Low Temps In Cured And Soft Cheeses: Study

Cordoba, Spain—Storage of soft and cured cheeses at room temperature does not compromise food safety with respect to the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in both types of cheeses, compared to refrigeration, nor does the reduction of salt in cheeses in the range studied, according to a study carried out by the University of Cordoba and the University of Burgos.

As a ready-to-eat (RTE) food, cheese can support the survival and growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*, noted the study, which was published in *Food Microbiology*. According to the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), 46 alert notifications concerning the presence of *L. monocytogenes* in cheeses produced and distributed in the European Union (EU) countries were recorded from 2016 to 2021.

L. monocytogenes can enter cheese processing environments through raw milk and adhere to food contact surfaces and form biofilms, which are hard to eliminate and can result in cheese cross-contamination, the study explained. As a result, many listeriosis outbreaks have been linked to the consumption of both raw milk cheeses and pasteurized milk cheeses worldwide.

Predictive microbiology models describing the growth/death kinetics of *L. monocytogenes* in soft and cured cheeses have been extensively documented in literature, the study pointed out. However, the variability between cheese types in terms of structure, physico-chemical characteristics, technological processing and other factors influencing microbial behavior, e.g., levels of lactic acid bacteria (LAB), hinders the application of a predictive model developed with data obtained in a specific cheese type to predict microbial behavior in other cheese varieties.

Thus, product-oriented approaches are recommended for the development of more precise and reliable predictive models. On the other hand, for obtaining more representative and accurate results predictive models should be developed using *L. monocytogenes* isolates from dairy companies as these strains would be better adapted to the cheesemaking conditions, the study said.

Objectives of this study were to quantify and model the kinetic behavior of a multi-strain cocktail of persistent *L. monocytogenes* strains belonging to the four most representative genetic serovars on soft cheese with different salt concentrations and on cured raw sheep milk cheese during storage at different isothermal conditions (4 and 22 degrees C). Further, the *L. monocytogenes* serovar variability

was characterized over storage of soft cheese under refrigeration.

Two different types of cheese were used in this study: soft cheese elaborated with pasteurized milk from different animal species, and cured raw sheep milk cheese. Cheese samples were provided vacuum packaged by a local cheese maker.

The soft cheese used in the study contained a moderate concentration of fat and proteins (approximately 30 and 21 percent, respectively). The main ingredients of the soft cheese were pasteurized milk from three animal species (cow, sheep and goat), salt (sodium chloride), rennet,

and starter cultures. This product was elaborated using two different salt concentrations: 1.17 percent (regular) and 0.30 percent (low-salt), respectively, and was salted by immersion in a brine solution.

The soft cheese used in this study was subjected to a ripening process for seven days at 4 degrees C and 77 percent relative humidity before packaging.

The cured raw sheep milk cheese contained a high concentration of fat (approximately 37 percent) and more than 24 percent of proteins, and 1.51 percent of salt (salting also by immersion in brine solution). The main ingredients of the cured cheese were raw sheep milk, salt, rennet, starter cultures, and some additives like potassium nitrate and lysozyme. The ripening process took place for 45 days at

5.5 degrees C and 85 percent relative humidity.

Results of the Study

The behavior of *L. monocytogenes* on soft cheeses elaborated with low-salt concentration, i.e., 0.30 percent, during storage at 4 degrees C was compared with the behavior of the pathogen on regular soft cheese, i.e., 1.18 percent. *L. monocytogenes* concentrations decreased over time on samples regardless of salt concentration.

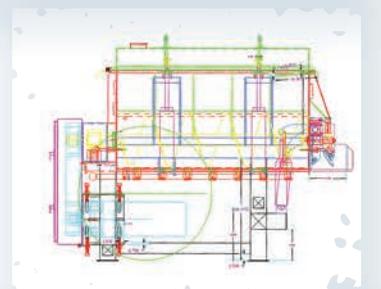
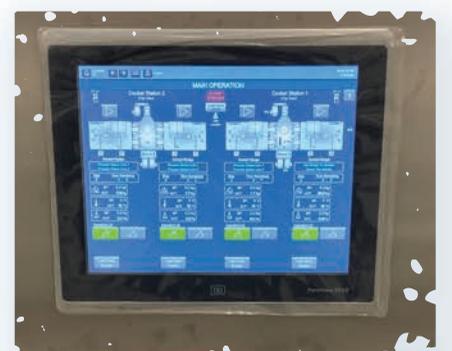
No significant differences were found between the reductions observed in low-salt and regular cheeses at the different sampling times at 4 degrees C.

Competition between *L. monocytogenes* and LAB is expected in

• See **Listeria Survives**, p. 40



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Widmer's Cheese Celebrates 100 Years Of Cheesemaking Excellence

Theresa, WI—Award-winning cheese company Widmer's Cheese Cellars here is celebrating 100 years in business this year, marking both the company's legacy as well as having an eye on the future.

Joe Widmer is the company's third-generation owner, and talks with great pride about his family's history both before the Theresa factory was acquired by his grandparents and the 100 years since then.

John Widmer, Joe's grandfather, immigrated to Wisconsin from Switzerland in 1905, and worked as a cheese maker at another plant in Dodge county, WI, before acquiring the company's current plant in Theresa in 1922.

Back in those days, the local population was heavily German, and the market for a surface-ripened cheese like Brick was high, Joe Widmer related. So Widmer's Cheese, like many other cheese factories in the area, started out making traditional Brick cheese, as well as Cheddar cheese.

The company started making traditional stirred-curd Colby sometime in about the 1940s, Joe noted.

Today, the market for the traditional foil-wrapped Brick isn't nearly as great as it once was, and the company sells considerably

more mild Brick cheese than the surface-ripened aged variety, Widmer noted. But the aged variety is making a comeback as consumers' tastes are much more adventurous these days.

The company still makes Brick cheese much the same way as it has for the past 100 years, using the same type of open vats that Joe's grandfather used, and also still using the same well-worn five-pound bricks that his grandfather used to press the whey from the cheese after it has been placed in the forms.

Widmer's Cheese is the only US cheese company that still uses bricks in the Brick cheesemaking process, Joe pointed out.

Like many members of family-owned Wisconsin cheese factories, Joe Widmer grew up above the factory. He began working there at a very young age, and helped out at the factory every day before and after grade school and high school.

But Widmer left the business, temporarily, after high school. "I'm sick of cheese and I'm sick of school," he recalled telling his father. He went to work on the railroad for two years, "pounding spikes and everything."

After that time away from the family business, Widmer enrolled at Moraine Park Technical Col-

lege in Fond du Lac, WI, where he got his degree in food science. He returned to the family business in 1978, "and I've been here ever since."

Cheddar And Cold Pack Varieties

In the Cheddar category, Widmer's Cheese is known for quite a few aged variations, Joe noted, including one-year, two-year, four-year, six-year, eight-year, 10-year, 12-year, and 15-year.

The company sees a lot of upside in the specialty Cheddar category, but "there's a lot of competition out there."

The newest product at Widmer's Cheese is Matterhorn Alpine Cheddar, which Joe said uses the same cultures as the company's award-winning Homestead Cheddar, but with added Alpine cultures. The company began experimenting with trial batches for Matterhorn in early 2019, and kept tweaking the recipe "until we got what we wanted"

"It just makes a fantastic flavor," he said. The Matterhorn name is

taken from the mountain in the Alps that straddles the border between Switzerland and Italy, harkening back to Joe's grandfather, who was a native of Switzerland.

Another relatively new product line for Widmer's Cheese is cold pack cheese food. Joe started working with Phil Lindemann of Pine River Pre-Pack, Newton, WI, in about 2001, after meeting him at the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA) show in Minneapolis.

Widmer was walking the aisles at the show when he ran across Phil

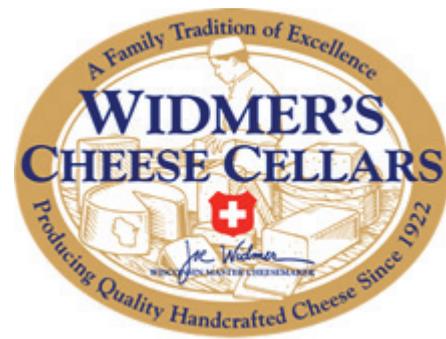
and Mary Lindemann, owners of Pine River Pre-Pack, and they had their line of cold pack cheese foods there. He asked Phil if anybody had ever made a

Brick cold pack before, and when Phil said no, Joe decided to send him some aged Brick.

Initially, they experimented with just the aged Brick, and it was "very strong," and there's only a limited number of people that would eat it, Joe explained.

So Phil suggested mixing the Brick with Cheddar, "and it's a hit," Joe said.

• See **Widmer's Turns 100**, p. 17



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Widmer's Turns 100

Continued from p 16

In addition to the Aged Brick Cold Pack, Pine River also makes Jalapeno Brick and Green Olive Brick Cold Pack cheeses for Widmer's Cheese.

Cold pack cheeses aren't the only flavored varieties offered by Widmer's Cheese. The company also makes Caraway and Jalapeno Pepper Brick cheeses; Jalapeno, Garden Vegetable and Caraway Colby; and Jalapeno Cheddar.

Cheese curds are also a significant business for Widmer's Cheese, Joe said. More and more restaurants are buying and breading them and then deep-frying them. Widmer's makes Cheddar curds, as well as Brick curds, "which nobody else makes."

Joe credits his father, John Widmer, for coming up with the idea for the Brick cheese curds, which are cube-shaped as opposed to the random shapes of most traditional curds. His father would take Brick cheese, the day it's made, after it's been pressed, and cut it up and salt it, "and it turned out to be a hit." Demand was low initially, "but now we can hardly keep up."

In addition to its products being sold by retailers around the US, the company's factory in Theresa also features a small retail store, which sells the company's products as well as products from other cheese makers and additional food and related items. The factory and

store are located just two miles from Interstate 41, and so it tends to be pretty busy during the summer tourist season, Joe said.

Third And Fourth Generations

Joe Widmer represents the third generation in the family business, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, John Widmer, as well as his father, also John Widmer, and uncles Ralph and James Widmer. His father and uncles all worked at the family's cheese factory and they all passed the art of cheesemaking on to Joe.

And now the fourth generation of the Widmer family is involved in the business. Joe's son, Joey, is working at the plant, and has "a lot of responsibility for a young guy." Joey Widmer returned to the family business six or seven years ago, after receiving a Master's Degree in business. He is also a licensed cheese maker.

Widmer's Cheese has expanded twice in the last 20 years, in 2004 and then again in 2015, adding space for packaging, mail order and also cooler space, but the factory is kind of land-locked, so room for further expansion is limited.

Joe Widmer is optimistic about the future.

"I try to stay as optimistic as I can," Joe remarked, while noting that the type of cheese factory he operates is becoming rarer and rarer.

Widmer also appreciates all the support he has received over



Widmer's Cheese still makes Brick cheese much the same way as it has for the past 100 years, pressing the Brick loaves with the same well-worn five-pound bricks that his grandfather, John Widmer, used to press the cheese after it has been placed in the forms.

the years from the University of Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research (CDR), the Wisconsin Master Cheese Maker Program, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association — all the organizations that "keep the state on top of things."

Widmer has gone through the Wisconsin Master Cheese Maker program twice, and holds certifications for Brick, Colby and Cheddar cheeses. He was a member of the second Wisconsin Master Cheese Maker class, receiving certifications in Brick and Colby cheeses — two Wisconsin originals — in 1998.

Widmer's Cheese has also received numerous awards for its cheeses over the years. Just last weekend, the company's Mild Brick cheese was declared champion of Milwaukee Magazine's Big Cheese Bracket, in which 16 cheeses from across Wisconsin were pitted against each other in a March Madness-style showdown, with each available for a tasting at local Sendik's stores.

Widmer's Mild Brick topped Terrific Trio from Renard's Cheese in the finals of the Big Cheese Bracket.

For more information about Widmer's Cheese Cellars, visit www.widmerscheese.com.

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Dairy UK Brings Together Experts To Discuss Benefits Of Dairy Products For Aging

London, England—Dairy UK recently brought together health-care professionals, researchers and industry sector experts to hear and discuss the latest science showing the benefits of dairy products in the diet to support healthy aging and sustainable diets.

Dairy UK's "Stronger for Longer" showcased the findings from research covering a range of topics from slowing bone loss, preserving muscle mass and strength and the benefits of the nutrient richness of dairy products in aging adults.

Dr. Sandra Iuliano of the University of Melbourne presented the results of a recently published trial which looked at dairy consumption and frailty. They found that adding 3.5 servings of dairy a day to the diets of older adults in care homes improved their nutritional status, slowed bone loss, and reduced their risk of fractures and falls.

Dr. Leigh Breen from the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England, provided a comprehensive overview of the latest evidence on the interventions and research on dairy consumption and aging muscles. Breen described how dairy proteins and

whole dairy products, alongside exercise, can help preserve muscle mass and strength in older adults.

Dr. Mitch Kanter, an expert on the nutrition and sustainability of dairy foods from Global Dairy Platform, outlined the nutrition and health benefits of dairy interplay with all pillars of sustainability.

Kanter highlighted how the nutrient richness and bioavailability of dairy nutrients mean that dairy foods are a key pillar of a sustainable diet and for feeding a growing global population.

"Our panel of expert speakers really brought to life the many facets of dairy nutrition and the huge contribution dairy foods can make to our health as we age and their importance in sustainable food systems," said Erica Hocking, senior nutrition scientist, Dairy UK.

"It was fantastic to see so many of our colleagues in the healthcare professions could join in these discussions with us today and I hope that they can take forward the evidence and learnings presented by our speakers into their clinical practice and support older adults to make the best dietary choices," Hocking added.

New Members Join GDT Events Oversight Board; GDT Releases 2021 Annual Report

Auckland, New Zealand—The Global Dairy Trade (GDT) Events Oversight Board recently began a new three-year term through to Dec. 31, 2025, with Bill Shields, an Australian-based economist and non-executive director, being reappointed as chairman.

A mix of new and existing members representing bidder, seller and finance and markets groups have also been appointed. The members and their representatives are:

—Patricia Smith of Dairy-America, Inc., US, as a seller group member;

—Jessica Lee Hiu Sun of Zhongshan Right On Trading Co. Ltd., and Rushikesh Ved of Majan Food Industries LLC as bidder group members; and

—Singapore Exchange Limited (SGX), represented by Nick Morris of NZX as part of the NZX-SGX dairy derivatives partnership as a finance and markets group.

The returning members are:

—Kimberly Fisk of Nestrade S.A. as a bidder group member;

—Thomas Carstensen of Arla Foods and Bruce Turner of Fonterra as seller group members; and

—Liam Fenton of StoneX Financial as a finance and markets group member.

The GDT Events Oversight Board is an independent oversight body established to monitor the twice-monthly trading events (auctions) held by Global Dairy Trade. It ensures that the GDT Events trading platform is operated

and developed in accordance with the guiding principles and to represent the interests of the parties trading on the platform.

The oversight board may comprise an independent chairperson and a balanced representation of GDT participants, and financial market or independent parties with markets and/or governance expertise. Oversight board members meet several times a year to monitor GDT's compliance with appropriate governance practices and vote on any proposed changes to the GDT trading event rules.

Global Dairy Trade published its 2021 Annual Report, providing trading statistics for the year. The 12-month quantity traded on GDT's auction fell 7.6 percent to 626,747 metric tons in 2021, while the average GDT price index increased 30 percent, reaching a seven-year high in December.

During 2021, the main milk powders, whole milk powder and skim milk powder, accounted for 79 percent of the total quantity traded (57 percent for WMP, 22 percent for SMP). Anhydrous milkfat accounted for 9 percent of the quantity traded, followed by butter at 7 percent, Cheddar cheese at 3 percent and other products (buttermilk powder, lactose and rennet casein) at 2 percent.

The most active contract period was Contract Period 2, which is the contract period used as settlement for NZX Dairy Derivatives. Contract Period 2 accounted for 41 percent of the quantity traded last year, followed by Contract Period 3, at 23 percent. GDT average clearance rate — the quantity traded divided by maximum supply — was 96 percent.

For more information, visit www.globaldairytrade.info.

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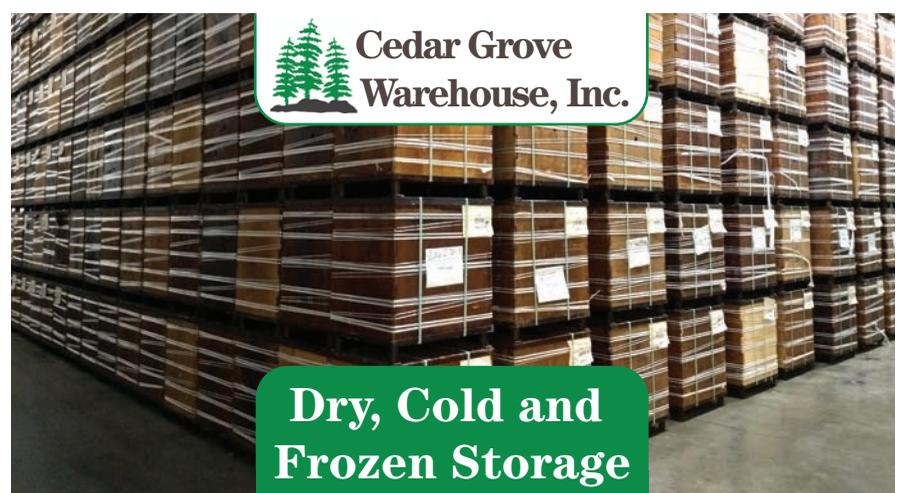
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Few Plant-Based Cheese Alternatives Are Good Sources Of Protein Or Calcium

Loma Linda, CA—Few plant-based cheese alternatives can be considered good dietary sources of either protein or calcium, according to a new study published in the journal *Nutrients*.

The study's authors were Winston J. Craig of the School of Public Health, Loma Linda University; A. Reed Mangels of the Vegetarian Resource Group; and Cecilia J. Brothers of the department of biology, Walla Walla University.

As interest in reducing intake of animal-based products has grown, plant-based cheese alternatives based on nuts, oils, grains, soy, and other plant products have been developed, the study noted.

Plant-based cheese alternatives are produced using techniques similar to those used in the production of processed dairy cheese, the study said. An emulsion is created which may include oils and protein from plant sources, water, emulsifiers, stabilizers, and natural flavorings. Some products may also contain preservatives and coloring agents. Potato starch provides anti-clumping properties, while tapioca starch adds elasticity to the product.

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate a cross-sectional survey of the nutritional content

of plant-based cheese alternatives that are commonly available in the US. Secondary aims included the evaluation of the effect of product composition on nutritional quality and the determination of the extent and type of fortification. The study only examined products that were entirely plant-based.

For the study, a total of 295 plant-based cheeses were identified by supermarkets and health food stores in the western US and by searching the websites of the manufacturers of these plant-based cheeses. Dips, sauces, and spreads were not included in the analysis. Products reporting casein as a minor component on their ingredient list were also excluded.

The ingredients and nutritional contents of 245 plant-based cheese alternatives, representing 35 brands, were recorded, using either the Nutrition Facts label on the retail package or the data collected from the website of the manufacturer. The data representing the 245 cheeses were collected from November 2021 to January 2022. The nutrients per serving size included calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium, carbohydrates, dietary fiber, total sugars, protein, calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12.

The cheeses were divided into groups based upon their major ingredients. The median values of all nutrients were calculated for each type of cheese. The levels of fortification for calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12 were calculated for each group of cheese.

The 245 non-dairy plant-based alternatives analyzed were based upon almonds, cashews, cashews and coconut oil, coconut oil with food starch, soy and coconut oil, and the following mixtures: palm fruit oil and corn and/or potato starch, potato starch and canola oil, tapioca flour and canola/safflower oil, soy or other vegetable oil, and coconut and oats.

When people choose a plant-based non-dairy cheese alternative, they often expect a product that as a similar taste, texture, appearance, and nutrient profile and similar functional characteristics to a regular dairy cheese product.

However, the median values for the protein and calcium content of the non-dairy cheeses in this study were found to be zero. Only 3 percent of the products reached a level of five grams of protein per serving, while less than 20 percent of the plant-based cheese alternatives were fortified with calcium.

Of the top seven selling brands of non-dairy cheese alternatives, representing 41 percent of all varieties of cheese alternatives, only

one-third of the products had calcium fortification. Considering all 245 cheeses in the study, less than one in five had calcium fortification, less than one in seven had vitamin B12 fortification and only 1 percent had vitamin D added.

A survey, in a variety of formats, found that dairy cheese typically contains approximately five to eight grams protein per serving, and 10 to 20 percent of the Daily Value (DV) for calcium, which is "substantially more" than the non-dairy alternatives, the study noted.

Researchers found that only one in seven of the non-dairy alternatives had low saturated fat levels and one in seven had low sodium levels. The almond and cashew-based products were the lowest in saturated fat content, while those containing coconut were rich in saturated fat. The cashew-based cheese alternatives were the most likely products to be low in sodium.

"While the demand for non-dairy cheese alternatives continues to rise in the United States, there appears to be a need for products with a better nutritional content and a healthier profile," the study stated. "The near-zero level of protein in most non-dairy plant-based cheese alternatives is particularly worrisome when these products are fed to children with the assumption that they are a good nutritional substitute for dairy cheese."

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IDFA Now Accepting Applications For 19th Dairy Safety Recognition Awards

Washington—The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) is now accepting applications for its 19th annual Dairy Industry Safety Recognition Awards.

Companies must be an IDFA member to enter.

The submission deadline is May 13, and award winners will be notified this summer.

Now in its 19th year, the awards honor dairy processing facilities and trucking operations for outstanding worker safety performance and management.

New this year, IDFA is placing equal weight to an applicant's essay and statistical data as health and safety experts recommend emphasis on leading indicators and EHS management as essential components of a worker safety program.

Examples of leading indicators include number of inspections conducted, number of safety and health hazards identified, decreased time for hazard abatement, increased employing training, safety suggestions implemented, and job hazard analyses completed.

"The Dairy Industry Safety Recognition Awards spotlights dairy businesses that have gone above and beyond in proactive workplace safety programs to prevent illness and injuries," said Danielle Quist, IDFA vice president of regulatory affairs and counsel.

Processing & Trucking Operations

Dairy processing and trucking operations will be judged on occupational injury and illness performance rates, which are recorded in each operation's "Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses" report.

Companies are required to post their OSHA 300A forms from February 1 through April 30 following the year covered by the form, IDFA said.

Applicants will also provide a written essay explaining the components of their safety and health programs and how the company is using leading indicators as an essential driver of worker safety.

To be eligible for an award, a processing facility or transportation operation must implement an effective and innovative health and safety program and have illness and injury rates below industry averages reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Workplace safety is not just a priority for dairy companies, it is at the heart of each business and essential to productivity," Quist said.

"These safety awards are just one way for companies to demonstrate their planning and successful strategies for maintaining a culture of safety throughout the company," she said.

"Safety achievements can be a strong indicator of success and through this awards process, we hope to encourage all dairy facilities to continuously approach safety as a priority and engage all levels of employees and managers in the process," Danielle Quist continued.

The 2022 award program rules, regulations and application form are available online at www.idfa.org, and there is no fee to enter, IDFA stated.

For more information, contact Quist at dquist@idfa.org or (202) 220-3508.

PERSONNEL

OLIVIER DELAMEA has been selected to succeed JEAN-PAUL TORRIS as CEO of **Savencia Fromage & Dairy**. Torris announced plans to retire after 30 years of service at Savencia, leading the company as CEO since 2016. Delamea is joining Savencia on April 4; Torris will remain with Savencia through Sept. 1, to ensure a smooth transition. Delamea kicked off his career with the Danone Group, where he held several executive-level positions prior to him being named general manager of Danone France.

PATRIK HANSSON has been tapped for the newly-created role of chief marketing officer and member of the executive management team for **Arla Foods**. Hansson is currently head of Arla Foods' German market and will step into his new role today. Hansson will lead the company's global brands, innovation and digital marketing functions. Hansson joined Arla in 2011 as commercial vice president for cheese, butter and fruit drinks. In 2015, he was appointed vice president for Arla's Southeast Asia business, before returning to Sweden in late 2016 as managing director for. Last year, Hansson took up his most recent role as managing director for Arla in Germany. He will continue leading Arla's business interests until a successor has been found.

The **Organic Trade Association (OTA)** has selected TOM CHAPMAN to succeed LAURA BATCHA as executive director and CEO, effective April 18. Batcha has been a key figure in the organic movement for several decades. She joined the staff of OTA in 2008 and has served as CEO and executive director for the past nine years. Chapman most recently served as senior director, supply chain at Kinder's Sauce & Seasoning. Before that, he worked with OTA members Clif Bar and Quality Assurance International. Chapman has also served as a board member with OTA members Mercaris and California Certified Organic Farmers, as NOSB chair from 2015 to 2020, and as a member of the California Organic Products Advisory Committee at the California Department of Food and Agriculture from 2007 to 2016.

MARTY MCKINZIE has been promoted to chief growth officer of **Dairy MAX**, responsible for business development, industry relations, sustainability and organizational development. McKinzie joined Dairy MAX in 2008

as director of industry image and relations. Dairy MAX has also hired KAY JOHNSON SMITH as chief operating officer, leading areas of the business including consumer marketing, corporate communications, issues management, health and wellness and school marketing. Johnson Smith joins Dairy MAX from the Animal Agriculture Alliance, where she served originally as executive director, then president and CEO for nearly 28 years.

Golden State Foods (GSF) has appointed HUGUES LABRECQUE as vice president of sales, and TRISHA MCROBERTS as group vice president, strategic sourcing. Based in Texas, Labrecque leads GSF's North American sales and customer strategy across multiple business groups, including Dairy Products and Liquid Products. Prior to joining GSF, Labrecque served as chief customer officer for food-service in North America and McDonald's Global account lead for Bonduelle Fresh Americas. He previously spent more than a decade with Cargill in several leadership roles across various areas of the business, including his most recent position as vice president of strategic growth, Cargill McDonald's Business Unit. Labrecque's earlier career experience includes various operations and commercial roles in Canada's dairy and baking industries. Based in Georgia, McRoberts designs and implements strategic sourcing strategies for packaging, food ingredients, and indirect spend categories across GSF's North America food manufacturing divisions. In her previous role as head of Americas procurement with McCormick & Company, Inc., McRoberts led end-to-end supply chain solutions, consultant engagements, and the development of strategic growth. Her 12 years at McCormick's Maryland headquarters included leadership positions in procurement and customer integration, in addition to her prior market-based roles in sales, customer logistics, operations, and purchasing. Before McCormick, McRoberts served in logistics management and national account management roles with US food manufacturing companies.

The **Dairy Business Association (DBA)** and **Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative** have hired JEREMY HENKELS to serve as managing director, a new role for the advocacy organizations. Henkels most recently was executive vice president-shared services for Agfinity, a member-owned cooperative headquartered in Colorado.

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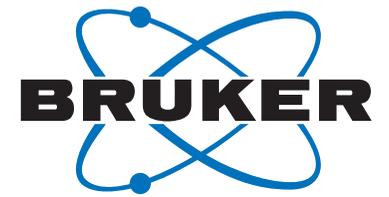
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Ellsworth Meeting Cheese Curd Demand; Shifts Production To New Cheese Plant

Menomonie, WI—Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery opened its first-ever new cheese plant late last month to balance production of its growing cheese curd business.

While the new plant in Menomonie, WI, will handle the co-op's growing Muenster and American-type cheese production, the cheese curd business is booming at the co-op's nearby Ellsworth, WI, plant.

The new facility in Menomonie will also house new packaging capabilities of those Muenster and American-type cheese products.

"It's an exciting time for the co-op," said Paul Bauer, CEO of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. "This is the first new plant the co-op has ever built."

With the new and efficient Menomonie plant, Ellsworth has decided to cease cheese production in its Comstock, WI, facility.

Bauer said the Comstock plant will remain open as a retail store until the cooperative can find the plant's "next purpose in the dairy industry".

Ellsworth has approximately 280 members, the biggest with about 1,200 milk cows. That member brings in a large percentage of the milk but about 100 members bring in 90 percent of the co-op's milk.

Bauer said the co-op's milk production grew about 13 to 14 percent per member in 2019.

"We didn't expect that," Bauer said. "That was a surprise. Milk volume-wise, the new facility will absorb patron milk as they continue to grow. Every year our farmers get better. They produce better quality milk and we need to be prepared to handle that."

The new facility in Menomonie will also allow the co-op to take on new members.

"We have a lot of people asking to ship milk to the creamery," Bauer said. "We actually had to stop taking on additional milk 'cause we just didn't have production capacity in essence for the last

three years and that has continued until very recently."

Ellsworth will run about 2.5 million pounds of milk through its two facilities per day.

"We sell some milk to key customers," Bauer said. "But the majority we process."

Historically known for its barrel cheese production, Ellsworth will make under 50 million pounds of barrels really for the first time in many decades, Bauer mentioned.

Ellsworth mills its barrel cheese to get cheese curd out of the production.

"We will continue to make barrel cheese because we excel in that market," Bauer said. "But also because it is a function of making cheese curds and how we are set up."

To remain flexible with its production, Bauer said the co-op mitigated some risk a few years ago when it purchased Wohlt Cheese, a process cheese manufacturer based in New London, WI.

Besides the new plant in Menomonie, the cooperative has a cheese production plant in Ellsworth, WI.

The Comstock plant's production of Muenster, horns, and block cheese will be moved to Menomonie, while the co-op's New London's plant, Wohlt Cheese, will continue making process cheese, cheese food, and spread products.

"We are trying to capture all realms of the spectrum and try to get as much value as we can out of our members' milk," Bauer said.

When Bauer came to Ellsworth about 15 years ago, his goal was to transform the now 111-year old cooperative in order for it to stay relevant.

"We couldn't just stand still," Bauer said. "We had to be an energetic, entrepreneurial co-op. If not, we were going to be in the dust bins. If this was still a barrel cheese plant predominantly, we wouldn't be here today."

Ellsworth has been in the cheese curd business for over 20 years, but it wasn't until this past year that production shifted.

"I've been saying value-added to our farmers for so long sometimes they'd get mad," Bauer said. "We are really starting to come into our own and we have set some pretty lofty goals for cheese curd production."

Bauer said that in June of 2021, cheese curds actually outsold barrel cheese for the first time at Ellsworth.

"For years there was a subtle change of production. Our barrel cheese production would tick downward as we added more

to the cheese curd side," Bauer said. "Those ticks have increased significantly over the past years."

New Menomonie Plant

The cooperative's new plant started just last month to manufacture traditional production and to offset the closing of the Comstock facility.

The co-op has no patrons within 20 miles of the new plant but is perfectly located on the interstate. A large cheese store attached to the manufacturing plant will welcome Interstate 94 travelers.

"We shopped backwards as we have no patrons near here yet. It's still in our procurement area," Bauer said. "But it offered a perfect site to handle our wastewater and has plenty of room for expansion."

Bauer said the new facility will be close to running 700,000 pounds of milk a day, five days a week.

In comparison, the Ellsworth plant handles 1.8 million pounds of milk a day while the Comstock plant processed just 200,000 of milk a day.

In Menomonie, Ellsworth will be making American-style cheeses in blocks and horns and Muenster in loaves.

Bauer said the co-op has been making blocks in Comstock for many years and has had to ration some of its customers' production due to high demand and limited capacity. The new plant will alleviate some of those issues.

"I will have to say every product we make, demand has been up this year," Bauer said. "We may have oversold this plant already."

Capacity at the city's sewer plant is geared to handle 1.5 million pounds of milk a day at full plant capacity, he said.

Plans to expand the new Ellsworth facility are already in the works.

"We'll get started on phase two once the milk supply is ready," Bauer said.

He said Ellsworth probably put more into the building and the infrastructure to handle future expansion.

The new plant has plenty of room for possible wish-list items like more towers, bigger vats, or a DMC, Bauer said.

The plant added new packaging equipment to the operations which will allow the co-op packaging options it never had, as well as reduce labor costs.

"It really is a flexible platform in order for us to avoid adding sub-

stantially more bricks and mortar," Bauer said. "We may have to rip out a wall or two, but the footprint can handle more milk."

Bauer alluded to the

fact that a cooperative its size can't afford too many mistakes.

"It's just so expensive to do it over again. There is a reason this is our first new plant in 111 years. We added more to the size of the rooms and to the height of the rooms with intent. We'll keep that in the forefront as we plan the future; as we continue our growth, with well-defined objectives to add value to our members' milk," he said.

"We couldn't just stand still. We had to be an energetic, entrepreneurial co-op. If not, we were going to be in the dust bins. If this was still a barrel cheese plant predominantly, we wouldn't be here today."

—Paul Bauer,
Ellsworth Cooperative
Creamery

One of the key attributes of Ellsworth, Bauer described, is that the co-op revolves its equity every 10 years.

"On the dot," he said. "While it is not written in stone, it might as well be. We very much adhere to the 10-year revolvment. We try to pay a competitive price as well as add value to our member's milk check. And with that, we do have a waiting list."

Cheese Curd Line

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery has been making cheese curds for over 20 years.

The co-op's flavored cheese curds earned a first and a second place in the World Champion

• See **Ellsworth Cooperative**, p. 23



Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery's new cheese plant in Menomonie, WI, will make American-type cheese in blocks and horns, as well as Muenster in loaves. It will also house a new cheese packaging line that will increase the co-op's services to retail operations. Located just a mile off Interstate 94, the new cheese plant features a cheese store for travellers.

Photo courtesy of Hunter Haase

Ellsworth Creamery

Continued from p. 22

Cheese Contest held in early March in Madison, WI.

Ellsworth also earned two first place awards in pasteurized process cheese.

“The cheese curd business just keeps growing,” Bauer said. “We’ve been expanding the business pretty rapidly over the past few years. We have been very fortunate.”

Bauer said the co-op makes frozen cheese curd for industrial use and fresh curd in branded and in private label.

“One of the ways that we like to get sales is we find good companies to partner with and bless their hearts they order 1 to 2 percent more per month. That we can handle,” Bauer continued. “The problem is they are not ordering 1 to 2 percent more, they end up ordering 3 to 4 percent more a month. We are making room for that kind of growth.”

Ellsworth provides the curd in 40-pound boxes for converters, and then in 5-pound bags for restaurants. Flavors for industrial and foodservice include white Cheddar cheese curds, hot Buffalo white Cheddar cheese curds, and beer-battered white Cheddar cheese curds.

“America is just learning what a fried cheese curd is,” Bauer mentioned. “We have some very large chains that take a truckload a week and they’ll bread them in their stores.”

This year, curd sales are up significantly and Bauer said they don’t even have several companies back operating due to the pandemic shutdown.

“The cheese curd business just keeps growing. We’ve been expanding the business pretty rapidly over the past few years. We have been very fortunate.”

—Paul Bauer

“When you look at the data, a cheese curd appetizer is generally the number one menu driver in the appetizer section,” Bauer said. “For our customers, it’s their number one profit center on appetizers. Coast to coast.”

For fresh curd, Ellsworth packages range from two ounces up to a one-pound bag. Flavors include natural, Cajun, Garlic, Ranch, Taco, and Hot Buffalo.

“The two-ounce is aimed at the school convenience or the quick snack in your lunch,” Bauer said. “The five-ounce sells very well outside Wisconsin, while in Wisconsin the one-pound bag is the best seller.”

Bauer is so high on cheese curds he said the future of cheese curd is in fresh and for deep frying but now also for freeze drying.

“I really think the key is to add value to whatever product you have. To take that product as far as you can,” Bauer said.

He said while the pandemic slowed introduction and growth of new products, Ellsworth has some interesting items it will be bringing to market soon.

“We have a lot of great things in the hopper yet,” Bauer said. “We’ll continue expanding our product line and get some more unique products out to market. We’re going to mesh some new technology with some really old-school things.”

One of the new products hampered by the pandemic was the introduction in June 2021 of the co-op’s Cheddar Curd Crunchers — a freeze-dried crunchy, not squeaky, cheese curd.

“They really haven’t been out there all that long,” Bauer mentioned. “They have a huge shelf-life so they are perfect for on-the-go snacking domestically as well as for export. There is no refrigeration needed.”

According to Ellsworth, the Cheddar Curd Crunchers are keto-friendly, made from 100 percent natural cheese, and have 10 grams of protein.

They are also high in calcium and contain no added sugars and zero trans fats, making them an enjoyable healthy option for everyone.

Bauer said that while the Crunchers come in Cheddar flavor, the cooperative is looking at introducing, Ranch, Dill Pickle, and Jalapeno flavors to the Crunchers’ line.



Introduced in June, 2021, Cheddar Curd Crunchers are a freeze-dried crunchy, keto-friendly cheese snack. Paul Bauer of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery said this is just one of the new and interesting new products the 111-year-old dairy cooperative will be releasing in the near future.

“No refrigeration is needed, huge shelf-life, good calcium and it’s made in the US. I don’t think people understand how much foreign companies want products made in the United States,” Bauer added.

We’re not done yet. We’ll get this one done and we’ll start the next one, Bauer continued. We’ll start turning our cheese makers loose over the next year or so and we’ll be releasing several new products.

“The export market is an elite market,” Bauer said. “We look at cheese curds as something that’s easy to find. Cheese is a high-end product in most countries. So you only need a few of those cities to hit before you’re selling a lot of cheese.”

He said the dairy industry has not even begun to really tap the export market for cheese.

“Everyone talks about exports for our lowest commodities, whey,

lactose, milk powder and that’s not where the money is,” Bauer said. “The money is in cheese and Europe is already over there. Our freeze-dried cheese curd is competing against the European product already.”

In addition to being hampered by the pandemic, the trade wars also were a setback to growing the cooperative’s export markets, Bauer said.

“We do a lot of whey exports and that helped us get into cheese exports,” Bauer said. “We were on track to grow one truckload a month then the trade wars came in to play. And then it just dropped down to nothing. But there is a huge appetite for American-made products overseas.”

For more information on Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery or the cooperative’s new cheese items, including Cheddar Cheese Crunchers, visit www.ellsworthcreamery.com

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Arla Announces Five-Year Growth Strategy; Eyes Export Opportunities

Leeds, England—Following the launch of the global Arla Group Future26 strategy, Arla has announced new growth ambitions in the United Kingdom for the next five years.

As part of that growth strategy, Arla will explore export opportunities out of the UK for the first time, as well as the need for more milk, from existing and potentially new farmer owners in the UK.

Arla Foods, is planning long-term investments in its UK supply chain, key sales channels and market leading brands, as it makes clear its plans to become a leading household name.

Over the next five years, Arla is looking to grow its UK business through a combination of branded and added-value private label innovation in prioritized categories like liquid milk, yogurts, butter and spreads, milk-based beverages and cheese. The ambition is to grow the branded share of the revenue to 45 percent from 38 percent.

In the next five years the Arla Group will increase its investments by more than 40 percent in sustainability actions, product innovations, capacity expansions and digitalization. As the single biggest market in Arla's global business, this will also mean increased investments for Arla's UK operations, with a focus on efficient and sustainable production and categories and channel opportunities such as added-value milks, foodservice and ecommerce.

Arla is also targeting more than 50 percent growth across its UK organic retail and foodservice business in the next five years.

"This growth and value-up ambition is about improving the value of dairy for our consumers through high quality products that meet their demands, for our retail and foodservice customers as we add category value and growth, and for farmers through a sustainable farmgate price," said Ash Amirahmadi, managing director of Arla Foods UK.

Liquid milk will be Arla's flagship category in developing the sustainability agenda from farm to store. Arla will work with its customers to lead the category sustainability proposition and significantly improve the profitability so that its farmers can cover their increased costs and also invest in the on-farm sustainability agenda.

"For a number of years, we have indicated that the lack of profit in own label liquid milk in the UK is not sustainable. It delivers little to no profitability for farmers and is a category of the UK dairy sector where the market is failing to deliver value for farmers. It is unsustainable," Amirahmadi said.

As global demand for dairy continues to outgrow international supply, the value of milk and dairy products on the world market has shifted to a new, sustained high level. This shift means more opportunities for Arla to increase the value from its UK milk and subsequently the returns for the farmers that own the cooperative.

As part of its Future26 strategy, Arla will therefore also explore opportunities to begin exporting raw milk from the UK to supply Arla's global supply chain and has begun trials to move milk to

its European processing sites as a means to supply its growing international sales of sought-after dairy products and to improve the profitability of UK milk for its British and European farmer-owners.

"With farmer owners and production sites across Europe we have the opportunity to use the scale of our cooperative to create the most value from the milk produced on our farms," said Peter Giørtz-Carlsen, executive vice president of Arla Foods Europe. "Demand for Arla dairy products is growing in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and West Africa, and so it is natural for us to explore how we can best utilize our European milk pool to meet that demand."

To deliver the scale of growth across its global and UK strategy, Arla will explore the need to recruit more milk from existing and potentially new farmers, including in the UK.

Global demand for dairy over the next five years is estimated to continue to increase by 2 percent per year, but there are clear signals from milk producers around the world that the increases in supply required to meet that rising global demand are now far less certain.

"To meet these future demands and maintain the cost effectiveness of our supply chain, we will welcome and continue to support members who wish to help us grow our milk pool by increasing their supply and growing their businesses sustainably," Amirahmadi said.

"While we are not recruiting as of now, we will also investigate opportunities to gradually open up for new members or contracted milk who share our farmers' commitment to producing high quality milk more sustainably," Amirahmadi added.

Connecticut Milk Promotion Board Makes Up To \$500,000 Available To Hike Consumption

Hartford, CT—The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board (CTMPB) has announced up to \$500,000 available in funding opportunities for programming in fiscal year 2022-23.

These opportunities align with the CTMPB's core focus, which includes the vision of increasing purchases and expanding the access of milk and dairy products to consumers, retailers, institutions, and other applicable outlets.

The CTMPB has up to \$500,000 available for programming and expects to award contracts up to \$200,000 each in the first two of the following program areas and no more than \$100,000 in the third program area:

- Partnerships with various types of retail, educational, and professional organizations that will lead to an increase in dairy consumption.

- Multi-media campaigns promoting the value of Connecticut's dairy farms and the accessibility of milk.

- Farmer engagement programs to educate and engage dairy farmers on the utilization of their checkoff dollars.

Proposed applicants can apply for any combination of these program areas and are not limited to applying for only one. Eligible entities include businesses, extension agencies, agricultural and non-profit organizations, universities, community colleges, educational institutions, agricultural science schools, research organizations, and contract media vendors.

Funding is provided through dairy checkoff dollars, via the national dairy checkoff program.

"These funding opportunities will enable us to continue building upon the work done over the past year which aligns with the strategic vision plan created with input from the state's dairy farmers and formally adopted by the board in 2020," said Paul Miller, chairman of the CTMPB, which is administered by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

"The board has honed our focus on funding to include consumer nutrition, multi-media marketing, and farmer engagement programs to meet our five-year target of realizing an increase in dairy purchases and consumption throughout the supply chain in Connecticut," Miller added.

Additional details on the dairy dairy grant funding opportunities can be found at www.ctgrown.gov/grants. For more information on the CTMPB, visit www.ctdairy.org.




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Global Demand For US Whey Products Projected To Rise 6-7% Through 2026

Denver, CO—Industry experts anticipate significant market growth for whey protein to persist in the next three to five years, and CoBank anticipates global annual market demand growth of 6 to 7 percent for US whey products for the 2021-2026 period.

That projection is included in a new report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange, entitled *COVID-19 Spiked Demand for High-Protein Whey, but is Growth Sustainable?*

COVID-19 fundamentally altered the whey protein market. Demand for high-protein whey products surged as consumers around the world became more aware of whey protein's immune-enhancing properties, causing US supplies to dwindle despite record large whey production.

The renewed focus on health and physical fitness spurred by the pandemic has coincided with the long-term trends of rising demand for whey protein globally. This is especially true across Asia for infant formula, sports nutrition, high-protein snacks, and products for healthy aging to promote bone and muscle growth.

Most of the supply growth projected by CoBank over the next several years will come from the US because the other major dairy exporters, the European Union and New Zealand, face supply constraints as their respective governments try to reduce cow numbers to meet sustainability initiatives on greenhouse gas emissions.

New technological advances in whey processing and significant profit margins on whey protein caused by the COVID-19 demand shift are expected to expedite investments and plant upgrades among dairy processors in the next one to two years.

As a result of this capacity expansion, CoBank expects whey protein concentrate with 80 percent protein (WPC-80) and whey protein isolate at 90 percent protein (WPI) to become commoditized longer-term, with still higher-value whey products like fractionates eventually becoming bigger value drivers of the whey stream.

The rapid change in demand for high-protein whey products like WPC-80 and WPI resulted in a breakout of prices in 2021 when WPC-80 and WPI enjoyed significant premiums to lower-protein whey products like dry whey and WPC-34, the report noted. Low-protein dry whey prices have also followed in the price rally behind the high-protein whey products as production shifts away from dry whey to WPC-80 and WPI. Increased demand for dry whey and whey products such as WPC-

34 and permeate for inclusion in Chinese hog rations has also added further demand for US whey.

The dual demand pull from animal feed and high-protein whey products has changed the economics of Class III milk prices as increased dry whey prices alone accounted for a \$1.50 per hundred-weight increase in milk checks, the report pointed out. Throughout 2021, dry whey futures on the CME rose 57 percent, while cheese futures rose 29 percent.

Extrapolating from USDA historical data on whey protein concentrate domestic demand and exports, CoBank is forecasting demand for US high-protein whey to grow at a compound annual

growth rate of 6 to 7 percent over the next five years, led mostly by demand growth in the export market.

Plant-based alternative sources of protein like soy protein and pea protein are not expected to disrupt the whey protein market due to nutritional deficiencies compared to whey, which offers all the essential amino acids needed by the human body and are quickly digestible, the report said. Rather, plant-based alternatives fill niche markets for consumers on vegetarian or vegan diets, or offer a lower-priced alternative as an ingredient to boost protein content for less health-conscious or more price-sensitive consumers.

Growing Production Capacity

Processors are responding with increased production of WPC-

80 and WPI, while production of lower-protein whey products has atrophied as more of the whey stream becomes dedicated to high-protein products, the report noted.

Total cheese and whey processing capacity in the US is expected to increase by an estimated 10 percent in the next five years based on current announced expansion plans or greenfield projects. The substantial increase in whey production will result in all whey products including WPC-80 and WPI becoming increasingly commoditized.

Processors will turn to whey protein fractionates like lactoferrin and alpha-lactalbumin, high-value whey products prized for their functional properties, as the next value drivers in the whey stream,

• See **Demand For US Whey**, p. 49

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Kusel Equipment Announces Winners Of Drain Sales And Service Awards

Watertown, WI—Kusel Equipment Co. recently announced the winners of the Drain Sales and Service Awards for 2021.

"2021 was a year of new challenges on top of an already complicated market due to Covid-19. In addition, we saw severe supply chain disruptions and widespread price increases on all kinds of materials and products. Kusel wasn't immune to any of it, but our rep partners did an amazing job navigating through it all to end the year very strong," said Dan McMahon, Kusel's national sales manager.

"I do not envy the position that the manufacturing representatives lived in during 2021 and I wish we could give them all awards for the efforts and impacts they have made in their markets," he added.

Kusel presented awards in three categories to recognize its manufacturer rep partners for their efforts across the US and Canada throughout 2021. Awards given were the Sales Volume Award, a Standard of Excellence Award, and the Gary Smith Memorial Customer Service Award.

Kingsway Marketing LLC was awarded the Sales Volume Award

for achieving a significant milestone in sales for the 2021 sales year.

Colin King, principal of Kingsway Marketing, commented: "Kingsway is very proud to be a part of the Kusel tradition – we enjoy a great relationship with the Kusel team and look forward to growing and developing our market together. Kusel enables us to be successful via their tremendous product offering, manufacturing excellence, and drive to provide value to the market. Thank you for the great award and we look forward to working towards another great year together!"

"Kingsway sets the bar high with the efforts and relationships that they have in their market, and they continue to lead all reps in the country with total sales volume. Colin does a great job energizing his team with every product that they sell." McMahon said.

Spec 22 Sales was awarded the Standard of Excellence Award for its efforts in all aspects of sales and service.

"Great quality products, shipped on time, and sincere customer service are always spot on," said Hans Haas, principal at Spec 22 Sales. "The key to winning, keeping, and growing our Kusel business is when our customers walk away, thinking, 'Wow, I love doing business with Kusel, and I want to do MORE...'"

"Hans and his team do an amazing job representing Kusel in their

marketplace. They target every last opportunity, and their relationships are as strong as they come." McMahon said.

BBN Sales, Inc. was recognized for its customer service efforts with the Gary Smith Memorial Customer Service Award.

"Thank you for recognizing BBN. Kusel is a great line to sell for a lot of reasons; great products and great people are the two biggest!" said Jim Nolan, principal at BBN.

"We're honored to have partnerships with what we believe are the absolute best reps in the industry." said Dave Smith, Kusel's CEO and president: "These awards give us an opportunity to recognize a few of our partners. But it also shows how great all our rep partnerships are across the US and Canada."

For over 30 years Kusel Equipment Co. has been a leader in stainless-steel floor drains and other stainless-steel drainage products. The company said its products continue to be the first choice for many plant locations throughout North America that require a sanitary drain solution. Kusel keeps many of its standard drainage options in stock to minimize lead times. At the same time, the company takes pride in being a solutions provider that can take any of its existing products and reconfigure them to fit a customer's specific needs.

For more information, visit www.kuselequipment.com.

New App Available For 2022 CheeseExpo

Milwaukee, WI—With just days remaining until advance online registration for CheeseExpo 2022 closes on Monday, April 4, the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) has unveiled the global conference's mobile app.

Sponsored by WCMA supplier member Cybertrol Engineering, the app is available for download by searching "CheeseExpo" on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

The app provides access to complete exhibitor information, a map of the exhibit floor, a list of educational seminars, and schedule alerts.

"CheeseExpo 2022 will feature a sold-out exhibit floor with booths from over 300 trusted supplier companies, a full slate of educational seminars and celebrations of industry excellence, and valuable networking opportunities," said WCMA events director Judy Keller.

CheeseExpo's registration booths will be open Tuesday, April 12 from noon until 7 p.m.; Wednesday, April 13 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Thursday, April 14 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Hard copies of the 2022 CheeseExpo Official Program will be available at registration. Full schedule, registration and more information is now online at CheeseExpo.org.



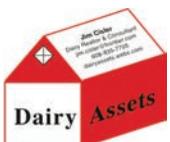
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- Hot Topics in Cheese & Dairy Research
- Advancing Cheese and Dairy Ingredient Exports
- Dairy Product Safety & Sanitation
- Creating an Effective Cheese Grading Program
- Hot Topics in Quality Cheesemaking
- Recruiting & Retaining an Effective Workforce

CONNECT

Join thousands of colleagues, friends, and customers at exciting events

- WCMA Job Fair
- Tetra Pak Welcome Reception
- WCMA Young Professionals Outing
- Amcor Continental Breakfast
- KSS/RELCO Opening Keynote
- Chr. Hansen Reception & Championship Cheese Auction
- Custom Fabricating and Repair Afterglow Reception

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Honor success and celebrate the future of dairy processing

- Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest & Awards Ceremony
- WCMA Recognition Breakfast exclusively sponsored by DSM Food Specialties
- World Champions Reception exclusively sponsored by IFF
- World Champions Awards Banquet

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

REGISTRATION OPEN 12:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M.

WCMA JOB FAIR

3:00-5:00 p.m. | Ballroom Foyer, 1st Floor

Meet the industry's next generation at WCMA's Workforce Connections Job Fair. Dairy processors and manufacturers will highlight job opportunities and students will share their resumes.

TETRA PAK

WELCOME RECEPTION

5:00-7:00 p.m. | Room 102

Join Tetra Pak as they kick off 2022 CheeseExpo with an elegant reception open to all attendees.

WCMA YOUNG

PROFESSIONALS EVENT

7:00-9:30 p.m. | Drink Wisconsensibly Pub

Dairy's next generation gathers for a fun evening of networking.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

REGISTRATION OPEN 7:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.

AMCOR CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

7:00-8:00 a.m. | Ballroom Foyer, 1st Floor

Kick off Wednesday morning with Amcor's continental breakfast.

OPENING KEYNOTE CEO PANEL SPONSORED BY KSS/RELCO

8:00-9:00 a.m. | Ballroom, 1st Floor

The U.S. Role in Global Dairy Sales & Sustainability

Join these leaders in the U.S. dairy processing industry as they discuss global opportunities and challenges in international sales. Krysta Harden will guide discussion on how the United States can lead in creating a sustainable dairy industry desired by consumers around the globe.

COLLEGIATE DAIRY PRODUCTS EVALUATION CONTEST

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. | Room 103

Watch the action: Dairy students from colleges across the U.S. compete for top honors in assessing several dairy product categories. Visit the next generation of dairy industry leaders at the CheeseExpo.

WEDNESDAY CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

U.S. Dairy Exports: Resources to Help You Grow Your Business

9:15-11:00 a.m. | Room 201

A complete export overview – from current market outlook to surmounting regulatory hurdles – is captured in talks from U.S. Dairy Export Council's top staff. In addition, USDEC will display the marketing materials and programs that are winning sales worldwide with consumers, chefs, distributors and buyers. A must-see seminar for dairy processor representatives involved in exports, marketing and sales.

- Dairy Export Market Dynamics
- Marketing Your Dairy Products Overseas: USDEC Programs & Resources for Dairy Ingredients
- USDEC Programs & Resources for Cheese
- Opportunities & Pitfalls – How USDEC Helps You Navigate the Policy & Regulatory Landscape
- Mini Export Showcase: An experiential display of USDEC worldwide marketing materials and programs.

Hot Topics in Cheese Research

9:15-11:00 a.m. | Room 202

Join the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) cheese staff as they offer insight into recent research projects. They will discuss how CDR utilizes a toolbox approach, using various techniques and methods, to customize cheese functionality and shelf-life. One project demonstrates optimizing manufacturing efficiency when handling or converting cheese curd, and the other project looks at different options to extend cheese shelf life in some popular cheese varieties. Both options were already useful with COVID disruptions in the cheese supply chain and could be helpful in increasing cheese exports.

Winning Workforce Tools in Challenging Times

9:15-11:00 a.m. | Room 203

Join WCMA for a deep dive into current workforce issues and strategies for change. Dennis Winters, a nationally recognized human resources expert serving as Chief Economist at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development leads off with a U.S. Labor Market Analysis and Forecast. Next, leading dairy processors will join a Peer-to-Peer Human Resources Panel to describe impactful strategies to navigate the labor shortage, engage employees for maximum productivity, and embrace diversity and new workplace policies to attract and retain top talent. The big finish: Cynthia Wentland, MBA, Certified Coach, and Founder of Intentionaleaders, LLC, will light up a Mini-Workshop – Leading Through Change – highlighting the tools and mindset you need to successfully implement shifts in workplace policies, processes, and technology.

Cheese Technology for Artisan Cheese Manufacturers

9:15-11:00 a.m. | Room 101

Join us for this Artisan Track session where we will explore and learn about the cheese technologies available for artisan manufacturers. The session will address topics at every stage of the cheesemaking process, from production to packaging. Well known equipment manufacturers and industry experts will discuss traditional and new technologies in cheese manufacturing equipment, including manual and automated systems, air handling systems for aging rooms, finished cheese cutting and packaging equipment, as well as specialty packaging films and ripening papers for surface ripened cheeses.

- Exploring Automation and Artisan Cheese Manufacturing Equipment
- Understanding and Reviewing Current Technology of Plastic Cheese Molds
- Creating the Correct Aging Room Environment for your Cheeses
- Technical Considerations for Packaging your Surface Ripened Cheese
- Cheese Cutting and Packaging Equipment Solutions for the Artisan
- Overview of Technologies at the Center for Dairy Research

KEYNOTE GENERAL SESSION:

An Address from USDEC CEO Krysta Harden

11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Ballroom, 1st Floor

All attendees are welcome to attend this live address from America's dairy export leader, Krysta Harden, President and CEO of U.S. Dairy Export Council. Krysta led top CEOs through a discussion this morning, and now she has the platform to share a vision of America's opportunity to lead the world in dairy exports from a nation that the world admires as the leader in sustainable agriculture. Exports are the U.S. dairy industry's present and future, and a clear vision of how the United States can stand above its peers could unite our manufacturers and marketers around common goals and outcomes.

EXHIBIT FLOOR OPEN

11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. | Exhibit Floor, 3rd Floor

Visit the sold-out exhibit floor for the latest in dairy technology including cutting-edge equipment, high-tech automation, advanced software, quality ingredients and more! And, enjoy a complimentary lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

COLLEGIATE CONTEST AWARDS CEREMONY

3:30-4:30 p.m. | Ballroom, 1st Floor

Students and teams earn awards for their dairy grading skill on stage in the exhibit hall. Listen for the cheering!

CHR. HANSEN RECEPTION & CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE AUCTION

5:00-7:30 p.m. | Ballroom, 1st Floor

Chr. Hansen hosts a highlight of CheeseExpo. Energetic and fun, this reception features the Auction of gold-medal cheeses, butters and more from the 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest. Grab a bidding paddle and support WCMA industry training programs, scholarships and our ongoing support for dairy universities.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14

REGISTRATION OPEN

7:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.

WCMA RECOGNITION BREAKFAST EXCLUSIVELY SPONSORED BY DSM FOOD SPECIALTIES

8:00-9:15 a.m. | Ballroom, 1st Floor

WCMA Recognition of Cheese Industry Leaders

All attendees are invited to celebrate the achievements of industry greats. WCMA is proud to honor leaders who have built the U.S. cheese industry, featuring recipients of:

- WCMA Life Member Award
- WCMA Luminary Award
- WCMA Cheese Industry Champions
- WCMA Distinguished Service Award
- WCMA Babcock Award
- WCMA Vanguard Award

THURSDAY CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

Hot Topics in Food Safety Success

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Room 201

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and CDR will lead three informative Dairy Food Safety sessions:

1. How to Build/Improve your Food Safety Culture,
2. Best Practices in Foreign Material Controls, and
3. Recent Research finding in the control of Listeria.

Building a Successful Food Safety Culture

What people believe, do, and hold each other accountable for drives behaviors. Focusing on your "culture" is an effective way to ensure food safety and quality. You'll hear from Lone Jespersen, a leading global expert in Food Safety Culture, followed by an industry panel with practical advice about what has worked in the real world.

Foreign Material Prevention

This session will review three pillars of an effective foreign material control program followed by a panel of industry experts sharing their experiences and best practices on foreign material mitigation.

Recent Research Findings in the Control of Listeria

Dr. Glass will share recent findings on control measures for cheese manufacturing environments. Her presentation will cover aspects of acid type and pH in fresh cheese, the use of hydrogen peroxide in brine systems and development of an application to easily apply thermization heating to cheese milk.

Hot Topics in Quality Cheesemaking

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Room 202

Center for Dairy Research will break down a range of topics that challenge consistent production of high-quality cheese. Quality challenges include bitterness, acidity and calcium lactate crystal formation in aged cheeses, bacteriophage growth and infection of starter cultures and salt brine management.

Creating an Effective Cheese Grading Program

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Room 101

- Some Context: Cheese Grading and Why an Effective Program is Necessary
- Grading Definitions and Methods
- Aspirations: What Would Building an Effective Program Look Like?
- Actions: Next Steps, Practical Considerations & Traps to Avoid
- Closing Workshop: Hands on Grading Practice with Attendees

EXHIBIT FLOOR OPEN

11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. | Exhibit Floor, 3rd Floor

Visit the sold-out exhibit floor for the latest in dairy technology including cutting-edge equipment, high-tech automation, advanced software, quality ingredients and more! And, enjoy a complimentary lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

WORLD CHAMPIONS RECEPTION EXCLUSIVELY SPONSORED BY IFF

4:30-5:30 p.m. | Ballroom Foyer, 1st Floor

Join as winners gather to celebrate success in the 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest.

WORLD CHAMPIONS AWARDS BANQUET

5:30-8:00 p.m. | Ballroom, 1st Floor

A night to remember for dairy craftsmen from across the world. A must attend for everyone with a passion for the dairy industry.

CUSTOM FABRICATING & REPAIR AFTERGLOW RECEPTION

8:30 p.m. – Midnight | Hilton Hotel
Crystal Ballroom

Relax and enjoy music as we close the 2022 CheeseExpo with a reception hosted by Custom Fabricating & Repair, Inc.

CHEESE EXPO

EXHIBITS AND NETWORKING

A record breaking 306 companies will exhibit at CheeseExpo across more than 600 booths. Plan your visits by reviewing our list of exhibitors and booth numbers.

EXHIBIT HOURS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13:
11:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14:
11:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.

Ace Chemical Products, Inc.	251
Ace Sanitary	1536
Advanced Detection Systems	1405
Advanced Process Technologies - APT	1001
AFCO - A ZEP Company	1508
AGC Heat Transfer, Inc.	1846
Agropur Ingredients	1349
Air Quality Process	635
Airgas, an Air Liquide company	105
Alce North America, Inc.	213
Alfa Laval Inc.	1553
Allied Blending LP	1015
ALLIEDFLEX Technologies, Inc.	1834
ALPMA USA	1421
ALS Marshfield	122
AmbaFlex	127
Amcor Flexibles North America	527
AMETEK MOCON	1521
Ampco Pumps Company Inc.	109
AMS Steam Products, LLC	227
Anderson Chemical Co./ Sanitation Technologies	1401
Anderson Chemical Co./ Water Management	1403
Anderson-Negele	212
Applied Science, Inc.	1343
Aquachem of America Inc.	144
Aquatech	808
Archway Brick & Tile, LLC	252
Arena Products	714
Atlantium Technologies	451
AVID Risk Solutions	612
AWI Manufacturing	248
AxiFlow Technologies, Inc.	421
Baker Tilly	138
Baldwin Supply Company	1860
Bassett Mechanical	1504
Batzner Pest Control	301
Baumer Ltd.	1840
Begerst Stainless, Inc.	521
BELL-MARK	513
Benchmark	727
Bentley Instruments	348
Bepex International	1820
Berry Global	1850
Best Sanitizers, Inc.	1824
BFR Systems	1884
Bioionix, Inc.	1445
bioMerieux, Inc.	1550
Bruker Optics	1427
Burkert Fluid Control Systems	1540
BW Flexible Systems	1402
Caloris Engineering	440
CEM Corporation	240
Center for Dairy Research	927
CES/Foodlogistik USA	208
Charter Next Generation	243
Cheese Market News	1412
Cheese Reporter	332
Chem-Aqua, Inc.	1531
ChemStation Wisconsin LLC	135
Chr. Hansen, Inc.	627
Christakis Agathangelou Ltd.	1408
Clauger	327
Clayton Industries	541
Clean Logix	1351
Clean Water Technology, Inc.	201
Compeer Financial	300
Complete Control Solutions	133

Complete Filtration Resources	921
Control Concepts, Inc.	1812
CP Packaging LLC	650
Crane Engineering	204
CRB	514
Creative Business Services	241
Custom Fabricating & Repair, Inc.	921
Cybertron Engineering	950
Dahmes Stainless Inc.	737
Dairy Connection Inc.	1416
Dairy.com	205
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin	927
DCI, Inc.	641
Delkor Systems, Inc.	901
Detectapro Products	1832
Deville Technologies Inc.	801
Dirty Ducts Cleaning and Environmental	308
Diversey F&B	1810
Dixon Sanitary	1153
DORAL Corporation	1525
Dorner Manufacturing Corp.	1854
DR Tech, Inc.	837
DSM Food Specialties USA, Inc.	821
DSO Fluid Handling	1519
Duncan Company	1012
Dynaco Entrematic	342
Eagle Product Inspection	1151
Ecolab, Inc.	1210
ELPLAST America Inc.	1353
Endress+Hauser	402
Energenec	744
Energy Panel Structures, Inc.	1451
Enerquip, LLC	1149
Engilico	232
Engineering Specialists	1868
ePac Flexible Packaging	1866
ErgonArmor	1252
Evaporator Dryer Technologies, Inc.	648
Evoqua Water Technologies	120
Excel Engineering, Inc.	1248
Extrutech Plastics Inc.	441
FBF North America LLC	542
F.N. Sheppard & Co.	653
Fiberglass Solutions LLC	344
First Choice Ingredients	214
FLAIR Flexible Packaging Corporation	1507
Flavorseal	126
FlexLink Systems Inc.	442
Flexxray	200
Fluid Path Products, LLC	143
FoodSafe Drains	226
Fortress Technology, Inc.	1303
Foss	1137
Foth	1548
Fredman Bag Company	1411
Fresh-Lock by Presto	544
Fristam Pumps USA	304
Fromagex	1527
FSNS, A Certified Group Company	1532
FT System North America LLC	750
Gamay Food Ingredients	244
Garon Foods Inc.	1870
GEA Systems North America	743
Gemak Gıda Endüstri Makinaları ve Tic AŞ	151
G-M-I, Inc	1444
Gray	443

Great Northern Corporation	409
Green Bay Packaging Inc.	340
GS PlantOptics	636
Handtmann	701
Harpak-Ulma Packaging, LLC.	1333
Haskell	742
HART Design & Manufacturing, Inc.	341
Heritage Manufacturing, Inc.	145
Heron Innovators, Inc.	616
Hotsy Cleaning Systems, Inc	1517
Hurckman Mechanical Industries Inc.	1152
Hydrite	621
Hygiene	611
ID Technology	727
IFF	1021
IFM Efeotor, Inc.	851
IML Containers	1409
Immel Construction	1876
Inficon	1452
Ingredion	1341
Integrated Packaging Machinery	209
International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA)	1448
International Machinery Exchange	401
International Media & Cultures, Inc.	1509
Intralox	118
ISG	716
Ivarson, Inc.	1321
J&W Instruments	1806
JIE USA INC	620
J. Rettenmaier USA	352
J.P. Morgan	510
Jay R. Smith Mfg.	116
JBT - A&B Process Systems	1345
Jeneil Biotech Inc.	128
Kagetec Industrial Flooring	1549
Karl Schnell Inc.	809
KEI Steam Solutions, Inc.	1049
Keller, Inc.	1882
Kelley Supply, Inc	1227 & 1327
Kersia	1415
Key Resin Company/Flowresin	1453
KING-GAGE, A NOSHOK Company	1864
KJ Cold Storage, LLC	1534
Koch Separation Solutions & RELCO	1043
Koss Industrial, Inc.	615
Kraemer Brothers, LLC	740
KROHNE/Durable Controls	343
Kurita America Inc.	404
Kusel Equipment Co.	1440
Kwik Bond Polymers	551
Lallemand	535
Laporte Consultants Corporation	1537
LCI Corporation	1844
LETICO Inc.	1053
Loos Machine & Automation	1121
M4 Control Systems	837
Malisko Engineering, Inc	1541
MANN+HUMMEL Water & Fluid Solutions Inc.	849
Marchant Schmidt, Inc.	749
Martin Milk Service and Martin Warehousing	405
Massman Automation Designs, LLC	1878

Masters Gallery Foods, Inc.	1219
Matrix Packaging Machinery	727
Matrix Sciences	312
McFinn Technologies	642
McMahon Associates	1830
MCT Dairies Inc.	1317
Mead & Hunt, Inc.	948
Membrane Process & Controls, Inc.	1544
Membrane System Specialists, Inc.	1241
Memmert USA, LLC	103
MHM AUTOMATION	1148
Milk Movement	1802
Miron Construction Co., Inc.	415
Mohawk Technology	242
Multi-Conveyor LLC	1400
MULTIPOND America Inc	121
Multivac, Inc.	601
Munters Corporation	237
Natec USA LLC	549
National Utilities Co.	1503
Nelson-Jameson, Inc.	721
Nercon Conveyor Systems	113
Northfield Corporation	203
Nutraceuticals, LLC	537
optek-Danulat, Inc.	449
Oterra	1880
Packaging Corporation of America	1435
Page & Pedersen International, Ltd	917
Paul Mueller Company	233
Pentair	403
PerkinElmer, Inc.	540
Piller TSC Blower Corporation	1543
Plunkett's Pest Control	1539
Powder Process-Solutions	1545
POWER Engineers, Inc.	643
PPI Technologies Group	134
Precision Biolabs	1414
ProActive Solutions USA, LLC	1313
ProFood World	350
Proleit Corp.	512
ProMach	727
Protective Coating Specialists, Inc.	302
Provisur Technologies	309
PSSI Chemical Innovations	146
PureLine	249
QLC, Inc.	1305
Quadbeam Technologies Ltd.	913
QualiTru Sampling Systems	137
Quality Tank Solutions, LLC	1862
Qualtech Inc	1115
Quest Industrial	727
RathGibson	652
Reflectronics, Inc.	1150
Reiser	1101
Rieger Flow Products, LLC	508
River Valley Logistics, LLC.	132
Rocket Industrial	632
RSM US LLP	1816
Rubber Fab	1513
RWS Design And Controls, Inc.	400
Rytec High Performance Doors	234
Safe Food Resources	140
Sani-Matic, Inc.	651
Sanitary Design Industries, LLC	710
Sapal SA	1523

Sapphire Flavors & Fragrances	1011
Schenck Process	433
Schneider & Schneider Mechanical	1016
Separators, Inc.	500
Setric Best Inc.	253
SEW-EURODRIVE	1110
Shambaugh & Son, L.P.	427
Sheffield Machine Knife	124
Shuttleworth	727
SoftTrace Ltd	413
Spancrete - Wells	1502
SPX Flow Inc.	515
Staab Construction Corp.	1818
Stainless Technologies LLC	1250
Staubli Robotics	645
Steel & O'Brien Manufacturing	141
Strategybytes, LLC	1111
Stuart W. Johnson & Company Inc.	453
Suedpack Oak Creek Corporation	1211
SUEZ Water Technologies & Solutions	115
Summit Refrigeration Group	1814
SupplyOne Wisconsin	101
Sweetener Supply	1417
SwipeGuide	149
Symbiont Science, Engineering and Construction Inc	748
Synder Filtration	649
Tauber	640
TC Transcontinental Packaging Technology Group International	815
Tecnal	1309
Teel Plastics, Inc.	1852
Tetra Pak Inc.	1027
The Boldt Company	752
The Boson Company	1449
The Probst Group, LLC	504
Toray Membrane USA	502
TREIF USA	507
Tweet/Garot Mechanical	1441
UltraSource LLC	1201
United Industries, Inc.	215
United Scale a Transcat Co.	533
Urschel Laboratories, Inc.	501
Valcour Process Technologies	303
Valley Cold Transit and Storage	1874
VDG (Van der Graaf)	715
Viking Masek Global Packaging Technologies	1535
Vivolac Cultures Corporation	314
VNE Corporation	1500
Wabash	517
Wayland Industries	614
WCR, Inc.	1808
WDS Construction	202
Webber/Smith Associates, Inc.	1804
Weber, Inc.	937
Weiland Logistics	552
Weimer Bearing & Transmission	130
Werner Electric Supply	1514
Westfalia Technologies, Inc.	644
Winpak	1037
WIPOTEC-OCS	548
Wisconsin Aging & Grading Cheese Inc.	1301
Witt Gas Controls	1433
WOW Logistics	216
Zepnick Solutions, Inc.	943
Zone Mechanical	245

2022 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE CONTEST

CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE AUCTION

Join us for the Auction event of the year – the sale of Gold Medal winners from the 2022 World Championship Cheese Contest benefitting the education and training programs of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association.

Buying these amazing dairy products allows you to congratulate these winning manufacturers and has helped WCMA support excellence in our industry. WCMA has used Auction dollars to build popular training programs for dairy manufacturers and suppliers, make key donations to dairy education facilities across the country, and support dairy producer improvement organizations.

AUCTION PROCEDURE

- The Auction begins at 5:30 p.m. during the Chr. Hansen Reception at the 2022 CheeseExpo in the Wisconsin Center Ballroom. Visit the Auction stage starting at 5:00 p.m. and grab a bidding paddle with your company name.
- Bids during the Auction are made on a per-pound basis. The total pounds of each item for bid are noted below each item number. Many items have multiple cheeses.
- Successful bidders must arrange payment immediately following the Auction at the Auction supervisor's table.
- Cheeses can be shipped to winning bidders. However, WCMA encourages bidders to pick up their items Thursday, April 14 (3:00 to 4:00 p.m.) or Friday, April 15 (8:00-10:00 a.m.) at the cheese display coolers on the CheeseExpo exhibit floor.

2022 AUCTIONEER

Tim Slack Auction & Realty

2021 WINNING BIDDERS

Great Lakes Cheese
Kelley Supply, Inc.
DSM Food Specialties
Brian Eggebrecht
& the B-Team
Nelson-Jameson
Chr. Hansen
ALPMA USA

2020 WINNING BIDDERS

Great Lakes Cheese
Kelley Supply, Inc.
Chr. Hansen
T.C. Jacoby & Co.
Custom Fabricating & Repair
Nelson-Jameson
ProActive Solutions USA
TC Transcontinental
Complete Filtration Resources
Dairy Connection, Inc.
Masters Gallery Foods
Decatur Dairy
APT
R. Mueller
Loos Machine & Automation
WI Aging & Grading Cheese
Milk Specialties Global
Vivolac Cultures Corp.
Brian Eggebrecht
& the B-Team
Cheese Market News
ProAmpac
ALPMA USA
DSM Food Specialties

ITEM #1 19 lbs MARVELOUS ARLA

Castello Smoked Cracked Pepper Gouda, Dave Newman
Dofino Havarti, Trace Peterson, Arla Foods, Kaukauna, WI, USA

ITEM #2 40 lbs VALLEY QUEEN VICTORIOUS

Reduced Fat Cheddar, Valley Queen, Milbank, SD, USA

ITEM #3 10 lbs MIGHTY MEISTER

Smoked Cheddar, Meister Cheese Company, Muscoda, WI, USA

ITEM #4 23 lbs AGROPUR'S FINEST

Whole Milk Mozzarella & Provolone, Pat Doell, Agropur, Luxemburg, WI, USA

ITEM #5 50 lbs EXCEPTIONAL ELLSWORTH

Pizza Cheese & Hot Pepper Processed Cheese, ECC New London

Habanero Ghost Pepper Jack Cheese, ECC Comstock

Hickory Bacon Cheese Curds, ECC Ellsworth Creamery, Ellsworth, WI, USA

ITEM #6 22 lbs DEER CREEK+ HENNINGS = DEERLICIOUS!

Deer Creek The Night Walker, Henning's Cheese for Deer Creek Cheese, Kiel, WI, USA

ITEM #7 40 lbs SUPER CHALET

Baby Swiss, Richard Buss, Jr., Chalet Cheese Co-op, Monroe, WI, USA

ITEM #8 40 lbs CABOT, NAB IT!

Cabot Mild Cheddar & Pepper Jack Cracker Cuts, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Cabot, VT, USA

Cabot Pepper Jack, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Chateaugay, NY, USA

ITEM #9 10 lbs OUTSTANDING OLD CROC

Old Croc Medium Aged Cheddar Slices, Trugman-Nash, LLC, Melbourne, Australia

ITEM #10 11 lbs CEDAR VALLEY SUPREME

Smoked Mild Provolone, 1st Shift Team, Cedar Valley Cheese, Belgium, WI, USA

ITEM #11 100 lbs ALPINE ELEGANCE

Erzherzog Johann, Othmar Pichler and Team, Obersteirische Molkerei eGen, Knittelfeld, Steiermark, Austria

Arzberger Aurum, Franz Moestl & Team, Almenland Stollenkaese GmbH, Passail, Arzberg, Austria

Gmundner Milch Stoderer Rauchkäse, Yaser Yilmaz, Gmundner Molkerei eGen (mbH), Gmunden, Oberösterreich, Austria

Baldauf Allgäuer Bergkäse, Gebr. Baldauf GmbH & Co. KG, Lindenberg, Bavaria, Germany

ITEM #12 10 lbs WILLIAMS WONDER

Williams Original Horseradish Gourmet Spreadable Cheese, Williams Team 1, Williams Cheese Company, Linwood, MI, USA

ITEM #13 30 lbs KLONDIKE GOLD

Odyssey Feta, Kristi Wuthrich
Odyssey Peppercorn Feta & Odyssey Lowfat Feta, Steve Webster, Klondike Cheese Co., Monroe, WI, USA

ITEM #14 10 lbs WESTBY'S BESTBY

4% Good Culture Organic Strawberry Cottage Cheese, Westby Coop Creamery, Westby, WI, USA

ITEM #15 21 lbs REMARKABLE RENARD'S

Traditional Red Wax Cheddar Daisy, Renard's Rosewood Dairy, Algoma, WI, USA

ITEM #16 45 lbs LAND O' LAKES O' MY!

Queso Bravo Cheese Dip, Land O' Lakes, Spencer, WI, USA
Aged Cheddar - 1 to 2 Years, Land O' Lakes, Kiel, WI, USA

ITEM #17 10 lbs CRAVE THAT CRAVE BROTHERS

Fresh Mozzarella, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Waterloo, WI, USA

ITEM #18 40 lbs PURE MICHIGAN MWC

Monterey Jack, MWC, St. Johns, MI, USA

ITEM #19 36 lbs EMMI EMINENCE

Roth Creamy Havarti & Roth Grand Cru Surchoix, Emmi Roth, Monroe, WI, USA

Lamb Chopper, Cypress Grove, Arcata, CA, USA

ITEM #20 10 lbs NUESTRO QUESO PERFECCION

Panela/Nuestro Queso, Hispanic Cheese Makers-Nuestro Queso Team, Nuestro Queso, LLC, Kent, IL, USA

ITEM #21 10 lbs DISTINGUISHED DECATUR

Muenster & Muenster Curds, Steve Stettler, Decatur Dairy, Brodhead, WI, USA

ITEM #22 300 lbs SWISS WONDERS

Appenzeller® Mild-Würzig, Hans Näf, Käseerei Niederbüren AG, Niederbüren, Switzerland

Gourmino Emmentaler AOP, Stefan Haldner, village dairy Sommeri, Gourmino AG, Langnau i.E., Bern, Switzerland

Appenzeller® Extra-Würzig, Marcel Gabriel, Käseerei Gabriel, Oberbüren, Switzerland

Biocella, Brülisauer Käse AG, Künnten, Switzerland

Alte Geiss & Blüemli-Chäs, Franz Scheuber, Fläcke-Chäsi GmbH, Beromünster, Switzerland

Tête de Moine AOP, Fromages Spielhofer SA, St-Imier, Bern, Switzerland

Mont Vully Réserve, Käseerei Schafer AG, Cressier, Fribourg, Switzerland

Switzerland Swiss, Simmental Switzerland AG, Oey, Bern, Switzerland

ITEM #23 40 lbs SKILLED SOUTHWEST

White Cheddar, Southwest Cheese, Clovis, NM, USA

ITEM #24 50 lbs ARTISAN EXCELLENCE

Flagship Reserve, Beecher's Handmade Cheese, Seattle, WA, USA

Ocooch Reserve, Brenda Jensen, Hidden Springs Creamery, Westby, WI, USA

St. Malachi, The Farm at Doe Run, Coatesville, PA, USA

Cave Aged Chandoka, Robert Garves, LaClare Creamery, Malone, WI, USA

St. Germain, Veronica Pedraza, Blakesville Creamery, Port Washington, WI, USA

ITEM #25 64 lbs JOYOUS BELGIOIOSO

Creamy Gorg, Jeff Allen

Mandarini Aged Provolone, Kevin Benzel

Asiago Fresco, Mitch Borzych, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, WI, USA

ITEM #26 12 lbs ASTONISHING ARENA

Original Recipe Colby Jack Deli, Arena Cheese, Arena, WI, USA

ITEM #27 25 lbs SARTORI SPLENDOR

Sartori Tuscan Blend & Sartori Classic Asiago, Sartori Cheese, Plymouth, WI, USA

ITEM #28 9 lbs ROCKIN' ROELLI

Red Rock, Roelli Cheese Co., Shullsburg, WI, USA

ITEM #29 10 lbs PREMIUM PRAIRIE FARMS

Prairie Farms 4% Small Curd Cottage Cheese, Prairie Farms Dairy, Quincy, IL, USA

ITEM #30 40 lbs GLORIOUS GLANBIA

Cheddar Sharp, Juan Torres

Bandage Cheddar Sharp, Brad Johnson

Colby, Mirsad Zuko

Pepper Jack, David Banza

Colby Jack with Peppers, Heather Aspiasu

Red & Green Habanero Color Cheddar, Maryann Swinney, Glanbia Nutritionals, Twin Falls, ID, USA

ITEM #31 20 lbs PINE RIVER GOLD PACK

Chunky Bleu Cold Pack Cheese Food & Pimento Cold Pack Cheese Spread, Pine River Pre-Pack Inc, Newton, WI, USA

ITEM #32 10 lbs SHOOTING STAR SPARKLES

Sagittarius, Shooting Star Creamery at Central Coast Creamery, Paso Robles, CA, USA

ITEM #33 20 lbs MAGNIFICENT MARIEKE

Marieke Thorp Gouda, Marieke Gouda, Thorp, WI, USA

ITEM #34 40 lbs AGROPUR PERFECTION

Agropur Grand Cheddar, Agropur, Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil, QC, CA

ITEM #35 10 lbs UPSTATE NIAGARA RISES

LMPS Culture String Cheese & Part Skim Retail, Upstate Niagara Cooperative Inc., Campbell, NY, USA

ITEM #36 20 lbs SCHUMAN SHINES

Cello Parmesan, Lake Country Dairy, Schuman Cheese, Turtle Lake, WI, USA

ITEM #37 100 lbs DUTCH MASTERS

Mild Goat Cheese, Team Gerkesklooster, Royal FrieslandCampina, Amersfoort, Netherlands

Holland Master Cantenaar & Vermeer, Team Steenderen, Royal FrieslandCampina, Amersfoort, Netherlands

Roemer Sweet, Van der Heiden Kaas B.V., Bodegraven, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands

Old Amsterdam Mild Gouda, Westland Kaasexport BV, Huizen, Noord Holland, Netherlands

Beemster Royaal & Beemster Royaal Grand Cru, Lieke Kortekaas, Beemster, Westbeemster, Netherlands

ITEM #38 10 lbs A-M-P-I LIKE IT!

Dinner Bell Pasteurized Process American Cheese, Associated Milk Producers Inc., Portage, WI, USA

ITEM #39 12 lbs VICTORIOUS V&V

Cotija Cheese Wheel, V&V Supremo Foods, Chicago, IL, USA

ITEM #40 10 lbs LACTALIS LANDMARKS

Ricotta - Whole Milk, Lactalis American Group, Buffalo, NY, USA

Bella Gento Mascarpone, Sonita Rass, Sorrento Lactalis, Nampa, ID, USA

ITEM #41 70 lbs THE WORLD CHAMPION!

Gourmino Le Gruyère AOP, Michael Spycher, Mountain Dairy Fritzenhaus, Gourmino AG, Langnau i.E., Bern, CH



WCMA Announces Seven Scholarship Winners; 2022 Funds Total \$19,000

Madison—Seven current and future dairy industry professionals have been selected to receive a total of \$19,000 in scholarship funds from the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA).

Funds for WCMA's scholarship program come from the annual Championship Cheese Auction, where gold medal cheeses from WCMA's Championship Cheese Contests are sold to the highest bidders.

The next auction – the Chr. Hansen Reception & World Championship Cheese Auction – will be held Wednesday, April 13 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI, during CheeseExpo.

“Building a strong future for the dairy processing industry requires fresh, energetic, diverse perspectives,” said WCMA executive director John Umhoefer.

“Thanks to the generosity of our members, WCMA is thrilled to once again offer these awards to a group of highly deserving emerging leaders,” Umhoefer continued.

Myron ‘Mike’ Dean Scholarships

Dairy processors and their family members are eligible for the WCMA Myron P. “Mike” Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarship.

Over 25 years, WCMA has awarded these \$3,000 scholarships to 44 students. Winners of the 2022 Mike Dean Cheese Industry Student Scholarships are **Bailee Aisenbrey** and **Jamie Feldmann**.

Aisenbrey works in the production plant at Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. Set to begin a quality assurance internship this summer, she is also completing her undergraduate degree in food science and technology at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Upon graduation in May 2023, Aisenbrey plans to continue pursuing a quality assurance career in the dairy processing industry.

Feldmann, currently serving as manager of supplier quality at Sartori Company, is pursuing a master's degree in business administration from Lakeland University.

After earning his degree, Feldmann hopes to move into a project management role at Sartori, working to ensure supply chain continuity.

Supplier Student Scholarships

Since 1999, suppliers to the dairy industry and their family members have earned the WCMA Supplier Student Scholarship. In total, 60 scholarships have been awarded over 22 years.

This year's three recipients are **Jenna Jakel**, **Stephanie Kraemer**, and **Jack Pluta**.

Jakel has served for 11 years as office manager of Loos Machine & Automation. She plans to graduate from Upper Iowa University in December 2023 with an accounting-focused MBA. After graduation, Jakel will continue her career with Loos as the company's controller/office manager.

Kraemer currently works as a quality and food safety specialist for International Flavors & Fragrances, Inc. (IFF). She's pursuing an MBA at UW-Madison, with goals of becoming a marketing or brand manager after graduation in May 2023.

Pluta is a process engineering intern at Excel Engineering, continuing a family tradition shared with his father, senior project manager John Pluta.

After graduating next May with a bachelor of science degree from Michigan Technological University, Pluta plans to continue his dairy industry career as a process engineer in Excel's Food Process Group.

Brian Eggebrecht Scholarships

Since 2021, WCMA has also selected two students to receive the Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship supporting skilled trades in the dairy industry, worth \$2,000 each.

This award, named in honor of Championship Cheese Contest chairman and donor Brian Eggebrecht, is open to students attending any technical school in Wisconsin, or high school students registered to attend a Wisconsin technical school.

Winners of this year's Brian Eggebrecht Student Scholarship are **Bryce Gustafson** and **Xiapor Lor**.

Gustafson is employed as an internal raw materials grading coordinator at Masters Gallery Foods. He is pursuing a degree in manufacturing management at Lakeshore Technical College.

Gustafson aims to continue his career in the Master's Gallery grading department and become a licensed cheese maker.

Lor currently holds a utility position at the Master's Gallery facility in Oostburg, WI.

Upon graduating with an associate's degree in electromechanical maintenance from Lakeshore Technical College, Lor plans to pursue a maintenance career with Master's Gallery.

Next month's auction is part of CheeseExpo, which runs April 12-14. Wednesday's reception and auction event take place from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

For information about the World Championship Cheese Contest Auction, schedule of events for CheeseExpo and full registration details, visit www.CheeseExpo.org.

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 2nd: Toasted Onion
 3rd: Aged Asiago

Cold Pack Cheese Spreads
 3rd: Clean Label Garlic & Herb

Cheese Based Spreads
 1st: Pimento

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Jamie Fahrney



Charles Henn



Matt Henze



Ken Kane



Gerard Knaus



Shawn Sadler

Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Program Welcomes Three New Graduates; Three Returning Masters Earns Additional Certification

Madison—The Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research (CDR) and Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin (DFW) announced the 28th graduating class of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker program, one of the largest in recent years, with three new and three returning Master Cheesemakers.

To be eligible for the program, students must be licensed Wisconsin cheese makers for at least 10 years. Before applicants are accepted, they're required to complete CDR's Advanced Cheese Technology Short Course and one other workshop of their choice.

Applicants must also lead a plant visit and walk-through of their facility, and pass an oral exam.

Once they're accepted into the program, participants complete a list of courses and an intensive exam. The cheeses they're being certified in are graded for flavor, composition and microbial analysis; this is done three times before they can graduate as a Master Cheesemaker.

It takes about three years to complete the program. To date, more than 90 cheese makers have earned the title of Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker in dozens of cheese varieties.

Many Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers have also earned multiple certifications in different cheese types and styles.

"I want to congratulate both the returning and new Master Cheesemakers," said Andy Johnson, coordinator of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker program.

"I'm proud and excited to continue working with this impressive group," Johnson said.

Charles Henn, Agropur

Cheese has taken Charles Henn around the world. It started at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where he got a cheesemaking job at the university dairy plant.

"I went to college thinking I was going to be a veterinarian," Henn said. "When I first applied to vet schools after my junior year in college, I got denied."

"My college advisor tried to cheer me up and told me I'd probably make more money as a cheese maker than as a vet," Henn said.

As part of the dairy plant job, an alumnus from China brought Henn and other cheese makers to China, where they spent three weeks on a Tibetan plateau making Halloumi cheese from yak's milk.

"I had a pretty unique college

experience and that was all because of cheese," he said.

After graduating, Henn joined the team at Belgioioso, where he made cheeses like Mascarpone and Ricotta for more than 10 years.

Henn now works at the Agropur plant in Weyauwega, where he makes Cheddar. This year, Henn joins the ranks of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers with a certification in Cheddar.

Becoming a Master Cheesemaker has been a goal of his since first hearing about the program in 2003 when Henn first earned his cheesemaking license.

Looking ahead, Henn said he would be interested in earning a second certification in Feta. Agropur's Weyauwega facility manufactures a considerable amount of Feta.

"I don't have any experience in Feta, but I told the plant manager I'd be willing to put the time in to become a master," he said. "I never knew how Feta was made or really even ate before I got here."

Although Henn initially hoped to be a veterinarian, he said he likes his career as a cheese maker.

"I really enjoy the difficulty of cheesemaking," he said. "There's a lot of work in finding out how to

fix the problems and that's what I enjoy – the difficulty of it."

Ken Kane, Sartori

Ken Kane, named after his grandfather who owned a dairy farm and was a cheese maker in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, was destined to become a cheese maker.

"My grandfather would milk the cows in the morning, bring the milk into the plant and make cheese," Kane said.

However, it wasn't until Kane was a couple of years into his own career at Sartori that his dad told him about his family's history and legacy in the dairy industry.

"It's a pretty cool experience to bring it full circle, to get his name, and to be a cheese maker as well," he said.

Kane started his career in 2005 at the Sartori plant in Plymouth, WI, where he initially worked in food sanitation. Over the years, he said he worked almost every job in the plant, eventually serving as a cheese maker.

Right away, he fell in love with the work.

The creative process really drew me in, he said. I love creating something that starts out as a singular product and is completely transformed through the cheesemaking process.

As soon as he learned about the Master program, he knew he wanted to be one. Kane also said he was fortunate to have good mentors like Master Cheesemaker Mark Gustafson

"That was really my true north and everything that I did was about trying to get to that point," Kane said.

This year, Kane has earned certifications in Parmesan and Romano.

"I learned how to make cheese by making Parmesan and Romano," he said. "So, it was really near and dear to my heart to obtain certifications in those two cheeses."

Shawn Sadler, AMPI

Over the course of his 25-year career, Shawn Sadler has gone from literally sweeping the floors to running the place. Sadler, who currently serves as cheese plant superintendent at the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI) location

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New Masters

Continued from p. 32

in Jim Falls, WI, started working at the plant right out of high school.

“My dad had worked here for most of his career and I thought it seemed like a good place to work,” Sadler said. “I just started working on the floor, doing clean-up and helping with various other jobs.”

Sadler found his way into cheesemaking and got his license. It wasn't long until the plant supervisor asked Sadler if he'd be interested in a foreman role.

At this time, Sadler started taking short courses at CDR and learning more about cheesemaking. Then the plant supervisor job opened, Sadler was encouraged to apply, and he has been in that role for about four years.

Through it all, Sadler said that he has learned to love cheesemaking, and the interesting challenges that go with it.

“It seems like you're always learning something new,” he said. “Every time you think you have cheese figured out there's always something else to learn. I'm always trying to tweak something. We don't standardize our milk here, so we're always trying to tweak things through the seasons.”

Sadler earned certifications in Monterey Jack and Cheddar – two high-volume cheeses made at the AMPI plant.

One part of the program he especially liked was the opportunity to network with other cheese makers.

“Getting connected with other cheese makers was really helpful,” Sadler said. “Being able to talk to other people in the industry in other plants; that's phenomenal.”

Looking ahead, Sadler said he's heard that Pepper Jack may get a standard of identity in the US Code of Federal Regulations, which would most likely mean it would be an eligible cheese for the Master program.

“I would definitely be interested in that,” he said.

Jamie Fahrney, Chalet Cheese

Jamie Fahrney started working at Chalet Cheese Cooperative in Monroe, WI, when he was 16.

“After my first day, I went home and told my mother, ‘I don't know if I want to do this cheesemaking stuff; it's pretty tough work.’ Then my dad came home, and he told me, ‘You're staying right where you're at.’ I've been here ever since,” Fahrney said.

Fahrney has been at Chalet Cheese for about 44 years. He started working full time at the historic cheese plant after graduating high school in 1980 and earned his cheese maker's license in 1985. Chalet Cheese cooperative was founded in 1885 and is one of the oldest cheese co-ops in the US. It's also well-known for its Limburger.

“We're famous for our Limburger because we're the only ones in the United States making it,” Fahrney said. “However, Swiss and Baby Swiss is our main business.”

This year, Fahrney earns Master certifications in Limburger and Swiss. He also holds certifications in Brick and Baby Swiss.

“My favorite cheese is that old-time Swiss – those 200-pound wheels of Swiss,” Fahrney said. “I still remember as a kid going into the local Swiss plant. My dad bought some Swiss and I think it wasn't two days gone by and I had that piece of cheese eaten myself. It's like candy to me.”

Fahrney was hired by Albert Deppeler and mentored by Master Cheesemaker Myron Olson.

“Our plant still uses the hands-on approach – we think it's the best way. We don't have the push-button vats where you're not even involved in it,” he said.

As Fahrney said, Chalet's claim to fame is its Limburger. However, Limburger production has declined in recent years.

“The younger crowd today doesn't care as much for that full-flavored cheese,” he said. “Limburger gets the bad connotations with the jokes about it. It's unfortunate, but unfortunately they're all true,” he said.

However, “there's always going to people who like a full-flavored cheese,” he continued.

Matt Henze, Decatur Dairy

Like many Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers, Matt Henze fell in love with cheesemaking right from the start.

“It all started when I graduated high school and needed a job,” Henze said. “A buddy was working at Decatur Dairy and he got me a job. I just fell in love with it.”

At Decatur, Henze found a good mentor in Steve Stettler, a Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker with certifications in seven cheeses.

“I started in the pack room and I overheard Steve talking about training someone else on how to make cheese,” Henze said. “And I asked Steve, ‘What do I got to do to make cheese?’ And he said, ‘Be here tonight.’ So, I came in and it started from there. Steve taught me everything.”

Henze has now been making cheese for almost 20 years. In 2018, he earned Master certifications in Muenster and Havarti. This year, he adds Brick and Butterkäse – two major varieties produced at Decatur Dairy.

Henze said the Master program is a good opportunity for someone who loves cheesemaking, and be rewarded for all the hard work they put into it.

Looking back, Henze said he is fortunate that he landed that job at Decatur Dairy.

“The best part is creating something that people enjoy,” he said.

“I think we get compliments every day. We have a cheese store here at Decatur Dairy and hearing the feedback from everyone enjoying our product; that's what I enjoy the most.”

Gerard Knaus, Weyauwega Dairy

Gerard Knaus comes from a long tradition of cheesemaking. His family has been making cheese for four generations.

Knaus was still in high school when he started making cheese.

“It started with sampling and testing milk with my dad, and then one day he said, ‘Let's go in the plant and make some cheese.’ It started from there,” Knaus said.

Knaus has been making cheese for about 42 years, and still likes the challenge and drive to make a quality product.

This year, Knaus earns Master certifications in Monterey Jack and Muenster. In total, he has eight Master Cheesemaker certifications. Knaus is especially proud to add Muenster to his list of Master cheeses.

“It's a really nice cheese and you can put it anywhere and people love it. It has a nice flavor to it; it's creamy,” Knaus said. “It's some of the best.”

He credits current and former CDR and University of Wisconsin

staff like Marianne Smukowski, John Jaeggi, Mark Johnson, Bob Bradley, and Bill Wendorff for the success of the program and for great education through CDR short courses.

“They wanted you to do the best you can,” Knaus said. “They did whatever they could to teach you. It wasn't just, ‘Here's a book and read it.’ No, they came in and were very thorough with everything they did.”

As for the program itself, Knaus said it helps elevate Wisconsin cheese and cheese makers.

The Master program – no one else has anything like it, he said. And it's not just about earning a medal; it's about getting real knowledge that you can use every day in the plant.

“You got to make sure you do it right,” Knaus said. “Get quality milk in, get your yields right. Talk to your farmers, make friends with them and make sure they know this is what we're trying to achieve.”

That same attitude applies in the plant.

“There no such thing as good enough to us,” Knaus said.

For more information about the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Program, visit www.wisconsincheese.com.

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Supplier New Products, Partnerships, Acquisitions & Expansion News

Massman Companies Acquires New England Machinery

Villard, MN—The Massman Companies, a global leader in packaging machinery, recently announced the acquisition of New England Machinery, Inc., a privately held company based in Bradenton, FL.

New England Machinery (NEM) builds machines to improve efficiencies in packaging production lines worldwide. NEM product lines include bottle unscramblers, orienters, cappers, retorquers, and lidders.

New England Machinery also provides several types of specialty equipment including pluggers, pump sorters and placers, scoop feeders, and spout inserters.

The addition of NEM to The Massman Companies enables full line solutions from bottle to pallet, according to The Massman Companies. NEM is the fourth acquisition for Massman in bottling systems and container/component handling following the acquisitions of PASE, Ideal-Pak, and DTM Packaging. Combined, these businesses deliver filling and

packaging line solutions for bottle through drum and tote container applications.

“NEM and Massman share common company family values focused on customer success, employee wellness, community, and long-term business growth,” said Jeffrey Hohn, president and CEO of The Massman Companies.

“We are excited to be joining The Massman Companies,” said Judith Nickse, a second-generation family owner of New England Machinery.

The transaction closed on Friday, Mar. 11, 2022.

The Massman Companies provide a full line of automated packaging equipment, including pouch filling, case packaging, shrink wrapping, palletizing and liquid filling solutions. Massman provides customized bottling and packaging equipment from bottle to tote containers across a wide variety of food, beverage, industrial, OTC pharma, and consumer products applications.

For more information on The Massman Companies, visit www.themassmancompanies.com.

For more information on New England Machinery, visit www.neminc.com.

Vivolac Introduces High-Yielding Cultures Program For Mozzarella Blends

Greenfield, IN—Vivolac Culture Corporation has introduced new, innovative, high-yielding, Mozzarella blended cultures to its current Mozzarella program.

Vivolac STEP series cultures have been used for making Mozzarella and Provolone for years. The new STEP Cultures blends for Mozzarella are the company's newest innovative addition, designed to maximize profits through higher yields.

“Cheese makers are realizing actual cost savings with our new STEP program,” said Aaron Miller, sales and technical services manager at Vivolac. “Based on recent commercial trials, cheese makers are seeing a consistent 1.5 percent-plus higher moistures in their pizza cheese products.”

Miller said the company had been developing the program when it became expedited due to supply chain issues.

“It was brought to our attention there was a need for products to be supported from the US market,” Miller said. “Our current Mozzarella customers requested our expertise in developing a price competitive product made in the US that would increase yield through moisture retention of their Italian cheese.”

The focus of the initial project was to create a fast acidification, high-moisture retaining product that adds value to our customers, both through our ability to supply the pizza cheese market with US-made products, but also with more cheese per pound and higher yields to their vats, Miller said.

“We have done specialty projects like this in the past,” Miller

said. “Given our track record of fast turn-around times, technical expertise, as well as flexibility, we were able to deliver our first trial cultures in a few short weeks.”

“Initial trials went extremely well, and companies find the product competes in cost, quality, and functionality,” Miller said.

Vivolac Culture Corporation is a leader in starter culture, media and bioprotective cultures. The company recently completed an 8,000-square-foot expansion to its freezer capacity, warehousing, and its shipping operations to more efficiently serve the industry.

“Being a privately held business allowed us to quickly make changes in reaction to global supply chain disruptions. We moved our raw material sourcing to be mostly based in the US which has allowed us to have an uninterrupted flow of products available for our customers,” Miller said.

“Pair that with our ability to rapidly create new and innovative products, and we feel we have helped our customers successfully navigate through the challenges that have been presented over the past couple years,” Miller added.

Vivolac currently offers four of the higher-yielding complex blends. These blends have multiple strains to add phage robustness. Combined with Vivolac's current higher-yielding STEP Mozzarella and Provolone cultures, the company is suited to satisfy any cheese maker looking to maintain high yields, the company said.

For more information, contact Miller at amiller@vivolac.com or 920-255-0808.



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Ultrasource Offers New Stainless Lifting Equipment For Lifting Wheels Of Cheese

New to Packline Materials Handling and Ultrasource LLC, a stainless clamp attachment with powered clamping and manual rotation was designed in response to a customer enquiry in the cheese industry to lift, transport and rotate wheels of cheese in confined spaces.

Constructed from stainless steel, this wheel and roll handling solution is suitable for clean room high

care environments such as the food processing industries.

The rotating clamp attachment is smaller and narrower than the standard clamp with a new bespoke rotation system for the very small clamp attachment, with locking indents to hold fixed positions at pre-set angles, Packline explained. The cheese is stored on racks to mature and turned 180 degrees. The cheese is transported to a washing area to be washed at a 45-degree angle on both sides of the cheese. For information on the EZ Lift, contact Ultrasource LLC in the US, at www.ultrasourceusa.com.

NZ Start-Up Using Molecular Farming Process To Make Animal-Free Proteins

Auckland, New Zealand—Miruku, a New Zealand-based food company developing advanced dairy proteins in plants, has emerged from stealth to announce an oversubscribed \$2.4 million seed investment round.

Miruku is developing animal-free proteins in its own labs and greenhouses and through farmer, corporate, and research and development partnerships. Its proprietary molecular farming platform is designed for scale and implementation across geographies.

Miruku said it employs a molecular farming process at the frontier of applied plant science which recruits plant cells as mini-factories to produce proteins, fats and sugars that have, until now, only been sourced from animals.

The company said its technology will enable the development

of traditional dairy products like cheese and yogurt and open the possibility of new product formats.

Miruku was established in 2020 by CEO Amos Palfreyman, a leader in New Zealand's future foods landscape and a former dairy industry executive; Ira Bing, a technology and life science investor; Prof. Harjinder Singh, a leading expert in milk protein science and technology; and food technology and molecular agronomy innovator Prof. Oded Shoseyov.

"Miruku's breakthrough plant technologies hold potential to produce animal-free milk proteins cost-effectively," Shoseyov explained. "Plants lie at the bottom of the food chain. Miruku cuts

out the middlemen (cows) which convert plant energy to proteins.

"Instead, Miruku produces its proteins directly in the plants themselves," Shoseyov continued. "This is an elegant approach to energy and production efficiency and this efficiency is better for soil, water and atmosphere. Plant-based food systems with improved protein functionality can contribute materially to balancing human and ecological needs."

The investment round was headed by New Zealand venture capital fund Movac and includes Asia Pacific investor Better Bite Ventures, Colorado-based Ahimsa Foundation, and NZ Growth Capital Partners via its Aspire fund.

"We share a vision that applies the sharp edge of applied science to agronomy and food tech, at scale, with global partners," Palfreyman

commented.

"Miruku has a world-class team with standout capability across agronomy, food technology, molecular biology, and computational botany," said Movac partner Mark Stuart. "In addition to unique capabilities in protein innovation and plant biotechnology, the company is forming remarkable big corporate and research partnerships that reinforce its model for scale and impact. Miruku is doing this through collaboration with exceptional innovators in dairy science in both Israel and New Zealand."

"Miruku's founding team has the powerful mix of scientific expertise and entrepreneurial drive. I am looking forward to seeing the positive impact the Miruku technology will have on our food system," said Michal Klar of Better Bite Ventures.

BelGioioso Expands In-Store Fresh Mozzarella Promo

Green Bay, WI—BelGioioso Mozza Palooza™, an in-store Fresh Mozzarella promotion, has expanded for 2022 with a promotional four-week program available to retailers nationwide from mid-June through August, BelGioioso Cheese announced recently.

The campaign includes an online website complete with inspirational recipes including Fresh Mozzarella and Burrata. In-store point-of-sale kits with QR codes driving consumers to the Mozza Palooza page are also available.

Retailers can choose a custom mix of items including pearls, balls, sliced Mozzarella and Burrata for their in-store promotions. Mozza Palooza sign-up is available until Apr. 12 through BelGioioso Cheese sales representatives.

"Retailers create a total deli department event to maximize Fresh Mozzarella sales during the prime summer selling season," said Sean Moran, VP sales, BelGioioso Cheese. "Previous events have driven a 50 to 60 percent increase in Fresh Mozzarella and Burrata sales for many participants."

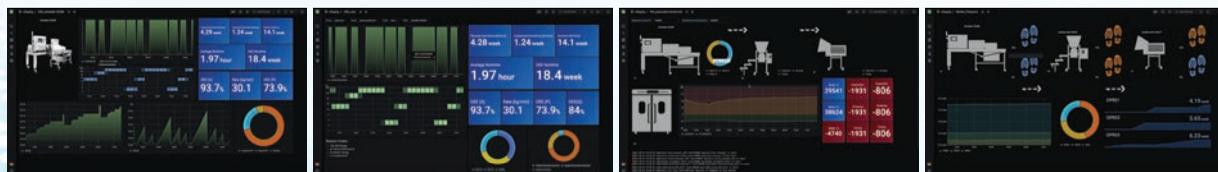
"Summer tomato season is the perfect time for promoting America's favorite Fresh Mozzarella brand," said Umberto Marconi, VP marketing, BelGioioso Cheese. "Building displays, integration into prepared deli foods and cross-merchandising in the produce department transforms multiple departments into a Mozza Palooza extravaganza."

For more information, visit www.belgioioso.com.

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Taco Bell Rolls Out Dairy-Based Creamer, Coffee Drink With Dairy Checkoff Support

Rosemont, IL—Taco Bell restaurants nationwide have rolled out a dairy-based coffee creamer and a new coffee drink with support from dairy checkoff food scientists, according to Dairy Management, Inc. (DMI).

The vanilla creamer replaces a non-dairy product and will become a permanent offering at more than 7,500 Taco Bell locations in the US, DMI said.

The shelf-stable creamer also was used in the checkoff-created Pineapple Whip Freeze and Island Berry Freeze beverages that previously appeared on Taco Bell's menu.

Taco Bell consumers who order 12-ounce hot or 20-ounce iced coffee drinks have the option of adding the creamer. The DMI product research team worked with the checkoff-funded Midwest Dairy Center at the University of Minnesota to create the creamer in 2020.

The creamer is also featured in the Cinnabon Delights® Coffee, which is available at participating US locations for a limited time. DMI dairy scientist Kimber Lew

led the creation workstream and said it demonstrates the chain's desire to grow its breakfast business.

"We're really excited for this because we are putting a lot of emphasis into getting consumers to think more about starting their mornings at Taco Bell," Lew said. "Creating a coffee that has dairy and the iconic, craveable Cinnabon Delights flavor was a no-brainer."

Lew said the creamer and Cinnabon Delights Coffee are further proof of Taco Bell's openness to menu innovations featuring dairy.

"This demonstrates how Taco Bell is leaning in on dairy in multiple avenues," Lew said. "It's not just about cheese and reduced-fat sour cream use; it's about exploring other ways to elevate the consumer experience with the deliciousness of dairy. This shows the strength of our partnership."

Heather Mottershaw, vice president of pipeline innovation and product development for Taco Bell, said the additions greatly enhance the chain's breakfast menu.

"These fit very well with our strategy of growing our breakfast business and offering a premium coffee drink and creamer made from dairy," Mottershaw said. "We are very grateful for the checkoff's continued support to lead the way with dairy innovation that resonates very well with our consumers."

DBI Initiatives Author Baldwin Visits Grant Recipient Cedar Grove Cheese



US Sen. Tammy Baldwin visited and toured Cedar Grove Cheese in Plain, WI, last month and discussed USDA's Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives and other topics. Among those attending the event were, left to right: Tom Guerin, CDR; John Umhoefer, WCMA; Sen. Baldwin; and Bob Wills, Cedar Grove Cheese.

Plain, WI—US Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), who authored the legislation to create the Dairy Business Innovation (DBI) Initiatives that was included in the 2018 farm bill, toured Cedar Grove Cheese factory here last month.

Cedar Grove Cheese is a recipient of a grant from the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA), a partnership between the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) and the University of Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research (CDR).

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance is funded through the Dairy Business Innovation Initiative.

Last November, Cedar Grove Cheese was named as one of four recipients of DBIA Dairy Industry Impact grants.

These grants are designed to attract medium to large dairy companies to develop an innovative idea or tackle a challenge with the potential to advance the dairy industry.

With the help of its grant, Cedar Grove Cheese will scale up a model, liquid waste-to-fertilizer

system for small dairy processor. This solution will convert wash water from Cedar Grove's cheese plant into marketable fertilizer, which is expected to be relatively affordable for small and medium sized dairy plants.

Cedar Grove's project will result in recovery and marketing of nutrients from the bio-solids remaining after treatment of cheese plant wash waste.

The common elements of technology and results will be shared with other food processors.

During her visit, Baldwin met with Bob Wills, Cedar Grove's owner and cheese maker; John Umhoefer, executive director, WCMA; Tom Guerin, research program manager, University of Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research; and Andy Hatch, owner and cheese maker at Uplands Cheese, Dodgeville, WI, among others, and discussed a number of topics of importance to the cheese and dairy industries, including, among others, labeling of plant-based dairy alternatives and geographical indications (GIs) for cheese.

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Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano Launches Digital Tracking Technology

Reggio Emilia, Italy—The The Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano (CFPR) this week announced its partnership with Kaasmerk Matec and p-Chip Corporation to launch a line of food-safe and secure traceability digital labels for its Parmigiano Reggiano cheese wheels.

The new technology will deliver previously unseen levels of traceability, inventory tracking and control, product authentication, quality-assurance testing, product serialization, and consumer safety, according to the CFPR.

“Since the establishment of our Consortium in 1934, we have worked to convey the value of our product globally and distinguish it from similar-sounding products on the market that do not meet our strict requirements for production and area of origin,” said Nicola Bertinelli, president of the CFPR. “By being the first to incorporate these secure digital labels onto our cheese wheels, we can continue to ensure consumer safety, bringing the traceability and the authentication of our products to meet industry 4.0 technological targets.”

Since 2002, a casein label with a unique and sequential alphanumeric code has been applied to each Parmigiano Reggiano cheese wheel, but now p-Chip is launching a new line of secure, digital tracking labels for the industry, and the CFPR said it is breaking new ground by embedding these p-Chip micro transponders into 2D codes, QR codes, and/or data-matrix codes.

The result is an innovative, food-safe digital tag that takes CFPR’s food safety and security a step beyond the government requirement, the Consortium stated.

Kaasmerk and p-Chip partnered to complete this program for a p-Chip device integrated into casein label, an industry-standard, protein-based type of food/cheese identification method. The innovation combines food-safe casein labels with the p-Chip micro transponder — a blockchain crypto-anchor that creates a digital “twin” for physical items. This scannable new food tag is smaller than a grain of salt and highly durable, delivering next-generation visibility and traceability to the Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano.

“We’re pleased to partner with a leading global brand as Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano is, to bring world-class, disruptive tracing technology to the food industry,” said Joe Wagner, CEO of p-Chip Corporation.

“I look forward to working with Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano as they realize the full potential this technology holds for their business,” Wagner added.

Over the past two years, the Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano said it has conducted extensive testing of the p-Chip/Kaasmerk Matec casein label and approved the label’s technical use for the authentication and digital traceability of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese.

“For more than 100 years, we’ve worked with artisan cheese producers to deliver casein cheesemarks that provide an invaluable level of protection for their recipes, helping to safeguard the passion and craftsmanship they bring to production of their cheeses,” said Winus Sloot, managing director of Kaasmerk Matec.

Kaasmerk is pleased to collaborate with p-Chip to develop this smart digital label that will track and trace the Consorzio del Parmigiano Reggiano’s bulk cheeses from start to finish, “providing additional protection and to both CFPR and consumers, as the label is highly resistant to tampering,” Sloot continued.

Kaasmerk Matec is a leading producer of casein cheesemarks (both hard and flexible) in Europe. Cheesemarks are applied on the cheese at the beginning of the cheese production process. They serve as certificates of authenticity that help cheese producers protect their investments and identities and provide confidence to consumers that they are receiving the composition, taste, and quality they expect, the company noted.

The casein cheesemarks also provide transparency and traceability in every stage of the cheese production and distribution process, Kaasmerk noted.

The new smart digital food labels will be added to 100,000 CFPR bulk cheese wheels in the second quarter of 2022.

This represents the final phase of large-scale “testing” before evaluating the possibility of extending this technology to the entire production of Parmigiano Reggiano.

All producers of Parmigiano Reggiano are members of the Consortium, globally engaged in the defense of typicality and in the promotion and enhancement of Parmigiano Reggiano.

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Cheese Crisps

(Continued from p. 1)

Ranch, Sour Cream & Onion, Nacho, other “standard Nineties stuff,” David Scharfman said.

The product was successful, and the timing was perfect – right at the start of the high-protein, low-carbohydrate Atkins Diet boom.

“It was the top selling snack in the Atkins catalog,” Scharfman said. “It was exponential growth three years in a row.”

Less than a year later, we invested in more oven capacity and as quickly as it began, “the Atkins fad died,” Scharfman said. After that, our retail presence cratered. Effectively, the end of the Atkins craze almost bankrupted the company.

The fresh cheese side of our business wasn’t that big at the time, Scharfman said. With all the inventory buy-backs and retail issues, we weren’t large enough to handle that type of dramatic swing.

Before “Just the Cheese” launched, Paul Scharfman had patented his idea for baked cheese; patents last for 17 years and in the mid-2010s-plus, the patent lapsed.

“We weren’t really doing anything with it at the time – just some legacy customers, but nothing crazy,” Scharfman said. “We

weren’t protecting it (the patent), because we thought there wasn’t really anything to protect.”

It was then that other large cheese manufacturers started creating their own baked cheese products, Scharfman said.

One outfit was already making pretzels and cookies, he continued. For them, it was like, “We have all these ovens – can we make something else?”

Washington state’s EnWave Corporation found early success with its Moon Cheese brand.

“Moon Cheese had their own microwave technology, and did a phenomenal job branding their product to get trials, novel concepts, entertaining names, and partnered with probably the perfect strategic channel – Starbucks,” Scharfman said.

These companies were already established when my wife Connie and I were at a Stop & Shop in Stanford, CT, Scharfman said. That’s when we realized “this is now a thing again.”

“There were two big discussion points. The one I got stuck on really early was that you have to make the cheese taste good. You cannot do this with artificial flavors anymore,” Scharfman said. “If you can’t, then it’s not worth doing.”

The other factor was whether to do bars or crisps, he continued. Everyone agreed we should do bars, because that’s the easiest point of differentiation.

Then we worked with the cheese makers to create a product that’s 100 percent cheese, and tastes good, Scharfman said. My big thing was single ingredient.

Scharfman’s revamped Just the Cheese was available on Amazon in January 2018.

At the same time, my wife nailed the nascent diet trend called “keto,” Scharfman said. It just went up and up and up for the next three years.

“We had the perfect product for the perfect time in the perfect channel,” Scharfman said. “Because keto was so new, retailers didn’t really care about it. Retailers are typically slow to adjust to new things.”

Our Aged Cheddar bars were Amazon’s Choice for keto snacks for about a year, he said. If I tried to launch at retail or coffee shops, I’d have never gotten in.

“For that first year, e-commerce was huge for us. It proved we were legit, got us a market, and provided enough cash flow so that I didn’t have to deal with distributors and retailer charge-backs,” he said.

“Dealing with Amazon is its own separate animal, but I can control my product, my inventory, my promos,” he said. “Four years later, everybody’s on Amazon.”

New Players, Unique Technologies

One of the latest companies to add cheese crisps to its product portfolio is Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery of Ellsworth, WI.

Made by freeze-drying its famous cheese curds, Ellsworth debuted its Cheddar Curd Crunchers last summer. The co-op’s Crunchers are keto-friendly, made from 100 percent natural cheese, and have 10 grams of protein.

“We’re always looking for new opportunities and innovations for the quality milk our patrons produce,” said Paul Bauer, CEO and manager, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery.

“The one I got stuck on really early was that you have to make the cheese taste good. You cannot do this with artificial flavors anymore. If you can’t, then it’s not worth doing.”

— David Scharfman,
Specialty Cheese

“The driving force for this product was export opportunities,” Bauer said. “While here in the Midwest we have access to fresh cheese and refrigeration, that’s not always the case in other parts of the world.”

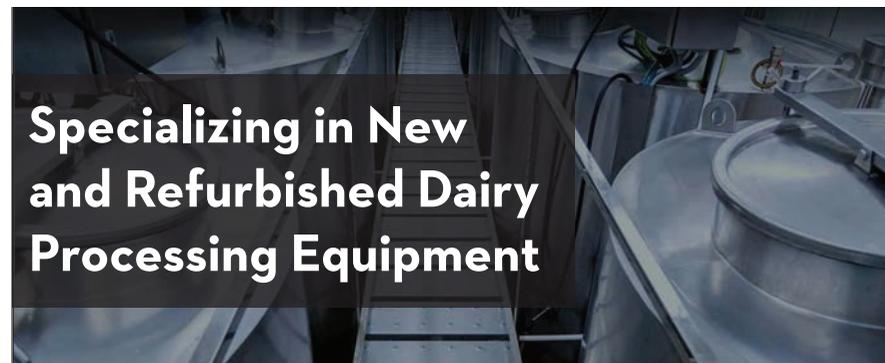
China was a target market for this product, Bauer said. Shipping perishable cheese products is expensive. We knew the product could also be popular in the US.

“It’s an appealing product for those who enjoy low-carb and sugar-free snacks,” he continued. “For those who need a snack that can travel with them, like hikers, bikers, and other sports enthusiasts, Crunchers are an ideal grab-and-go snack.”

Katie Nahoum, senior vice president of marketing for Whisps Snacks, said the US cheese crisp category exploded about six years ago, and Whisps has enjoyed significant growth since then.

“We’ve found our consumers tend to follow clean label or low carb diets, but we also have families and everyday salty snackers

• See **Cheese Crisps**, p. 39



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Cheese Crisps

(Continued from p. 38)

that purchase Whisps,” Nahoum said.

While household penetration for cheese crisp brands are still single digits, Nahoum said once consumers discover cheese crisps, “they fall in love with the taste and quality, finding themselves snacking throughout the day or using cheese crisps in their recipes.”

Category Sales, Competition Grow

Several factors can be attributed to the growth of 100 percent cheese snacks, according to Bridgette Kovacevich, brand manager for Moon Cheese.

“Consumers continue to seek cleaner, healthier products to meet their lifestyles,” Kovacevich said. “Snackers tend to be exploratory in searching for what’s new.”

Distribution continues to expand for the entire category, which means that consumers are looking for a healthier alternative to satisfy their craving for crunchy, salty snacks, Kovacevich said.

“We tell our consumers to clear their minds of any preconceived notions when tasting Cheese Curd Crunchers for the first time. Think chip or cheese crackers, not cheese curds, when you try them.”

—Paul Bauer,
Ellsworth Creamery

Moon Cheese consumers tend to be educated and fairly affluent, Kovacevich said.

“This category also leans toward the health-inclined – particularly those on the keto diet – due to the positive nutritional content,” she continued.

Moon Cheese works as a snack on its own, but we also have many consumers who use it as a mix-in for soups and a no-carb alternative to a salad topper, Kovacevich said.

“Competitive brands have been launching new flavors, since they are generally uniform in the type of cheese they use,” Kovacevich said. “Parmesan cheese is a common cheese type that’s used in competitive products.”

Moon Cheese is different in that its core product line features five distinct types of cheese: Cheddar, White Cheddar, Parmesan, Pepper Jack and Gouda, “so there’s something for every cheese lover,” Kovacevich said.

Just last month, Moon Cheese debuted its new Crunchy Cheese Sticks at Natural Products Expo West. The new line includes five flavors, with creative names like “Wild White Cheddar” and “Kick It Up A Nacho.”

Recent trends we’re seeing in the cheese crisp category include low-carb, high-protein and single ingredient offerings, as well as bright, bold packaging that mimics the fun of less healthy, salty snacks, added Whisps’ Katie Nahoum.

Getting the Technology Right

Using the right equipment and make procedure is critical in creating quality cheese snacks.

“Cheese crisps are very hard to produce,” said Ellsworth’s Paul Bauer. “It’s why many companies use flow agents like cassava flour in the manufacturing process.”

“We’re really proud that we pushed through research and development to solve some of those challenges, and that our portfolio today of cheese crisps remains 100 percent artisanal cheese and nothing else as the base of all products,” Bauer continued.

“We had to work with a third-party freeze drier and just kept trying and testing, making adjustments for different curd sizes and freshness until we perfected the process,” Bauer said.

Getting the curds as fresh as possible, and then having the perfect freeze is a combination of art and science, he said.

“In addition to the production challenges, we also learned a lot about our consumers throughout the process,” he continued.

“Cheese Curd Crunchers are sometimes too big of a leap for die-hard fresh cheese curd fans. They can’t believe they don’t require refrigeration,” Bauer said.

Crunchers are best at room temperature, and if you’re expecting

it to taste anything like a fresh cheese curd, you’re in for a surprise, he said.

“We tell our consumers to clear their minds of any preconceived notions when tasting Cheese Curd Crunchers for the first time,” Bauer continued. “Think chip or cheese crackers, not cheese curds, when you try them.”

When Moon Cheese launched, there was nothing else like it in the snack category, added Kovacevich.

“Now, there’s constantly new brands entering the 100 percent cheese category,” she continued.

Moon Cheese is a proprietary product made from parent company EnWave’s Radiant Energy Vacuum (REV™) technology, which dries the cheese, versus the baking process of our competition, resulting in more of a pop-able ball shape product, Kovacevich said.

“There was a significant amount of research and development upfront to ensure that the cheese dries exactly right in the REV platform,” Kovacevich said. “We wanted to make sure the product not only tasted great, but gave the perfect amount of crunch.”

“Once we found the right formula, we were able to lock-in the exact process so that Moon Cheese can consistently provide the flavor and texture that our consumers have grown to love,” she said.

Moon Cheese also uses only premium cheese, Kovacevich said. It makes a significant difference in creating the best crunchy cheese snack.

The baseline of using 100 percent real cheese to create a quality



The Specialty Cheese Company was a driving force behind Atkins-friendly, high-fat, low-carb snacking. The product continues to have a dedicated following 20 years later.

product is critical, market leaders agree.

“Part of the romance of cheese crisps is its simplicity: 100 percent pure cheese that you grate and bake,” Nahoum said. “But the reality of making it is much harder; not all cheeses bake equally. For example, they can get oily or bitter,” she said.

“Our Cheddar in particular required two years of research and development where we trialed dozens of Cheddars, only to discover we needed to work with our master cheese maker to create a custom recipe that is only available to us,” Nahoum said. “The result is a perfect light, airy and savory bite every time.”

Flavor, Packaging Innovations

While cheese crisps is a relatively young category, it’s reaching the point where we can expect to start

• See **Cheese Crisps**, p. 50

Looking Forward

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Listeria Survives

Continued from p. 15

chilled foods with extended shelf lives.

The inactivation of *L. monocytogenes* in soft cheeses, which have growth-permissive water activity and pH values, has been mainly attributed to the production of organic acids by LAB and pH reduction along storage.

In this study, the mechanism of the interaction between both microorganisms in soft cheese at 4 degrees C is not associated with the decrease in pH, since this physicochemical parameter remained almost constant along storage.

Rather, the survival behavior observed in this study for *L. monocytogenes* may be induced by the production of metabolites with antilisterial activity by LAB, such as bacteriocins, or by the exhaustion of nutrients in cheese due to the consumption of carbohydrates by starter cultures during fermentation.

In this study, salt reduction did not affect the water activity and pH of soft cheeses, which could

partially explain the similar levels of *L. monocytogenes* inactivation observed during refrigerated storage of low-salt and regular soft cheeses.

The levels of *L. monocytogenes* also declined over time in low-salt soft cheeses stored at 22 degrees.

A gradual reduction of *L. monocytogenes* occurred during storage of raw sheep milk cured cheese at both temperatures evaluated. The pathogen could be detected in cured cheeses up to 185 days of storage at 4 degrees C and up to 76 days of storage at 22 degrees C.

Higher survival capacity of *L. monocytogenes* in cured cheeses stored under refrigeration compared to cheeses stored at room temperatures has been previously reported, the study pointed out. Besides the faster consumption of cell resources during storage at room temperature in comparison with refrigerated storage mentioned for soft cheeses, the lower survival capacity of *L. monocytogenes* in cured cheeses stored at 22 degrees C could be attributed to the reduction of water activity noted on samples, which was not

observed in samples stored at 4 degrees C.

On the other hand, the use of antimicrobials such as lysozyme and potassium nitrate in the cured raw sheep milk cheese could have been related to the survival patterns of *L. monocytogenes* during storage, the study noted. Some studies have indicated that lysozyme combined with other antimicrobials such as nisin is effective against *L. monocytogenes* in matured cheese. Its application in active packaging films is also reported to prevent *L. monocytogenes* growth in cheese at refrigeration temperatures.

Although in this study a reduction on *L. monocytogenes* levels rather than growth was observed in both cheese types evaluated, the pathogen could survive for long storage periods at room temperature and under refrigeration, which is a "matter of concern" for dairy processors, since the exposure to sub-lethal environmental stresses may induce adaptive responses in *L. monocytogenes*, resulting in cells with increased resistance to subsequent severe stresses, the study noted.

Summer Meals

Continued from p. 11

of the utmost importance," said Kevin L. Sauer, the 2021-2022 President of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Without crucial waivers in place, more children will be at risk for food insecurity and schools will no longer have flexibilities they badly need to operate successful, financially solvent programs."

"The sooner the USDA is authorized to extend child nutrition waivers, the sooner schools and community organizations can plan meal programs for summer and next school year," said Lisa Davis, senior vice president of Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign. "Schools and community meal providers continue to face extreme pandemic-related challenges like supply chain disruptions, rising food prices and staffing shortages.

"Without crucial waivers in place, more children will be at risk for food insecurity and schools will no longer have flexibilities they badly need to operate successful, financially solvent programs."

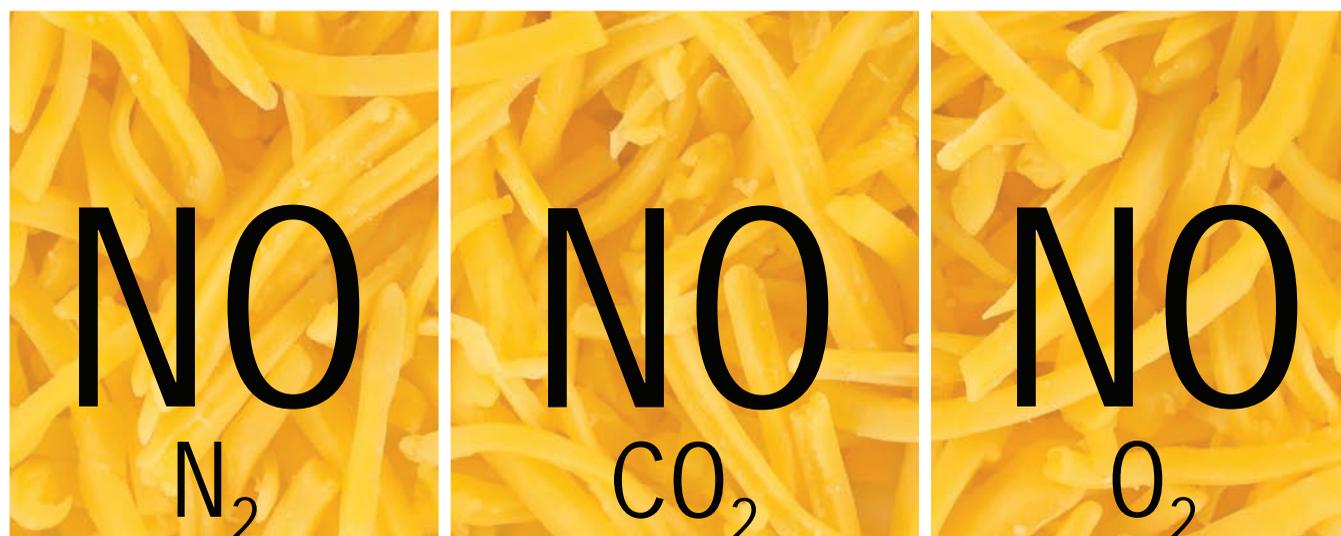
—Kevin L. Sauer, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

"Without waivers, they will have a difficult time responding to these challenges in real-time, impacting their ability to safely and effectively reach kids with the nutrition they need and stunting their ability to transition to normal operations as those challenges subside," Davis continued.

"Nearly 12 million children struggle to know where their next meal will come from, disrupting their ability to reach their full potential. Fortunately, child nutrition waivers have helped provide year-round access to much-needed nutrition," said Vince Hall, chief government relations officer, Feeding America.

If the waivers aren't extended, millions of children will lose that access, with Black, Latino, and Native American children, and children in rural areas, being hit hardest," said Vince Hall, chief government relations officer, Feeding America.

"Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization, applauds the introduction of this bill to extend child nutrition waivers, continuing this critical lifeline for children," Hall said. "We urge Congress to act immediately to ensure our children don't face hunger this summer and beyond."



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Rumiano Cheese Completes Transition To 100% Organic Food Brand

Crescent City, CA—Rumiano Cheese Company announced this week its transition to a 100 percent organic food brand.

Effective Friday, Rumiano's entire dairy portfolio is USDA Certified Organic, in addition to being American Humane Certified and Non-GMO Project Verified. Rumiano sources its organic ingredients from 27 small, family-owned farms in Northern California.

The company also announced the launch of a new direct-to-consumer e-commerce website featuring a premium selection of organic, non-GMO cheeses and gourmet gift boxes.

Created for busy and sustainability-minded consumers, the new online shop is up and running at *RumianoCheese.com*. Customers can shop a variety of curated cheese collections and gift boxes, or they can create their own five-pack "Build a Box" cheese collection and have it delivered with two-day shipping.

With Build a Box, customers can mix and match different cheese styles and choose from over 20 items from Rumiano's Redwood Coast and Family Organics lines.

"Very few large cheese producers sell directly to consumers," said Joe Baird, CEO of Rumiano Cheese Company.

"As the demand for home delivery continues to grow, we are proud to offer this convenient online solution to our loyal customers and to be expanding our reach across the country," Rumiano said.

As part of the company's commitment to sustainability, all shipping materials are 100 percent recyclable and made from recycled materials; products are packed in compostable, recycled crinkle paper with reusable ice packs.

In tandem with Rumiano's new direct-to-consumer retail platform, the company's organic cheese products are available in over 1,500 grocery and natural foods stores across the country, including selective Whole Foods, Costco, Natural Grocers and Sprouts.

The company's products are also distributed internationally to customers in Mexico and Asia.

Rumiano Cheese is the oldest family-owned cheese company in California. Four generations and 102-years later, its iconic, award-winning California Dry Jack cheese remains a flagship cheese. In 2011, Rumiano Family Organics became the first certified non-GMO organic cheese in the world.

Online purchasing and more information is available at *RumianoCheese.com*.

Australian Milk Price Initiative Runs First Regional Milk Spot Markets

Melbourne, Australia—A breakthrough in milk price transparency and buyer competition was made last month, according to Australian Dairy Farmers (ADF), when the Australian Milk Price Initiative (AMPI) ran its first regional milk spot markets.

The market was launched on Mar. 3 on the Mercari platform, which is owned and operated by Mercari Pty Ltd. Various bids across the three regions of Victoria were made with prices exceeding \$9.00 per kilogram of milk solids for the spot market. Individual months in the new season traded above \$8.00 per kilogram of milk solids.

Regional spot markets deliver the monthly price transparency necessary to enable a forward hedging market like those seen in New Zealand, the US and Europe, according to ADF. Such markets enable dairy farmers and processors to lock in prices up to three years forward for some of their milk.

"There is no more transparent price signal than an open market price," ADF president Rick Gladigau said. "AMPI will improve risk management across the supply chain with back-to-back pricing from customer to processor to farmer, providing the ability to lock in margins across the chain. Better margin and risk management enables better planning, which, in turn, drives investment and growth across the supply chain. More investment in the supply chain means a strong dairy industry."

In 2019 the Australian government provided ADF with an election pledge of \$560,000 towards the development of a milk trading platform.

This initiative was key to the Australian Dairy Plan's commitment to deliver new measures to increase transparency and help manage market risk, including the establishment of a functioning milk price market.

"While the launch of the AMPI is an important step, the work is not over yet," Gladigau said. "Effort is required in the future to ensure appropriate governance and operations and there is a well-designed education or extension program delivered to farmers and processors on how to participate in this or other trading initiatives and how this makes a difference to their risk management and bottom line."



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Strengthening GIs

(Continued from p. 1)

Increased online protection: The new framework will increase the protection of GIs on the internet, namely as regards sales via online platforms and the protection against bad-faith registration and use of GIs in the domain name system.

More sustainability: As a direct follow-up of the EU's Farm to Fork strategy, it will be possible for producers to valorize their actions regarding social, environmental or economic sustainability in their product specifications by laying down the related requirements. This will contribute to better protecting natural resources and rural economies, securing local plant varieties and animal breeds, conserving the landscape

of the production area and improving animal welfare. This could also lead to appealing consumers who want to lower their impact on the environment.

Empowered producers' groups: EU member countries will have to recognize GI producers' groups at their request. Recognized groups will be empowered to manage, enforce and develop their GIs, notably by having access to anti-counterfeiting authorities and customs in all member countries.

The proposal also re-conducts the quality scheme for traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG) and the use of the term "mountain product" as an optional quality term.

Member countries remain in charge of the enforcement at the national level, while the Commission remains responsible for the

registration, amendment and cancellation of all registrations. The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) will provide technical support in the scrutiny process to help speed up the procedures.

The Commission and EUIPO have been cooperating on geographical indications for the last four years, during which EUIPO contributed to assessing around 1,300 GI applications and created GIview, a new search database for all protected names, linked to the EU register of geographical indications.

Thursday's proposal reflects the result of a broad consultation process, the Commission noted. An inception impact assessment was published in October 2020, followed by a public consultation in early 2021, as well as targeted con-

sultations with member countries and relevant organizations in the field.

"Geographical indications represent the wealth and diversity of our European culinary heritage. By proposing today a strengthening and further harmonization of our legal framework, we want to boost the production of traditional quality products," said EU Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski.

"This will benefit rural economies across the Union and contribute to preserving local traditions and natural resources," Wojciechowski continued. "It will further protect the global reputation of EU agri-food products."

While the proposed GI regulation provides some encouraging elements with respect to a more robust protection and controls of GIs, in particular in the domain names environment, the attempt to define the concepts of evocation and the generic status of terms might result in limiting GI protection, according to oriGIn EU, the European branch of the GI global alliance.

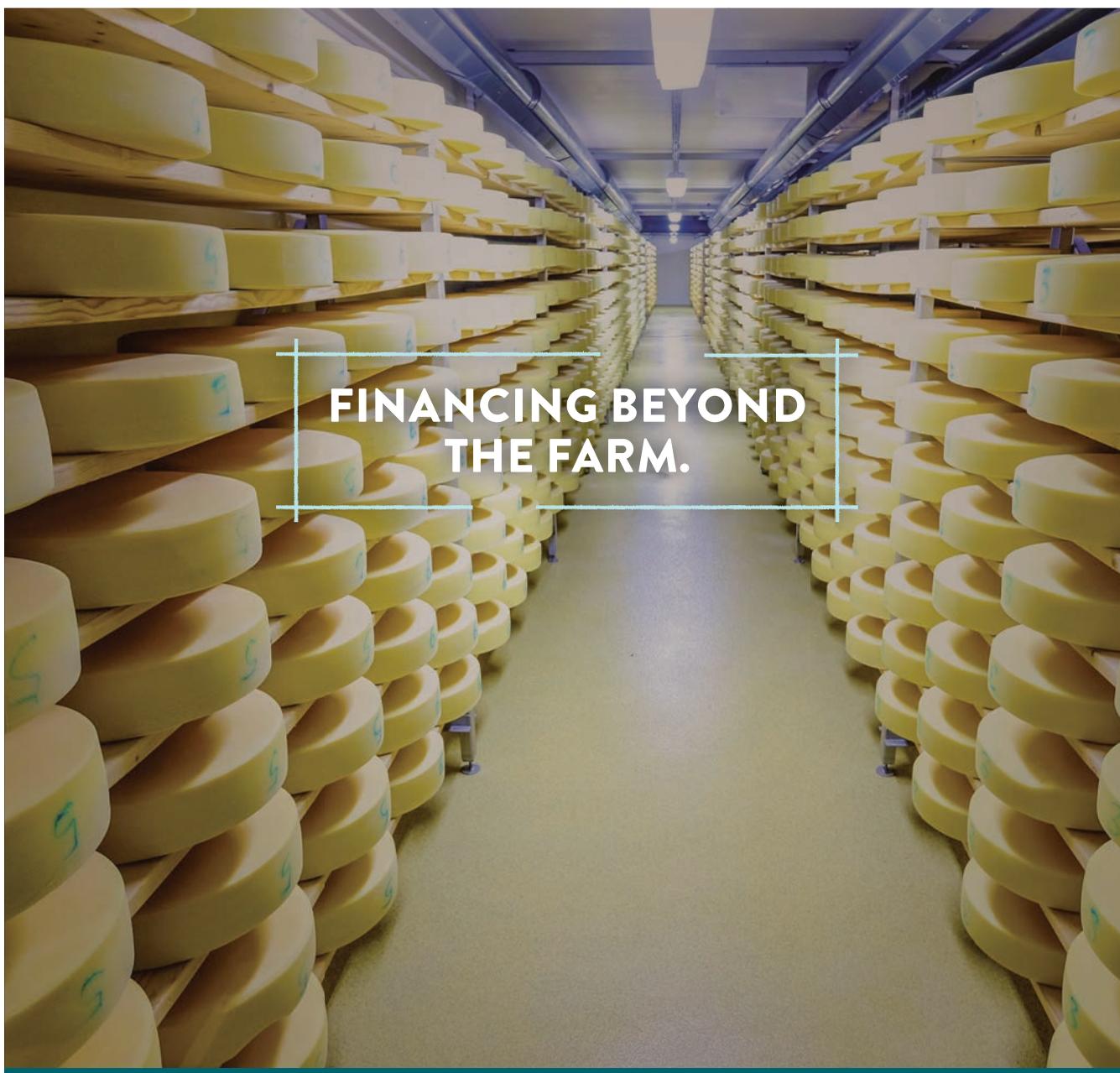
Likewise, other provisions do not go in the right direction recently set forth by the reform of the Common Market Organization and of Regulation 1151/2012, oriGIn EU said. First, oriGIn would have expected stronger proposals to support the strategic role of GIs and more ambition in the recognition of powers and prerogatives of groups, which are the core of the EU system.

Moreover, oriGIn EU regrets the complexity of the procedures which might result from the proposal, as the simplification of the system is one of its main priorities. While remaining responsible for decision-making on GI registrations, amendments and cancellations, the Commission proposes to carry out the management of the system in collaboration with the EUIPO, without explaining the powers and responsibilities given to it.

This might lead to further delays in the process and the loss of centrality of the Commission.

Finally, oriGIn EU noted that the proposal lacks a clear vision on the future of GIs. The Commission is calling for several delegated powers, which would bypass the two EU co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, to decide, at a later stage, on strategic issues such as sustainability.

"In light of this, oriGIn EU looks forward to working with the members of the European Parliaments and the member states, as well as the EC, for a very much needed and clear improvement of the legislative proposal, which is crucial for the future of the sector," said Charles Deparis, President of oriGIn EU.



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USDA Now Accepting Applications For Value-Added Producer Grant Program

Supplemental Funding For Local Ag Market Program Also Announced

Washington—USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS) is now accepting applications for the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program.

A total of \$19.75 million is currently available in fiscal year 2022, including about \$2.75 million in COVID-19 relief funds. The agency may also utilize any funding that becomes available through enactment of the fiscal 2022 appropriations.

The objective of the VAPG program is to assist viable independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based businesses in starting or expanding value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added agricultural products.

Grants will be awarded competitively for either planning or working capital projects directly related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added products.

Examples of planning activities include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans for processing and marketing the proposed value-added product. Examples of working capital expenses include processing costs, marketing and advertising expenses, and some inventory and salary expenses.

Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the end goals of the program.

All proposals must demonstrate economic viability and sustainability to compete for funding.

Funds will be awarded in application scoring rank order. COVID-19 relief funds will be utilized first until exhausted and then the agency will continue making awards with the additional fiscal 2021 and fiscal 2022 funds.

COVID-19 relief funds may include a reduced cost share match requirement of 10 percent of the grant amount. The other available funds have a statutory cost share match requirement of 100 percent of the grant amount. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or eligible in-kind contributions.

Completed paper applications must be submitted by May 2, 2022. Electronic applications are permitted via www.grants.gov only and must be received by Apr. 25, 2022. Application materials are available at www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants.

Meanwhile, USDA on Tuesday announced supplemental American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP).

The program will receive a total of \$130 million in supplemental ARP Act funding to promote competition and create more and better markets for local and regional food producers by expanding and strengthening opportunities to sell to institutions, such as universities, hospitals, and settings operated by local, tribal, and state governments.

The supplemental ARP funding is divided into \$65 million for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 each.

In fiscal 2022, LAMP will receive a total of \$97 million in competitive grant funding to help local and regional food entities develop, coordinate and expand producer-to-consumer marketing, local and regional food market and local food enterprises. Of that \$97 million, LAMP's Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP) will receive \$57 million and the Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP) will receive \$40 million.

FMLFPP is implemented through two funding opportunities: the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), which supports direct-to-consumer markets like farmers markets and CSAs, and the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), which supports indirect-to-consumer markets like

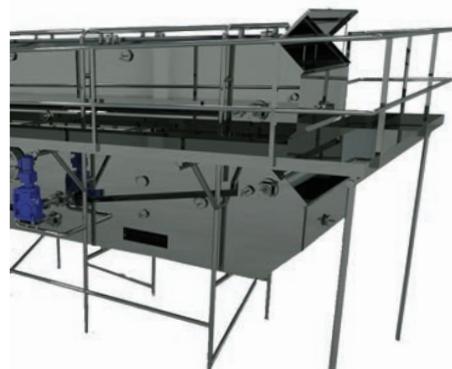
food hubs and value-added product incubators. Both programs require a 25 percent cash or in-kind match of the federal portion of the grant.

RFSP supports public-private partnerships that build and strengthen viability and resilience of local or regional food economies. Projects focus on increasing the availability of produced agricultural products and alleviating unnecessary administrative and technical barriers.

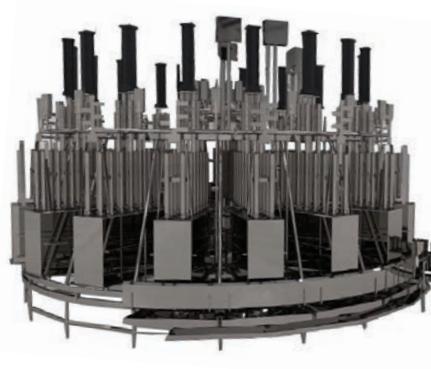
Projects can cover the planning and design of a local and regional food economy as well as implementing or expanding an existing one. This program requires 25 percent cash match of the federal portion of the grant.

Applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov by May 16, 2022.

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FDA Opens Application Portal For Lab Accreditation Bodies Interested In LAAF Program

Silver Spring, MD—The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has opened the application portal for accreditation bodies interested in participating in the Laboratory Accreditation for Analyses of Foods (LAAF) program.

Under the LAAF program, FDA will recognize accreditation bodies that will accredit food testing laboratories established in a final rule issued by FDA in December 2021.

The final rule established the LAAF program and outlined eligibility requirements that accreditation bodies and laboratories wishing to participate in the program will need to satisfy. The final rule also describes the procedures for how FDA will manage and oversee the program.

In certain circumstances, owners and consignees (persons with an ownership or consignment interest in the food product or environment that is the subject of food testing under the final rule) will be required to use a LAAF-accredited laboratory for food testing.

FDA will maintain an online public registry of recognized accredited bodies and LAAF-accredited laboratories.

Eligibility requirements for an accreditation body seeking FDA recognition include being a full member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperative (ILAC) and a signatory to the ILAC mutual recognition agreement (MRA) with demonstrated competence to ISO/IEC 17011:2017(E) with a scope of “Testing: ISO/IEC 17025:2017.”

The LAAF final rule applies to accreditation bodies and food testing laboratories that wish to participate in the program. Their participation is voluntary. In certain circumstances, owners and consignees will be required to use LAAF-accredited laboratories to conduct food testing.

Owners and consignees will be required to use a LAAF-accredited lab for the testing covered in the final rule only after a sufficient number of labs have been LAAF-accredited. FDA will issue a notice informing owners and consignees that sufficient laboratory capacity has been attained; compliance will be required six months after the notice.

FDA said the establishment of the LAAF program will improve its capacity to protect US consumers from unsafe food by improving the accuracy and reliability of certain food testing through the uniformity of standards and enhanced oversight of participating labs.

FDA To Study Consumer Responses To Front-Of-Package ‘Healthy’ Symbol

Silver Spring, MD—The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) intends to conduct two quantitative research studies to explore consumer responses to the draft front-of-package (FOP) symbols that companies could voluntarily use on a food product as a graphic representation of the nutrient content claim “healthy.”

FDA outlined this research in a 30-day procedural notice on the planned research that was published in Monday’s *Federal Register*.

The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) permits the use of label and labeling claims that characterize the level of a nutrient in a food when the

claims are made in accordance with FDA’s regulations, FDA noted. Such claims are referred to as “nutrient content claims.”

The agency has also issued regulations describing “implied nutrient content claims” as those that, among other things, suggest that a food, because of its nutrient content, may help consumers maintain healthy dietary practices. The rule finalizing these claims also described implied claims, in part, as those that imply that a food, because of its nutrient content, may be useful in achieving a total diet that conforms to current dietary recommendations.

FDA has determined that a

claim that a food, because of its nutrient content, may be useful in maintaining healthy dietary practices is clearly a claim that characterizes the level of nutrients in that food. The claim is essentially saying that the level of nutrients in the food is such that the food will contribute to good health.

To help advance its goals of improving dietary patterns and empowering consumers with information to make more informed choices, FDA is exploring the development of a graphic symbol to help companies communicate and consumers identify packaged food products that meet the agency’s definition of “healthy.”

The symbol would be a graphic representation of the nutrient con-

• See *Front-of-Pack*, p. 45



Front-of-Pack

Continued from p. 44

tent claim “healthy” and, like the implied nutrient content claim “healthy” itself, would be voluntary for packaged food companies. Companies could voluntarily use the symbol on products that meet the agency’s definition of “healthy.”

In 2019 and 2020, FDA conducted a review of the literature on front-of-package (FOP) nutrition-related symbols and conducted a series of focus groups to test symbol concepts and draft FOP symbols.

Now, the agency intends to conduct two consecutive quantitative research studies: a survey (Study 1) and an experimental study (Study 2) to explore consumer responses to the draft FOP symbols.

If results suggest the need, the symbols will be fine-tuned following the survey and again following the experimental study.

Pros, Cons Of ‘Healthy’ Symbol

Last May, FDA requested public comment on a proposed collection of information regarding the necessity and practical utility of collecting information on a voluntary symbol depicting the nutrient content claim “healthy” on packaged foods.

Some comments supported FDA’s proposed collection of information through three proposed quantitative consumer research studies. Some comments expressly supported FDA’s end research goal of enabling consumers to make informed dietary choices and construct healthful diets.

Some supported the agency’s intention to understand consumer responses to draft FOP symbols and gather data and other information to inform its thinking on a “healthy” symbol. Many comments indicated the importance of conducting this research before taking regulatory action on any symbol.

Comments supported conducting the research in conjunction with development of a proposed rule that would update the definition of “healthy” on food packages.

Other comments opposed FDA research on a “healthy” symbol. Some of these comments suggested the research is unnecessary, claiming that a single food is not “healthy” or “unhealthy,” that overall diet matters more than individual foods, or that symbols are industry marketing.

Some comments also questioned whether a “healthy” symbol would: have a positive and meaningful impact on improving health; or lead consumers to overconsume foods bearing the symbol.

In response to these comments, FDA said it intends to conduct this research now, in conjunction with further work on updating its definition of the claim “healthy,” and before taking regulatory action on any symbol.

“Our intended research will help us better understand how consumers might respond to and use a graphic symbol to identify packaged food products that meet our definition of ‘healthy,’” FDA stated. “This research will help address many points raised in the comments, such as how consumers might react to and understand a ‘healthy’ symbol and misinterpretations they may have.”

While FDA agrees that there are some symbols that may be used exclusively for industry marketing, companies could use any FDA “healthy” symbol that the agency develops and finalizes only when the product displaying the symbol meets FDA’s regulatory definition of “healthy.” This could help consumers make more informed dietary choices and construct healthy diets, FDA said.

The comments claiming that a single food is not “healthy” or “unhealthy” and that overall diet matters more than individual foods are commenting on the “healthy” claim itself, which FDA does not intend to test in this research.

Nonetheless, FDA noted that a “healthy” symbol, such as the ones FDA is exploring in its research, could help consumers choose food products as part of their overall diet that meet the agency’s regulatory definition of “healthy.”

Many comments expressed a preference for conducting the research after FDA revises its regulatory definition of “healthy,” as they wondered whether the definition of the claim could influence both the design and consumer understanding of the symbol.

In response to those comments, FDA noted that it has an existing definition for the claim “healthy,” and in September of 2016, the agency announced its intent to exercise enforcement discretion around some criteria for the claim.

However, as part of this data collection, FDA has included experimental conditions in which participants will read general information outlining the use of the claim “healthy” only for purposes of this study.

This will help FDA better understand how consumers might respond to the symbols the agency is proposing to test if participants understand a “healthy” definition, even if not necessarily an updated definition.

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New Product Section



New Dairy Products, Packaging, Promotions

Tillamook Introduces Maker's Reserve 2012 Extra Sharp White Cheddar

Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA) recently announced the release of Tillamook Maker's Reserve 2012 Extra Sharp White Cheddar as the newest 10-year-old vintage in its Maker's Reserve program.



Each year, TCCA introduces a 10-year and a three-year aged Extra Sharp White Cheddar into its specialty line.

These vintages join the existing lineup of 2016, 2017, and 2018 Tillamook Maker's Reserve cheeses.

To celebrate, TCCA has partnered with Truffle Shuffle, a company that specializes in interactive culinary experiences, to host a live virtual cooking class on April 10.

Steve Marko, TCCA's senior director of research and development, will guide attendees through a vertical tasting of Maker's Reserve Cheddars.

For more information, visit www.tillamook.com.

Beehive Cheese Adds Red Butte Hatch Chile Flavor To Aged Cheddar Lineup

The latest award-winning creation by Beehive Cheese Company, Unitah, UT, is an homage "to the American Southwest," the company reported.

Beehive's new Red Butte Hatch Chile starts with its Promontory Cheddar, rubbed with hatch chile paste infused with coriander spice. The result is a creamy, smoky flavor with a proper balance of heat.

It's made with cow's milk, and features exclusively organic ingredients on the rind. The cheese is also a gluten-friendly product.

Red Butte Hatch Chile is sold in 12-ounce wedges and five-pound quarter-wheels.

Beehive Cheese has also augmented its flavored Cheddar lineup with Queen Bee Porcini; Promontory Cheddar is rubbed with a fine powder of porcini mushrooms, and then aged.

Another favorite is Beehive's Pour Me A Slice – fully aged Promontory Cheddar infused with Basil Hayden's® Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey.

Visit www.beehivecheese.com.

Beecher's Finds Success With Frozen Entrees, Curds

Beecher's Handmade Cheese of Seattle and New York has dipped into a Midwestern staple with creation of its Plain and Market Herb Cheese Curds.

Beecher's Market Herb Cheese Curds feature a flavor blend of olive oil, garlic, rosemary and thyme.

The curds are packaged in 5-ounce tubs. Customers can also order a one-pound bag of Plain Cheese Curds, and products are seasonally available during the holidays.



Beecher's has also expanded its line frozen entrees, including the "World's Best Mac n' Cheese," Roasted Potatoes in Flagship Sauce, Street Corn and Cheese Curd Lasagna.

For more details, visit www.beechershandmadecheese.com.

Marin French Adds Golden Gate To Washed Rind Line

Inspired by the vibrant color of the Golden Gate Bridge, Marin French Cheese Company has added the new Golden Gate washed rind cheese to its artisan product portfolio.

Marin's triple crème cheese gets its color from being hand-washed with brine multiple times

throughout the 14-day aging process, allowing natural cultures in the coastal air to flourish.

Golden Gate is made in small batches with pasteurized milk from Holstein, Jersey and Guernsey cows pastured at North Bay dairies located near the creamery.

The new cheese is packaged in eight-ounce wedges and is available at select specialty retail stores across the US.

To buy cheese online, visit www.marinfrenchcheese.com.

Cabot Creates New Boxed Mac n' Cheese Line Made With Aged Cheddar

The retail boxed macaroni and cheese category has welcomed a new specialty product with the creation of Cabot Premium Macaroni & Cheese.

Cabot's take on the popular dish is sold in four flavors: Aged Yellow Cheddar, Seriously Sharp Cheddar; Pepper Jack and Bacon Cheddar.

The ingredient list includes organic pasta, no artificial ingredients and dried Vermont Cheddar Cheese.



Available now at Price Chopper, Big Y, Weis, Stop & Shop, Hannafords and Shaw's along with other Vermont retail stores. Visit www.cabotcheese.coop/premium-macaroni-cheese

CHEESE REPORTER
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Global Dairy Market Expected To Remain Tight For Next Six Months

February Milk Production Up 0.1% After Adjusting For Leap Year; Milk Cow Numbers Continue To Rise

Hot, Dry Weather Cutting New Zealand's Milk Output

Tightening Market Climate Trade Prices Jump Again

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New Product Section



New Dairy Products, Packaging, Promotions

Cypress Grove Fresh Goat's Milk Cheese Cups In Avant-Garde Flavors, Cool Packaging

Cypress Grove Chevre has created a new line of fresh goat cheese cups, perfect for tossing, dipping, spreading, and snacking. Each cheese is packaged in a 4-ounce resealable cup.



Cypress Grove's new Sweet Dreams has a hint of molasses from brown sugar, coupled with vanilla bean and a touch of salt.

The company's Little Red Corvette flavor features bell pepper, black garlic, and chermoula

spice – a North African seasoning blend with fragrant spices like garlic, turmeric and paprika.

The third flavor is called "Danger Zone," spiked with brined jalapeño, onion, garlic, and perfectly balanced spices. Danger Zone packs serious heat for customers who like it spicy.

The fourth flavor is called "Straight Up" Fresh Goat Cheese. The product is soft and lightly salted.

Each of the four flavors are packaged in a 4-ounce, resealable container.

To buy cheese online, visit www.cypressgrovecheese.com.

Allo Nutrition Drops First Protein Powder For Coffee

Allo Nutrition recently launched a new protein powder created to dissolve instantly in hot coffee, with the end result free from clumps, sugar and gluten.

One serving of Allo contains 10 grams of hydrolyzed whey protein concentrate, with options to suit coffee drinkers' preferences: non-creamer natural, flavored non-creamer, and flavored creamers.

Allo also offers a variety bundle of seven whey protein concentrate packs that include flavored and non-flavored options. For more details, visit www.ellenos.com.

Naera Joins Snack Cheese Crisp Class Made With Icelandic Cheese, Skyr

Responsible Foods, Ltd. of Reykjavik, Iceland, has introduced a new line of cheese and skyr snacks for health-conscious consumers.

Co-founder and CEO Holly Kristinsson struggled with food allergies and intolerances, but was invigorated by Icelandic food and ingredients. She and her husband, Hörður Kristinsson, founded Responsible Foods and started making Næra Icelandic Snacks.

"Næra" is the Icelandic word for nourish. Responsible Foods is doing just that with its new popped cheese snacks with added super protein.

Næra natural snacks are made using "green energy." There's no baking, frying, air drying or freeze-drying, so Responsible Foods use less energy than most other snack production processes.

Næra's poppable are vegetarian friendly, as well as gluten, wheat, peanut, GMO, and preservative free.

Current offerings include Næra skyr snacks and Næra cheese snacks. The company's base product is 100 percent aged Icelandic Cheddar. The Næra brand includes the following flavors: Garlic & Herb Cheese Crunch; Cheesy Cheddar Crunch; Premium Estate Cheese Crunch; Very Gouda Cheese Crunch; and Power Protein Sour Cream & Onion Cheese. New Seafood flavors will launch soon.

Visit www.naerasnacks.com

Stepladder Creamery Launches Big Sur Mixed Milk, Triple Creme Cheese

Seasonal spring cheesemaking has returned to California's Stepladder Ranch & Creamery, with its inaugural Big Sur mixed milk triple crème now available for sale.

Big Sur's bloomy rind is coated with vegetable ash and packaged in 3.5-ounce rounds. Big Sur is named after the iconic California coastline just north of where Stepladder Creamery located in Cambria, CA.

It's only available during peak milking season, because Stepladder likes to use the freshest milk from its herd of LaMancha dairy goats.

"Big Sur is a top seller in our lineup of year-round and seasonal cheeses," said Stepladder Creamery co-owner Jack Rudolph. "The fresh goat's milk gives the cheese a little bit of tang and is perfect spread over crusty bread or even in a burger."

"We're very grateful for the support of our customers with the release of Big Sur," added co-owner Michelle Rudolph. "We typically get a rush of orders when it's first available, especially now that people can purchase our cheeses online and have it shipped throughout the US. It's also a top seller at farmers' markets across California."

For more information, visit www.stepladdercreamery.com.

Tulip Tree Creamery Adds Foxglove Style To Lineup

Tulip Tree Creamery of Indianapolis, has developed a new washed-rind, double-creme cow's milk cheese called Foxglove.

It has a soft consistency and earthy, pungent flavors created by a mixture of cultures including yeast, salt, and Hubbard & Cravens Porter Beer made by Thr3ee Wise Men Brewery, on the distinctive reddish-colored rind.

If a customer has trouble choosing between a Taleggio and Epoisses, this cheese is the one for you, the company reported.

Foxglove is packaged in 8-ounce pieces, with six units per case.

It joins the Creamery's other artisanal cheeses, including Hops, Dutch Tulip, Nightshade, Milkweed, Snapdragon, Queen Anne's Lace, and the multi-award-winning Trillium.

For more information, visit www.tuliptreecreamery.com.

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Real California Pizza Contest Kicked Off At Pizza Expo In Vegas

Las Vegas, NV—The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) recently launched its fourth annual Real California Pizza Contest for foodservice professionals here at Pizza Expo.

The contest – a search for the best pizza recipes topped with Real California Cheese – will award prizes totaling \$30,000, and is open to chefs and culinary students throughout the US.

Participants can enter recipes in three categories: Cal-Mex, the REAL Californian and Plant-Forward.

Cal-Mex recipes incorporate toppings from California and Mexi-

can cuisines, and feature Hispanic-style cheeses from California.

Plant-Forward pizza recipes will emphasize the delicious flavor combinations of fruits, veggies, and Real California Cheeses.

The REAL Californian category will showcase cheeses and toppings indicative of California cuisine.

This year's contest also will include ideas from winners of separate Real California Pizza Contests in Mexico, who will compete in the final bake-off event at the Culinary Institute of America in Napa, CA.

The deadline for contest submissions is April 24.

In addition to the recipe, contestants must submit a short essay describing their personal and professional inspiration for their pizza creation.

A professional panel of expert judges will select 12 United States finalists to compete alongside their colleagues from Mexico in the pizza bake-off contest on June 22, 2022.

All finalists will win a cash prize. Finalists who are not category winners will receive \$500 each.

The winners in each category will receive \$5,000, and the best overall pizza recipe creator will receive an additional \$10,000 grand prize award, contest organizers stated.

Contestants can choose from over 250 varieties of cheese that carry the Real California Milk seals.

For a list of qualifying cheeses and cheese makers, contest rules and to enter online, visit www.realcaliforniamilk.com/foodservice.

Atalanta's Celebrity Goat Cheese Line Expands With Dessert Flavors Like Maple Toffee, Cappuccino

The Atalanta Company has launched four dessert-style flavors to its Celebrity Goat brand.

Atalanta's award-winning Celebrity Goat Cheese gets a jolt with premium cappuccino. The java-flavored cheese can be paired with gingersnap cookies, spread on apple slices and top with shaved dark chocolate.

Celebrity's Maple Toffee flavored chevre is influenced by Canadian maple flavors. It can be served on crackers with a drizzle of maple syrup, or crumbled over pancakes and french toast.

Celebrity Truffle Goat Cheese is made from Canadian goat's milk and fine imported truffles. Consumers can spread it on a baguette and enjoy with champagne, or dress up pasta and egg dishes.

Celebrity Spiced Sweet Potato Chevre partners tangy goat cheese with classic ingredients of sweet potato pie like cinnamon and other warm spices.

Each of the four flavors are packaged in a 4-ounce container, with 12 units per case.

Visit www.celebritygoat.com.



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Burnett Dairy Adds Black Truffle Merken Spice To Wood River Creamery Line

Burnett Dairy Cooperative has extended its line of flavored Wood River Creamery cheeses to include a special Black Truffle Merken Spice variety.

Cheese makers begin with a Gruyere Cheddar base, and flavor it with Italian black truffles and a new addition of smoky Merken spice. Black Truffle Merken Spice brings the number of flavors in Burnett's Wood River Creamery line to almost 10, including Northwoods Cheddar, Applewood Smoked Sea Salt, Smoked Cracked Peppercorn, Chipotle Garlic, Roasted Red Pepper & Black Peppercorn, Herbs de Provence, Creamy Fenugreek, Mango Habanero, and Original.

The entire collection of 8-ounce wedges is available online and select retailers, the company stated.

For more information, visit www.burnettdairy.com.

UK Company Wins Award For Vodka Made From Sheep's Milk Whey

Moreton-in-Marsh, England—The founders of Blacklion Vodka, the husband-and-wife team Tim and Tanya Spittle, won a Spirit Bronze award in the recent International Wine & Spirits Competition (IWSC) for their spirit which is made using an innovative method of recycling leftover whey from the cheesemaking process.

Handcrafted in small batches, Blacklion Vodka is made using the whey from the couple's own breed of Black Lion sheep. The curds are separated by a local farmer and friend who makes his own cheese, and the whey is then collected and taken for processing.

The exact process is "top secret; it took us three years of research and development to create this super-premium vodka which has been likened to a white whiskey," Tim Spittle said.

Originally from the mountains of Switzerland, in the Valais region, the Valais Blacknose sheep are an extremely rare breed that now forms part of the couple's flock. Using selective breeding, they have created the Black Lion sheep which allows them to contribute to the preservation of this iconic breed.

"Whey vodka is silky smooth. It can be drunk neat, on its own or over ice. It's also very versatile and can be used to make an exquisite cocktail," Tim Spittle said. "We knew we had a great sustainable vodka and this has now been confirmed by the award. Having launched in 2021 after years of planning, we are absolutely thrilled to win."

"It's amazing to see something we talked and dreamt about come to life and become award-winning," Tanya Spittle said.

Blacklion Vodka is described as Europe's rarest vodka. It is the first vodka to be made in the UK from sheep's milk.

"We are the first in Europe to bring sheep's milk vodka to the market and we are hugely excited for what the future holds," Tim and Tanya said.

Blacklion Vodka is a family-owned, British business with a passion for adventure and vodka. Based in the Cotswolds, the Spittles thought it would be a brilliant idea to convert a byproduct of the cheesemaking process into the UK's first sheep's milk vodka. They set up the business in 2018 with the vision to enter the spirits industry with their niche alcoholic beverage made from a rare breed of sheep, Black Lion.

For more information, visit www.blacklionvodka.co.uk.

Demand For Whey

Continued from p. 25

the report predicted. Processors using membrane technology to capture whey proteins directly from fresh milk to produce milk protein concentrate have added to the versatility and capacity of US whey processing, but with major cheese and whey plant expansions slated to become operational in the next five years, whey proteins derived from the whey stream will be the dominant source of high-protein whey in the future.

Not all processors will have the capability to capture the profits of high-value whey or fractionates due to the capital-intensive technology and high barriers to entry, the report noted. The consolidated number of processors that can

afford costly membrane technology will also be selling to a select group of buyers, resulting in a different business model compared to commodity products: a model where long-term strategic relationships in the supply chain are needed.

Prices in niche markets can also be markedly more volatile, while price elasticities can be far greater for processors depending on a scarce number of major food manufacturers to buy their product.

US whey processing capacity currently lacks flexibility due to minimal expansion in dry whey processing capacity in recent years. Current plant capacity that produces all varieties of whey products is limited due to high cost constraints of adding processing equipment, while recent investments in whey processing have been limited

to high-protein products that generate higher returns.

The main risk to processors is the higher price volatility characteristic of smaller niche markets. Value-added and further-processed whey products will be meeting a narrower demand base, easily risking oversupply. The industry of the future will need to meet growing demand needs for low-protein whey for both human consumption and animal feed, but also for high-protein whey for consumer products, which will require a variety of pricing structures and investments in new plant technology.

While high-protein whey will continue to grow in demand and offer higher returns, low-protein whey will still offer the appeal of stability and price hedging for processors, according to the report.

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Cheese Crisps

(Continued from p. 39)

seeing more breakthrough innovations beyond pack sizes and flavors, according to Whisps' Nahoum.

"Listening to our fans and learning how our community uses Whisps has informed our current innovations," she said.

We often heard how consumers would snack on a few nuts alongside their crisps, which inspired Whisps Cheese Crisps & Nuts, she said.

Whisps Cheese Crumbs is a new product that consumers can swap for bread crumbs to bake, mix or sprinkle in favorite recipes, Nahoum said.

"What started as a category celebrating clean-label, single-ingredient snacks has the opportunity to expand to fit consumers' cheesy needs throughout the day," Nahoum continued.

Ellsworth's product line kicked off with its Natural Cheese Curd Crunchers. However, after hearing consumer feedback, "it became clear that they wanted variety," Bauer said.

We've been testing flavors such as dill pickle, ranch, and jalapeno, "which have been successful," he said. "We look forward to rolling out our first flavored Cheese Curd Crunchers soon."

Just the Cheese will continue on with its unique bar shape, Scharfman said. It started with product strategy – go where your competition isn't.

And while cheese makers agree that competition in the category is growing, most aren't losing sleep at

the thought of plant-based products stealing away customers.

"The proliferation of baked cheese is absolutely a thing," Scharfman said, but "I never have to convince anyone that cheese tastes good."

"Adding cheese to things is universally positive," Scharfman said.

Plant-based eating is a trend, he continued, but if you're vegan and want a cheese crisp, you can probably just have a Triscuit or a Cheeto.

"Those are plant-based cheese snacks, too," he said.

"I think plant-based consumer behavior is trending for now, but in my opinion, it's still a trend," Scharfman said. "Cheese has been popular for thousands of years, so I'm not worried about the staying power or market share of cheese."

Consumers seem to prefer a single-ingredient cheese snack to a processed cheese puff, he said. "But price is also a thing. A single piece of baked cheese is probably three or four times more expensive than Cheetos."

"That's one of the bigger barriers, and why you won't see the market proliferate as much," Scharfman said.

Consumer research conducted by Moon Cheese found that plant-based category consumers tend to be flexitarian, and generally open to a variety of healthy snack options.

"Moon Cheese consumers love cheese, which is, of course, low-carb and high in protein," Kovacevich said.

Ellsworth's Cheese Curd Crunchers also appeal to those

who are looking for a healthier snack option.

"The low-carb and keto crowd seem to particularly love these snacks," Bauer said. "Since they don't require refrigeration, they're great for when you're on the go, and conditions don't allow for refrigerated snacks."

"Sports enthusiasts or anyone who likes to keep snacks at the ready in a desk drawer or vehicle will also appreciate this feature," he said. "They're great out of the bag, but our customers have reported incorporating them into their trail mixes, adding crunch to their salads, and that their dogs and cats love them as a treat, too."

While plant-based is growing and we are watching the category, I will say that Statista found that the average consumer in the US ate about 40 pounds of cheese in 2020, and based on our own growth, I can infer this number has only grown.

"Part of the romance of cheese crisps is its simplicity: 100 percent pure cheese that you grate and bake. But the reality of making it is much harder; not all cheeses bake equally."

Katie Nahoum,
Whisps Snacks,

"Our focus, therefore, is on providing great tasting, clean label snacks and foods made with real cheese," Kovacevich said.

There will always be a place for our dairy snacks, Bauer agreed. "They're healthy and low-carb with a super clean label, which you don't always have in a plant-based snack unless you're eating a fresh fruit or vegetable."

People at different times in their lives want different options, Bauer added.

Everyone loves a good, wholesome and crunchy snack, so the demand will always be there.

Moon Cheese likewise sees a strong trajectory of growth for the future – not just for its own brand, but within the overall category.

"Moon Cheese really has changed the way people snack," Kovacevich said. "It's shown consumers want something that tastes great, but won't make them feel guilty when they enjoy something crunchy and delicious."

Impact Of Pandemic, Inflation

For some baked cheese companies, the overall impact of Covid favorably created more in-store purchase/at-home snacking occasions as foodservice shut down or operated with limited capacity.

For others, including Specialty Cheese, Covid-19 "hurt our business a lot," Scharfman said.

"It's a healthy, grab-and-go snack, but if people aren't going anywhere and don't care about healthy snacking, that's not great for us," he explained.

"More often than not, snacks fall into two big categories – there's use case, and then there's dietary. Use case is typically the biggest driver," Scharfman explained.

When eating at home, many consumers opt for a big bag, he said. If I'm going somewhere, I'm taking a bar. If you want baked cheese and you're not leaving the house, consumer psychology would say a bag of Whisps would be a more suitable package than a bar.

During Covid, Parm Crisps and Whisps – already market leaders – further expanded their lead, Scharfman continued.

"I think the bar space will come back as Covid recedes," he said.

For Ellsworth's Paul Bauer, future success comes down to taste and an open mind.

"Once the consumer gets a taste of them, know what they are, and overcome the impulse to compare them to a fresh cheese curd, we believe we will see a growing demand," he said.

"The taste, nutrition, and convenience are hard to beat," Bauer continued. "We know that since they're a relatively new item, there will be a learning curve before consumers appreciate what Cheese Curd Crunchers can bring to their snack table."

There's a couple of headwinds for the baked cheese case, Scharfman warned. One of the biggest headwinds is waning interest in the keto diet.

"It's been down year-over-year for the past two years," he said. "Keto was a huge driver of baked cheese retail products. I would imagine that some of the bigger brands would see a similar decline in keto-related consumption that hurt revenue numbers."

Inflation is another factor, Scharfman said. It's less specific to us, but more discretionary spending on snacks.

Inflation has hurt upper middle class demographic consumer spending and when you combine that with the loss of Keto demand, it's a thing.

Over the next five to 10 years, however, Scharfman predicts a bullish future for the market.

"You don't have to convince consumers that cheese tastes good," he said. "Trends come and go, but I'll bet my life on three things being popular in 10 years – ice cream, chocolate and cheese."



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Retail Dairy Prices

(Continued from p. 1)

projecting that retail dairy product prices will rise 4.0 to 5.0 percent in 2022.

The CPI for dairy products increased 1.4 percent in 2021, and rose by 4.4 percent in 2020.

Prior to that, over the 2015-19 period, the dairy CPI declined three times and increased twice, including an increase of 0.1 percent in 2017 and an increase of 1.0 percent in 2019.

The 20-year historical average change in the dairy CPI is a 1.7-percent rise. The last time the dairy CPI posted an increase of more than 5 percent was in 2011, when it increased 6.8 percent.

In February 2022, the CPI for dairy and related products was 242.4 (1982-84=100), up 1.6 percent from January and 5.2 percent higher than in February 2021, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported last month.

Also in February, the CPI for all food was 292.8, up 1.0 percent from January and up 7.9 percent from February 2021. The food-away-from-home (restaurant purchases) CPI increased 0.4 percent in February and was 6.8 percent higher than in February 2021 while the food-at-home CPI increased 1.4 percent from January and was 8.6 percent higher than in February 2021.

Those large increases in all-food, food-away-from-home, and food-at-home prices in February followed similarly large changes in January, ERS noted. These aggregate price increases were the result of increases across many of the food categories rather than one or a few categories.

While prices did not decline for any reported food price category, prices for 11 disaggregated food categories increased by more than 1 percent in February, ERS said. The impacts of the conflict in Ukraine and the recent increases in interest rates by the Federal Reserve are expected to put upward and downward pressures on food prices, respectively.

All food prices are now predicted to increase between 4.5 and 5.5 percent in 2022; food-away-from-home prices are predicted to increase between 5.5 and 6.5 percent; and food-at-home prices are predicted to increase between 3.0 and 4.0 percent in 2022.

The ERS producer price index (PPI) forecast ranges for a number of categories, including wholesale dairy, were revised upward in last Friday's Food Price Outlook report.

Wholesale dairy prices increased by 2.0 percent in February 2022 on strong domestic and international demand, ERS noted. Wholesale dairy prices are now predicted to increase between 7.0 and 10.0 percent this year.

Defense Department Should Formalize Its Process For Revising Food Ingredients

Washington—The US Department of Defense (DOD) has, since 2017, been working to develop a new process for making food ingredient decisions, based on its menu standards for providing nutritious food to servicemembers, but the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that Department of Defense has not coordinated with all stakeholders or formalized the process.

In response to concerns voiced by food industry representatives that DOD was not sufficiently transparent in making food ingredient decisions, such as prohibiting certain ingredients, DOD drafted a process map for including food industry and other federal agency

stakeholders in those decisions, the GAO noted in a recently released report.

However, while DOD actively sought input from the food industry, it did not similarly engage with other federal agencies, such as the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and some Department of Defense components in developing the new process, the GAO noted.

The Department of Defense also did not formalize its food process map by, for example, clearly identifying stakeholder roles and responsibilities in the proposed process.

Coordinating with all stakeholders and formalizing the process would help ensure that DOD

has a more transparent and reliable method for making informed food ingredient decisions, the report noted.

The Government Accountability Office also found that Department of Defense does not track key information about its food program. For example, while the military services track head count data — numbers and types of diners who purchase meals at their dining facilities — most do not track the extent to which servicemembers with a meal entitlement use their benefit.

Tracking these data would help DOD meet its goal of providing nutritious meals to servicemembers and assess its food program's effectiveness.

The Department of Defense concurred with the Government Accountability Office's recommendations.

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COMING EVENTS

www.cheesereporter.com/events.htm

IFT Expo Returns With Live & Virtual Options; To Be July 10-13 In Chicago

Chicago—The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) will welcome the full return of its annual event and expo here July 10-13, 2022 at McCormick Place.

Attendees have the option of in-person or virtual attendance – the event will feature both live and virtual scientific conversation, solution-seeking and strategic connections for all participants.

Topics range from food waste to supply chain impacts, recent salary survey research and what it means for equity. Select Science FIRST and Business FIRST sessions will be live-streamed for those participating virtually.

The theme of this year's event – *Hacking the Food Supply: Can We Synthesize a More Sustainable Future?* – will explore potential promises and pitfalls in hacking the future of food.

The IFT event also returns with some major re-branding. Attendees can expect more discussions and less lectures, more debate with shorter sessions, and new formats in Science FIRST.

The Science segment will look at the top five packaging solutions

for food safety and sustainability; critical components for the safety determination of novel sourced food proteins; and cold chain logistics.

The expo's Business FIRST stage will feature experts from academia, finance, industry, and government to explore potential advantages and limitations of cutting-edge innovations in food.

Programming will center around how the global food system can contribute to a more sustainable future using the tools of novel technology and innovation; sustainability, health and nutrition; and food safety, consumer insights and education.

More scheduled sessions are "How Food Development Is Responding to Inflation and Supply Chain Challenges" and "Tackling Food Waste: Defining the Problem, Innovating Solutions."

For the full IFT agenda and in-person and virtual registration, visit www.iftevent.org.

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WOW Charity's 8th Annual Shooters Cup Is May 13 In Brillion

Brillion, WI—WOW Logistics Company will host its eighth annual Shooters Cup fund-raiser here Friday, May 13 at Woodfire.

Shooters of all skill levels will take part in individual and team challenges. Raffle games, door prizes, and pay-to-play shooting games will be held throughout the day for a chance to win prizes, including guns and hunting gear.

Check-in starts at 10 a.m. The event will wrap with a cocktail hour, award distribution and raffle announcements.

Several registration options are offered, including individual registration at \$100; \$550 for a six-person team; and cocktail only tickets for \$50 per person.

To sign up for the event, visit wow-wecarecharity.org/shooters-cup. Sponsorship information and charity details are also available online.

Questions can be directed to Ashly Manske via email: ashlyma@wowlogistics.com.

PLANNING GUIDE

Oregon Dairy Industries Annual Convention: April 12-13, Salem Convention Center, Salem, OR. Visit www.oregondairy.org.

Cheese Expo: April 12-14, Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, WI. Visit www.cheeseexpo.org for updates and online registration.

ADPI/ABI Joint Annual Meeting: April 24-26, Hyatt Regency Downtown, Chicago, IL. Visit www.adpi.org.

International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA) Meeting & Expo: June 5-7, Atlanta, GA. Visit www.iddba.org for details.

Summer Fancy Food Show: June 12-14, Javits Center, New York. Visit www.specialtyfood.com.

ADSA 2022 Annual Meeting: June 19-22, Kansas City, MO. Check www.adsa.org for updates and registration details.

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Class Milk & Component Prices

March 2022 with comparisons to March 2021

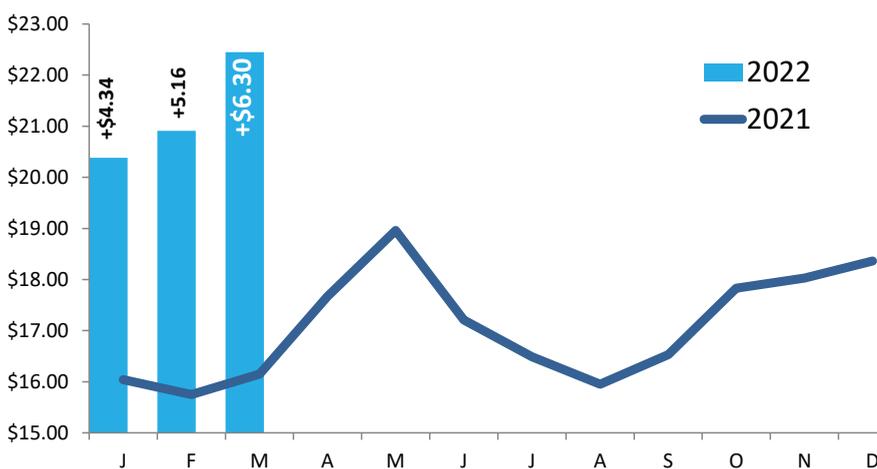
Class III - Cheese Milk Price	2021	2022
PRICE (per hundredweight)	\$16.15	\$22.45
SKIM PRICE (per hundredweight)	\$10.51	\$12.04
Class II - Soft Dairy Products	2021	2022
PRICE (per hundredweight)	\$15.07	\$24.76
BUTTERFAT PRICE (per pound)	\$1.7246	\$3.1005
SKIM MILK PRICE (per hundredweight)	\$9.36	\$14.41
Class IV - Butter, MP	2021	2022
PRICE (per hundredweight)	\$14.18	\$24.82
SKIM MILK PRICE (per hundredweight)	\$8.46	\$14.50
BUTTERFAT PRICE (per pound)	\$1.7176	\$3.0935
NONFAT SOLIDS PRICE (per pound)	\$0.9396	\$1.6113
PROTEIN PRICE (per pound)	\$2.6954	\$2.7182
OTHER SOLIDS PRICE (per pound)	\$0.3652	\$0.6131
SOMATIC CELL Adjust. rate (per 1,000 scc)	\$0.00080	\$0.00103
AMS Survey Product Price Averages	2021	2022
Cheese	\$1.5981	\$2.0548
Cheese, US 40-pound blocks	\$1.6695	\$2.0748
Cheese, US 500-pound barrels	\$1.5023	\$2.0066
Butter, CME	\$1.5898	\$2.7954
Nonfat Dry Milk	\$1.1169	\$1.7954
Dry Whey	\$0.5537	\$0.7943

DAIRY FUTURES PRICES

SETTLING PRICE *Cash Settled

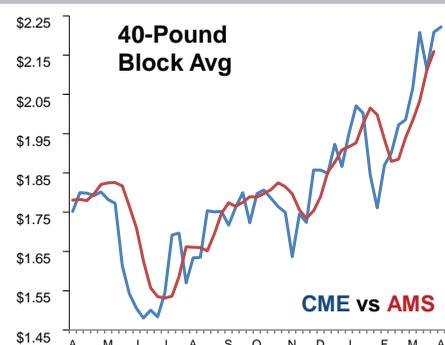
Date	Month	Class III	Class IV	Dry Whey	NDM	Block Cheese	Cheese*	Butter*
3-25	Mar 21	22.42	24.85	79.050	179.350	2.085	2.0520	272.525
3-28	Mar 21	22.41	24.85	79.050	179.350	2.085	2.0520	272.525
3-29	Mar 21	22.42	24.85	79.050	179.350	2.085	2.0500	272.450
3-30	Mar 21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3-31	Mar 21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3-25	Apr 21	24.30	25.33	73.575	182.500	2.300	2.2810	278.000
3-28	Apr 21	23.53	25.30	74.000	182.500	2.300	2.2040	277.250
3-29	Apr 21	23.29	25.12	72.800	181.500	2.230	2.1820	273.000
3-30	Apr 21	23.90	25.12	72.950	181.500	2.203	2.2530	273.000
3-31	Apr 21	23.68	25.12	75.200	182.000	2.230	2.2190	273.000
3-25	May 22	25.01	25.31	69.500	184.425	2.410	2.3830	272.350
3-28	May 22	24.16	25.19	70.000	183.250	2.323	2.2960	271.000
3-29	May 22	23.50	24.94	68.000	181.000	2.260	2.2350	269.000
3-30	May 22	23.73	24.94	68.750	182.250	2.270	2.3650	269.600
3-31	May 22	24.47	25.10	72.725	184.000	2.340	2.3250	269.600
3-25	June 22	24.79	25.23	67.500	186.100	2.405	2.3070	270.000
3-28	June 22	24.06	25.18	67.725	184.850	2.369	2.3090	268.450
3-29	June 22	23.52	25.11	65.000	182.575	2.300	2.2600	265.000
3-30	June 22	23.64	25.11	64.100	183.050	2.280	2.3620	266.000
3-31	June 22	24.27	25.07	70.750	185.750	2.350	2.3300	267.000
3-25	July 22	24.34	25.32	67.500	187.000	2.375	2.3500	268.000
3-28	July 22	23.85	24.95	67.500	185.500	2.375	2.2970	266.475
3-29	July 22	23.40	24.55	63.675	183.000	2.344	2.2750	264.000
3-30	July 22	23.57	24.80	62.500	184.000	2.275	2.2480	265.000
3-31	July 22	23.95	24.96	69.500	186.225	2.330	2.3080	265.975
3-25	Aug 22	24.27	25.17	66.700	186.500	2.365	2.3400	267.000
3-28	Aug 22	23.82	24.92	66.700	185.550	2.359	2.3150	265.500
3-29	Aug 22	23.22	24.50	62.500	182.725	2.359	2.2780	264.000
3-30	Aug 22	23.42	24.70	62.500	183.550	2.284	2.2360	264.500
3-31	Aug 22	23.84	24.85	69.225	185.700	2.320	2.3010	265.000
3-25	Sept 22	24.05	24.86	65.000	185.250	2.343	2.3300	267.500
3-28	Sept 22	23.68	24.80	65.000	184.600	2.343	2.2910	264.500
3-29	Sept 22	22.90	24.58	62.400	181.225	2.334	2.2900	263.000
3-30	Sept 22	23.42	24.54	62.400	182.025	2.280	2.2150	259.500
3-31	Sept. 22	23.66	24.67	68.000	183.725	2.334	2.3080	264.500
3-25	Oct 22	23.65	24.74	63.500	184.100	2.326	2.3000	264.500
3-28	Oct 22	23.37	24.63	63.975	183.575	2.326	2.2910	264.500
3-29	Oct 22	23.22	24.25	60.500	180.000	2.326	2.2830	262.025
3-30	Oct 22	22.19	24.03	60.500	180.000	2.275	2.2970	262.025
3-31	Oct 22	23.30	24.40	66.500	181.750	2.326	2.2860	262.200
3-25	Nov 22	23.22	24.45	63.000	183.700	2.292	2.2700	262.400
3-28	Nov 22	23.14	24.44	65.000	182.525	2.292	2.2600	262.000
3-29	Nov 22	22.90	24.10	64.050	179.875	2.292	2.5670	262.000
3-30	Nov 22	22.85	24.02	64.050	179.075	2.292	2.2370	262.175
3-31	Nov 22	23.00	24.05	65.000	180.800	2.292	2.2480	262.175
3-25	Dec 22	22.79	24.10	63.500	181.400	2.232	2.2220	255.400
3-28	Dec 22	22.60	24.04	63.500	181.400	2.232	2.2150	254.500
3-29	Dec 22	22.00	23.88	63.000	178.800	2.232	2.3140	252.000
3-30	Dec 22	22.49	23.69	63.000	177.900	2.232	2.2070	255.125
3-31	Dec 22	22.50	23.69	63.500	177.900	2.232	2.2000	255.000
3-25	Jan 23	22.18	23.17	63.000	178.400	2.188	2.1810	242.275
3-28	Jan 23	22.08	23.17	63.000	178.400	2.188	2.1760	242.275
3-29	Jan 23	22.00	23.12	63.000	178.400	2.188	2.1680	242.000
3-30	Jan 23	22.00	23.12	63.000	177.900	2.188	2.1680	243.000
3-31	Jan 23	22.00	23.12	63.000	177.900	2.188	2.1640	243.000

Class III Milk Price Tracker, 2022 vs 2021



DAIRY PRODUCT SALES

March 30, 2022—AMS' National Dairy Products Sales Report. Prices included are provided each week by manufacturers. Prices collected are for the (wholesale) point of sale for natural, unaged Cheddar; boxes of butter meeting USDA standards; Extra Grade edible dry whey; and Extra Grade and USPH Grade A nonfortified NFDM.
 *Revised



Week Ending	March 26	March 19	March 12	March 5
40-Pound Block Cheddar Cheese Prices and Sales				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	2.1594	2.1119	2.0330	1.9835
Sales Volume				
US	13,463,327	12,494,897	11,550,852	12,255,647
500-Pound Barrel Cheddar Cheese Prices, Sales & Moisture Content				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	2.1598	2.1404	2.0886	2.0640
Adjusted to 38% Moisture				
US	2.0530	2.0309	1.9388	1.9650
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	12,560,656	13,719,207	14,534,846	13,945,728
Weighted Moisture Content	Percent			
US	34.78	34.66	34.71	34.88
AA Butter				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	2.7416	2.7516	2.7297	2.6894•
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	3,639,893	3,708,871	4,576,247	4,594,688
Extra Grade Dry Whey Prices				
Weighted Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	0.7938	0.7942	0.7958	0.7989
Sales Volume				
US	4,034,304	6,014,063	4,512,759	5,397,509
Extra Grade or USPHS Grade A Nonfat Dry Milk				
Average Price	Dollars/Pound			
US	1.8075	1.7943•	1.7986	1.7817
Sales Volume	Pounds			
US	19,487,230	23,070,906•	21,530,640	22,437,435

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DAIRY PRODUCT MARKETS

AS REPORTED BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WHOLESALE CHEESE MARKETS

NATIONAL - MARCH 25: Cheese demand is hearty in all regions. Until recent weeks, hesitant customers were awaiting potential downward pressure on prices. Now, they are actively seeking out cheese to refill pipelines, and get ahead of bullish price movements. Western suppliers are busily filling orders for Asian buyers, as domestic cheese prices remain a bargain to global values. Labor and hauling remain problematic, although cheese makers who can run full (or near-full) schedules are busy. Milk remains available for Class III use, as prices are discounted for spot milk in the Midwest from \$2 to \$1.50 under Class.

NORTHEAST - MARCH 30: Northeastern cheese manufacturers are maintaining busy production schedules. Class III milk intakes are steady to increasing. Some cheesemaking plants are operating near capacity despite delivery delays, supply issues, and staffing shortages that continue to challenge dairy processing operations. Regional cheese inventories are plentiful. Industry contacts suggest sustained good demand prevents hearty supplies from becoming too onerous. US cheese prices remain competitive on global markets, and export interest is robust. Domestic sales are stable to higher. Foodservice orders are steadily strong. Market participants say some limited-service eateries are meeting or surpassing pre-pandemic business levels, which is correlated with a boost in cheese consumption.

Wholesale prices, delivered, dollars per/lb:

Cheddar 40-lb blocks: \$2.6725 - \$2.9600 Process 5-lb sliced: \$2.2750 - \$2.7550
Muenster: \$2.6600 - \$3.0100 Swiss Cuts 10-14 lbs: \$3.5150 - \$5.8375

MIDWEST AREA - MARCH 30: Cheese makers say, despite some declinations in market prices, that demand is strong to very strong. Customers were hesitant during the variant market movements in February and earlier this month, but as prices began to climb with more vigor, buyers had to refill their pipelines ahead of potentially further increases. Market prices during week 13 have slumped some, which cheese contacts say may only push more buying in coming weeks. Milk is available for cheese makers, as some plants continue to deal with staffing/supply shortages. Plant managers at neighboring plants that are running full, or near full, are clearing spot milk loads at discounts as low as \$4 under Class so far this week.

Wholesale prices delivered, dollars per/lb:

Blue 5# Loaf: \$2.7150 - \$3.9250 Mozzarella 5-6#: \$2.2450 - \$3.3325
Brick 5# Loaf: \$2.4450 - \$3.0125 Process 5# Loaf: \$2.1525 - \$2.6200
Monterey Jack 10# \$2.4200 - \$2.7675 Grade A Swiss 6-9#: \$3.0300 - \$3.1475

WEST - MARCH 30: Cheese makers say that export demand remains strong, as purchasers look to the US for loads that are sold at a discount to internationally produced loads. Some purchasers in Asia are interested in buying loads to ship in late Q4 of 2022 and early Q1 of 2023. Domestic demand for cheese is steady in retail markets, while foodservice demand is increasing. Spot availability for cheese is trending higher. Port congestion and a shortage of truck drivers continue to cause delays to the delivery of loads and production supplies. Cheese producers are running busy schedules to work through available supplies of milk, though some plant managers say that labor shortages and delayed production supply deliveries are preventing them from running at capacity.

Wholesale prices delivered, dollars per/lb: Monterey Jack 10#: \$2.4275 - \$2.7025
Cheddar 10# Cuts: \$2.4400 - \$2.6400 Process 5# Loaf: \$2.1125 - \$2.3675
Cheddar 40# Block: \$2.1925 - \$2.6825 Swiss 6-9# Cuts: \$3.3225 - \$3.7525

EEX Weekly European Cheese Indices (WECI): Price Per/lb (US Converted)

Variety	Date: 3/30	3/23	Variety	Date: 3/30	3/23
Cheddar Curd	\$2.67	\$2.61	Mild Cheddar	\$2.60	\$2.56
Young Gouda	\$2.53	\$2.40	Mozzarella	\$2.54	\$2.42

FOREIGN -TYPE CHEESE - MARCH 30: Cheese production in Germany continues to juggle very high demand that is expected to increase further, against lower estimated current YOY production below factory capacity. Sluggish seasonal milk progression is restraining cheese output. The dual challenges of driver shortages and higher transportation costs hover over cheese markets. Western European cheese prices are increasing. Sources report that cheese manufacturers are asking significantly higher prices.

Selling prices, delivered, dollars per/lb:

	Imported	Domestic
Blue:	\$2.6400 - 5.2300	\$2.5300 - 4.0175
Gorgonzola:	\$3.6900 - 5.7400	\$3.0375 - 3.7550
Parmesan (Italy):	0	\$3.9175 - 6.0075
Romano (Cows Milk):	0	\$3.7200 - 5.8750
Sardo Romano (Argentine):	\$2.8500 - 4.7800	0
Reggianito (Argentine):	\$3.2900 - 4.7800	0
Jarlsberg (Brand):	0	0
Swiss Cuts Switzerland:	0	\$3.5500 - 3.8750
Swiss Cuts Finnish:	\$2.6700 - 2.9300	0

NDM PRODUCTS - MARCH 31

NDM - CENTRAL: Low/medium heat NDM prices were steady on the range, but moved lower on the bottom of the mostly series. Despite the slight price decrease, Central NDM availability is still viewed as light. The coastal regions reportedly have shown increases in stocks, due to port delays and condensed skim availability. Thus, if freight allows, regional end users are able to move loads from the West. Still, regional production is not fully active and is not expected to be in the near-term. High heat NDM remains very tight, as limited trading activity is quiet.

NDM - WEST: Low/medium heat NDM markets have shown some bearishness on the CME, with prices falling 3.5 cents since last Wednesday. Contacts report that export demand for loads of low/medium heat NDM remains lackluster and has been contributing

to increased spot availability in the region. Domestic demand is steady. Milk availability is increasing, which has allowed some drying operations to increase production. Some plant managers say that labor shortages are limiting their ability to run full schedules.

NDM - EAST: Low/medium heat NDM prices moved lower on the bottom of the mostly, while remaining steady elsewhere. Contacts say condensed skim availability is steady to higher, but production activity remains variable from one area to the next within the region. Buyer interest remains steady, but as market prices have decreased, some contacts expect customers to adjust their purchasing activity to await more declines. Still, some contacts suggest \$2/lb NDM prices may be a near- or mid-term possibility. High heat NDM trading was quiet, on very limited supplies.

NATIONAL - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY PRODUCTS

Total conventional dairy ads decreased 20 percent, while organic ads increased 9 percent this week. Conventional ice cream, in 48- to 64-ounce containers, was the most advertised dairy item. The average advertised price for ice cream in 48- to 64-ounce containers was \$3.51, compared to \$3.22 last week. Conventional butter in one-pound packages held a weighted average a price of \$3.90, up 29 cents from last week.

Conventional cheese ads decreased 4 percent. Conventional 8-ounce block cheese narrowly edged out conventional 8-ounce shred cheese for the most advertised cheese item this week. The average price of 8-ounce blocks was \$2.51, up 25 cents from last week, while the average advertised price of 8-ounce shreds was \$2.46, up 13 cents.

Half-gallon conventional milk's weighted average price was \$1.86, down 8 cents from last week. The average advertised price for organic half-gallon milk was \$4.26, resulting in a premium of \$2.40. Total conventional yogurt ad numbers decreased 40 percent, while organic ad numbers for yogurt increased 39 percent.

RETAIL PRICES - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY - APRIL 1

Commodity	US	NE	SE	MID	SC	SW	NW
Butter 1#	3.90	4.03	4.49	3.46	3.50	3.45	3.53
Cheese 8 oz block	2.51	2.21	2.78	2.72	2.54	2.07	2.60
Cheese 1# block	3.66	2.94	3.39	4.00	NA	3.71	4.71
Cheese 2# block	6.82	6.99	6.99	6.99	6.21	6.85	5.99
Cheese 8 oz shred	2.46	2.36	2.41	2.58	2.56	2.43	2.47
Cheese 1# shred	3.65	4.00	3.41	4.00	NA	3.50	4.21
Cottage Cheese	2.12	2.49	1.87	1.99	2.00	2.11	2.34
Cream Cheese	1.77	1.13	2.00	1.99	1.39	1.81	1.73
Flavored Milk 1/2 gallon	2.01	2.71	NA	1.45	NA	1.74	1.61
Flavored Milk gallon	3.60	4.21	NA	5.99	NA	2.79	3.66
Ice Cream 48-64 oz	3.51	3.18	3.95	3.34	3.88	3.43	2.73
Milk 1/2 gallon	1.86	2.38	1.46	1.34	2.03	1.74	1.78
Milk gallon	3.29	3.91	NA	2.59	1.77	2.79	3.18
Sour Cream 16 oz	1.95	1.89	1.96	1.88	1.65	1.96	1.36
Yogurt (Greek) 4-6 oz	.97	1.01	1.00	1.12	.93	.86	.87
Yogurt (Greek) 32 oz	4.28	4.74	4.57	4.39	4.88	3.82	3.83
Yogurt 4-6 oz	.53	.58	.53	.52	.53	.45	.49
Yogurt 32 oz	2.36	2.55	2.50	2.00	2.50	1.92	1.92

US: National **Northeast (NE):** CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT;
Southeast (SE): AL, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV; **Midwest (MID):** IA, IL, IN, KY, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI; **South Central (SC):** AK, CO, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX; **Southwest (SW):** AZ, CA, NV, UT; **Northwest (NW):** ID, MT, OR, WA, WY

ORGANIC DAIRY - RETAIL OVERVIEW

National Weighted Retail Avg Price:		
Butter 1 lb:	NA	
Ice Cream 48-64 oz:	\$6.49	
Cheese 8 oz block:	NA	
Cottage Cheese 16 oz:	\$4.29	
Yogurt 4-6 oz:	NA	
Yogurt 32 oz:	\$3.90	
Greek Yogurt 4-6 oz:		NA
Greek Yogurt 32 oz:		\$4.27
UHT Milk 8 oz:		NA
Milk 1/2 gallon:		\$4.26
Milk gallon:		\$5.84
Sour Cream 16 oz:		NA
Cream Cheese 8 oz:		NA

WHOLESALE BUTTER MARKETS - MARCH 30

WEST: Demand for cream is strengthening. Contacts report that ice cream makers are increasing production and pulling heavily on cream supplies. Meanwhile, butter makers are internally utilizing cream loads to build inventories. Demand for butter is increasing in retail markets; grocers are preparing for spring holiday demand. Foodservice demand is unchanged. Stakeholders say that export demand is strong for butter, as internationally produced loads are being sold at a premium to US produced loads. Spot purchasers report that butter availability is increasing, but that unsalted inventories are tighter than salted. Butter makers are running busy schedules throughout the region, though some continue to cite labor shortages as preventing them from running at capacity.

CENTRAL: Butter makers in the region say spring holiday demand has picked up later than expected. Production is busy. Still, employment shortages are being reported from multiple plant managers. There is still a pull from export interests, so plants are being pulled in two directions: international buying and growing stocks for seasonal fall demand in the domestic sector. Cream is findable, but costs are ticking up. As cream cheese/ice cream production steadily

increases, cream availability is not expected to increase near-term. Some midwestern butter producers continue to find cream from western sources, but freight costs/limitations are deterring them from purchasing more from there. Butter market tones have slackened some this week, but contacts do not expect a market downturn to last.

NORTHEAST: Butter manufacturers are working through labor shortages as the quantity of butter produced in the East region rises higher. Churns that had been idle are active as budding spring milk production increases balancing plants' milk intakes. East cream remains strong, with multiples pushing 1.35 to 1.40 for spot loads this week. Salted butter runs are mostly occurring, with intermittent unsalted churning taking place as well. Inventories are at adequate levels for the near-term and likely to increase with the mounting flush. On the demand side, job growth in the food service sector correlates with re-openings of eateries and helps drive the current uptick in food service butter sales. Retail channels look fairly steady ahead of holiday purchases of print butter for baking needs. The butter market undertone is steady on good seasonal domestic demand and export butter sales.

WEEKLY COLD STORAGE HOLDINGS

SELECTED STORAGE CENTERS IN 1,000 POUNDS - INCLUDING GOVERNMENT

DATE	BUTTER	CHEESE
03/28/22	44,799	86,812
03/01/22	41,079	89,465
Change	3,720	-2,653
Percent Change	9	-3

CME CASH PRICES - MARCH 28 - APRIL 1, 2022

Visit www.cheesereporter.com for daily prices

	500-LB CHEDDAR	40-LB CHEDDAR	AA BUTTER	GRADE A NDFM	DRY WHEY
MONDAY March 28	\$2.2500 (NC)	\$2.2600 (-1½)	\$2.7375 (-5¼)	\$1.8475 (-½)	\$0.7175 (-¼)
TUESDAY March 29	\$2.1900 (-6)	\$2.1700 (-9)	\$2.7175 (-2)	\$1.8300 (-1¾)	\$0.6900 (-2¾)
WEDNESDAY March 30	\$2.1600 (-3)	\$2.1800 (+1)	\$2.7125 (-½)	\$1.8350 (+½)	\$0.6775 (-1¼)
THURSDAY March 31	\$2.2025 (+4¼)	\$2.2500 (+7)	\$2.7000 (-1¼)	\$1.8450 (+1)	\$0.6625 (-1½)
FRIDAY April 1	\$2.2525 (+5)	\$2.2950 (+4½)	\$2.7100 (+1)	\$1.8500 (+½)	\$0.6100 (-5¼)
Week's AVG \$ Change	\$2.2110 (+0.0360)	\$2.2310 (+0.0105)	\$2.7155 (-0.0795)	\$1.8415 (-0.0235)	\$0.6715 (-0.0745)
Last Week's AVG	\$2.1750	\$2.2205	\$2.7950	\$1.8650	\$0.7460
2021 AVG Same Week	\$1.48875	\$1.75188	\$1.81938	\$1.18250	\$0.64438

MARKET OPINION - CHEESE REPORTER

Cheese Comment: One car of blocks was sold Monday at \$2.2600, which lowered the price. On Tuesday, 1 car of blocks was sold at \$2.1700, which reduced the price. Two cars of blocks were sold Wednesday, the last at \$2.1800, which raised the price. Two cars of blocks were sold Thursday, the last at \$2.2400, which set the price. One car of blocks was sold Friday at \$2.2950, which raised the price. The barrel price dropped Tuesday on a sale at \$2.1900, fell Wednesday on a sale at \$2.1600, increased Thursday on a sale at \$2.2025, and jumped Friday on a sale at \$2.2525.

Butter Comment: The price dropped Monday on a sale at \$2.7375, fell Tuesday on a sale at \$2.7175, declined Wednesday on a sale at \$2.7125, fell Thursday on a sale at \$2.7000, then increased Friday on a sale at \$2.7100.

Nonfat Dry Milk Comment: The price fell Monday on a sale at \$1.8475, dropped Tuesday on a sale at \$1.8300, increased Wednesday on a sale at \$1.8350, rose Thursday on a sale at \$1.8450, and increased Friday on a sale at \$1.8500.

Dry Whey Comment: The price fell Monday on an uncovered offer at 71.75 cents, declined Tuesday on a sale at 69.0 cents, fell Wednesday on a sale at 67.75 cents, dropped Thursday on a sale at 66.25 cents, and fell Friday on a sale at 61.0 cents.

WHEY MARKETS - MARCH 28 - APRIL 1, 2022

RELEASE DATE - MARCH 31, 2022

Animal Feed Whey—Central: Milk Replacer:	.6000 (NC) – .6550 (-2)
Buttermilk Powder:	
Central & East:	1.8100 (NC) – 1.9300 (-2) West: 1.7500 (+4) – 1.8600 (+7)
Mostly:	1.7700 (+5) – 1.8000 (+5)
Casein: Rennet:	5.1100 (+1) – 5.2100 (+1) Acid: 6.4200 (+2) – 6.7100 (+1)
Dry Whey—Central (Edible):	
Nonhygroscopic:	.6500 (NC) – .7900 (-¾) Mostly: .6900 (-2) – .7400 (-3½)
Dry Whey—West (Edible):	
Nonhygroscopic:	.6950 (-½) – .8500 (-½) Mostly: .7100 (-1) – .7450 (-1½)
Dry Whey—NorthEast:	.7175 (-3¼) – .8250 (-¾)
Lactose—Central and West:	
Edible:	.3200 (NC) – .5300 (NC) Mostly: .3600 (NC) – .4700 (NC)
Nonfat Dry Milk —Central & East:	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.8500 (NC) – 1.9500 (NC) Mostly: 1.8800 (-1) – 1.9300 (NC)
High Heat:	2.0000 (NC) – 2.0500 (NC)
Nonfat Dry Milk —Western:	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.8025 (NC) – 1.9250 (NC) Mostly: 1.8150 (-½) – 1.8500 (-¼)
High Heat:	1.9550 (NC) – 2.0750 (NC)
Whey Protein Concentrate—34% Protein:	
Central & West:	1.6500 (NC) – 1.9000 (NC) Mostly: 1.7000 (NC) – 1.7750 (+2½)
Whole Milk—National:	2.1000 (NC) – 2.4200 (NC)

Visit www.cheesereporter.com for historical dairy, cheese, butter, & whey prices

HISTORICAL CME AVG BLOCK CHEESE PRICES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
'09	1.0883	1.2171	1.2455	1.2045	1.1394	1.1353	1.1516	1.3471	1.3294	1.4709	1.5788	1.6503
'10	1.4536	1.4526	1.2976	1.4182	1.4420	1.3961	1.5549	1.6367	1.7374	1.7246	1.4619	1.3807
'11	1.5140	1.9064	1.8125	1.6036	1.6858	2.0995	2.1150	1.9725	1.7561	1.7231	1.8716	1.6170
'12	1.5546	1.4793	1.5193	1.5039	1.5234	1.6313	1.6855	1.8262	1.9245	2.0757	1.9073	1.6619
'13	1.6965	1.6420	1.6240	1.8225	1.8052	1.7140	1.7074	1.7492	1.7956	1.8236	1.8478	1.9431
'14	2.2227	2.1945	2.3554	2.2439	2.0155	2.0237	1.9870	2.1820	2.3499	2.1932	1.9513	1.5938
'15	1.5218	1.5382	1.5549	1.5890	1.6308	1.7052	1.6659	1.7111	1.6605	1.6674	1.6175	1.4616
'16	1.4757	1.4744	1.4877	1.4194	1.3174	1.5005	1.6613	1.7826	1.6224	1.6035	1.8775	1.7335
'17	1.6866	1.6199	1.4342	1.4970	1.6264	1.6022	1.6586	1.6852	1.6370	1.7305	1.6590	1.4900
'18	1.4928	1.5157	1.5614	1.6062	1.6397	1.5617	1.5364	1.6341	1.6438	1.5874	1.3951	1.3764
'19	1.4087	1.5589	1.5908	1.6619	1.6799	1.7906	1.8180	1.8791	2.0395	2.0703	1.9664	1.8764
'20	1.9142	1.8343	1.7550	1.1019	1.6704	2.5620	2.6466	1.7730	2.3277	2.7103	2.0521	1.6249
'21	1.7470	1.5821	1.7362	1.7945	1.6778	1.4978	1.6370	1.7217	1.7601	1.7798	1.7408	1.8930
'22	1.9065	1.9379	2.1699									

Restaurant Performance Index Rose 0.5% In February; Sales, Traffic Up

Washington—The National Restaurant Association's Restaurant Performance Index (RPI) stood at 103.8 in February, up 0.5 percent from January, the association reported Thursday.

The RPI is constructed so that the health of the restaurant industry is measured in relation to a neutral level of 100. Index values above 100 indicate that key industry indicators are in a period of expansion, while index values below 100 represent a period of contraction.

The RPI consists of two components: the Current Situation Index and the Expectations Index.

The Current Situation Index, which measures current trend indicators (same-store sales, traffic, labor and capital expenditures), stood at 104.6 in February, up 1.5 percent from January.

In February, a strong majority of restaurant operators reported higher same-store sales compared to year-ago levels. Some 82 percent of operators said their same-store sales rose between February 2021 and February 2022, while only 16 percent reported a decline.

Two-year comparisons remained mixed, with 50 percent of operators reporting higher sales and 47

percent reporting lower sales compared to February 2020, just before the pandemic closed most restaurants.

A majority of restaurant operators reported positive customer traffic in February, but it remained somewhat dampened compared to late 2021, the association noted.

The Expectations Index, which measures restaurant operators' six-month outlook for industry indicators, stood at 102.9 in February, down 0.5 percent from January.

Restaurant operators are generally positive about their sales prospects in the coming months; 61 percent of operators expect their sales volume in six months to be higher than it was during the same period in the previous year, while 21 percent expect their sales volume in six months to be lower than it was during the same period in the previous year.

By contrast, restaurant operators are much less optimistic about the direction of the overall economy. Some 29 percent of operators said they expect economic conditions to improve in six months, down from 33 percent in January, while 42 percent think conditions will worsen in the next six months, up from 25 percent in January.



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