



# CHEESE REPORTER

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## USDA Releases Action Plan For Federal Order Hearing Process

### Additional Proposals Sought By June 14; IDFA, WCMA Submit New Make Allowance Proposals

Washington—USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) on Thursday released an "Action Plan" on proposed amendments to the pricing provisions of all federal milk marketing orders, and also issued an invitation to submit additional proposals for consideration at that potential hearing.

AMS had received petitions in late March from both the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) seeking a hearing to amend all four make allowances in federal order pricing formulas.

Then on May 2, AMS received a formal proposal from the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) that asked the agency to begin a rulemaking proceeding to consider amending five provisions related increasing make allowances, returning to the "higher of" as the mover for Class I milk prices, updating the milk composition factors, removing barrel cheese from the Class III

price formula, and updating the Class I price surface.

NMPF's proposal has not yet been approved for inclusion in a "Notice of Hearing," AMS noted. Before deciding whether a hearing will be held, the agency is providing the opportunity for interested parties to submit additional proposals regarding potential amendments to the current pricing provisions applicable to all federal orders.

On Tuesday, IDFA and WCMA provided additional information regarding their proposals to increase make allowances, as requested by AMS. Those proposals are now considered additional proposals in conjunction with NMPF's request.

Additional proposals for consideration at a hearing must be received by AMS by Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

The preferred method for submitting additional proposals is via email, at [\[usda.gov\]\(http://usda.gov\). Proposals can also be mailed to: Deputy Administrator, USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, Stop-0225-Room 2530, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0225.](mailto:FMMOhearing@</a></p></div>
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Each pricing-related proposal should be accompanied by a comprehensive explanation on the need for and potential impacts of the proposed change(s), how the proposed change(s) facilitates more orderly marketing, and any other relevant information. An evaluation of the submitted information will help in determining whether the proposal will be accepted if a hearing is held, AMS noted.

USDA will hold a virtual "Pre-Hearing Information Session" on Friday, June 16, 2023, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Eastern time to allow proposal submitters to explain their proposal(s). Justification for adoption should not be provided during this session. USDA staff will ask questions of the submitters. Each submission may have one representative participate per proposal with the individual's

• See **USDA Action Plan**, p. 10

## Bill Introduced In Senate, House Would End Tariffs On Infant Formula; NMPF Objects

Washington—Bipartisan legislation introduced in both the US Senate and House would permanently waive tariffs on infant formula imports into the US.

The legislation was introduced in the Senate by US Sens. Mike Lee (R-UT) and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and in the House by US Reps Adrian Smith (R-NE) and Don Beyer (D-VA).

In July 2022, Lee's FORMULA Act was signed into law by President Biden, temporarily suspending tariffs on imported formulas.

Now, with the introduction of the Formula 3.0 Act, the Senate and House sponsors aim to solidify and expand upon that 2022 legislation. The bill would permanently waive tariffs on infant formula base powder, which sponsors said would ensure a continuous and reliable supply for families. By doing so, domestic manufacturers will be able to increase their production, further easing the formula crisis in the US.

"The formula shortage has highlighted the need for long-term solutions that promote accessibility and affordability," Lee said. "With the FORMULA 3.0 Act, we take a significant step towards permanently eliminating trade barriers and ensuring a stable sup-

• See **Formula Tariffs**, p. 6

## USDA Raises Fiscal 2023 Dairy Export, Import Forecasts

Washington—The US Department of Agriculture (USDA), in its quarterly *Outlook for US Agricultural Trade* report released Wednesday, raised its forecast for both dairy exports and dairy imports for fiscal year 2023.

USDA's dairy export forecast for fiscal 2023, which runs from Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023, is raised \$100 million from its February forecast, to \$8.9 billion, on higher-than-expected volumes of cheese, lactose, nonfat dry milk and whey.

Fiscal 2022 dairy exports had been valued at \$9.07 billion.

During the first six months of fiscal 2023 dairy exports were valued at \$4.51 billion, up 12.4 per-

• See **Trade Forecasts**, p.4

## Spread Between Farm Value, Retail Dairy Cost Reached New High In 2022

Washington—The spread between the farm value of milk and the retail cost of milk and dairy products reached a record high of 137 last year, up from 136 in 2021, according to figures recently released by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS).

ERS compares prices consumers pay for food with prices farmers receive for corresponding commodities.

This dataset reports these comparisons for a variety of foods sold at retail. Comparisons are made for individual foods and groupings of foods (market baskets).

Long-run trends in farm-to-consumer price spreads may reflect a variety of underlying economic conditions, ERS explained. These conditions include advances in technology

used to process and distribute food, and changes in prices for inputs such as labor, energy, and raw agricultural commodities.

The process of generating market basket statistics has two steps: a market basket of foods is constructed to represent what households buy for at-home consumption over a one-year period; and estimates of farm share and the farm-to-retail price spread (or difference between costs of the food basket at retail and the farm basket) are calculated using consumer and farm price data.

To identify the retail dairy basket, ERS uses the dairy portion of the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) to determine how much money households spent

• See **Farm-Retail Spread**, p. 9

**May Avg Prices - 2023 vs 2022**  
Average CME Prices\*\*  
Class 3 and Class 4 Milk Price x 10





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2810 Crossroads Drive, Suite 3000  
Madison, WI 53718-7972  
(608) 246-8430 • Fax (608) 246-8431  
<http://www.cheesereporter.com>

DICK GROVES  
Publisher/Editor

e-mail: [dgroves@cheesereporter.com](mailto:dgroves@cheesereporter.com)  
608-316-3791

MOIRA CROWLEY  
Specialty Cheese Editor  
e-mail: [mcrowley@cheesereporter.com](mailto:mcrowley@cheesereporter.com)  
608-316-3793

KEVIN THOME  
Advertising & Marketing Director  
e-mail: [kthome@cheesereporter.com](mailto:kthome@cheesereporter.com)  
608-316-3792

BETTY MERKES  
Classifieds/Circulation Manager  
e-mail: [info@cheesereporter.com](mailto:info@cheesereporter.com)  
608-316-3790

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:  
Jen Pino-Gallagher, Bob Cropp, Brandis Waswick,  
Dan Strongin, John Umhoefer  
You can e-mail our contributors at:  
[contributors@cheesereporter.com](mailto:contributors@cheesereporter.com)

Cheese Reporter is the official publication of the following associations:

**California Cheese & Butter Association**  
Lisa Waters,  
1011 Pebble Beach Dr, Clayton, CA 94517

**Central Wisconsin Cheesemakers' and Buttermakers' Association**  
Peggy Noeldner  
[pnoeldner@nasonvilledairy.com](mailto:pnoeldner@nasonvilledairy.com)

**Cheese Importers Association of America**  
204 E St. NE, Washington, DC 20002

**Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers' and Buttermakers' Association**  
Barb Henning, Henning's Cheese  
21812 Ucker Road, Kiel, WI 53042

**International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association**  
8317 Elderberry Road, Madison, WI 53717

**Missouri Butter & Cheese Institute**  
Terry S. Long, 19107 Factory Creek Road,  
Jamestown, MO 65046

**Nebraska Cheese Association**  
Ed Price, Fremont, NE 68025

**New York State Cheese Manufacturer's Assn**  
Kathryn Boor, 11 Stocking Hall,  
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

**North Central Cheese Industries Assn**  
Prafulla Salunke, SDSU, Box 2104,  
Brookings, SD 57007

**North Dakota Cheese Makers' Assn**  
Chuck Knetter, Medina, ND 58467

**Ohio Swiss Cheese Association**  
Lois Miller, P.O. Box 445,  
Sugar Creek, OH 44681

**South Dakota State Dairy Association**  
Howard Bonnemann, SDSU, Box 2104,  
Brookings, SD 57007

**Southwestern Wisconsin Cheesemakers' Association**  
Ben Workman, Edelweiss Creamery LLC,  
W6117 Cty Hwy C, Monticello, WI 53566

**Wisconsin Association for Food Protection**  
Bob Wills  
PO Box 620705, Middleton WI 53562

**Wisconsin Cheesemakers' Association**  
John Umhoefer, 5117 W. Terrace Dr.,  
Suite 402, Madison, WI 53718

**Wisconsin Dairy Products Association**  
Brad Legreid, 8383 Greenway Blvd.,  
Middleton, WI 53562

## EDITORIAL COMMENT



**DICK GROVES**

Publisher / Editor  
Cheese Reporter  
e: [dgroves@cheesereporter.com](mailto:dgroves@cheesereporter.com)

### Hispanic Cheese Output Just Keeps Growing And Growing

In an expanding market such as cheese, where production hasn't declined in over three decades, it's pretty easy to find successful "niches," ranging from Mozzarella and Parmesan to Feta and Gouda.

But there seems to be one cheese category that exceeds all others when it comes to consistent production growth, year after year. That category is Hispanic cheeses.

As reported last week in our *Dairy Production Extra* supplement, Hispanic cheese production in 2022 totaled a record 386.3 million pounds, up an impressive 9.8 percent from 2021. That marked the 10th straight year in which Hispanic cheese production set a new record.

There are several ways to put the growth in Hispanic cheese production into proper perspective. First, USDA's National Ag Statistics Service first started tracking Hispanic cheese production back in 1996. Output that year totaled 67.4 million pounds, or about 319 million pounds less than last year.

Since 1996, Hispanic cheese production has declined exactly once: that was in 2012, when output of 223.9 million pounds was down about half a million pounds from 2011. Other than that, Hispanic cheese output has increased every year since 1996.

By comparison, for the four cheese categories noted above, Mozzarella output has declined three times since 1996, most recently in 2020, and Parmesan output has declined six times, most recently in 2019.

NASS has only been tracking Feta and Gouda production since 2010; since then, Feta output has declined three times, most recently just last year; and Gouda production has fallen four times, most recently in 2020.

These comparisons aren't meant to downplay these other categories; rather, they illustrate

just how consistent the growth in Hispanic cheese production has been over the past 27 years, and how rare that consistent growth really is in the expanding cheese industry.

Another way to look at the growth in Hispanic cheese production is to look at plant numbers. The number of plants producing Hispanic cheese has risen from 28 in 1996 to 62 in 2022.

There has, in fact, been an increase in the overall number of cheese plants in the US since 1996, from 423 that year to 515 last year, but not many categories can boast a more than doubling of plant numbers over that period (although it should be noted that the number of plants producing Gouda has risen from 39 in 2010 to 89 in 2022).

Related to this, Cacique Foods — which describes itself as the maker of the number one brand of authentic Mexican-style cheeses in the US — just opened a new dairy processing facility in Amarillo, TX, a few weeks ago. It's probably safe to describe this new Cacique plant as one of the largest Hispanic cheese plants in the US.

Another way to illustrate the growth of Hispanic cheese production is to look at cheese contest categories over the years. Back in 1997, for example, there were no classes for Hispanic-style cheeses in the United States Championship Cheese Contest.

This year, that contest featured three classes for Latin American style cheeses, one for fresh cheeses, one for melting cheeses and one for hard cheeses.

The many entries in those classes help illustrate how the growth in Hispanic cheese production has evolved. Companies entering Latin American style cheeses in that contest generally fell into two categories: companies that are largely or

...the growth in Hispanic cheese production has been over the past 27 years, and how rare that consistent growth really is in the expanding cheese industry.

completely devoted to producing Hispanic cheeses; and companies that have added Hispanic cheeses to their product portfolio in recent years.

So, will Hispanic cheese production continue to grow in the years ahead? It would certainly seem likely, for at least a couple of reasons.

First, with Cacique's new Texas plant opening this year, it's probably a safe bet that Hispanic cheese production will get a nice "bump" just from that plant's output, for eight-plus months here in 2023 and then for a full year in 2024.

Related to that point, another major player in the Hispanic cheese business, V&V Supremo Foods, last year announced the acquisition of Mill Creek Cheese of Arena, WI, which produces both Hispanic cheeses such as Queso Quesadilla and Queso Blanco as well as Brick and Muenster. That purchase will allow V&V Supremo to increase production to meet the growing demand for its products, the announcement noted.

V&V Supremo also recently received a Dairy Processor Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to invest in a modernization project at its plant in Browntown, WI.

Suffice it to say that two of the largest players in the Hispanic cheese business are in expansion mode.

Finally, a quick check of pretty much any listing of the top US restaurant chains finds at least a few chains focusing on Mexican-style or similar cuisines, ranging from Taco Bell and Chipotle to El Pollo Loco and Del Taco. These chains don't necessarily use Hispanic cheeses, but they help illustrate the popularity of Mexican and related cuisines.

And that popularity points to further growth in Hispanic cheese production.

## Location Matters: Price Cuts On Some Foods Affects Demand For Others

Chicago—Researchers from four universities published a new Journal of Marketing article that examines whether price promotions on some products differentially impact demand for other products, depending on their relative locations within a display.

Consumers select from a variety of competing products in multi-product displays. Some products are discounted while others in close proximity are regularly priced, the researchers noted.

For example, Costco offers items that are not regularly stocked at a reduced price to train shoppers to enter the store in search of “deals,” as if on a treasure hunt. Finding these deals exposes customers to proximal products in other categories, which allows Costco to capture sales from people not interested in the discounted product.

The key question is: Do price promotions on some products differentially impact demand for other products depending on their relative locations within a display? This new study concludes that the answer is yes.

The researchers say that “When the proximal items (i.e., those placed nearby) and distal items (i.e., those placed farther)

are strong substitutes for the promoted item, we find that a price promotion decreases the sales of proximal products relative to distal products. This is known as a negative proximity effect. However, when the proximal and distal items are weak substitutes for the promoted item, the promoted product increases the sales of proximal products relative to distal products. This is known as a positive proximity effect. In this case, the proximal product benefits from the increased attention by virtue of being close to the promoted product.”

The research team — from the University of Connecticut, Texas A&M University, University of Colorado at Boulder, and University of Florida — found evidence for these sales patterns across eight studies.

In one study, they analyzed yogurt sales at a retail grocer. When non-promoted products are strong substitutes for the promoted product, a 1 percent decrease in the price of the promoted product results in a 0.25 percent decrease in sales of proximal products, but there is no change in sales of distal products.

However, when non-promoted products are weak substitutes for

the promoted product, a 1 percent decrease in the price of the promoted product results in a 0.10 percent increase in sales of proximal products. Again, there is no change in sales for distal products.

The promotion-proximity results provided three insights:

- It is often assumed that price promotions draw attention toward the promoted brand and away from all other brands. In contrast, these results show price promotions direct attention to the promoted brand and the brands that surround it (i.e., attention spills over).

- Prior research assumes that goal-directed consumers will search a product display so that all appropriate products enter a consideration set before the purchase decision is made. In contrast, this analysis indicates that a price promotion can increase (or decrease) the likelihood of a proximal (or distal) product entering the consumers’ consideration set.

- Prior research assumes multiple purchases come from a single consideration set. In contrast, this research argues that consumers can search multiple locations in a product display, with each location generating a unique consideration set and purchase opportunity.

Understanding how attention spills over to proximal products creates several opportunities for

marketing managers, according to the researchers.

For example, managers may consider product subcategory boundaries as opportunities to exploit positive proximity effects. Placing a border brand on price promotion should draw increased attention to a less substitutable proximal item and increase the probability of a positive proximity effect. Managers can take advantage of this to direct attention to full-priced higher-margin brands. Taking this further, positive proximity effects may also occur for non-substitutes (e.g., refrigerated yogurt and refrigerated desserts).

Further, retailers commonly conceive of loss leaders (e.g., milk) as items used to increase exposure to other non-promoted product categories in the store (e.g., product categories they pass on the way to the dairy aisle).

However, a loss leader can also be used to introduce customers to new products within a product category.

For example, imagine discounting a product like almond milk and surrounding it with novel flavors/versions of non-promoted items (e.g., oat milk, soy milk) to induce trial of those new items. In this sense, price promotions benefit the promoted brand and also increase exposure to other high margin items in the product category.

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## Lipari Foods Finalizes Acquisition Of Iowa-Based Food Distributor

Warren, MI—Specialty food distributor Lipari Foods recently announced that it has reached an agreement to acquire Clive, IA-based Comercializadora Del Midwest (CDM), a provider of Central and South American specialty items.

This acquisition will expand Lipari's portfolio of international products as well as its distribution footprint in the Midwest, the company noted.

Founded in 2007 in Burnsville, MN, as a wholesaler of grocery,

frozen, and dairy products to supply niche Latino communities with nostalgic products, the CDM team services 380-plus customers within the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin, according to Lipari Foods.

CDM sources over 1,200 items from 12-plus countries throughout Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Islands.

"We are thrilled to welcome the CDM team into our family as we develop the Latino category," said John Pawlowski, president and COO of Lipari Foods. "Roberto and Martha did an incredible job focusing on the customer and supplier relationships, while building out their program, as a trusted partner.

"We are excited to integrate their expertise with our distribution footprint, leading to significant opportunities for all of our business partners," he added.

"We knew Lipari was a trusted partner that would build upon our company values centered around people, relationships, trust and focus on the customer," said Roberto Gomez, owner of Comercializadora Del Midwest.

Claudio Zarate will continue to serve as the leader for Comercializadora Del Midwest.

Lipari Foods is an independent "perimeter of the store" distributor, delivering a wide range of bakery, dairy, deli, packaging, seafood, meat, grocery, foodservice, confectionery and convenience food and beverage products.

## Trade Forecasts

(Continued from p. 1)

cent, or \$496 million, from the first six months of fiscal 2022.

USDA raised fiscal year 2023 dairy import forecast by \$500 million from its February forecast, to \$5.1 billion, due to higher unit values and volumes of cheese and butter. Fiscal 2022 dairy imports were valued at \$4.6 billion.

During the first six months of fiscal 2023, dairy imports were valued at \$2.73 billion, up 29.5 percent, or \$627 million, from the first six months of fiscal 2022.

USDA's fiscal year 2023 forecast for cheese imports is raised by \$200 million from its February forecast, to \$1.8 billion. Fiscal 2022 cheese imports were valued at \$1.53 billion. During the first half of fiscal 2023, cheese imports were valued at \$818 million, up 9.9 percent, or \$74 million, from

the first half of fiscal 2022.

USDA's overall agricultural exports for fiscal year 2023 are forecast at \$181.0 billion, down \$3.5 billion from the February forecast. This revision is driven by declines in corn, wheat, beef and poultry exports. Total livestock, poultry, and dairy exports are projected to fall by \$1.2 billion to \$39.3 billion, as declines in beef and poultry exports more than offset increases in dairy exports.

US agricultural imports in fiscal 2023 are projected at \$198.0 billion, down \$1.0 billion from the February forecast.

These export and import forecast result in a negative US ag trade balance of \$17.0 billion, down from February's forecast of negative \$14.5 billion. The US ran a positive agricultural trade balance of \$2.4 billion in fiscal 2022.

The global economic outlook for calendar year 2023 remains mostly unchanged from USDA's

February 2023 report. Inflation remains on a slowing trend, but economic growth challenges are materializing as monetary conditions tighten.

North America is still projected to grow moderately, with growth in the Eurozone projected to remain at lower levels. World real gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to increase by 2.8 percent in 2023, unchanged from the previous forecast.

China's real GDP is expected to grow by 5.2 percent in 2023, up from the previous forecast of 5.0 percent. The reopening of the economy has led to stronger growth and projection figures.

Japan's real GDP growth for 2023 is lowered to 1.3 percent, from 1.8 percent previously. South Korea's real GDP growth in 2023 is lowered to 1.5 percent from 1.9 percent, as exports have declined because of lower overseas demand.

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

### 50 YEARS AGO

**June 1, 1973: Heuvelton, NY**—The New York State Cheese Manufacturers Association lauded efforts to keep open a Foremost whey processing plant here. The James B. Downing Company purchased the plant, scheduled to close on Jan. 31. Retention of the facility assures continued operation of cheesemaking plants in Heuvelton, Ogdensburg, Chateaugay and Adams.

**Washington**—Without accepting the specific price target set in the Senate's version of the new farm program, President Nixon has told congressional leaders he is willing to use the Senate plan as the basic framework for negotiating new legislation.

### 25 YEARS AGO

**May 29, 1998: Washington**—A special IDFA butter committee has decided to pursue several actions related to the high butter prices so far in 1998. Last week, the price of all three grades of butter increased to \$1.6500 per pound – the second-highest price ever, trailing only the Grade AA butter price of \$1.95 last October.

**Chicago**—It appears there is a place for both Pasta Filata and pressed curd Mozzarella in today's market, with use and customer preference as the final judge – not a standard of identity or scientific developments, said Dick Smith, director of ADPI's Cheese Division.

### 10 YEARS AGO

**May 31, 2013: Madison**—With a higher milk and protein quotient, the budding Icelandic yogurt market in the US has the potential to become the next big thing if customers can get past limited availability and a premium price. Originally the by-product of buttermaking, skyr has been made in Iceland for over 1,000 years.

**Randolph, VT**—Vermont Butter & Cheese Company officially broke ground this spring on the newly-acquired Ayers Brook Goat Dairy here, strengthening the state's supply of quality goat's milk. Created as a demonstration farm, Ayers Brook will also offer a teaching venue for new goat farmers.



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## Importance Of Taste As Top Factor In Food, Beverage Purchases Increases

Washington—The International Food Information Council (IFIC) recently released its *2023 Food and Health Survey*, revealing key consumer insights around, among other things, the rising cost of food, key factors driving food and beverage purchases, and social media's role in shaping food choices.

This was the 18th edition of IFIC's annual survey. The 2023 survey was conducted by Greenwald Research, using Dynata's consumer panel, via an online survey of 1,022 Americans ages 18 to 80 between Apr. 3 and Apr. 10, 2023.

Some 91 percent of survey respondents saw an increase in food and beverage prices over the past year (72 percent noted a "major" increase), up from 83 percent who said the same thing last year. Among those people, nearly half said they always or often cut back on nonessential food and beverage products.

Price is also taking a toll on the healthfulness of Americans' diets, the survey found: nearly three in 10 consumers who noticed higher food prices in 2023 said they made less healthy choices as a result.

A consistent theme across the IFIC survey history has been the dominance of taste as the top factor driving food and beverage purchases. Its importance among five key motivators (taste, price, healthfulness, convenience, and sustainability) only strengthened over the past year, with 87 percent of respondents in 2023 citing it as a factor in their decisions, up from 80 percent in 2022.

Similarly, price also saw a notable increase, from 68 percent in 2022 to 76 percent in 2023, suggesting that economic uncertainties and inflation could be exerting a stronger influence on consumers.

The survey also sheds light on the pervasive influence of social media on the dietary habits of Americans, especially among younger generations. About four in 10 consumers said they have come across social media content about food and nutrition in the past year.

Exposure to this content is inversely proportional with age, with Gen Z (71 percent) and Millennials (58 percent) reporting the highest exposure as compared to older generations. For better or worse, two-thirds said they trust that information at least a little (46 percent) or a lot (21 percent).

Findings about specific social media platforms show that there are major disconnects between where people see content and how trustworthy they find those sources, the survey found. For

instance, Facebook is the most popular social platform for food and nutrition content, cited as the source for 64 percent of respondents who reported seeing such content. But only 18 percent trust Facebook a lot.

On the other end of the spectrum, food and nutrition content was seen by only 6 percent on LinkedIn, whereas 52 percent said they trust its content a lot.

Given the disparities in popularity and trust among platforms, it might come as little surprise that about two-thirds of consumers reported seeing a lot of conflicting information on social media about foods to eat or avoid, and 60 percent said that conflicting information makes them doubt their food choices.

"Social media has morphed from a mere networking platform into a digital dining table, shaping our food choices, stirring culinary curiosity, and serving as a recipe for both clarity and confusion in our nutritional narratives," said Wendy Reinhardt Kapsak, IFIC's president and CEO. "Social media discourse about food is not just a fad; it has grown into a de facto nutritionist for millions of Americans, influencing consumer attitudes and decisions, but with information that can vary in both its accuracy and impact."

With health consciousness at the forefront, consumers report that "healthy" labels would affect their food choices. For instance, when given the option of buying a hypothetical snack product labeled "healthy" versus an otherwise identical product without such a label, consumers chose the

"healthy" option 55 percent to 16 percent.

But individual definitions of the term vary, with 40 percent of respondents defining "healthy" as fresh, followed by low in sugar and a good source of protein.

Consumers are scrutinizing product labels for a variety of other terms, including "natural," which 40 percent of in-person shoppers reported buying regularly, the survey found.

Overall, people who shop in-person are more likely to check food labels (55 percent always or often check labels) than online shoppers (46 percent always or often check labels). Moreover, online shoppers' attention to labels is down from 2022, when 52 percent said they always or often check those labels.

### High Protein Diets Trending

The survey revealed a prevalence of specific dietary patterns, with more than half of consumers (52 percent) reporting they followed a specific eating pattern or diet at some point in the past year.

High protein diets, a new choice in this year's survey, was the most popular (18 percent), followed by mindful eating (17 percent).

The findings of the survey suggest that image is an increasingly big motivator behind people's eating patterns. The top three reasons people cited for those eating patterns all increased significantly in 2023: 43 percent wanted to lose weight (up from 34 percent in 2022), 39 percent wanted to improve their physical appearance (up from 31 percent), and 39 percent wanted to feel better or have more energy (also up from 31 percent).

Fewer consumers in 2023 cited environmental sustainability as a

driver of their food and beverage purchases (34 percent in 2023 versus 39 percent in 2022), trailing far behind the other four decision-making factors, as it has every year of the survey.

**"Social media has morphed from a mere networking platform into a digital dining table, shaping our food choices, stirring culinary curiosity, and serving as a recipe for both clarity and confusion in our nutritional narratives."**

—Wendy Reinhardt Kapsak,  
International Food  
Information Council

While a similar number (35 percent) said that "climate friendliness" impacted their choices about at least some of the foods they eat, 43 percent said it didn't make much or any impact at all. Millennials were the most likely to report such impacts, followed by Gen Z, Gen X and Boomers.

Among those who said climate friendliness impacted their choices about specific foods, meat and poultry topped the list (62 percent of those respondents), followed by fresh fruits/vegetables (55 percent) and dairy (50 percent).

When respondents were asked which factors they considered to be indicators of sustainability, 43 percent cited recyclable packaging, followed by reusable packaging (37 percent), packaging made from recycled materials (36 percent) and being labeled as locally grown (35 percent).

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## Formula Tariffs

(Continued from p. 1)

ply of infant formula for families across the nation.”

“I’m proud to be co-leading this bipartisan effort to permanently waive tariffs on infant formula, which will lower prices and ensure we can protect infants from risks associated with current or future supply shortages,” Menendez said.

“The baby formula crisis put an additional spotlight on the serious supply chain challenges we face,” said Smith, who chairs the House Ways and Means trade subcommittee. “Congress immediately came together in a bipartisan way to waive tariffs on safe, FDA-approved formula, and it alleviated some of the pressures families faced when searching for formula.

“Now that those tariffs have returned, the availability of formula has become strained once again,” Smith said. “That’s why we are working in a bipartisan, bicameral way to permanently lift barriers to safely import formula and give families more options and access to the formula they need.”

“The fragility of the domestic infant formula market was put into stark relief last year when a problem at just one company’s facility led to a drastic supply shortage and massive price increases for parents nationwide,” Beyer said. “Due to high tariffs

and other protectionist obstacles preventing high-quality infant formula imports from the global market, parents with small children were left scrambling to find affordable alternatives.

“With the expiration of temporary emergency measures designed to ease the shortage, the market remains extremely vulnerable to another supply shock,” Beyer said. “This bill would permanently eliminate trade barriers to encourage the import of FDA-compliant infant formula, bringing prices down for parents in the near term and staving off a potential future crisis.”

“The FORMULA 3.0 Act seeks to provide a much-needed permanent response to the ongoing infant formula shortage that would ensure additional market flexibility in both good times and bad while tearing down artificial barriers that have long made it difficult for parents to obtain their formula of choice,” said Jerry Theodorou, policy director for finance, insurance and trade at the R Street Institute.

“During the severe domestic supply shortages of 2022, tariffs and other restrictions on imported infant formula had a detrimental effect on the market’s ability to respond,” Theodorou noted. But National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) opposes the legislation, saying it would increase US vulnerability to infant formula

supply disruptions by increasing US reliance on imported formula and formula inputs.

“This bill would make American families more reliant on foreign companies for their infant formula supply and puts in place new one-way-street trade conditions that would harm dairy farmers, cooperatives and processors,” said Jim Mulhern, NMPF’s president and CEO. “Instead of weakening our domestic infant formula sector and putting American jobs at risk, we ask that Congress work with us to reinforce and expand our domestic production capacity.

“We strongly support two-way dairy trade,” Mulhern continued. “That’s why we advocated for passage of existing US free trade agreements and why we’ve been vocal proponents of resuming trade negotiations to expand dairy trade opportunities; but we vehemently object to putting unilateral import expansion on the backs of American dairy farmers.”

In response to last year’s infant formula emergency, NMPF supported the 2022 Formula Act and did not oppose passage of the subsequent 2022 Bulk Infant Formula to Retail Shelves Act, which increased import access at a time of acute need. Both laws rightfully expired at the end of 2022, once US production had recovered to pre-crisis levels, NMPF noted.

The US “can absolutely more than meet domestic demand, and should in fact be positioning itself as a net exporter of infant formula,” said Randy Mooney, NMPF chairman and a Missouri dairy farmer. “The US dairy industry is a proven leader in providing milk powder, whey, lactose and cheese to consumers all around the world; infant formula should be no different.”

## Listeria Concerns Prompt MA Firm To Recall Cheeses

**Williamstown, MA**—Cricket Creek Farm of Williamstown, MA, is recalling 165 units of Sophelise cheese and 149 pounds of Tobasi cheese because it has the potential to be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Sophelise and Tobasi were distributed in Massachusetts and New York through Wild Oats, Williamstown, MA; Provisions Williamstown, Williamstown, MA; McEnroe Organic Farm Market, Millerton, NY; New Lebanon Farmers Market, New Lebanon, NY; at restaurants, and farmers markets.

Sophelise product code 087055 is a washed, pasteurized milk cheese with a soft rind and pinkish hue, Cricket Creek Farm noted in its recall announcement. It was distributed between Mar. 29 and May 26, 2023. Tobasi with a product label of 315, 341, 048 is a washed raw-milk cheese with an orange rind and creamy interior. These batches were distributed between Mar. 26 and May 26, 2023.

One hospitalization due to *Listeria monocytogenes* has been reported as of May 30, 2023, the company noted. Following this customer notification of illness, products purchased by this individual were tested by Biotrax Testing Laboratory and the current batch of Sophelise was determined to be positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*.

The three batches of Tobasi are being recalled due to their proximity during storage to the exposed product.

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## Amarillo, TX, Aiming To Become Silicon Valley Of Dairy, Beef Industries

Amarillo, TX—Amarillo is a center of production for the nation's dairy and beef industries, and a group of area business leaders plans to leverage the region's unique industry influence and perspective in a collaborative movement to transform the city into a global food hub.

The newly established Regional Accelerator and New Growth Engine (RANGE), which launched to the public last month, will lay the framework for Amarillo to become a world leader in facilitating research, developing programs and creating technology that addresses present and future challenges in the dairy, beef, and crop-production industries.

"We envision an Amarillo that's as central to the beef and dairy industry as Silicon Valley is to the technology industry, and we'll incubate technology, innovation and capital to grow and attract uniquely aligned business and talent to the region," said Matt Garner, Ph.D., executive director of the RANGE.

## Lallemand Offers Solution To Control Mold, Yeast Growth In Dairy Products

Montreal, Quebec—Lallemand Specialty Cultures is introducing LALCULT® Protect MC1, which has been designed to prevent mold as well as yeast growth in dairy products.

This helps extend the shelf life of dairy products, providing a cost-effective and efficient solution for dairy product manufacturers, Lallemand noted. By implementing LALCULT Protect MC1, companies can ensure the safety and quality of their products while maintaining consumer trust and brand reputation.

Mold and yeast contamination pose a significant risk to both consumers and dairy manufacturers, Lallemand explained. This issue can lead to organoleptic alterations such as color and taste defects in various dairy products, including cheese, milk and yogurt.

LALCULT Protect MC1 is an innovative bioprotective solution through its strong activity, ease of use and large range of applications (fresh cheeses, ripened cheeses, sliced and grated cheeses, yogurt-type dairy specialties, and sour cream), Lallemand said. With its key features, LALCULT Protect MC1 will be a major complementary tool for producers in the control of mold and yeast growth.

For more information, visit [www.lallemand.com](http://www.lallemand.com).

To meet its goal, the RANGE will train and retain top talent in Amarillo and encourage collaboration between the business sectors that intersect with agricultural production, such as manufacturing, research and technology.

"Global demand for dietary protein will increase 75 percent by the year 2050," Garner noted. "By becoming a creator and net exporter of technological innovations, the RANGE will address industry challenges, leverage our strengths, and create new opportunities to attract businesses."

Laura Street, one of the Amarillo leaders behind the initiative, explained the RANGE's unique collaborative model will result in transformative synergy between producers, industry partners and

academic institutions to identify and solve global food supply chain issues.

"The RANGE will create a multi-industry ecosystem that encourages protein-related production, research and innovation," Street said. "We envision a global food hub that fortifies the food supply chain while transforming the future economic growth of our region."

The endeavor has had a promising start, piloting programs and creating new industry partnerships, leaders said. Recent projects the RANGE supported include research into livestock varieties that require less water to help producers adapt to fluctuating water availability and an effort to harness developments in asset tracking technology by developing beacons to better manage herds with up-to-the-minute insights into every animal.

Street pointed to recent food supply chain disruptions during and since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to stress the importance of facilitating innovation that grows and strengthens the food supply.

Milk production has been growing rapidly in Texas in recent years, from 9.6 billion pounds in 2012 to 16.5 billion pounds in 2022. Texas last year ranked fourth in the US in milk production. During the first quarter of this year, Texas moved past Idaho to rank third in milk production.

In one illustration of the growth of the Texas industry, Cacique Foods expanded its operations by opening a new dairy processing facility in Amarillo and new corporate headquarters in Irving.

For more information about collaborating with the RANGE and its integrated partners, contact [info@therange.org](mailto:info@therange.org).

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## Hidden Springs Creamery Under New Ownership; Legacy To Continue

Westby, WI—Hidden Springs Creamery, the award-winning sheep's milk cheese company established by Brenda Jensen and her husband Dean almost 20 years ago, is under new ownership.

Jensen and her husband, a mental health practitioner, launched Hidden Springs in June 2006. Since then, the farmstead operation has earned a host of awards for its cheeses.

The company makes raw milk originals like Ocooch Mountain, Bohemian Blue and Wischago, but its line of Driftless Spreadable Cheese in flavors like Honey Lavender, Maple Cream, and Basil Olive Oil created an allegiant customer base.

"Building Hidden Springs has been an exciting, meaningful and wonderful ride for Dean and I, but we are now looking forward to finding inspiration in our next adventure," Jensen said.

The new owners have a dairy background, working for 17 years on a family-owned, 80-cow dairy farm in Alburgh, VT, next to the Canadian border on Lake Champlain. Amy and Travis Forgues purchased Hidden Springs on April 3.

"When we were young farmers, I took cheesemaking classes at the University of Vermont," Amy Forgues said. "It was something I always wanted to do – make cheese on the farm."

"Farmstead plants aren't cheap," she continued. "It was a hard thing for us to think about, because it was something we always would've loved to do."

The couple did transition their dairy farm to organic, "which

allowed us a pay price that would support both families on the farm," Forgues said. "We raised our three kids on that farm."

During that time, Amy and Travis became very involved with Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative in LaFarge, WI, joining the dairy cooperative and starting the farmer pool.

"We both got really involved with Organic Valley to the point where we actually came here to work for them about nine years ago," she said.

We still really missed agriculture, though, Forgues continued. Our realtor actually came to me and said 'I think this farm may be perfect for you.'

"We didn't really know that much about sheep, but the more we learned, the more we thought 'we could do this,'" Forgues said.

"There's a herdsman that's been here for 10 years and stayed on with us, as well as a cheese maker that's been here for 10 years, so we really had the support to help us through training," she continued.

And the award-winning Hidden Springs founder is just up the road.

"Amy has made cheese in the past and is taking classes to sharpen her skills, as well as being mentored by me," Jensen said. "She's dedicated to ensuring the quality products you all expect from us will continue."

"I knew how to make cheese, but I wasn't a licensed Wisconsin cheese maker," Forgues said. "I'm taking all the classes and learning under her – you have to complete so many hours under a licensed cheese maker."

"She grew an amazing business, and it's nice for her to be able to have some freedom, but be involved and see how things are going, as much as she wants to – not because she has to," Forgues continued.

The transition of caring for sheep as opposed to cows was challenging but doable.

"We were a bit intimidated at first, but sheep are ruminants – pretty similar to cows," Amy Forgues said. "The biggest difference I'm seeing right now with lambing is just the sheer volume. We have 130 lambing right now, with between two or three each – they have twins and triplets. That's a lot of babies."

### Product Line, Brand Remain Intact

On the cheesemaking end, production will remain the same. The Hidden Springs brand, logo and product line will continue intact.

"We have all the same cheeses; we have all the recipes and all the knowledge to make those, and that's what we're sticking with for now," Forgues said.

"I may try some new flavors of the Driftless spread, but that's probably as adventurous as I'll get," she said. "I want to make sure we continue to make the good cheese she's been making for so many years."

One of the biggest surprises Forgues encountered in taking over the business was a welcome one – she was surprised at how much fun she's having.

"When I got into the transition, taking cheesemaking classes while trying to learn about the business from Brenda and still working at Organic Valley – throughout all that chaos, I kind of forgot how much I like farming and how fun it is to make cheese," she said. "It



The new owner of Hidden Springs Creamery, Amy Forgues, will continue the legacy of Brenda Jensen's sheep's milk cheese company.

was like, 'Oh, yeah – that's why I started doing all of this.'"

"I think my biggest challenge is to slow down and stay in my lane," Forgues said. "One thing at a time."

Making sheep's milk cheese isn't considerably different than cow or goat's milk – both of which Forgues has experience in.

"The components are the biggest difference. Sheep's milk has a much higher amount of milk solids, so I get a much better yield from my sheep than my cows, or even goats," she said.

"It doesn't seem to be much of a transition as far as the cheesemaking process for me. It's all a calculation," she continued.

The Forgues continue to maintain a herd of nine Irish Dexter cows – small animals with dual purpose for beef or milking.

"They don't milk high – about 30 pounds apiece, but with very high components, so quite good for cheesemaking," Forgues said.

"Once we get our feet on the ground here, I'd like to make some mixed milk cheeses, exploring with that Irish Dexter breed."

"Brenda actually did make a mixed milk cheese that won some awards back in the day, so I have a recipe for that as well," she continued.

Fellow cheese makers in Wisconsin's Driftless Region have been extremely welcoming and generous with sharing information, Forgues said.

We ship some of our milk to Hook's Cheese in Mineral Point, she said. Tony Hook makes his Blue cheese with our milk, and just yesterday he set me up with the Sheep Dairy Association of Wisconsin.

"Everyone's been incredibly friendly," Forgues said. "I tend to focus on what we're doing here on the farm, and people are reaching out, which is really nice."

For product line and more information, visit [www.hidden springscreamery.com](http://www.hidden springscreamery.com).

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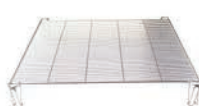
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EAST

Brian Schlatter  
brian@fromagex.com  
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## USDA Releases Updated Spec. For Pasteurized Process American Cheese, Kosher Process

Washington—The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) this week released an updated Pasteurized Process American Cheese and Kosher Certified Process Cheese Product CRD (Commodity Requirements Document).

Primary updates to the CRD include kosher language modifications.

Among other things, under the update, Kosher certified process cheese product has to be produced according to FDA standardized product, pasteurized process cheese, with the exception to replace an insignificant amount of lecithin with an insignificant amount of olive oil in the formulation in order to receive kosher certification.

When olive oil is used in place of a lecithin ingredient, the product has to be labeled as "cheese product," with the exception of a Temporary Marketing Permit (TMP) from FDA. Manufacturers who are issued a TMP may label the food as "cheese" for the timeframe authorized through the TMP.

Questions about the updated specification for Pasteurized Process American Cheese and Cheese Product Kosher Certified Process should be submitted to Matthew Siedschlaw, AMS, at [matthew.siedschlaw@usda.gov](mailto:matthew.siedschlaw@usda.gov).

In other USDA dairy commodity procurement developments, the agency last Friday announced the purchase of a total of 238,500 containers of fluid milk for delivery in the state of Pennsylvania from June 1 through Sept. 30, 2023.

The total price of the fluid milk acquisition is \$425,121.21.

The purchase includes 3,600 gallons and 234,900 half-gallons of 2 percent milk.

Contracts were awarded as follows:

**Cream-O-Land Dairy:** 32,400 containers of milk, at a total price of \$59,713.20.

**Harrisburg Dairies:** 89,100 containers of milk, at a total price of \$154,448.14.

**Marburger Farm Dairy:** 60,300 containers of milk, at a total price of \$108,061.81.

**United Dairy Inc.:** 56,700 containers of milk, at a total price of \$102,898.06.

Additional information about selling dairy or other food products to USDA is available on the AMS Commodity Procurement website, at [www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food](http://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food).

## Farm-Retail Spread

(Continued from p. 1)

on various foods. The CE includes a diary for recording purchases, National Consumer Panel data, and IRI InfoScan data.

Indices for retail cost, farm value, the farm-to-retail price spread, and the farm value share, which is computed by dividing farm value by the value of the retail basket.

For the milk and dairy basket, 2022 indices were as follows:

**Retail cost:** 154, a record, up from the previous of 138.

**Farm value:** 199, a new record, up from 143 in 2021.

**Farm-to-retail spread:** 137, a new record high, up from the previous record high of 136, set in 2021.

**Farm value share:** 36 percent, up from 29 percent in 2021 and the highest level since 2014.

**Cheddar cheese:** The retail price averaged \$5.76 per pound, up from \$5.44 per pound in 2021 and a new record, breaking the previous record of \$5.63 per pound, set in 2012. The farm value (based on minimum prices for Class III products) was \$2.06 per pound, up from \$1.57 per pound and the highest farm value since 2014's record \$2.07 per pound. The farm share was 36 percent, up from 29 percent in 2021 and the highest since 2014's record 37 percent.

**Whole milk:** The retail price averaged \$4.09 per gallon, up from \$3.54 per gallon in 2021 and a new record high, breaking the previous record of \$3.69 per gallon, set in 2014. The farm value (based on minimum prices for Class I products) was \$2.27 per gallon, up from \$1.69 per gallon in 2021 and a new record high, breaking the previ-

ous record of \$2.26 per gallon, set in 2014. The farm share was 55 percent, up from 48 percent and the highest level since 2019's 56 percent.

The record high of 61 percent was set in 2014.

**Ice cream:** The retail price averaged \$5.43 per half-gallon, up from \$4.89 per half-gallon in 2021 and a new record, breaking the previous record of \$5.04 per half-gallon, set in 2012. The farm value (based on minimum prices for Class II products) was \$1.27 per half-gallon, up from 78 cents per half-gallon in 2021 and a new record, breaking the previous record of \$1.05 per half-gallon, set in 2014.

The farm share was 23 percent, up from 16 percent in 2021 and a new record high, breaking the previous record of 22 percent, set in 2014.

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## USDA Action Plan

(Continued from p. 1)

name and contact information provided to USDA by June 14. Representatives will be contacted on Thursday, June 15, with participation instructions.

Additional information will be posted at [www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/dairy](http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/dairy).

In addition to the deadline for submitting additional proposals and the date for the virtual pre-hearing information session, USDA's "Action Plan" includes three additional pre-hearing steps:

- Modified proposals due: June 20, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.
- Hearing notice published in *Federal Register*: Late July 2023.
- Tentative hearing start date: Aug. 23, 2023.

A copy of submitted proposals can be found on the USDA/AMS/Dairy Program's website, at [www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/dairy/petitions](http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/dairy/petitions).

For more information, contact Erin Taylor, at [Erin.Taylor@usda.gov](mailto:Erin.Taylor@usda.gov); phone (202) 720-7311.

### Updated Make Allowance Proposal

As noted earlier, both IDFA and WCMA on Tuesday provided additional information to AMS regarding their proposals to increase make allowances.

Both organizations had commissioned Dr. Mark Stephenson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison to update his 2022 study of manufacturing costs of Cheddar cheese, butter, dry whey, and nonfat dry milk. Stephenson has now completed that study, IDFA and WCMA noted.

Stephenson's survey is "especially robust," the WCMA noted, relying upon cost data from 18 cheese plants, nine dry whey plants, 15 nonfat dry milk plants and 13 butter plants.

As noted by both IDFA and WCMA, Stephenson's 2023 cost study establishes the following 2022 weighted average costs of manufacture: cheese, 26.43 cents per pound; dry whey, 33.61 cents per pound; nonfat dry milk, 27.50 cents per pound; and butter, 31.76 cents per pound.

Stephenson's determination of the 2022 manufacturing costs are comparable to the 2022 cost study by Dr. Bill Schiek, CEO of the Dairy Institute of California, which projected 2022 costs based upon California Department of Food and Agriculture audited cost surveys performed in 2016 and the changes in relevant cost factors since then, WCMA noted.

Schiek's 2022 cost study establishes the following 2022 weighted average costs of manufacture: cheese, 30.06 cents per pound; dry whey, 29.53 cents per pound; nonfat dry milk, 26.53 cents per pound; and butter, 23.64 cents per pound.

WCMA asked USDA to consider for adoption make allowances equal to the average of the costs of manufacture as determined by the 2023 Stephenson survey and the 2022 Schiek survey. These averages are as follows: cheese, 28.25 cents per pound; dry whey, 31.57 cents per pound; nonfat dry milk, 27.01 cents per pound; and butter, 27.70 cents per pound.

However, IDFA and WCMA are asking that USDA phase in these new make allowances over time. The first step would be to adopt make allowances effective Jan. 1, 2025, equal to 50 percent of the difference between the current make allowances and the average of the costs of manufacture established by the 2023 Stephenson study and the 2022 Schiek survey.

That would establish the following make allowances effective

Jan. 1, 2025: cheese, 24.14 cents per pound; dry whey, 25.74 cents per pound; nonfat dry milk, 21.90 cents per pound; and butter, 22.43 cents per pound.

Then, on January 1 of each of the following three years, the four make allowances would increase by one-third of the difference between the Jan. 1, 2025, make allowances and the average of the costs of manufacture established by the 2023 Stephenson study and the 2022 Schiek survey.

Under this approach, the full make allowances based upon the 2023 Stephenson survey and the 2022 Schiek survey would go into effect Jan. 1, 2028, three years after the initial make allowance increase on Jan. 1, 2025.

In its hearing request, NMPF proposed the following make allowances: cheese, 24.0 cents per pound; dry whey, 23.0 cents per pound; butter, 21.0 cents per pound; and nonfat dry milk, 21.0 cents per pound.

In their updated proposals submitted Tuesday, both IDFA and WCMA also stated that they support proposals that would replace the current system of updating make allowances with a system that provides USDA with the legal authority and funds necessary to conduct regular, audited mandatory dairy product cost studies, resulting in scheduled periodic updating of make allowances.

In their new proposals, IDFA and WCMA include a provisions under which the make allowance increases set forth in their proposal not come into effect in any given year if, prior to the start of that year, Congress has enacted legislation providing authority for mandatory audited cost surveys, and USDA has promulgated regulations implementing that authority and adopted make allowances pursuant thereto.

## NZ's Westland Milk Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony For Lactoferrin Plant

Hokitika, New Zealand—Westland Milk Products, a subsidiary of China's Yili Group, held a ceremony for the construction of its NZ\$70 million lactoferrin plant at Hokitika, New Zealand.

The investment will enable Yili to rank among the top three global companies in the category, with a market share of approximately 10 percent, according to the Yili Group.

Lactoferrin, a multifunctional natural protein, offers immune benefits as well as antibacterial and antioxidant functions and is now widely used in food, pharmaceutical products and in other industries, the Yili Group noted. The company said it has invested considerable resources to tackle lactoferrin extraction challenges.

At the ceremony, Westland CEO Richard Wyeth welcomed guests and provided them with an overview of the background of the lactoferrin project. Yili Westland's resident director, Zhiqiang Li, spoke about the global market advantage that both Westland and Yili would gain from Yili's investment in the new lactoferrin plant.

"Today's launch of the lactoferrin program will secure Westland as one of the world's leading producers of highly prized bioactive ingredients," Li said. "The investment also signals Yili's commitment to take the global lead in the high-value bioactive dairy ingredients sector."

"We were one of the first to market with this highly specialized protein ingredient, and over the past 20 years have established a reputation as a manufacturer of a product of exceptional quality," Wyeth said.

Over the years, Yili said it has successfully developed its own directional lactoferrin extraction and protection technology, which can significantly enhance the quality of protein ingredients and increase extraction efficiency.

According to some analyses, lactoferrin is a crucial and scarce resource for the dairy industry. The Westland project is therefore a significant step in Yili's efforts at overcoming core technological barriers, strengthening its global influence, and developing its long-term strategic layout, Yili said.

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## Mostly Cottage Process, Paneer Gaining Ground In Foodservice, Retail

**Madison**—As the world becomes increasingly diverse, US consumers are being introduced to new ethnic dishes, ingredients and flavors from around the world.

Indian cuisine in particular is expanding its reach, boosting demand for Indian-style cheeses like Paneer for both retail and foodservice sectors.

Common in the Indian sub-continent, Paneer is a fresh, acid-set cheese made from full-fat milk and vinegar instead of rennet to kick-start the ripening process.

With its clean, milky flavor, Paneer is a versatile ingredient used in savory and sweet dishes. Because it won't melt like other cheeses, chunks of Paneer can be stirred into soups or curries and remain intact.

**“It might not be at the level of some of the Hispanic cheeses, but it’s growing in popularity – particularly in the foodservice industry.”**

—Paul Scharfman,  
Specialty Cheese Company

Countless recipe inclusions run from traditional Indian fare such as Paneer Masala, Saag Paneer and Baked Tandoori Paneer Tikka, to universal dishes like Crispy Fried Paneer Burgers, Paneer Tart with Rosemary Potatoes & Creamy Mascarpone, and Habanero Paneer Fries.

Paul Scharfman, president and founder of Specialty Cheese Company, Inc., Reeseville, WI, was one of the first US cheese companies to consider and go after the Indian style cheese market.

“My company makes specialty cheese,” Paul Scharfman said. “We like to start with the little niches, and we’ll make a little bit of anything.”

“Sometimes we get lucky and that market grows, so we have an enormous amount of varieties, and this one grew,” he said.

Specialty Cheese Company started making Paneer in 2004.

“We had a small distributor, and he would take it out to a few local Indian restaurants in his area,” Scharfman said.

The first area of distribution was in Washington, DC. Today, the company’s Paneer distribution is nationwide, with sales stronger in urban areas compared to rural settings.

“Actually, wherever there’s a concentration of people wanting and eating Indian food,” Scharfman said.

“My son David, who is now my partner, started with the company in 2005 or 2006,” Scharfman continued.

“One of his jobs at that time was to get in the car – in the summer with no air conditioning in the car – and drive into the major cities around our company, like Milwaukee, Chicago, the Twin Cities.”

“He would walk into the Indian restaurants – a big white guy – and say ‘Do you want to buy our Paneer?’ The person at the front counter of the restaurant would say ‘You’re not of Indian descent,’ and David would reply, ‘We bet you’re making Paneer in the back room of your restaurant.’”

“It’s easy to make, and Indian restaurants all over were making it in their back rooms,” Scharfman said. “Our company commercialized that process.”

“David would offer the owner a piece of the cheese, and they were typically amazed that a white guy could produce this quality,” he said.

“Then we would talk about price; as soon as we started talking price, we had them,” Scharfman continued. “That’s the story of American Paneer.”

### Doing It Right Every Time

For generations, Indian restaurants were hand-making their cheese in-house, according to Scharfman.

“Starting with our company, the American cheese industry commercialized that cottage process,” he said.

“We have friends of Indian descent, and the mother of these friends would make homemade



Paneer for her adult children,” he continued.

“Today, they buy it, and that’s because the American cheese industry figured out how to make homemade Paneer.”

“They commercialized it,” Scharfman said. “It might not be at the level of some of the Hispanic cheeses, but it’s growing in popularity – particularly in the foodservice industry.”

Regarding quality and taste, a fresh, clean taste of course is best, Scharfman said.

“We’ve offered a few tweaks, but generally follow our customers’ tastes and trends. If the market grows and adapts, we hope to grow and adapt with it,” he said.

“Our goal is to be selling our Paneer, and continuing to sell our Paneer, wherever Paneer is eaten and sold,” he continued.

“Consistent quality is both our goal and our biggest challenge. This is a dangerous cheese with a high pH and no salt – there’s no culture to fight bad bacteria, no

acid, and no salt to help develop flavor, so the microbiology risks are quite high,” he said.

“Doing it right every time is the challenge and the goal,” Scharfman continued.

### Paneer As Meat Alternative

First-generation Indian immigrants Jasleen and Tarush Agarwal founded California-based Sach Foods in 2019. After immigrating, the Agarwals were consistently disheartened by the lack of good-tasting, high-protein, and low-carbohydrate meatless options in local stores.

“We are lifelong vegetarians and missed eating the Paneer we grew up with,” said Sach Foods co-founder Tarush Agarwal. “We lived in San Francisco when we started the company, and felt all current options lacked any authenticity.”

In response, the couple began making Paneer at their San Fran-

• See **Paneer Growing**, p. 12

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## Paneer Growing

Continued from p. 11

cisco apartment and quickly recognized the market gap for natural, vegetarian foods – specifically small batch, artisan Paneer.

“We wanted to make a great-tasting Paneer with an authentic and genuine story behind the product,” Agarwal said. “We wanted to create a product that resembles the Paneer we grew up with, and share the versatility of this great cheese with the rest of America.”

The couple met with several consultants in the lead-up from idea to product, and began making the cheese themselves.

“In fact, Jasleen was making cheese all throughout her pregnancy,” Agarwal said. “It’s really a labor of love and passion for us. We started with doing everything ourselves – from production, to marketing to self-distribution.”

Since then, the Sach brand, meaning “honest” in Hindi, has grown multiple folds and continues to see increased consumer demand.

We wanted to be thoughtful on how we named our brand, Agarwal said. It represents the quality of our products and values of our company. We started in our own kitchen and in just over three years, our products can be found

nationwide in over 3,000 locations.

“We have national distribution with Whole Foods Market, and have great relationships with iconic retailers like HEB,” he said. “We also just launched with Target in California.”

Sustained growth has likewise allowed Sach Foods to create well-paying jobs in functions like production, marketing, operations, and sales.

The company sources its cow’s milk from organic, pasture-based family dairies in Northern California. Because Paneer is a fresh cheese with a unique manufacturing process, it requires special equipment and a special orchestration of the facility, Agarwal said.

“You heat up the milk significantly higher than other cheeses,” he said. “Making it well requires a lot of expertise and experience, as it’s really unlike other cheeses.”

Paneer also has a relatively short shelf-life, which makes the production process a bit more complicated, he continued.

We use high-quality, humane-certified organic milk, he continued. It has a high fat content, produced by cows that are taken care of, have pasture access, and proper medical treatment. We think this really adds to the integrity of the cheese.

“We make Paneer that we grew up with; it’s got a unique flavor to it,” Agarwal said.

### Consumer Education Campaign Spans Retail Demos, Social Media

Sach Foods invests considerable time and resources in consumer educating and marketing. The company has conducted hundreds of retail demonstrations across the US, telling its story and teaching consumers about Paneer and its many applications.

“Content creation and promotion on social media through recipes is also core to our marketing and consumer education strategy,” Agarwal said.

“Although its popularity is growing, there are a lot of consumers – especially in cities outside of the coasts – who still don’t know what this cheese is, and especially how to use it,” he said.

“We’re continuing to invest in marketing to these consumers through a variety of ways, often by partnering closely with national and regional retailers through store demos and shelf tags that highlight founder/product stories,” Agarwal continued.

**“Although its popularity is growing, there are a lot of consumers – especially in cities outside of the coasts – who still don’t know what this cheese is...”**

—Tarush Agarwal, Sach Foods

To keep innovating in the category, Sach has recently launched a line of Paneer Kits in Tandoori and Barbecue flavors, packaged with a 6-ounce piece of Paneer and 2-ounce sauce packet “that make it incredibly easy and convenient for consumers to make a delish Paneer dish at home,” Agarwal continued.

While the customer favorite flavor remains Original Paneer, “our favorite is the Habanero,” Agarwal said. “We’re working on some new flavors right now.”

Imported Paneer doesn’t represent much competition in the category, since the majority are frozen and sold in a certain channel, he added.

Jasleen and Tarush Agarwal believe the category for Paneer and other Indian-style varieties is growing, and “poised for future growth similar to other natural foods categories.”

The popularity of Indian cuisine is growing, which spurs the growth of Indian products like Paneer used in making Indian food at home, Agarwal said.

“I think brands that are creating an authentic product and have a genuine story to tell consumers would continue to grow,” he said.

## Government Of Canada Investment Helps Quebec Firm Boost Cheese Production Capacity

Gatineau, Quebec—Canadian officials recently announced an investment of up to \$1,548,800 for La Trappe a Fromage de l’Outaouais to increase production capacity and productivity.

The investment, under Canada’s Supply Management Processing Investment Fund, will help La Trappe a Fromage de l’Outaouais purchase and install automated equipment to enhance its cheese manufacturing and packaging processes.

The expansion project is expected to increase processing capacity at the Gatineau plant, and will also support the company’s competitiveness and enable it to diversify its product offerings.

Founded in 1995, La Trappe a Fromage specializes in artisanal cheesemaking, including fresh cheese curds, fresh and aged Cheddar, and other specialty cheeses.

“We are proud of the 16,000-square-foot expansion of our new plant,” said Gilles Joannis, co-founder of La Trappe a Fromage. “Our dream, which has been in progress for 28 years now, is possible thanks to the quality of our products, and confidence and loyalty of our customers, the commitment of our teams and the financial support of several partners, including the federal government.”

“La Trappe a Fromage has developed an incomparable expertise in the Outaouais region. With its cheeses made with 100 percent local milk, it contributes to food autonomy and the vitality of the region,” said Steven MacKinnon, member of the Canadian Parliament for Gatineau. “This investment demonstrates our willingness to continue to invest in our cheese factories in order to improve their competitiveness and contribute to their sustainability.”

Canada’s Supply Management Processing Investment Fund helps processors of supply-managed commodities, including milk, increase their competitiveness and resilience in the face of evolving markets.

The fund is part of the Canadian government’s commitment to support processors in the supply-managed sectors to address the impacts of recent trade agreements, including the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement.



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## Schreiber Foods Plans \$68 Million Expansion Of Plant In Logan, UT

Logan, UT—Schreiber Foods plans to bring at least 52 new high-paying jobs to Utah during the next eight years thanks to a newly announced expansion of its plant in Logan, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity and the Economic Development Corporation of Utah (EDC Utah) announced recently.

Capital expenditures and square footage associated with the project are \$68 million and 312,000 square feet, according to the announcement.

Schreiber Foods produces Cream cheese, natural cheese, process cheese, and yogurt at the Logan plant, and also has a distribution center there, according to the company's website. Schreiber has operated the Logan plant since 1972.

"We're pleased to welcome the expansion of Schreiber Foods in Utah," said Ryan Starks, executive director of the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity. "The company's vision to do good through food and create a positive impact in business and communities aligns well with our values in Utah."

Schreiber Foods may receive up to 25 percent of the additional state taxes it will pay over the eight-year life of the agreement in the form of a Utah Legislature-authorized Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) tax credit. Each year Schreiber Foods meets the criteria in its contract with the state, it will qualify for a portion of the total tax credit.

"Schreiber Foods has been a premier employer in Logan for over 40 years," said Scott Cuthbertson, president and CEO of EDC Utah. "This expansion demonstrates a commitment to their Logan-area employees and their confidence in Utah as a place to do business."

Schreiber Foods also owns a dairy plant in Smithfield, UT.

Schreiber Foods is a customer-brand leader in Cream cheese, natural cheese, process cheese, beverages and yogurt. The company has more than 9,000 employees in more than 30 locations across five continents, and annual sales of more than \$6.8 billion.

The company was founded in 1945 when L.D. Schreiber, a butter and egg businessman from Chicago, partnered with Merlin G. Bush and Daniel "Dave" Nusbaum to form the L.D. Schreiber Cheese Company in Green Bay, WI. For more information, visit [www.schreiberfoods.com](http://www.schreiberfoods.com).

## Stonetown Wildwood Entry Tops SIAL Canada International Cheese Contest

Toronto, Canada—Stonetown Artisan Cheese Ltd. of St. Marys, Ontario, earned Grand Champion bragging rights at the third International Cheese Competition by SIAL Canada.

Stonetown's winning Wildwood entry is a raw milk, Appenzeller style cheese named after the Wildwood Dam in St. Marys.

"I'm overwhelmed with joy at this win; it was completely unexpected," said Hans Weber, owner of Stonetown Artisan Cheese.

"Jolanda and I are very grateful for the talents and skills of our cheese maker and business partner, Ramon Eberle, a Master Cheesemaker from Switzerland," Weber said. "We are proud to share this cheese with the world."

The judging panel was chaired by jury president Gurth Pretty and featured 18 cheese industry professionals, including Alex Armstrong, Jasper Hill Farm; Andy Shay, JK Overweel; Art Hill, University of Guelph; Caroline Bédard, Quebec Cheese Expertise Center; Cecilia Smith, George Brown College and Conestoga College; Gina Creta, Maple Leaf Gardens; Erin Harris, Canadian Cheese Collective; Martin Koupric, Alton Mill Arts Center; Martin Raymond, Conestoga College; Martin Melendez, Mary Ferrer, Miriam Holmes, Whole Foods Market; Olivia Janse, Saputo Dairy Products Canada; Pieter Van Oudenaren, cheese maker; Tanya Moodie, Longo's; Thierry Martin, Agropur; Vanessa Simmons, Savvy Company; and thought leader Wendy Furtenbacher.

The judging team evaluated 231 cheeses from eight countries in 25 categories. New this year was the Artisanal Farmstead Cheese category, created in partnership with the Quebec Dairy Processors Council to highlight cheese made by dairy farmers with milk from their own herd.

The SIAL Canada International Cheese Competition is an excellent opportunity for cheese makers to submit their cheese for evaluation and feedback by cheese professionals, chief judge Gurth Pretty said.

"It's the only competition in Canada where cheese from across the world can be judged in their respective categories and compete for the coveted title of Grand Champion," he said.

**FRESH CHEESE – COW'S MILK:** Bella Casara Ricotta, Quality Cheese, Inc., Ontario

**FRESH CHEESE – OTHER MILK:** Couturier Fresh Goat Log Plain, Hudson Valley Creamery, New York

**SOFT, BLOOMY RIND CHEESE:** Le Sabot du Blanchette, La Suisse Normande, Quebec

**WASHED RIND CHEESE:** Chemin Hatley, Fromagerie La Station, Quebec

**MIXED RIND CHEESE:** Magie de Madawaska, Le Detour, Fromages CDA, Quebec

**CHEDDAR – 3 TO 6 MONTHS:** Franc-Gilles, Fromage Warwick, Quebec

**CHEDDAR – 6 TO 12 MONTHS:** Sheep Cheddar, Ewe-Nique Dairy, Inc., Ontario

**CHEDDAR – OVER 12 MONTHS:** 2017 Reserve Cheddar, Cows Creamery, Prince Edward Island

**BANDAGED CHEDDAR:** Avonlea, Cows Creamery

**AGED GOUDA – 6 TO 12 MONTHS:** Old Amsterdam Goat, Norseland, Inc., Quebec

**AGED GOUDA – OVER MONTHS:** Farmstead 3 Year, Mountainoak Cheese, Ltd., Ontario

**SWISS STYLE:** OKA Swiss Style, Agropur Cooperative Laitiere, Quebec

**SMOKED CHEESE:** Mountainoak Farmstead, Mountainoak Cheese

**CHEESE WITH ADDED PHYSICAL PARTICULATES:** Harbison, Jasper Hill Farm, Vermont

**CHEESE WITH ADDED NON-PHYSICAL PARTICULATES:** Couturier Fresh Goat Log, Honey, Hudson Valley Creamery

**SEMI SOFT CHEESE:** Comtomme, Fromagerie La Station, Quebec

**FIRM CHEESE:** Wildwood, Stonetown Artisan Cheese, Ontario

**BLUE CHEESE WITH VEINAGE:** Blue Moo, Cows Creamery

**GRILLING CHEESE – RACLETTE:** Raclette Fritz, Fritz Kaiser, Fromages CDA, Quebec

**GRILLING CHEESE – MIDDLE EASTERN STYLE:** St. Vallier, Fromagerie du Terrior de Bellechasse, Fromages CDA

**ASH COATED CHEESE:** Grey Owl, La Detour, Fromages CDA

**LOW FAT CHEESE:** Zurigo, Fritz Kaiser, Fromages CDA

**NEW CHEESE – NOT YET AVAILABLE IN THE NORTH AMERICAN MARKET:** New Gloucester Cheddar, Pineland Farms Dairy Company, Maine

**ARTISANAL FARMSTEAD CHEESE:** Mountainoak Farmstead 3 Year, Mountainoak Cheese

**BEST ARTISANAL FARMSTEAD CHEESE IN QUEBEC:** La Sabot de Blanchette, La Suisse Normande.

For more information on the competition, visit [sialcanada.com/en/cheese-competition](http://sialcanada.com/en/cheese-competition).

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## CMAB Launches Real CA Excelerator Competition; Signup Deadline July 7

Tracy, CA—The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) on Thursday announced the return of the Real California Excelerator competition, created in partnership with innovation advisory VentureFuel.

The Real California Excelerator competition seeks anyone building any product made with at least 50 percent dairy, including, but not limited to foods, beverages, personal care products, packaging, material sciences, textiles, pet products, or anything else using dairy in an innovative way.

This year's competition offers a value of up to \$500,000 in prize money and program value for products that introduce novel applications in any form and drive utilization of Real California dairy.

Over the past four years, the Real California Milk Excelerator has worked with 45 startups across numerous categories including food, beverage, direct-to-consumer platforms, textiles, and personal care.

Program alumni have gone from idea to distribution with organizations such as UNFI and KeHE; and many can now be found on the shelves of retailers like Walmart, Safeway, Kroger, Amazon, and Whole Foods, the CMAB noted.

Each of the eight participants selected for the 2023 cohort will have access to a group stipend and a network of resources to refine and scale their product and business.

They will also participate in the CMAB/VentureFuel Mentor-

ship Program, consisting of elite counsel from successful founders, investors, leading corporate executives, and experts across design, marketing, sales, manufacturing, distribution, farming, and processing industries.

Past mentors have included venture capitalists, successful entrepreneurs, and executives from organizations like Unilever, UNFI and Mondelez, among others.

"The program has grown and evolved over the last five years as we've had the pleasure of bringing some interesting, innovative, and delicious products to the market using milk from our California dairy families. What hasn't changed is our focus on creating the future for dairy product innovation in whatever form that takes," said John Talbot, CEO of the CMAB.

"Real dairy continues to be an attractive tool for product developers, with functional and practical benefits hard to replicate," Talbot continued. "The business insight, contacts, and tools this program offers, along with the marketing power of the Real California Milk seal, makes this a golden opportunity for brands."

"This fifth anniversary year we're excited to celebrate CMAB as the clear leader in dairy innovation. Since the program's launch in 2019, we've accelerated so many awesome products together, from delicious yogurts, ice creams and cheeses, to the more unexpected — whey-based spirits, alternatives to micro plastics and new personal care products," said Fred

Schonenberg, founder and CEO of VentureFuel.

"We have evolved the program each year to optimize for changing consumer and industry trends, but our North Star has remained constant: to help CMAB find, fund, and scale the future of dairy," Schonenberg added. "I cannot wait to find this year's cohort of bold dairy innovations and to introduce them to our mentors, resources, and program to accelerate their success."

The cohort will present their concepts at a live pitch event in November where four of the eight participants will receive \$30,000 each to grow and expand their product in California and have access to an Investor/Buyer Virtual Roadshow.

One participating company will unlock an additional \$100,000 grand prize by establishing their presence in California and exhibiting the most promising growth within 12 months of the final competition.

More details about the Real California Excelerator competition, including competition rules, timeline and application, are available at [realcamilkexcelerator.com](http://realcamilkexcelerator.com).

The deadline to apply is July 7, 2023.

The Real California Milk Excelerator was built on the premise of supporting and nurturing innovative opportunities and products that leverage the performance, flavor, and nutritional benefits of Real California Dairy.

The program is specifically designed to find, fund, and accelerate early-stage products, giving entrepreneurs access to mentors, investors, and buyers, non-dilutive funding, and exclusive network access from the California Milk Advisory Board.

## CMAB Announces Return Of Retail Campaign Highlighting Dairy Snacks For Summer

Tracy, CA—The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) this week announced the return of a retail campaign focused on summer snacking with Real California dairy products.

Snacking has risen in popularity over recent years, which has shifted consumers to snack more than ever and continuing to look for affordable options that offer flavor and health benefits, the CMAB noted.

The "Snack Happy This Summer" promotion will elevate awareness of California products through integrated digital media and in-store elements. This will consist of targeted digital ads and social media posts, email communication, and rebate offers through Instacart, and recipes on Chicory, the CMAB explained.

In-store components will include Shelftalk and Floor-talk signage. An advertising and public relations surround sound campaign will include influencer partnerships with posts on Instagram and TikTok platforms, as well as earned media outreach to spotlight trends in dairy snacks.

Recipes featured in the "Snack Happy This Summer" campaign range from global flavors to frozen treats, all elevated with Real California dairy. These snacks are perfect for outdoor activities and rising temperatures, the CMAB said, and focus on current culinary trends including Mini Unicorn Smoothies, Bang Bang Style Chili Paneer Bites, Tropical Palatas, and more.



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## China's Milk, WMP Production Rising; Cheese, Butter Imports To Increase

Beijing, China—China's raw milk production is expected to rise this year, as is its production of whole milk powder (WMP), which will weigh on imports of both WMP and skim milk powder, according to a report from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

However, China's imports of other dairy products such as cheese and butter are expected to increase this year due to the end of zero-COVID restrictions.

Total Chinese milk production is forecast to exceed 42 million metric tons in 2023, a 4 percent increase over 2022. A larger inventory of high-quality dairy cows and improvements in farm management and technology will contribute to production gains, the FAS report noted.

Raw milk consumption in China is estimated to exceed 43 million metric tons in 2023, with growth in fluid and industrial use. Fluid use is expected to rise mainly due to consumption of ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk products, which account for most of the fluid milk consumed in China.

The whole milk production forecast for 2023 is increased to nearly 1.18 million metric tons due to producers processing surplus raw milk into WMP. With larger domestic inventories, food processors are expected to substitute domestically produced WMP for imported WMP, depending on product specifications.

Imported WMP is perceived as a higher quality product with longer shelf life compared to domestically produced WMP. However, the WMP imports forecast in 2023 is reduced to 600,000 metric tons on relatively strong imported WMP prices and as production of domestically produced WMP expands.

New Zealand remains the dominant supplier of WMP, accounting for over 90 percent of China's imports.

China's 2023 domestic cheese production forecast is increased to 25,000 metric tons as low raw milk prices incentivize increased production. Cheese consumption is expected to keep growing, incentivizing further investment and expansion.

Cheese imports in 2023 are forecast at 150,000 metric tons. New Zealand dominates the market, accounting for nearly 70 percent of all imports, followed by Australia, Italy and the US, according to the report.

China's National Food Safety Standard — Processed Cheese and Cheese Products GB 25192-2022 came into effect on Dec. 30, 2022, the FAS report noted. The

new national standard divides processed cheese products into processed cheese and processed cheese products according to the proportion of raw cheese ingredients. The raw cheese usage ratio of processed cheese is adjusted from more than 15 percent to more than 50 percent, and products with a cheese ratio between 15 percent and 50 percent can be called "cheese products."

The new standard is expected to improve the overall quality of processed cheese production in China, the report said. Cheese imports can also benefit from this new standard as more raw cheese is required to produce processed cheese.

The butter production forecast for China is increased to 17,000 metric tons as low domestic raw milk prices incentivize increased production.

Imported butter dominates China's consumption, the report said. In 2023, butter consumption is expected to decline due to high import prices.

China's domestic butter production is not expected to mitigate the decline in overall consumption. Despite the decline, butter consumption in 2023 remains historically high.

Forecast 2023 butter imports are expected to reach 140,000 metric tons with gradual recovery in demand. They will remain below 2022 rates due to high global butter prices. China's butter imports are expected to continue to be dominated by New Zealand.

In 2023, China's skim milk powder production forecast remains at 25,000 metric tons. China's SMP supply comes mainly from imports. China's SMP consumption forecast for 2023 is revised down to 353,000 metric tons, similar to 2022.

New Zealand continues to dominate the Chinese market for SMP imports, accounting for more than half of those imports, followed by Australia and the US.

New Zealand receives preferential tariffs up to a certain limit for milk powder products and 2023 is the last year for special safeguard measures on milk powder, the report noted. Previously, importers had rushed to secure allocations of the safeguard quota at the beginning of the year, which caused imports to concentrate in January.



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# New Product Section



## New Dairy Products, Packaging, Promotions

### Crystal Farms Launches Snack Stick Line For Adults; Snack Sticks Aren't Just For Kids

Edina, MN—Crystal Farms Dairy Company is expanding its snack cheese stick portfolio with new Gouda and Sharp Cheddar styles created especially for adult palates. The new flavors will join Mozzarella, Pepper Jack, Marble Jack and Cheddar cheese sticks in Midwestern dairy aisles.



“We’re launching new flavors that appeal to an adult audience because cheese sticks are great, well-balanced snack options for people of all ages, said Janell Lofton-Minta, vice president of growth and marketing, Crystal Farms. The new cheese sticks are now sold at participating retailers across Minnesota and Wisconsin, including AWG, Cub Foods, Coborn’s, Festival Foods, Piggly Wiggly and Woodman’s. For more information on Crystal Farms, visit [www.crystalfarmscheese.com](http://www.crystalfarmscheese.com)

### Hood Cottage Cheese Medleys Feature Single Serve Snacks With Healthy Mix-Ins

New England brand Hood has launched a new line of single-serve Cottage Cheese Medleys for convenient and healthy snacking. The line currently includes three flavor options: Pineapple with

Honey Roasted Almonds; Strawberry with Graham Crackers and Chocolate Chips; and Blueberry with Crunchy Oat Granola. The company’s first foray into Cottage Cheese with mix-ins gives consumers the opportunity to “flip, stir and go.” Hood’s Medleys are now sold in select stores across New England and New York. For more details, visit [www.Hood.com](http://www.Hood.com)

### Alec’s Ice Cream Now Sold At Whole Foods Market, Just In Time For Summer

California-based Alec’s Ice Cream is now available at Whole Foods Market stores nationwide in time for summer ice cream season. Alec’s indulgent flavor lineup includes Tahitian Vanilla Bean, Chocolate Chocolate Chip, Salted Caramel Latte, Honey Blueberry Lavender, Mint Chocolate Chip, Matcha Chocolate Chip, and their newest award-winning flavor Peanut Butter Fudge Honeycomb. About 98 percent of Alec’s ice cream base ingredients are certified and verified regenerative organic via Land to Market. The expansion marks a milestone for the emerging brand as it continues to expand its retail footprint. For more details, visit [www.alecsicecream.com](http://www.alecsicecream.com).



### Rumiano Cheese Debuts New Logo, Packaging To Show Sustainability Vision

Crescent City/Willows, CA—California’s oldest family-owned cheese company recently debuted a new logo and redesigned packaging to reflect the brand’s 104-year history, dovetailed with its modern commitment to environmental stewardship. One year ago, Rumiano Cheese Company transitioned to a 100 percent USDA Certified Organic food brand. Along with being American Humane Certified and Non-GMO Project Verified, the company also committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, and introduced a climate impact program to accelerate its efforts to improve the sustainability of its supply chain. Rumiano’s new logo features cleaner typography and incorporates the iconic Redwood trees of the Pacific Coast region of Northern California, where all of Rumiano’s organic, pasture-raised dairies are located. The three redwood trees in the logo serve as a nod to the company’s roots, strength and longevity and watch over the grazing cows that produce Rumiano’s high-quality, award-winning organic cheese, the company noted. “Like the truly remarkable Redwood trees of our region, the secret to our strength and longevity is our community and root system that works together to promote a thriving agri-ecosystem,” said Joe Baird, Rumiano Cheese Company CEO. For more information on the new packaging from Rumiano Cheese, visit [www.rumianocheese.com](http://www.rumianocheese.com).



### Wherever You Go Whenever You Need It At Your Fingertips

**CHEESE REPORTER**  
Vol. 137, No. 39 Friday, March 22, 2013 Madison, Wisconsin

**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**

**US Dairy Exports, Imports Both Set New Single-Month Records In May**

**Cheese Production Rose 2.1% In May; Cheddar Output Fell 3.2%**

**FDA Developing New Framework For Expanded Access To Infant Formula Supplies**

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# New Product Section



## New Dairy Products, Packaging, Promotions

### Rogue Creamery's Seasonal Favorite Bluehorn Blue Available For Limited Time

Rogue Creamery is now offering its Bluehorn Blue cheese available online and through wholesale distributors nationwide for a limited time.

The award-winning cheese made with Certified Organic pasteurized cow's milk and aged about six months in Rogue Creamery's aging caves. After the allotted time, each wheel of Bluehorn is soaked in red wine made from organic, biodynamic Syrah grapes from Southern Oregon's Troon Vineyard.

For more details, visit [www.roguecreamery.com](http://www.roguecreamery.com).

### Mini Babybel Unveils New Monterey Jack; Reformulates Mozzarella

Chicago—Babybel has recently introduced its new Mini Babybel Monterey Jack, the brand's first new flavor since 2014.

Significant consumer research found that about 90 percent of adults would purchase Mini Babybel Monterey Jack for themselves. Roughly 80 percent of kids say they'd eat it if it was in the house.

After nearly 15 months of product development and consumer testing, Mini Babybel Monterey Jack will hit shelves nationwide.

The company also announced it has reformulated its Mini Babybel Mozzarella for a creamier texture and milder flavor. While the original recipe was first available starting in 2013, consumers can expect this updated version to feature a true Mozzarella taste.

Visit [www.babybel.com](http://www.babybel.com).



### Belle Chevre Moves To 'Log In A Cup' For Less Waste; No Difficult-To-Seal, Flimsy Packaging

In a move to reduce mess and eliminate waste, Belle Chevre, Inc. here will package its traditional fresh chevre logs traditionally packaged in vacuum-sealed film to logs in 6-ounce resealable cups.

Research found that consumers expect the spreadable yet somewhat crumbly texture of the goat cheese log, but are often frustrated by the film that surrounds it, the company reported.

The goat cheese often falls apart when removed from the package, or it remains lodged in the film. Also, the film is not re-sealable and if it's not consumed at once, a secondary container is required for storage.

Belle Chevre's updated packaging is designed to help consumers understand that goat cheese packaged in a cup is comparable in taste, texture, and usage to fresh chevre logs.

Until now, goat cheese consumers accepted that chèvre is packaged in thin, flimsy film, which is often challenging to open and never resealable," said Belle Chevre co-owner and director of sales and marketing Pierre Guerin.



Our objective is to make goat cheese more user-friendly by reminding consumers that our chèvre sold in a resealable cup offers the same qualities they expect, Guerin said.

"During focus groups with goat cheese lovers, it was clear they were looking for updated packaging while not compromising on product quality," Guerin continued.

The company's "log in a cup" packaging will hit stores this summer. Flavors available include Fig, Honey, and Original.

For more details on the new packaging, visit [www.bellechevre.com](http://www.bellechevre.com).

### Cabot Launches Microwaveable Mac N' Cheese Cups

Enjoying specialty mac and cheese just got faster and easier with the launch of Cabot Creamery Cooperative's new microwaveable Mac & Cheese Cups.

The new product piggybacks the introduction of Cabot boxed mac and cheese last year.

Cabot's latest product is the result of a collaboration with The Farmer Companies, a Burlington-based private equity concern founded in 2018 to leverage a brands' value into new categories.

Cabot worked directly with The Farmer Companies' newest division – Vermont Cheese Products, Inc. (VCPI). The first license by VCPI covers a line of specially branded consumer snack products under the Cabot brand, held by Agri-Mark, and now includes microwaveable Mac & Cheese cups as part of their line of convenient snack items.

The new 2.05-ounce cups are available in three flavors: Seriously Sharp Cheddar, Yellow Cheddar,



and American Cheese. Four-pack cups are available at retail locations in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and Pennsylvania.

Visit [www.cabotcreamery.com](http://www.cabotcreamery.com).

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## Greenwalt To Succeed Kondrup As General Manager Of Westby Co-op Creamery

Westby, WI—After 19 years at the helm, Westby Cooperative Creamery general manager Pete Kondrup will be retiring early this month and making way for the co-op's new general manager, JD Greenwalt.

Kondrup is retiring after a lengthy and highly regarded career in the dairy industry, which began when he was 16 years old. His family owned and operated a creamery in central Illinois that primarily produced Baby Swiss cheese. He started in the company's manufacturing facility and eventually made his way up to plant manager.



Pete Kondrup

From there, Kondrup spent five years in Stephenville, TX, with the Southern Region of AMPI as plant superintendent. He then moved to Tropical Cheese Industries in Perth Amboy, NJ, as plant manager for nine years before starting his current position in Westby.

Since 2004, and under his guidance, Westby Co-op Creamery has added yogurt production and an organic line of products; continuously reached new production records; opened a new distribution center and cheese store to meet growing customer demand; and remained fully operational through the COVID-19 pandemic.



"I came into the Creamery when it was on the brink of shutting down. It's incredibly rewarding to see how far we've come," Kondrup said. "It's all thanks to the support of our community and our hard-working farms and employees. They're definitely what I'll miss most."

JD Greenwalt, Westby's new general manager, has been working alongside Kondrup since the end of April and is excited to support the co-op's mission.

"I know how much the Creamery means to this community; it's really what drew me in," Greenwalt said. "Growing up on a small farmstead myself, I know the importance of keeping our local farms around. I am excited to start this journey with Westby."

Greenwalt grew up on a farmstead in the small town of Walcott, IA, and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa. He has spent most of his career working in various food manufacturing facilities, from General Mills to other well-known companies such as PepsiCo and Coca-Cola. His work has taken him all over the US, including Kraft in Idaho, HP Hood in Washington, DC, and SlimFast in Arizona.

## RECOGNITION

### Greg Kinate Earns WDPA Presidents Award For Industry Leadership

Middleton, WI—Lifelong cheese and dairy industry leader Greg Kinate has been selected to receive the 2023 WDPA Presidents Award sponsored by the Wisconsin Dairy Products Association.

The award will be presented to Kinate at a special dinner on Monday, July 10, as part of WDPA's Dairy Symposium. The two-day event will be held July 10-11 at Door County's Landmark Resort.

Wisconsin's cheese business has been a backdrop of Kinate's entire life, with both his grandfather and father dedicating their careers to the industry.

After earning his degree, Kinate joined Wisconsin Dairies (now Foremost Farms) in Decora, IA, in 1979, as a supervisor.

During the 1980s, Kinate worked at Arpin Dairy in Arpin, WI, in a production capacity, and at Kraft Foods in Green Bay as a cheese grader, production specialist, and procurement manager.

It was also during this time that Kinate became involved in cheese judging.

In 1990, he joined Sargento Foods as cheese procurement manager.

Four years later, he launched Kineva Foods, which supplied small- and medium-size distributors with cheese and powder needs. The company also featured shredding and stick packaging operations.

In 2016, Kinate joined Winona Foods, Green Bay, as cheese procurement manager – a role he continues today.

Kinate joined the WDPA board of directors in 1994, rising to the position of board president in 2007.

Throughout his tenure, he served on several WDPA committees and special events over the years. Kinate was also an original member of the WDPA World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest steering committee, which was formed in 2003.

## PERSONNEL

BRIAN DICK has been promoted to president and chief operating officer for Golden State Foods (GFS) following the recent death of CEO Mark WETTERAU on May 8. Dick most recently served as GSF corporate executive vice president and chief operating officer since 2019, and previously held several executive leadership roles.

In his new position, Dick will oversee all global operations and functions for GFS, including food manufacturing, logistics, and administrative groups. Beyond his service at GFS, Dick currently serves on the US Board of Governors for GS1, a non-profit information standards organization that facilitates industry collaboration to help improve supply chain visibility and efficiency using GS1 Standards.

From 2020 to 2022, Dick also served as board chairman for the Association for Dressings and Sauces (ADS), which represents manufacturers and suppliers within the liquid products segment of the food industry.

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## IFT Recommends Collaboration, Innovation To Boost Food Traceability

Chicago—The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) recently released a report, commissioned by the FDA, based on the 90 submissions from teams that participated in FDA's 2021 Low- or No-Cost Tech-Enabled Traceability Challenge.

The report is intended to contribute to industry discussions about the role of technology in traceability and provide high-level recommendations to key stakeholders on advancing the tech-enabled traceability landscape.

Because IFT's Global Food Traceability Center (GFTC) has played a central role in discussions of traceability for over a decade, FDA determined that IFT was positioned to develop this independent report analyzing recent technological hardware, software, and data analytics developments for traceability end users.

IFT's report discusses current trends, identifies themes from the Challenge submissions, and examines how increased collaboration can promote a more digital, traceable, and safe food system. Specifically, the report examines how improvements in interoperability, support and infrastructure, and cost could provide opportunities for future industry improvements within this space.

The Challenge had two main goals. The primary goal was to encourage stakeholders — including technology providers, public health advocates, entrepreneurs, and innovators from all disciplines — to develop traceability hardware, software, or data analytics platforms that were low-cost or no-cost to the end user.

The Challenge's secondary goal was to promote innovation throughout the private sector.

Under the FDA New Era of Smarter Food Safety blueprint, FDA hoped to enable food producers of all sizes to participate in tech-enabled traceability in a scalable, cost-effective way.

Once the Challenge winners were announced, IFT used the agency's Challenge submissions to benchmark the tech-enabled traceability community's progress in executing against best practices related to interoperability, support and infrastructure, usability and cost considerations.

Food supply chains are designed to move product to people as cost effectively as possible, the report noted. However, as the food system has been optimized for cost and profitability, it has globalized and lengthened, and its ability to move information about products has not kept up with the pace of change. This has put a strain on the ability to pinpoint the who, what, when, and where a product was produced.

To remedy the data issue, the private sector looked to technol-

ogy, the report continued. As of a decade ago, the tech sector had developed many tech-enabled, cloud-based, commodity-specific solutions to support industry actors in addressing their internal data collection needs. However, timely and accurate traceability data sharing between trading partners, or between private sector entities and regulatory bodies, remained challenging.

Over the past decade, there has been an even greater proliferation of private sector solutions, with advances in methodologies and diversification of use cases with solutions leveraging technologies like blockchain, mobile apps, and others, the report said. However, in the US, there have also been "profound shifts" in the structure and sourcing of the food supply, with marked shifts in production of foods to other countries.

"These shifts highlight the importance of creating solutions that are accessible to a diverse set of users and capable of supporting accurate transmission of data between multiple supply chain segments and regulatory partners to achieve timely, end-to-end traceability," the report stated.

Today, using the Traceability Challenge as the barometer, solution providers are taking steps in the right direction, but continue to chase the ever-changing food system, the report noted. However, there are clear opportunities for future-proofing against these changes to achieve digital, interoperable traceability in food supply chains.

"The technology needed to achieve this is available and solutions are adapting to the requirements of their customers," the report said. Further action should be taken to clearly define the shared goals for traceability as well as costs associated with the life-cycle of investing in systems.

Support and infrastructure is still lacking in certain geographies and programs should be designed to ensure that digital traceability is accessible regardless of supply chain segment, commodity, or size of operation, the report said. FDA's traceability rule, which has a compliance date of Jan. 20, 2026, provides the industry with a starting point by defining the critical tracking events and key data elements related to food safety.

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## B2B Info Provider Winsight Acquired By Informa PLC

Chicago—London-based Informa PLC has acquired Winsight, a B2B information provider in the food-service and allied retail industries, from HPS Investment Partners, Winsight announced recently.

Headquartered in Chicago, Winsight provides market intelligence, professional events and media to the restaurant, noncommercial foodservice, convenience retailing and grocery industries.

Informa owns established food-service media brands and trade shows and intends to operate Winsight brands alongside these to strengthen its position in the restaurant and food space.

For more information on Informa, visit [www.informa.com](http://www.informa.com)

# COMING EVENTS

[www.cheesereporter.com/events.htm](http://www.cheesereporter.com/events.htm)

## California Artisan Cheese Guild 'Meet The Maker' Web Series Back June 22

Sonoma, CA—The California Artisan Cheese Guild (CACG) will bring back its popular “Meet the Maker” web series starting June 22.

Meet the Maker is held virtually via Zoom, and includes conversation and question-answer sessions with each guest. The educational series was created to offer cheese enthusiasts and industry members to meet the makers behind California’s artisan cheese industry.

The new season kicks off with Jack Rudolph, owner of Stepladder Creamery, Cambria, CA. Stepladder was originally founded in 1870 as a cattle ranch, and part of the Harmony Valley Creamery Association. Most of the 750-acre property remains grazing land.

Jack and Beverly Russell of the current operating family acquired the operation in the 1980s. Grandson Jack Rudolph operates the ranch with his wife Michelle.

Eight years ago, the couple turned their hobby interest in farmstead cheesemaking into a licensed creamery operation. Stepladder is now an award-winning cheese company with a cheese club, Sponsor a Goat program, farm tours, national distribution, retailer partnerships and farmer’s market presence in the Bay Area, Central Coast, Los Angeles and San Diego.

Cost to attend the web event is \$25 per person. Attendees can also purchase a tasting add-on for \$65, with 15 percent off at checkout. Stepladder’s Medium Cheese Bundle includes Marinated Fromage Blanc, Spicy Fromage Blanc, Ragged Point triple crème bloomy rind, and three hard cheeses – LumberJack, Cabrillo, and Paso Vino.

For more information and to buy tickets online, visit [www.cacheeseguild.org](http://www.cacheeseguild.org).

## WCMA Health & Safety Group June 7 Meeting Will Focus On Worker Health

Sun Prairie, WI—Practical strategies to prevent employee health and safety lawsuits will be the focus of next month’s Health & Safety Group meeting hosted by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association’s (WCMA).

The meeting will take place here Wednesday, June 7 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at WCMA headquarters. Virtual attendance is also available.

It kicks off with a presentation from Chuck Palmer and Bethany McCurdy of Michael Best & Friedrich, LLP, on how to prevent employee health and safety lawsuits – from creation and implementation of safety protocols, to maintaining open lines of communication with staff and regulators.

Later in the meeting, a panel of dairy processing professionals will share their experiences with inspections related to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration’s (OSHA) new Local Emphasis Program for food processors.

Another presentation highlighting noise protection practices in dairy processing plants will be led by Danica Harrier of WisCon, the University of Wisconsin-Mad-

ison’s occupational safety consulting service.

“Studies show that companies with robust safety programs enjoy higher productivity and employee retention rates, boosted employee morale, and – most importantly – fewer incidents of injury in their workplaces,” said Rebekah Sweeney, WCMA senior director of programs and policy.

“This four-hour block is chock full of learning and opportunities to connect with your peers in industry safety endeavors,” Sweeney continued.

All WCMA members – including both dairy processor and supplier members, regardless of their background or experience in employee safety – are welcome to participate. A networking lunch will also be available for in-person attendees.

The WCMA Health & Safety Group meets regularly to cover a wide range of issues related to worker safety in dairy processing, guided by member feedback.

Cost to attend the June 7 meeting is \$35 per person for both live and virtual attendees. Registration is open now at [WisCheeseMakers.org](http://WisCheeseMakers.org).

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## Those Who Register For ACS Conference By June 14 Enter To Win Free Tour

Des Moines, IA—Those who register for the American Cheese Society (ACS) Annual Conference by June 14 will be entered into a drawing to win a tour ticket of their choice.

Tours are on Tuesday, July 18 and Friday, July 21.

Tour options include: Farm to Table – Simple Life Farms, PepperHarrow Farm, John Wayne Museum, and Covered Bridges Winery; Food Culture in the Heartland – Gateway Market, The Cheese Shop of Des Moines, and Purveyor Wine Bar; Food Stream – Eat Greater Des Moines, La Quercia, Middlebrook Farm, and Hy-Vee; and Taste Iowa State – Iowa State University and Hy-Vee.

ACS conference registration is available online at [www.cheesesociety.org](http://www.cheesesociety.org).

## 39th Capitol Hill Ice Cream Party Planned For June 21

Washington—Lawmakers and industry leaders from both sides of the aisle will gather here Wednesday, June 21 for the 39th Capital Hill Ice Cream Party hosted by the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA).

The celebration will take place at Union Square Park on Capitol Hill.

It will feature America’s favorite flavors, toppings, and ways to eat ice cream, as detailed by IDFA’s *Ice Cream & Frozen Novelty Trends Survey*.

“Ice cream is as bipartisan as you can get,” said IDFA president and CEO Michael Dykes.

IDFA’s Capitol Hill Ice Cream Party is our way of showing appreciation on behalf of America’s dairy producers and dairy foods makers to public servants and in our federal agencies, Dykes continued.

For more information, visit [www.idfa.org](http://www.idfa.org).

## PLANNING GUIDE

**IDDBA 2023:** June 4-6, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Check [www.iddba.org](http://www.iddba.org) for details.

**Summer Fancy Food Show:** June 25-27, Javits Center, New York, NY. For information, visit [www.specialtyfood.com](http://www.specialtyfood.com).

**ADSA Annual Meeting:** June 25-28, Ottawa, Ontario. Registration is online at [www.adsa.org](http://www.adsa.org).

**WDPA Dairy Symposium:** July 10-11, Landmark Resort, Door County, WI. Visit [www.wdpa.net](http://www.wdpa.net) for updates and registration.

**IFT Expo:** July 16-19, McCormick Place, Chicago. Visit [www.iftevent.org](http://www.iftevent.org) for future updates.

**ACS Conference:** July 18-21, Des Moines, IA. Updates available at [www.cheesesociety.org](http://www.cheesesociety.org).

**IMPA Conference:** Aug. 10-11, Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, ID. Visit [www.impa.us](http://www.impa.us) for more information closer to event date.

**Pack Expo Las Vegas:** Sept. 11-13, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. Registration open at [www.packexpolasvegas.com](http://www.packexpolasvegas.com).

**ADPI Dairy Ingredients Seminar:** Sept. 25-27, Santa Barbara, CA. Registration now open at [www.adpi.org/events](http://www.adpi.org/events).

**NCCIA Annual Conference:** Oct. 10-12, Best Western/Ramkota, Sioux Falls, SD. Visit NCCIA at [www.northcentralcheese.org](http://www.northcentralcheese.org) for more information and registration updates.

**IDF World Dairy Summit:** Oct. 16-19, Chicago, IL. Visit [www.idfwds2023.com](http://www.idfwds2023.com) to register online and for more information.

**Dairy Purchasing & Risk Management Seminar:** Nov. 1-2, Convene Willis Tower, Chicago, IL. Registration opens July 15 at [www.adpi.org/events](http://www.adpi.org/events).

**PLMA Trade Show:** Nov. 12-14, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Chicago. Registration opens in June at [www.plma.org](http://www.plma.org).



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# DAIRY PRODUCT MARKETS

AS REPORTED BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## WHOLESALE CHEESE MARKETS

**NATIONAL - MAY 26:** Cheese production is trying to match milk availability, as more plants are back online following updates/maintenance. As market prices shift lower, some customers are adding to orders. Some cheese makers reported being nearly oversold.

**NORTHEAST - MAY 31:** Milk volumes remain strong in the Northeast. Contacts have shared that there was scheduled plant downtime for the holiday weekend and spot loads of milk were turned away. Other contacts have shared that their retail and foodservice customers are opting to put some cheese into longer term storage as inventories remain consistently strong. Plant managers have relayed that their American-type, Italian-type, and Swiss inventories remain ample and that it is difficult to move excess inventories. Retail demand is strong while foodservice demand remains moderate due to menu price inflation.

### Wholesale prices, delivered, dollars per/lb:

Cheddar 40-lb block: \$2.0300 - \$2.3175 Process 5-lb sliced: \$1.6100 - \$2.0900  
Muenster: \$2.0175 - \$2.3675 Swiss 10-14 lb cuts: \$3.4550 - \$5.7775

**MIDWEST AREA - MAY 31:** Midwestern cheese makers are running full schedules. A number of plant managers relayed they worked through the holiday weekend, and plants that have been down for updating in recent weeks are back online. Cheese demand is mixed, but more processors are reporting upticks in demand than the alternative. Cheese inventories are moving somewhat briskly, and curd processors say customers are showing more interest. Milk availability is, putting it lightly, readily accessible. Cheese plant contacts say they are turning spot milk offers away, as they are already full.

### Wholesale prices delivered, dollars per/lb:

Blue 5# Loaf: \$2.0725 - \$3.2825 Mozzarella 5-6#: \$1.6025 - \$2.6900  
Brick 5# Loaf: \$1.8025 - \$2.3700 Muenster 5#: \$1.8025 - \$2.3700  
Cheddar 40# Block: \$1.5250 - \$2.0675 Process 5# Loaf: \$1.4875 - \$1.9550  
Monterey Jack 10#: \$1.7775 - \$2.1250 Swiss 6-9# Cuts: \$2.9700 - \$3.0725

**WEST - MAY 31:** Retail and foodservice demand is steady to lower for varietal cheeses, as some stakeholders relay decreased sales activity. A few manufacturers report block cheese inventories are slightly looser. Spot market activity is steady. Some cheese makers relay contract obligations making heavy pulls on their supply. Inventories are available to meet current demand, with production keeping moderately ahead overall. Mixed export demand is indicated by industry sources, with steadier demand from Mexico and South America, compared to softer Asian market demand. Production schedules have been quieter, as some facilities planned downtime for the holiday weekend.

**Wholesale prices delivered, dollars per/lb:** Monterey Jack 10#: \$1.8925 - \$2.1675  
Cheddar 10# Cuts: \$1.9050 - \$2.1050 Process 5# Loaf: \$1.6125 - \$1.7675  
Cheddar 40# Block: \$1.6575 - \$2.1475 Swiss 6-9# Cuts: \$2.2625 - \$3.6925

### EEX Weekly European Cheese Indices (WECI): Price Per/lb (US Converted)

Variety	Date: 5/31	5/24	Variety	Date: 5/31	5/24
Cheddar Curd	\$1.93	\$1.91	Mild Cheddar	\$1.97	\$1.96
Young Gouda	\$1.67	\$1.63	Mozzarella	\$1.64	\$1.59

**FOREIGN -TYPE CHEESE - MAY 31:** Retail sales of foreign type cheese are trending higher as contacts note lower prices at grocery stores are contributing to increased cheese purchasing. Industry sources report strong demand for cheese from foodservice purchasers and say warmer weather and summer tourism have been good for restaurateurs in Europe. Milk production is steady, though some suggest output may have peaked in certain parts of Europe. Cheese makers are utilizing seasonally available milk volumes to operate strong production schedules. Cheese inventories are tightening. Contacts say increased ordering in recent weeks has contributed to declining warehouse stocks. Cheese prices are trending higher amid strong demand and tightening inventories.

### Selling prices, delivered, dollars per/lb:

	Imported	Domestic
Blue:	\$2.6400 - 5.2300	\$1.8875 - 3.3750
Gorgonzola:	\$3.6900 - 5.7400	\$2.3950 - 3.1125
Parmesan (Italy):	0	\$3.2750 - 4.3650
Romano (Cows Milk):	0	\$3.0775 - 5.2325
Sardo Romano (Argentine):	\$2.8500 - 4.7800	0
Reggianito (Argentine):	\$3.2900 - 4.7800	0
Jarlsberg (Brand):	\$2.9500 - 6.4500	0
Swiss Cuts Switzerland:	0	\$3.4900 - 3.8150
Swiss Cuts Finnish:	\$2.6700 - 2.9300	0

## DRY PRODUCTS - JUNE 1

**LACTOSE CENTRAL/WEST:** Contract loads of lactose are moving at a steady pace. Spot market demand is light and not keeping up with some manufacturers' expectations. Spot loads of lactose must be priced near the lower end of the range to move loads. Contract sales of lactose are being secured by a few manufacturers, with mixed results. Some have confirmed a limited number of contracts, while others report being mostly booked for Q3.

**WPC CENTRAL/WEST:** Demand for WPC 34% is light, though some stakeholders note steady sales of specific brands based on buyer preferences. Contacts suggest lower prices for WPC 34% in recent weeks had less of an impact on spot sales than anticipated. WPC 34% inventories are heavy, though loads from certain manufacturers are less ample. Some stakeholders' loads of WPC 34% are being moved to feed channels to free up warehouse space.

**CASEIN:** Rennet and acid casein prices are unchanged on slow market activity. The market tone remains quiet to quietly bearish. Demand is moderate, as there are some protein-rich snack makers and specialty retail item processors who have taken advantage of recently dropping prices. That said, reported market activity has been quieter in recent weeks. European milk output has strengthened, as has processing in Ireland, and elsewhere. South American processors are still contending with limited, albeit slowly growing, milk supplies.

**NDM EAST:** Some end users say they are contending with updates/maintenance at their facilities, which has kept them off the market. Processing is ongoing, but with either recent holiday downtime and/or downtime for unscheduled maintenance, this week was a bit uneven. Still, availability is somewhat balanced in the eastern region for low/medium heat NDM.

## NATIONAL - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY PRODUCTS

Total conventional dairy ads increased 5 percent, but organic dairy ads decreased 21 percent. Conventional cheese was the most advertised dairy commodity. Shredded cheese in 6- to 8-ounce packages had an average price of \$2.52, up 12 cents from last week. Sliced cheese in 6- to 8-ounce packages had an average advertised price of \$2.53, up 14 cents. Block cheese had an average price of \$2.63, up 39 cents.

Ice cream was the second-most advertised conventional dairy commodity, despite appearing in 13 percent fewer ads. Ice cream in 48- to 64-ounce and 14- to 16-ounce containers appeared 15 percent and 10 percent fewer ads, respectively.

Half-gallon containers of conventional milk have an average price of \$2.08, while organic milk has an average price of \$4.88. This is an organic premium of \$2.80.

## RETAIL PRICES - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY - JUNE 2

Commodity	US	NE	SE	MID	SC	SW	NW
Butter 8 oz	2.48	3.00	2.25	NA	NA	NA	NA
Butter 1#	3.94	3.73	4.44	3.95	4.09	3.79	3.46
Cheese 6-8 oz block	2.63	2.45	2.78	2.49	2.65	3.55	2.59
Cheese 6-8 oz shred	2.52	2.41	2.62	2.45	2.44	2.90	2.59
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced	2.53	2.52	2.49	2.62	2.47	2.56	2.62
Cheese 1# block	4.37	NA	4.49	4.42	NA	3.99	NA
Cheese 1# shred	4.58	4.29	4.69	4.42	NA	4.54	NA
Cheese 1# sliced	4.99	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.99	NA
Cheese 2# block	6.10	5.83	NA	NA	NA	5.98	6.45
Cheese 2# shred	6.41	NA	7.99	7.89	6.99	5.98	5.93
Cottage Cheese 16 oz	2.19	2.45	2.48	1.76	1.49	1.90	1.79
Cottage Cheese 24 oz	3.07	2.99	3.03	3.07	3.39	3.50	2.49
Cream Cheese 8 oz	2.49	3.07	2.00	2.00	1.96	1.99	1.75
Ice Cream 14-16 oz	3.40	3.81	3.28	3.49	2.80	3.45	2.97
Ice Cream 48-64 oz	3.55	3.50	3.74	3.10	3.31	3.91	3.54
Milk 1/2 gallon	2.08	1.29	NA	2.79	2.79	2.23	1.35
Milk gallon	3.68	3.87	NA	NA	4.43	3.54	1.77
Flavored Milk 1/2 gal	3.29	NA	NA	NA	3.29	NA	NA
Flavored Milk gallon	3.82	4.09	NA	4.39	NA	NA	1.77
Sour Cream 16 oz	2.07	3.87	2.17	1.71	2.27	1.93	1.79
Sour Cream 24 oz	2.99	2.21	NA	2.59	NA	3.50	NA
Yogurt (Greek) 4-6 oz	1.04	1.07	1.06	1.00	1.05	1.04	0.94
Yogurt 4-6 oz	0.64	0.82	0.62	0.61	0.45	NA	0.35
Yogurt (Greek) 32 oz	5.44	NA	NA	NA	7.99	3.99	4.84
Yogurt 32 oz	3.35	2.90	2.99	5.99	2.49	NA	4.49

## ORGANIC DAIRY - RETAIL OVERVIEW

### National Weighted Retail Avg Price:

Cream Cheese 8 oz:	NA	Yogurt 4-6 oz:	NA
Butter 8 oz:	NA	Yogurt 32 oz:	\$4.13
Butter 1 lb:	\$7.30	Yogurt Greek 32 oz:	\$6.43
Cottage Cheese 16 oz:	\$4.97	Flavored Milk 1/2 gallon:	\$5.69
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced:	\$3.00	Milk 1/2 gallon:	\$4.88
Cheese 6-8 oz shreds:	\$3.66	Milk gallon:	\$6.28
Cheese 6-8 oz block:	NA	Sour cream 16 oz:	NA
Cheese 2 lb block:	NA	Ice Cream 48-64 oz:	NA

## WHOLESALE BUTTER MARKETS - MAY 31

**NATIONAL:** Plenty of cream is widely available. A few manufacturers report lowering the amount of outside cream brought in due to planned maintenance in the coming month. Although some down time for churn repairs was reported, butter production is strong overall.

**WEST:** Cream is widely available. Due to downtime for the holiday weekend and upcoming equipment maintenance, some butter manufacturers report lower amounts of outside cream brought in and more loads available for spot purchasing. Butter production has been quieter, and some cream volumes have shifted from buttermaking to ice cream manufacturing. Foodservice demand is strong to steady, while retail demand is steady. Although unsalted bulk butter is indicated as comparatively tighter by industry sources, loads are available to accommodate market demand for unsalted and salted butter. Aside from some interest with purchasers supplying butter needs in Canada, export activity is on the quieter end by stakeholders.

**CENTRAL:** Some butter plant managers churned cream through the weekend, while others scheduled down time. The rest of this week and through the weekend are expected to be busy regarding production schedules. Butter contacts say as Class II processing ticks up, along with temperatures, cream accessibility is not expected to remain. Right now, cream is widely available. Butter demand is steady, but seasonal upticks are expected soon. Butter market tones are holding steady.

**NORTHEAST:** Cream is plentiful. Market contacts are operating robust production schedules in the wake of some scheduled plant downtime for the holiday weekend. Butter inventories remain ample, and some contacts have shared that they are either selling spot loads of cream or are freezing bulk butter for later micro-fixing needs. Demand is mixed, as seasonal baking interests have sparked some retail demand, but foodservice demand remains moderate as consumers are dissuaded by menu price increases.

## WEEKLY COLD STORAGE HOLDINGS

### SELECTED STORAGE CENTERS IN 1,000 POUNDS - INCLUDING GOVERNMENT

DATE	BUTTER	CHEESE
05/29/23	68,966	73,315
05/01/23	61,251	69,879
Change	7,715	3,436
Percent Change	13	5

### CME CASH PRICES - MAY 29 - JUNE 2, 2023

Visit [www.cheesereporter.com](http://www.cheesereporter.com) for daily prices

	500-LB CHEDDAR	40-LB CHEDDAR	AA BUTTER	GRADE A NFDN	DRY WHEY
<b>MONDAY May 29</b>	No Trading	No Trading	No Trading	No Trading	No Trading
<b>TUESDAY May 30</b>	\$1.4950 (+½)	\$1.4300 (-¾)	\$2.4300 (NC)	\$1.1625 (-¾)	\$0.2750 (NC)
<b>WEDNESDAY May 31</b>	\$1.4975 (+¼)	\$1.4200 (-1)	\$2.4550 (+2½)	\$1.1550 (-¾)	\$0.2700 (-½)
<b>THURSDAY June 1</b>	\$1.5100 (+1¼)	\$1.5025 (+8¼)	\$2.4650 (+1)	\$1.1700 (+1½)	\$0.2575 (-1¼)
<b>FRIDAY June 2</b>	\$1.5125 (+¼)	\$1.4300 (-7¼)	\$2.4450 (-2)	\$1.1700 (NC)	\$0.2575 (NC)
<b>Week's AVG \$ Change</b>	\$1.5038 (-0.0032)	\$1.4456 (-0.1199)	\$2.4488 (+0.0143)	\$1.1644 (+0.0022)	\$0.2650 (-0.0035)
<b>Last Week's AVG</b>	\$1.5070	\$1.5655	\$2.4345	\$1.1620	\$0.2685
<b>2022 AVG Same Week</b>	\$2.2794	\$2.2531	\$2.9050	\$1.8663	\$0.5463

### MARKET OPINION - CHEESE REPORTER

**Cheese Comment:** Eight cars of blocks were sold Tuesday, the last at \$1.4300, which set the price. On Wednesday, 14 cars of blocks were sold, the last at \$1.4200, which set the price. Two cars of blocks were sold Thursday, the last at \$1.5025, which set the price. One car of blocks was sold Friday at \$1.4300, which set the price. The barrel price increased Tuesday on a sale at \$1.4950, rose Wednesday on a sale at \$1.4975, climbed Thursday on a sale at \$1.5100, and increased Friday on a sale at \$1.5125. A total of 25 carloads of blocks were traded this week while 35 carloads of barrels were traded.

**Butter Comment:** The price increased Wednesday on a sale at \$2.4550, rose Thursday on an unfilled bid at \$2.4650, then fell Friday on a sale at \$2.4450. A total of 6 carloads of butter were traded this week on the CME.

**Nonfat Dry Milk Comment:** The price fell Tuesday on a sale at \$1.1625, declined Wednesday on a sale at \$1.1550, then increased Thursday on an unfilled bid at \$1.1700.

**Dry Whey Comment:** The price declined Wednesday on a sale at 27.0 cents, and dropped Thursday on a sale at 25.75 cents. A total of 37 carloads of dry whey were traded this week on the CME.

### WHEY MARKETS - MAY 29 - JUNE 2, 2023

RELEASE DATE - JUNE 1, 2023

<b>Animal Feed Whey—Central: Milk Replacer:</b>	.2300 (-¾) – .2500 (-3)
<b>Buttermilk Powder:</b>	
Central & East:	.9500 (-3) – 1.0500 (NC) West: .8900 (-1) – 1.0300 (-2)
Mostly:	.9000 (-1) – .9900 (NC)
<b>Casein: Rennet:</b>	4.5000 (NC) – 5.0000 (NC) Acid: 4.9000 (NC) – 5.1500 (NC)
<b>Dry Whey—Central (Edible):</b>	
Nonhygroscopic:	.2500 (+1¼) – .3800 (-2½) Mostly: .2700 (-2) – .3500 (-1)
<b>Dry Whey—West (Edible):</b>	
Nonhygroscopic:	.2675 (+¾) – .4400 (-3) Mostly: .3100 (-2) – .4000 (NC)
<b>Dry Whey—NE:</b>	.3675 (-¼) – .4400 (-¼)
<b>Lactose—Central and West:</b>	
Edible:	.1350 (NC) – .4800 (-2) Mostly: .1500 (-2) – .3300 (-1)
<b>Nonfat Dry Milk—Central &amp; East:</b>	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.1400 (+2) – 1.1900 (NC) Mostly: 1.1500 (+1) – 1.1700 (-½)
High Heat:	1.2400 (NC) – 1.3200 (NC)
<b>Nonfat Dry Milk—Western:</b>	
Low/Med Heat:	1.1200 (NC) – 1.2100 (NC) Mostly: 1.1400 (NC) – 1.2000 (NC)
High Heat:	1.2525 (+¼) – 1.4000 (NC)
<b>Whey Protein Concentrate—34% Protein:</b>	
Central & West:	.7000 (NC) – 1.2800 (-2) Mostly: .8000 (-5) – 1.2000 (-5)
<b>Whole Milk:</b>	1.9000 (NC) – 2.0500 (-5)

Visit [www.cheesereporter.com](http://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	2.3399	2.3293	2.1902	2.0143	1.8104	1.9548	2.0260	2.1186	2.0860
'23	2.0024	1.8895	1.9372	1.7574	1.5719							

## Restaurant Performance Index Fell 0.8% In April; Traffic Declined

Washington—The National Restaurant Association's Restaurant Performance Index (RPI) stood at 100.9 in April, down 0.8 percent from March, the association reported Wednesday.

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 Current Situation Index, which measures current trends in four industry indicators, stood at 100.8 in April, down 1.4 percent from March.

Restaurant operators reported positive same-store sales in April, but the readings were dampened compared to recent months. Some 59 percent of operators said their same-store sales rose between April 2022 and April 2023, which was down from more than seven in 10 operators who reported higher sales during the first three months of this year.

Operators reported a net decline in customer traffic in April. Only

18 percent of operators said their customer traffic rose between April 2022 and April 2023, down from 40 percent who reported higher traffic in March.

The Expectations Index, which measures restaurant operators' six-month outlook for four industry indicators (same-store sales, employees, capital expenditures and business conditions), stood at 100.9 in April, down 0.1 percent.

Restaurant operators remain cautiously optimistic about sales growth in the months ahead. Some 44 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 16 percent think their sales volume in six months will be lower.

Restaurant operators are much less optimistic about the direction of the overall economy. Only 12 percent said they expect economic conditions to improve in six months, compared to 5 percent who reported similarly last month. Forty percent of operators think economic conditions will worsen in the next six months, down from 48 percent in March.

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