



# CHEESE REPORTER

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## Dairy, Farm Groups Want Congress To Pass Trade Promotion Authority

### Separately, Dairy And Ag Groups Seek Sufficient Funding For Meaningful Farm Bill In 2023

Washington—More than 50 dairy, farm and food organizations on Thursday urged members of Congress to advance legislation to establish new Trade Promotion Authority and to provide direction to the Biden administration about the importance of expanding new markets for America's food and agriculture products.

"Agriculture-related industry is a driver of the American economy, but it is being thwarted by barriers to market access," the letter stated. The advantages of being "the world's most efficient and sustainable agricultural system are not being fully realized," due to the failure by the US to advance new tariff-reducing trade agreements.

Trade Promotion Authority includes expedited congressional procedures to consider legislation necessary to implement trade agreements that involve both tariff and nontariff barriers, provided the president meets certain negotiating objectives as well as notification and consultation requirements,

according to a recent report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

The letter to members of Congress was signed by, among others, the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), US Dairy Export Council (USDEC), Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, Dairy Producers of New Mexico, Center for Dairy Excellence, Colorado Dairy Farmers, Idaho Dairymen's Association, Minnesota Milk Producers Association, Nebraska State Dairy Association, North Carolina Dairy Producer Association, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, Texas Association of Dairymen, Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance, Virginia State Dairymen's Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, Farmers for Free Trade, Global Cold Chain Alliance, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, and National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

The organizations that signed the letter said they "appreciate the efforts of the Biden administration to advance trade relations, particularly through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). To the extent that this initiative is able to address specific sanitary/phytosanitary and other non-tariff barriers to trade, it can be highly constructive."

The groups urged that the US build on this initiative by also undertaking negotiations in pursuit of new tariff-reducing trade agreements.

But the "essential question" isn't just whether the US is working for new market access, "but also how well the US is doing so relative to our economic competitors," the letter continued. "Regrettably, America is falling badly behind." Between 2010 and 2020, China and the European Union (EU) enjoyed over twice as much advantage from trade agreement tariff reductions as the US.

"In this decade, our situation to date is far worse," the letter added.

• See **New Trade Deals**, p. 7

## Dairy CPI Rose 0.1% In Feb.; Retail Cheddar, Whole Milk Prices Declined

Washington—The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for dairy and related products was a record 272.3 in February (1982-84=100), up 0.1 percent from January and 12.3 percent higher than in February 2022, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported Tuesday.

The dairy CPI has now increased for 15 consecutive months, and has set new records in each of those months.

The overall CPI for all items stood at 300.8 in February, up 0.6 percent from January and 6.0 percent higher than in February 2022.

February's CPI for food was 320.6, up 0.4 percent from January and 9.5 percent higher than in February 2022. February's CPI for food at home was 302.5, up 0.3 percent from January and 10.2 percent higher than in February 2022; and the CPI for food away from home was 347.9, up 0.6 percent from January and up 8.4 percent from February 2022.

February's CPI for cheese and related products was 271.1, down 0.3 percent from January but 9.4 percent higher than in February 2022. That marked the second straight decline in the cheese CPI, after it reached a record high of 272.9 in December 2022.

The average retail price for a pound of natural Cheddar cheese in February was \$5.85, down

• See **Retail Prices Fall**, p. 6

## Suntado Breaks Ground On State-Of-The-Art Dairy Beverage Plant In Burley, ID

Burley, ID—Suntado LLC has broken ground on a new state-of-the-art shelf-stable milk and alternative beverage manufacturing facility in Burley, ID, the company announced Wednesday at the Idaho Dairymen's Association Legislative Banquet.

Scheduled to open in spring 2024, the multi-million-dollar facility will process approximately 800,000 to 1.0 million pounds of local milk per day.

The plant will open with six production lines to produce conventional and organic extended shelf-life (ESL) and ultra-high-

• See **New ID Milk Plant**, p. 6

## February Class IV Volume On Seven Federal Orders: 1.63 Billion Pounds Class III Volume Remains Above 6.0 Billion Pounds

Washington—The volume of milk pooled in Class IV in February on the seven federal milk marketing orders that pay dairy farmers a producer price differential (PPD) totaled 1.63 billion pounds, up 42 million pounds from January and 797.3 million pounds higher than in February 2022, according to the uniform price announcements for those orders.

That's the second straight month in which Class IV volume for those seven orders topped 1.5 billion pounds.

By contrast, Class IV volume on those seven orders was under 1.0 billion pounds every month

from June through December 2022.

Class III volume on the seven orders that pay dairy farmers a PPD totaled 6.8 billion pounds in February, down 574.5 million pounds from January but up 677 million pounds from February 2022. Class III volume on those seven orders hasn't been below 6.0 billion pounds since May 2022.

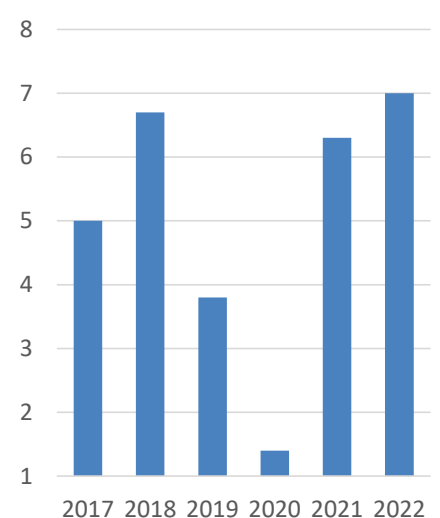
All seven orders reported positive PPDs in February, ranging from 31 cents per hundredweight on the Upper Midwest order to \$2.97 per hundred on the Northeast order. That marked the ninth straight month in which all seven orders reported positive PPDs.

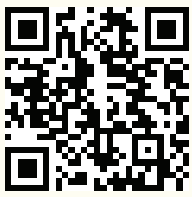
On the California federal order in February, Class III volume

• See **Class III, IV Milk**, p. 3

### Volume of Milk Pooled in Class III: Feb

billions of pounds; all 11 orders; California order wasn't in effect in Feb 2018





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...on standards modernization, we're moving backwards, not forward.

### Standards Proposal Withdrawal Illustrates FDA's Problems

These days, it certainly isn't easy being the US Food and Drug Administration. Whether the agency is trying to restructure to better serve its stakeholders, trying to define "healthy" food claims, or providing worthless guidance on the labeling of plant-based milk alternatives, the agency can't seem to do much of anything without being roundly criticized.

And the agency did it again a couple of weeks ago, when (as reported on the front page of our March 3rd issue) it withdrew a 2005 proposed rule that was intended, in part, to establish a set of general principles for the agency to use when considering whether to establish, revise, or eliminate a food standard.

At first glance, this is a pretty easy decision to criticize, for the simple reason that FDA, and USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, are withdrawing a proposed rule first released way back in 2005. This of course means that, after almost 18 years (the original proposal was released in May of 2005), USDA and FSIS are basically starting over.

But the proposed rule released in 2005 wasn't the starting point for this rulemaking (or lack of rule-making). It was actually 10 years earlier, in 1995, when FDA and FSIS began reviewing their regulatory procedures and requirements for food standards to determine whether food standards are still needed and, if so, whether they should be modified or streamlined.

To initiate this review, FDA and FSIS published advance notices of proposed rulemaking (ANPRMs) on food standards in December of 1995 and in September of 1996, respectively. These ANPRMs discussed regulations and policy governing food standards, the history of food standards, and the possible need to revise the food standards.

This is where the problem with FDA's standards-related efforts starts. As FDA and FSIS explained in the 2005 proposed rule, in

those 1995 and 1996 ANPRMs, the agencies "identified problems with existing food standards. Specifically, we stated that some food standards might impede technological innovation in the food industry."

So, in roughly 28 years, we've gone from FDA identifying problems with existing food standards, to FDA withdrawing a proposal that would have established a set of general principles for food standards. In other words, on standards modernization, we're moving backwards, not forward.

There had been at least a little FDA movement on this rulemaking in recent years. In public meetings FDA held in July 2018 and September 2019, stakeholders said that, due to changes in manufacturing, food technology, market trends, and nutrition science since 2005, FDA should solicit new data and information when determining next steps for the proposed rule.

As a result of that feedback, FDA reopened the comment period in February 2020 for FDA-specific aspects of the 2005 proposed rule.

As FDA explained when announcing the withdrawal of the proposed rule, many of the comments submitted in 2020 suggested that the general principles be revised and consolidated to make the principles easier to understand and implement. FDA and FSIS agreed, and withdrew the proposed rule to reconsider how best to approach general principles and food standards modernization.

In its announcement withdrawing the proposed rule, FDA noted that a joint FDA and USDA effort to publish a new proposed rule on principles for food standards modernization was included in the Fall Unified Agenda, which was released in early January 2023.

That Unified Agenda item lists a proposed food standards modernization rule possibly being released in October of this year. That would mean a comment period that ended

sometime in 2024. Any final rule wouldn't be released until 2025 at the earliest, and any final rule, if one is ever released, wouldn't take effect until probably a year or two later. By then, FDA's 1995 ANPRM will have "celebrated" its 30th anniversary, and then some.

There are several very frustrating aspects to this proceeding. First, FDA noted, in the 2005 proposed rule, that it had received 95 letters, each containing one or more comments, in response to the 1995 ANPRM. Most of the comments to both FDA's 1995 ANPRM and FSIS's 1996 ANPRM (which drew 28 comments) "strongly supported the concept of food standards."

But "very few comments to both ANPRMs supported the existing food standards as currently written." Although most comments supported retaining food standards in some form, they requested that food standards be simplified, be made more flexible, or be clarified.

Second, as the International Dairy Foods Association noted in its comments submitted during the 2020 reopened comment period, a "large segment" of the food standards of identity — 37 percent of the 280 federal food standards — are for dairy products. These standards are "significantly outdated," IDFA said, and now they'll remain outdated for the foreseeable future (although FDA finally released a final amended yogurt standard).

Finally, it's worth noting that dairy and food industry organizations have had at least four opportunities to comment on food standards in general: the 1995 ANPRMs, the 2005 proposed rule, a September 2019 FDA public meeting to discuss modernizing food standards, and the 2020 reopened comment period. And there will be another comment period when FDA and FSIS issue a new proposed rule.

Enough already. No matter how FDA ends up restructuring itself, it needs to move forward, swiftly, on revising its standards process.



## MDS Foods To Invest \$8.9 Million To Expand Operations In Coffee County, TN

Nashville, TN—Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, along with Stuart McWhorter, commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD), and officials of MDS Foods Inc. (MDS Cheese), announced Tuesday that the company will invest \$8.9 million to expand operations at its Tullahoma facility in the Coffee County Joint Industrial Park.

To increase its manufacturing and distribution capabilities, MDS Cheese will add approximately 48,000 square feet of cooler space dedicated to the distribution of finished products and approximately 10,000 square feet of space for new cheese production lines.

Founded in 2003 and headquartered in Navarre, OH, MDS Foods serves supermarket delis and restaurants across the US as a manufacturer and supplier of cheese slices, shreds, chunks, cubes and loaves.

With the additional 75 new jobs in Tullahoma, that will be created as a result of this expansion project, MDS Cheese will employ nearly 200 Tennesseans.

“After 15 years of being in Coffee county, we are excited to continue growing by expanding our team and business here in Tullahoma,” commented Jim Straughn, president, MDS Foods.

“The cities of Tullahoma and Manchester, along with the Coffee County Industrial Board, have been great partners and made this expansion possible for us and our dedicated team members,” Straughn continued.

“Thank you to all who have supported our business over the years. We look forward to the next chapter of growth in Coffee county,” Straughn added.

“Tennessee’s quality workforce and unmatched business climate make our state the ideal location for companies to succeed,” Lee said.

“Companies always have a choice in where they choose to place their trust, and we thank MDS Cheese for its decision to expand in Middle Tennessee,” McWhorter commented. “The solid infrastructure system and skilled workers in Tullahoma and Coffee County will amplify this company’s growth and success in the years to come.”

For more information about MDS Foods, visit [www.mds-foods.com](http://www.mds-foods.com).

## Class III, IV Milk

(Continued from p. 1)

totalled 1.37 billion pounds, down 27 million pounds from January but up 145 million pounds from February 2022.

February Class III utilization on the California order was 57.8 percent, down from 59.6 percent in January and down from 70.7 percent in February 2022.

Class IV volume on the California order was 517.7 million pounds, up 95.6 million pounds from January and up 466.4 million pounds from February 2022. Class IV utilization was 21.9 percent, up from 18.1 in January and up from 3.0 percent in February 2022.

A total of 2.36 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the California order, up 26 million pounds from January and up 637 million pounds from February 2022.

Class III volume on the Upper Midwest order totaled 2.5 billion pounds, down 348 million pounds from January but up 373 million pounds from February 2022. Class III volume on the Upper Midwest order has now topped 2.5 billion pounds for seven straight months.

Class III utilization on the Upper Midwest order in February was 92.9 percent, down from 93.0 percent in January but up from 89.7 percent in February 2022. Class III utilization on the order has now been above 90.0 percent for nine straight months.

Class IV volume on the Upper Midwest was 13.7 million pounds down 2.1 million pounds from January and down 3.9 million pounds from February 2022. Utilization was 0.5 percent, unchanged from January and down from 0.7 percent in February 2022.

A total of 2.71 billion pounds was pooled on the Upper Midwest

order, down 370 million pounds from January but up 318 million pounds from February 2022.

On the Southwest order, Class III volume totaled 711.8 million pounds, up 13.5 million pounds from January and up 29.1 million pounds from February 2022. Class III utilization was 62.5 percent, up from 54.5 percent in January but down from 64.8 percent in February 2022.

Class IV volume on the Southwest order totaled 55.6 million pounds, down 110.1 million pounds from January but up 43.7 million pounds from February 2022. Class IV utilization was 4.9 percent, down from 12.9 percent in January but up from 1.1 percent in February 2022.

A total of 1.14 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Southwest order, down 142 million pounds from January but up 86 million pounds from February 2022.

February Class III volume on the Central order totaled 644.1 million pounds, down 78.3 million pounds from January but up 60.1 million pounds from February 2022. Class III utilization was 47.4 percent, down from 49.5 percent in January and down from 49.9 percent in February 2022.

Class IV volume on the Central order totaled 268.0 million pounds, up 11.1 million pounds from January and up 124.3 million pounds from February 2022. Class IV utilization was 19.7 percent, up from 17.6 percent in January and up from 12.3 percent in February 2022.

A total of 1.36 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Central order, down 102 million pounds from January but up 188 million pounds from February 2022.

Class III volume on the Mideast order in February totaled 656.1 million pounds, down 48.9 mil-

lion pounds from January but up 55.3 million pounds from February 2022. Class III utilization was 45.6 percent, down from 47.6 percent in January and down from 47.0 percent in February 2022.

February Class IV volume on the Mideast order totaled 191.7 million pounds, up 59.6 million pounds from January and up 154.0 million pounds from February 2022. Class IV utilization was 13.4 percent, up from 8.8 percent in January and up from 2.9 percent in February 2022.

A total of 1.44 billion pounds of milk was pooled on the Mideast order, down 44 million pounds from January but up 159 million pounds from February 2022.

On the Northeast order, Class III volume totaled 596.2 million pounds, down 59.6 million pounds from January but up 12.2 million pounds from February 2022. Class III utilization was 28.1 percent, down from 28.4 percent in January and down from 28.3 percent in February 2022.

Class IV volume on the Northeast was 378.8 million pounds, down 11.8 million pounds from January but up 25.0 million pounds from February 2022. Class IV utilization was 17.9 percent, up from 16.9 in January and up from 17.1 percent in February 2022.

A total of 2.12 billion pounds was pooled on the Northeast order, down 191 million pounds from January but up 55 million pounds from February 2022.

Class III volume on the Pacific Northwest order in February totaled 290.3 million pounds, down 26.5 million pounds from January but up 2.6 million pounds from February 2022. Class III utilization was 44.3 percent, down from 44.7 percent in January but up from 42.9 percent in February 2022.

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## Della Toffola Group Takes On New Name: Omnia Technologies

**Santa Rosa, CA**—The Della Toffola Group has taken on a new name: Omnia Technologies.

“Inspired by the Latin root meaning ‘all things’, the word Omnia expresses the multifaceted nature of our Group, which aims to be a qualified partner for integrated solutions for processing, bottling and packaging, inspired by the values of technology, sustainability, and service,” according to Antonino Li Brizzi, managing director North America, Omnia Technologies.

The main business areas, led by Della Toffola for processing and by Bertolaso for bottling, are

supported by a pool of companies that deliver a complete equipment offering across several industry categories, Li Brizzi noted: Priamo for the dairy and cheese production, Permeare for high-end wine filtration, Gimar and Sirio Aliberti for tanks, Frilli for distillation plants, Ave Technologies for beverage and dairy bottling, Z-Italia, OMB and Ape Impianti for labeling and end-of-line equipment.

A comprehensive spectrum of solutions further expanded with the recent acquisitions of Progema Engineering, a leader in the production of complete plants for the production of Parmesan cheese,

and Mar.Co., specialized in cap feeding technology, Li Brizzi added.

“Strengthened by this new identity, by our uniquely wide portfolio and by the solid heritage of our brands, we aim to be your preferred partner in delivering tailor-made and sustainable solutions,” Li Brizzi said.

He assured that Della Toffola USA, the company’s commercial and after-sale subsidiary, will continue to serve as a “strong presence” in North America.

“Our mission remains the same: to support our past, current and future customers by delivering top-quality products and unparalleled service,” Li Brizzi said.

For information, contact Gary Bergquist, at [gary.bergquist@dellatoffola.us](mailto:gary.bergquist@dellatoffola.us); or [www.dellatoffola.us](http://www.dellatoffola.us).

## Leprino Selects Univar Solutions As Authorized Ingredient Distributor

**Downers Grove, IL**—Univar Solutions Inc. recently announced that Leprino Foods Company has selected the company as an authorized distributor of nutritional ingredients and dairy products, including lactose, sweet whey, whey protein concentrate and isolate, micellar casein, and milkfat globule membrane (MFGM) in the US and Canada.

Used in adult, early life, and nutraceutical blends, sports and animal nutrition products, and commercial food and beverage applications, these increasingly popular ingredients are found in many of the foods and beverages health-conscious consumers demand as they focus on improving overall health and wellness, Univar said.

“Our relationship with Leprino Foods provides customers expanded access to more of the

in-demand ingredients needed to remain atop health-conscious consumers’ shopping lists,” said Kevin Hack, global vice president of food ingredients for Univar Solutions, a global specialty chemical and ingredient distributor.

“We are excited to work with Univar Solutions as a trusted supplier and business partner, creating innovative dairy products for the evolving food and nutrition marketplace,” said Jason Eckert, senior vice president and general manager for Leprino Foods. “Innovation, food safety, and global responsibility are at the heart of our success, and we’re impressed that this aligns with their dedication to helping customers create pioneering food ingredient solutions while demonstrating their commitment to sustainable operations and practices.”

## EnWave Sells NutraDried Assets, Including Moon Cheese Brand, To Creations Foods

**Vancouver, British Columbia**—EnWave Corporation on Wednesday announced that it has agreed to sell certain assets of NutraDried Food Company LLC to Creations Foods.

The asset sale to Creations Foods includes the Moon Cheese® brand, as well as other NutraDried trademarks, auxiliary equipment, and saleable inventory.

EnWave has also executed a royalty-bearing commercial license agreement with Creations Foods Company to produce cheese snacks in the US.

Creations Foods will seamlessly take over the production, sale, and distribution of the Moon Cheese product portfolio, which includes snack packs in several flavors, Crunchy Cheese Sticks, and Cheddar and Mozzarella Crumbles. All NutraDried customers have been informed of this transition and both parties are optimistic about the future of the better-for-you snack brand, according to the announcement.

Creations Foods will also entertain bulk dried cheese opportunities that complement its branded product business, the announcement added.

Creations Foods is a snack food company, based on Ferndale, WA. The company said its primary purpose is to offer creative, better-for-you foods without compromising nutritional profile, quality, or taste. The company operates out of a facility located in Ferndale, producing cheese crisps, mini-cookies, crackers, wafers, and other snack foods. The company’s facility is dedicated to producing unique branded as well as private label and co-manufactured offerings.

## FROM OUR ARCHIVES

### 50 YEARS AGO

**March 16, 1973: Madison**—Ray Geenen of White Clover Dairy was elected president of the Wisconsin Gift Cheese Association. Other officers are vice president, Dan Carter, Purity Cheese Co.; and treasurer, Dean Roth, Blue Mounds Cheese Company.

**Washington**—A second package of food labeling rules intended to prevent consumer deception and promote good nutritional practices was issued this week by FDA. The administration reported that nutritional quality guidelines may prove to be more important to consumers than nutritional labeling rules.

### 25 YEARS AGO

**March 20, 1998: London**—A low-salt diet may not be so healthy after all. A new study by Michael Alderman at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine suggests the US government should consider suspending its recommendation that people restrict the amount of salt they consume. “It’s possible the harm of a low-sodium diet may outweigh its benefit,” the study noted.

**Prairie du Chien, WI**—Lyle Lester, 83, a cheese maker in Crawford and Grant counties for 35 years, died March 8. Lester and his wife, Rita, bought the Plainview Cheese Factor in rural Wauzeka and operated it for 15 years before moving here in 1971.

### 10 YEARS AGO

**March 15, 2013: Washington**—Diners will have to wait a bit longer to find calorie counts on most chain restaurant menus and on vending machines. Writing a new menu labeling rule has “gotten extremely thorny,” FDA commissioner Margaret Hamburg said. While the restaurant industry has signed on to the idea (although many pizza restaurants aren’t fully supportive), supermarkets, convenience stores and other retailers that sell prepared food say they want no part of it.

**Eden Prairie, MN**—Milk Specialties Global, a provider of milk and whey proteins, achieved milk protein concentrate production on Feb. 14, 2013, in its latest expansion in Visalia, CA. Tulare county, CA, is one of the largest milk-producing counties in the US, noted David Lenzmeier, CEO of Milk Specialties Global.

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## Restaurant Association Seeks Fixes For Immigration, Food Supply Chain Stability

Washington—The National Restaurant Association earlier this month outlined, in a letter to House and Senate leaders, policy priorities where their support could make a wide and positive impact for restaurant operators and the industry workforce.

“Restaurants are the cornerstone of every community, providing jobs, adding to the local tax base, and supporting the region,” said Sean Kennedy, executive vice president for public affairs at the National Restaurant Association. “Any investment Congress can make to support these small business owners can have a wide and positive impact right now.”

Several suggestions in the Association’s letter dealt with creating opportunity to expand the nation’s workforce. Specifically, the Association wants Congress to:

—Establish a non-immigrant essential worker program. With an expanded workforce, restaurants would be able to better serve their customers and support their communities. The Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act (EWEA) creates a non-immigrant temporary worker program that would increase the labor pool in occupations that provide growth opportunities and career paths without a college degree, including the hospitality industry. This legislation was introduced in the 117th Congress and is expected to be reintroduced soon.

—Strengthen existing visa programs. Several challenges and limitations to current visa programs make it difficult for restaurants to use them effectively. Congress can help alleviate these challenges by: raising the cap on H-2B Visas and providing an exemption for returning workers; and expediting processing times for EB-3 and J1 Visas.

—Provide clarity and a permanent fix to individuals already living in the US. Immigrants play a critical role in the restaurant industry’s success. Approximately 2.2 million restaurant workers in the US are foreign-born, including 43 percent of restaurant chefs. Also, 38 percent of businesses in the hospitality industry are immigrant-owned.

The Association supports providing a pathway to legalization for beneficiaries of existing programs, including DACA and Temporary Protected Status. Doing so would create a more stable workforce by reducing employer and worker uncertainty.

Related to this point, the Association favors shortening the waiting period for asylum seekers to receive employment authorizations. The current processing time

for this documentation can take months, leaving asylum seekers to rely on community aid and no legal means to provide for themselves. Restaurants can provide jobs and communities to these people as they work to settle in the US.

In the area of stabilizing and expanding the food supply chain, the Association wants Congress to fund agricultural development and insurance programs in the farm bill.

Prioritizing funding for risk management tools including crop insurance and commodity programs will protect farmers against extreme weather conditions, and expanding preparedness programs for animal disease threats such

as avian flu can reduce the price shocks experienced by restaurants and customers alike.

Congress should support actions to remove tariffs that spike costs throughout the restaurant value chain. The Association urged the Office of the US Trade Representative to disband the China 301 tariffs (and resulting retaliatory tariffs) that impact restaurant products, from aluminum to food to linens. Working families are disproportionately affected by these tariffs, according to research from the Progressive Policy Institute. With these economic realities, Congress can show leadership by supporting actions to remove tariffs which are contributing to inflation.

Congress also has the opportunity to improve the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP), which

increases food access at restaurants throughout the US, the Association said. By increasing education and creating guidance, more restaurant operators can participate in the RMP and provide meals to those experiencing food insecurity.

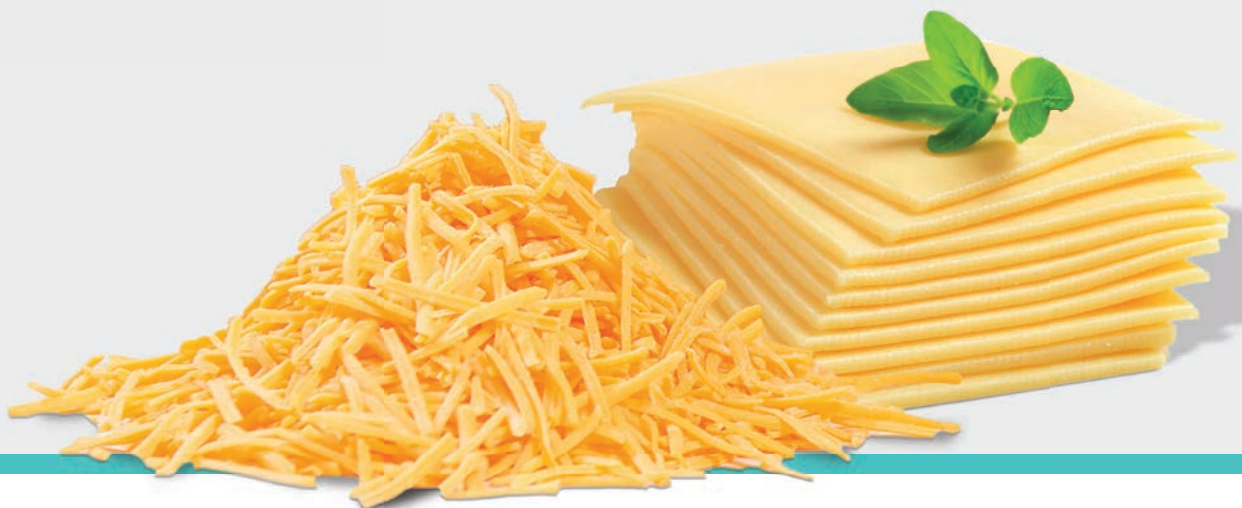
The Association also urged congressional leaders to support changes that it said will help bring down the cost of doing business, including: advance the “Credit Card Competition Act” to stem skyrocketing swipe fees; permanently restore the business interest deduction to reduce tax burdens; and scrutinize labor rules from the National Labor Relations Board.

“These actions will provide greater economic stability and have an overwhelmingly positive impact on businesses and workers in neighborhoods across the country,” Kennedy said.

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## Retail Prices Fall

(Continued from p. 1)

almost 10 cents from January but up more than 40 cents from February 2022. That's the second consecutive month in which the average retail Cheddar price has fallen. The average retail Cheddar price had reached a record high of \$6.08 per pound in September 2022.

Average retail Cheddar prices in the four major regions in February, with comparisons to a month earlier and a year earlier, were as follows:

**Northeast:** \$6.28 per pound, down more than 10 cents from January but up almost 42 cents from February 2022.

**Midwest:** \$5.59 per pound, down more than 14 cents from January but up almost 42 cents from February 2022.

**South:** \$5.65 per pound, down more than 24 cents from January but up more than 61 cents from February 2022.

**West:** \$6.08 per pound, up almost 18 cents from January and up almost 22 cents from February 2022.

In February, the average retail price for a pound of American processed cheese was \$4.63, down

almost 10 cents from January but up almost 65 cents from February 2022.

### Retail Whole Milk Price Declines

February's CPI for whole milk was 258.1, down 0.7 percent from January but up 6.9 percent from February 2022.

That's the lowest level for the whole milk CPI since last October, when it was 257.5.

The CPI for "milk" was 179.4 in February (December 1997=100), down 0.1 percent from January but up 8.1 percent from February 2022.

February's CPI for milk other than whole was 185.3, up 0.3 percent from January and 9.0 percent higher than in February 2022.

The average retail price for a gallon of whole milk was \$4.16, down more than four cents from January but up almost 29 cents from February 2022. The average retail whole milk price has now been above \$4.00 per gallon for 11 straight months.

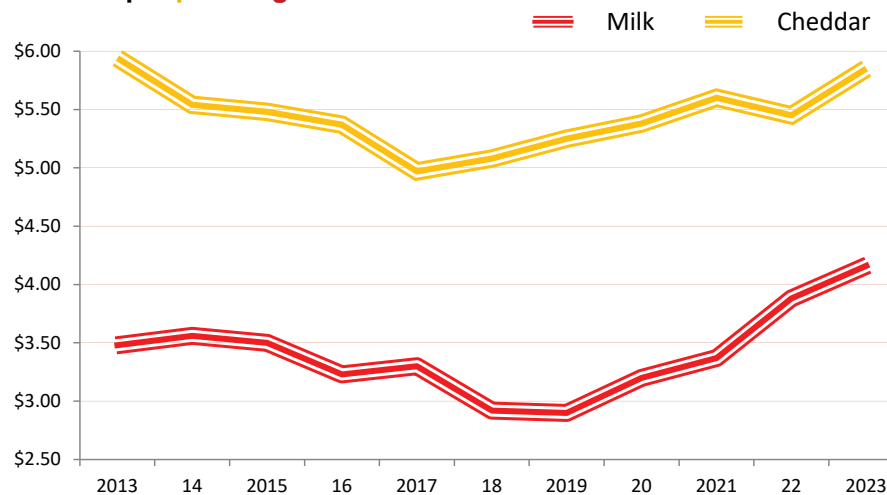
Average retail whole milk prices in the three major regions reported by the BLS in February, with comparisons to a month earlier and a year earlier, were:

**Northeast:** \$4.44 per gallon, down more than seven cents from January but up more than 13 cents from February 2022.

## Average Retail Prices

Cheddar & Whole Milk: February 2013 – 2023

Price per pound/gallon



**South:** \$4.26 per gallon, down less than one cent from January but up more than 52 cents from February 2022.

**West:** \$4.14 per gallon, down almost seven cents from January but up more than three cents from February 2022.

### Butter CPI Drops

February's consumer price index for butter was 316.9, down 1.7 percent from January's record high but 20.7 percent higher than in February 2022.

The butter CPI has now been above 300 for nine consecutive months.

The CPI for ice cream and related products was 273.9, down 0.7 percent from January but up 13.9 percent from February 2023.

The ice cream CPI has now been above 270 for four straight months.

In February, the average retail price for a half-gallon of regular ice cream was \$5.72, down almost nine cents from January but up more than 67 cents from February 2022.

February's CPI for other dairy and related products was 191.1 (December 1997=100), up 1.1 percent from January and 19.2 percent higher than in February 2022.

## New ID Milk Plant

(Continued from p. 1)

temperature (UHT) dairy beverages and products.

Suntado's strategic growth plan includes multiple phases to expand to 18 production lines in the future. Milk will be procured in Cassia county, ID.

"This project has been a dream for dairy farmers Jesus Hurtado and

Dirk Reitsma for a long time and it's exciting to see their innovative approach come to life in the state that they love so much," said Suntado CEO Jeff Williams, former president and CEO of Glanbia Foods, Twin Falls, ID. "Their commitment to detail, enthusiasm for big thinking, and their loyalty to the dairy community gives integrity to the capability of the Suntado name.

"That they saw an area to grow dairy consumption and stepped up to answer the call speaks volumes to the owners' dedication to the future of this industry," Jeff Williams added.

"This facility represents a new, pioneering mindset in which dairy products are designed to be a destination, not just a commodity," said Dairy West CEO Karianne Fallow. "It's exciting to see new product offerings and vertical integration in the same project.

"Dairy West has partnered with Suntado in helping the company get to market with products that meet the demands of our changing consumer landscape," Fallow continued. "This is good for dairy farmers, good for the dairy community, and certainly good for customer choice."

Value-added dairy products like ESL and UHT are popular options in today's changing marketplace, Fallow pointed out.

"These innovations provide an expansion in the assortment of products available for rapidly shifting consumer demands," Fallow commented. "With trends favoring smaller households, growing dairy consumption around the world, access to easier food storage, and consumer concern over food waste

and caring for the planet, ESL and UHT are in increasing demand."

Suntado plans to hire up to 95 full-time employees and said it will provide market-competitive compensation and above-market benefits. The company identifies respect for its workers, operational safety, and quality products as its defining factors.

Reitsma is a second-generation dairy farmer, having recently taken over operations from his father, John Reitsma. It was the elder Reitsma's vision to vertically integrate in the dairy beverage space.

Hurtado began his career working for other dairy farmers until the senior Reitsma helped launch his career as a cowman and landowner. Together, Reitsma and Hurtado produce 2.5 million pounds a day of milk on their collective conventional and organic dairies.

Williams said the project was only possible with the help of strong partners throughout the state, including Idaho Gov. Brad Little, the Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Department of Agriculture, Burley Mayor Steve Ormond, the City Council of Burley, Cassia county, Dairy West, and the Idaho Dairymen's Association.

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## New Trade Deals

(Continued from p. 1)

“The US has not implemented a comprehensive trade agreement that opens new markets in over a decade.”

Meanwhile, just over a year ago, China added the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to its portfolio of trade agreements and displaced the US as the EU’s largest trading partner, the letter noted.

China, the world’s largest trader, is establishing major economic ties in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa, and has requested participation in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a US-led strategic initiative “from which the US precipitously withdrew in 2017,” the letter stated.

“Falling badly behind in global economic influence has serious, enduring consequences,” the letter said. “Taking markets from established competitors is far more difficult than establishing footholds as markets open.”

Further, economic competitors use trade agreements to establish rules of trade that give them long-term structural advantages, such as the EU’s “monopolistic geographical indications trade policies,” the letter said.

“Thus, in establishing trade relationships, first movers have a major advantage.”

Meanwhile, approximately 400 dairy, farm and related organizations on Tuesday asked leaders of the House and Senate budget committees to provide the agriculture committees in both chambers with “sufficient budgetary resources to write a new bipartisan, multi-year, comprehensive, and meaningful” farm bill this year.

“Just as there are many pressures on the federal budget, there are many pressures on US farmers and others throughout the agricultural supply chain who provide food, feed, fuel, fiber, and other products to consumers across the United States and abroad,” said the letter, which was signed by, among others, NMPE, IDFA, American Farm Bureau Federation, National Farmers Union, Global Cold Chain Alliance, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Dairy Producers of Utah, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, and Texas Association of Dairymen.

According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), international sales of US farm and food products reached \$196 billion in 2022.

But the leading market for these products, China, “is marked with geopolitical volatility,” the letter noted.

“During the trade war with China that began in 2018, US agriculture endured significant market impacts, which unfortu-

nately revealed gaps in the farm safety net,” the letter stated. “If a trade war with our largest trading partner hardly triggered the farm safety net provided in the current farm bill — a Title I safety net that has been shrinking over the past 20 years — it is difficult to envision a scenario that would provide meaningful assistance without significant improvements.

“Continuing rising tensions with this important trading partner underscore the need in the next farm bill for a more meaningful, predictable farm safety net and the need to invest more into trade promotion programs to help diversify agricultural markets,” the letter continued.

Market volatility with China is only one example of the many disruptions impacting US agriculture during the life of the current farm bill, the letter stated.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other supply chain disruptions, non-tariff trade barriers erected by multiple countries, and “devastating natural disasters” have tested the effectiveness of current farm policy.

Increased production input costs have as well, with USDA projecting that most expense categories will remain above their 2021 levels in 2023 both in nominal and inflation-adjusted dollars, the letter added.

USDA’s February 2023 farm income forecast publication proj-

ects a 20.7 percent decline in net cash farm income in 2023 relative to 2022.

Projections such as this, when realized, often result in financial stress and calls for ad hoc or supplemental disaster assistance to farmers and ranchers; that is, assistance outside of the farm bill, the letter pointed out.

In fact, between 2018 and 2021, ad hoc assistance made up approximately 70 percent of direct farm payments due to challenges described earlier.

“Ad hoc assistance is necessary in times of need but is not a timely, reliable, or predictable safety net for farmers and ranchers,” the letter stated.

“The upcoming farm bill reauthorization provides an opportunity to address very real needs in agriculture and rely less on off-budget ad hoc assistance,” the letter continued.

In addition to needs already highlighted in the letter, farm bill budget resources are needed for “protecting and enhancing crop insurance to assist with volatile weather and crop loss, improving access to voluntary conservation incentives, addressing rural development needs, investing in research for innovation and competitiveness, providing opportunities to help the nation become more energy independent and food secure, and supporting solutions to address logistics challenges,” the letter said.

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# COMING EVENTS

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

## ACS Conference Registration, Agenda Now Online; Set For July 18-21 In Iowa

Des Moines, IA—The American Cheese Society has kicked off registration for its 2023 Conference here July 18-21 at Iowa Events Center.

Tuesday begins with an optional Artisan Cheese Food Safety Workshop. The six-hour course is designed for producers who are preparing to create or currently developing a food safety plan for their facilities that is preventive control (PC)-based, and Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) compliant.

Pre-conference cheese tours will also take place Tuesday, with details yet to be determined. The Certified Cheese Professional Exam and ACS T.A.S.T.E. Test will begin after lunch.

The President's Reception featuring current ACS president Mike Koch and incoming president Larry Hedrich will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by the Des Moines Cheese Crawl.

Wednesday's concurrent educational seminars will look at best practices for managing brine systems; how cheese makers can

leverage cost-effective practices to make better decisions and drive sales; and traceability within the cheese supply chain.

A session on Mexican cheese led by cheese researcher and lactographer Aaron Gonzalez will delve into the history and science behind Mexican style cheeses.

Another research and development session will provide a glimpse into the future of the industry, allowing cheese makers a chance to receive feedback on a new product or possible changes in make procedures of current products.

A retail-focused seminar on overcoming consumer bias when selling specialty cheese online will show how to connect with a growing number of e-commerce customers who purchase groceries online, without the opportunity of product sampling.

Research conducted in collaboration with Oregon State University's food science and applied economics department will demonstrate how informational cues like sensory tasting notes and

## Food Research Institute Spring Meeting Is May 16-17; Virtual Option Available

Madison—The Food Research Institute (FRI) will host its annual spring meeting here May 16-17 at the Pyle Center on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, it was announced.

Participants have the option of attending in person or online via live Zoom access.

The two-day meeting is designed for those involved in food safety, product development, food microbiology, food quality assurance, or public health: processors, retailers, nutritionists, consultants, educators, students, and government workers.

The hybrid FRI annual program will include presentations on regulatory changes and challenges, natural antimicrobials, foodborne disease updates, and bioactive compounds.

Event instructors will also cover microorganisms in reservoirs and processes, new and improved antimicrobials, hard-to-predict food hazards, and the industry view of regulatory changes, as well as and challenges.

Linda Harris of University of California-Davis will present the William C. Frazier Memorial lecture, and will be recognized for her contributions to food microbiology and safety.

Tuesday evening's program features a poster session, reception, and networking opportunities, event organizers said.

The deadline to register is April 28. In-person registration is \$375. Discounted rates of \$250 are available for Food Research Institute sponsors and federal employees, and cost for the University of Wisconsin and State of Wisconsin employees is \$50.

Event organizers stated the fees include continental breakfasts, lunch, reception, breaks, and conference materials.

Virtual attendance, which includes Zoom access to live presentations only is \$250, \$125 and \$25, respectively.

Enrollment and full meeting agenda is available online at the Food Research Institute website, [www.fri.wisc.edu](http://www.fri.wisc.edu).

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award labels are becoming increasingly important.

Afternoon sessions will look at how to build export sales through US Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding, and *Cheese Your Own Adventure*, where a panel of cheese professionals focus on skills and abilities that can be utilized across the many different fields of the cheese industry.

A segment on Multi-Criteria-Decision-Analysis (MCDA) will show how this method can be applied to a supplier-approval process, followed by a session on coagulants from different sources, and the impact they have on cheese character.

A tasting session entitled *You put WHAT in my cheese?* will look at unique flavors and embellishments, followed by a talk on coagulants and the annual Cheese Contest awards ceremony.

To register online and for full conference details, visit [www.cheesesociety.org](http://www.cheesesociety.org).

### PLANNING GUIDE

**NCIMS Conference:** April 3-7, 2023, J.W. Marriott, Indianapolis, IN. Details available in the coming months at [www.ncims.org](http://www.ncims.org).

**CheeseCon 23:** April 5-6, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI. Official event website now live at [www.CheeseCon.org](http://www.CheeseCon.org).

**ADPI/ABI Joint Annual Conference:** April 23-25, Sheraton Grand Chicago. Visit [www.adpi.org](http://www.adpi.org) for future updates.

**DairyTech Conference:** May 17-18, Minneapolis, MN. Registration is now available online at [www.dairytechconference.com](http://www.dairytechconference.com).

**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. Early registration will kick off soon 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 opens April 3 at [www.packexpolasvegas.com](http://www.packexpolasvegas.com).

**IDF World Dairy Summit:** Oct. 16-19, Chicago, IL. Check [www.northcentralcheese.org](http://www.northcentralcheese.org) for updates.

## CWCBA Annual Spring Meeting To Be May 3 In Marshfield

Marshfield, WI—The Central Wisconsin Cheesemakers & Buttermakers Association (CWCBA) will gather here Wednesday, May 3 at Holm's RiverEdge Golf Course for its annual spring meeting.

The event will include updates from the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research (CDR), and University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

A social hour will begin at 5 p.m., followed by the annual banquet. During this time, CWCBA will present the Life Membership Award and \$100 CWCBA Attendance Award.

The registration deadline is April 17, and cost to attend is \$38 per person.

Cost to be included in the CWCBA booklet is \$150 and must be received by April 24.

Registration materials can be mailed or emailed to CWCBA's Peggy Noeldner, 311 N Hendren, Greenwood, WI 54437 or email: [pnoeldner@nasonvilledairy.com](mailto:pnoeldner@nasonvilledairy.com).





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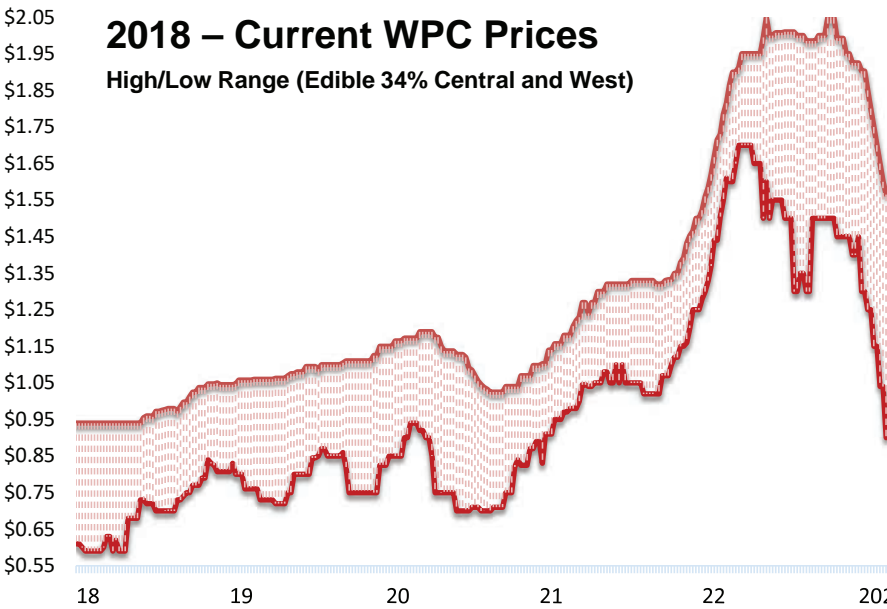
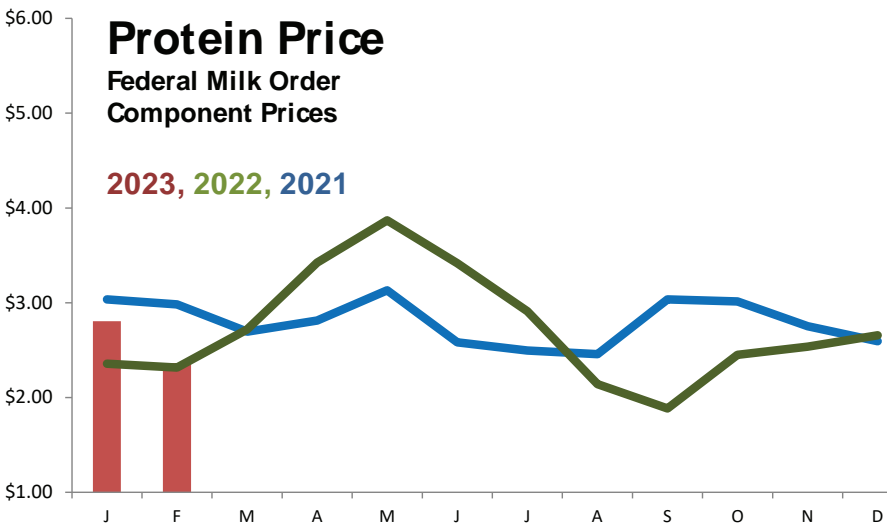
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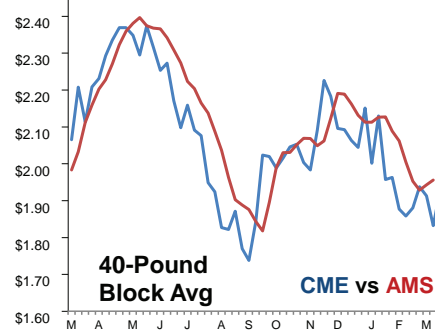


**AVERAGE MONTHLY WPC MOSTLY PRICES: USDA**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
'16	.5445	.5750	.5852	.6076	.6239	.6616	.6937	.7151	.7305	.7706	.7961	.8608
'17	.9318	.9905	.9681	.9425	.9138	.9013	.8919	.8486	.8231	.8063	.7757	.7490
'18	.7268	.7211	.6960	.7027	.7502	.7949	.8092	.8144	.8437	.8658	.8817	.8851
'19	.8929	.8995	.9025	.9025	.9074	.9244	.9297	.9444	.9465	.9530	.9597	.9854
'20	1.0017	1.0140	1.0148	1.0027	.9590	.9356	.8945	.8591	.8500	.8810	.9124	.9255
'21	.9693	1.0134	1.0487	1.0977	1.1328	1.1513	1.1551	1.1548	1.1450	1.1540	1.2149	1.3174
'22	1.4378	1.5904	1.7102	<b>1.7920</b>	<b>1.8160</b>	<b>1.8269</b>	<b>1.8313</b>	<b>1.8118</b>	<b>1.8052</b>	<b>1.8085</b>	<b>1.8073</b>	<b>1.7478</b>
'23	1.6671	1.4846										

**DAIRY PRODUCT SALES**

March 17, 2023—AMS' National Dairy Products Sales Report. Prices included are provided each week by manufacturers. Prices collected are for the (wholesale) point of sale for natural, unaged Cheddar; boxes of butter meeting USDA standards; Extra Grade edible dry whey; and Extra Grade and USPH Grade A nonfortified NFD.   
\*Revised



Week Ending	Mar. 11	Mar. 4	Feb. 25	Feb. 18
<b>40-Pound Block Cheddar Cheese Prices and Sales</b>				
<b>Weighted Price</b>	<b>Dollars/Pound</b>			
US	1.9559	1.9426*	1.9285	1.9524
<b>Sales Volume</b>	<b>Pounds</b>			
US	13,511,722	12,128,291*	11,107,349	13,236,134
<b>500-Pound Barrel Cheddar Cheese Prices, Sales &amp; Moisture Content</b>				
<b>Weighted Price</b>	<b>Dollars/Pound</b>			
US	1.6998	1.7053	1.7023	1.7293
<b>Adjusted to 38% Moisture</b>	<b>Dollars/Pound</b>			
US	1.6174	1.6202	1.6173	1.6440
<b>Sales Volume</b>	<b>Pounds</b>			
US	16,632,152	15,897,716	15,085,345	15,616,293
<b>Weighted Moisture Content</b>	<b>Percent</b>			
US	34.84	34.74	34.74	34.78
<b>AA Butter</b>				
<b>Weighted Price</b>	<b>Dollars/Pound</b>			
US	2.4364	2.4427*	2.4417	2.4378
<b>Sales Volume</b>	<b>Pounds</b>			
US	3,718,419	3,965,087*	3,940,659	3,123,449
<b>Extra Grade Dry Whey Prices</b>				
<b>Weighted Price</b>	<b>Dollars/Pound</b>			
US	0.4246	0.4083*	0.4030	0.3990
<b>Sales Volume</b>	<b>Pounds</b>			
US	6,866,135	7,002,824	7,046,953*	6,803,353
<b>Extra Grade or USPHS Grade A Nonfat Dry Milk</b>				
<b>Average Price</b>	<b>Dollars/Pound</b>			
US	1.2146	1.2026*	1.2298*	1.2475*
<b>Sales Volume</b>	<b>Pounds</b>			
US	19,980,241	31,978,178*	23,089,315*	26,983,065*

**DAIRY FUTURES PRICES**

SETTLING PRICE

\*Cash Settled

Date	Month	Class III	Class IV	Dry Whey	NDM	Block Cheese	Cheese*	Butter*
3-10	Mar 23	17.71	18.30	41.400	119.250	1.925	1.8110	239.825
3-13	Mar 23	17.78	18.30	41.400	119.025	1.925	1.8140	239.825
3-14	Mar 23	17.95	18.30	41.400	119.025	1.925	1.8310	239.850
3-15	Mar 23	17.87	18.30	41.800	120.000	1.925	1.8350	241.975
3-16	Mar 23	18.00	18.39	42.000	120.250	1.925	1.8310	241.975
3-10	Apr 23	17.70	18.09	40.150	118.225	1.880	1.8180	235.000
3-13	Apr 23	17.78	17.92	40.000	119.025	1.850	1.8250	235.500
3-14	Apr 23	18.53	18.05	40.900	119.525	1.850	1.9000	236.025
3-15	Apr 23	18.60	18.09	40.900	119.500	1.950	1.9070	236.025
3-16	Apr 23	18.60	18.10	42.400	119.250	1.950	1.8970	236.750
3-10	May 23	17.85	18.33	39.100	119.500	1.899	1.8510	238.850
3-13	May 23	17.94	18.25	38.000	119.150	1.899	1.8550	242.250
3-14	May 23	18.60	18.42	38.600	122.125	1.911	1.9150	240.350
3-15	May 23	18.41	18.33	39.000	119.000	1.950	1.8950	240.350
3-16	May 23	18.31	18.29	40.250	119.150	1.950	1.8810	240.350
3-10	June 23	18.33	18.76	37.900	122.500	1.925	1.8950	242.750
3-13	June 23	18.33	18.75	38.000	122.000	1.925	1.8930	242.750
3-14	June 22	18.87	18.75	38.025	125.250	1.925	1.8950	242.750
3-15	June 23	18.65	18.76	38.425	121.500	1.940	1.9170	242.750
3-16	June 23	18.53	18.65	40.000	122.250	1.950	1.9010	242.750
3-10	July 23	18.87	19.03	38.400	125.750	1.900	1.9370	244.025
3-13	July 23	18.78	18.95	38.400	124.900	1.980	1.9550	243.000
3-14	July 23	19.18	18.95	38.400	128.250	1.980	1.9720	245.500
3-15	July 23	19.02	18.95	38.525	127.500	1.989	1.9550	245.500
3-16	July 23	18.97	18.95	39.000	124.000	1.989	1.9410	245.750
3-10	Aug 23	19.28	19.40	38.550	128.600	2.031	1.9850	246.000
3-13	Aug 23	19.20	19.36	38.550	128.000	2.021	2.0000	246.000
3-14	Aug 23	19.45	19.36	38.550	131.250	2.021	1.9990	247.000
3-15	Aug 23	19.34	19.33	38.550	127.000	2.021	1.9970	247.000
3-16	Aug 23	19.46	19.33	39.500	127.000	2.021	1.9850	248.375
3-10	Sept 23	19.55	19.68	39.750	131.250	2.051	2.0100	248.275
3-13	Sept 23	19.48	19.60	39.750	130.750	2.051	2.0100	248.275
3-14	Sept 23	19.68	19.60	39.750	133.250	2.051	2.0140	248.750
3-15	Sept 23	19.57	19.58	39.750	130.000	2.044	2.0100	248.750
3-16	Sept 23	19.64	19.58	39.875	129.750	2.044	2.0100	249.925
3-10	Oct 23	19.70	19.90	41.475	133.000	2.055	2.0200	249.500
3-13	Oct 23	19.65	19.86	41.475	133.000	2.054	2.0200	249.500
3-14	Oct 23	19.76	19.86	41.475	133.250	2.054	2.0230	249.500
3-15	Oct 23	19.70	19.86	41.475	130.200	2.054	2.0210	249.500
3-16	Oct 23	19.76	19.86	41.850	132.000	2.054	2.0200	249.500
3-10	Nov 23	19.58	20.10	41.975	134.500	2.051	2.0130	250.000
3-13	Nov 23	19.55	20.05	41.975	134.500	2.051	2.0160	250.000
3-14	Nov 23	19.68	20.05	41.975	134.500	2.051	2.0170	250.000
3-15	Nov 23	19.58	20.05	41.975	134.000	2.047	2.0130	250.000
3-16	Nov 23	19.69	20.05	41.975	134.250	2.047	2.0150	250.000
3-10	Dec 23	19.25	20.00	42.975	135.250	2.011	1.9800	247.800
3-13	Dec 23	19.18	19.92	42.975	135.250	2.011	1.9750	248.750
3-14	Dec 23	19.30	19.92	42.975	135.250	2.011	1.9770	248.750
3-15	Dec 23	19.17	19.92	42.975	135.250	2.011	1.9770	248.750
3-16	Dec 23	19.36	19.92	42.975	135.200	2.011	1.9800	248.750
3-10	Jan 24	19.00	19.50	43.000	136.000	1.986	1.9580	245.000
3-13	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	136.000	1.986	1.9400	245.000
3-14	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	136.000	1.986	1.9300	245.000
3-15	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	136.000	1.986	1.9350	245.000
3-16	Jan 24	19.00	19.50	43.000	136.000	1.986	1.9380	245.000
<b>Mar. 16</b>	<b>23,402</b>	<b>5,962</b>	<b>2,613</b>	<b>9,004</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>20,470</b>	<b>9,211</b>	

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# DAIRY PRODUCT MARKETS

AS REPORTED BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## WHOLESALE CHEESE MARKETS

**NORTHEAST - MARCH 15:** Milk supplies are abundant in the eastern states. Persistent dryer challenges within the region have freed up condensed skim milk supplies that would have been processed into NDM. Plant managers report robust production schedules, with some contacts saying they have manufactured more cheese than expected due to milk availability. Last Friday's close showed a 1 cent difference of block over barrel pricing, but that gap has expanded during trading this week. Retail and foodservice demands are noted to be steady. Inventories are steady to increasing.

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

Cheddar 40-lb block:	\$2.2975 - \$2.5850	Process 5-lb sliced:	\$1.8000 - \$2.2800
Muenster:	\$2.2850 - \$2.6350	Swiss Cuts 10-14 lbs:	\$3.7625 - \$6.0850

**MIDWEST AREA - MARCH 15:** Cheese market tones experienced a bullish push on Tuesday, as market prices climbed both for blocks and barrels. Markets are also under a more assured tone, as the block to barrel price difference has narrowed noticeably since early last week. At the beginning of last week's CME trading, the price gap from blocks to barrels was over \$.27, by Friday there was a 1 cent difference. Cheese makers say demand is hearty. Barrel and curd makers relay more committed customers, while some retail Cheddar and Italian style cheese processors say they are concerned about lacking the production capacity to bolster summer/fall inventories, despite readily available milk. Spot milk prices met the \$10 under Class III mark again this week, as milk handlers continue to offer spot milk loads exclusively below Class III.

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

Blue 5# Loaf :	\$2.3400 - \$3.5500	Mozzarella 5-6#:	\$1.8700 - \$2.9575
Brick 5# Loaf:	\$2.0700 - \$2.6375	Muenster 5#:	\$2.0700 - \$2.6375
Cheddar 40# Block:	\$1.7925 - \$2.3350	Process 5# Loaf:	\$1.6775 - \$2.1450
Monterey Jack 10#:	\$2.0450 - \$2.3925	Swiss 6-9# Cuts:	\$3.2775 - \$3.3800

**WEST - MARCH 15:** Varietal cheese demand from retail and foodservice purchasers is strong to steady. Q2 bookings continue steadily, as some contacts report close to sold out inventories for contract sales. Spot loads are available and overall spot market demand is steady. Barrel sales are heavily active, while block sales are light in activity. Barrel inventories remain more abundant than block inventories, despite the strong week for barrel markets. Export demand continues to be reported as mixed. Some stakeholders report strong to steady demand from Asian and Mexican markets, while others report current prices are un-competitive with European and Global Dairy Trading pricing. Available milk volumes are regionally plentiful to ample for cheese makers to keep strong production schedules going. The block-barrel spread on the CME decreased to 7.25 cents, compared to 10.00 cents since last Wednesday.

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

Cheddar 10# Cuts:	\$2.1725 - \$2.3725	Monterey Jack 10#:	\$2.1600 - \$2.4350
Cheddar 40# Block:	\$1.9250 - \$2.4150	Process 5# Loaf:	\$1.8025 - \$1.9575
		Swiss 6-9# Cuts:	\$2.5700 - \$4.0000

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

Variety	Date: 3/15	3/8	Variety	Date: 3/15	3/8
Cheddar Curd	\$1.94	\$1.96	Mild Cheddar	\$1.99	\$2.00
Young Gouda	\$1.54	\$1.55	Mozzarella	\$1.47	\$1.49

**FOREIGN -TYPE CHEESE - MARCH 15:** European cheese markets are, reportedly, balanced currently and prices are steady from last week. Industry sources indicate demand is trending higher from retail customers, though there is some variation dependent on cheese sales being offered by grocers. Demand for Mozzarella cheese is strengthening. Export sales of cheese are picking up as some purchasers are preparing for spring holidays. Cheese production is steady, as milk output remains seasonally strong. Cheese makers in some parts of Europe have been impacted by winter weather, which has delayed milk deliveries and had a negative impact on production. Cheese inventories in warehouses have begun to stabilize and stakeholders say loads are generally available for spot purchasing.

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

	Imported	Domestic
Blue:	\$2.6400 - 5.2300	\$2.1550 - 3.6425
Gorgonzola:	\$3.6900 - 5.7400	\$2.6625 - 3.3800
Parmesan (Italy):	0	\$3.5425 - 5.6325
Romano (Cows Milk):	0	\$3.3450 - 5.5000
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	\$3.7975 - 4.1225
Swiss Cuts Finnish:	\$2.6700- 2.9300	0

## NDM PRODUCTS - MARCH 16

**NDM - CENTRAL:** Condensed skim availability has been noted as long. Drying time, although some seasonal ingredients are taking dryer capacity, has been somewhat active in drying NDM. End users who can interchange their dairy powders say, as whey protein concentrates' prices move lower week to week, the bargains are to be found in those markets in lieu of NDM. Mexican demand is spotty from one week to the next, but some contacts suggest they are waiting out stronger spring milk/condensed skim volumes, as volumes are already noted as hearty. High heat NDM markets are under some pricing pressure, as well. NDM market tones are, at least slightly, aquiver.

**NDM - WEST:** Some spot purchasers are, reportedly, anticipating increased availability and lower prices for low/medium heat NDM as spring approaches. This is contributing to lighter demand from both domestic and

international purchasers, who are limiting their purchases to loads which meet their immediate needs. Spot loads of low/medium heat NDM are available. Plant managers report plenty of milk is available for drying, and they are utilizing strong milk volumes to operate steady production schedules. High heat NDM production is limited, as processors are focusing on low/medium heat NDM. Spot inventories of high heat NDM are tight, though stakeholders say demand is limited.

**NDM - EAST:** Trading was steadily light this week. End users, in some cases, say they are not aggressively seeking out spot loads. Some buyers are aware of the amount of condensed skim, which is robust, and they are taking a hand-to-mouth buying approach. Drying is relatively steady after some plant downtime last week. High heat NDM prices moved lower on both ends of the range. NDM market tones are uncertain.

## NATIONAL - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY PRODUCTS

Total conventional dairy ads decreased by 6 percent, but the total number of organic ads increased by 33 percent. Shredded cheese in 6- to 8-ounce packages was the most advertised conventional dairy item with an average price of \$2.68, up 4 cents from last week. Block cheese in 6- to 8-ounce packages was prevalent in dairy ads with an average price of \$2.56, down 13 cents from last week. Sliced cheese in 6- to 8-ounce packages had an average advertised price that dropped 28 cents to \$2.22.

Conventional ads for ice cream declined by 24 percent, while total organic ads for ice cream grew by 316 percent. Conventional ads for ice cream in 48- to 64-ounce containers declined by 26 percent. Ads for its organic counterpart increased by 227 percent. The average price for conventional increased 28 cents to \$3.95, while organic declined 62 cents to \$8.91.

Conventional ads for yogurt increased 20 percent, and organic yogurt ads increased 107 percent. Conventional Greek yogurt in 4- to 6-ounce containers was the second-most advertised dairy item, holding the same average price of \$1.06 as last week.

## RETAIL PRICES - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY - MARCH 17

Commodity	US	NE	SE	MID	SC	SW	NW
Butter 8 oz	2.84	NA	2.84	NA	NA	NA	NA
Butter 1#	4.22	4.52	4.24	1.99	4.64	4.13	4.31
Cheese 6-8 oz block	2.56	2.38	2.70	2.18	2.53	2.87	2.45
Cheese 6-8 oz shred	2.68	2.71	2.75	2.23	2.71	2.72	2.88
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced	2.22	2.32	2.30	1.79	2.37	2.28	2.55
Cheese 1# block	4.00	3.40	NA	NA	4.99	NA	NA
Cheese 1# shred	4.54	NA	NA	NA	4.99	NA	3.83
Cheese 1# sliced	3.99	NA	3.99	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cheese 2# block	7.28	7.99	NA	NA	NA	6.99	6.99
Cheese 2# shred	8.15	7.99	NA	6.99	8.62	7.94	NA
Cottage Cheese 16 oz	2.64	3.02	2.53	NA	NA	2.05	NA
Cottage Cheese 24 oz	2.36	NA	1.99	2.46	2.74	2.49	2.09
Cream Cheese 8 oz	2.72	2.32	2.94	2.76	2.65	3.49	2.32
Ice Cream 14-16 oz	3.94	3.88	3.99	3.73	3.09	4.37	4.49
Ice Cream 48-64 oz	3.95	3.71	3.71	3.69	4.68	4.31	4.10
Milk 1/2 gallon	2.15	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.18	2.48
Milk gallon	2.56	3.55	3.99	NA	4.49	3.09	4.46
Sour Cream 16 oz	2.15	2.00	1.78	1.99	2.88	2.24	1.67

**US:** National **Northeast (NE):** CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT; **Southeast (SE):** AL, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV; **Midwest (MID):** IA, IL, IN, KY, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI; **South Central (SC):** AK, CO, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX; **Southwest (SW):** AZ, CA, NV, UT; **Northwest (NW):** ID, MT, OR, WA, WY

## ORGANIC DAIRY - RETAIL OVERVIEW

National Weighted Retail Avg Price:	Yogurt 4-6 oz:	NA
Butter 1 lb:	\$5.45	\$6.33
Cottage Cheese 16 oz:	\$4.66	\$4.53
Cheese shreds 6-8 oz:	\$3.33	\$5.29
Cheese 6-8 oz block:	\$4.49	\$2.38
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced:	\$6.38	\$6.99
Yogurt 32 oz:	\$4.48	\$8.91

## WHOLESALE BUTTER MARKETS - MARCH 15

**NATIONAL:** Cream supplies are ample throughout the US, though contacts in the Central region report volumes are down, slightly, this week. Lighter production of Cream cheese in the East has freed up some cream supplies for buttermaking. Butter churning is active as some processors are operating seven-day schedules. Western butter makers say they are operating busy production schedules to work through available cream supplies. Demand for butter is steady to lighter in the East and West regions.

**WEST:** Cream supplies for production needs remain reported as balanced to ample. Cream demand is steady to light. Butter production is mixed. Some contacts note steady to lighter production and decreased processing capacity with equipment repairs taking place. Retail demand is light, and some stakeholders report a light start for the spring holiday season. Contract sales and spot market activity are steady to light. Export market demand is steady, although some stakeholders report current domestic prices are taking away from competitiveness in export markets. Unsalted butter inventories kept ahead of salted butter inventories, despite closer comparative pricing noted by stakeholders.

**CENTRAL:** Butter demand has strengthened, due, at least in part, to the proximity to spring holidays according to contacts. Butter makers say bulk availability, which has grown in recent weeks, is still accessible. However, they also say buyers are more active, particularly in regards to retail markets. Cream availability, despite similar multiples week to week, has begun to tighten up when compared to just a few weeks ago. That said, cream remains generally available for active churning rates, but demand from other end users, namely cream cheese and ice cream manufacturers, has butter plant managers reporting offers have begun to subside.

**NORTHEAST:** Cream supplies have tightened slightly. Cream cheese production has picked up ahead of spring holidays and has further strained regional cream supplies. Despite tighter cream supplies, plant managers report that they are still operating strong seven-day churning schedules. Some contacts report that they are freezing some butter supplies in bulk and that inventories are more comfortable in certain locales than in others. Foodservice demand is steady. Recent retail prices have dissuaded some consumers and demand is noted to be steady to weaker.

## WEEKLY COLD STORAGE HOLDINGS

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

DATE	BUTTER	CHEESE
03/13/23	51,629	66,576
03/01/23	48,681	67,267
Change	2,948	-691
Percent Change	6	-1



### CME CASH PRICES - MARCH 13 - 17, 2023

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

	500-LB CHEDDAR	40-LB CHEDDAR	AA BUTTER	GRADE A NDFM	DRY WHEY
<b>MONDAY</b> March 13	\$1.7950 (+2½)	\$1.8100 (+3)	\$2.3800 (+4¾)	\$1.1700 (-½)	\$0.4400 (-¼)
<b>TUESDAY</b> March 14	\$1.8400 (+4½)	\$1.9250 (+11½)	\$2.3800 (NC)	\$1.1850 (+1½)	\$0.4375 (-¼)
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> March 15	\$1.8875 (+4¾)	\$1.9600 (+3½)	\$2.3800 (NC)	\$1.1800 (-½)	\$0.4500 (+1¼)
<b>THURSDAY</b> March 16	\$1.8875 (NC)	\$1.9525 (-¾)	\$2.4000 (+2)	\$1.1800 (NC)	\$0.4600 (+1)
<b>FRIDAY</b> March 17	\$1.9600 (+7¼)	\$1.9975 (+4½)	\$2.4000 (NC)	\$1.1875 (+¾)	\$0.4675 (+¾)
<b>Week's AVG \$ Change</b>	<b>\$1.8740 (+0.1725)</b>	<b>\$1.9290 (+0.0965)</b>	<b>\$2.3880 (+0.0510)</b>	<b>\$1.1805 (+0.0090)</b>	<b>\$0.4510 (+0.0010)</b>
<b>Last Week's AVG</b>	<b>\$1.7015</b>	<b>\$1.8325</b>	<b>\$2.3370</b>	<b>\$1.1715</b>	<b>\$0.4410</b>
<b>2022 AVG Same Week</b>	<b>\$2.0090</b>	<b>\$2.1135</b>	<b>\$2.7260</b>	<b>\$1.8515</b>	<b>\$0.7590</b>

### MARKET OPINION - CHEESE REPORTER

**Cheese Comment:** Three cars of blocks were sold Monday, 1 each at \$1.7750, \$1.7775 and \$1.7950; an unfilled bid for 1 car at \$1.8100 then set the price. Two cars of blocks were sold Tuesday, 1 at \$1.8500 and 1 at \$1.9000; an unfilled bid for 1 car at \$1.9250 then set the price. Three cars of blocks were sold Thursday, the last at \$1.9600, which set the price. No blocks were sold Thursday; the price declined on an uncovered offer of 1 car at \$1.9525. Five cars of blocks were sold Friday, the last at \$1.9975, which raised the price. The barrel price rose Monday on a sale at \$1.7950, increased Tuesday on a sale at \$1.8400, climbed Wednesday on an unfilled bid for 5 cars at \$1.8875, and jumped Friday on a sale at \$1.9600.

**Butter Comment:** The price increased Monday on a sale at \$2.3800, and rose Thursday on a sale at \$2.4000.

**Nonfat Dry Milk Comment:** The price fell Monday on a sale at \$1.1700, increased Tuesday on an unfilled bid at \$1.1850, declined Wednesday on an uncovered offer at \$1.1800, then rose Friday on a sale at \$1.1875.

**Dry Whey Comment:** The price declined Monday on an uncovered offer at 44.0 cents, fell Tuesday on a sale at 43.75 cents, increased Wednesday on an unfilled bid at 45.0 cents, rose Thursday on a sale at 46.0 cents, and increased Friday.

### WHEY MARKETS - MARCH 13 - 17, 2023

RELEASE DATE - MARCH 16, 2023

<b>Animal Feed Whey—Central:</b> Milk Replacer:	.3200 (+2) – .3850 (+6½)
<b>Buttermilk Powder:</b>	
Central & East:	1.1000 (-3) – 1.2200 (NC) West: 1.0500 (-7) – 1.1800 (-3)
Mostly:	1.0800 (-5) – 1.1400 (-4)
<b>Casein:</b> Rennet:	5.7400 (NC) – 6.0000 (NC) Acid: 6.0000 (-15) – 6.3500 (NC)
<b>Dry Whey—Central (Edible):</b>	
Nonhygroscopic:	.3850 (+2) – .4650 (-½) Mostly: .4200 (+2) – .4400 (NC)
<b>Dry Whey—West (Edible):</b>	
Nonhygroscopic:	.4100 (+1) – .4800 (+½) Mostly: .4200 (+2) – .4600 (+1)
<b>Dry Whey—NorthEast:</b>	.3950 (+½) – .4675 (+½)
<b>Lactose—Central and West:</b>	
Edible:	.1600 (NC) – .5600 (-3) Mostly: .2500 (-1) – .4500 (-3½)
<b>Nonfat Dry Milk —Central &amp; East:</b>	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.1700 (NC) – 1.2700 (NC) Mostly: 1.1900 (NC) – 1.2200 (-1)
High Heat:	1.3100 (-2) – 1.3900 (-3)
<b>Nonfat Dry Milk —Western:</b>	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.1225 (-1) – 1.2800 (-2) Mostly: 1.1725 (-1¾) – 1.2425 (-1¾)
High Heat:	1.2725 (-1) – 1.4375 (NC)
<b>Whey Protein Concentrate—34% Protein:</b>	
Central & West:	0.9000 (-14) – 1.5650 (-3½) Mostly: 1.1500 (-7) – 1.5250 (-3½)
<b>Whole Milk—National:</b>	2.1000 (NC) – 2.2000 (-2)

### HISTORICAL MONTHLY AVG BARREL PRICES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
'08	1.8774	1.9560	1.7980	1.8010	2.0708	2.0562	1.8890	1.6983	1.8517	1.8025	1.6975	1.5295
'09	1.0832	1.1993	1.2738	1.1506	1.0763	1.0884	1.1349	1.3271	1.3035	1.4499	1.4825	1.4520
'10	1.4684	1.4182	1.2782	1.3854	1.4195	1.3647	1.5161	1.6006	1.7114	1.7120	1.4520	1.3751
'11	1.4876	1.8680	1.8049	1.5756	1.6902	2.0483	2.1124	1.9571	1.7010	1.7192	1.8963	1.5839
'12	1.5358	1.4823	1.5152	1.4524	1.4701	1.5871	1.6826	1.7889	1.8780	2.0240	1.8388	1.6634
'13	1.6388	1.5880	1.5920	1.7124	1.7251	1.7184	1.6919	1.7425	1.7688	1.7714	1.7833	1.8651
'14	2.1727	2.1757	2.2790	2.1842	1.9985	1.9856	1.9970	2.1961	2.3663	2.0782	1.9326	1.5305
'15	1.4995	1.4849	1.5290	1.6135	1.6250	1.6690	1.6313	1.6689	1.5840	1.6072	1.5305	1.4628
'16	1.4842	1.4573	1.4530	1.4231	1.3529	1.5301	1.7363	1.8110	1.5415	1.5295	1.7424	1.6132
'17	1.5573	1.6230	1.4072	1.4307	1.4806	1.3972	1.4396	1.5993	1.5691	1.6970	1.6656	1.5426
'18	1.3345	1.4096	1.5071	1.4721	1.5870	1.4145	1.3707	1.5835	1.4503	1.3152	1.3100	1.2829
'19	1.2379	1.3867	1.4910	1.5925	1.6278	1.6258	1.7343	1.7081	1.7463	2.0224	2.2554	1.8410
'20	1.5721	1.5470	1.4399	1.0690	1.5980	2.3376	2.4080	1.4937	1.6401	2.2213	1.8437	1.4609
'21	1.5141	1.4442	1.4811	1.7119	1.6923	1.5639	1.4774	1.4158	1.5319	1.8008	1.5375	1.6548
'22	1.8204	1.9038	2.0774	2.3489	2.3567	2.2077	2.0581	1.8741	2.0690	2.1285	1.9454	1.8395
'23	1.6803	1.5761										

## USDA Accepting Applications For Value Added Producer Grants For Fiscal 2023

Washington—The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS), a USDA agency, is now accepting applications under the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program for fiscal year 2023, according to a notice published in today's *Federal Register*.

The objective of this grant program is to assist viable independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based businesses in starting or expanding value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added agricultural products.

Grants will be awarded competitively for either planning or working capital projects directly related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the end goals of the program. All proposals must demonstrate economic viability and sustainability.

Applicants for both planning and working capital grants must meet all applicable requirements,

including that the value-added product must result from one of the five methodologies identified in the definition of value-added agricultural product.

Also, it must be demonstrated that, as a result of the project, the customer base for the agricultural commodity or value-added product will be expanded, by including a baseline of current customers for the commodity, and an estimated target number of customers that will result from the project.

There is a matching fund (cost-sharing) requirement of at least \$1.00 for every \$1.00 in grant funds provided by the RBCS. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or eligible in-kind contributions.

RBCS currently estimates that approximately \$31 million will be available for fiscal 2023.

Electronic applications filed through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) must be filed by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, May 11, 2023.

The funding announcement will be announced on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov); application materials are also available at [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants).



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