



CHEESE REPORTER

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WCMA, IDFA Seek USDA Hearing To Update Make Allowances

NMPF Says It Would Be 'Economically Harmful' To Dairy Producers To Address Issue In Isolation

Washington—Both the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) on Tuesday petitioned the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to hold a hearing to amend all make allowances in the federal milk marketing order (FMMO) program.

One day later, the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) filed an objection to the WCMA and IDFA petitions, saying it would be “economically harmful to the nation’s dairy producers to address this single issue in isolation without consideration of a number of other provisions of the current FMMO program in need of review and update.”

IDFA said its petition supports the WCMA’s petition, and that the petitions “seek to relieve the economic hardships” on cheese, nonfat dry milk, butter and whey manufacturers due to “dramatically higher costs of manufacturing these products” since USDA

last established make allowances based on industry cost data from 2005-06.

“Accurate and up-to-date make allowances are absolutely critical to a properly functioning FMMO program,” the WCMA noted in its petition.

For Class III and Class IV products, a manufacturer is legally required by the FMMO to pay the farmers supplying it milk the money the manufacturer receives from selling its finished products to customers (as determined by monthly audited surveys of actual finished product prices for the core Class III and IV products), minus the cost incurred in making those products (the “make allowance”), WCMA said.

Federal order make allowances were last revised in 2008. As USDA stated at that time, “plant manufacturing cost increases may not be recovered because Class III and Class IV product-price formulas use make allowances that are fixed regardless of market con-

ditions and change only by regulatory action.”

WCMA’s proposal seeks to have USDA take the requisite “regulatory action” and amend the make allowances for Class III and Class IV product formulas “in order to reflect the substantial increases in plant manufacturing costs since make allowances were last revised in 2008.”

WCMA’s proposal is:

“Amend § 1000.50 milk price formulas by revising the existing manufacturing allowances for butter, nonfat dry milk, cheese, and whey powder based upon evidence obtained from the hearing record. Amendments to these manufacturing allowances would directly affect the milk component values used in Federal Milk Marketing Order milk price formulas for all classes of milk.”

This proposal language “is nearly identical” to the language USDA previously published as Proposal 1 for the 2006 make allowance hearing requested by Agri-Mark dairy coopera-

• See **Make Allowances**, p. 8

Chobani Receives Temporary FDA Permit For Yogurt Products Deviating From Standard

College Park, MD—The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Tuesday announced that it has issued a temporary permit to Chobani, LLC, to market test lower-fat yogurt products deviating from the general definition and standard of identity for yogurt with modified milkfat and fat-containing flavoring ingredients, and yogurt deviating from the yogurt standard of identity by using ultrafiltered nonfat milk as a basic dairy ingredient.

The temporary permit will allow Chobani to evaluate the commercial viability of the products and to collect data on consumer acceptance of the products.

The temporary permit would allow Chobani to manufacture yogurts using ultrafiltered nonfat milk as a basic dairy ingredient through the addition of water and non-nutritive sweeteners, FDA explained.

Consumers can distinguish this deviation in manufacturing from yogurts meeting the standard of identity for yogurt using the list of ingredients, wherein the “ultrafiltered nonfat milk” ingredient would be declared as such according to its common or usual name followed by a means to indicate to the consumer that the ingredi-

• See **Chobani Permit**, p. 3

Grande Cheese Acquires Former Foremost Farms Cheese Plant In Chilton, WI

Fond du Lac, WI—Grande Cheese Company, a manufacturer of Italian cheeses and whey products, has announced the acquisition of the former Foremost Farms USA cheese plant in Chilton, WI.

Built in the 1940s, the Chilton plant produced Italian cheese that was sold into the foodservice market. The Chilton plant will further enhance Grande’s manufacturing capabilities.

“Over the past several years, we have explored opportunities to develop our manufacturing network through expansion of our existing facilities as well

• See **Grande Acquires**, p. 14

Bipartisan Legislation Would Codify Formal Definition Of Natural Cheese

Washington—Bipartisan legislation introduced in both the US Senate and House this week would codify a formal definition of “natural cheese,” a term commonly used on food packaging that currently has no official definition, the legislation’s sponsors noted.

Cheese makers have long used the term “natural cheese” to distinguish products that use basic ingredients and are made directly from milk, from processed cheeses that incorporate extra steps, the bill’s sponsors noted.

Under the Codifying Useful Regulatory Definitions (CURD) Act, “natural cheese” would be defined as cheese that is produced from animal milk or other dairy ingredients and is produced in accordance with established

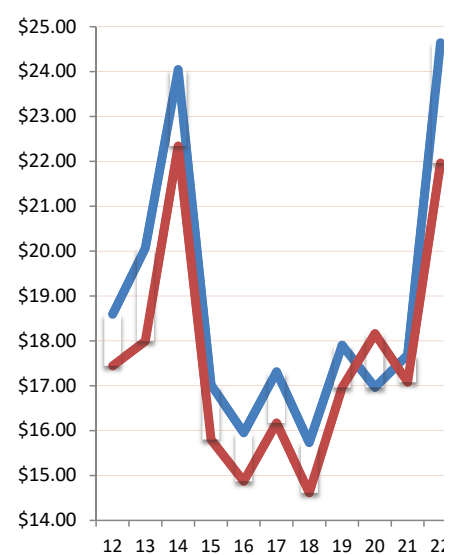
cheesemaking practices.

The legislation was introduced in the Senate by US Sen Ron Johnson (R-WI), who was joined by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jim Risch (R-ID), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Mike Braun (R-IN) and Peter Welch (D-VT). In the House, the CURD Act was introduced by US Reps. Mike Gallagher (R-WI), Jim Costa (D-CA), Bryan Steil (R-WI), Angie Craig (D-MN), Glenn Grothman (R-WI), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) and Scott Fitzgerald (R-WI).

“The dairy processing industry has used the term ‘natural cheese’ for decades to help differentiate cheese made with fresh milk and dairy ingredients from pasteurized processed cheese,”

• See **Natural Cheese**, p. 13

Average Mailbox vs Class 3 Milk Price 2012–2022





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EDITORIAL COMMENT



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Salt Substitutes: What's The Potential For Their Use In Cheese?

The US Food and Drug Administration last Friday announced that it will soon propose to amend its standards of identity to permit the use of salt substitutes in foods for which salt is a required or optional ingredient.

As reported on our front page last week, FDA believes the proposed rule will provide manufacturers with flexibility and facilitate innovation to reduce sodium in standardized foods, including numerous cheese and other dairy products.

But we can't help but wonder, how much of this flexibility will cheese and other dairy product manufacturers actually be able to take advantage of, and how much industry innovation will this actually lead to?

The simple answer is, that's hard to say, for the simple reason that salt substitutes haven't been allowed in standardized dairy products up to this point, so there hasn't really been all that much research and development devoted to the use of salt substitutes in dairy products. What's the point of doing the R&D if these substitutes aren't permitted?

But that's going to change sometime down the road. How soon is anybody's guess. Here, the dairy industry has earned the right to be a bit cynical about the timeline to a final FDA rule on salt substitutes, given the recent (and not-so-recent) history of FDA's foot-dragging on amending the yogurt standards and allowing the use of ultrafiltered milk in standardized cheeses, to name just a couple of examples of FDA taking way too long to finalize a proposed rule.

Beyond that, the dairy industry generally, and the cheese industry specifically, have had numerous opportunities in recent years to offer their views to FDA on sodium reduction and, to a lesser extent, the naming and use of salt substitutes.

Regarding that latter point, it may be recalled that FDA issued guidance back in December 2020 stating that the agency intends to exercise enforcement discretion for declaration of the name "potassium salt" in the ingredient statement on food labels as an alternative to the common or usual name "potassium chloride."

FDA said it intends to exercise this enforcement discretion to provide industry with greater flexibility when labeling their food products, and said this enforcement discretion may result in manufacturers using potassium chloride as a substitute ingredient for some sodium chloride.

But it's not as simple as allowing this and other salt substitutes in standardized foods. For example, back in October 2016, Sargento Foods noted, in comments submitted to FDA on the agency's voluntary sodium reduction goals, that, in certain natural cheeses, it may be possible to replace 30 percent of the sodium content with potassium from a functional standpoint; however, "even this partial replacement still causes increased bitterness and a metallic taste."

Specific to Cheddar cheese, Sargento noted that researchers reported back in 1985 that a 50 percent replacement of sodium with potassium resulted in unacceptable crumbly texture, and that replacement of sodium with potassium also resulted in excessive bitterness. And similar results were obtained from Cheddar cheeses made with potassium, magnesium and calcium chloride, resulting in unacceptable properties such as bitter, metallic and rancid flavors as well as a crumbly texture.

Also in comments submitted to FDA back in October 2016, the International Dairy Foods Association and National Milk Producers Federation noted

Specific to Cheddar cheese, Sargento noted that researchers reported back in 1985 that a 50 percent replacement of sodium with potassium resulted in unacceptable crumbly texture, and that replacement of sodium with potassium also resulted in excessive bitterness.

that non-sodium salt substitutes "typically impart metallic or bitter tastes, limiting their use and creating severe hurdles to consumer acceptance."

And the National Dairy Council, in comments submitted to FDA in September 2019 regarding the use of the name "potassium chloride salt" in food labeling, noted that potassium chloride remains "the most viable sodium substitute" for cheesemaking, but cost "remains an important barrier to implementation." Potassium chloride "also presents a barrier to successful adoption due to sensory characteristics," NDC added.

What about internationally? Specifically, what do Codex standards have to say regarding the use of salt substitutes in cheeses that have a Codex standard?

Codex has two types of cheese standards. The "General Standard for Cheese" lists, as a permitted ingredient, sodium chloride "and potassium chloride as a salt substitute."

However, that general standard notes that standards for individual varieties of cheese, or groups of varieties of cheese, may contain provisions which are more specific than those in the general standard and, in those cases, those specific provisions apply.

So, for example, the "Group Standard for Cheeses in Brine" lists sodium chloride as a permitted ingredient, but not potassium chloride. But standards for Cheddar and Havarti, among others, do list potassium chloride as a permitted ingredient.

If nothing else, FDA's proposed rule to allow the use of salt substitutes might jump-start R&D efforts to find out if these substitutes can be used in standardized dairy products. Maybe their best use will be in flavored cheeses, such as pepper-flavored varieties.

USDA Buys Shredded Cheddar, Seeks Fluid Milk For June Delivery

Washington—The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that it is awarding a contract to Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI) for 67,200 pounds of shredded Cheddar cheese for delivery in June.

The price range for the shredded Cheddar, which is being purchased in support of child nutrition and other related domestic food distribution programs, is \$2.5100 to \$2.5300 per pound. The total price of the contract award is \$169,344.00.

Meanwhile, USDA on Monday issued an invitation seeking various fluid milk products for delivery in June.

The fluid milk is being acquired for use in domestic food distribution programs.

USDA is specifically seeking a total of 677,700 containers of fluid milk, including 61,200 gallons and 307,800 half-gallons of 1 percent milk; 144,000 gallons and 145,800 half-gallons of 2 percent milk; and 10,800 gallons and 8,100 half-gallons of skim milk.

Bids are due by 1:00 pm. Central time on Monday, Apr. 10. Offers must be submitted electronically via the Web-Based Supply Chain Management System (WBSCM).

For more information on selling dairy and other food products to USDA, visit www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food.

Meanwhile, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published a notice in Thursday's *Federal Register* announcing the surplus and purchased foods that the agency expects to make available for donation to states for use in providing nutrition assistance to the needy under The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in fiscal year 2023.

USDA is directed to purchase an estimated \$445.5 million worth of foods in fiscal 2023 for distribution through TEFAP. In addition, states will receive up to \$943 million in supplemental foods and operational expenses.

For fiscal 2023, USDA anticipates purchasing the following dairy products for distribution through TEFAP: reduced fat American cheese, loaves, refrigerated; yellow shredded Cheddar cheese; shelf-stable 1 percent UHT milk; shelf-stable 1 percent UHT milk, individual portion; 1 percent fresh milk; and fresh skim milk.

The amounts of each item purchased will depend on the prices USDA must pay, as well as the quantity of each item requested by the states.

Chobani Permit

(Continued from p. 1)

ent is not found in regular yogurt.

The purpose of the temporary permit is to allow Chobani to market test the products throughout the US. The temporary permit will allow the company to evaluate commercial viability of the products and to collect data on consumer acceptance of the products, FDA noted.

The temporary permit provides the temporary marketing of a maximum of 150 million pounds of the test products. Chobani will manufacture the test products at its facilities located in Twin Falls, ID, and New Berlin, NY. The company will produce, market test, and distribute the test products throughout the US.

Each ingredient used in the food must be declared on the labels as required by the applica-

ble sections of 21 CFR part 101, FDA stated.

The temporary permit is effective for 15 months, beginning on the date the applicant introduces or causes the introduction of the test products into interstate commerce, but not later than June 26.

About Temporary Permits

FDA on Nov. 1, 2021, issued guidance to industry on the Temporary Marketing Permit (TMP) process. The guidance is intended to help clarify, streamline, and improve the efficiency of the TMP application process.

Foods for which FDA has established a standard of identity must conform to the applicable standard, but FDA permits manufacturers to market test products that deviate from the applicable standard so they may conduct research and obtain data to support a petition to amend food standards.

FDA said it recognizes that, before industry submits a petition to amend a food standard, appropriate investigations of potential advances in food technology may require product testing in interstate markets. Manufacturers who want to obtain a permit to market test food products that deviate from the established standards may apply for a TMP. This product testing may help to determine consumer acceptance of foods varying from applicable SOIs.

In December 2020, FDA announced that a temporary permit had been issued to Bongards' Creameries to market test several standardized processed sliced cheeses that deviate from the US standards of identity for cheese products. For the purpose of that temporary permit, natamycin, which is not permitted under the standards for those specific cheese products, would be added as a mold inhibitor in those cheeses.

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BEC Causes Dairy Products To Go MIA

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The dairy industry is full of acronyms that are pertinent to the industry, like PMO, FMMO, CWT, PCQI. The FBI is asking that dairy processors add another acronym to their repertoire: BEC.

BEC — business email compromise; that crafty under-handed technique that cyber-criminal gangs use to steal funds or gain access to confidential company information. By creating an email that looks nearly identical to a customer or vendor email, the cyber criminals trick their victims into sending money or divulging confidential company data.

This tactic is now being used against the dairy industry — not to steal data, but to steal product. The result: hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of stolen dairy products.

The cybercrime against dairy and food processors has reached such a critical point that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations (FDA OCI), and the USDA released a joint Cybersecurity Advisory (CSA). The advisory warns the Food & Agriculture sector about recently observed incidents of criminal actors using business email compromise (BEC) to steal shipments of food products and ingredients.

According to the advisory, in April 2022, a US food manu-

facturer and supplier received a request through their web portal inquiring about pricing for whole milk powder purportedly from another food company. The spoofed food company email used the name of the president and the company's actual physical address. The ingredient supplier ran a credit check on the company, extended a line of credit, and the first of two shipments — valued at more than \$100,000 — was picked up from the supplier.

In February 2022, four different fraudulent companies placed large orders for whole milk powder and nonfat dry milk from a food manufacturer. The orders, valued at almost \$600,000, were picked up, and the victim company was unaware something was wrong until they did not receive payment. In all four instances, real employee names and slight variations of the legitimate domain names were used.

So what's a dairy processor to do?

According to Matt Thomson, director of cyber liability at M3 Insurance, some of the easiest-to-implement strategies to defend your operation against a business email compromise include:

- **Security Awareness Training** – Include these examples in your security awareness training. Security awareness training should be an ongoing and evolving program

that should address threats that are relevant to your business. Technical controls can't stop every activity from cyber criminals, so informed employees can act as a human firewall for your organization.

- **Review and Update Business Processes** – Understand these scenarios and determine if any business processes need additional verification, and at what level. For instance, you may want to use a phone call to verify any new customer/client before processing their first order to ensure a cybercriminal hasn't attempted to impersonate the customer. The level at which your business will require this type of verification may differ based on your size.

- **Review Your Cyber Insurance Policy** - Work with your insurance broker to review and verify that your cyber insurance policy would cover these losses. In general, this would be a social engineering fraud claim.

- **Implement Security Controls for Email Systems** – Two controls that can greatly help prevent your organization from falling victim to business email compromise are multi-factor authentication (MFA) and advanced email filter, sometimes referred to as a secure email gateway (SEG). MFA adds additional protection for your users who have weak passwords or have had their password compromised. SEGs can identify and stop more advanced spoofing or phishing emails that your employees may be at an increased risk of falling victim to.

By staying diligent, training your employees, and implementing strong security controls, dairy processors can make sure BEC does not become part of your standard acronym dictionary. **JPG**

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

50 YEARS AGO

March 30, 1973: Minneapolis, MN—Three Minnesota farmers and three dairy co-ops are set to launch the first lawsuit against a government price support program. The suit will be filed in federal court against Ag Secretary Earl Butz and the Commodity Credit Corporation, after plans to set milk price supports at 75 percent of parity for dairy products.

Washington—The sound of angry housewives protesting food prices is echoing throughout the world. However, echoes from foreign countries make the US protests seem small as Japan reports steak selling at \$17.40 per pound; Germans buying roast beef at \$2.08; and Parisian bakers selling bread at 79 cents a loaf.

25 YEARS AGO

April 3, 1998: Seattle, WA—Darigold has tapped John Mueller as the co-op's next CEO, succeeding Wesley Eckert, who will retire this spring. Mueller brings 25 years of food industry experience to his new job, most recently serving as president and CEO of Unilever's US subsidiary, Van den Bergh Foods.

Oshkosh, WI—Ken Neumeier has joined Oshkosh Cold Storage as a sales and procurement representative. In his role, Neumeier will work with Stan Dietsche in buying and selling all types of cheese, specializing in Aged Cheddar.

10 YEARS AGO

March 29, 2013: Sacramento, CA—It "may be appropriate" for California's dairy industry to consider alternatives to facilitate the movement of milk to fluid milk plants in light of recent changes in market structure, according to a new report from the California Department of Food & Agriculture.

Madison—Edwin "Mike" Foster, 96, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, passed away Feb. 11. Foster was an internationally respected authority on food microbiology and established the UW-Madison as a center for food research through his 20-year directorship of the Food Research Institute.



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First Turkish Cypriot Halloumi Cheese Producer Awarded PDO Certificate

Brussels, Belgium—The first Turkish Cypriot Halloumi cheese producer on Tuesday was awarded the protected designation of origin (PDO) certificate under the European Union's (EU) quality scheme.

Following the registration of the name Halloumi as a PDO, only Halloumi produced on the island of Cyprus in accordance with the requirements of the related product specification can be marketed in the EU as Halloumi (Hellim). This provides for the possibility for producers on both sides of the Green Line (which separates the two parts of Cyprus) to apply for PDO certification of their products.

The first control in the Turkish Cypriot community took place in February by Bureau Veritas, an internationally accredited body delegated to perform the related official controls throughout the island. The first producer from the Turkish Cypriot community was assessed to be compliant with requirements set out in the Halloumi PDO product specification.

The PDO control and certification system by Bureau Veritas is in place since the application of the European Commission Regulation registering Halloumi as a PDO. A number of Halloumi producers established in the areas of the Republic of Cyprus under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus have already received the PDO certification under this system.

Meanwhile, the measures concerning EU animal and public health requirements required to be fulfilled for the Turkish Cypriot community to fully benefit from the EU quality scheme by trading the PDO products across the Green Line still remain to be implemented.

The registration of Halloumi, the best known cheese of Cyprus, as a PDO in 2021 enabled the producers from both Cypriot communities to benefit from this EU quality scheme. The Turkish Cypriot community still needs to implement measures related to EU sanitary and phytosanitary standards before Halloumi PDO cheese by Turkish Cypriot producers can be allowed to be marketed in the European Union. This is expected by the end of next year.

Milk Transportation In Northeast: Challenges And Possible Remedies

Enfield, CT—Farm Credit East Knowledge Exchange recently took a fresh look at milk transportation, specifically in the Northeast US, and released its findings in a new report titled *Challenges in Northeast Milk Transportation*.

“The logistics of getting milk from the farm to the plant are complex, expensive and fraught with challenges, but they are a key component of the dairy industry,” said Chris Laughton, Farm Credit East director of Knowledge Exchange and author of the report.

The report identifies key challenges facing milk haulers. Some of these challenges apply to the trucking industry generally, including driver shortages, regulations, aging drivers and a lack of younger drivers, inconsistency in weight limits across states, poor public road and bridge infrastructure, and supply chain issues with equipment and parts.

Other challenges identified are more specific to the dairy industry. These challenges include:

Extended wait times and limited delivery windows at dairy plants: Because of, in many cases, years of underinvestment in logistics infrastructure, many plants have insufficient unloading capacity, which results in tight delivery windows at some plants and, often, long wait times.

Plants operating below capacity due to staffing shortages: Many processing plants are not operating at full capacity and have reduced operating hours due to staffing shortages. This may reduce the receiving hours available for haul-

ers as well as limiting the amount of milk they can process.

Inadequate farm facilities: Similar to the problems at dairy plants, many dairy farms have insufficient storage and loading facilities. Problems range from roadways impassable in certain weather conditions, to bulk tank capacity, cooling capacity, and lack of high-speed pumps to load tankers. Farmers are, in general, inadequately incentivized to invest in loading infrastructure compared to other areas of their farms.

Road closures due to inclement weather: Several milk haulers report that, from their perspective, highway closures due to weather are excessive, and may be counter-productive. They noted that most highways are usually cleared of snow and safe to traverse well before they are officially reopened to commercial traffic.

Farm attrition and isolation of remaining farms: While this was not reported as a issue in New York, New England milk haulers reported that as farms, particularly smaller farms, exit the industry, remaining farms are sometimes left isolated and “out of the way” from a trucking standpoint.

Many of the problems being experienced today have existed, in one form or another, for many years and, as such, won't be easily remedied, the report noted.

There are a number of possible areas for improvement. These may require cooperation, investment and commitment from industry, policymakers, and others.

Similar to the challenges facing milk transportation, some of

the possible remedies are general in nature, including increased public investment and access to training programs for young drivers; improved access to driving careers for young people; consistent weight limits between states; and infrastructure investment in rural roads and bridges.

Some potential remedies are industry-specific. For example, the report suggests more investment and focus on farm-level transportation infrastructure.

Dairy farmers typically have limited capital for farm investment and many competing needs. The current structure of hauling assessments leaves little incentive for farmers to invest in things like larger bulk tanks, better refrigeration, high-speed pumps, all-weather roads, and other improvements that could make hauling routes more efficient.

The report also suggests more investment and focus on plant-level transportation infrastructure. Expanded delivery facilities and streamlined procedures could be implemented to allow milk deliveries to get in and out faster and get back on the road.

Limited drop-off windows can be problematic if drivers are delayed due to farm conditions, weather or traffic, and cause extended waits, the report pointed out. This can cause additional problems in terms of exhausting drivers' limited “hours of service” and has a quality of life impact on drivers which can make the job less appealing.

The report suggests more judicious road closures, noting that allowing trucks to use interstate highways in inclement weather would allow milk trucks to continue to make their pickups during winter weather.



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House Hearing Looks At FDA's Response To Infant Formula Shortage

Washington—The House Oversight subcommittee on health care held an oversight hearing Tuesday on the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) response to the infant formula shortage.

Frank Yiannas, who served as FDA deputy commissioner, food policy and response, from 2018 through last month, offered the subcommittee several recommendations, including, among others:

- Make *Cronobacter sakazakii* a nationally notifiable disease, just like *Listeria*, *Salmonella* and *E. coli* 0157.

- FDA must enhance its ability to detect signals of potential safety concerns with regulated products and act on them with a greater sense of urgency.

- Congress should address the "cultural, siloed, structural, and leadership issues" in the FDA Food Program that contributed to a less-than-desirable response to the infant formula incident.

- Demand that the infant formula industry set higher standards of care for themselves that include more modernized production facilities and equipment, stronger preventive controls, enhanced sanitary design, more aggressive environmental monitoring, and statistically strengthened verification procedures.

- Strengthen regulatory requirements for infant formula manufacturers to include more robust sanitary design, environmental monitoring, a re-evaluation of sampling plans beyond N=30 for *Cronobacter*, and mandatory reporting of product positives to FDA.

- Re-evaluate the thoroughness and frequency of FDA inspections conducted at infant formula manufacturers.

- Re-invent the process used by FDA and health officials to investigate confirmed reports of *Cronobacter sakazakii* linked to a particular infant formula product.

- Support the development of more modern, data-driven Food Supply Chain Analytic Platforms, such as 21 Forward, as a tool to address food supply chain challenges using data-driven insights.

- Complete an in-depth analysis of the structure and resilience of the infant formula supply chain in the US and implement policies that will promote competition, diversification, resiliency, redundancy, and everyday low costs for consumers.

"The infant illness and deaths due to *Cronobacter*, the Abbott Nutrition recall, and the cascading and devastating effects it had on infant formula availability in our country was a preventable tragedy," Yiannas said.

If the US infant formula market had been characterized by vigorous competition, the recall of Abbott formula would likely not have catapulted the market into a full-blown shortage, with parents having to go from store to store in search of dwindling supplies, according to Peter Lurie, president and executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and a former associate commissioner at FDA.

But, prior to the recall, Abbott was estimated to control about 40 percent of the US formula mar-

ket, with about half of that coming from the plant in Sturgis, MI, Lurie said.

Moreover, just four companies controlled about 90 percent of the domestic market, which left the US with few alternative suppliers as the recall hit.

"These conditions had existed for years, but it took the addition of a pandemic, with its own supply chain problems, Abbott Nutrition's deficient manufacturing practices, and, later, the war in Ukraine, to produce a full-blown shortage," Lurie said.

Much of the FDA response "was entirely appropriate," but in other respects, the agency's performance "failed to live up to the high standards American consumers expect and deserve from the agency responsible for keeping our food supply safe," Lurie commented.

A whistleblower report went undelivered to senior FDA staff for months and the agency took too long to schedule a repeat inspection of the Sturgis facility, even as *Cronobacter sakazakii* cases continued to be reported, thus delaying the resultant recall.

On the first, the Food and Drug Omnibus Reform Act provided FDA with some important additional authorities, Lurie noted. It required formula and medical food manufacturers to develop a redundancy risk management plan to identify and evaluate risks to their supply, and it mandated the creation of an Office of Critical Foods at FDA, which will manage the regulation of infant formula and medical foods. And it requires critical food manufacturers to notify FDA of interruptions in manufacturing likely to lead to disruptions in supply.

FDA Releases Strategy To Boost Resiliency Of Infant Formula Market

Silver Spring, MD—The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) this week released an "Immediate National Strategy to Increase the Resiliency of the US Infant Formula Market."

As directed by Congress in the Food and Drug Omnibus Reform Act of 2022, the national strategy describes immediate actions FDA took to address the infant formula shortage and details the agency's plans for improving the resiliency of the infant formula supply, while noting multiple issues beyond the purview of the agency.

The national strategy also traces the events that led up to and followed the voluntary recall of infant formula by Abbott Nutrition in February 2022, the temporary pause in production at the facility in Sturgis, MI, and pantry loading that peaked in May 2022, likely driven in part by an over-emphasis on other shortages being reported in the media, as well as numerous other factors that contributed to and exacerbated the shortages.

This strategy represents a first step toward issuing, with input from the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), a long-term national strategy in 2024 to improve preparedness against infant formula shortages by outlining methods to improve information-sharing, recommending measures for protecting the integrity of the infant formula supply chain, and preventing contamination.

The long-term strategy will also explore new approaches to help facilitate entry of new infant formula manufacturers to increase supply and mitigate future shortages and recommend other necessary authorities to gain insight into the supply chain and risks for shortages.

In a related development, FDA recently asked all companies involved in the manufacturing and distribution of powdered infant formula to share current safety information and called on the industry to take prompt action to improve processes and programs for the protection of the most vulnerable US population.

FDA's letter was directed to manufacturers, packers, distributors, exporters, importers, and retailers involved in the manufacturing and distribution of powdered infant formula.

FDA issued the letter to share current information to assist industry in improving the microbiological safety of powdered infant formula.

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Bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act Introduced

Washington—US Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and John Garamendi (D-CA) on Tuesday introduced the Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act to build on the progress of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA) that became law in June 2022.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act aims to crack down on the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) attempts to influence America's supply chain, the bill's sponsors explained.

Specifically concerning China, the legislation: establishes a formal process to report complaints against shipping exchanges like the Shanghai Shipping Exchange to the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) for investigation; bans US port authorities from using the Chinese state-sponsored National Transportation Logistics Public Information Platform (LOGINK) and similar state-sponsored malware; directs the US Department of Transportation (DOT) to contract an independent auditor to examine the influence of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the business practices of the Shanghai Shipping Exchange and report to Congress; and codifies the definition of "controlled carrier" under the Shipping Act to encompass state-controlled enterprises in non-market economies like the PRC.

In the area of data streamlining and port performance statistics, the legislation: authorizes the FMC to streamline data standards for maritime freight logistics and use existing data standards or industry best practices, including contracting an expert third party to develop the new federal data standard if needed; and authorizes the Bureau of Transportation Statistics to collect more information on port operations, such as the total of incoming and outgoing containers and yard capacity.

And in the area of OSRA good government, the bill: clarifies that FMC may also stipulate additional minimum requirements for service contracts by ocean common carriers, at the agency's discretion; updates and improves the purposes of the Shipping Act to better reflect current federal policy governing international ocean shipping and establishes reciprocal trade as part of FMC's mission in enforcing the Shipping Act; and prohibits the FMC from requiring ocean carriers to report information already reported to other federal agencies.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act is supported by, among others, the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), US Dairy Export Coun-

cil (USDEC), Agriculture Transportation Coalition, National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America, and Consumer Brands Association.

"The Ocean Shipping Reform Act was a key step in the right direction to correcting an ocean shipping market that has for too long disadvantaged US dairy exporters," said Krysta Harden, USDEC's president and CEO. "This bill gives the Federal Maritime Commission the full suite of tools necessary to return balance and certainty for American dairy exports."

"American dairy producers rely upon a consistent transpor-

tation network for their products to reach international customer," said Jim Mulhern, NMPF's president and CEO. "The legislation introduced today builds upon the important steps initiated in the Ocean Shipping Reform Act to correct an ocean shipping market that put US dairy exporters at a steep disadvantage over the past three years."

"Consumer Brands is encouraged by bipartisan efforts in Congress to ensure the federal government is equipped with the policy and regulatory tools it needs to protect American shippers and ensure the seamless operation of US supply chains," said Tom Madrecki, vice president, supply chain and logistics, Consumer Brands Association.

"The Ocean Shipping Reform

Implementation Act of 2023 confirms the purpose of OSRA to advance the interests of US agriculture exports, an objective the current FMC has embraced wholeheartedly," said Peter Friedman, executive director of the Agriculture Transportation Coalition.

"The new statutory language will guide the FMC in future years, as new commissioners are appointed, and new staff are hired. It addresses emerging security and market control concerns relating to non-market economies with whom we trade and transport," Friedman said. "It broadens the input provided to the Commission by the shipping public, to include freight forwarders and others, who arrange transport for many agriculture exporters."



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Make Allowances

(Continued from p. 1)

tive in September 2005, WCMA explained. WCMA's exclusive proposal is to update the make allowances for cheese, whey powder, butter and nonfat dry milk.

"Actual manufacturing and other costs considered in make allowances have risen dramatically during the past 16 years," WCMA noted. "Despite these cost increases, FMMO provisions have effectively stopped manufacturers from covering these higher costs through make allowances."

WCMA's amendment will be based on record evidence that the association anticipates will include the most current studies of Dr. Mark Stephenson published by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in 2022, a new study that Stephenson is undertaking to update that study to take into consideration 2022-23 data, and a study by Dr. William Schiek, CEO of the Dairy Institute of California.

Schiek's most current projections, based on California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) studies and updated with indices, encompass costs to manufacturer Cheddar cheese, dry whey, butter and nonfat dry milk in 2022, WCMA explained. Schiek has determined that the cost to manufacture Cheddar cheese has risen 51 percent, dry whey has risen 49 percent, butter has risen 39 percent, and nonfat dry milk has risen 59 percent compared to the current make allowance values.

In the Upper Midwest, a fair measure of the health of the cheese industry is a comparison of where producer pay prices are rel-

ative to Class III, WCMA noted. In 2013-14, the Upper Midwest saw on average a \$1.50 per hundredweight premium paid over Class III.

"Without updated make allowances, cheese plants today are fortunate to return the Class III price; more often we see prices under Class III," WCMA added. "This is clear evidence that the current make allowances are insufficient to cover plants' costs."

Further, in February and March 2023, WCMA member cheese producers responded to a WCMA survey seeking percent changes in business costs, reflecting the time-frame 2019 to 2022. Cost increases ranged from 14.1 percent for electricity to 68.9 percent for natural gas. Cost increases were between those percentages for wages, health policy premiums, cultures used in cheese production, salt, cardboard packaging (bulk cheese boxes) and plastic packaging (bulk cheese bags).

These everyday losses and significant costs "are impossible to sustain," WCMA stated. "Farmer-owned cooperatives in this region are routinely returning dairy farmer payments with significant deductions from FMMO uniform minimum prices.

"Proprietary members of WCMA are absorbing losses, attempting to sell specialty cheeses at prices designed to mitigate losses, and/or otherwise failing to invest in plants and facilities," WCMA continued. "This is not sustainable for the plants, nor for dairy farmers who depend on these plants as outlets for their raw milk."

WCMA said it is "aware and supportive" of industry and USDA efforts for USDA itself to

have the authority and funding to conduct regular, audited dairy product cost studies. A long-term solution would be to have such studies efficiently update make allowances on a regular basis.

However, this requires congressional action both to authorize and fund the audits, WCMA pointed out. It will likely take at least another year or two, if not longer, before legislation (not yet introduced, much less passed) authorizes the initiation of such audited cost studies.

"The dairy manufacturing industry simply cannot wait several more years for this solution, as plants suffer growing losses each day as a result of the current obsolete cost structure," WCMA said. "These dated manufacturing allowances must be updated as expediently as possible using the best available means."

When USDA implemented the 1996 farm bill's directive to reform federal orders, "it fundamentally altered the formulas for establishing the minimum prices which regulated dairy processing plants must pay dairy producers and milk marketing cooperatives for milk used in all dairy products," IDFA noted.

In doing so, USDA established a fixed relationship between the wholesale price of dairy products used in those formulas and the minimum class prices, with that fixed relationship based on the cost of producing cheese and other manufactured products (make allowances). However, USDA provided no mechanism to adjust that fixed relationship short of conducting a formal rule-making process, IDFA said.

Neither Congress nor USDA intended to threaten the economic

viability of the US cheese, butter, nonfat dry milk or whey industries by forcing manufacturers to lose money on every pound of dairy products produced, or potentially injure dairy producers by eliminating these important outlets for farm milk, IDFA said. But without any mechanism to adjust make allowances in response to changes in industry costs, "manufacturers are trapped into either losing money on every pound of product produced or stopping production entirely."

In its petition, IDFA seeks immediate consideration of the following proposed change in FMMO regulations:

"Update the make allowances used in all FMMO minimum class price formulas using the most recently available industry cost data."

Despite "significant cost increases" since make allowances were last updated, "FMMO provisions have effectively stopped manufacturers from covering these higher costs through higher sales prices or other means," IDFA said. "The existing use of fixed out-of-date make allowances is a major problem for all dairy product manufacturers producing cheese, butter, whey and nonfat dry milk. These everyday losses are impossible to sustain."

IDFA and WCMA said they both understand and appreciate the concerns of their members' dairy farmer patrons for whom increased make allowances mean lower regulated minimum prices. However, the loss of significant plant capacity and the resulting loss of competition will mean greater pain for everyone, including especially dairy farmers.

"Such losses of plant capacity would certainly result in disorderly marketing conditions that FMMOs are designed to alleviate not exacerbate," IDFA stated.

In its objection, NMPF said an increase in make allowances "has the impact of reducing farm milk prices. While we believe make allowances are a necessary component of the federal milk pricing formulas and are in need of some adjustment, it is critically important to do so in a balanced, measured approach that modernizes the FMMO program by also addressing a number of other outdated pricing factors in the program.

"The proposal from IDFA and WCMA is neither measured nor balanced," NMPF added.

NMPF noted that it has worked "extensively" over the past year-plus to conduct a comprehensive examination of the FMMO program aimed at updating and modernizing the program and plans to submit a petition to USDA in April "for a comprehensive national federal order hearing to modernize FMMOs."



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Mailbox Milk Price Averaged A Record \$24.64 Per Hundredweight In 2022

Washington—In 2022, mailbox milk prices for selected reporting areas in federal milk marketing orders averaged a record \$24.64 per hundredweight, up \$6.95 from 2021, according to figures released recently by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

That breaks the previous record high for average mailbox milk prices, \$24.04 per hundred, which was set in 2014.

The two average prices aren't directly comparable, because California wasn't part of the federal order program in 2014. That year, California's mailbox milk price, as calculated by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), averaged \$21.83 per hundred, or \$2.21 less than the average for all federal order areas.

In 2022, California's mailbox milk price averaged \$24.86 per hundred, 22 cents higher than the average for all federal order areas.

Last year was just the fourth time that mailbox milk prices averaged above \$20.00 per hundred. In addition to 2014, the other years were 2011, when the mailbox milk price averaged \$20.20 per hundred; and 2013, when it averaged \$20.06 per hundred.

After averaging \$24.04 per hundred in 2014, the mailbox milk

price averaged under \$18.00 per hundred for seven consecutive years, including a low of \$15.73 per hundred in 2018.

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

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

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

assessments above the national program level.

Other deductions, such as loan, insurance or feed mill assignments are not included.

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

During 2022, average mailbox milk prices for the selected reporting areas ranged from a low of \$23.20 per hundred in January to a high of \$26.32 per hundred in May, a difference of \$3.12 per hundred between the low and high prices. By comparison, in 2021, average mailbox prices ranged from a low of \$15.70 per hundred in February to a high of \$20.87 per hundred in December, or a difference of \$5.17 per hundred.

Among all federal order areas reported by AMS in its mailbox milk price report, mailbox price averages in 2022 ranged from a high of \$26.34 per hundred for Southern Missouri to a low of \$22.44 per hundred for New Mexico.

In 2021, mailbox price averages in 2021 ranged from a high of \$20.18 per hundred for Florida to a low of \$15.38 per hundred for New Mexico.

In addition to Southern Missouri, the following reporting areas posted mailbox price averages above \$26.00 per hundred-

weight in 2022: New England states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont), \$26.01 per hundred; Appalachian states (Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia), \$26.07 per hundred; Southeast states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi), \$26.21 per hundred; and Florida, \$26.30 per hundred.

Other reporting areas that posted mailbox price averages above the national average of \$24.64 per hundred last year included New York, \$25.53 per hundred; Eastern Pennsylvania, \$25.25 per hundred; Western Pennsylvania, \$24.93 per hundred; Ohio, \$24.74 per hundred; Indiana, \$24.65 per hundred; Illinois, \$25.27 per hundred; Northwest States (Oregon and Washington), \$25.50 per hundred; and California, \$24.86 per hundred.

In addition to New Mexico, other reporting areas that had average mailbox prices below the national average of \$24.64 per hundred last year were: Michigan, \$23.83 per hundred; Wisconsin, \$24.06 per hundred; Minnesota, \$24.26 per hundred; Iowa, \$24.02 per hundred; Corn Belt States (Kansas, Nebraska, and counties in northern Missouri), \$23.46 per hundred; and Western Texas, \$23.97 per hundred.

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Nominees Wanted For National Dairy Promotion, Research Board

Washington—The USDA is asking fluid milk processors and other interested parties to nominate candidates to serve on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board.

The deadline for nominations is April 28, 2023.

From the nominees, 13 individuals will be selected to succeed members whose terms expire on Oct. 31. Newly-appointed members will serve three-year terms from Nov. 1, through Oct. 31, 2026. One individual will be selected to fill a vacancy with a term expiring Oct. 31, 2024.

The USDA is seeking nominees for: one seat, Region 1, Alaska, Oregon and Washington; one seat, Region 2, California and Hawaii, vacant seat; one

seat, Region 3, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming; two seats, Region 4, Arkansas, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas; one seat, Region 5, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota; two seats, Region 6, Wisconsin; one seat, Region 7, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska; one seat, Region 8, Idaho; one seat, Region 9, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia; one seat, Region 10, Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia; one seat, Region 12, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont; and one seat for an importer.

Nomination forms are available on the AMS National Dairy Promotion & Research Board website: www.ams.usda.gov. For details, contact Jill Hoover at (202) 720-1069; or jill.hoover@usda.gov.

NDB Scholarship Applications Due May 12, 2023

Rosemont, IL—The National Dairy Promotion & Research Board (NDB) is accepting applications for college scholarships now through May 12, 2023.

Eleven scholarships worth \$2,500 each will be awarded, in addition to a \$3,500 James H. Loper Jr. Memorial Scholarship to one outstanding recipient.

Students in their sophomore through senior year for the school year and majoring in one of the following fields are eligible: communications/public relations,

journalism, marketing, business, economics, nutrition, food science and agriculture education.

Scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement, interest in a career in a dairy-related discipline, and demonstrated leadership, initiative and integrity.

Candidates must complete an application form, submit an official transcript of all college courses, and write a short statement describing their career aspirations, dairy-related activities and work experiences.

Completed applications must be received no later than May 12. Forms can be found at online at www.usdairy.com/about-us/dmi/scholarship.

Katsy Flarida Named Majority Owner And CEO Of Brewster Cheese

Brewster, OH—Tom Murphy, president of Brewster Cheese Company, Brewster, OH, announced that Katsy Flarida (Leeman) has succeeded her grandfather, Fritz Leeman, as majority owner and CEO of the company.

Fritz Leeman has led Brewster Cheese throughout its history after founding it along with his father, John, in 1965.

Katsy Flarida has been with Brewster Cheese in various roles since graduating from Auburn University in 2015 and represents the company's fourth generation of Leeman family leadership.

John (Hans) Leeman, a Swiss immigrant, started working at Stark County Milk Producers in the early 1930's. Over 30 years later, Brewster Cheese was born when John and his son Fritz pur-

chased the plant and renamed it Brewster Dairy.

Today, Brewster Cheese is said to be the largest Swiss cheese manufacturer in the US. The company produces several types of Swiss cheese in addition to traditional Swiss, including Reduced Fat Swiss Cheese, Aged Swiss, Baby Swiss, Lacey Baby Swiss, Gouda and Havarti.

Brewster now operates three facilities across the US: the original plant in Brewster, OH; the company's second production plant, located in Stockton, IL, which was added to the Brewster Cheese family in 1998; and a plant in Rupert, ID, which was purchased by Brewster Dairy in 2007.

For more information about Brewster Cheese, visit www.brewstercheese.com.

PERSONNEL

Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. has promoted CHRIS HACKMAN to chief operating officer, effective April 1. Hackman succeeds GARY AGGUS, who has served as COO since 2006. Hackman recently served as senior vice president of operations for Prairie Farms. He currently serves on the Missouri State Milk Board Advisory Committee, and the Missouri Dairy Products Association board of directors. In 2017, Hackman received the Missouri Dairy Hall of Honors Leadership Award.

Hiland Dairy has tapped RICK BEAMAN as the new president, succeeding GARY AGGUS, who led Hiland for the past two decades. Beaman joined Hiland Dairy in 2012, and most recently served vice president. He began his career with Borden Dairy in 1975. Since then, Beaman has held several executive positions with companies like Southern Foods, Dean Foods and LaLa USA. SHAWN PINON was tapped to succeed Beaman as senior vice president. Pinon began his dairy career with Beatrice/Meadow Gold Dairy in 1980. After positions in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Utah, Pinon was promoted to group vice president of Dean Foods in 2004. He joined Hiland Dairy in 2017 as general manager of its Nebraska operation.

Life-long dairy farmer TOM OELRICHS has joined the **Missouri State Milk Board**. Oelrichs has worked on his family farm, O-Rich Dairy, since 1980. He currently serves as partner, and is a member of Dairy Farmers of America milk cooperative.

The **Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST)** has appointed CHRIS BOOMSMA executive vice president and CEO, succeeding KENT SCHESCKE, who will retire in August after eight years of service. Boomsma currently works as education director for the American Society of Agronomy. Before that, he was a research director for Purdue and a strategist/scientist at Dow AgroSciences (now Corteva).

The **Food Processing Suppliers Association (FPSA)** elected two new members to its Executive Committee and new leadership for the Beverage Council. KATE ROME of Rome Grinding Solutions and DANA SUMMEROUR of Intralox were both elected to the Executive Committee. JOHN PIAZZA of Alfa Laval has been elected chair of FPSA's Beverage Council, and MICHAEL MAS of JBT Corporation was elected vice chair. CARA GODACK was elected chair of the FPSA Network Leadership Team, and BOB GROTE will serve in the at-large position.

MICHAEL STEIN has been tapped to serve as Democratic chief counsel for the **House Agriculture Committee**. Stein began his career on Capitol Hill working on agriculture, energy, and environmental issues with the House Small Business Committee. Before that, he worked on policy issues for the Organic Farming Research Foundation. BRITTON BURDICK has been tapped as the new Democratic communications director for the Committee. Burdick served as communications director for Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ).



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Comment Period Extended On New Child Nutrition Program Standards

Washington—USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is extending the comment period on proposed long-term school nutrition standards for, among things, fluid milk, sodium, and added sugars.

The original comment period for the proposed rule, which was released in early February, was Apr. 10. The comment period has been extended to May 10, 2023. Online comments may be submitted at www.regulations.gov; the docket number is FNS-2022-0043.

USDA’s rulemaking proposes new added sugars standards for the school lunch and breakfast programs, including for yogurt and flavored milk, and also proposes gradually reducing school meal sodium limits.

And USDA is proposing two alternatives for the current fluid milk standard: Alternative A proposes to allow flavored milk (fat-free and lowfat) at school lunch and breakfast for high school children only; and Alternative B proposes to maintain the current standard allowing all schools to offer fat-free and lowfat milk, flavored and unflavored, with the new proposed added sugars limit for flavored milk.

USDA received at least two requests to extend the deadline for submitting comments. The American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA) and the Urban School Food Alliance asked USDA to provide an additional 60 days for submitting comments on the proposed rule.

And US Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), chairwoman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, and US Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee, requested an additional 30 days for comments to be submitted.

As of today, USDA has received almost 53,000 comments on the proposed rule. Over 8,000 of those comments address, at least in part, issues related to fluid milk.

For example, Midwest Dairy noted that, if schools respond to menu-wide limits on added sugars and sodium by scaling back or eliminating nutrient-rich foods such as flavored milk, published research and case studies suggest the result would be lower milk consumption in schools, “putting an already at-risk population at a greater risk for nutrition insecurity.”

The School Nutrition Association (SNA), which represents 50,000 school nutritional professionals nationwide, supports Alternative B to maintain current standards allowing all schools to offer fat-free and lowfat milk, flavored and unflavored.

“Milk processors have significantly reduced the added sugar in flavored milk options served in schools,” the SNA noted. “School nutrition professionals report that when flavored milk is unavailable, students drink less milk and miss out on milk’s 13 essential nutrients. Research shows the consumption of flavored milk is associated with higher total milk consumption and better overall diet quality without any adverse impact on weight.”

SNA said it supports the milk substitute process, saying it “works well for school meal program operators as it provides clear, specific guidelines on how to respond to milk substitute requests.”

Regarding sodium, SNA said its survey found that 98 percent

of school nutrition directors are concerned about the availability of foods that meet Target 1A transitional sodium limits and are acceptable to students.

“USDA must research the impact of Target 1A sodium limits on menu planning, meal participation and students’ health prior to proposing further sodium reductions,” SNA stated.

Schools and K-12 food companies have reduced the sodium, calories and fat in school menu options, so choices are healthier than students eat outside of school, SNA noted. However, sodium mandates that exceed Target 1 A will force schools to remove popular, culturally relevant, choices from the menu.


“Student tastes will not adjust to further school meal sodium reductions when there are no corresponding mandatory reductions in the foods they eat from res-





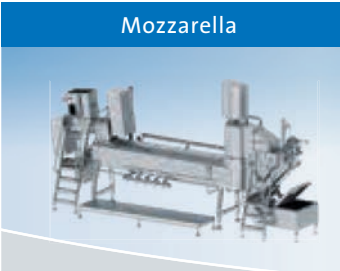



taurants, grocery stores or those obtained through other federal nutrition assistance programs,” SNA commented.

To help programs, USDA should allow schools to exclude naturally occurring sodium. Low-fat and fat-free milk are a required component for school meals, but typically contain over 100 milligrams of sodium per serving.

USDA is proposing a gradual multi-year approach to implementing the nutrition standards. The proposed rule indicates that USDA expects to issue a final rule in time for schools to plan for school year 2024-2025. But requirements to the school meal patterns would not begin until SY 2025-26, at the earliest. or-profit information standards organization that facilitates industry collaboration to help improve supply chain visibility and efficiency through the use of GS1 Standards.

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Vivolac Introduces New 'INFUZE' Line Of Flavor Cultures For Cheese

Greenfield, IN—Vivolac Cultures Corporation recently introduced its new line of flavor cultures called "INFUZE," ready to hit the market just in time for the Apr. 5-6 CheeseCon event in Madison, WI.

Vivolac noted that its award-winning cultures have already been used for years to produce a wide array of cheeses, but the company sees more and more adjuncts being used to enhance flavor.

"Time and time again our customers are asking us to give them something that makes their products unique," said Aaron Miller, who heads up Vivolac's sales team. "We also see artisan producers who are trying to set themselves apart from larger companies to gain market shares, and large companies who are trying to break into the artisan markets

with flavors that really grab the end consumers."

Miller said the company has been taking its time, perfecting the program before it goes to market.

"This isn't just a single culture that provides a single flavor, these multiple strain, complex blends are giving a depth of flavors you can't get from just regular adjuncts," Miller said. "What makes these so innovative is the balance of flavors and how one strain of culture complements the others in the blend. We feel the complexity of these cultures really adds a nice depth of flavor, something unique."

The line will consist of products for all cheese makers, Vivolac noted. Some of the early blends released will be: Alpine, Sweet, Gouda, and Parm.

"We feel the name of each cul-

ture says it all," Miller said. "When you buy a product from Vivolac we want you to be confident in the flavor profile you are going to receive. We feel the naming sums up the flavor profiles very well."

Vivolac Cultures Corporation is a leader in starter culture, media and bioprotective cultures. The company recently is also working on an automation upgrade to better serve its customers.

"As a privately held business with 50-plus years of culture innovation, I'm really excited to see the work and progress Vivolac has made over the past few years. We have some exciting things in the works, that are new and innovative," Miller commented.

Vivolac is located in Greenfield IN, and its research facility is located in Logan, UT. All of its sourced materials and manufacturing are based in the US.

For more information, contact Aaron Miller, at amiller@vivolac.com or 920-255-0808.

Bipartisan House Bill Would Require Milk Alternatives In Schools

Washington—US Reps. Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D-LA) and Nancy Mace (R-SC) recently introduced the Addressing Digestive Distress in Stomachs of Our Youth (ADD SOY) Act, a bill which would require schools to provide fluid milk substitutes upon request of a student or parent/guardian.

The ADD SOY Act would make soy milk available to children in schools who need an alternative to cow's milk. This is especially important, the bill's sponsors noted, because large numbers of minority children, particularly Black, Latino, Native American, and Asian-American, are lactose intolerant. These children experience adverse health effects because, in practice, dairy is the only type of milk offered in schools.

"The federal government is wasting \$300 million of our tax dollars a year by mandating that every school kid getting nutrition assistance has a carton of cow's milk on the tray even though millions of them don't want it and get sick from it," Mace said.

"Thirty percent of kids throw the milk away in the carton, and hundreds of millions of tax dollars wasted is not spilled milk," Mace continued. "Kids should have a healthy choice in lunchrooms."

"It is abundantly clear that the current milk substitute system that USDA employs is delivering detrimental impacts on BIPOC school children," Carter commented. "Too many children who cannot safely or comfortably consume dairy are being forced to accept containers of cow's milk on their lunch trays.

"My ADD SOY Act ensures the health and nutritional needs of all our nation's students are met. America needs to embrace its diversity at the lunch counter," Carter added.

"Our nation's 'milk mandate' is a sure-fire way to cause digestive distress and to impede classroom learning for millions of school kids with lactose intolerance," said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action.

"It's also a matter of reckless food and fiscal waste, easily remedied by giving kids a soymilk option," Pacelle said.

According to Carter and Mace, the rates of lactose intolerance in BIPOC communities are "startlingly high," with 65 percent of Latino students, 75 percent of Black students, and 90 percent of Asian students unable to digest dairy milk without detrimental effects.

FrieslandCampina Ingredients Opens New Lactoferrin Production Facility

Veghel, Netherlands—FrieslandCampina Ingredients recently announced the opening of its new lactoferrin production facility here to help meet growing global demand in the early life and adult nutrition markets.

The facility increases the company's total capacity from 20 metric tons to 80 metric tons per year. The plant features new machinery designed specifically to ensure

quality and purity of the company's lactoferrin and complies with the latest sustainability standards, according to FrieslandCampina.

The new facility exemplifies FrieslandCampina Ingredients' extensive protein processing expertise, the company stated. New equipment has been installed across the production process, from the collection of milk, to packaging and shipping, including cutting edge technology for absorption and elution, filtration and spray drying.

FrieslandCampina Ingredients also benefits from uninterrupted access to fresh cow's milk through FrieslandCampina's nearly 10,000

member farms, the company noted. The company processes this milk into lactoferrin using a mild heat-treating process that has been specially designed by the company's R&D experts. The result is a product that is 95 percent pure as a minimum and has considerable iron-binding properties, the company said.

Also, the plant will run on 100 percent green electricity, which is largely generated by FrieslandCampina's member farms and certified under the EU's Guarantee of Origin scheme. Water and salt residues produced during the manufacturing process are reused.

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Natural Cheese

(Continued from p. 1)

said John Umhoefer, executive director of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA).

“Wisconsin is known for its cheese, in all its forms and varieties,” Johnson said. “Codifying the definition of ‘natural cheese’ will allow consumers the necessary information to make informed decisions when purchasing and enjoying the great products of our state.”

“Wisconsin’s dairy farmers and cheese makers work hard to produce high-quality cheese products that are known across the globe and move our Made in Wisconsin economy forward,” Baldwin said. “This legislation honors their celebrated products and makes sure consumers know what products on the shelf meet the definition of ‘natural cheese’ and what do not.”

“Oregonians are proud of our state’s world renown high-quality cheese,” Wyden said. “The CURD Act will ensure that cheese consumers nationwide understand how the cheese they’re buying at their local supermarket is produced, which will highlight Oregon’s delicious natural cheese products.”

Clearly defining what is and isn’t ‘natural cheese’ is a common sense step that promotes transparency in food labeling and recognizes the time, ingredients, and work our dairy industry puts into their products.”

US Representative
Mike Gallagher, WI

“Vermont farmers work hard to produce world-class cheeses; they deserve truthful labeling that reflects the hours they put in and the nutritional, economic, and cultural value of their product,” Welch said. “I’m proud to support the CURD Act to ensure truth in labeling for Vermont’s delicious cheese products.”

“The CURD Act will promote label transparency and help Americans make informed decisions around their consumption of cheese,” Braun said.

“Dairy is Idaho’s top agriculture industry, and protecting the integrity of our farmers, producers and their products is a top priority,” Crapo said. “The CURD Act insures customers receive accurately-labeled ‘natural cheese’, so they can make informed decisions at the grocery store.”

“Mislabeling is a big issue for Idaho’s dairy industry and cheese

is no exception,” Risch noted. “The CURD Act will provide certainty and clarity for consumers by ensuring cheese made from Idaho dairies, instead of a compilation of fillers, is labeled as ‘natural cheese’.”

“Clearly defining what is and isn’t ‘natural cheese’ is a common sense step that promotes transparency in food labeling and recognizes the time, ingredients, and work our dairy industry puts into their products,” Gallagher mentioned.

“This legislation will provide clarity for consumers to make informed decisions when purchasing and enjoying delicious California cheese,” Costa commented.

“The CURD Act is common-sense legislation that will help families make informed decisions

when purchasing groceries,” Steil said. “Wisconsin is a world-class producer of cheese, and consumers deserve to know whether they are buying natural cheese or processed cheese.”

“Farmers across Minnesota who work hard to produce high-quality products deserve to have those products labeled accurately, and consumers should know exactly what they’re purchasing at the grocery store or farmer’s market,” said Angie Craig (D-MN).

“Our legislation will increase transparency in food labeling and ensure our farmers’ hard work is recognized,” Craig said.

“The CURD Act is an important piece of legislation that further sets apart high-quality Wisconsin cheese products from

those that wish they were. I’m proud to support this necessary legislation and look forward to advocating on its behalf as we consider the farm bill this Congress,” Scott Fitzgerald (R-WI) commented.

“People need to know exactly what they are buying when it comes to the food that they feed their families, including cheese,” Panetta said.

“By codifying a formal definition of ‘natural cheese’ we can empower consumers to understand how their cheeses are made, the inherent differences between natural cheese and processed cheese, and better recognize the hard work and craftsmanship of cheese by our dairy farmers all across the country,” Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) continued.

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Loos Machine & Automation Expands Operations; Extends Services

Colby, WI—Loos Machine & Automation, a leading manufacturer of dairy processing equipment, machinery, and automation, will soon near completion of an expansion that nearly doubles manufacturing capacity while supporting major growth of the company's product lines.

The company also announced that it has acquired CPH Enterprises, a nearby business located in Bruce, WI, better known for its custom automation equipment services to the fruit and vegetable industry.

Already serving the fruit and vegetable industries, the Bruce operation for Loos expands its product offering and capabilities. Loos also has a solid reputation in the meat and poultry industries, all building upon more than 120 years of experience as a lead equipment and automation provider to the cheese and dairy industry.

CPH Enterprises was a full-service, modern machine shop with 15 employees with many years of experience.

"Our interest in acquiring CPH was to grow our capacity, and also expand our portfolio with our current portfolio in the cheese and dairy industry," said Eric Mertens, president of Loos Machine & Automation. "We are excited. It's a new industry and it's also a new area of labor."

The acquisition comes on the heels of a major expansion to the company's Colby location which also adds to the network of Loos services.

"We are really excited for all these different offerings and the ability it affords us," Mertens said.

"It increases capacity, improves the timeliness of service, as well as increasing the overall service we offer our clients."

The new 60,000-square-foot expansion virtually doubles the manufacturing capacity at the Colby location. Innovative production practices allow the company to design and build larger scale equipment and systems.

"It's a state-of-the-art manufacturing shop," said Brady Hoes, vice president of the company. "We've restructured a lot of our processes and streamlined all our efforts."

The building is adjacent to the company offices and existing manufacturing operation. The expansion began in May 2022 with a formed project team and goals defined, the construction phases were executed timely all while maintaining current production.

"There is plenty of opportunity on this property to allow us to expand our services to the dairy industry," Mertens said. "We are always trying to improve that. As the industry requests more automation and other things that create efficiencies, we'll work alongside those partners to create those. That's the relationship we've established with our customers and the service they've come to expect."

This expansion allows the company to grow in all facets, but Mertens sees the growing scope of product and equipment innovation as an integral aspect to ease labor issues.

"This expansion grows our entire portfolio but specifically, it allows us to increase efficien-



Loos Machine & Automation nearly doubled manufacturing capacity to its operations by adding the above 60,000 square foot operations. Located adjacent to the company's current location on Highway 13 in Colby, WI, the facility allows for larger scale equipment and systems projects.

cies and grow further automation offerings," Mertens said. "Automation, robotics, and overall system capabilities that improve the labor and safety issues in an operation."

Mertens and Hoes both expect to increase the production of its robotics technologies, with manufacturing and assembly occurring at the expanded facility.

"We've long supported the dairy industry with unique, plant-specific automation skills and capabilities," Mertens continued. "As our clients establish new operations or find a need for efficiency in current operations, we are expanding with them in line with their growth and evolving needs."

At the newly expanded location, Loos has increased various warehousing, inventory management and shipping services, including product kitting and inventory parts management that will increase timeliness of equipment delivery.

Troy Kilty, marketing manager at Loos, is excited for this expansion

and acquisition as it not only benefits Loos Machine & Automation's employees but its customers as well.

"We plan on utilizing this space to continue our excellence of high standard custom equipment offerings," Kilty said.

Loos Machine & Automation's line of equipment includes custom automated 640- and 500-pound cheese equipment lines; automated cheese processing lines; cheese shredding and dicing systems; and more.

"We are pleased to provide our value-added manufacturing services, which we are confident will expand our overall production capacity in a highly cost-effective and efficient manner," Mertens said.

"Our deep expertise in automation and design, along with final assembly, will prove pivotal in accelerating world-class production of leading-edge automated and robotic systems," Mertens continued.

For more information, visit www.loosmachine.com

Grande Acquires

(Continued from p. 1)

as the prospect of either building and/or retrofitting an existing dairy facility," commented Todd H. Koss, Grande's chief executive officer.

"The Chilton property will undoubtedly help us meet our obligation to support a growing and thriving business and those who are a part of the Grande family – including producers, foodservice operators and distributors, other customers, and stakeholders," Koss continued.

"The addition of this facility also continues to build on our commitment to financial security and development opportunities for current and future generations of associates and their families," Koss added.

The transaction was facilitated by Bob Wolter of CBS-Global, representing Grande Cheese Company. For more information about CBS-Global, visit www.cbs-global.com.

Grande Cheese Company, which was founded in 1941, currently operates dairy plants in Brownsville, Fond du Lac, Wycena, Friendship, Lomira, Juda and Rubicon, WI.

Grande Cheese produces a wide variety of Italian cheeses, including Mozzarella, Fumella™, Smoked Mozzarella, Provolone and Aged Provolone, Fresh Mozzarella, Burrata, Ricotta, Fresh Curd, Parmesan, Romano, Asiago, Italian Blends, Fior•di•Latte, and Avorio®. The company also produces a variety of whey products.

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Administration Announces Biotech Goals; Food, Ag Systems Included

Washington—The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) last week released a report outlining a vision for what is possible with the power of biotechnology and biomanufacturing, and research and development needs to achieve this ambitious vision.

Last September, President Biden signed an executive order that called on federal departments and agencies to assess the potential for biotechnology and biomanufacturing R&D to further five societal goals: food and agricultural innovation, climate change solutions, supply chain resilience, human health, and crosscutting advances.

The report released last week includes individual sections authored by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Energy, Department of Commerce, Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Science Foundation.

“Biotechnology and biomanufacturing are providing transformative solutions to many of the greatest challenges facing US agriculture and food production, including climate change, food and nutrition insecurity, and pests and diseases in agricultural plants and animals,” according to the section of the report authored by USDA.

In its section of the report, USDA outlined a vision for bioeconomy research and development that fits into three themes:

Theme 1: Improving Sustainability and Resource Conservation While Increasing Agricultural Productivity. USDA lists five goals: increasing ag productivity; increasing climate-smart feedstock production and biofuel usage; reducing nitrogen emissions; reducing methane emissions; and reducing food loss and waste.

Theme 2: Improving Food Nutrition, Quality, and Consumer Choice. There are three goals within this theme. The first of those three goals is to develop new food and feed sources, including production of novel or enhanced protein and fat sources at scale.

R&D needs within this area include, among others: expand research into food components that make novel foods more palatable, affordable, easier to prepare, and more easily incorporated into manufactured foods; research the structural design and food architecture of alternative protein (e.g., plant-based, fermentation-derived, and cell-cultured) products, including how plant and microbial materials compare to animal-based products; and identify and conduct feasibility

studies for high-volume, low-cost protein and fat sources that could be used in food or feed, including products resulting from precision fermentation and co-products or waste streams.

The second of Theme 2’s three goals is to, within the next 20 years, enhance nutrient density in agricultural animals and plants, developed underutilized animals and plants that have enhanced nutrient density, and build on traditional ecological knowledge to better utilize and conserve culturally important and nutritionally relevant plants and animals.

And the third goal is to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness,

including with new and improved screening tools.

Theme 3: Protecting Plants and Animals Against Environmental Stressors. In this area, USDA lists two goals: increase capacity to detect and mitigate pests and pathogens; and improve resilience to biotic and abiotic stress.

USDA has identified four overarching R&D needs:

- Scale-up, standardization, and regulatory science. This includes, among other things: developing an ecosystem of biomanufacturing facilities, including for precision fermentation, close to feedstocks and workforce development opportunities; developing standardized systems for measuring nutritional characteristics of different ingredients as well as sensory properties; and

developing standardized methods for measuring sustainability and conducting related assessments, such as lifecycle analyses (LCAs).

- Plant, animal, and microorganism genome to phenome. This includes: increasing capacity to screen species for relevant agricultural traits and enable data collecting with advanced imagery, spectra, and sensors to better describe phenotypes.

- Data analytics, infrastructure, and sharing.

- Affordability, equitable access, and consumer perception. This includes expanding research into consumer perception and adoption of alternative packaging, biobased products, biofuels, and foods developed with biotechnology and biomanufacturing; and labeling.



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COMING EVENTS

www.cheesereporter.com/events.htm

Registration Open For IDF World Dairy Summit; Returns To US After 30 Years

Chicago—Registration kicked off Monday for the 2023 International Dairy Federation's (IDF) World Dairy Summit here Oct. 16-19 at McCormick Place.

The Summit is returning to the US for the first time in 30 years, bringing together dairy leaders to address the industry's significant opportunities and challenges in a global market.

Over 1,000 participants from around the world are slated to attend, including industry leaders, scientists, and producers.

The IDF Summit Expo will showcase dairy companies, suppliers, trade organizations and products. The program also includes over 25 educational sessions on health and nutrition, sustainable production, consumer expectations, policy and innovation.

Specific topics of discussion are dairy's role in feeding the world and the impact of policy; up-cycle-processing of dairy products; and dairy's role in personalized nutrition.

Speakers will cover recent international dairy food outbreaks; advanced tools in foodborne pathogen monitoring; promoting sustainability to today's global consumer; international dairy trade; emerging chemical contaminants; dairy's environmental impact; and technologies for increasing water efficiency and reuse for dairy farmers and processors.

Optional Tours Oct. 19-20

Attendees will have the option to register for half-day, one- and two-day farm and technical tours. Chicago-area tours for Thursday, Oct. 19 will include stops at Amazon Fresh Grocery Store and USDA's Federal Milk Marketing Order Laboratory. Cost is \$175 per person.

A two-day technical tour in Michigan will include visits to Crandall Dairy Farms and Vanderploeg Farms. Following an overnight stay in Lansing, attendees will tour Proliant Dairy Prod-

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ucts and the MWC cheese and whey protein manufacturing facility in St. Johns, MI. Cost is \$395.

A two-day Wisconsin tour features stops at Klondike Cheese, Larsen Acres, Hinchley Dairy Farm, Four Winds Farm and an overnight stay in Madison.

The following day includes stops at the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) and ABS Global. Cost is \$395 per person.

The one-day Indiana tour will feature stops at Klein Dairy and Fair Oaks Farm. Cost is \$205.

Early Sign-Up Deadline Is June 30

Registration for the IDF Summit is open online, with registration discounts of \$1,150 per person available now through June 30. Starting July 1, cost is \$1,350; on-site sign-up is \$1,600 per person.

Discounts for spouses and students are also available at \$595 and \$250, respectively. For full program and online registration, visit www.idfwds2023.com.

PLANNING GUIDE

NCIMS Conference: April 3-7, 2023, J.W. Marriott, Indianapolis, IN. Details available in the coming months at www.ncims.org.

CheeseCon 23: April 5-6, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI. Official event website now live at www.CheeseCon.org.

ADPI/ABI Joint Annual Conference: April 23-25, Sheraton Grand Chicago. Visit www.adpi.org for future updates.

DairyTech Conference: May 17-18, Minneapolis, MN. Registration is now available online at www.dairytechconference.com.

IDDBA 2023: June 4-6, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Check www.iddba.org for more details.

Summer Fancy Food Show: June 25-27, Javits Center, New York, NY. For information, visit www.specialtyfood.com.

ADSA Annual Meeting: June 25-28, Ottawa, Ontario. Early registration will kick off soon online at www.adsa.org.

WDPA Dairy Symposium: July 10-11, Landmark Resort, Door County, WI. Visit www.wdpa.net.

IFT Expo: July 16-19, McCormick Place, Chicago. Visit www.iftevent.org for future updates.

ACS Conference: July 18-21, Des Moines, IA. Updates available at www.cheesesociety.org.

IMPA Conference: Aug. 10-11, Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, ID. Visit 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.

IDF World Dairy Summit: Oct. 16-19, Chicago, IL. Check www.northcentralcheese.org for updates.

Land O'Lakes CEO To Speak At Water For Food Global Meeting

Lincoln, NE—Land O'Lakes, Inc. president and CEO Beth Ford is a featured speaker at the 2023 Water for Food Global Conference here May 8-11 at the Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center.

The two-day event will explore ways to support improved water use in agriculture and increase productivity at small cooperatives to commercial farm and dairy operations – while preserving water resources for other human and environmental needs.

This year's theme is "Cultivating Innovation: Solutions for a Changing World," focusing on the next generation of research, smart technology, policy development and best practices.

Five session tracks include climate change; technology to improve productivity and protect the environment; water policy and management; people, animals and health; and capacity development.

Online registration and more information on the conference is available at waterforfood.nebraska.edu.

ADPI Launches New Online Event Registration System

Elmhurst, IL—The American Dairy Products Association (ADPI) has launched a new event registration system on its website, along with an updated calendar of events for 2023.

The lineup includes:

April 23-25: ADPI/ABI Joint Annual Conference, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Chicago, IL

June 13-16: Membrane Technology Forum, Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, MN

Sept. 25-27: Dairy Ingredients Seminar, Santa Barbara, CA. Registration will launch May 15.

Nov. 1-2: Dairy Purchasing & Risk Management Seminar, Convene Willis Tower, Chicago, IL. Registration will open July 15.

Also new for 2023 is a sponsorship program, including year-long sponsorship of ADPI subject matter events.

For information, contact ADPI director of marketing and events Tara Anderson at (630) 530-8700. Visit www.adpi.org/events for online registration and more details.

Midwest Food Products Sanitation Seminar Is April 27

Wisconsin Dells, WI—Midwest Food Products Association, Inc. (MWFPA) will host a sanitation seminar here April 27 at the Glacier Canyon Conference Center.

The seminar kicks off with a welcome from MWFPA's Jason Culotta, followed by a session on microbiology and sanitary design featuring Joel Cook, lead instructor of Hydrite Chemical Co.

The Anderson Chemical Company will lead a presentation entitled "Seven Steps of Effective Cleaning," and ProActive Solutions' Steve Rydzewski will cover cooker and cooler cleaning.

After lunch, Jim Miller of Saldezia Corporation will lead a talk on color coding schemes and best practices. Sara Lopez with ChemStation Wisconsin will also give a presentation on CIP automation.

The event will wrap with regional regulatory updates. Cost to attend is \$145 for members and \$195 for non-members. To sign up online and for more information, visit mwfpa.org/events/sanitation-seminar.



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Cheese Maker/Plant Manager

Exciting opportunity for an experienced cheese maker/plant manager for our southern New York operation.

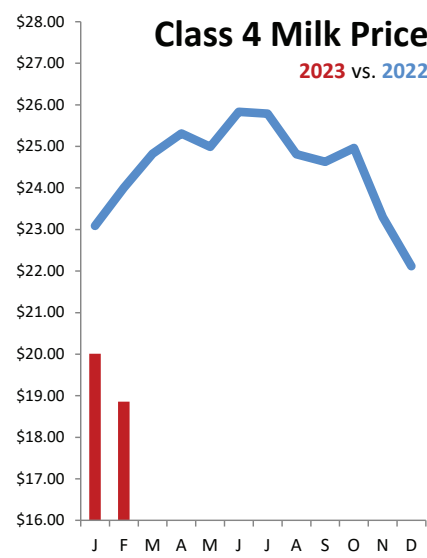
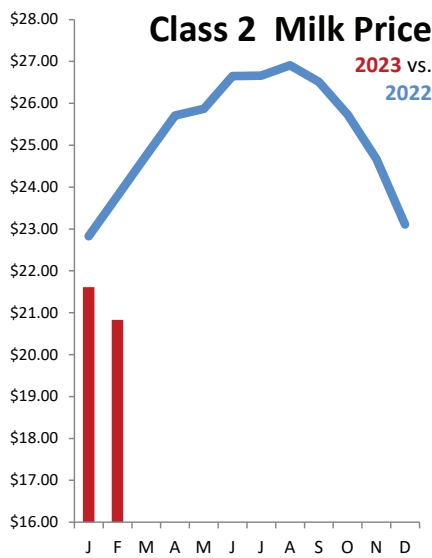
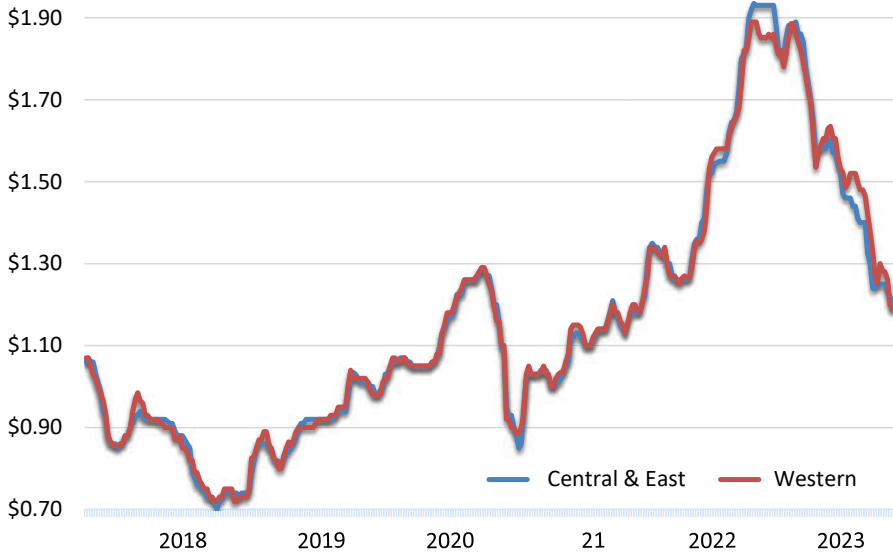
Experience in soft and hard cheese needed. Knowledge in yogurt/dips would be nice.

Compensation commensurate with experience; relocation expenses and other benefits included.

Email interest to: Box-490@cheesereporter.com

NDM Prices: Jan 2017 – March 30, 2023

USDA: High Range (Low/Medium Heat): Mostly



DAIRY FUTURES PRICES

SETTLING PRICE

*Cash Settled

Date	Month	Class III	Class IV	Dry Whey	NDM	Block Cheese	Cheese*	Butter*
3-24	Mar 23	18.10	18.42	41.850	120.150	1.927	1.8460	242.400
3-27	Mar 23	18.07	18.42	42.000	120.150	1.927	1.8450	242.425
3-28	Mar 23	18.05	18.42	41.975	120.150	1.930	1.8430	242.000
3-29	Mar 23	18.06	18.42	41.900	120.150	1.930	1.8410	242.025
3-30	Mar 23	18.07	18.42	42.400	120.600	1.930	1.8400	242.250
3-24	Apr 23	19.93	17.91	41.750	117.600	2.075	2.0390	235.600
3-27	Apr 23	19.76	17.97	41.800	117.625	2.075	2.0250	235.700
3-28	Apr 23	19.52	17.97	41.000	117.500	2.065	2.0020	237.000
3-29	Apr 23	19.50	18.06	40.500	117.900	2.050	2.0010	239.000
3-30	Apr 23	19.46	18.06	42.000	117.600	2.038	1.9880	239.250
3-24	May 23	19.12	17.98	39.000	116.850	2.000	1.9710	236.750
3-27	May 23	19.02	18.08	38.500	117.025	2.000	1.9620	236.050
3-28	May 23	18.58	17.94	37.700	116.975	2.000	1.9240	237.975
3-29	May 23	18.50	17.94	37.500	116.300	2.000	1.9160	239.250
3-30	May 23	18.61	17.94	38.650	116.500	1.975	1.9190	239.750
3-24	June 23	18.77	18.35	37.725	119.000	1.965	1.9510	241.000
3-27	June 23	18.60	18.35	37.700	119.000	1.965	1.9300	241.000
3-28	June 22	18.35	18.25	37.000	118.000	1.950	1.9050	242.750
3-29	June 23	18.47	18.25	37.000	117.750	1.951	1.9180	242.750
3-30	June 23	18.60	18.24	38.500	117.750	1.951	1.9220	242.750
3-24	July 23	19.01	18.55	39.000	121.375	1.990	1.9570	243.750
3-27	July 23	18.88	18.55	38.700	121.450	1.990	1.9560	245.000
3-28	July 23	18.76	18.55	38.600	120.250	1.980	1.9450	246.000
3-29	July 23	18.93	18.55	38.525	120.350	1.985	1.9600	247.000
3-30	July 23	19.01	18.55	38.525	120.300	1.995	1.9690	246.000
3-24	Aug 23	19.29	18.88	39.750	124.325	2.027	1.9950	246.000
3-27	Aug 23	19.24	18.88	39.000	124.325	2.025	1.9880	246.250
3-28	Aug 23	19.18	18.88	38.000	122.600	2.010	1.9870	248.000
3-29	Aug 23	19.32	18.88	38.000	122.500	2.025	2.0000	248.000
3-30	Aug 23	19.38	18.88	38.000	122.500	2.025	2.0070	248.000
3-24	Sept 23	19.60	19.21	40.375	127.250	2.044	2.0150	247.275
3-27	Sept 23	19.44	19.21	39.725	127.250	2.044	2.0120	248.000
3-28	Sept 23	19.42	19.21	39.725	125.625	2.044	2.0100	249.750
3-29	Sept 23	19.56	19.21	39.800	125.500	2.044	2.0150	250.750
3-30	Sept 23	19.64	19.21	39.800	125.475	2.047	2.0260	250.575
3-24	Oct 23	19.63	19.45	41.850	129.000	2.049	2.0180	246.025
3-27	Oct 23	19.65	19.45	41.400	128.500	2.049	2.0180	247.525
3-28	Oct 23	19.56	19.45	41.400	128.000	2.046	2.0180	249.025
3-29	Oct 23	19.62	19.45	41.400	127.500	2.046	2.0180	250.500
3-30	Oct 23	19.70	19.41	41.400	127.000	2.046	2.0240	250.600
3-24	Nov 23	19.63	19.65	42.250	131.475	2.043	2.0130	249.000
3-27	Nov 23	19.60	19.65	42.250	131.325	2.043	2.0130	249.000
3-28	Nov 23	19.46	19.65	41.000	129.025	2.043	2.0100	249.000
3-29	Nov 23	19.58	19.65	41.000	129.025	2.043	2.0140	249.000
3-30	Nov 23	19.69	19.65	41.000	129.025	2.045	2.0250	249.000
3-24	Dec 23	19.31	19.65	43.250	131.750	2.010	1.9700	245.500
3-27	Dec 23	19.29	19.65	43.250	131.925	2.010	1.9730	245.500
3-28	Dec 23	19.18	19.65	43.250	131.000	2.010	1.9700	245.500
3-29	Dec 23	19.24	19.65	43.250	131.000	2.010	1.9750	245.500
3-30	Dec 23	19.28	19.63	43.250	131.000	2.030	1.9810	245.500
3-24	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	134.725	1.986	1.9470	244.000
3-27	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	134.725	1.986	1.9500	244.000
3-28	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	134.000	1.986	1.9500	244.000
3-29	Jan 24	18.95	19.50	43.000	133.000	1.986	1.9500	244.000
3-30	Jan 24	18.95	19.35	43.000	133.000	1.986	1.9550	244.000
Mar. 30		24,498	6,000	2,972	9,838	885	21,596	9,841

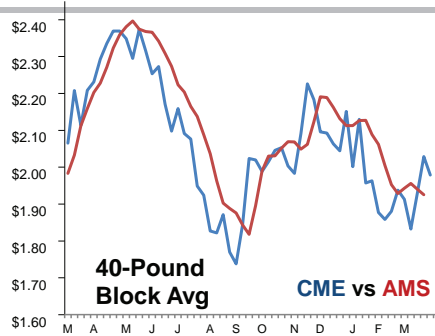
AVG MONTHLY ANIMAL FEED PRICES: USDA

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
'18	.1980	.1888	.1836	.1907	.1915	.2326	.2346	.2767	.3042	.3384	.3263	.3275
'19	.3655	.3376	.3105	.2852	.2718	.2725	.2657	.2598	.2550	.2509	.2446	.2924
'20	.2900	.2997	.2973	.2968	.3098	.2914	.2680	.2540	.2767	.2895	.3142	.3416
'21	.3784	.3913	.4752	.5469	.5613	.5255	.4719	.4168	.4024	.4643	.4853	.5100
'22	.5638	.6624	.6586	.5525	.5138	.4873	.4435	.3863	.3664	.3308	.3250	.3159
'23	.2967	.2895										

DAIRY PRODUCT SALES

March 29, 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 NFDM.

•Revised



Week Ending	Mar. 25	Mar. 18	Mar. 11	Mar. 4
40-Pound Block Cheddar Cheese Prices and Sales				
Weighted Price Dollars/Pound				
US	1.9255	1.9404	1.9559	1.9426
Sales Volume Pounds				
US	12,719,254	12,219,435	13,511,722	12,128,291
500-Pound Barrel Cheddar Cheese Prices, Sales & Moisture Content				
Weighted Price Dollars/Pound				
US	1.8776	1.7746	1.6998	1.7053
Adjusted to 38% Moisture				
US	1.7865	1.6855	1.6174	1.6202
Sales Volume Pounds				
US	14,059,526	14,537,833	16,632,152	15,897,716
Weighted Moisture Content Percent				
US	34.84	34.72	34.84	34.74
AA Butter				
Weighted Price Dollars/Pound				
US	2.4235	2.4055	2.4364	2.4427
Sales Volume Pounds				
US	3,329,800	4,851,861	3,718,419	3,965,087
Extra Grade Dry Whey Prices				
Weighted Price Dollars/Pound				
US	0.4375	0.4195	0.4245	0.4086
Sales Volume Pounds				
US	5,159,744	6,430,178	6,823,635	7,044,987
Extra Grade or USPHS Grade A Nonfat Dry Milk				
Average Price Dollars/Pound				
US	1.2204	1.2220	1.2144	1.2028
Sales Volume Pounds				
US	20,553,292	20,176,768	20,108,493	32,092,669

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TYPE OF BUSINESS:

.....Cheese Manufacturer

.....Cheese Processor

.....Cheese Packager

.....Cheese Marketer(broker, distributor, retailer)

.....Other processor (butter, cultured products)

.....Whey processor

.....Food processing/Foodservice

.....Supplier to dairy processor

JOB FUNCTION:

.....Company Management

.....Plant Management

.....Plant Personnel

.....Laboratory (QC, R&D, Tech)

.....Packaging

.....Purchasing

.....Warehouse/Distribution

.....Sales/Marketing

DAIRY PRODUCT MARKETS

AS REPORTED BY THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WHOLESALE CHEESE MARKETS

NATIONAL - MARCH 24: Milk is available for processing throughout the US. Contacts in the Northeast say regional dryer challenges have freed some milk volumes intended for nonfat dry milk production. In the Midwest, loads of milk continue to move as low as \$11 under Class III, but some cheese makers are not receiving offers quite as low this week.

NORTHEAST - MARCH 29: Milk volumes are steady to higher and enough to meet current cheese manufacturing needs. Cheese plant contacts report strong production schedules ahead of spring holidays. Retail and foodservice demands are steady to increasing. Inventories are steady. Market prices for cheese blocks on industry cash exchanges reached \$2.0150 last Wednesday and increased to \$2.0325 as of reporting, steadying somewhat in comparison to the large price jumps outlined in the previous week's report.

Wholesale prices, delivered, dollars per/lb:

Cheddar 40-lb block:	\$2.4950 - \$2.7825	Process 5-lb sliced:	\$2.0525 - \$2.5325
Muenster:	\$2.4825 - \$2.8325	Swiss Cuts 10-14 lbs:	\$3.7625 - \$6.0850

MIDWEST AREA - MARCH 29: Cheese demand notes range across the spectrum. Some cheese makers say ordering is active, while others say they are processing with expectations to store cheese ahead of later spring/summer, and others say orders are meeting weekly expectations. Milk remains readily accessible for cheese processing. Spot prices ticked higher on the top end of the range, but all reported prices at report time remain below Class III. Milk availability is variant depending on location. Cheese production, despite what have become typical supply chain and/or labor tightness, is steadily active this week. A number of cheese makers say production is six to seven days per week. Cheese market tones are fluctuant from one day to the next.

Wholesale prices delivered, dollars per/lb:

Blue 5# Loaf :	\$2.5375 - \$3.7475	Mozzarella 5-6#:	\$2.0675 - \$3.1550
Brick 5# Loaf:	\$2.2675 - \$2.8350	Muenster 5#:	\$2.2675 - \$2.8350
Cheddar 40# Block:	\$1.9900 - \$2.5325	Process 5# Loaf:	\$1.9300 - \$2.3975
Monterey Jack 10#:	\$2.2425 - \$2.5900	Swiss 6-9# Cuts:	\$3.2775 - \$3.3800

WEST - MARCH 29: Demand from retail and foodservice purchasers for varietal cheese is steady. Inventories available for contracted purchases remain reportedly close to sold out by some stakeholders. Demand from spot market purchasers remains reportedly steady and loads are available to meet current spot market demand. Barrel inventories remain ahead of block inventories. Strong to steady demand from Asian markets continued this week. Export demand from elsewhere is moderate to light as current domestic prices stayed uncompetitive with European and Oceania prices. Production from cheese makers is strong with ample milk volumes available for processing.

Wholesale prices delivered, dollars per/lb:

Cheddar 10# Cuts:	\$2.3700 - \$2.5700	Process 5# Loaf:	\$2.0550 - \$2.2100
Cheddar 40# Block:	\$2.1225 - \$2.6125	Swiss 6-9# Cuts:	\$2.5700 - \$4.0000

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

Variety	Date:	3/29	3/22	Variety	Date:	3/29	3/22
Cheddar Curd		\$1.97	\$1.99	Mild Cheddar		\$2.02	\$2.04
Young Gouda		\$1.58	\$1.57	Mozzarella		\$1.52	\$1.54

FOREIGN -TYPE CHEESE - MARCH 29: Milk production is trending higher in Europe, and some contacts report total output is up compared to this time last year. Cheese makers are operating busy production schedules as they work through available milk volumes. Demand for cheese is strengthening as more purchasers are looking to stock their shelves ahead of spring holidays. Industry sources relay steady cheese sales to food service customers, and some note strong orders of Mozzarella cheese. Export demand is strong as cheese produced in Europe is being sold at lower prices than cheese produced in some other parts of the world. Cheese loads are available for spot purchasing, though some stakeholders say inventories are tightening some amid current market demands.

Selling prices, delivered, dollars per/lb:

	Imported	Domestic
Blue:	\$2.6400 - 5.2300	\$2.3525 - 3.8400
Gorgonzola:	\$3.6900 - 5.7400	\$2.8600 - 3.5775
Parmesan (Italy):	0	\$3.7400 - 5.8300
Romano (Cows Milk):	0	\$3.5425 - 5.6925
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 30

CENTRAL: Market activity was somewhat slow, but reported prices were below those of previous weeks. Spot market activity is primarily falling in the mid to high \$1.10s. End users are aware of the ample availability of condensed skim milk. Drying is moderately active. Due to plant maintenance and other logistics, it is not active at every plant within the region. Still, despite some downtime, NDM remains the focus of dryers. High heat NDM prices are unchanged on equally quiet markets. NDM market tones, across the board, are under some bearish pressure.

EAST: Eastern contacts reported prices specifically toward the top end of the range and mostly, but contacts suggest limitations of availability in the East compared to the Midwest and West are keeping higher prices somewhat anchored regionally. There have been plant related logistical concerns in all

regions in recent weeks, from workforce turnovers to equipment updates, which have given condensed skim suppliers increased difficulties in finding destinations for their ample supplies. Dairy powder alternatives, specifically whey protein concentrate 34%, are under some bearish pricing pressure, so end users who can adapt their ingredient usages to use alternatives are doing so.

WEST: Contacts report spot demand for low/medium heat NDM is light and stakeholders are only purchasing loads to meet their immediate needs. Spot loads of low/medium heat NDM are available for purchasing. Drying operations are steadily producing low/medium heat NDM, amid strong regional milk production. High heat NDM production is limited, as plant managers focus their schedules on the shorter drying times of low/medium heat NDM.

NATIONAL - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY PRODUCTS

Total conventional cheese ads increased 25 percent and total organic cheese ads increased 44 percent. Both conventional 1-pound shredded cheese and 2-pound block cheese reported noteworthy increases in store ads, 788 and 374 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, shredded cheese in 6- to 8-ounce packaging was the most advertised conventional cheese item, with an average ad price of \$2.42, down 34 cents from last week. Organic 6- to 8-ounce block cheese was the most advertised organic cheese item, with an average advertised price of \$7.05, down 29 cents from last week.

Total conventional dairy ads increased 13 percent, but organic dairy ads declined 25 percent. Ice cream in 48- to 64-ounce containers was the most advertised conventional dairy product, with a price of \$3.86, up \$0.14. Regular yogurt in the 32-ounce container was the most advertised organic dairy item, with an average price of \$4.31, down \$0.07 cents.

Half-gallon conventional milk posted a 112 percent increase in store ads, with a \$1.70 average price. Half-gallon organic milk ads posted a 10 percent decline, with a \$4.00 weighted average price. As a result, the market is seeing an organic premium of \$2.30 this week.

RETAIL PRICES - CONVENTIONAL DAIRY - MARCH 31

Commodity	US	NE	SE	MID	SC	SW	NW
Butter 8 oz	3.05	3.13	3.00	NA	NA	3.00	3.48
Butter 1#	3.51	3.64	3.53	3.15	3.81	2.96	3.69
Cheese 6-8 oz block	2.51	2.49	2.45	2.44	2.57	2.74	2.91
Cheese 6-8 oz shred	2.42	2.39	2.13	2.59	2.63	2.74	2.57
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced	2.52	2.32	2.25	2.69	2.49	2.88	NA
Cheese 1# block	4.86	NA	4.29	4.99	NA	4.49	4.90
Cheese 1# shred	4.24	4.20	4.00	3.99	NA	4.49	5.17
Cheese 1# sliced	2.52	3.99	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cheese 2# block	7.42	8.81	9.99	NA	NA	6.88	6.47
Cheese 2# shred	6.42	NA	NA	6.98	8.12	5.87	5.99
Cottage Cheese 16 oz	2.02	2.70	1.93	1.89	1.79	1.75	NA
Cottage Cheese 24 oz	3.52	NA	NA	3.66	3.28	NA	NA
Cream Cheese 8 oz	2.36	NA	2.18	2.51	2.47	2.34	2.33
Ice Cream 14-16 oz	3.73	3.75	4.10	3.42	3.41	3.45	3.94
Ice Cream 48-64 oz	3.86	3.75	3.91	3.64	4.23	4.01	3.64
Milk 1/2 gallon	1.70	3.29	1.29	1.29	2.08	1.61	1.21
Milk gallon	3.07	2.94	NA	NA	NA	3.18	2.46
Sour Cream 16 oz	2.06	2.21	1.97	2.04	1.91	2.07	2.03

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

ORGANIC DAIRY - RETAIL OVERVIEW

National Weighted Retail Avg Price:	
Butter 8 oz:	\$4.38
Butter 1 lb:	\$5.63
Cream Cheese 8 oz:	\$3.99
Cream Cheese 16 oz:	NA
Cottage Cheese 16 oz:	\$4.85
Cheese shreds 6-8 oz:	\$6.49
Cheese 6-8 oz block:	\$7.05
Cheese 6-8 oz sliced:	\$3.69
Yogurt 32 oz:	\$4.31
Greek Yogurt 32 oz:	\$6.61
Milk 1/2 gallon:	\$4.00
Milk gallon:	\$6.32
Ice Cream 48-64 oz:	\$8.24

WHOLESALE BUTTER MARKETS - MARCH 29

WEST: Plenty of cream volumes are available. Stakeholders report heavy to ample supplies compared to production needs. Demand for cream is steady to light. Some Cream cheese producers have cut back on demand, while ice cream producers have increased demand. Cream multiplies increased on the top end this week. Butter production is strong to steady. Some stakeholders report maxed out production schedules, while others have decreased processing capacity due to uncompleted equipment repairs. Retail demand is strong to steady. Some stakeholders report retail demand for the upcoming holiday has plateaued and less active foodservice sales. Contract sales are steady and spot market sales had moderate activity. Export demand is more active for Asian markets, compared to European markets, with more competitive prices. Some s report stronger bookings for unsalted loads compared to salted loads.

as steadily available cream supplies have been reported for the entirety of 2023. Last week, there were some expectations of ice cream/Cream cheese processing taking on more cream and pushing multiples higher, but plant managers say cream remains in a similar price point to previous weeks. Butter market tones are holding steady, despite some bearish indicators such as increasing national stores.

NORTHEAST: Cream supplies are variable in the Eastern region. Some contacts have relayed that cream availability is tight while other contacts have reported that cream is readily available in certain locales. Spring flush conditions are picking up and market contacts suggest this will ameliorate existing cream tightness. As spring holidays draw nearer, cream cheese and ice cream manufacturing are drawing upon existing cream supplies. Some butter manufacturers report steady churning schedules, while others have relayed that labor shortages have caused them to scale back production and refrain from purchasing spot cream loads. Inventories are noted to be strong. Both retail and food service demand are steady to increasing.

CENTRAL: Butter demand, according to processors, has softened following a bit of a more active run in late February/early March due to spring holiday ordering. Butter supply numbers continue to tick up, as active churning continues on

WEEKLY COLD STORAGE HOLDINGS

SELECTED STORAGE CENTERS IN 1,000 POUNDS - INCLUDING GOVERNMENT

DATE	BUTTER	CHEESE
03/27/23	53,046	66,697
03/01/23	48,681	67,267
Change	4,365	-570
Percent Change	9	-1

CME CASH PRICES - MARCH 27 - 31, 2023

Visit www.cheesereporter.com for daily prices

	500-LB CHEDDAR	40-LB CHEDDAR	AA BUTTER	GRADE A NDFM	DRY WHEY
MONDAY March 27	\$1.9625 (NC)	\$2.1000 (NC)	\$2.3450 (NC)	\$1.1500 (NC)	\$0.4450 (NC)
TUESDAY March 28	\$1.9500 (-1¼)	\$2.0325 (-6¼)	\$2.3700 (+2½)	\$1.1500 (NC)	\$0.4450 (NC)
WEDNESDAY March 29	\$1.9050 (-4½)	\$1.9350 (-9¼)	\$2.3975 (+2¼)	\$1.1475 (-¼)	\$0.4425 (-¼)
THURSDAY March 30	\$1.8750 (-3)	\$1.9250 (-1)	\$2.3975 (NC)	\$1.1475 (NC)	\$0.4400 (-¼)
FRIDAY March 31	\$1.8075 (-6¼)	\$1.8500 (-7½)	\$2.3975 (NC)	\$1.1600 (+1¼)	\$0.4475 (+¾)
Week's AVG \$ Change	\$1.9000 (-0.0535)	\$1.9685 (-0.0605)	\$2.3815 (-0.0035)	\$1.1510 (-0.0035)	\$0.4440 (-0.0010)
Last Week's AVG	\$1.9535	\$2.0290	\$2.3780	\$1.1545	\$0.4450
2022 AVG Same Week	\$2.2110	\$2.2310	\$2.7155	\$1.8415	\$0.6715

MARKET OPINION - CHEESE REPORTER

Cheese Comment: There was no block market activity at all on Monday. Tuesday's block market activity was limited to an uncovered offer of 1 car at \$2.0325, which set the price. No blocks were sold Wednesday; the price dropped on an uncovered offer of 1 car at \$1.9350. One car of blocks was sold Thursday at \$1.9250, which set the price. Two cars of blocks were sold Friday at \$1.8500, which set the price. The barrel price declined Tuesday on an uncovered offer at \$1.9500, fell Wednesday on a sale at \$1.9050, dropped Thursday on an uncovered offer at \$1.8750, and declined Friday on a sale at \$1.8075. there were 41 carloads of blocks traded in March at the CME; while 138 carloads of barrels were traded in March at the CME.

Butter Comment: The price increased Tuesday on a sale at \$2.3700, and rose Wednesday on a sale at \$2.3975.

Nonfat Dry Milk Comment: The price declined Wednesday on an unfilled bid at \$1.1475 (following a sale at \$1.1450), then increased Friday on a sale at \$1.1600.

Dry Whey Comment: The price fell Wednesday on an uncovered offer at 44.25 cents, declined Thursday on an uncovered offer at 44.0 cents, then rose Friday on a sale at 44.75 cents.

WHEY MARKETS - MARCH 27 - 31, 2023

RELEASE DATE - MARCH 30, 2023

Animal Feed Whey—Central: Milk Replacer:	.3100 (NC) – .4000 (NC)
Buttermilk Powder:	
Central & East:	1.0600 (+1) – 1.1500 (NC) West: 1.0200 (-1) – 1.1500 (NC)
Mostly:	1.0700 (NC) – 1.1300 (NC)
Casein: Rennet:	5.7000 (-4) – 5.9000 (NC) Acid: 5.7500 (-15) – 6.0000 (-15)
Dry Whey—Central (Edible):	
Nonhygroscopic:	.4000 (NC) – .4700 (+1) Mostly: .4200 (+1) – .4600 (+1)
Dry Whey—West (Edible):	
Nonhygroscopic:	.3950 (-½) – .4850 (NC) Mostly: .4100 (-½) – .4600 (-½)
Dry Whey—NE:	.4050 (NC) – .4775 (NC)
Lactose—Central and West:	
Edible:	.1600 (NC) – .5200 (-2) Mostly: .2400 (NC) – .4300 (NC)
Nonfat Dry Milk—Central & East:	
Low/Medium Heat:	1.1300 (-2) – 1.2250 (-½) Mostly: 1.1400 (-3) – 1.1900 (-2)
High Heat:	1.3100 (NC) – 1.3700 (NC)
Nonfat Dry Milk—Western:	
Low/Med Heat:	1.1050 (+½) – 1.2250 (-1) Mostly: 1.1200 (-1) – 1.1900 (-1)
High Heat:	1.2700 (NC) – 1.4075 (-1)
Whey Protein Concentrate—34% Protein:	
Central & West:	0.9000 (NC) – 1.5400 (-½) Mostly: 1.1500 (NC) – 1.4500 (-3)
Whole Milk:	2.1000 (NC) – 2.2000 (NC)

Visit www.cheesereporter.com for historical dairy, cheese, butter, & whey prices

HISTORICAL CME AVG BLOCK CHEESE PRICES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
'09	1.0883	1.2171	1.2455	1.2045	1.1394	1.1353	1.1516	1.3471	1.3294	1.4709	1.5788	1.6503
'10	1.4536	1.4526	1.2976	1.4182	1.4420	1.3961	1.5549	1.6367	1.7374	1.7246	1.4619	1.3807
'11	1.5140	1.9064	1.8125	1.6036	1.6858	2.0995	2.1150	1.9725	1.7561	1.7231	1.8716	1.6170
'12	1.5546	1.4793	1.5193	1.5039	1.5234	1.6313	1.6855	1.8262	1.9245	2.0757	1.9073	1.6619
'13	1.6965	1.6420	1.6240	1.8225	1.8052	1.7140	1.7074	1.7492	1.7956	1.8236	1.8478	1.9431
'14	2.2227	2.1945	2.3554	2.2439	2.0155	2.0237	1.9870	2.1820	2.3499	2.1932	1.9513	1.5938
'15	1.5218	1.5382	1.5549	1.5890	1.6308	1.7052	1.6659	1.7111	1.6605	1.6674	1.6175	1.4616
'16	1.4757	1.4744	1.4877	1.4194	1.3174	1.5005	1.6613	1.7826	1.6224	1.6035	1.8775	1.7335
'17	1.6866	1.6199	1.4342	1.4970	1.6264	1.6022	1.6586	1.6852	1.6370	1.7305	1.6590	1.4900
'18	1.4928	1.5157	1.5614	1.6062	1.6397	1.5617	1.5364	1.6341	1.6438	1.5874	1.3951	1.3764
'19	1.4087	1.5589	1.5908	1.6619	1.6799	1.7906	1.8180	1.8791	2.0395	2.0703	1.9664	1.8764
'20	1.9142	1.8343	1.7550	1.1019	1.6704	2.5620	2.6466	1.7730	2.3277	2.7103	2.0521	1.6249
'21	1.7470	1.5821	1.7362	1.7945	1.6778	1.4978	1.6370	1.7217	1.7601	1.7798	1.7408	1.8930
'22	1.9065	1.9379	2.1699	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									

Restaurant Performance Index Fell 0.1% In Feb.; Sales, Traffic Increased

Washington—The National Restaurant Association's Restaurant Performance Index (RPI) stood at 102.7 in February, down 0.1 percent from January, the association reported today.

Index values above 100 indicate that key industry indicators are in a period of expansion, while index values below 100 represent a period of contraction.

The RPI consists of two components: the Current Situation Index and the Expectations Index.

The CSI, which measures current trends in four industry indicators, stood at 103.0 in February, unchanged from January.

Restaurant operators reported a net increase in same-store sales for the seventh straight month, with February's readings similar to January's. Some 73 percent of operators said their same-store sales rose between February 2022 and February 2023, compared to 75 percent who reported higher sales in January. Only 12 percent of operators said their sales were lower in February, down from 23 percent who reported a sales decline in January.

Restaurant operators also report-

ed positive customer traffic readings in February.

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 102.4 in February, down 0.1 percent from January.

Restaurant operators are increasingly optimistic about sales growth in the coming months, the association reported.

Some 60 percent of operators expect their sales volume in six months to be higher than it was during the same period in the previous year. That was up from 58 percent in January and represented the highest reading in 12 months.

Only 8 percent of restaurant operators think their sales volume in six months will be lower than it was during the same period in the previous year, down from 16 percent who reported similarly in January.

In contrast to the positive sales outlook, restaurant operators are not as optimistic about the direction of the overall economy.



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