

WCMA: Thanks USDA, Baldwin for investment of \$20.2 million in dairy business innovation initiatives in 2021

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MADISON, WI — The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) today applauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [announcement of \\$20.2 million in support](#) for Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII), championed by U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) in the 2018 Farm Bill and in a federal spending package approved last December.

WCMA and the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison partner in running one of the DBII programs, called the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA). It offers direct-to-business grants, free workshops and consultative services, as well as industry research for dairy farmers and processors in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

“Smart, targeted investments in farmstead dairy operations and in the development of new, value-added dairy products mean a stronger, more resilient agricultural economy, and we thank Secretary Vilsack and Senator Baldwin for delivering the support needed to continue the impactful work of the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance,” said John Umhoefer, WCMA Executive Director.

“Wisconsin’s dairy businesses are a key driver of our state’s economy and with all the challenges they face I’m working to do everything I can to help,” said Senator Baldwin. “This federal funding from USDA for the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives will help Wisconsin dairy businesses grow their business, modernize their dairy plants and reach new markets. It’s critical that farmers, cheesemakers and

dairy processors have tools to innovate and develop new Made in Wisconsin dairy products to build a brighter future for our dairy farms and drive our rural economy forward. I'm thankful that President Biden and Secretary Vilsack are committed partners in supporting Wisconsin's dairy economy and rural communities."

Today's USDA announcement noted that \$18.4 million of its latest funding allocation will go to the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance and to other existing programs run by the University of Tennessee and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. An additional \$1.8 million will be competitively awarded to a new Initiative program.

"Greater innovation is critical for a vibrant dairy industry, and this program is critical to support innovation both by dairy farmers and processors," said Dr. John Lucey, CDR Director and Food Science Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

For more information on the Dairy Business Innovation Alliance resources, and to learn about existing grant opportunities and recent recipients, visit <https://www.cdr.wisc.edu/dbia>.