

# **Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association: Applauds 2023 Dairy Processor Grant announcements, calls for state budget boosts to strengthen industry and rural economy**

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**MADISON, WI – Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) members today applauded the [announcement of 2023 Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grant awards](#), and called on lawmakers to boost funding for this impactful program.**

“As Wisconsin dairy processors expand their capacity and modernize facilities, create new value-added products, and launch new endeavors, they are creating family-supporting job opportunities, strengthening the market for farmers’ milk, and boosting the largely rural communities in which they operate,” said Rebekah Sweeney, WCMA Senior Director of Programs & Policy. “It’s a win-win for Wisconsin, and we appreciate the support of lawmakers now considering a funding increase.”

On Thursday, the state’s powerful budget-writing Joint Finance Committee will consider [proposals](#) to support the Dairy Processor Grant program at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP), including a concept (Paper #177, Alternative 1) to increase the base funding to \$1 million from \$200,000 per year. In 2023, WDATCP received 38 dairy processor grant requests, totaling \$1.5 million. In 2022, the agency saw demand for \$1.7 million in funding from 43 businesses.

“The program is popular, and we know that additional grant dollars could expedite further growth in our state’s signature industry: cheesemaking,” said Sweeney. “Often, grants pay for engineering studies or design work that enable dairy processors to move forward much faster on their growth projects.”

In concert with today’s announcement, WDATCP Secretary Randy Romanski visited WCMA member Nasonville Dairy in Marshfield to highlight two grant projects, detailed in this brief video: [Wisconsin Dairy Processor Grant Spotlight: Nasonville Dairy & Weber’s Farm Store.](#)

**WCMA members are also calling on Wisconsin lawmakers to [increase budget allocations](#) for the Wisconsin Initiative for Agricultural Exports, also up for discussion later this week.** After just one full year in operations with annual state support of \$1 million, this program has supported a 37.7 percent increase in dairy exports, to a total value of \$617 million, as well as new export endeavors to support the sale of Wisconsin-produced meat and crops. WCMA supports concepts (Paper #197, Alternatives 3 & 1) to increase available monies for this program and expects continued return on investment for the industry and for the state.