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## **1. February Conference To Address Dairy Profitability, Sustainability**

If you are a dairy producer or processor interested in achieving greater profitability by implementing environmentally sustainable practices on your farm or dairy plant, then register now for a Feb. 10 conference at the Monona Terrace in Madison.

Hosted by the Dairy Business Innovation Center, University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural Life Sciences, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, the "2010 Profitability and Environmental Sustainability in the Dairy Industry Conference" will feature an array of nearly 20 national and state speakers with hands-on knowledge in sustainability issues.

The conference is a partnership with the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), which is hosting a three-day national conference on Energy Efficiency in Agriculture in Madison on Feb. 7-9. Held for the first time in Wisconsin, the national event will transition into a Wisconsin-centric conference on Feb. 10.

The Feb. 10 one-day Wisconsin conference will open with a morning session featuring keynote speaker Andrea Asch, of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. Additional morning topics will include developments in carbon credit programs, and a presentation by Dairy Management Inc. on U.S. dairy sustainability. The afternoon will be separated into producer and processor tracks. Dairy processors will learn practical methods to reduce their overall carbon footprint, information on product packaging to convey sustainable efforts, and learn about the life cycle of fluid milk. Producers will gain information on powering their farms, making a profit via "green farming" and hear from three leading dairy farmers on what methods they're implementing to make a profit.

"This conference is an excellent opportunity to learn more about what others in the industry are doing to improve energy efficiency, enhance sustainability and help reduce dairy's greenhouse gases," said Wisconsin Agriculture Secretary Rod Nilsestuen. "I would encourage any dairy farmer or processor



interested in implementing environmentally sustainable practices on their farm or dairy plant to consider attending.”

Conference speakers on Feb. 10 include:

- Andrea Asch, Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream, Vermont
- Donna Berry, Food Scientist and Dairy Foods Writer
- Patrick Taylor, Hogan & Hartson LLP, Washington, D.C.
- Matthew Welch, Dairy Management Inc.
- Doug Caruso, Wisconsin Farmers Union
- Rick Adamski, Full Circle Farm, Wisconsin
- Scot Wall, Cashton Bio-Energy Park, Wisconsin
- Charles Crave, Crave Brothers Farm, Wisconsin
- Francis Thicke, Radiance Dairy, Iowa
- Mike McCloskey, Fair Oaks Farm, Indiana
- Joe Tomandl, Tomandl Family Farm, Wisconsin
- Altfred Krusenbaum, Krusen Grass Farms, Wisconsin

Register [online](#) or download a registration form on the [DBIC website](#) and mail to ACEEE. The registration fee for the one-day Feb. 10 conference (including an evening Wisconsin cheese and wine reception on Feb. 9) is \$100. Participants are also encouraged to attend the ACEEE national conference, where one-day registrations are an option. The ACEEE is organizing farm tours on Tuesday, Feb. 9, and Wisconsin conference attendees are welcome to attend for a nominal fee. Visit the [ACEEE website](#) for more information.

Scholarships are available for interested farm families for the one-day Feb. 10 event. Receive a \$50 scholarship (maximum two per family) if you send a brief email to [maggiemfitzsimmons@gmail.com](mailto:maggiemfitzsimmons@gmail.com) outlining why you’re interested in attending, and why you’re requesting financial assistance. All requests will remain confidential.

To view a complete program and agenda for the Feb. 10 Profitability and Environmental Sustainability in the Dairy Industry Conference, [click here](#).

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## 2. New Dairy Industry Panel to Include Four Wisconsin Representatives

Four prominent agriculture experts with Wisconsin ties have been appointed to serve on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s new 17-member Dairy Industry Advisory Committee. The Committee will be tasked with reviewing the issues of farm milk price volatility and dairy farmer profitability, and providing suggestions and ideas to the Secretary of Agriculture on how USDA can best meet the dairy industry’s needs. Joining the committee from Wisconsin are:

- **Rod Nilsestuen**, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- **James Goodman**, operator of a 45-cow organic dairy and active in Vernon Electric Coop, Midwest Organic Service Association and Wisconsin Sustainable Agriculture Task Force
- **Ed Welch**, who has worked for the Associated Milk Producers Inc for the last 26 years.
- **Robert Wills**, owner/operator of Cedar Grove Cheese Factory and PhD economist.

“Wisconsin’s dairy interests will have strong advocates and tremendous representation on the Dairy Industry Advisory Committee. Each of these people brings a wealth of experience, expertise and understanding to this new initiative, and I congratulate them on their selection,” Senator Herb Kohl said.

Last August, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced plans to form the Dairy Industry Advisory Committee to respond to urgent challenges in agriculture and rural economies, and to look for long-term solutions to keep the industry competitive and viable. Kohl, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee, submitted several names to Secretary Vilsack for consideration. The four Wisconsin committee members were selected from 400 nominated nationwide. The committee members will serve a two year term.

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### 3. Interested in Exporting? International Marketing Programs Available

The Food Export Association of the Midwest works with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture to offer a variety of programs and services to help grow exports of value-added food and agricultural products for Wisconsin companies. Whether your company is just getting started or is already exporting to several countries, multiple programs and services are available, including:

- **Food Export Helpline™** -- this free service provides customized, one-on-one assistance on a wide variety of export related topics including helping to set an export price and selecting a product's top 25 markets.
- **Export Essentials OnLine** – an online education center, consisting of ten modules to help learn the steps of exporting and how to integrate all elements of the export transaction at your own pace.
- **Market Builder** – customized package of services helps companies to find the right market and buyer for your products through importer feedback on products, competitive market research and importation analysis, distributor referrals and importer lists, and assistance with in-market meetings.
- **Branded Program** – cost-share funding program provides financial assistance to help exporters promote products in international markets. Participants in this program receive 50% cost reimbursement for a variety of approved overseas marketing and promotional expenses.
- **Buyers Missions** - Food Export Midwest brings foreign food/food ingredient buyers to the U.S., usually to major tradeshows. U.S. companies can review the buyers' profiles before registering. Once registered, one-on-one meetings will be scheduled with the buyers of interest to the U.S. company.



To learn more or to take advantage of any of these programs, contact Lisa Stout at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, 608-224-5126 or email: [lisa.stout@wisconsin.gov](mailto:lisa.stout@wisconsin.gov)

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## 4. Industry News

❖ **Wisconsin Licensed Cheesemaker Scholarship Now Available:**

In an effort to help grow the state's artisan cheesemaker community, Wisconsin Cheese Originals, an organization dedicated to sharing information about new artisan cheeses and the cheesemakers who craft them, has established a yearly \$2,500 Wisconsin Licensed Cheesemaker Scholarship. The scholarship is available to any Wisconsin resident intending to pursue a Wisconsin Cheesemaker License. The deadline to apply for the 2010 scholarship is March 15, 2010. To learn more, [download the scholarship application form](#).



❖ **New Dairy Management Website:** Victor E. Cabrera, an Assistant Professor at UW-Madison, has created a new Dairy Management website designed to support dairy farming decision-making focusing on model-based scientific research. The site features user-friendly computerized decision support systems to help dairy farms improve their economic performance. As an Extension Specialist, Dr. Cabrera works in close relationships with county-based Extension faculty, dairy producers, consultants, and related industry. Visit the website [here](#).

❖ **Goat Profitability:** A new publication on dairy goat profitability is available. The publication contains data from a two-year study of a small number of dairy goat farms in Wisconsin. The farms were chosen based on: 1) Each had been milking goats commercially for a minimum of 5 years; 2) Each is achieving the majority of their farm income from the dairy goat operation; 3) The dairy goat operation is the primary source of income for the farm household. [Download the report](#) from the DBIC website.

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## 5. Upcoming Important Dates

• **Jan. 21-22: Wisconsin Local Food Summit, Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference & Value Added Agriculture College. Eau Claire, Wis.**

These three events offer educational sessions and networking opportunities for farmers, farm suppliers and distributors; agricultural educators, service providers and agencies; farmers' market managers and vendors; local food buyers and advocates; and others with an interest in sustainable agriculture. Keynote speakers will be urban farmer and MacArthur Fellow Will Allen, writer Michael Perry, author of *Population 485*, and dietician, nutritionist and journalist Melinda Hemmelgarn. A wide-ranging choice of breakout sessions and round table discussions related to marketing, production, business management, bio-energy, building regional food economies, and local food projects will be offered. This year, for the first time, the conference and summit will be preceded by the Value Added Agriculture College, consisting of half- and full-day workshops. [Click here](#) to see a complete schedule and to register.

• **Feb 10: Profitability & Environmental Sustainability in the Dairy Industry. Madison, Wis.**

The DBIC is partnering with the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) to host a conference about energy efficiency and sustainability in agriculture on Feb 10. The event will kick off with a Wisconsin cheese reception at the Monona Terrace on the evening of Feb 9, and then commence with an all-day series of speakers, workshops and trade show exhibits on Feb. 10. Learn more on the [DBIC website](#).

- **March 6-10: Wisconsin Dairy Sheep School. Spooner, Wis.**  
The DBIC, the Spooner Agricultural Research Station, and UW Cooperative Extension have teamed up to host the first Wisconsin Dairy Sheep School in March 2010. The school will train new producers in an effort to increase the supply of quality sheep milk. The five-day course will be held at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station and will feature lectures on topics including: weaning and artificial rearing of lambs, mastitis and milk quality, parlor design and milking machine function, ewe nutrition, and milk handling regulations. In addition, the course will provide hands-on experience in the milking parlor and caring for young lambs, reinforcing information provided in daily lectures. As space in the milking parlor and barn is limited, course enrollment will be capped at 14 students. Enrollment preference will be given to Wisconsin residents and those interested in commercial dairy sheep production. For a course brochure and application, [click here](#).



- **March 16-18, 2010: World Championship Cheese Contest. Madison, Wis.**  
Participate with cheesemakers and buttermakers from around the world in the 28th biennial World Championship Cheese Contest, to be held at the Monona Terrace in Madison, Wis. This contest is an objective assessment of cheeses and butters and awards Best of Class gold, silver and bronze medals to the finest products in 80 classes. Key contest dates include:

- \* Entry Deadline: February 18, 2010
- \* Entries Delivered: March 10, 2010
- \* Contest Judging: March 16 - 18, 2010
- \* Awards Banquet: April 22, 2010

For more information, visit the [contest website](#).

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*The **Dairy Business Innovation Center** offers technical assistance to dairy producers and processors in developing value-added dairy products, business planning and market development. For more information, visit [www.dbicusa.org](http://www.dbicusa.org) or contact Jeanne Carpenter at 608-358-7837, email: [jeanne@wordartisanllc.com](mailto:jeanne@wordartisanllc.com).*

