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## **1. New Buttermaker Course Reflects Expected Changes in Licensing**

With Wisconsin facing a shortage of licensed buttermakers, the Dairy Business Innovation Center is working with the state Department of Agriculture and a host of industry partners to update the rules related to obtaining a buttermaker's license in the State of Wisconsin.

As part of the process, the Center for Dairy Research, in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin Department of Food Science and College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, is offering a new Buttermakers Short Course on Sept 14-16 in Madison. The course is limited to 25 Wisconsin residents and will cover the production of quality butter with an emphasis on flavor, composition and shelf life. Cost is \$350. To register, call 608-263-1672.



*Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board*

The new Buttermakers Short Course reflects an alternate rule, currently being drafted by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, with input from Wisconsin's dairy industry, including artisan and farmstead buttermakers. In January, the state Agriculture Board unanimously approved a scope statement to begin the process of altering the rules to earn a license. Under current law, anyone applying for a buttermaker's license must pass an exam and match at least one other qualification, including: 1) working under a licensed buttermaker for at least 24 months, 2) working under a licensed buttermaker for 18 months and have completed a training course approved by the agriculture department, or 3) possess a four-year degree in food science, and have worked under a licensed buttermaker at least 12 months.

With only 43 licensed buttermakers in the state, Wisconsin's butter industry may be at risk to take advantage of new market opportunities, including meeting a growing demand for farmstead and artisan butters if the licensing rule is not updated, industry experts testified in January. It is expected that the new rule will offer another option in obtaining a buttermaker's license that would include attending the Center

for Dairy Research's Buttermakers Short Course, apprenticing for a certain number of hours under a licensed buttermaker, and then passing a state exam. The new licensing rules are expected to be finalized by September. Stay tuned for additional updates.

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## 2. Team Column: A Perfect Storm for Wisconsin Cheese



This month, we hear from **Janet Ady, DBIC Market Strategist & Client Product Research**. Janet is President of Madison-based Voltedge, Inc., a market research, branding, marketing and communications firm. She assists the DBIC team with market research and analyses on branding, labeling, packaging, and product characteristics, and helps develop educational content on marketing topics such as how to market artisanal and specialty dairy products, trends in key labeling terms, and more. This month, she makes the case for **A Perfect Storm for Wisconsin Cheese**.

For all of the DBIC clients, partners, and consultants who work so hard to advance the Wisconsin dairy industry, I would like to invite you to step away from the cheese vat for a moment to celebrate some of the successes to which you have all contributed.

- U.S. per capita cheese consumption continues its multiple-year rise; it is now at 32.7 pounds per person, up nearly 20 percent over the past 10 years.
- Wisconsin cheese production continues to increase; it is now at 2.5 billion pounds, also up nearly 20 percent over the past 10 years.
- Wisconsin specialty cheese production also continues to increase; it is now at 429 million pounds, up 250 percent from 10 years ago.
- Wisconsin's specialty cheese production also continues to increase; specialty cheese now accounts for 17 percent of Wisconsin's overall production, more than doubling over the past 10 years.

There are lots more statistics where these came from, but you get the picture. In an economy that is flat at best, and a national population that grows in the range of 1 percent per year, the Wisconsin cheese industry is doing phenomenally well.

I think there are three main reasons why cheese – and Wisconsin cheese in particular – is a star performer in the broader food industry.

First, consumers' interest and awareness in cheese continues to rise. You wouldn't believe how educated some of the consumers are who participate in DBIC's focus groups and how passionate they are about Wisconsin cheeses. The National Restaurant Association ranked cheese as the 14th hottest trend in 2008.

Consumers' interest in cheese has spurred the development of cheese-centric communications, which in turn has spurred an even greater interest and awareness in cheese. For example, within the past two years:

- Two specialty magazines focusing on cheese were introduced (*Culture* and *Cheese Connoisseur*). These high quality publications are creating awareness and demand for quality cheeses, not only among consumers but also among retail and foodservice cheese buyers.
- Closer to home, a group called Wisconsin Cheese Originals was formed to help cheese lovers learn about cheese and the cheese makers behind them. Its first annual festival sold out.

Second, there is no better support for cheesemaking than in Wisconsin. We have all the ingredients it takes to make cheese – milk, talent, and cheese vats. No less importantly, we have an unparalleled network and infrastructure to support cheesemaking. These include many, many world-class organizations such as WMMB, WCMA, UW's Center for Dairy Research, UW's College of Agriculture (CALs), DBIC, and many more.

Third, the trend toward "local" and "sustainable" foods are here to stay, and Wisconsin is at the epicenter of the movement. Here are just a handful of many potential examples:

- You've heard of Slow Food, but did you know Slow Money (which helps fund Slow Food projects) has targeted Wisconsin for its groundbreaking work?
- In a book on community development, the Dairy Business Innovation Center was identified as a premier example of how to foster value-added agriculture initiatives.
- An Agricultural Innovation Center is on the drawing board in Clark County – with hopes of promoting local cheesemakers and their craft.

Thanks to all of you, Wisconsin's dairy industry is alive and well, and its future is bright.

*\*Thanks to the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board for this data. For more detail on these statistics, visit: <http://www.wisdairy.com/AllAboutCheese/CheeseFactsAndFigures.aspx>*

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### 3. World Championship Cheese Contest Shatters All Entry Records

Entries in the 2010 World Championship Cheese Contest, set for March 16-18 in Madison, Wis., rose 18 percent to a stunning 2,313 cheeses and butters from around the world. The Contest, held in even-numbered years since 1958, received entries from 20 nations around the globe. An international panel of 30 cheese evaluation experts will work three days at the Monona Terrace Convention Center to select medalists in 80 cheese and butter classes.

"For the first time, each continent has offered cheese to the contest. The art of cheesemaking is thriving in nations around the globe," said John Umhoefer, executive director of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, host of the event. "No other competition captures the breadth and depth of international cheesemaking."

Cheesemakers and buttermakers will send entries to Wisconsin by March 10 for the competition, including makers in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United States.



Thirty states in the U.S. will send cheese or butter entries as well as the Canadian provinces Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Quebec. Strong growth in the contest is reflected in several cheese categories. Bandaged cheddar entries nearly doubled in 2010 along with rinded Swiss styles, brie cheeses and spreadable cheeses. Significant increases are noted in classes for gorgonzola, ricotta, blue veined cheeses, smear-ripened cheeses, flavored cheeses, reduced fat cheeses and semi-soft goat's milk and sheep's milk cheeses. The new reduced sodium cheese class debuted with a respectable 10 entries and the shredded cheese evaluation, new in 2008, grew from 5 to 20 entries.

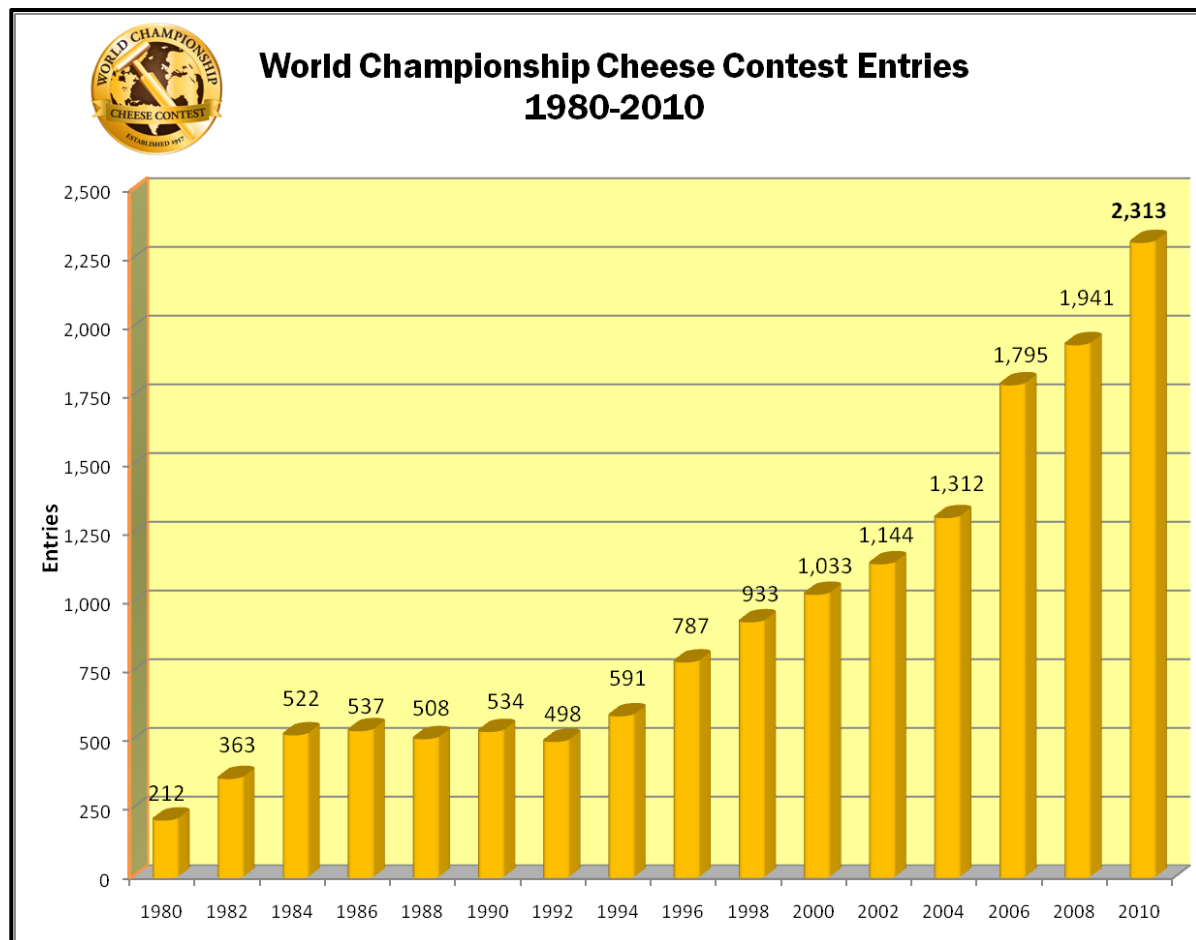
The World Championship Cheese Contest is a technical evaluation of entries, using an objective measure of cheese defects to select the products in each class that best exemplify perfection for a cheese variety. The highest scoring cheeses and butters earn a gold medal, with silver and bronze medals awarded to second and third place finishers in each class.

On Thursday morning, March 18, the entire international team of expert judges will convene for the Championship Round of judging. The 77 gold medal cheeses from cow, goat and sheep milk classes will be evaluated again and the highest scoring cheeses named World Champion and First and Second Runners-Up.

In 2008, cheesemaker Michael Spycher of Kaserei Fritzenhaus in Wasen, Switzerland, was named World Champion in the Championship Round for his Le Gruyere Switzerland.

The Championship Round, 8:30 to 12:00 CST on March 18, will be broadcast as a live, video-streamed program on the WCMA website. In addition, contest result and digital images will be posted on the website throughout the competition. Visit [www.worldchampioncheese.org](http://www.worldchampioncheese.org) for complete contest coverage.

Winners from around the globe will travel to Madison to receive their awards during the International Cheese Technology Exposition, April 20-22, 2010. During the Expo, gold medal cheeses are auctioned to support the contest, scholarships and the WCMA Member Education Initiative. The Expo concludes April 22 with a gala awards banquet for the winning manufacturers.



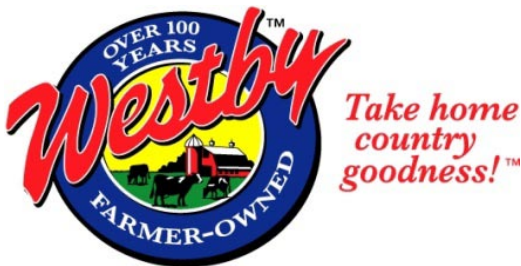
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## 4. Industry News

- **Producers First Grant Program Announced:** The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for its new Producers First Grant Program, supporting small-midsized farms who need technical assistance. Proposals must be received by 5 p.m., April 19. Successful applicants will identify a need for technical assistance and receive up to \$3,000 to hire a consultant to meet that need. Examples of technical assistance include but are not limited to: business planning, accounting and financial organization, packaging and label development, whole farm planning, food safety, grant writing assistance, market development, and cooperative development. Assistance directly related to production does not qualify for this program. Any Wisconsin farmer or producer may apply. Preference will be given to producers selling at least 75% of their products to be consumed within 300 miles of the farm and with at least \$35,000 in annual sales. More info: contact Keefe Keeley at 608-224-5095 or email [keefe.keeley@wi.gov](mailto:keefe.keeley@wi.gov).



- **Westby Cooperative Creamery Reaches Record Sales in 2009:** With total sales for 2009 nearing \$32 million, Westby Cooperative Creamery in Wisconsin has doubled its annual sales from five years ago. The cooperative reports that last year, a total of 96 million pounds of milk were supplied by 120 dairy farm family members, up about 5 percent from the previous year's total. About 70 percent of that milk was manufactured into dairy food products for retail, food service and ingredient customers, with an increasing percentage certified as organic. The remaining 30 percent was sold on the open market to other manufacturers. Pete Kondrup, General Manager, reports that with growth in sales, came growth in employment and product lines. Ten new employees joined the Westby plant during the past fiscal year, bringing the total to 72. And, expansion occurred in new products with fat-free/sugar-free "Lite-n-Dreamy" yogurts joining the "Thick-n-Creamy" low-fat yogurts. Kondrup says Westby Co-op Creamery will continue to invest in growth through new product development, further distribution, and capital investments to expand capacities and operational efficiencies.



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## 5. Upcoming Important Dates

- **March 12: Cheese Labeling Seminar & Trade Show. Wisconsin Dells.**  
The Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute is hosting a special value-added seminar and trade show at its next meeting on March 12 at 10 a.m., at the Great Wolf Lodge in Wisconsin Dells. Open to WSCI members and non-members alike, the labeling seminar will feature information on Label Design Do's and Don'ts, Labeling Compliance, Printing, and support available from the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. A mini trade show featuring suppliers, vendors and other companies that provide labeling and packaging resources to the cheese industry will follow a

networking luncheon. Attendance for the seminar, lunch and trade show is free for WSCI members and \$25 for non-members. To RSVP, call Kathy Brown at 866-740-2180.

- **March 17: An Evening at the World Championship Cheese Contest. Madison, Wis.**

A once-in-a-lifetime event to sample and compare 15 unique, rare, international cheeses vs. their Wisconsin artisan counterparts, side by side. Meet 30 cheese judges representing six continents, as well as 11 award-winning artisan Wisconsin cheesemakers, all sampling their best of the best at Monona Terrace in Madison. Event runs from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. and tickets are \$20. Advance sales only. Buy tickets at:

<http://www.wisconsincheeseoriginals.com/>



- **March 31-April 2: Three Day Cheese Workshop. Columbia, Missouri**

This three-day course, specializing in "Making Cheese From Northern Italy and The Alps," is designed for farmers and cheesemakers who have not made cheese, or who are relatively new to cheesemaking. Led by two industry veterans: Neville McNaughton, international cheesemaker, and Ann Wilkinson, expert business planner. Participants will gain knowledge and a basic spreadsheet of capital expenses they are likely to encounter in the first three years, as well as two full days of hands-on cheesemaking of Raw Alpine Cheeses, Whey Based Ricotta, and Quadrilateral Fresh & Washed Rind cheeses. Participants will take away detailed make sheets and a full set of manufacturing notes. Classes will be held at the University of Missouri, Columbia. More info: call 314-517-4397 or email [brevitalized@yahoo.com](mailto:brevitalized@yahoo.com).

- **April 20-22: International Cheese Technology Exposition. Madison, Wis.**

In even-numbered years, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research host cheese manufacturers and suppliers from across the nation and around the world. The International Cheese Technology Exposition is an intensive combination of morning seminars, two full afternoons of uninterrupted Expo and evening social affairs. It is the world's largest gathering devoted solely to the multi-billion dollar market for cheese and related dairy products. More info or to register: <http://www.cheeseexpo.org/>

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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).*

