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## NEWS RELEASE

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# Center for Dairy Research and Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association Awarded Dairy Business Innovation Initiative Grant

MADISON, WI – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that the Center for Dairy Research (CDR) and Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) have been chosen to host a regional Dairy Business Innovation Initiative, serving Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Illinois. With initial funding of more than \$450,000, this project will offer low- or no-cost workshops designed to grow the dairy industry and allocate grants directly to dairy businesses for product development and marketing.

“This initiative will help support farmstead or small dairy businesses as they explore opportunities to create new value-added dairy products like specialty cheeses, in addition by providing targeted grants to dairy businesses it will encourage more entrepreneurial efforts,” said John Lucey, CDR Director.

“We’re pleased to be guiding investments in the U.S. dairy industry that can boost sales of value-added dairy products domestically and abroad, and – ultimately – increase profitability for family farmers,” said John Umhoefer, WCMA Executive Director. “We’re grateful for Senator Baldwin’s leadership on this concept and USDA’s quick follow-through to aid the dairy industry. And we couldn’t have a better partner than Center for Dairy Research.”

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) developed the Dairy Business Innovation Initiative program, successfully shepherding its passage through the 2018 Farm Bill. Baldwin championed the CDR/WCMA application, along with Congressmen Glen Grothman (R-WI6), Ron Kind (D-WI3), Mark Pocan (D-WI2), Bryan Steil (R-WI1), and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Secretary Brad Pfaff.

“Wisconsin’s dairy businesses are a key driver of our state’s economy, but recently our dairy farmers have faced very challenging times with an oversupply of milk, low milk prices and tough impacts from tariffs. 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,” said Senator Baldwin. “I’m proud to stand with Wisconsin’s dairy leaders, including those at the Center for Dairy Research and Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, and work together to



open up new resources for our dairy businesses to foster innovation, update manufacturing practices and reach new markets so Wisconsin dairy can continue to lead the nation. With this initiative, we're making sure that the world-class research expertise at the University of Wisconsin can reach more of our farmers as they work to build a better future for our rural communities."

The Dairy Business Innovation Initiative is set to run through 2021. Future announcements regarding training and grant opportunities will be publicly available at [www.cdr.wisc.edu](http://www.cdr.wisc.edu) and [www.wischeesemakers.org](http://www.wischeesemakers.org).

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*Since 1891, the **Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association** has served as the voice of cheese and dairy manufacturers, processors, and marketers. Today, WCMA represents more than 675 companies and cooperatives, including dairy processors, manufacturers, and their suppliers operating across the United States and around the world. Learn more at [www.WisCheeseMakers.org](http://www.WisCheeseMakers.org).*

*The **Center for Dairy Research** is located within a licensed, operating dairy plant on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus and is one of the premier dairy research centers in the United States. Its goal is to bring innovative, nutritious and profitable products to the global marketplace. Learn more at [www.cdr.wisc.edu](http://www.cdr.wisc.edu).*