



Cheese Market News®

China considers tariff exemption, U.S. takes new actions on trade

WASHINGTON — China's Tariff Commission of the State Council this week announced it will allow importers to apply for tariff exemptions on certain products from the United States and Canada, including some U.S. dairy imports.

Starting March 2, the commission says it will accept and begin reviewing applications to waive tariffs from a list of nearly 700 products imported from the United States that had countertariffs imposed in response to U.S. Section 301 tariffs. Dairy products included on the list include: milk and cream, solid content less than or equal to 1.5%; whey and modified whey; anhydrous lactose, lactose content greater than or equal to 99% by weight; retail packaged formula for infants and young children; other retail packaged foods for infants and young children; and whey albumin, including two or more whey protein concentrates.

The *South China Morning Post* reports that other product lines range

from soybeans, pork and beef to liquefied natural gas and crude oil. The list also includes dozens of types of medical equipment that could help contain the coronavirus outbreak in China. The tariff exemptions would be effective for one year, subject to approval.

Meanwhile, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has announced the formation of a new Bilateral Evaluation and Dispute Resolution Office as part of the phase one trade agreement signed Jan. 15 by the United States and China. The phase one agreement entered into effect Feb. 14, 2020.

This newly created office will monitor China's implementation of its commitments under the agreement and will be responsible for working with China's corresponding Bilateral Evaluation and Dispute Resolution Office to address disputes that arise over implementation matters.

U.S. Ambassador Jeffrey Gerrish will serve as the "designated deputy

USTR" heading the new Bilateral Evaluation and Dispute Resolution Office. Interested parties may raise concerns about implementation matters under the phase one agreement by calling 202-395-3900.

USTR also recently revised the World Trade Organization (WTO) award of \$7.5 billion in countermeasure tariffs against the European Union (EU) in the Airbus case, which was implemented Oct. 18, 2019. USTR issued a notice in the Federal Register that the United States is increasing the additional duty rate

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Dairy Farmers of America reaches bid agreement with Dean Foods

KANSAS CITY, Kansas — Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) and Dean Foods this week announced an asset purchase agreement has been reached where DFA will acquire a substantial portion of Dean's assets and business.

"As Dean is the largest dairy processor in the country and a significant customer of DFA, it is important to ensure continued secure markets for our members' milk and minimal disruption to the U.S. dairy industry," says Rick Smith, president and CEO, DFA. "As a family farmer-owned and governed cooperative, no one has a greater interest in preserving and expanding milk markets than DFA. We are pleased that we have come to an agreement on a deal that we believe is fair for both parties."

The two parties have been

working to reach an agreement since DFA became aware of Dean's plan to initiate voluntary Chapter 11 reorganization proceedings. (See "Dean Foods files for bankruptcy, in advance talks for sale to DFA, in the Nov. 15, 2019, issue of Cheese Market News.")

As part of the proposed deal, DFA has agreed to pay a base purchase price of \$425 million and assume various liabilities, subject to certain adjustments, to acquire 44 of Dean's fluid and frozen facilities and real estate, inventory, equipment and all other assets necessary to operate such facilities (the "stalking horse assets").

"We have had a relationship with DFA over the past 20 years, and we are confident in their ability to succeed in the current market and serve our customers with the

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FROM COW TO CURD: A LOOK ACROSS THE NATION

NEW MEXICO

Big cheese, efficient farms support dairy in New Mexico

Editor's note: In our series, "From Cow to Curd: A Look Across the Nation," Cheese Market News takes a look at the cheese and dairy industry across the United States. Each month we examine a different state or region, looking at key facts and evaluating areas of growth, challenges and recent innovations. This month we are pleased to introduce our latest state — New Mexico.

By Rena Archwamety

MADISON, Wis. — New Mexico, with its arid climate and ample cheese processing, supports a strong dairy industry that ranks in the top 10 for both milk output and cheese production in the United States. The state has 135 permitted dairy farms and 14 permitted dairy processing facilities, including major plants owned by Glanbia, Leprino Foods, Saputo and Dairy Farmers of America (DFA).

"We're No. 9 in milk production, No. 5 in cheese production, and also No. 1 in efficiency, meaning the lowest carbon footprint as we recycle nutrients and water several times over," says Beverly Idsigna, executive director, Dairy Producers of New Mexico (DPNM).

While cows do well in New Mexico's dry heat, water availability is a constant issue, and dairy farms have adopted conservation practices out of necessity. Idsigna says DPNM has worked with the state government to establish the Dairy Rule, legislation passed five years ago that helps dairy farms anticipate what to expect when it comes to groundwater regulations.

"Right now, we probably have the most stringent regulations in the country for groundwater," Idsigna says. "Our producers are some of the most innovative and resilient. Through the farm labor crises and low milk prices, they

Turn to NEW MEXICO, page 6

NEWS / BUSINESS

U.S. lawmakers urge FDA commissioner to address misuse of dairy terms in labeling

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of 58 members of the House of Representatives this week sent a letter to FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn urging the agency to quickly finish and act upon its examination of how to enforce regulations defining what may be labeled a dairy product.

“The deception caused by mislabeling of imitation products is both unfair to our hardworking dairy farmers and problematic for consumers, making it harder for Americans to make educated decisions about what they feed themselves and their families,” wrote the lawmakers in the letter, which was led by Reps. Peter Welch, D-Vt., Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, Anthony Brindisi, D-N.Y., and John Joyce, R-Pa.

Citing public health concerns expressed by medical groups including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Heart Association, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the members of Congress say they appreciate that Hahn saw the topic of fake dairy labeling as “a public health and nutrition matter” while calling action on it “long overdue.”

A bipartisan group of U.S. senators also recently sent a letter to Hahn expressing similar concerns. (See “Senators ask new FDA commissioner to halt use of dairy terms on non-dairy items” in the Feb. 7, 2020, issue of Cheese Market News.)

“FDA knows this is a problem, and now is the time to solve it,” says Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation. “Dr. Hahn has shown his interest in resolving it, public health professionals have spoken out, and more and more members of Congress are as well. Agency inertia shouldn’t jeopardize public health. We applaud the efforts of lawmakers to prod FDA into action.” CMN

Advanced Prices and Pricing Factors

| | March 2020 | February 2020 |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Base Class I Price: | \$17.46/cwt. | \$17.55/cwt. |
| Base Skim Milk Price for Class I: | \$10.82/cwt. | \$10.46/cwt. |
| Advanced Class III Skim Milk Pricing Factor: | \$10.47/cwt. | \$9.90/cwt. |
| Advanced Class IV Skim Milk Pricing Factor: | \$9.68/cwt. | \$9.54/cwt. |
| Advanced Butterfat Pricing Factor: | \$2.0057/lb. | \$2.1309/lb. |
| Class II Skim Milk Price: | \$10.38/cwt. | \$10.24/cwt. |
| Class II Nonfat Solids Price: | \$1.1533/lb. | \$1.1378/lb. |
| Two-week Product Price Averages: | | |
| Butter: | \$1.8277/lb. | \$1.9311/lb. |
| Nonfat Dry Milk: | \$1.2541/lb. | \$1.2388/lb. |
| Cheese: | \$1.8032/lb. | \$1.8081/lb. |
| 40-lb. Blocks: | \$1.9677/lb. | \$1.8823/lb. |
| 500-lb. Barrels: | \$1.6084/lb. | \$1.6994/lb. |
| Dry Whey: | \$0.3644/lb. | \$0.3295/lb. |

Note: The Class I price equals the Class I skim milk price times 0.965 plus the Class I butterfat price times 3.5.

*Effective July 3, AMS is reporting 40-lb. block and 500-lb. barrel price averages with its Advanced Prices data.

Data provided by USDA

National Dairy Products Sales Report

| For the week ended: | 2/15/20 | 2/8/20 | 2/1/20 | 1/25/20 |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cheese 40-lb. Blocks: | | | | |
| Average price ¹ | \$1.9711 | *\$1.9642 | \$1.9450 | *\$1.8982 |
| Sales volume ² | 11,953,110 | *11,400,399 | *12,779,013 | *11,845,083 |
| Cheese 500-lb. Barrels: | | | | |
| Average price ¹ | \$1.6782 | \$1.7091 | \$1.7153 | \$1.7328 |
| Adj. price to 38% moisture | \$1.5936 | \$1.6242 | \$1.6313 | \$1.6484 |
| Sales volume ² | 12,052,468 | 11,265,538 | 11,694,514 | 12,085,004 |
| Moisture content | 34.71 | 34.76 | 34.81 | 34.83 |
| Butter: | | | | |
| Average price ¹ | \$1.8257 | *\$1.8296 | \$1.8675 | \$1.9011 |
| Sales volume ² | 8,282,960 | *8,470,002 | 5,991,195 | 4,059,032 |
| Nonfat Dry Milk: | | | | |
| Average price ¹ | \$1.2540 | \$1.2542 | *\$1.2579 | \$1.2475 |
| Sales volume ² | 20,320,159 | *23,069,224 | *22,161,979 | *21,860,573 |
| Dry Whey: | | | | |
| Average price ¹ | \$0.3654 | *\$0.3633 | \$0.3529 | \$0.3409 |
| Sales volume ² | 5,825,733 | 5,310,981 | 5,910,624 | 5,485,202 |

¹/Revised. ²/Prices weighted by volumes reported. ³/Sales as reported by participating manufacturers. Reported in pounds.

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CME FUTURES for the week ended February 20, 2020

Class III Milk*

| | Fri., Feb. 14 | Mon., Feb. 17 | Tues., Feb. 18 | Wed., Feb. 19 | Thurs., Feb. 20 |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| FEB 20 | 16.99 2,741 | | 16.98 2,792 | 16.97 2,800 | 16.95 2,813 |
| MAR 20 | 17.01 3,409 | | 17.01 3,451 | 16.77 3,465 | 16.66 3,412 |
| APR 20 | 17.06 2,262 | | 17.16 2,244 | 16.85 2,284 | 16.72 2,290 |
| MAY 20 | 17.12 1,781 | Markets Closed | 17.24 1,789 | 17.03 1,794 | 16.88 1,816 |
| JUN 20 | 17.33 1,668 | | 17.42 1,689 | 17.27 1,719 | 17.12 1,750 |
| JUL 20 | 17.62 886 | | 17.71 911 | 17.60 913 | 17.40 936 |
| AUG 20 | 17.69 793 | | 17.81 831 | 17.73 830 | 17.51 835 |
| SEP 20 | 17.73 935 | | 17.84 969 | 17.77 974 | 17.63 978 |
| OCT 20 | 17.78 685 | | 17.81 711 | 17.69 711 | 17.60 716 |
| NOV 20 | 17.62 690 | | 17.65 735 | 17.64 736 | 17.48 735 |
| Total Contracts Traded/ Open Interest | 1,154/17,725 | | | 1,565/18,030 | 925/18,131 |

Class IV Milk*

| | Fri., Feb. 14 | Mon., Feb. 17 | Tues., Feb. 18 | Wed., Feb. 19 | Thurs., Feb. 20 |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| FEB 20 | 16.28 753 | | 16.28 751 | 16.28 751 | 16.28 751 |
| MAR 20 | 16.02 766 | | 16.20 762 | 16.11 761 | 15.81 760 |
| APR 20 | 16.20 807 | | 16.35 816 | 16.28 798 | 15.98 776 |
| MAY 20 | 16.50 857 | Markets Closed | 16.65 862 | 16.51 861 | 16.25 851 |
| JUN 20 | 16.75 939 | | 16.86 940 | 16.86 940 | 16.59 929 |
| JUL 20 | 17.01 538 | | 17.26 538 | 17.10 537 | 16.89 513 |
| AUG 20 | 17.25 562 | | 17.35 562 | 17.35 555 | 17.10 524 |
| SEP 20 | 17.30 573 | | 17.45 575 | 17.45 575 | 17.21 536 |
| OCT 20 | 17.49 593 | | 17.45 587 | 17.49 587 | 17.42 577 |
| NOV 20 | 17.61 566 | | 17.61 570 | 17.65 575 | 17.45 565 |
| DEC 20 | 17.57 562 | | 17.61 562 | 17.59 559 | 17.50 549 |
| Total Contracts Traded/ Open Interest | 265/8,473 | | 116/8,490 | 83/8,464 | 339/8,328 |

Cash-Settled NDM*

| | Fri., Feb. 14 | Mon., Feb. 17 | Tues., Feb. 18 | Wed., Feb. 19 | Thurs., Feb. 20 |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| FEB 20 | 123.250 1,313 | | 123.300 1,309 | 123.300 1,306 | 123.600 1,314 |
| MAR 20 | 117.500 1,632 | | 119.100 1,685 | 118.500 1,703 | 117.350 1,724 |
| APR 20 | 116.850 1,289 | | 118.950 1,302 | 118.700 1,340 | 117.025 1,367 |
| MAY 20 | 118.500 1,016 | Markets Closed | 120.475 1,047 | 120.375 1,038 | 118.300 1,054 |
| JUN 20 | 120.150 990 | | 122.250 1,043 | 122.050 1,022 | 119.625 986 |
| JUL 20 | 121.650 523 | | 123.800 615 | 123.275 608 | 121.000 608 |
| AUG 20 | 122.525 457 | | 124.950 470 | 124.675 460 | 122.250 452 |
| SEP 20 | 123.525 389 | | 126.200 393 | 126.125 391 | 123.500 395 |
| OCT 20 | 125.000 278 | | 127.375 295 | 127.125 299 | 124.825 295 |
| NOV 20 | 125.800 353 | | 127.800 362 | 127.950 362 | 126.350 359 |
| Total Contracts Traded/ Open Interest | 967/8,828 | | | 1,476/9,121 | 451/9,132 |

Cash-Settled Butter*

| | Fri., Feb. 14 | Mon., Feb. 17 | Tues., Feb. 18 | Wed., Feb. 19 | Thurs., Feb. 20 |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| FEB 20 | 184.250 1,330 | | 185.100 1,333 | 184.000 1,335 | 183.500 1,338 |
| MAR 20 | 190.325 1,451 | | 191.675 1,447 | 189.900 1,436 | 185.925 1,423 |
| APR 20 | 195.100 1,300 | | 195.650 1,308 | 193.325 1,310 | 189.800 1,311 |
| MAY 20 | 199.025 1,144 | Markets Closed | 197.325 1,132 | 197.325 1,132 | 194.275 1,133 |
| JUN 20 | 202.875 1,262 | | 202.875 1,257 | 201.775 1,317 | 199.250 1,325 |
| JUL 20 | 206.450 1,027 | | 206.475 1,031 | 204.750 1,032 | 203.100 1,052 |
| AUG 20 | 208.400 906 | | 208.250 920 | 206.775 957 | 205.500 983 |
| SEP 20 | 209.025 808 | | 209.675 800 | 207.500 830 | 206.500 829 |
| OCT 20 | 209.100 771 | | 209.100 779 | 207.950 779 | 206.525 777 |
| NOV 20 | 209.750 694 | | 208.875 725 | 207.950 778 | 207.225 778 |
| DEC 20 | 208.025 627 | | 207.750 636 | 206.800 674 | 206.000 685 |
| JAN 21 | 204.200 42 | 204.200 44 | 204.200 59 | 203.975 59 | |
| FEB 21 | 203.000 14 | 203.000 15 | 203.000 27 | 203.000 27 | |
| Total Contracts Traded/ Open Interest | 569/11,444 | | 488/11,491 | 701/11,749 | 370/11,803 |

Daily market prices are available by visiting CME's online statistics sites at <http://www.cmegroup.com>.
*Total Contracts Traded/Open Interest reflect additional months not included in this chart.

GUEST COLUMNIST *CMN Exclusive!*

Perspective: Dairy Nutrition

Tammy Anderson-Wise, CEO of Dairy Council of California, is a guest columnist for *Cheese Market News*®.

Cheese for breakfast? Yes, please!

It's been said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and while healthy eating habits are vital no matter the hour, research supports the importance of starting the day with a nutritionally balanced meal.

March is National Nutrition Month, and it kicks off with National School Breakfast Week to remind students and families to consume breakfast, a healthy habit associated with better health, diet quality, behavior and academic success.

Cheese is especially well-suited for breakfast thanks to its versatility, flavor profile and unique package of nutrients. From simple offerings like Cheddar over eggs or in a breakfast sandwich to more creative options like a breakfast burrito or quesadilla packed full of veggies and cheesy goodness, there are plenty of ways to include cheese as part of a healthy breakfast. The end result is a full tummy and a fueled mind ready to tackle school or work.

• A nutritional case for cheese and dairy at breakfast

Compared to people around the globe, Americans may have a rela-

tively narrow view on the types of foods suitable for breakfast. Opting for convenience in the morning could mean eating ready-to-consume whole grain cereal with milk, yogurt, cereal bars or fruit. No matter what constitutes breakfast, consuming a healthy, balanced breakfast that includes nutrient-dense foods from the food groups such as whole grains, dairy and protein, and fruits or vegetables is important to keeping children and adults alike feeling full through lunch.

Milk, yogurt and cheese are healthy options that can be included in a nutritionally balanced breakfast, and families can feel good about making dairy a cornerstone of breakfast. Scientific research confirms that dairy foods' unique package of nutrients — calcium, vitamin D, potassium and more — provides multiple health benefits, including optimal growth and development in children and reduced risk of developing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

In addition, emerging studies continue to discover the beneficial effects

of whole dairy foods — particularly fermented ones like yogurt, cheese and kefir — on metabolic health, body weight and chronic disease risk. This may be due to dairy foods' structure of nutrients that interact in unique ways to facilitate digestion, absorption and synergy with other nutrients and bioactive compounds within the body.

Dairy foods can benefit people of all ages but are especially important for young children, providing essential nutrients that support optimal growth and development in addition to overall good health. Studies show that by age 6, many American children do not meet the recommended daily servings of dairy, fruits and vegetables and whole grains. Poor eating patterns, especially in early childhood, can continue as habits in adulthood, increasing risk for becoming overweight and developing chronic conditions. Encouraging consumption of nutritious and wholesome foods — including dairy — goes a long way to help ensure children and Americans of all ages are meeting nutrient requirements for good health.

• School breakfast programs are critically important

Early childhood is a key time to establish healthy eating patterns, and breakfast for students is especially important to helping children reach their full potential physically, cognitively and academically. Evidence also shows consumption of nutrient-dense foods made readily available in school meal programs is associated with improved academic, behavioral and health outcomes. Conversely, low intake of healthy foods is associated with lower grades and higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness.

Nutritious foods may not be accessible to all students as availability is often tied to socioeconomic factors,

specifically where families and children live, learn, work and play. For millions of children and their families who live in vulnerable communities across the United States, federally funded programs like the School Breakfast Program are critical, providing a key opportunity for students to consume important nutrients like those found in cheese and other dairy foods.

By eating school meals — specifically the dairy products, fruits and vegetables made readily available in these programs — students are better prepared for improved academic and health outcomes. Research shows that eating school breakfast and lunch is associated with healthier dietary intakes among U.S. schoolchildren, particularly increased intakes of dairy, fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

• We all play a role

The dairy community, including cheese processors, can help improve the health of children and families by continuing to advocate for cheese and other dairy foods at all meals, including breakfast. Cheese processors can also support the School Breakfast Program by showcasing how cheese can play a role at breakfast as part of a healthy, balanced meal. This may mean helping school nutrition directors think creatively about how cheese can be included in healthy breakfast offerings. Doing so helps ensure students consume the nutrients they need to be fueled for learning. More importantly, supporting student access to a variety of healthy foods, including dairy foods, helps foster better health outcomes for future generations. **CMN**

The views expressed by CMN's guest columnists are their own opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of Cheese Market News®.

NEWS/BUSINESS

ACS accepting applications for 2020 conference cheesemongers

PORTLAND, Ore. — The American Cheese Society (ACS) is accepting applications for official conference cheesemongers (OCCs) until Feb. 28.

The 37th annual ACS conference, "Blazing the Trail for Cheese," will take place July 22-25 in Portland, Oregon. OCC's will work on-site in Portland, Oregon, receive round-trip airfare to Portland, lodging for the duration of the conference, complimentary ACS conference registration to attend in 2021, personalized ACS chef coats and more.

Specifically, OCCs create displays of cheese and accompaniments for meals, sessions and events ranging from a 200-person educational session to a meal for more than 1,000 people. They also practice safe handling, storage and transport of all food and

overseeing a team of volunteers.

OCCs work closely with the eight other "Back of House Team" members, and commit to spending approximately seven to 10 days behind the scenes at the ACS conference. OCCs should anticipate working extended hours and will be too busy to attend conference sessions or events in the year they are serving in this role. Typical schedules average 12 hours per day.

OCCs are part of the Conference Leadership Training Program, which was designed as a pipeline for growth with opportunities to advance into other conference leadership roles. The team works to streamline conference food receiving, inventory, preparation and safety for all conference events including food tasting sessions, meals, ACS Judging & Competition and

cheese sale.

After the application period closes, the ACS management team evaluates all applications and conducts interviews with top applicants. The final three candidates are chosen and notified by the end of March.

Candidates should possess the ability to organize, arrange and schedule the tempering and delivery of multiple products including cheese, fluid milk, crackers, charcuterie, chocolate and beverages for multiple events throughout the conference. Other skills include experience catering and managing staff or volunteers; collaborative and project management skills; and creative drive with a strong work ethic.

To apply, visit www.cheesesociety.org. **CMN**

USDA issues fluid milk solicitations

WASHINGTON — USDA late last week issued two solicitations for fluid milk for delivery April 8-July 1, 2020. Bids are due Feb. 28 by 1 p.m. Central Time.

Under one fluid milk solicitation, USDA is seeking 4.9 million containers of fluid milk, including 223,200 gallons and 558,900 half-gallons of 1%, 997,200 gallons and 1.6 million half-gallons of 2%, and 651,600 gallons and 850,500 half-gallons of whole milk.

USDA also is seeking a total of 177,600 containers of fluid milk, including 14,400 gallons and 32,400 half-gallons of 1%, and 120,000 gallons and 10,800 half-gallons of 2%.

For more information, visit www.ams.usda.gov/open-purchase-request/Dairy_Products%2C_Grades_&_Procurement_of. **CMN**

NEWS/BUSINESS

Whitehall Specialties grows capacity and reduces lead times to meet slice demand

WHITEHALL, Wis. — CEO Steve Snyder recently announced that Whitehall Specialties is growing capacity and reducing lead time to meet demand for slice on slice (SOS) and individually wrapped slice (IWS) processed cheese by summer 2020.

“It was critical that we listen to our customers and deliver on our value propositions better than we had in the past. So, we’ve invested heavily in facilities and great people. Our goal was to meet customer demands through increased capacity, allowing for reduced lead times during the busy season with consistently high quality at the best price,” Snyder says.

“We have invested millions in equipment and talent to expand IWS and SOS capacity by 15 million pounds annually. That means no more long lead times,” Snyder adds. “We’ve also hired more skilled labor talent and increased the size of our sales staff to give our customers the superior attention they deserve.”

This major change in Whitehall Specialties’ operations, led by Gary Buell, the vice president of operations, comes just in time for the 2020 grilling season. This is a key part of the new leadership team’s strategy to reset the company’s capabilities to deliver IWS processed cheese.

“Our facilities needed some renewed focus,” Snyder says. “Our operations people needed effective leadership and equipment upgrades,

both of which are now in place.”

Snyder says he also attributes the improvements in customer service to Whitehall’s new vice president of sales, Erin Reynolds, whose industry experience includes leadership roles with General Mills and The Kraft Heinz Co.

In addition to new optimism and innovation within the company, Whitehall Specialties is increasing its support of its local community in Whitehall, Wisconsin, as well as in Hillsboro, Wisconsin, and Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, where the company has additional facilities.

“We believe our products are well suited for international markets. Since our slices are made with plant-based oils and have no animal fats or proteins, they have attractive shelf life, allowing for international shipping,” Snyder says.

Whitehall Specialties currently supplies all styles of processed, imitation, plant-based and analogue cheese products including Cheddar, Gouda, Mozzarella and Parmesan, in all configurations from blocks and loaves to dried, shredded, sliced, diced and grated. The company now has more than 200 formulas available for many processed cheese product types, including those meeting specific dietary requirements such as dairy-free, lactose-free, low/reduced sodium, reduced fat, Kosher and Halal.

For more information, visit www.Whitehall-Specialties.com. **CMN**

Bipartisan checkoff reform bill gains sponsors

WASHINGTON — U.S. Reps. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., and Mark Pocan, D-Wis., recently joined in cosponsoring the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, H.R. 5563, led by Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nev., to create a system of financial controls and transparency to reform USDA’s agricultural checkoff programs. In 2019, Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah, Cory Booker, D-N.J., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Rand Paul, R-Ky., introduced identical companion legislation in the U.S. Senate. Gaetz is a newcomer to the legislation in the 116th Congress, and Pocan was a cosponsor of the bill in the 115th Congress.

“The USDA’s checkoff programs have operated without sufficient oversight for far too long — and this legislation will bring much-needed accountability and transparency,” Titus says. “Family farmers should not be forced to pay into organizations that sometimes lobby against their own interests and threaten animal welfare.”

Supporters of the bill say the OFF Act would amend the authorizing checkoff laws to reaffirm that

these programs may not contract with organizations that engage in policy advocacy, conflicts of interest or anticompetitive activities that harm other commodities. It also would require that they publish all budgets and disbursements of funds for the purposes of public inspection and submit to periodic audits by the USDA Inspector General. The effort for checkoff reform is supported by organizations that represent more than 250,000 farmers, along with Animal Wellness Action, the Organization for Competitive Markets, Family Farm Action and the Heritage Foundation.

“With farmer bankruptcies and suicides at an all-time high, family farmers across America are screaming for checkoff reform and passage of the OFF Act,” says Mike Eby, chairman of the National Dairy Producers Organization and a candidate for president of the National Farmers Union. “I applaud Reps. Matt Gaetz and Mark Pocan for cosponsoring H.R. 5563 and will continue to advocate on Capitol Hill for a hearing on the bill.” **CMN**

USDA raises forecast for dairy product exports

WASHINGTON — U.S. agricultural exports in fiscal year (FY) 2020 are projected at \$139.5 billion, up \$500 million from the November forecast, according to the latest “Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade” released this week by USDA’s Economic Research Service and Foreign Agricultural Service. U.S. agricultural imports in FY2020 are forecast at \$132.5 billion, up \$500 million from the November forecast. The trade balance of \$7 billion remains unchanged from the November forecast.

USDA reports dairy exports are raised \$200 million from November to \$6.0 billion in the February outlook as slower growth in global milk production is expected to result in stronger prices and higher export volumes, particularly for nonfat dry milk. Dairy product exports in FY2019 were worth \$5.675 billion.

Dairy product imports for FY2020 are forecast at \$3.6 billion and cheese imports at \$1.3 billion, both unchanged from November’s outlook. In FY2019, dairy product imports were worth a total of \$3.695 billion and cheese imports worth \$1.348

billion, USDA reports.

The latest outlook forecasts steady economic growth in worldwide trade, which will be slightly affected by the coronavirus or Covid-19 outbreak in China. The per capita world gross domestic product (GDP) growth is unchanged from November at 1.5% in 2019 and 2020. U.S. per capita GDP growth is consistent with the prior forecast for 2019 at 1.6%, but it is lowered 0.2 percentage points to 1.1% in 2020 due to diminished business prospects, USDA says. A slowdown across the Eurozone, declining growth rates in China and the recent damaging global impact of the Covid-19 outbreak is expected to dampen growth prospects worldwide, the outlook adds.

USDA says the lowered uncertainty over the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement and the recent phase one agreement with China has been a positive factor for future growth prospects. However, revised 2020 projections for U.S. growth are likely to reduce prospects for both Canada and Mexico. **CMN**



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FROM COW TO CURD: A LOOK ACROSS THE NATION

NEW MEXICO

NEW MEXICO

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learn to adapt and keep going. We're recycling all our water and putting nutrients back on the fields. They're doing a good job keeping viable and producing some of the most nutrient-rich dairy products in the world."

• Big dairies, big cheese

New Mexico's cow-friendly climate allows for large, efficient dairy farms that over the years have consolidated and continued to expand in cow numbers. Robert Hagevoort, extension dairy specialist and professor at New Mexico State University (NMSU), estimates the state's average herd size is around 2,500, with the smaller herds still reaching 1,000-1,500 head.

"A lot of large dairies came into New Mexico in the '90s and early 2000s, most of those coming in from places like California," Hagevoort says. "The last couple of years of financial difficulty, I don't think we've lost lots of dairies, or at least any cows. We do see consolidation, the same number of cows owned by fewer people. ... We continue to produce more milk. Producers are becoming better

at what they do."

The stability in dairy production is supported by several major processors in the area. In Clovis, New Mexico, Southwest Cheese, a joint venture between Glanbia, DFA and Select Milk, is the world's largest cheese factory under one roof. Leprino Foods owns a large Mozzarella plant in Roswell, New Mexico, and a major Hilmar Cheese plant is located just across the eastern New Mexico border in Dalhart, Texas. F&A Cheese, owned by Saputo, is in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Tucumcari Mountain Cheese, a Feta and specialty cheese processor, has been expanding in Tucumcari, New Mexico.

"The milk here is primarily produced for cheese," Hagevoort says. "There are some fluid contracts in bigger cities around here like Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, but the majority of milk will be for cheese."

Finding adequate labor on New Mexico's dairy farms can be a challenge. NMSU has developed audio and video training materials in English, Spanish and K'iche' to help dairies provide safety and animal training. NMSU also offers a minor in dairy and a summer program that allows students

from across the country to experience working with local large-scale dairy operations.

Idsigna notes that the dairy industry is one of the largest private employers in New Mexico, providing both direct and indirect employment. In addition to local and state issues, DPNM advocates on behalf of the state's dairy industry in support of national legislation like the Farm Workforce Modernization Act and applauded the passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), as much of the dairy processed in New Mexico is exported across its southern border.

• Joint success

Southwest Cheese, the joint venture between Glanbia and the milk member Greater Southwest Agency, which includes DFA and Select Milk, opened in 2006 initially processing 7 million pounds of milk a day. Since then, the plant has undergone two significant expansions and now processes more than 14 million pounds a day. Each year Southwest Cheese, which employs around 450 people, produces more than 500 million pounds of block cheese and 35 million pounds of value-added whey protein powders.

"It's a great business model that

allows both parties to do what they do very well. The milk member's primary role is milk procurement, assuring enough milk for the facility, and Glanbia handles manufacturing, sales and research and development," says George Chappell, president of Southwest Cheese and vice president of dairy operations, Glanbia Nutritionals.

Before Southwest Cheese opened, Ireland-based Glanbia had three cheese manufacturing facilities in Idaho and was looking to grow its U.S. footprint. Eastern New Mexico was an ideal location due to the available and expanding milk production in the region.

"The combination of a partner that had a growing milk supply, the milkshed in the region and a need for processing in that region, and Glanbia's desire to grow, fueled the partnership," Chappell says. "The milk supply has continued to grow and has really fueled our expansion growth. With each expansion, there was additional milk supply and growing demand for our products. It was a natural fit to grow as both of those happened simultaneously."

Southwest Cheese provides American-style block cheese to

Turn to PARTNER, page 7

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NEWS / BUSINESS

Fonterra extends MyMilk initiative for farmers

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Fonterra recently announced plans to make it easier for more dairy farmers to purchase their own farm and grow with the co-op by extending its MyMilk initiative to New Zealand's North Island.

"Fonterra's been looking at ways to make it easier for farmers to join and grow in the co-op, ensuring our co-op is strong for generations to come," says Richard Allen, group director of Farm Source, Fonterra's farm business supply and support brand. "One way has been through MyMilk, a Fonterra-backed company that's helping young and new farmers establish a foothold in the industry and ultimately take a stake in Fonterra."

MyMilk has had five successful years in New Zealand's South Island, Allen says, and now it will be extended across the North Island to allow more farmers, especially young farmers, the chance to purchase their own farm and join the Fonterra co-op. The initiative also will be extended to help existing Fonterra farmers looking to grow through purchasing another Fonterra farm.

Fonterra says MyMilk is ideal for farmers who aren't currently

Fonterra suppliers but who want to be part of the New Zealand cooperative. First launched in 2014 in the South Island, MyMilk has assisted more than 145 dairy farmers since then across New Zealand's Southland, Otago and Canterbury regions.

MyMilk offers farmers the ability to supply milk for up to five seasons without a requirement to purchase shares in Fonterra. MyMilk farmers are required to meet the same supply terms and conditions as Fonterra shareholders with regard to milk quality, safety and sustainability, and have access to many of the tools and services the cooperative offers.

"We know farmers have choices when they decide who they supply, and we want Fonterra to be the best choice with a strong sustainable farmgate milk price, targeted on-farm support to help farmers meet new environmental and climate expectations, and flexible financial tools and ways to 'share up,'" Allen says.

MyMilk will be available in the North Island for supply starting June 1, 2020. Eligibility conditions apply and MyMilk volumes are limited to 5% of Fonterra's total milk collections. **CMN**

FROM COW TO CURD: A LOOK ACROSS THE NATION

NEW MEXICO

PARTNER

Continued from page 6

businesses that further process it for ready-to-eat retail or foodservice applications, as well as whey protein for ingredient applications and liquid permeate for animal feed. In recent years, the facility has processed more value-added varieties of both cheese and whey. The New Mexico location also allows Southwest Cheese to conveniently supply into the Mexican market, and the company exports about 15% of its products internationally.

“We partner closely with our customers’ needs both in U.S. and international markets,” Chappell says. “We’re constantly looking for ways to grow the business in terms of volume as well as value. In 2019 we commissioned a

volume expansion, and now we are looking for value propositions, taking new products up in the value chain.”

As a major employer and representative of the dairy industry, Chappell notes that Southwest Cheese works closely with local communities and state governing bodies, often welcoming and meeting with business representatives and state officials.

“About 5,400 direct jobs are linked to dairy in New Mexico. Roughly \$194 million in direct wages are linked to those jobs, and \$1.5 billion direct output goes back to the state,” Chappell says. “The plant itself is significant in its own right, but when you look at it as a whole — overall jobs and agriculture supporting those rural communities — we have a strong place in the top three or four job suppliers in that area. We try to make sure we have a good relationship with all key stakeholders.” **CMN**



Photo courtesy of Glanbia

WORLD'S LARGEST — In Clovis, New Mexico, Southwest Cheese — a joint venture between Glanbia, Dairy Farmers of America and Select Milk — is the world's largest cheese factory under one roof.

NEWS/BUSINESS

Plant-based Miyoko's Kitchen sues CDFA over use of term 'butter,' citing free speech

SAN FRANCISCO — The Animal Legal Defense Fund this month filed a lawsuit against the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on behalf of plant-based food producers Miyoko's Kitchen Inc. after CDFA sent an enforcement letter instructing the company to stop using terms like “dairy” and “butter” on its products.

In a Dec. 9, 2019, letter to Miyoko's Kitchen, CDFA says the product label with the words “Cultured Vegan Plant Butter” requires revision to be in compliance with Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations and the California Food and Agricultural Code that defines butter.

“The product cannot bear the name ‘butter’ because the product

is not butter,” CDFA's letter says. “‘Butter’ is defined in 21 USC 321a as the food product made exclusively from milk or cream, or both with or without common salt ... and containing no less than 80 percentum by weight of milkfat, all tolerances having been allowed for.”

CDFA adds that the regulations deem a food misbranded if it is offered for sale under the name of another food, and that the label should be revised so that the name “Cashew Cream Fermented from

live cultures,” which appears in small font toward the bottom, is moved to the principal display panel.

The lawsuit argues that CDFA misapplies federal regulations in a way that unconstitutionally violates Miyoko's right to free speech, restricting truthful commercial speech.

“The government has no business censoring humane companies from accurately describing their animal-friendly products,” says Stephen Wells, executive director, Animal

Legal Defense Fund. “The California Department of Food and Agriculture should be at the forefront of efforts to shift away from destructive factory farming, not acting to stifle its competitors.”

The lawsuit also claims that there is no evidence of consumer confusion over the “butter” label and that CDFA's demands that the company change its labeling would result in considerable expense to the company as well as confusion among its consumers. **CMN**


WCMA announces Ideas Showcase lineup at CheeseExpo

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association recently announced presentation topics and speakers for the Ideas Showcase, which takes place at CheeseExpo 2020 April 15-16 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee.

In 2020, Ideas Showcase speakers will focus on food safety, innovations in dairy processing and packaging equipment and sustainability methods.

Presentations begin at 12:30 p.m. on both days, with each running no more than 20 minutes.

For Ideas Showcase times and additional details, visit www.CheeseExpo.org. **CMN**



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PEOPLE & AWARDS

Comings and goings ... comings and goings

Agri-Mark, Andover, Massachusetts, has elected dairy farmer **James Jacquier** of East Canaan, Connecticut, as the cooperative's chairman of the board. Jacquier succeeds **Neal Rea**, a dairy farmer from Cambridge, New York, who will retire after serving in the role for the past 13 years.

During the election at the Agri-Mark board of directors meeting, the following dairy farmers were elected as officers: Vice Chairman **Rob Wheeler**, Wilmington, Vermont; Treasurer **Bill Harrigan**, Chateaugay, New York; and Secretary **Blake Gendebien**, Ogdenburg, New York. Director **Mark Duffy**, Carlisle, Massachusetts, was elected by the board to serve with officers to form the cooperative's executive committee.

American Cheese Society (ACS), Denver, has named **Dawn Schipper** acting executive director until a permanent hire takes office. Serving ACS since 2019, Schipper has more than 13 years of leadership experience in nonprofits, including fundraising, marketing and communications, and events. She succeeds **Nora Weiser**, who served as executive director for the past 10 years. In her new role, Schipper will be responsible for the duties of the executive role, in addition to her current role with ACS as marketing and development director.

California Artisan Cheese Guild (CACG), Petaluma, California, has named **Felice Thorpe Charlton** as its new president. Growing up on a farm in Bolinas, California, Charlton has strong roots in California agriculture and has a passion for handcrafted foods. She formerly served as the national sales director for Point

Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. Graduating Mons Academie Opus Caseus, an expert in cheese pairings and a 2019 cheese judge for the Good Food Foundation, Charlton is a full-time cheese specialist for Northern California Chefs Warehouse. As CACG president, Charlton says she will work diligently to keep the traditional craft of cheesemaking alive, preserving and promoting the flavors unique to the Golden State's regions through education and awareness.

CME Group, Chicago, recently announced that **Bryan T. Durkin** will step down as president, effective this May. At that time, Durkin will begin serving as a special advisor to the company, reporting to Terry Duffy, chairman and CEO. Additionally, the CME Group board of directors has recommended Durkin be slated for election to the company's board at its May 2020 Annual Meeting of Shareholders. Durkin is a 37-year veteran of CME Group, starting his career in 1982 as an investigator.

Organic Valley, La Farge, Wisconsin, has added two consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry professionals to newly created positions on the cooperative's executive leadership team. **Ty Brannen** will serve as executive vice president of supply chain, and **Staci Kring** will serve as chief revenue officer. For 27 years, Brannen held leadership positions with several of the world's top CPG companies, including PepsiCo, Clorox and Nestle Waters. Kring brings nearly 22 years of dairy industry experience, most recently serving as senior vice president of retail sales and marketing at Schreiber Foods. **CMN**

IDFA names members of executive council, directors for five industry segment boards

WASHINGTON—The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) recently announced new members of the organization's executive council as well as new directors for the group's five industry segment boards.

IDFA's executive council is composed of executives from across the dairy foods industry and focuses on the business and operations of the association. The five industry segment boards represent fluid milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt and cultured products, and dairy-derived ingredients, and are composed of experts and executives who help drive policy and strategy alongside the association's leadership.

IDFA executive council members (terms ending January 2021)

• Officers

Chair: Dan Zagzebski, president and CEO, Great Lakes Cheese Co. Inc.

Vice chair: David Ahlem, president and CEO, Hilmar Cheese Co. Inc.

Secretary: Stan Ryan, president and CEO, Darigold Inc.

Treasurer: David Nelsen, vice president, manufacturing, Albertsons Companies.

• Directors

Jay Bryant, CEO, Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association Inc.

Peter Cotter, general manager, cheese and dairy, The Kraft Heinz Co.

Tim Galloway, CEO, Galloway Co.

Douglas Glade, executive vice president, commercial operations, Dairy Farmers of America Inc.

Ken Jorgensen, director, dairy operations, H-E-B.

Jerry D. Kaminski, chief operating officer, Land O'Lakes Inc.

Scott McGinty, CEO, Aurora Organic Dairy.

Tom Murphy, president, Brewster Cheese Co.

Brian Phelan, CEO, Glanbia Nutritionals, Glanbia plc.

Shelley Roth, president, Pierre's Ice Cream Co.

Greg Schlafer, CEO, Foremost Farms USA.

Erin Sharp, group vice president, manufacturing, The Kroger Co.

Patricia D. Stroup, global vice president and head of commodities, Nestle S.A.

Sue M. Taylor, vice president, dairy economics and policy, Leprino Foods Co.

Lawrence Webster, CEO, Upstate Niagara Cooperative Inc.

• Gold business partner representatives on executive council

Dale Andersen, president and CEO, Delkor Systems Inc.

Mary Ledman, global dairy strategist, Rabobank.

Mike Neu, senior vice president, food cultures and enzymes, Chr.

Hansen Inc.

Chris Olsen, vice president, community and government affairs, Tate & Lyle Ingredients Americas LLC.

Industry segment boards chairs, vice chairs and additions (terms ending January 2022)

• IDFA fluid milk board

Chair: Jeffrey Kaneb, executive vice president, HP Hood LLC.

Vice chair: Ed Mullins, executive vice president and CEO, Prairie Farms Dairy Inc.

• Additions:

Bonnie Chan, CFO and officer, Crystal Creamery.

Kristi Kangas, president, Readington Farms Inc.

Gold business partner: Randi Muzumdar, head of dairy/food Americas, INTL FCStone Inc.

• IDFA ice cream board

Chair: Mike Wells, president and CEO, Wells Enterprises Inc.

Vice chair: Rich D. Draper, CEO, The Ice Cream Club Inc.

• Additions:

Timothy B. Hopkins, president and CEO, Turkey Hill Dairy Inc.

Gold business partner: Murray Bain, vice president, marketing, Stanpac.

• IDFA cheese board

Chair: Louie P. Gentine, CEO, Sargento Foods Inc.

Vice chair: Doug Simon, president, Agropur U.S. Operations.

• Additions:

Patrick Criteser, president and CEO, Tillamook County Creamery Association.

Bill Graham, CEO, Bel Brands USA Inc.

Neal Schuman, president, Schuman Cheese.

• IDFA yogurt and cultured products board

Chair: Philippe L. Caradec, vice president, public affairs and sustainable development, Danone North America.

Vice chair: Tim Walls, executive vice president, Schreiber US, Schreiber Foods Inc.

• Additions:

Jorge Ramos, CEO, LALA U.S.

Gold business partner: Patrick Carroll, president, IMA Dairy & Food.

• IDFA Ingredients Board

Chair: Andrei Mikhalevsky, former president and CEO, California Dairies Inc.

Vice chair: Terry Brockman, president and chief operating officer, U.S. Division, Saputo Cheese USA Inc.

• Additions:

Keith Murfield, CEO, United Dairymen of Arizona.

Vinith Poduval, senior vice president, enterprise quality and food safety, Schreiber Foods Inc.

William L. Schreiber, CEO, O-AT-KA Milk Products Cooperative Inc. **CMN**



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NEW PRODUCTS

Somic America to exhibit packaging solutions at Pack Expo East, March 3-5 in Philadelphia

EAGAN, Minn. — Vice President of Sales Peter Fox this week announced Somic America for the first time will exhibit its packaging solutions at Pack Expo East at booth #628. The event takes place March 3-5 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia.

Somic says it has increased the design and manufacturing of its end-of-line packaging machinery, leading to double digital sales growth in the last three years. At the Pack Expo East booth, visitors will learn about Somic's 424 T2 (D) multi-purpose, retail-ready case packer system, and how it serves as a bridge to the newer Somic-FLEXX III and ReadyPack machines introduced at previous Pack Expo shows. The 424 T2 (D) has the capability to collate up to 600 products

and carton up to 35 cases per minute in open display trays, or trays with covers and wraparound cases.

"There are manufacturers from the Eastern seaboard and Northeast markets who are looking for a flexible, retail-ready packaging machine. Our goal is to educate them about Somic and our 424 T2 (D) mechatronic, end-of-line packaging system," Fox says.

"One thing we learned from our customer base was they did not know about us earlier. That's one reason why we hired Tim Howell as our East Coast sales manager last August. Another is we are especially interested in the broader consumer products arena. There are many industries that can benefit from our unique system that combines high levels of finished packaging quality, a

small footprint and terrific versatility for retail-ready packaging," Fox adds.

For more information, visit www.somic.us. **CMN**

Alfa Laval introduces new ThinkTop V50, V70 to improve production on dairy process lines

LUND, Sweden — Alfa Laval has introduced a new version of the Alfa Laval ThinkTop, a valve sensing and control unit for hygienic valves used in the dairy, food, beverage, brewery and pharmaceutical industries. The Alfa Laval ThinkTop V50 and V70, the second-generation of control units, has been reengineered to meet customer needs while incorporating advances in technology.

"We have listened carefully to what customers want from a valve sensing and control unit," says René Stietz, product management valves & automation, hygienic fluid handling, Alfa Laval. "The changes we've made to the ThinkTop are highly responsive to customer needs and therefore highly relevant — for instance, faster and more intuitive setup without compromising durability and reliability."

The company says the reengineered Alfa Laval ThinkTop for the first time offers: fast and intuitive setup and commissioning; enhanced 360° LED visual status indication; a repositioned Gore Vent; a 30% more compact and aesthetic design; burst seat clean-in-place functionality; and a QR code for easy online access to support materials and direct support.

The new auto setup feature offers manufacturers up to 90% faster com-

missioning than the previous generation. Plus, the live setup feature coupled with true valve recognition ensures the perfect match during any-and-all setups, the company says.

The new ThinkTop fits on any Alfa Laval valve. It also features 24/7 self-diagnostics, checking and remedying operations when required, and a 360° LED visual status indication so that operators can see the valve status no matter where they are on the production floor, the company says.

Alfa Laval says that repositioning the Gore Vent has made the ThinkTop more durable and reliable than before, equalizing the enclosure pressure in the unit while eliminating the risk of water ingress. Additionally, a burst clean-in-place liquid during the opening moment of seat lift and seat push reduce water consumption and save up to 90% in cleaning agent costs, the company says.

The ThinkTop V50 series matches the requirements of the Alfa Laval DV-ST, butterfly, single seat and double seal valves while the ThinkTop V70 series matches the requirements of all these valves plus Alfa Laval double seat and special valves. They are now available globally.

For more information, visit www.alfalaval.com/thinktop. **CMN**

SPX Flow releases fly-through animation

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — SPX Flow recently released a fly-through animation, which explains the capabilities of its Infusion UHT Express solution. The company says this UHT solution deploys process technology and media handling principals that set the industry benchmark for the production of dairy and non-dairy liquid products.

The animation takes viewers on a step-by-step journey that explains the features and functions offered by the Infusion UHT Express plant with emphasis on its primary USP, the tight control and accuracy of the rapid heating and short holding time. This tight temperature/time control ultimately protects

the product's natural characteristics, while ensuring a high bacteria spore kill rate, the company says.

"To understand the benefits of our Infusion UHT Express system, you need to understand the configuration and operation of the system," says Allan Hurup Vangsgaard, global product manager, UHT Systems, SPX Flow. "This short video explains this in clear, simple terms. The viewer is left with no doubt that products will maintain the taste and quality needed to satisfy what are often multi-supplier markets full of very discerning customers."

To view the video, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgLtr08W10Y. **CMN**

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NEWS/BUSINESS

TRADE

Continued from page 1

imposed on aircraft imported from the EU to 15% from 10%, effective March 18, and making certain other minor modifications.

According to the Cheese Importers Association of America (the CIAA), all other goods on the list, including cheese, will continue to be subject to an additional 25% duty, with no increase.

“USTR did not add or remove any cheeses to this tariff action, and all cheeses previously subject to the previous list action from certain countries continue to be subject to the additional Section 301 duties,” the CIAA says. “It is also important to note that while the United Kingdom is officially no longer a part of the EU, certain goods imported from the United Kingdom are still subject to this tariff action.”

Additionally, USTR last week issued a report on the Appellate Body of the WTO. USTR says this is the first comprehensive study of the Appellate Body’s record and it provides an in-depth assessment of the Appellate Body’s failure to comply with WTO rules and interpret WTO agreements

as written.

The Trump administration has been critical of the WTO dispute settlement process and since December has blocked reappointments of judges to the Appellate Body, weakening its power to rule on WTO decisions. (See “Global leaders seek reform on WTO issues” in the Jan. 31, 2020, issue of Cheese Market News.)

USTR’s report says the Appellate Body has strayed from the limited role that WTO members assigned to it, increasing its own power at the expense of the authority of the United States and other WTO members. USTR says the Appellate Body has failed to follow basic WTO rules, and the report gives examples of how USTR claims the Appellate Body has altered WTO members’ rights and obligations through alleged erroneous interpretations of WTO agreements. USTR says these actions have harmed the United States and its citizens, workers and businesses and have undermined the effectiveness of the WTO dispute settlement system.

To read the full report, visit https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/Report_on_the_Appellate_Body_of_the_World_Trade_Organization.pdf. **CMN**

Dairy Strong



Photo courtesy of the Dairy Business Association

MADISON, Wis. — The sixth annual Dairy Strong conference was held Jan. 22-23 in Madison, Wisconsin, where approximately 550 farmers, agribusiness representatives and others gathered to hear and discuss topics ranging from robotics in dairy to a secure milk supply to wine and cheese pairing. Shown above, attendees listen to an Innovation Stage presentation by Jennifer Van Os, assistant professor and extension specialist in animal welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“Dairy Strong is really a celebration of what unites us in the dairy community,” says Tom Crave, president of the Dairy Business Association in Wisconsin, which originally developed the conference and is now a main sponsor. “We face many of the same challenges and we strive to find solutions, and we are reminded that we have a broader network of support than we might realize.” **CMN**

DEAN

Continued from page 1

same commitment to quality and service they have come to expect,” says Eric Beringause, president and CEO, Dean Foods.

While the parties have reached an agreement on the terms of the asset

purchase, the transaction remains subject to various approvals, including approval from the bankruptcy court overseeing Dean’s Chapter 11 reorganization and the U.S. Department of Justice.

If approved by the bankruptcy court at a hearing scheduled for March 12, DFA will serve as a “stalking horse bidder” for the stalking horse assets

in a court-supervised sales process, where the agreement with DFA will set the floor for the sale of the stalking horse assets. Accordingly, the proposed agreement is subject to higher or otherwise better offers.

The deadline for interested parties to furnish information to be considered a potential bidder for any or all of the stalking horse assets currently

is scheduled for March 31 at 3 p.m. Central Time. Bids may be submitted in the form of an asset purchase or plan of reorganization. Dean also is in active discussions with parties interested in the plants and assets that are not included in the stalking horse assets. The deadline to furnish information to be considered a potential bidder for these plants and assets that are not subject to the DFA bid also currently is scheduled for March 31.

For approved potential bidders, the deadline to submit a qualified bid for the stalking horse assets or any of the plants or assets not included in the DFA bid is April 13 at 3 p.m. Central Time. Interested parties should contact John Kimm, 212-849-3436 or email john.kimm@evercore.com. Additional information, including a list of entities included and excluded from the Dean Foods-DFA asset purchase agreement, is available at DeanFoodsRestructuring.com.

If qualified bids are submitted, an auction would be held starting April 20. A hearing to approve the sale is proposed to be held April 27, subject to the availability of the bankruptcy court.

Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP and Norton Rose Fulbright are serving as legal advisors to Dean Foods, Evercore is serving as its investment banker and Alvarez & Marsal is serving as its financial advisor. DFA is advised in this matter by Latham & Watkins LLP, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP and Houlihan Lokey. **CMN**



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NEWS / BUSINESS

Most Global Dairy Trade prices decline at latest auction; GDT releases annual report

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — The Global Dairy Trade (GDT) price index declined 2.9%, and most commodity prices averaged lower following the latest GDT trading event Tuesday.

The only commodity to see an average price increase, Cheddar, increased 5.3% to US\$4,526 per metric ton FAS (\$2.0530 per pound).

Other average commodity prices, and the percent decline from earlier this month, are as follows:

- Anhydrous milkfat: US\$4,379 per metric ton FAS (\$1.9863 per pound), down 5.5%.
- Butter: US\$4,090 per metric ton FAS (\$1.8552 per pound), down 3.9%.
- Lactose: US\$822 per metric ton FAS (\$0.3729 per pound), down 1.0%.
- Rennet casein: US\$9,873 per metric ton FAS (\$4.4784 per pound), down 0.9%.
- Skim milk powder: US\$2,840 per metric ton FAS (\$1.2882 per pound), down 2.6%.
- Whole milk powder: US\$2,966

per metric ton FAS (\$1.3454 per pound), down 2.6%.

The next trading event will be held March 3.

GDT also released its 2019 Annual Report which recaps the trading platform's achievements and provides key trading statistics for the year.

During 2019, GDT events achieved a milestone of exceeding US\$25 billion since its inception in total cumulative traded value to buyers from more than 80 countries, according to the report.

The GDT Events Oversight Board adopted rule changes to enable sellers to better protect their data and to shift GDT's focus toward regional average prices rather than individual seller winning prices. In making this change, GDT encourages more sellers to join the platform, increase liquidity and provide greater value to all participants, the report says.

GDT Marketplace, GDT's 24/7 online platform for buying and selling dairy products in any quantity, now has

more than 500 registered buyers and has offered more than 80 product specifications across 30 product groups.

Market determined average prices by region were added to GDT Insight, enabling subscribers to analyze regional price trends as they change over time, the report notes.

The annual report also includes a comprehensive range of GDT statistics and historical GDT events data, including quantity sold and prices achieved, supply

and demand analysis, bidder concentration analysis and regional comparisons.

"After another successful year, we look forward to extending our regional relevance and enhancing our digital offerings," GDT says. "We will continue to work on initiatives that strengthen our core price discovery service with a strong focus on enhancing liquidity."

For more information or to download the annual report, visit www.globaldairytrade.info. **CMN**

NMPF accepting scholarship applications

ARLINGTON, Va. — National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) is now accepting applications for its National Dairy Leadership Scholarship Program for the 2020-2021 academic year. Applications must be received no later than Friday, April 3.

Each year, NMPF awards scholarships to graduate students (enrolled in master's or Ph.D. programs) actively pursuing dairy-related fields or research of interest to NMPF member cooperatives and the dairy industry.

Graduate students pursuing research of direct benefit to milk marketing cooperatives and dairy producers are encouraged to apply. Applicants do not need to be members of NMPF cooperatives.

The top scholarship applicant will be awarded the Hintz Memorial Scholarship, created in 2005 in honor of the late Cass-Clay Creamery Board Chairman Murray Hintz, who was instrumental in establishing NMPF's scholarship program.

Recommended fields of study include but are not limited to agriculture, communications and journalism, animal health, animal and/or human nutrition, bovine genetics, dairy products processing, dairy science, economics, environmental science, food science, food safety, herd management and marketing and price analysis.

To apply, visit www.nmpf.org/about/members/scholarship or email scholarship@nmpf.org. **CMN**

January milk production up from year ago

WASHINGTON — Milk production in the 24 major milk-producing states in January totaled 17.92 billion pounds, up 1.2% from January 2019, according to data released this week by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). For the entire United States, January milk production was estimated at 18.79 billion pounds, up 0.9% from January 2019. (All figures are rounded. Please see CMN's Milk Production chart on this page.)

December revised production for the 24 major states totaled 17.52 billion pounds, an increase of 82 million pounds or 0.5% from last month's preliminary production estimate. With the latest revisions, the annual production of milk for the United States during 2019 was 218.38 billion pounds, 0.4% above 2018. Revised 2019 production was up 60 million pounds from last month's publication. Annual total milk production has increased 13.0% from 2010, NASS reports.

January production per cow in the 24 major states averaged 2,031 pounds, 21 pounds above January 2019. For the entire United States, production per cow in January is estimated at 2,010 pounds, 20 pounds higher than January of last year.

NASS reports the number of milk cows on farms in the 24 major states was 8.82 million head in January, up 16,000 head from January 2019 and up 5,000 head from the previous month. In the entire United States, there were an estimated 9.35 million milk cows in January, 6,000 cows less than a year earlier but 5,000 cows more than December 2019.

California led the nation's milk production in January with 3.53

billion pounds of milk, up 0.7% from a year earlier. Wisconsin followed with 2.59 billion pounds of milk produced in January, down 1% from January 2019. **CMN**

Milk Production — January 2020

| | January 19 | January 20 | Pct. Chg. | YTD 2019 | YTD 2020 | Pct. Chg. |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Arizona | 427 | 416 | -2.6 | 427 | 416 | -2.6 |
| California | 3,508 | 3,534 | 0.7 | 3,508 | 3,534 | 0.7 |
| Colorado | 398 | 416 | 4.5 | 398 | 416 | 4.5 |
| Florida | 210 | 215 | 2.4 | 210 | 215 | 2.4 |
| Georgia | 159 | 161 | 1.3 | 159 | 161 | 1.3 |
| Idaho | 1,283 | 1,331 | 3.7 | 1,283 | 1,331 | 3.7 |
| Illinois | 155 | 153 | -1.3 | 155 | 153 | -1.3 |
| Indiana | 353 | 347 | -1.7 | 353 | 347 | -1.7 |
| Iowa | 459 | 452 | -1.5 | 459 | 452 | -1.5 |
| Kansas | 320 | 338 | 5.6 | 320 | 338 | 5.6 |
| Michigan | 958 | 974 | 1.7 | 958 | 974 | 1.7 |
| Minnesota | 848 | 848 | 0.0 | 848 | 848 | 0.0 |
| New Mexico | 690 | 711 | 3.0 | 690 | 711 | 3.0 |
| New York | 1,263 | 1,291 | 2.2 | 1,263 | 1,291 | 2.2 |
| Ohio | 457 | 469 | 2.6 | 457 | 469 | 2.6 |
| Oregon | 222 | 220 | -0.9 | 222 | 220 | -0.9 |
| Pennsylvania | 873 | 866 | -0.8 | 873 | 866 | -0.8 |
| South Dakota | 239 | 246 | 2.9 | 239 | 246 | 2.9 |
| Texas | 1,132 | 1,221 | 7.9 | 1,132 | 1,221 | 7.9 |
| Utah | 194 | 183 | -5.7 | 194 | 183 | -5.7 |
| Vermont | 230 | 226 | -1.7 | 230 | 226 | -1.7 |
| Virginia | 132 | 134 | 1.5 | 132 | 134 | 1.5 |
| Washington | 573 | 577 | 0.7 | 573 | 577 | 0.7 |
| Wisconsin | 2,616 | 2,589 | -1.0 | 2,616 | 2,589 | -1.0 |
| 24 STATE TOTAL | 17,699 | 17,918 | 1.2 | 17,699 | 17,918 | 1.2 |
| EST. U.S. TOTAL | 18,612 | 18,785 | 0.9 | 18,612 | 18,785 | 0.9 |

Note: Production reported in millions of pounds. Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service.

NEWS / BUSINESS

NCSU launches new online training course for dairy processors

By Trina La Susa

RALEIGH, North Carolina — North Carolina State University's (NCSU) Stephanie Maggio, a Ph.D. candidate, and Dr. Clint Stevenson, an associate professor of food science, recently launched a new online training for dairy processors, Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry.

"Our department assists the dairy and cheese industry by performing research in quality and food safety, as well as provide training and support to individual dairy processors in our state," Maggio says.

NCSU's Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences consists of a team of scientists, researchers and teachers committed to guiding undergraduate and graduate students preparing for professional and technical careers in food, bioprocessing and nutrition sciences. The department works with the Howling Cow Dairy Education Center and Creamery on the NCSU campus to develop training programs and provide students with hands-on training. Some of these dairy-related trainings include Food Safety Basics for Artisan Cheesemakers, Food Safety Basics for Ice Cream Makers, Preventive Controls for Dairy Processors and Good Manufacturing Practices in Food Safety.

NCSU is home to the Southeast Dairy Foods Research Center, which funds research in dairy science including flavor adjuncts, functional food ingredients like probiotics, whey proteins, microbial safety, quality, starter cultures and food safety.

The new Environmental Monitoring in the Dairy Industry course was designed specifically for dairy processors but can be a valuable resource for any food processor or anyone inspecting

food processing facilities, Maggio says.

The course takes approximately nine hours to complete. By the end of the training, students will have the knowledge, skills and resources required to develop an environmental monitoring program in their food processing facility. The course is 100% online and has rolling enrollment, meaning the course will always be available to anyone wanting to learn about how to develop an environmental monitoring program, Maggio says.

"We start the training with an introduction to environmental monitoring, what it is and why it's important," Maggio says. "Then in the following lessons, we discuss each of the steps to developing an environmental monitoring program in great detail. This includes identifying zones, developing a sampling schedule, identifying which pathogen is most important to monitor and how to monitor for that pathogen using indicator organisms, how to collect a sample and prepare it for transport to a lab, how to determine which corrective actions should be taken when a positive sample is found, and how to identify trends over time and determine preventive actions."

While the course was created specifically for dairy processors, it can be a valuable resource for any food processor or those inspecting food processing facilities. Maggio says a needs analysis found that many dairy processors do not know how to develop a systematic environmental monitoring program but want to learn how to. The analysis also found there are two main demographics of dairy processors in North Carolina, those that have been in the industry for more than 20 years and those that have been in the industry for less than five years.

"This gap in experience will bring

students into the course at different knowledge levels, so we designed the course using adaptive learning," Maggio says. "This means the course will adapt to the students' level of understanding, skipping material if it is remedial and showing remedial material as needed. We also included interactive components in the training to promote skill-building in a familiar environment to make it easier for students to translate what they learn in the training to real life. For example, a student will see images of a dairy facility as they answer questions."

This online course was designed as a graphic novel, so students follow a story, learning aside two virtual dairy processors, as they learn about environmental monitoring and see real-life examples.

Maggio says members of the cheese and dairy industry are encouraged to enroll in this course because environmental monitoring is now a requirement by FDA as a verification that cleaning and sanitizing procedures are effective.

"Since it is often difficult for food manufacturers running small businesses to attend face-to-face training, this adaptive and interactive online training can be a great alternative," Maggio adds.

This online course was funded by the North Carolina Dairy Foundation to better assist the state's dairy industry to get ahead and resolve issues prior to federal investigation.

Currently, dairy processors outside of North Carolina can use discount code EMP75 to save 75% on the new online course until Feb. 29. The course will be free for North Carolina dairy processors. To receive the code, in-state processors can contact Maggio via email at samaggio@ncsu.edu.

For more information, visit foodsafety.ncsu.edu/environmental-monitoring-for-food-safety. **CMN**

Congress passes bipartisan bill authorizing CBP to hire additional support staff

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House and Senate recently passed bipartisan legislation that would ensure the safe and secure trade of agricultural goods across U.S. borders by authorizing U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to hire additional inspectors, support staff and K-9 teams to fully staff America's airports, seaports and land ports of entry.

The Protecting America's Food & Agriculture Act of 2019 was introduced by U.S. Sens. Gary Peters, D-Mich., Pat Roberts, R-Kan., Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and John Cornyn, R-Texas. U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela Jr., D-Texas, introduced the companion legislation in the House.

The bill now heads to President Trump for his signature.

USDA and CBP work together to facilitate safe and secure importation of agricultural goods into the United States. The program's agricultural specialists and K-9 units conduct inspections of passengers, commercial vessels, trucks, aircraft and railcars at U.S. ports of entry to protect health and safety by preventing the entry of harmful goods and invasive species that may pose a threat to American food and agriculture. On a typical day, those inspectors process more than 1 million passengers and 78,000 truck, rail and sea containers carrying goods worth approximately \$7.2 billion. According to CBP estimates, there is a shortage of nearly 700 inspectors across the country.

The Protecting America's Food & Agriculture Act of 2019 authorizes the annual hiring of 240 agricultural specialists per year until the workforce shortage is filled, in addition to 200 agricultural technicians a year to carry out administrative and support functions. The bill also authorizes the training and assignment of 20 new K-9 teams a year, which have proven valuable in detecting illicit fruits, vegetables and animal products that may have otherwise been missed in initial inspections. Finally, the bill authorizes supplemental appropriations each year to pay for the activities of the agriculture specialists, technicians and K-9 teams.

The legislation is supported by a broad coalition of groups including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Dairy Coalition (ADC), American Farm Bureau Federation, Border Trade Alliance and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

"This important bill will provide for additional personnel to perform important inspections at the border, provide for training and offer additional funds each year to pay for activities in regards to agriculture specialists' needs," ADC says. "Our nation expects our ports of entry to have the appropriate staffing to guard against security threats, address public safety risks and grow the economy." **CMN**

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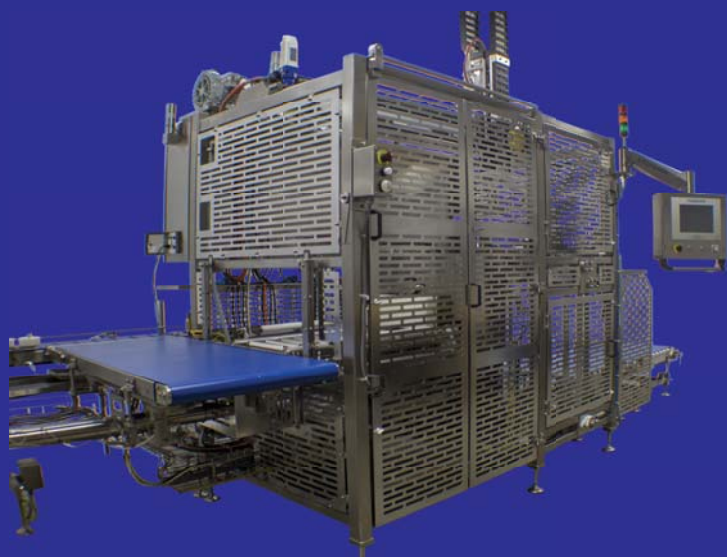
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