

Wisconsin Dairy Food Safety Program



a comprehensive approach
to dairy product food safety

A Comprehensive Approach to Ensuring the Safety of Wisconsin's Dairy Products

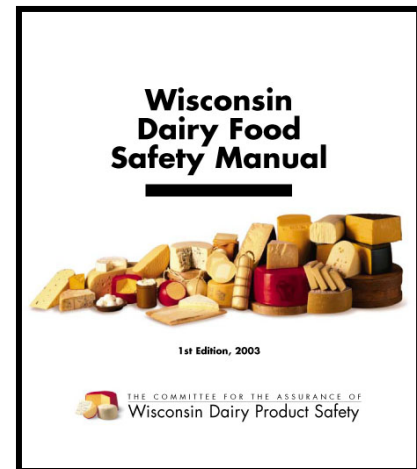
Consumers demand quality and safety in food products they purchase. Cheese and dairy products from Wisconsin have a strong reputation for safety, quality and value thanks to the dedicated efforts of our dairy producers, manufacturers, and marketers. The quest for improved food safety programs continues as the state's dairy industry works together to enhance and assure the safety and quality of all Wisconsin dairy products.

The Committee for the Assurance of Wisconsin Dairy Product Safety, an industry-led committee, has developed a new standardized approach to dairy and cheese food safety. This program has been developed by Wisconsin dairy companies that have successfully managed dairy plant food safety risks for many years. They understand the unique challenges the dairy processing environment represents, and have put in place a series of best management practices that provide the most up-to-date science-based approaches to ensuring dairy product safety. An important aspect of this overall program is that it is intended to be one of the most comprehensive dairy plant specific programs available.

Production processes required to manufacture safe, high quality dairy products can often be complex and highly technical. Through the work of this Committee, the **Wisconsin Dairy Food Safety Manual, 1st edition, 2003**, has been developed as a practical management tool to assist Wisconsin dairy companies and their business customers meet marketplace expectations for dairy product food safety. The **Manual** details a complete dairy food safety program and highlights two key program components:

- A Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) based approach which provides the process to manage dairy food safety programs.
- A standardized dairy plant specific audit program that verifies a comprehensive dairy food safety program is in place to effectively manage dairy plant risk.

These programs combine new technologies and new safety management practices with our century-old commitment to quality and craftsmanship. This ongoing effort underscores Wisconsin's longstanding commitment to provide consumers with the best quality and safest cheese and dairy products available.



The HACCP Program

HACCP stands for **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point** and takes an in-depth, proactive approach to food safety. It is a logical, effective, and highly structured system that is designed to identify hazards and/or critical situations, and most importantly provides a plan to control these situations. An effective HACCP program is supported by strong prerequisite programs and good manufacturing practices (GMPs).

These prerequisite programs are the foundation for implementing a successful food safety program. Prerequisite programs are the various policies and procedures used to control the plant environment and operating conditions that contribute to production of safe and wholesome products. These programs address operational conditions needed to ensure a clean and sanitary environment. GMPs specify many production and process controls needed to prevent contamination of food. Well-written, properly executed, and documented prerequisite and GMP programs provide an effective HACCP-based approach to ensuring safe dairy products.

The Wisconsin Dairy Plant Audit Program

Dairy product marketers are now taking a more active role in understanding their suppliers' food safety programs. These marketers want to be assured that the companies supplying dairy products have acceptable food safety programs already in place, to reduce their own company's risk in the marketplace. They expect a company-wide program that focuses on all systems that impact upon safety of the product. Through a "facilities and process audit" the buyer has a way to understand and verify supplier food safety capabilities.

The cornerstone of this new dairy food safety program, the **Wisconsin Dairy Plant Audit Program**, addresses this new requirement needed to compete in the rapidly changing marketplace. This audit is a comprehensive and standardized "facilities and process" audit, specific for cheese and dairy plants. The audit covers all systems (or processes) that impact product safety. It evaluates a company's documented HACCP; Prerequisite and GMP programs as well as the in-plant verification that these systems are in place and in control.

The 480 point audit scoring system which addresses 141 specific audit items covering three sections; Management and Food Safety Policy, Good Manufacturing Practices, and Prerequisite Programs. The **Management and Food Safety Policy** section has 26 audit items and represents 23 % of the total audit. The **Good Manufacturing Practices** section contains 57 audit items and represents 36 % of the total audit. The **Prerequisite Programs** section covers 58 audit items representing 41 % of the total audit.

Ensuring the Safety of Wisconsin's Dairy Products

Wisconsin dairy companies recognize that food safety is an important concern of consumers today, and so have taken a more proactive approach to dairy product safety. The goal of the **Committee** is to implement this complete program within all Wisconsin cheese and dairy companies; and to gain acceptance from all major marketers of Wisconsin dairy products. This new program provides all components necessary to implement an enhanced food safety program that is critical for building a successful dairy business today and assuring consumer confidence.

This program has been developed by ***The Committee for the Assurance of Wisconsin Dairy Product Safety*** and is available to all Wisconsin dairy companies. The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) has provided the resources to publish this Manual for the **Committee**. The Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research (CDR), recognized as a national leader in dairy technology, is a valuable resource to all Wisconsin dairy companies. WMMB has been partnering with and investing in CDR; and this long-standing relationship enables Wisconsin companies to work with some of the top specialists in cheese and dairy safety.

To learn more about this new proactive approach to dairy food safety, talk with your Wisconsin dairy product suppliers, or contact Matt Mathison, Vice President, Technical Services, WMMB at 800-373-9662, ext 221; or by email at mmathison@wmmb.org.

For more information regarding technical assistance from CDR, contact Marianne Smukowski, Dairy Safety/Quality Coordinator at 608-265-6346; or by email at msmuk@cdr.wisc.edu.