

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

Nick George, President
608-255-9946

Nick.George@mwfpa.org

Brian Elliott
Dir. of Communications
608-255-9946

Brian.Elliott@mwfpa.org

Food Manufacturers Feed Economic Growth, Celebrate October as Manufacturing Month

Wisconsin's food manufacturing industry is pleased to join the state of Wisconsin in honoring October as Manufacturing Month and celebrating National Manufacturing Day today!

According to Nick George, president of the Midwest Food Products Association ([MWFPA](http://www.mwfpa.org)), such a celebration "helps highlight the challenging and rewarding careers that manufacturing offers, and reaffirms the importance of manufacturers to our state's economy."

Wisconsin is home to a large and vibrant food manufacturing sector – feeding economic growth while serving up healthy, nutritious food, much of it grown and made locally. A study released by the University of Wisconsin-Extension on the Economic Impact of Wisconsin Agriculture, found that the food processing industry in Wisconsin contributed 259,600 jobs, \$12.9 billion to labor income and \$67.8 billion to industrial sales.

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“Food processing increases the value of Wisconsin agricultural products by about \$15.3 billion a year. It provides processing and shipping jobs, and expands the range of uses for raw products produced by our farmers” according to George. “It’s an important step that bridges primary food production with the consumer to deliver nutritious and safe food products” he added.

In 2016, Wisconsin’s food manufacturing sector was responsible for more than \$43 billion worth of economic output accounting for 26 percent of the state’s manufacturing shipments. It employed over 64,000 Wisconsinites comprising 15 percent of the state’s manufacturing employment.

Additionally, the food manufacturing industry offers a wide diversity of employment opportunities that allow a prospective employee to find a place no matter their career aspirations. Food manufacturing is a multi-faceted and technologically sophisticated industry and includes the fields of food safety, research and development, financial services, education, processing, agriculture, transportation and logistics to name a few. Many getting into the field get a degree in Food Science, but a degree is not always necessary. Processing workers typically need a high school diploma and many food processing workers learn their skills on the job.

“There are great long-term career opportunities available in the food manufacturing industry which will allow those going into the field to taste success” George explained. Wisconsin is home to hundreds of large and small food manufacturers and is a leader in dairy, meat, cheese and vegetable production.

Through its production and distribution linkages, Wisconsin’s food manufacturing industry impacts firms in numerous sectors of the economy. Beyond raw materials, converted paper products, plastics and aluminum manufacturing are suppliers to the food processing industry primarily for labeling, packaging and containers. Wholesale trade and transportation companies in addition to business services are significant beneficiaries of food processing industry expenditures.

Companies involved in food processing, along with their suppliers, distributors, retailers and ancillary industries provide a ripple effect on local economies throughout the state generating additional wages, taxes and consumer spending.

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George says “The industry brings a lot of product diversity and economic stability wherever it locates.”

The food industry is extremely complex, scientifically and technologically advanced and incredibly relevant for Wisconsin residents. Food processors play a substantial role in supporting the state’s economy and the industry diversifies the state’s economic base while creating jobs. Wisconsin food manufacturers are proud to join the celebration of October as “Manufacturing Month” and October 5th as “Manufacturing Day.”

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The Midwest Food Products Association represents the business interests of the region’s dynamic food products industry. The association lobbies on legislative and regulatory matters; promotes safe food processing practices; investigates new technologies; funds industry research; and plans industry events. It represents over 100 processing facilities in Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota.