

NEWS RELEASE

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Food Manufacturers Feed Economic Growth, Celebrate October as Manufacturing Month

To help highlight the challenging and rewarding careers that manufacturing offers, and to reaffirm the importance of manufacturers to our state's economy, the State of Wisconsin has declared October 2016 Manufacturing Month. Wisconsin's food manufacturing industry joins in the celebration as it continues to feed economic growth while serving up healthy, nutritious food, much of it grown and made locally.

Wisconsin is home to a large and vibrant food processing sector – 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 \$12.6 billion a year. It provides processing and shipping jobs, and expands the range of uses for vegetables and other products produced by our farmers” according to Nick George, president of the Midwest Food Processors Association (MWFPA). “It’s an important step that bridges primary food production with the consumer to deliver nutritious and safe food products” he added.

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.

George noted that many people don’t know Wisconsin is home to the largest canning and freezing companies in the nation. Wisconsin is a major food processor hosting companies possessing national and international name recognition. In Southeast Wisconsin alone, seven of the world's 12 largest food manufacturers have a presence in the region. Wisconsin 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. Manufacturing generates more economic activity than any other sector. Every dollar of final sales in general manufacturing generates \$1.34 in economic activity throughout the rest of the economy.

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.”

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