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Real California Milk Excelerator Launches 2025 Cohort With Products Tackling Consumer Demand for Protein, Clean Label, Sustainability, and Indulgence

Fourteen companies join 7th annual innovation program spanning growth-stage Excelerator and early-stage Incubator tracks

TRACY, Calif. – October 1, 2025 – The [California Milk Advisory Board \(CMAB\)](#), in partnership with [VentureFuel](#), today announced the 14 companies selected to participate in the 7th Annual Real California Milk (RCM) Excelerator and Incubator programs. One of the most active dairy innovation programs in the U.S., the Excelerator recently evolved into two tracks to support brands at various stages of growth: the Excelerator for growth-stage companies and an Incubator for earlier-stage products. This year, each track will feature seven companies providing access to programming, mentorship, and stipends to help accelerate company and product growth.

This year's Excelerator cohort companies showcase how brands are leveraging the natural benefits of real dairy to meet today's consumer demands. With products delivering on high protein, clean label, sustainability, and indulgence, the 2025 cohort reflects the growth and versatility of real dairy in fueling the next generation of food innovation.

The cohort includes:

[Foggy Bottom's Boys'](#) Jersey Scoops (Loleta, Calif.) - Organic, lactose-free, carbon-negative farm-to-scoop ice cream with 16g of protein, crafted from A2 Jersey cow's milk by a sixth-generation North Coast dairy farm.

[Joseph Farms'](#) String Cheese (Atwater, Calif.) - 99% lactose-free string cheese with 7g protein per stick.

[Kea Wellness](#) (Huntington Beach, Calif.) - Shelf-stable, 100% natural liquid collagen creamers providing a delicious and convenient way to support skin health and joint wellness.

[King Cheese](#)'s Spirella Minis (Monrovia, Calif.) - Hand-crafted high-quality artisanal meat and Oaxaca cheese rolls.

[Mavens Creamery](#) (San Jose, Calif.) - Asian-inspired indulgent ice cream made with rich, exotic ingredients in flavors like Thai Tea, Durian, and Black Sesame.

[Pioneer Pastures](#) (Bozeman, MT) - Ultra Filtered, A2 whole milks crafted for superior nutrition and taste with higher protein and lower sugar for easier digestion.

[Sweet Craft](#) Dessert Cups (Oceanside, Calif.) - Clean-label, Italian-inspired dessert cups in BPA-free packaging.

The seven companies selected for the Incubator track have products that highlight the next wave of dairy innovation: Clover Sonoma, Coney Island Creamery, Jonzo Inc.'s Frosty Cream Donut, Maazah, Marlene's Milk, Nalwaya Foods, and Proof Pudding. Their concepts range from compostable single-serve yogurt cups to functional puddings, aseptic Southeast Asian-inspired creamers, indulgent frozen donuts, probiotic-rich yogurt, and A2 ultra-filtered milkshakes.

"The Real California Milk Excelerator continues to push the boundaries of dairy innovation, and this year's cohorts showcase both market-ready products and bold early concepts," said Bob Carroll, CEO of CMAB. "This year's cohort represents exactly what today's consumers are looking for — products that deliver wellness, indulgence, and sustainability."

The program will culminate in December at an exclusive pitch event in Napa, Calif where all seven Excelerator companies will present their businesses and products to a live judging panel. During this pitch event, four finalists will be selected to receive \$30,000 in marketing support. Those four will then be tracked over the next 12 months for sales growth, competing for a \$100,000 grand prize to be awarded in 2026. This year's event will also reveal the \$100,000 winner from the [2024 Real California Milk Excelerator finalist group](#).

"For seven years, the Excelerator has been the launchpad turning dairy innovation into real-world sales," said Fred Schonenberg, Founder and CEO of VentureFuel. "By connecting early-stage brands with the right buyers, investors, and mentors, we've helped bold new products not just get to market—but thrive. This year's expanded program goes further, fueling commercialization at every stage of growth. The goal is simple: drive demand, create tangible business results, and unlock the full market potential of California dairy."

To learn more about this year's cohorts and their products, visit realcamlkexcelsator.com.

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About Real California Milk/California Milk Advisory Board

The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is funded by the state's dairy farm families who lead the nation in sustainable dairy farming practices. With a vision to nourish the world with the wholesome goodness of Real California Milk, the CMAB's programs focus on increasing demand for California's sustainable dairy products in the state, across the U.S. and around the world through advertising, public relations, research, and retail and foodservice promotional programs. For

more information and to connect with the CMAB, visit RealCaliforniaMilk.com, [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).

About VentureFuel

VentureFuel is an independent innovation advisory firm that helps the world's best organizations commercialize innovation to ignite change by working with startups. Its innovation programs help enterprise organizations learn, test, build and invest in emerging technology to solve their biggest problems today and unlock new sources of growth. VentureFuel provides organizations like Hershey's, Comcast, Dick's Sporting Goods, AARP Foundation and the State of California the tools to drive transformative change with less risk, more speed, and greater proximity to the consumer than traditional innovation models. Learn more at: www.venturefuel.net, [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#). You can listen to The VentureFuel Visionaries podcast on Apple, Spotify, Simplecast or wherever you get your podcasts.