



Wisconsin - Specialty Cheese

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Cooperating with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production Continues to Grow

In 2011, Wisconsin remained number one in the nation for cheese production with 25 percent of the nation's total. At 586 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 22 percent of Wisconsin's total cheese production. This was an increase of 3 percent over 2010.

Of the state's 126 cheese plants, 90 manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese, during 2011, one fewer plant than a year ago. Feta accounted for the largest share of specialty cheese production, with 13 percent of the total. Blue, Hispanic types, specialty Mozzarella varieties, Parmesan Wheel, and specialty Provolone continue to remain other popular categories. The largest increases in specialty production were Gouda, up 24 percent, and Asiago, up 20 percent.

Wisconsin cheese makers are known for offering a wide variety of high quality specialty cheeses. A specialty cheese is a value-added product which commands a premium price. According to the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute, the nature of specialty cheese is derived from one or more unique qualities, such as exotic origin, particular processing or design, limited supply, unusual application or use, and extraordinary packaging or channel of sale. The common denominator is its very high quality.

SPECIALTY CHEESE PRODUCTION Wisconsin, 2010 and 2011

Type	2010	2010	2011	2011	Change from 2010
	No. of plants	Revised Production	No. of plants	Production	
		1,000 lbs.		1,000 lbs.	Percent
Asiago	10	24,047	11	28,831	+20
Cheddar 1/	34	26,678	34	27,098	+2
Farmers	16	2,753	17	2,262	-18
Feta	9	72,627	7	75,950	+5
Gorgonzola	10	15,598	10	17,080	+10
Gouda	18	6,227	17	7,716	+24
Italian Fontina	12	5,404	12	6,408	+19
Hispanic	17	58,918	15	59,117	n.c.
Limburger	1	604	1	482	-20
Monterey Jack 1/	12	9,506	14	11,138	+17
Parmesan Wheel	7	46,476	8	51,172	+10
Provolone 2/	6	42,705	5	38,858	-9
Romano Wheel	7	10,762	9	8,685	-19
All Other 3/	57	245,434	56	251,251	+2
Total 4/	91	567,739	90	586,048	+3

1/ Includes only specialty types of this variety. 2/ Includes Provolone aged > 60 days and other specialty Provolone. 3/ Combined to avoid disclosure of individual plant data. Includes: American Grana, Auribella, Bel Pease, Blue, Brie, Butterkase, Camembert, specialty Colby, Edam, Fior di Latte, Fontiago, Fontinella, Gruyere, Havarti, other specialty Italian, Italic, Juustoleipa, Kefalograviera Sagana, Knight's Veil, Kreme Kaese, Les Freres, Mascarpone, Middle Eastern cheeses, Morning Sun, specialty Mozzarella, other specialty Parmesan, Pepato, Peperon, Raclette, other specialty Romano, Semi-soft, Swedish style Fontina, specialty Swiss, Tvarog Polish, and Yogurt cheese. 4/ Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses. Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office