



Wisconsin Ag News – Specialty Cheese

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Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production up 3 Percent

With 27 percent of the nation’s total cheese production, Wisconsin maintained its ranking as the nation’s top cheese producing state in 2017. At 799 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 24 percent of Wisconsin’s total cheese production. This was an increase of 24.2 million pounds over 2016.

Of the state’s 132 cheese plants, 99 manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2017. Blue, Feta, Havarti, Hispanic types, specialty Mozzarella, and Parmesan Wheel remain the most popular varieties. Gouda cheese production rose 44 percent over the previous year.

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: 2016 and 2017

Type	2016 number of producers	2016 revised production (1,000 pounds)	2017 number of producers	2017 production (1,000 pounds)	Change in production from 2016 (percent)
Asiago	12	29,269	13	31,941	9
Cheddar ¹	39	30,444	40	29,036	-5
Colby ¹	10	8,008	10	7,792	-3
Farmers	13	1,009	12	1,342	33
Feta	10	91,506	8	97,990	7
Gorgonzola	10	18,385	10	18,102	-2
Gouda	21	12,991	26	18,684	44
Italian Fontina	10	9,306	12	12,198	31
Havarti	13	37,884	12	42,685	13
Hispanic	13	85,403	12	91,407	7
Limburger	1	491	1	447	-9
Parmesan Wheel	5	61,358	6	67,116	9
Romano Wheel	6	10,794	6	10,655	-1
All Other ²	56	377,580	59	369,255	-2
Total ³	93	774,428	99	798,650	3

¹ Includes only specialty types of this variety.

² Combined to avoid disclosure of individual plant data. Includes: Alpine, American Grana, Auribella, Blue, Brie and Camembart, Butterkase, Caerphilly, Edam, Fior di Latte, Fontiago, Fontinella, Gruyere, other specialty Italian, Italic, Juustoleipa, Kefalograviera Sagana, Kasser, Kreme Kaese, Mascarpone, Middle Eastern cheeses, specialty Monterey Jack, Morning Sun, specialty Mozzarella, other specialty Parmesan, Pepato, Peperon, specialty Provolone, Raclette, other specialty Romano, Soft-ripened, Swedish style Fontina, specialty Swiss, Tvarog Polish, and Yogurt cheese.

³ Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses.