



Wisconsin Ag News – Specialty Cheese

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Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production up 5 Percent

With 26 percent of the nation’s production, Wisconsin maintained its ranking as the nation’s top cheese producing state in 2013. At 640 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 22 percent of Wisconsin’s total cheese production. This was an increase of 29.0 million pounds over 2012.

Of the state’s 126 cheese plants, 93 manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2013, one more plant than last year. Feta accounted for the largest share of specialty cheese production, with 13 percent of the total. Blue, Hispanic types, specialty Mozzarella, Parmesan Wheel, and specialty Provolone remain other popular varieties. Limburger cheese production rose 24 percent over the previous year, while Gorgonzola production was 12 percent higher.

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, 2012 and 2013

Type	2012 No. of producers	2012 Revised Production	2013 No. of producers	2013 Production	Change from 2012
		1,000 Lbs.		1,000 Lbs.	Percent
Asiago	9	31,142	11	32,159	+3
Cheddar 1/	33	31,330	36	31,801	+2
Colby 1/	10	7,488	12	7,616	+2
Farmers	14	2,119	15	1,710	-19
Feta	8	77,582	9	80,073	+3
Gorgonzola	10	16,777	10	18,722	+12
Gouda	16	11,366	20	10,551	-7
Italian Fontina	12	6,906	11	7,214	+4
Hispanic	13	65,580	16	70,906	+8
Limburger	1	439	1	544	+24
Parmesan Wheel	8	52,523	6	53,728	+2
Romano Wheel	8	9,265	7	8,847	-5
All Other 2/	56	298,641	58	316,317	+6
Total 3/	92	611,158	93	640,188	+5

1/ Includes only specialty types of this variety.

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

3/ Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses.

Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office