



Wisconsin Ag News – Specialty Cheese

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Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production Up 1 Percent

With 25 percent of the nation's total cheese production, Wisconsin maintained its ranking as the nation's top cheese producing state in 2023. At 942 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 27 percent of Wisconsin's total cheese production. This was an increase of 13.7 million pounds from 2022. Ninety-four of the State's 117 cheese plants manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2023.

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: 2022 and 2023

Type	2022 number of producers	2022 revised production (1,000 pounds)	2023 number of producers	2023 production (1,000 pounds)	Change in production from 2022 (percent)
Asiago.....	16	40,559	15	31,651	-22
Cheddar ¹	40	40,480	40	38,970	-4
Farmers.....	12	964	12	1,094	13
Feta.....	9	109,920	9	122,929	12
Fontina.....	(D)	(D)	12	11,247	(NA)
Gorgonzola.....	8	16,191	7	15,341	-5
Gouda.....	31	16,004	32	15,955	0
Havarti.....	13	45,872	13	44,596	-3
Hispanic.....	22	127,612	20	130,030	2
Parmesan Wheel.....	6	95,404	7	105,784	11
Romano Wheel.....	6	11,000	5	8,414	-24
All Other ²	54	424,005	55	415,675	-2
Total ³	93	928,011	94	941,686	1

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

(NA) Not Available.

¹ Includes only specialty types of this variety.

² Combined to avoid disclosure of individual plant data. Includes: Alpine, American Grana, Auribella, Bel Paese, Blue, Brie and Camembert, Butterkase, specialty Colby, Edam, Fior di Latte, Fontinella, Gruyere, other specialty Italian, Italic, Italian Fontina (2022 only), Juustoleipa, Krakow, Limburger, Mascarpone, Middle Eastern cheeses, specialty Monterey Jack, specialty Mozzarella, other specialty Parmesan, Pepato, Peperon, specialty Provolone, Quark, Raclette, other specialty Romano, Soft-ripened, specialty Swiss, Tvarog Polish, and Yogurt cheese.

³ Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses.