



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 2024. At 1.02 billion pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 28 percent of Wisconsin's total cheese production. This was an increase of 71.3 million pounds from 2023. Ninety-three of the State's 116 cheese plants manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2024.

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: 2023 and 2024

Type	2023 number of producers	2023 revised production (1,000 pounds)	2024 number of producers	2024 production (1,000 pounds)	Change in production from 2023 (percent)
Asiago.....	15	31,651	16	43,484	37
Cheddar ¹	40	42,154	40	44,864	6
Farmers.....	12	1,094	12	1,163	6
Feta.....	10	122,929	8	133,391	9
Fontina.....	12	11,247	12	11,262	0
Gouda.....	32	15,955	32	15,908	0
Havarti.....	13	44,596	14	44,611	0
Hispanic.....	20	130,030	19	151,316	16
Monterey Jack ¹	(D)	(D)	18	29,482	(NA)
Parmesan Wheel.....	7	105,784	6	85,406	-19
Romano Wheel.....	5	8,414	6	11,349	35
All Other ²	55	430,576	49	443,513	2
Total ³	94	944,430	93	1,015,749	7

(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, Gorgonzola, Gruyere, other specialty Italian, Italico, Italian Fontina, Juustoleipa, Krakow, Limburger, Mascarpone, Middle Eastern cheeses, specialty Monterey Jack (2023 only), specialty Mozzarella, other specialty Parmesan, Pepato, Peperon, specialty Provolone, Quark, Raclette, other specialty Romano, Soft-ripened, specialty Swiss, and Tvarog Polish.

³ Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses.