



# Wisconsin Ag News – Specialty Cheese

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Cooperating with Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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## Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production up 3 Percent

With 25 percent of the nation’s production, Wisconsin maintained its ranking as the nation’s top cheese producing state in 2014. At 660 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 23 percent of Wisconsin’s total cheese production. This was an increase of 19.7 million pounds over 2013.

Of the state’s 127 cheese plants, 91 manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2014, two fewer plants than last year. Feta accounted for the largest share of specialty cheese production, with 12 percent of the total. Blue, Havarti, Hispanic types, specialty Mozzarella, Parmesan Wheel, and specialty Provolone remain other popular varieties. Italian Fontina cheese production rose 27 percent over the previous year, while Romano Wheel production was 20 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, 2013 and 2014

Type	2013 No. of producers	2013 Revised Production	2014 No. of producers	2014 Production	Change from 2013
		1,000 Lbs.		1,000 Lbs.	Percent
Asiago	11	32,159	11	30,921	-4
Cheddar <sup>1</sup>	36	31,813	32	28,829	-9
Colby <sup>1</sup>	12	7,616	14	8,026	5
Farmers	14	1,709	13	1,470	-14
Feta	9	80,073	9	81,885	2
Gorgonzola	10	18,722	10	18,547	-1
Gouda	20	10,508	22	11,430	9
Italian Fontina	11	7,214	10	9,157	27
Hispanic	16	70,906	13	72,474	2
Limburger	1	544	1	542	0
Parmesan Wheel	6	53,728	6	56,920	6
Romano Wheel	7	8,847	6	10,625	20
All Other <sup>2</sup>	60	316,373	61	329,061	4
Total <sup>3</sup>	93	640,212	91	659,887	3

<sup>1</sup> Includes only specialty types of this variety.

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

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

Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office