



Wisconsin Ag News – Specialty Cheese

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Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production Down 3 Percent

With 26 percent of the nation’s total cheese production, Wisconsin maintained its ranking as the nation’s top cheese producing state in 2020. At 796 million pounds, specialty cheese accounted for 23 percent of Wisconsin’s total cheese production. This was an decrease of 20.8 million pounds from 2019. Ninety-one of the State’s 120 cheese plants manufactured at least one type of specialty cheese during 2020.

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: 2019 and 2020

Type	2019 number of producers	2019 revised production (1,000 pounds)	2020 number of producers	2020 production (1,000 pounds)	Change in production from 2019 (percent)
Asiago.....	13	33,001	13	30,873	-6
Blue.....	(D)	(D)	8	46,335	(NA)
Cheddar ¹	44	30,199	40	36,340	20
Farmers.....	11	1,088	13	1,097	1
Feta.....	10	101,035	9	92,149	-9
Gorgonzola.....	8	16,547	7	13,908	-16
Gouda.....	28	14,527	32	13,753	-5
Italian Fontina.....	11	10,047	11	9,791	-3
Havarti.....	12	43,209	13	42,334	-2
Hispanic.....	16	96,838	19	105,068	8
Limburger.....	1	365	1	369	1
Monterey Jack ¹	16	13,126	16	17,142	31
Parmesan Wheel.....	6	74,656	6	77,558	4
Romano Wheel.....	6	9,773	7	10,049	3
Swiss ¹	6	4,075	8	3,846	-6
All Other ²	50	368,453	42	295,571	-20
Total ^{3 4}	96	816,939	91	796,183	-3

(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 (2019 only), Brie and Camembert, Butterkase, specialty Colby, Edam, Fior di Latte, Fontinella, Gruyere, other specialty Italian, Italic, Juustoleipa, Kasseri, Mascarpone, Middle Eastern cheeses, specialty Mozzarella, other specialty Parmesan, Pepato, Peperon, specialty Provolone, other specialty Romano, Soft-ripened, Tvarog Polish, and Yoqurt cheese.

³ Total cheese plants producing one or more specialty cheeses.

⁴ Data may not add to totals due to rounding.