

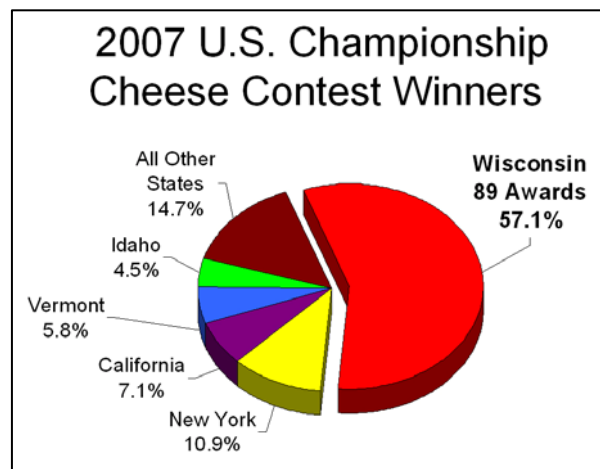
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1. WI Cheesemakers Top U.S. Cheese Contest; Newcomers Take Golds

The 2007 United States Championship Cheese Contest last week once again proved Wisconsin cheesemakers produce more award-winning cheeses than any other state. Wisconsin cheesemakers and butter makers earned 89 awards, including the overall First Runner-Up Prize awarded to Roth Käse USA of Monroe, Wis. for its Roth's Private Reserve.

Wisconsin cheese and butter captured the most awards of any state in the 53 categories, including 32 Best of Class medals, 26 second awards and 31 thirds. In addition, two new Wisconsin farmstead cheesemakers also earned gold medals in their very first showing:



Graphic Courtesy of Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

- **Brenda Jensen, Hidden Springs Creamery, Westby**, earned Best of Class in the Soft and Semi-soft Sheep's Milk Cheeses category with her Driftless Cheese, Honey Lavender. Brenda also captured second and fourth places in the same categories with her Driftless Cheese, Natural and Driftless Cheese, Basil & Olive Oil. The Jensen family farm is a new farmstead Grade A sheep dairy, producing fresh handmade and hand-packed sheep's milk cheese.
- **Marieke Penterman, Holland's Family Cheese, Thorp**, earned Best of Class in the Open Class for Flavored Semi-soft Cheeses with her Feonegreek Gouda. Marieke, who with her husband and family moved from the Netherlands to Wisconsin in 2003 to operate a 480-Holstein dairy farm, is crafting farmstead cheese in the style of her home country. The Pentermans built a new farmstead dairy plant last fall.

In addition to winning the most awards overall, Wisconsin dairy producers swept the top three places in 13 categories: Colby, Baby Swiss, Havarti, Gorgonzola, Brick and Muenster, Quesos para Fundir (melting cheeses), Smear Ripened Cheeses, Cold Pack Cheese, Flavored Spreadable Cheeses, Flavored Soft Goat's Milk Cheeses, Soft and Semi-soft Sheep's Milk Cheeses, Shredded Cheese and Unsalted Butter.

For complete award results from the U.S. Championship Cheese contest, visit:
<http://www.wischeesemakersassn.org/index.html>

2. DBIC Team Member Monthly Message



This month we hear from **Dan Carter**, DBIC Founder & Chairman. Dan addresses the subject of why "**Selling Your Dairy Products Locally is Logical**"

Time Magazine declared on its March 12, 2007 cover: "The best food you can eat may be in your own backyard." While buying local has been gaining momentum for the past 10 years, in the last three years it has ceased from becoming trend to being a matter of good business. It has been the greatest of pleasures to observe the explosion of green markets across Wisconsin and the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, green markets grew 11 percent from 1994 to 2004: the 2004 National Farmers Market Directory listed 3,700 green markets nationwide.

Buying local is a positive and profitable option for artisan and specialty cheese, milk, butter and yogurt producers. In the last 12 months, I have found products, such as Widmer and Carr Valley cheeses, in every sized store across the state. An increasing number of consumers want to know where their cheese, milk, butter, yogurt and other dairy products originate. Consumers are requesting these products to meet their demands for freshness, quality, value and a fast growing sense of community.

When local foods are more expensive than imported or national brands, consumers are showing less hesitation to pay more for the local dairy products because they understand the need for income to stay within the community. In addition, sourcing local strengthens retailer bonds with their customers' community and, obviously, it is good business when the products have the flavor, nutrition and visual appeal of locally raised, ripened and harvested quality to entice consumers. The August 2006 issue of *Gourmet News* published a survey reporting that 40 percent of all stores are now buying dairy products locally with the newest supermarket trend encouraging local products and green markets on store premises.

Green market sales and cooperative local selling opportunities should receive increased consideration from Wisconsin farm producers as well as artisan and specialty dairy industry marketers as sources for profitable, added value business.

3. "Living on the Wedge" Nominated for James Beard Foundation Award

"Living on the Wedge: Wisconsin's Artisan Cheesemakers," a documentary highlighting some of Wisconsin's most skilled and passionate cheesemakers, has been nominated for a 2007 James Beard Foundation Award. Billed as the "Oscars of the Food World," the James Beard Foundation award ceremony will take place in May in New York City.

This year, 62 award categories honor restaurants, chefs, broadcasting, print journalism, book authors and restaurant design. The Wisconsin documentary takes viewers on a journey through America's Dairyland to meet a half dozen artisan and farmstead cheesemakers. Sponsored by the Dairy Business Innovation Center and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, the film was produced by independent film makers Mariana Coyne and Gaylon Emerzian.



“We are truly honored by this James Beard Foundation award nomination,” said Dan Carter, DBIC Founder and Chairman. “We are especially proud of our partnership in producing a film that showcases the rich diversity and heritage of Wisconsin artisan cheesemaking.”

“Living on the Wedge” film producer Gaylon Emerzian, winner of a 2006 James Beard Foundation award for her website, Spatulatta.com, believes the film is helping Wisconsin redefine itself as a national leader in specialty and artisan cheese. “There are so many amazing cheeses being created right now in Wisconsin – the depth of tradition and skill is really setting the state apart,” Emerzian said. “I am honored to be part of a film that highlights just a few of the Wisconsin cheesemakers who are changing the artisan cheese world.”

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to preserving and nurturing America’s culinary heritage and diversity in order to elevate the appreciation of our culinary excellence. To select the nominees and winners, independent volunteer panels of more than 600 food and beverage professionals from around the country vote on specific award categories.

The Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception will be held at Lincoln Centers’ legendary Avery Fisher Hall in New York City on May 7, while the media awards will be presented at the Hudson Theatre in New York City on May 6. All winners receive a bronze medallion etched with the image of the late James Beard, the esteemed chef, cookbook author and food journalist.

4. Industry News

- **New Wisconsin-Based Website for Commercial Goat Milk Producers:** Be sure to visit the new www.goatdairylibrary.org for comprehensive information on setting up, licensing and operating a commercial goat dairy. Included are short summaries of many relevant topics, with citations and links to other information on each topic. Also available are materials for educators, 4-H and FFA leaders, forms for record keeping, plans for building equipment, and a complete reference section. The Goat Dairy Library’s goals are to provide education and support to commercial goat milk producers, to promote agricultural practices that preserve the environment and maximize goat health, and to provide a link between the goat research community and commercial goat milk producers.
- **Value Added Producer Grants - Start Planning Now:** The DBIC has been advised to expect the Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG) Notice of Solicitation of Applications to be published by the end of this month. Check the web-site daily to see if the announcement is posted: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm> We have also been advised to expect a 30 – 35 day application period, so, start preparing your application now! If you have any questions, please contact Barb Brewster at 715-345-7615, extension 134 or email barbara.brewster@wi.usda.gov.
- **Wisconsin Cheese Featured on the Today Show:** Chef Terrance Brennan established the record for the World’s Largest Fondue on the Today show in Rockefeller Plaza last month by using 2,100 lbs of fondue made in a 2 ton cast iron sugar kettle. Cheese for the event was donated by Roth Käse USA of Monroe, Wis. The fondue was donated to City Harvest, New York City’s food rescue program.



6. Upcoming Important Dates

- **March 24: Affinage Workshop with Randolph Hodgson. Monroe, Wis.**

Randolph Hodgson, founder of the United Kingdom's famed Neal's Yard Dairy, will visit Wisconsin in March and offer a public affinage workshop in Monroe. The DBIC and Roth Käse USA will host an "Affinage Workshop" with Hodgson from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on March 24. Cost is \$25 per person and registration is limited to the first 25 advance sign-ups. To register, contact Kara Kasten at 608-224-5083 or email kara.kasten@datcp.state.wi.us
- **March 26-30: Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course. Madison, Wis.**

This intensive four-day course covers cheesemaking production principles and technology and is intended for apprentice cheesemakers with at least 12 months experience or students with a basic science background. Students should have experience in algebra and general chemistry. Completion of this course will give the student six (6) months credit toward the apprenticeship requirement for the state cheesemakers license. For more information, visit: http://www.cdr.wisc.edu/courses/cheese_technology.html or call Bill Wendorff at 608-263-2015.
- **April 18-19: Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference. LaCrosse, Wis.**

More than 1,200 cheese industry leaders from around the nation will gather to gain information about the latest in cheese technology, product marketing and dairy issues affecting our industry. The show opens with a joint seminar, followed by an afternoon "Tabletop Mini Exposition" and an evening auction of Champion Cheeses. Thursday consists of a full day of seminars and closes with the United States Championship Cheese Contest Awards Banquet, open to all attendees. The conference is co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research. For more information, visit <http://www.wischeesemakersassn.org/>
- **April 30-May 3: The World of Cheese from Pasture to Plate. Madison, Wis.**

A class for culinary professionals, end users, brokers, distributors, retailers, and marketers, this four-day hands-on course is aimed at educating participants in the art and science of cheesemaking. It will feature lectures covering cheesemaking, cheese handling and display, packaging fundamentals, cheese economics, basics of cheese grading and evaluation, and more. Hands on sessions include cheesemaking, grading lab and cheese functionality demos. At the end of the course attendees will receive a participation certificate. For more information, visit http://www.cdr.wisc.edu/courses/pasture_to_plate_07.html or call Dean Sommer at 608-265-6469
- **May 4: Wisconsin Specialty Institute Meeting. Madison, Wis.**

The next WSCI meeting will be held on Friday, May 4 at the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, 8418 Excelsior Dr., Madison, Wis. Prior to the meeting, UW Provision, 2315 Pleasant View Rd., Middleton, will provide a tour of their operations. The tour will begin at 9 a.m. with the WSCI meeting following at 10 a.m. at the WMMB offices. Guest speakers include: Suzanne Isige, Market Research Manager, WMMB, who will discuss "Specialty Cheese Trends" and Bob Green, Cheese Monger, UW Provisions, who will discuss "Distribution Opportunities for the State of Wisconsin." RSVP your attendance to info@wisspecialcheese.org or call 866-740-2180.
- **August 1-4: The American Cheese Society Annual Conference. Burlington, Vermont**

Considered one of the world's most influential and prestigious competitions in recognizing the art of artisanal and specialty cheesemaking, the American Cheese Society's annual judging competition is held in conjunction with the American Cheese Society's 24th Annual Conference - held this year in beautiful Burlington, Vermont. Watch the ACS website for more announcements regarding conference schedules and competition entry dates: <http://cheesesociety.org/index.cfm>

- **November 13-15: Turning Chaos Into Control - Continental Style Cheeses. River Falls, Wis.**
This three-day conference is for cheesemakers who want to make artisanal cheeses. While Continental Style Cheeses has many connotations to many people, it may mean a typical Edam or Gouda from the Netherlands, Saint-Paulin from France, Manchego, a sheep milk cheese from Spain or any other number of European style cheeses. In any case, the manufacturing technology is basically the same. Attendees will examine the most important steps in the cheese making process. Making small manipulations at critical times in the process can result in a unique cheese. A better understanding of these manipulations can also help you come up with a solution to a problem you have wrestled with but did not know how to solve. Join Neville McNaughton - Consultant Cheesemaker and Ranee May - University Wisconsin-River Falls, Dairy Specialist as conference coordinators for an enlightening technology session that can put you in control of your Cheesemaking. For more information, visit <http://www.uwrf.edu/food-science/institutes/artisanalCheese.html> or call 715-425-3704

The Dairy Business Innovation Center offers technical assistance to dairy producers and processors in developing value-added dairy products, business planning and market development. For more information, visit www.dbicusa.org or contact Jeanne Carpenter, 608-358-7837.