



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Production Increases 7 Percent Since 2008**

Numbers released today, June 3, by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service show specialty cheese production in Wisconsin continues to expand. In fact, production of specialty cheese rose by 7 percent from 2007 to 2008 and now accounts for 17 percent of the state's total cheese production.

Of the state's 127 cheese plants, 88 are now manufacturing at least one type of specialty cheese, up four plants from 2007. Feta continues to be the state's most popular specialty cheese, with a 3 percent increase in production. Blue, Hispanic types, Parmesan Wheel, Farmers, and Romano wheel cheeses are other growing varieties.

Specialty cheese plants make up the backbone of the state's dairy industry. In 2008, six new specialty dairy plants opened in Wisconsin, with another 14 conducting major expansions. In total, 43 new processing plants have opened and more than 70 have expanded in Wisconsin since 2004.

Contributing to the state's seismic growth in specialty cheeses is the increasing number of start-up farmstead and artisan dairies. Ten years ago, only six farmstead dairies called Wisconsin home. Today, 23 farmstead operations craft an impressive variety of award-winning artisan and specialty cheeses from cow, goat and sheep's milk, as well as farmstead yogurt and ice cream. At least one additional farmstead dairy is expected to open its doors in 2009.

"We're working hard to ensure dairy remains a vital part of Wisconsin's economy and quality of life," said Dan Carter, Founder and Chairman of the Dairy Business Innovation Center. "Congratulations from the DBIC and all of our partners to every cheesemaker and dairy farmer in the state for their commitment to growing America's Dairyland."

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*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](http://www.dbicusa.org) or contact Jeanne Carpenter, 608-358-7837.*