



Cheese

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COMMODITY OF THE QUARTER

Cheese

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There's no exact figure for the number of types of cheese made throughout the world. New cheeses are being invented every day. In fact, the French organization CIDIL (Centre Interprofessionnel de Documentation et d'Information Laitières) claims France alone produces over 1,000 types of cheese!

There are numerous accounts as to how cheesemaking began, and just as many claims as to the geographic region where it developed. There is documentation that some regions have been producing cheese for over six thousand years. But even after a few millennia, the actual art of cheese making has hardly changed at all. The process involves coagulating milk to produce curds and whey. The whey is removed and the curd is further treated to produce cheese. The top cheese consumers are the Greeks, who eat approximately 23 kg each per year. Coming up close behind are France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United States, and Australia.



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While the types of cheese in each country are numerous, there have been recent attempts to regulate nomenclature and provenance. France has designated many of their cheeses under their Appellation d'Origine Controlle (AOC), stating that only cheeses from specific regions in France and made in a certain way can be called by that specific name (such as Morbier or Neufchâtel). Greece has also tried to control the use of "feta" as a type of cheese. And in the United States Senate, the Quality Cheese Act has been introduced to prevent other dairy additives from being labeled as domestic natural cheese.

"AMERICAN" CHEESE?

In the United States, cheese making was confined to on-farm locations until 1851, when the first cheddar cheese factory was opened in Rome, New York by Jesse Williams. The industry has never stopped growing. As of 2005, one-third of all milk produced in the United States is used to make cheese. The top cheese-producing state is Wisconsin, with 26.5% of the total production in the United States. It is followed by California, Idaho, New York, and Minnesota.

As popular as those single slices are "specialty" or artisanal cheeses, or those that reflect a specific region or manufacturer, now account for approximately 20% of cheese sales in the United States. And despite what many people think, the most popular cheese in the United States is not cheddar, but rather mozzarella. Both of these types of cheese are listed separately in regional cheese market pricing by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). There's also a category for "foreign" cheese, which refers to its manufacturing style, even if it was domestically produced.

The pricing structure of U.S. cheese can be somewhat confusing to non-dairymen, as prices are sourced from either the USDA or the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME). The CME Cheese Spot Market is used as the pricing guide for trading cheese in the United States. These block cheddar cheese prices are used to set not only the larger cheese market in the United States, but also regional raw milk prices. USDA prices, which are reported for different regions of the United States, are derived from recorded wholesale transactions as well as the product pay prices of dairy manufacturers. They also take into account CME pricing.

There has been some controversy as to the extent of control the CME has over cheese pricing, as cheese is only traded for fifteen minutes each day by a small regional group, and yet still effects a remarkable amount of products.

CHEESE AND CHEESE-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Domestic Organizations

Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Cheese Prices
<http://www.cme.com/wrappedpages/misc/cheese.html>

CME Cheese Spot Call
<http://www.cme.com/trading/prd/ag/cheesescover14519.html>

The CME is the sole market exchange in the United States that includes cheese. Cheese prices are listed daily. Historical data are available through the Spot Call section.

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI)
<http://www.dairyinfo.com>

Dairy Management Inc. is a farmer-funded marketing, promotion, and research organization. It also serves as an umbrella organization for a variety of dairy marketing programs, including the National Dairy Council and the “3 A Day” marketing plan. Of all the organizations under the DMI rubric, there are two that collect and disseminate cheese-specific data: the U.S. Dairy Export Council and the American Dairy Association.

U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC)
<http://www.usdec.org>

The USDEC helps to promote and improve the export of U.S. dairy products through lobbying efforts and outreach. The Web site includes directories of dairy suppliers, trade data, marketing material, and links to regulatory trade information. The Council also publishes a variety of materials. The members-only section of the Web site does not diminish the amount of data that is freely accessible.

American Dairy Association
<http://www.ilovecheese.com>

The American Dairy Association is home to probably every tagline you've heard about cheese. Not only are there consumer pages listing nutritional benefits, but there are also recipes and cheese guides, including maps to U.S. cheese makers.

Dairy and Food Market Analyst
<http://www.dairymarketanalyst.com>

Jerry Dryer publishes a weekly newsletter addressing dairy prices and forecasts. While the newsletter is available only to subscribers, Dryer's Web site also contains many links to freely available information. He explains where he gathers his results and has links to updated information from the USDA and CME.

U.S. Government Information

In USDA publications, cheese information is always placed with overall dairy products content. Additionally, more often than not, Web sites about butter or yogurt will also contain information about cheese. And cheese will also be mentioned in some livestock reports. The resource list below addresses the major points of interest for cheese researchers.

USDA Dairy Briefing Room
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Dairy>

The USDA Dairy Briefing Room is the gateway to all types of dairy information, including trade, production, consumption, and pricing.

USDA Dairy Yearbook
<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/data-sets/livestock/89032>

The *USDA Dairy Yearbook* gives historical data (in most cases monthly, as well as annually) for production, stocks, net removals, disappearance, trade data, and prices of cheese, broken down by type.

USDA Livestock Dairy and Poultry Outlook
***[http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/reports/erssor/
livestock/ldp-mbb](http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/reports/erssor/livestock/ldp-mbb)***

While cheese plays a minor role in the overall content of the *Outlook*, there is a brief update on production and pricing in relation to other commodities.

USDA AMS Dairy Programs
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/mnacs/index.htm>

The AMS publications give up-to-date (as well as historical) supply-and-demand data. These weekly reports include pricing and storage volumes of cheese, broken down by type. They also differentiate between government and commercial cold storage holdings of cheese throughout the country.

USDA Market News Reports
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/mnacs/butter.htm>

The weekly *Market News Reports* list the most current wholesale selling prices of cheese for different regions in the United States.

USDA NASS Dairy Products
<http://jan.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/dairy/pdp-bb>

The *NASS Dairy Products* gives monthly statistics on cheese production, both on a national and state level.

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
<http://www.wisdairy.com>

While there are many state-level cheese sites, Wisconsin, as the country's largest cheese manufacturer, deserves a mention. The site is definitely "cheese-centric" and includes not only statistics and recipes, but also the "Wisconsin Cheesecyclopedia," which contains in-depth information on all the types of cheese the state manufactures.

International Organizations
International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA)
<http://www.idfa.org>

IDFA represents more than 500 dairy food manufacturers, marketers, distributors, and industry suppliers across the United States, Canada,

and 20 other countries. The Association serves as the lobbying voice for the Dairy Industry. The IDFA hosts workshops and media events, as well as issuing a weekly newsletter on the entire dairy market. The Web site contains statistics and economic analysis, links to legislation regarding dairy products, and product marketing. The IDFA is also the parent organization of the National Cheese Institute (NCI), which represents about 80% of the U.S. cheese industry; however, the NCI does not have its own Web site.

The IDFA publishes *Cheese Market Research Report* and an annual report called *Dairy Facts*. Access to the full reports is limited to members or at a cost for non-members, but excerpts of each can be found for free on the Web site.

Canadian Dairy Information Center (CDIC)

<http://www.dairyinfo.gc.ca/cdicmain.htm>

The CDIC is part of Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada. It contains statistics on production trade and pricing of Canadian Dairy Products. It also contains the *Canadian Cheese Directory* (http://www2.agr.ca/dairyinfo/english/chees-from-v_e.cfm), an online database listing cheese by province, processor, or milk treatment and type.

Maison Du Lait

<http://www.maison-du-lait.com>

If you're going to talk about cheese, you can't forget the French! Maison du Lait is the Web site for the Centre National Interprofessionnel de L'Economie Laitière (CNIEL). The Web site serves as an umbrella directory for all the affiliated dairy programs in France. The pages on *fromages* include data on production, research, legislation, and even recipes. The entire site is in French but it is fairly easy to hunt down useful statistics.

Dairy Australia

http://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/template_home.asp

We don't often think of Australia when cheese comes to mind, but the country has a 13% share of global dairy product exports. The Dairy Australia Web site contains information for researchers and consumers alike. The cheese information is broken down by type. There's also links to the "Who Makes What" database, which lists dairy product manufacturers throughout the continent.

International Dairy Federation (IDF)
<http://www.fil-idf.org>

The IDF comprises dairy representatives from forty-nine countries. While the Web site is not always easy to navigate, it does have links to many of the group's publications, most of which are science-based papers on dairy product development.

GENERAL WEB SITES

A quick online search will pull up thousands of sources for cheese, ranging from individual producers to cheese fan clubs. Listed below are a few sources that cover cheese from a broader perspective and are also good sources of information.

Cheese.com
<http://www.cheese.com>

Cheese.com is not affiliated with any larger dairy organization, but it offers a considerable amount of information. The Web site contains a database that lists cheese by country, texture, and type of milk. Each entry gives a brief description of the cheese and includes the address of the cheese maker (if available). There are also cheese-related links and a bookstore. While most of the information is free, access to some requires registration at the site.

World Cheese Exchange Database
(Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research)
http://www.cdr.wisc.edu/applications/specialty_cheese/cheese_database.shtml

The World Cheese Exchange Database is another great resource for information about cheese from all over the world. In this database, arranged by country and name, you can find a brief description of taste and appearance, as well as photos and a detailed description of the production of each cheese, written by the FAO or USDA.

American Cheese Society
<http://www.cheesesociety.org>

The American Cheese Society is a group of cheese makers and enthusiasts (including scientists and cookbook authors) that strive to uphold

the standards and practices of proper cheese making in the United States. They also get involved in federal initiatives for standards and practices. In addition, the Society works with the Slow Foods Movement to promote artisanal cheese making. Much of the Web site is for members only, but it does include some very thorough listings of cheese-related events throughout the country.

PERIODICALS

As previously stated, many of the major publications in this sector deal with the overall dairy industry, although several will have entire issues dedicated to cheese. The *Cheese Reporter* and *Cheese Market News* (which, despite their names, also address dairy as a whole) include weekly updates on cheese production and pricing and are invaluable for keeping current on all cheese market and trade.

- *California Dairy Information Bulletin*
(ISSN 0892-4406-California Dept. of Food & Agriculture) Monthly
- *Cheese Market News*
(ISSN 0891-1509-Quarne Pub.) Weekly
- *Cheese Reporter*
(ISSN 0009-2142-Cheese Reporter Pub. Co.) Weekly
- *Dairy Field*
(ISSN 1055-0607-Stagnito) Monthly
- *Dairy Foods*
(ISSN 0888-0050-Business News Pub.) Monthly
- *Dairy Today*
(ISSN 1056-1382-Farm Journal Media) 10x/year

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