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U.S. cheesemakers set new standard at World Cheese Awards

The best way to describe U.S. cheesemakers' performance at this year's World Cheese Awards is "unprecedented." Thirty-six companies collected 83 medals in 43 cheese categories. Of those 83 medals, 21 were gold, 27 silver and 35 bronze (see list that follows for a full rundown).

Every one of those numbers not only surpassed results from all previous contests, they obliterated them—more than doubling the average annual medal totals from 2004-2007.

"The 2008 World Cheese Awards, where judges recognized a record 56 U.S. cheeses, was extraordinary," says Angelique Hollister, marketing director, cheese and manufactured products, for the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC). "But U.S. cheesemakers this year topped it by far.

"The performance reaffirms that the United States has come of age on the global stage. We have the capabilities to compete with any country in the world in cheese quality and variety," Hollister says.

Indeed, one of the most impressive aspects of this year's event was the broad sweep of U.S. success. U.S. cheese artisans earned awards in 43 categories—compared to a previous high of 28.

U.S. companies scored well in known specialties like cheddar and mozzarella, but they also took home medals for, among other types, camembert, provolone and gouda—varieties that have been rarely represented on the winner's list in the past.

"Gouda in particular is one of the world's most popular cheeses, and one that has leapt from culture to culture and country to country fairly easily in recent years,



penetrating and gaining a foothold in markets where cheese, at one time, was a foreign concept,” says Hollister. “Yet the United States is not known as a gouda producer—and some overseas buyers might not even consider a U.S. source when looking to purchase it.”

Thorp, Wis.-based Holland’s Family Cheese took home five medals for their gouda at the competition, with Traver, Calif.-based Bravo Farms Handmade Cheese picking up a sixth.

“That’s one specific instance where an event like the World Cheese Awards can open people’s eyes,” says Hollister.

More than 2,500 cheeses from all corners of the globe vied for the taste buds of the judges’ panel. While all U.S. winners were notable, some companies merited outstanding recognition.

Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., picked up the most medals—11—including three golds for its romano, gorgonzola and Sartori Reserve Black Pepper Bella Vitano (hand-rubbed with cracked pepper). Nampa, Idaho-based Sorrento Lactalis, the U.S. arm of France’s Lactalis Group, nabbed nine medals in five Italian cheese categories. BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., took home six medals, half of them golds for its Ricotta con Latte, parmesan and aged provolone.

Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., won eight medals in seven categories—everything from camembert to brie to chevre—and earned the USDEC trophy for “Best U.S. Cheese” for its Le Petit Déjeuner.

Le Petit Déjeuner is a soft, cows’ milk cheese with “old-fashioned ripened butter flavor,” traditionally served with breakfast but versatile enough for hors d’oeuvres with any meal, Marin says.

“The contest has become a showcase for U.S. cheese craftsman to demonstrate their world-class cheesemaking expertise,” says Hollister. “The recognition they continue to achieve works hand-in-hand with USDEC’s export development efforts by enhancing the global image of the U.S. dairy industry as a quality supplier of just about any variety of cheese a customer may need.”

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2009



World Cheese Awards winners
from the United States

Class 1a (Soft goats' milk cheese plain, fresh)

- Natural Fresh Chèvre, 4-oz. disk, Cypress Grove Chèvre Inc., Aracata, Calif., Gold

Class 1b (Soft goats' milk cheese plain, mould-ripened)

- Camembert, Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy, Longmont, Colo., Gold
- Humboldt Fog, 16-oz. wheel, Cypress Grove Chèvre, Aracata, Calif., Gold
- Marin French Chèvre, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Silver
- Fog Lights, 8-oz. disk, Cypress Grove Chèvre, Aracata, Calif., Silver

Class 2a (Semi-hard goats' milk cheese plain)

- Gridale Goat, Estrella Family Creamery, Montesano, Wash., Gold

Class 3 (Goats' milk cheese with additives)

- Purple Haze, 4-oz. disk, Cypress Grove Chèvre, Aracata, Calif., Gold
- Coeur de la Creme, Baetje Farms LLC, Bloomsdale, Mo., Gold
- Truffle Tremor, 3-lb. wheel, Cypress Grove Chèvre, Aracata, Calif., Silver
- Sunset Bay, Rivers Edge Chèvre, Logsden, Ore., Silver
- Coeur de la Creme, Baetje Farms LLC, Bloomsdale, Mo., Bronze
- Coeur de la Creme, Baetje Farms LLC, Bloomsdale, Mo., Bronze

Class 6 (Ewes' milk cheese with additives)

- Pepato, raw sheep milk with peppercorns, Bellwether Farms, Sonoma County, Calif., Bronze

Class 8 (Cheese made with the milk of more than one species)

- Mobay, sheep's/goats' milk, Carr Valley Cheese Co., La Valle, Wis., Gold
- Capriko, goats'/cows' milk, Nordic Creamery, Westby, Wis., Gold

Class 9a (Fresh/cream cheese, cows' milk, plain)

- Le Petit Déjeuner, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Gold
- Vermont Crème Fraîche, Vermont Butter & Cheese Co., Websterville, Vt., Gold
- Crescenza-Stracchino, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., Silver

Class 9b (Mould ripened, soft or unpressed cows' milk cheese, plain)

- Le Petit Crème, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Silver
- Le Petit Camembert, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Bronze

Class 10a (Cream or fresh cheese with savory additives)

- Alouette Garlic & Herbs, all-natural, spreadable, Bongrain Cheese USA, New Holland, Pa., Silver

Class 12a (Ricotta)

- Ricotta con Latte, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., Gold
- Velvety Smooth Ricotta, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Silver
- Part-skim Ricotta, milk-based, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Silver



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Class 12b (Mascarpone)

- Mascarpone, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Waterloo, Wis., Gold

Class 13a (Quark, plain or with additives)

- Wild Blackberry Quark, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Bronze

Class 14b (Brie made from pasteurized milk)

- Traditional Brie, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Bronze

Class 15b (Camembert made from pasteurized milk)

- Rouge et Noir Camembert, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Bronze

Class 19 (Gorgonzola)

- Creamy Gorgonzola, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., Bronze

Class 20 (Blue-vein cheese, any variety, uncut, natural rind)

- Asher Blue, unpasteurized, Sweet Grass Dairy, Thomasville, Ga., Bronze

- Marin French Brie, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., Bronze

Class 21 (Blue-vein cheese, any variety, uncut, foil-wrapped)

- Crocker Hills Organic Blue Cheese, Seymour Dairy Products Inc., Seymour, Wis., Gold

- Sartori Reserve Dolcina Gorgonzola, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Gold

Class 25 (Processed cheese or processed cheese spread with additives)

- Horsefeathers, Cheddar horseradish spread, Fiscalini Cheese Co., Modesto, Calif., Bronze

Class 26 (Smoked cheddar)

- Promontory, smoked with walnut shells and apples, Beehive Cheese Co., Uintah, Utah, Bronze

Class 27a (Other smoked cheese, soft/semi-soft)

- Smoked Mozzarella, Belfiore Cheese Co., Berkeley, Calif., Silver

- Smoked Provolone, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Bronze

Class 28b (Other hard pressed or re-pressed cows' milk cheese with savory additives)

- Sartori Reserve Black Pepper Bella Vitano Hand-Rubbed with Cracker Pepper, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Gold

Class 28c (Hard pressed or re-pressed cows' milk cheese with dessert-style additives)

- Sartori Reserve Merlot Bella Vitano Soaked in Merlot, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Bronze

Class 32 (Medium traditional cheddar made after 3/31/09)

- Organic Unpasteurized Mild Cheddar, produced by Gibbsville Cheese Co., Organic Valley Family of Farms, LaFarge, Wis., Silver

Class 35 (Extra mature traditional cheddar made after 5/31/08)

- Cabot Clothbound Cheddar, Cellars of Jaspar Hill, Greensboro, Vt., Silver

- Bandage Wrap Cheddar, Fiscalini Cheese Co., Modesto, Calif., Bronze



Class 36 (Extra Mature creamery cheddar made in a creamery after 5/31/08)

- Grafton Classic Reserve Cheddar, Grafton Village Cheese Co., Grafton, Vt., Bronze

Class 38 (Mild cheddar made after 5/31/09)

- Mild Cheddar Cheese, Joseph Gallo Farms, Atwater, Calif., Bronze

Class 40 (Vintage creamery cheddar made before 5/31/08)

- Cabot Vintage Choice Cheddar, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Montpelier, Vt., Silver
- Cabot Old School Cheddar, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Montpelier, Vt., Bronze

Class 47a (Mozzarella, fresh, cows' milk in ball (large or small))

- Sorrento Log, 12-oz. vacuum pack, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Gold
- Fresh Mozzarella, ovolini size, Cantaré Foods Inc., San Diego, Bronze
- Mozzarella Fresca, 4-oz. ball, Lactalis American Group, Buffalo, N.Y., Bronze
- Ovolini, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Bronze

Class 47b (Mozzarella, block, slices or string)

- Mozzarella Block, whole milk, Saputo Cheese USA Inc., Reedsburg, Wis., Silver
- Mozzarella Block, part skim, Saputo Cheese USA Inc., Reedsburg, Wis., Silver
- Whole Milk Low-Moisture Mozzarella Block, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Silver
- Part Skim Prima Cucina, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Bronze

Class 48 (Semi-hard cheese not in any other class)

- Colby Jack, Meister Dairy, Muscoda, Wis., Gold
- Carmoday, Jersey cows' milk, semi-hard, not pressed, Bellwether Farms, Sonoma County, Calif., Bronze

Class 50 (Rind-washed cheese not in any other class)

- Cabra La Mancha, FireFly Farms, Bittinger, Md., Silver

Class 52 (Hard-pressed cheese not in any other class)

- Parmesan, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., Gold
- Sartori Reserve SarVecchio Asiago, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Bronze
- Sartori Asiago, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Bronze

Class 54a (Provolone, mild)

- Provolone, Joseph Gallo Farms, Atwater, Calif., Gold
- Mild Provolone, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Silver
- Mild Provolone, Sorrento Lactalis, Buffalo, N.Y., Bronze

Class 54b (Provolone, aged)

- Aged Provolone, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., Gold

Class 57 (Very hard cheese not in any other class)

- Sartori Romano, Sartori Foods, Plymouth, Wis., Gold
- Sartori Reserve Aged Romano, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Silver
- Sartori Parmesan, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Silver
- Sartori Reserve SarVecchio Parmesan, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Silver
- American Grana, BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., Bronze
- Copper Kettle Parmesan produced by Lake Country Dairy, Arthur Schuman Inc., Fairfield, N.J., Bronze



Class 58a (New cheese—hard or semi-hard. Open to any new cheese first marketed after 1/10/08)

- Astraea, Rivers Edge Chèvre, Logsdan, Ore., Silver

Class 58b (New cheese—blue. Open to any new cheese first marketed after 1/10/08)

- Vaquero Blue, Willow Hill Farm, Milton, Vt., Bronze

Class 58c (New cheese—with additives. Open to any new cheese first marketed after 1/10/08)

- Sartori Reserve Balsamic Bella Vitano, Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Silver

- Sartori Reserve Pastoral Blend (hand-rubbed with imported paprika), Sartori Foods Corp., Plymouth, Wis., Bronze

- Mareike Gouda Clove, Holland's Family Cheese, Thorp, Wis., Bronze

Class 58d (All others new cheeses. Open to any new cheese first marketed after 1/10/08)

- Burata Round Mozzarella with Cream Filling, Belfiore Cheese Co., Berkeley, Calif., Bronze

Class 60a (Hard cheese produced on a farm or dairy with a total output not exceeding a weekly average of 2 tons)

- Pleasant Ridge Reserve, Uplands Cheese Co., Dodgeville, Wis., Silver

Class 60c (Soft cheese produced on a farm or dairy with a total output not exceeding a weekly average of 2 tons)

- Garlic Herb Fromage Blanc, Harley Farms Goat Dairy, Pescadero, Calif., Bronze

Class 62c (Gouda, made before 9/1/08)

- Mareike Gouda Super, Holland's Family Cheese, Thorp, Wis., Silver

- Mareike Gouda Overjarige, Holland's Family Cheese, Thorp, Wis., Silver

Class 62d (Gouda, made after 9/1/08)

- Mareike Gouda Mature, Holland's Family Cheese, Thorp, Wis., Silver

- Tulare Cannonball, Bravo Farms Handmade Cheese, Traver, Calif., Bronze

- Mareike Gouda Aged, Holland's Family Cheese, Thorp, Wis., Bronze

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Sponsor Award

U.S. Dairy Export Council Trophy for “Best USA Cheese”

- Le Petit Déjeuner, Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif.

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U.S. performance at the World Cheese Awards

	Total U.S. Entries	Winning Companies	Total U.S. Medals	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2009	352, from 52 companies	36	83	21	27	35
2008	188, from 34 companies	25	56	16	19	21
2007	249, from 51 companies	23	42	13	17	12
2006	199, from 34 companies	23	43	12	14	17
2005	149, from 29 companies	16	36	12	11	13
2004	226, from 53 companies	23	44	15	15	14

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The U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) is a non-profit, independent membership organization that represents the export trade interests of U.S. milk producers, proprietary processors, dairy cooperatives, and export traders. Its mission is to enhance international demand for U.S. dairy products and assist the industry to increase the volume and value of exports. USDEC accomplishes this through market development programs that build overseas demand for U.S. dairy products, resolving market access barriers and advancing the industry's trade policy goals. USDEC activities are supported by staff in Mexico, Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, South America, Middle East and Europe.