

Trends Analysis: Cheese



The U.S. is the tenth-strongest cheese consumer in the world, at 32.8 pounds per capita annually. With many consumers planning snacks as part of their daily eating habits, cheese is a popular choice in that niche. In fact, cheese is the most often-consumed deli product in 2010, IDDBA research shows. Sales of specialty cheeses, such as Feta, Fresh Mozzarella, Sharp Cheddar, Queso Fresco, and Pecorino Romano, are growing rapidly. Sales of sliced, shredded, and crumbled cheese are getting a boost from consumers hunting for convenience.

Monterrey Provision Company specializes in cheese, distributing over fifty different brands. Call 1.800.201.1600 for more information.

Artisan Cheese Sales are on the Rise

Joining wines, coffees, and chocolate as a gourmet product, small-batch, artisanal, locally produced and specialty cheese also carries a "better-for-you" halo that appeals to health-conscious consumers.

Defining Cheese Terms:

"Artisan" is a term applied to any product that is made in limited quantities by a skilled craftsman, usually by hand. The American Cheese Society does define "artisan" when applied to cheese. "Artisan" and "artisanal" (interchangeable terms) imply high-quality products!

"Farmstead" is a term applied to cheese made only from the milk of the farmer's own animals. The production size of a farmstead cheese business is not limited or defined. In consumers' minds, however, it is often assumed that the facility is small and not highly mechanized. The farmstead cheese maker is usually the smallest size of cheese producer, but not always.

"Specialty" cheese is produced by large-scale, industrial cheese companies as a value-added product of higher quality and in a limited quantity as compared to their other cheese products. According to the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute, a specialty cheese cannot exceed an annual nationwide volume of more than 40 million pounds.

NATURAL AND SPECIALTY CHEESES: THE U.S. MARKET AND A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Move over Velveeta, the increasingly sophisticated American palate for the 300 varieties of natural and specialty blended cheeses sold in the U.S. will pace future growth in a \$14 billion retail market that is projected to be on fire by 2020.

The retail natural and specialty blended cheese market showed healthy growth from 2005 to 2010, posting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7%. Packaged Facts projects the market will approach \$17 billion by 2014.

Only in the last quarter of the 20th century did most acculturated Americans even know of cheeses such as asiago, feta, and romano. But the fact is that Americans are on board. They want to explore the world of cheese and this is the number one driver of growth in the retail sector.

Data proves that consumers view cheese as an affordable luxury. Even during tough times, items such as gourmet cheese and spreads made it into shopping carts, to enjoy at home and for home entertaining.

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Did You Know?

Archaeological surveys show that cheese was being made from the milk of cows and goats in Mesopotamia before 6000 B.C.

JANUARY CHEESE PRODUCTION UP 5% FROM LAST YEAR

March 4, 2011: Cheese Market News

WASHINGTON — Total U.S. cheese production, excluding cottage cheese, in January totaled 883.4 million pounds, 5.0 percent above January 2010's 841.6 million pounds, according to data recently released by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Production of Mozzarella, the nation's most-produced cheese, totaled 306.2 million pounds, up 7.4 percent from 285.0 million pounds a year earlier. Total Italian-type cheese production was up 5.3 percent from a year earlier to 382.1 million pounds.

Cheddar production rose 5.6 percent in the January-to-January comparison to 281.5 million pounds. Total American-type cheese production totaled 362.7 million pounds in January, up 4.4 percent from a year earlier.

Wisconsin, the nation's top cheese-producing state, experienced a 1.8-percent increase in production compared to January 2010, rising to 217.7 million pounds. California followed with 186.1 million pounds, a 6.0-percent increase over January 2010. The next four cheese-producing states were Idaho, New Mexico, New York and Minnesota.

"Cheese is milk's leap toward immortality."

— Cliff Fadiman

Trends in Gourmet Foods

BOLD FLAVORS, HANDMADE ARTISAN PRODUCTS AND FOODS FROM AROUND THE WORLD ALL DICTATE NEW TRENDS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY.

AMERICAN CONSUMERS SPENT OVER \$40 BILLION ON SPECIALTY FOOD PRODUCTS. SPECIALTY CHEESES ARE IN THE TOP FIVE CATEGORIES (OTHERS INCLUDE CONDIMENTS, COFFEE AND COCOA, SNACKS AND DIVERSE BEVERAGES) OF SPECIALTY FOODS. THE AREAS OF IMPORTANCE IN GOURMET FOOD PRODUCTS ARE: FLAVOR, QUALITY, FOOD SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE.

EDUCATING CONSUMERS ABOUT THE FINER POINTS OF CHEESE TASTING, MUCH LIKE THE WINE INDUSTRY DID, SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF CHEESE MARKETING. CONSUMERS WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE CHEESE IS MADE, A DESCRIPTION OF THE FLAVOR AND TEXTURE, PAIRING SUGGESTIONS, SERVING SUGGESTIONS, TIPS FOR CUTTING AND STORING, AND NEW RECIPES INCORPORATING THE CHEESE.

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