

**AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY JUDGING & COMPETITION  
2018 CATEGORIES**

**A. FRESH UNRIPENED CHEESES**

Cheese Curds, Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, Impastata, Mascarpone, Quark, Ricotta

**Excluded:** Queso Blanco–types (Refer to Category G), Neufchatel (Refer to Category J), Fresh Goat Cheese (Refer to Category N), Crème Fraiche (Refer to Category Q)

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KA.*

AH: Cheese Curds<sup>1</sup> – all milks

AM: Mascarpone and Cream Cheese – made from cow’s milk

AQ: Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, and Quark – made from cow’s milk

AR: Ricotta – made from cow’s milk

AG: Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, Mascarpone, Quark, and Ricotta – made from goat's milk

AS: Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, Mascarpone, Quark, and Ricotta – made from sheep's milk

AX: Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, Mascarpone, Quark, and Ricotta – made from mixed, or other milks

**OPEN CATEGORY – FRESH UNRIPENED CHEESES**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories.

AC: Open Category – Fresh Unripened Cheeses – made from cow's milk

**Cheese Curds (Category AH)<sup>1</sup>**

ACS recognizes cheese curds as the fresh, solid, unripened form of curdled / soured / cultured / fermented milk that is the foundation for Cheddar and other cheeses, unique in flavor and texture, and optimally consumed within a day of its production.

**B. SOFT-RIPENED CHEESES**

White surface mold ripened cheeses (Brie, Camembert, Coulommiers, etc.)

**Excluded:** Washed Rind Cheeses (Refer to Category TB), External Molded Blue Cheeses (Refer to Category F)

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KB.*

BB: Brie – made from cow’s milk

BC: Camembert – made from cow's milk

BT: Triple Crème – soft ripened / cream added – all milks

**OPEN CATEGORY – SOFT-RIPENED CHEESES**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories.

BA: Open Category – Soft-Ripened Cheeses – made from cow’s milk

BG: Open Category – Soft-Ripened Cheeses – made from goat's milk

BS: Open Category – Soft-Ripened Cheeses – made from sheep's milk

BX: Open Category – Soft-Ripened Cheeses – made from mixed, or other milks

**C. AMERICAN ORIGINALS**

Cheeses recognized by the ACS as uniquely American in their original forms:

Brick Cheese, Brick Muenster, Colby, Dry Jack, Monterey Jack, Teleme

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KC.*

CB: Brick Cheese – made from cow’s milk

CD: Dry Jack – made from cow’s milk

CJ: Monterey Jack – made from cow’s milk (*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KM.*)

CM: Brick Muenster – made from cow’s milk

CY: Colby – made from cow’s milk

CT: Teleme – made from cow’s milk

(Cont.)

### **ORIGINAL RECIPE / OPEN CATEGORY**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories. Cheesemakers will be asked for a brief explanation of what differentiates their entry.

Cheeses recognized by the ACS as:

- Unique in their recipe and formulation
- Different from other acknowledged recipes for cheese types
- Created with a combination of at least THREE of the following elements that causes it to be globally new and unique from all other cheese types:
  - **RECIPE** – Measurable amount of any or all of these: pH, vat time, moisture, acidity, treatment of the curd, use of whey or other manipulation of the raw materials of milk or culture or starter agent or salting, brining, rind formation, use of whey, or pressing that adds an obvious difference to an existing recipe or is completely new from all other cheese recipes.
  - **TEXTURE** – Noticeable and desirable cheese texture qualities with an obvious tactile or mouth feel sensation.
  - **COMBINATION OF TWO OR MORE CHEESES OR TWO OR MORE MILKS** – Must be dairy milk (not soy or almond or other non-animal source).
  - **APPEARANCE/ RIND DEVELOPMENT** – The creation of enhanced cheese surface or rind development that alters the cheese appearance, flavor or texture and contributes to its uniqueness as an original recipe cheese.
  - **FLAVOR** – Obvious profile of a specific flavor or combination of flavors not available in other cheese.
  - **NON-DAIRY INGREDIENTS** – The addition of flavor agents or ingredients that contributes to the uniqueness of the cheese as an original recipe cheese. The use of ingredients and flavor agents other than the commonly used herbs, seasoning, peppercorns, hot peppers, fruits and liquids in support of creative cheese making is strongly encouraged.

CC: Original Recipe / Open Category – made from cow's milk

CG: Original Recipe / Open Category – made from goat's milk

CS: Original Recipe / Open Category – made from sheep's milk

CX: Original Recipe / Open Category – made from mixed or other milks

### **D. AMERICAN MADE / INTERNATIONAL STYLE**

Cheese modeled after or based on recipes for established European or other international types or styles (Abondance, Beaufort, Butterkase, Caerphilly, English Territorials, Gruyere, Juustoleipa, Monastery, Port Salut-styles, etc.)

*Cheeses with a washed rind please refer to Category T.*

*Cheeses with any added flavors, including Leyden, please refer to Category KD.*

**Excluded:** all Cheddars (Refer to Category E), all Hispanic/Portuguese-style (Refer to Category G), all Italian-style Pasta Filata types, Grating types and Mozzarella types (Refer to Category H), all Feta (Refer to Category I)

DD: Dutch-style (Gouda, Edam, etc.) – all milks

DE: Emmental-style with Eye Formation (Swiss, Baby Swiss, Blocks, Wheels, etc.) – made from cow's milk

*ALLOWED: Cheesemakers producing traditional Emmental wheels (180 lb. approx.) are permitted to submit cuts from original wheels. Entries cut from original wheels must weigh a minimum of 22 lbs.*

*NOT ALLOWED: Emmental wheels, blocks, or cuts that have been plugged, cored, or otherwise visibly sampled prior to entry.*

### **OPEN CATEGORY – AMERICAN MADE/INTERNATIONAL STYLE**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories.

DC: Open Category – American Made/International Style – made from cow's milk

DG: Open Category – American Made/International Style – made from goat's milk

DS: Open Category – American Made/International Style – made from sheep's milk

DX: Open Category – American Made/International Style – made from mixed, or other milks

### **E. CHEDDARS**

All Cheddars – all milks – Based on age at time of Judging & Competition.

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KE.*

EA: Aged Cheddar – aged 13 months through 23 months – all milks  
EC: Cheddar – aged through 12 months – made from cow’s milk  
EG: Cheddar – aged through 12 months – made from goat’s, sheep’s, buffalo’s, mixed, or other milk  
EX: Mature Cheddar – aged 24 months through 47 months – all milks  
EE: Mature Cheddar – aged 48 or more months – all milks  
EW: Cheddar wrapped in cloth, linen – aged through 12 months – all milks  
EB: Cheddar wrapped in cloth, linen – aged 13 or more months – all milks

## **F. BLUE MOLD CHEESES**

All cheeses ripened with *Penicillium roqueforti* or *glaucum*  
*Blue Mold Cheeses with Flavor Added (Refer to Category KC)*

### **RINDLESS BLUE-VEINED CHEESE**

Defined as having no additional rind or coating on the external face of the cheese (Roquefort-style, Danish Blue-style, etc.).

FC: Rindless Blue-veined – made from cow's milk  
FG: Rindless Blue-veined – made from goat's milk  
FS: Rindless Blue-veined – made from sheep's milk  
FX: Rindless Blue-veined – made from mixed, or other milks

### **BLUE-VEINED CHEESES WITH RIND OR EXTERNAL COATING**

Defined as a fully developed rind growth different from the naturally occurring blue (Bleu de Gex, Bingham Hill Rustic Blue, etc.). The rind can include white mold (soft ripened mold/*Penicillium candidum*; Cambozola, etc.)

External Coatings include non-mold coatings such as nettles, ash, herbs, leaves, spices, crust, cloth, oils, etc.

FK: Blue-veined with a rind or external coating – made from cow’s milk  
FL: Blue-veined with a rind or external coating – made from goat’s milk  
FM: Blue-veined with a rind or external coating – made from sheep's milk  
FZ: Blue-veined with a rind or external coating – made from mixed, or other milks

### **EXTERNAL BLUE-MOLDED/RINDED CHEESES**

Cheeses having **NO INTERNAL BLUE VEINING** but which **DO** have a rind, covering or crust made of **BLUE MOLD** which is completely different and separate from the cheese paste (Hubbardston Blue, Montbriac, etc.)

FE: External Blue-molded cheeses – all milks

## **G. HISPANIC & PORTUGUESE STYLE CHEESES**

Cheeses made in the Americas based on the recipes of the Central and South American, Cuban, Hispanic, Latino, Mexican, and Portuguese communities.

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KG.*

GA: Ripened, Aged over 90 days (Anejo, Cincho, Cotija, Flamingo Bolla, Prato) – all milks  
GC: Fresh, Unripened (Acoreano, Freir, Queijo Blanco, Queso Andino, Queso Blanco, Queso Campesino, Queso Crema, Queso de Puna, Queso Fresco) – all milks  
GM: Cooking Hispanic – Cheeses intended to be consumed heated or melted (Chihuahua, Para Freir, Quesadilla, Quesillo, etc.) – all milks **NOTE – All entries in this category will be cooked for judging.**

## **H. ITALIAN TYPE CHEESES**

**Excluded:** Crescenza, Mascarpone, and Ricotta (Refer to Category A), Blue Cheeses (Refer to Category F), Smoked Cheeses (Refer to Category L), Washed Rind Cheeses (Refer to Category T)

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category K.*

HA: Grating types (Aged Asiago, Domestic Parmesan, Grana, Reggianito, Sardo) – all milks  
Romano made *only* from cow’s or goat’s milk (for sheep milk Romano please refer to Category OU)  
HD: Traditional Regional Italian Cheeses (including but not limited to: Mezzo Secco, Asiago Piccante and Fresca, Piave, Montasio, Caciotta, Bra, Ragusano, Fontina, Fontal, Toma, Robiola Natural Rind, etc.) – all milks  
**PLEASE NOTE:** If using an original (new) name but following a traditional recipe, cheesemaker must identify cheese of origin in the comment field.

HP: Pasta Filata types (Provolone, Caciocavallo) – all milks

*(Cont.)*

HM: Mozzarella types (Brick, Scamorza, String Cheese) – all milks

HY: Fresh Mozzarella – 8 oz. or More (Balls or Shapes) – all milks

**PLEASE NOTE:** Sizes listed in HY refer to the size of the individual mozzarella ball, not the weight of the package.

HZ: Fresh Mozzarella – Under 8 oz. (Ovalini, Bocconcini, Ciliegine sizes) – all milks

**PLEASE NOTE:** Sizes listed in HZ refer to the size of the individual mozzarella ball, not the weight of the package.

HB: Burrata – Fresh mozzarella encasing a distinctly separate core made from softer curd and cream, or other soft cheese – all milks

## **I. FETA CHEESES**

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KI.*

IC: Feta – made from cow's milk

IG: Feta – made from goat's milk

IS: Feta – made from sheep's milk

IX: Feta – made from mixed, or other milks

## **J. LOW FAT / LOW SALT CHEESES**

*Each cheese entry must be labeled with one of the following terms:*

- **Fat-Free:** less than 0.5 grams fat per labeled serving size & no added fat or oil
- **Low Fat:** maximum 3 grams total fat per serving for serving size if serving size is more than 30 grams or 2 tablespoons; and 3 grams of fat or less per 50 grams of product if serving size is less than 30 grams or less than 2 tablespoons.
- **Light or Lite:** if less than 50% of calories come from fat the cheese label must show a 33.3% reduction of calories than referenced amount or 50% reduction in fat. If more than 50% of calories come from fat, the cheese labels must show a minimum of 50% reduction of fat per reference amount.
- **Reduced Fat:** minimum 25% reduction in total fat per referenced amount.

*Source: U.S. Nutrition Labeling & Education Act - Nov., 1990*

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KJ.*

JL: Fat Free and Low Fat cheeses – *Limited to cheeses with 3 grams or less total fat per serving size* – all milks

JR: Light/Lite and Reduced Fat cheeses – *Limited to cheeses with 25 – 50% reduction of fat per serving size when 50% of calories in the serving size come from fat* – all milks

## **K. FLAVORED CHEESES, BUTTER, AND CULTURED DAIRY PRODUCTS**

Cheeses, butters, and cultured dairy products containing ingredients distinct from, and not included in, the dairy process itself. Ingredients are either blended internally or applied externally for the purpose of adding additional flavors not found in those dairy products themselves.

*Entries are judged on the quality of the base cheese or dairy product and the complementary balance of its added flavors.*

**Excluded:** Smoked Cheeses (please refer to Category L)

KA: Fresh Unripened Cheese with Flavor Added (Cream Cheese, Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, Impastata, Quark, etc.) – all milks

KL: Cheese Curds with Flavor Added – all milks

KB: Soft-Ripened with Flavor Added – all milks

KD: International-Style with Flavor Added – all milks

KE: Cheddar with Flavor Added – all milks

KF: Farmstead Cheese with Flavor Added (must conform to all guidelines in Category M) – all milks

KG: Hispanic-Style with Flavor Added – all milks

KI: Feta with Flavor Added – all milks

KJ: Reduced Fat Cheese with Flavor Added – all milks

KK: Rubbed-Rind Cheese with added flavor ingredients rubbedbed or applied on the *exterior surface of the cheese only*. (Washed-Rind cheeses, please refer to Category T.) – all milks

KM: Monterey Jack with Flavor Added – all milks

KN: Fresh Goat Cheese with Flavor Added – aged under 30 days – 100% goat's milk

KO: Sheep Cheese with Flavor Added – 100% sheep's milk

*(Cont.)*

KQ: Yogurt and Cultured Products with Flavor Added (Set yogurts, Greek-style, dips, etc.) – all milks  
KV: Yogurt and Cultured Products with Flavor Added (Drinkable, pourable, smoothie, etc.) – all milks  
KR: Butter with Flavor Added – all milks  
KS: Cold-Pack and Club Cheeses with Flavor Added – with a maximum moisture of 42% – all milks

#### **OPEN CATEGORY – FLAVOR ADDED**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories.

**Excluded:** Pasteurized Process Cheese of any kind

KC: Open Category - Cheeses with Flavor Added – all milks and mixed milks

#### **L. SMOKED CHEESES**

***Information about the smoke source (i.e. natural and/or smoke flavorings) must accompany each cheese entry.***

LM: Smoked Italian Styles (Mozzarella, Scamorza, Bocconcini, Ovalini, etc.) – all milks

LD: Smoked Cheddars – all milks

#### **OPEN CATEGORY – SMOKED CHEESES**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories.

LC: Open Category – Smoked Cheeses – made from cow's milk

LG: Open Category – Smoked Cheeses – made from goat's milk milk

LS: Open Category – Smoked Cheeses – made from sheep's milk

LX: Open Category – Smoked Cheeses – made from mixed, or other milks

#### **M. FARMSTEAD CHEESES**

In order for a cheese to be classified as “farmstead,” as defined by the American Cheese Society, the cheese must be made with milk from the farmer’s own herd, or flock, on the farm where the animals are raised. Milk used in the production of farmstead cheeses may not be obtained from any outside source. Farmstead cheeses may be made from all types of milk.

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KF.*

#### **Limited to cheeses and fermented milk products produced with:**

- Milk obtained solely from the farmer’s own herds/flocks on the farm where the animals are raised
- Care and attention given to the purity, quality, and flavor of the milk
- Production primarily accomplished by hand
- Natural ripening with emphasis on development of characteristic flavor and texture, without the use of shortcuts and techniques to increase yield and shelf life at the expense of quality
- Respect for the traditions and history of cheesemaking regardless of the size of the production

MA: Farmstead Category – Aged less than 60 days – all milks

MC: Farmstead Category – Aged 60 days or more – 39% or higher Moisture – made from cow’s milk

ME: Farmstead Category – Aged 60 days or more – Less than 39% Moisture – made from cow’s milk

MG: Farmstead Category – Aged 60 days or more – made from goat’s milk

MS: Farmstead Category – Aged 60 days or more – made from sheep's milk

MX: Farmstead Category – Aged 60 days or more – made from mixed, or other milks

#### **N. GOAT’S MILK CHEESES**

Open to all shapes and styles of 100% goat’s milk cheeses; based on age at time of Judging & Competition.

**Excluded:** Cheese Curds, Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, Fromage Blanc, Fromage Frais, Mascarpone, Quark, and Ricotta

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KN.*

NO: Fresh Rindless Goat’s Milk Cheese Aged 0 to 30 Days (black ash coating permitted)

Extruded shape, goat logs, goat cheese in cylinders, buche style, etc.

Fresh goat cheese in containers, cups, tubs, cryovac bags

*(Cont.)*

NS: Fresh Goat's Milk Cheese Aged 0 to 30 Days – Hand-shaped, formed or molded into pyramid, disc, drum, crottin, basket or other shape (black ash coating permitted)

NT: Goat's Milk Cheese Aged 31 to 60 Days

NU: Goat's Milk Cheese Aged Over 60 Days

## **O. SHEEP'S MILK CHEESES**

Open to all shapes and styles of 100% sheep's milk cheeses; based on age at time of Judging & Competition.

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Category KO.*

OO: Fresh Rindless Sheep's Milk Cheese Aged 0 to 30 Days

OT: Sheep's Milk Cheese Aged 31 to 60 Days

OU: Sheep's Milk Cheese Aged Over 60 Days

## **P. MARINATED CHEESES**

Entries must identify the type of marinade (olive oil, safflower oil, vinegar, wine, spirits and liqueur, etc., including additional ingredients)

PC: Cheeses Marinated in Liquids and Ingredients – made from cow's milk

PG: Cheeses Marinated in Liquids and Ingredients – made from goat's milk

PS: Cheeses Marinated in Liquids and Ingredients – made from sheep's milk

PX: Cheeses Marinated in Liquids and Ingredients – made from mixed, or other milks

## **Q. CULTURED MILK and CREAM PRODUCTS**

Limited to Buttermilk, Yogurt, Sour Cream, Crème Fraiche, Kefir, Labneh, etc.

*Cultured products with any added flavors, please refer to Category KQ.*

*Cultured products made with added oil, please refer to Category P.*

QF: Crème Fraiche and Sour Cream Products – made from cow's milk

QK: Drinkable Cultured Products, Kefir, Drinkable Yogurt, Buttermilk, or other drinkable cultured products – all milks

QL: Labneh, Greek Style Yogurt, and Other Strained Cultured Products – all milks

QY: Yogurts – Plain with NO Additional Ingredients – made from cow's milk

QD: Yogurts – Plain with NO Additional Ingredients – made from goat's milk

QS: Yogurts – Plain with NO Additional Ingredients – made from sheep's milk

QX: Yogurts – Plain with NO Additional Ingredients – made from mixed, or other milks

## **R. BUTTERS**

Whey Butter, Salted Butter, Sweet Butter, Cultured Butter, etc.

*Butters with any added flavors, please refer to Category KR.*

RC: Salted Butter with or without cultures – made from cow's milk

RO: Unsalted Butter with or without cultures – made from cow's milk

RM: Butter with or without cultures – made from goat's milk

RS: Butter with or without cultures – made from sheep's milk

RX: Butter with or without cultures – made from mixed, or other milks

## **S. COLD-PACK AND CLUB CHEESES**

Produced by grinding and mixing one or more natural cheeses, without the aid of heat and/or emulsifying salts. Cold pack cheese and cheese food, unflavored – Maximum Moisture 42%.

*Cheeses with any added flavors, please refer to Categories KA, KC, or KS.*

**Excluded:** Pasteurized Process Cheese of any kind.

SC: Open Category – Cold-Pack and Club Cheeses – all milks

## **T. WASHED RIND CHEESES**

Cheeses with a rind or crust washed in salted brine, whey, beer, wine, other alcohol, or grape lees.

*(Cont.)*

TB: Soft-Ripened Washed Rind – Cheese using soft ripened cheese-make recipes with these differences from white mold rinds: elevated pH and lower acidity or high moisture over 42% or exhibiting an obvious smeared or sticky rind or crust (*B-Linens/ Brevibacterium*) – all milks

**Examples of bacterial surface-ripened cheeses in the style of:** Alsatian Munster, Chimay, Epoisses, Italic, Langres, Limburger, Pont L'Eveque, Robiola/Taleggio, St. Nectaire, Vacherin Mont d'Or.

**Excluded:** Brined/washed rind cheeses with very firm texture and a moisture content less than 42%. (Please refer to the Open Category – Washed Rind Cheeses below.)

TR: Raclette-style – Aged over 45 days – Alpine-style cheese able to be scraped when warmed and melts without excess free oil release – all milks **NOTE – All entries in this category will be cooked for judging.**

### **OPEN CATEGORY – WASHED RIND CHEESES**

This category is for cheese that does not belong in any of the above listed categories and that have a moisture content up to 42%.

**Examples:** Appenzeller-style, Vignerons-style, Alpine-style, Monastery-style

TC: Open Category – Washed Rind Cheeses – made from cow's milk

TG: Open Category – Washed Rind Cheeses – made from goat's milk

TS: Open Category – Washed Rind Cheeses – made from sheep's milk

TX: Open Category – Washed Rind Cheeses – made from mixed, or other milks