

Wisconsin GROCER

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE WISCONSIN GROCERS ASSOCIATION

Wisconsin Specialty Cheese

Driving Sales

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Driving Sales

with Wisconsin Specialty Cheese

Submitted by: Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

The best cheese in the world is made in Wisconsin. We believe that great cheese makes the world a better and happier place. We have a 175 year old tradition of cheese making excellence.

Wisconsin is the only state to require a license to make cheese and the only one to have a Master Cheesemaker Program outside of Europe. We make over 600 varieties, types and styles of cheese— more than any other state. We win more awards than any other state or country dominating both the World's and U.S. Cheese Championships. Almost fifty percent of specialty cheese produced in the United States comes from Wisconsin. It is a significant local heritage and a state treasure. You have an opportunity to capitalize on our cheesemaking history along with access to cheesemakers, our tradition and our innovation.

Why is this important to Wisconsin grocers?

We target the high value specialty cheese lover who accounts for 48% of total cheese sales. The cheese lover's basket ring is two times higher than the average shopper and the cheese purchase is connected to cross category purchases—magnifying value. Satisfaction with the specialty cheese case has a major impact on perception of overall store quality.

We have launched the Proudly Wisconsin Cheese badge and “The Most Awarded Cheese in the World” messaging

Retailer Testimonial:
Metcalf's

Metcalf's
Your local market since 1917

**I work as the cheesemonger/
Specialty Cheese manager for
Metcalf's Hilldale location. Our**

focus here is on the best local Wisconsin cheeses and carefully curated international selections. Customers come here because we carry an amazing variety of delicious cheeses as well as perfect accompaniments. For foodies, Metcalf's offers one-stop shopping for conscientiously produced products with exceptional flavor—award-winning Wisconsin cheese from small artisan producers, local preserves, crackers, charcuterie, and nuts. We are so proud to offer cheese from Uplands, Marieke, Hook's, Landmark, LaClare, Cedar Grove, Sartori, Roth, Roelli to name just a few. And we carry Quince & Apple, Potter's Crackers, Violet Rose, Underground meats, NutKrack, and Treat nuts in tandem with our cheese.

What we see are food enthusiasts who happily pick up assortments of specialty items, which have a proportionately higher price tag, especially when they entertain or plan a special meal. They see the value in pairing local cheese with local preserves, candied nuts, crisps and crackers. Not only do we help create a basket with a higher ring, we get to advocate for small producers and support the Wisconsin economy. I'm gratified every time a customer says we have the best selection of cheese and local products.

All the best, Sally Theys, Cheesemonger
Metcalf's Specialty Cheese

Retailer Testimonial: Festival Foods



Kyle Kress, Assistant Deli Manager at Festival Foods oversees Festival's specialty cheese areas, says they are

increasing their focus on Wisconsin made award winning cheeses because of the award winning selections to showcase and support the cheese industry in the state.

"There are so many producers of excellent cheeses right here in Wisconsin that we want to support", comments Kress. "We have built great relationships with many cheese manufacturers over the years and work closely to showcase their products. We work closely with cheese producers and companies to offer demos of existing and new items. Offering award winning cheese is important to foodies and gourmet home chefs—and helps us stay relevant in providing great products."

"The vast majority of Wisconsin cheeses go great with dinner, and also complement any charcuterie and snacking board! We work closely with the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin to stay current on what cheeses are trending and will continue to do so into the future."

to tell the stories behind the best cheese in the world, elevating perceptions and building preference for Wisconsin cheese. The Proudly Wisconsin Cheese badge was designed to clearly convey our championship pedigree. Our cheese company partners display the badge and for Master Cheesemakers, a new Master's Mark logo on their cheese packaging. We want all Wisconsin grocery and specialty cheese shops to immediately transition away from the old messaging and into the Proudly Wisconsin Cheese badge.

10 Ways Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Can Help Increase your Cheese Sales:

- 1. COMMUNICATIONS** Opt-in to receive our State of Cheese E-newsletter for timely information from in your state's Master Cheesemakers with heritage and traditions so rich you can taste them from Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin.
- 2. BADGE BRANDING** Support shopper awareness of the Proudly Wisconsin Cheese badge and Wisconsin identified cheeses with premium signage and displays for the store and around the cheese case.
- 3. POINT OF SALE** We offer a wide range of POS from channel strips, rail clips and decals to cheese contest scorecards that help sell award-winning Wisconsin cheese. See everything at WisconsinCheeseTools.com.
- 4. CHEESE CASE CONSULTATION** We can review your cheese case with you to suggest additional varieties and brands to help fill any gaps you might have.

Merchandising Assistance

Help shoppers identify and look for the Proudly Wisconsin Cheese badge on the packaging.



Contact us at WIRetail@WisconsinDairy.org for support with Wisconsin cheese promotions, merchandising and selection.

The complimentary assistance provided to retail by Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin is paid for by Wisconsin's dairy farm families. This marketing assistance is available for dairy products, primarily cheese, to increase the overall demand for Wisconsin dairy.

You'll find Proudly Wisconsin Cheese merchandising aids, consumer engagement, education and promotion (social/digital), and cheese selection, distribution and sales information (to help identify opportunities within the cheese case for cheese variety gap closures, new SKUs, distribution and sales strategy.)



Driving Sales

with Wisconsin Specialty Cheese

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- 5. DISTRIBUTION** Assistance in identifying Wisconsin cheese distribution chains and cheese companies.
- 6. CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT** Join our social game. We offer a library of constantly new and updated social and digital content that inspires consumer engagement and conversation online for Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Our website has world-class cheese content at WisconsinCheese.com.
- 7. BROCHURE BOX** We continue to offer our Wisconsin Cheese brochure box program with Wisconsin cheese travel maps and Grate.Pair.Share. consumer inspiration “Take One” brochures.
- 8. PROMOTIONS** Select from a variety of multi-faceted in-store promotional campaigns. We offer both seasonal and Wisconsin themed promotions to engage shoppers.
- 9. IN-STORE SPECIALS** Let’s discuss your sampling events, pairings, and **Cheese of the Month** introductions to explore opportunities together.
- 10. EDUCATION** Without knowledge we can’t get to passion for Wisconsin specialty cheese. We have online resources to help you educate, pairing ideas and fun facts for both your staff and customers.

With a world of incredible cheese all in one state – your state – why look anywhere else? Email us at WIRetail@WisconsinDairy.com and tell us how we can help you introduce your shoppers to their next favorite cheese.

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin (DFW) exists to increase sales of Wisconsin dairy. We are a non-profit marketing and promotion organization funded entirely by Wisconsin’s dairy farm families as part of the national dairy checkoff program. Our goal is to increase the sale and consumption of Wisconsin milk and dairy, with an emphasis on cheese because 90% of Wisconsin’s milk goes into cheese.

Crowd-Pleasers

Wisconsin Cheeseboard Pairings



The perfect cheeseboard will take your guests on a journey of flavor, color, and texture. It’s a delicious work of art that’s sure to please and easy to create.

Start with the very best cheese.

Wisconsin wins more awards than any other state or country, and is beloved around the world. And while it surely stands on its own, pairing Wisconsin cheese with the right accompaniments can elevate the flavors and take your tasting experience to the next level.

Pairing with Charcuterie

Strive for variety when selecting charcuterie and cheese. Assemble a mix of charcuterie representing different sizes, textures and types of meat. The cheeses should also vary in colors, textures and flavors. Try pairing fontina cheese with spicy, spreadable nduja; sliced salami with aged cheddar; smoky saucisson sec with blue cheese, and salty prosciutto with an aged gouda.

Temperature matters. Similar to cheese, the flavors in charcuterie develop as they come to room temperature. In order to experience the full range of notes and flavors, be sure to remove both from the refrigerator at least one hour before serving.

Pairing with Condiments & Preserves

Condiments such as mustards, balsamic vinegar, olive tapenade and fruit-based salsas are all terrific accompaniments. Just a drop of this or a dollop of that can take cheese to new heights of flavor. Try pairing olive tapenade with Italian-style cheeses such as fontina and provolone. Mild cheese such as gouda, Havarti and fresh mozzarella are great choices for salsas and flavorful mustards or vinegars. And don’t forget honey. It’s as heavenly with robust blue cheeses as it is drizzled on fresh cheese like ricotta and feta, or on aged cheddars and parmesan.

Preserves, chutneys and pastes lend just the right balance of sweet to cheese’s creamy texture and savory flavor. They come in many varieties that range from firm and sliceable to soft and spoonable. Favorite pairings include mango chutney with gouda, fig paste with alpine-style cheese, tomato conserve with fresh mozzarella, apple butter with cheddar cheese, and sour cherry jam with fontina cheese.



You'll know it's one of ours when you see the badge.



The Most Awarded Cheese In The World



WisconsinCheese.com

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Crowd-Pleasers

Wisconsin Cheeseboard Pairings
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Pairing with Olives & Pickled Vegetables

Olives and pickled vegetables offer salty, briny notes that cut through the creamy, richness of cheese and charcuterie, balancing the flavors of the pairing and cleansing the palate for another bite. Pickled vegetables also add a welcome crunch that contrasts the creamy texture of cheese. Offer a variety of olives and crunchy cornichons, as well as pickled vegetables, such as asparagus, green beans, Brussel sprouts, mushrooms and onions. Pickled vegetables are available in a range of flavors – from a clean, balanced and briny flavor to something sweet, sour, salty or spicy. Cheeses that are naturally lower in salt and higher in fat, such as a triple crème cheese pair well with pickled vegetables. Or, try them with the bold flavors of aged cheddar or Swiss cheeses.

Marieke Gouda
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clashing flavors of citrus and high-acid fruits, such as oranges, grapefruit and pineapple. Whenever possible, select seasonal fruit for the best flavors.

Dried fruits like apricots, mangos, dates, figs, pineapple, cranberries and cherries add rich and intense flavors that marry well with heartier, more aged cheeses. Try pairing an aged parmesan with dried pineapple, dried cranberries with a robust cheddar, or dried cherries with an aged alpine-style cheese.

Start with Wisconsin cheese and you're already on the path to success.

Made by pioneers, explorers and dreamers, Wisconsin cheesemakers are masters of their craft; third- and fourth-generation artisans carry on a tradition that spans more than 175 years.

Pairing Wisconsin Cheese with Crackers & Bread

Bread and cheese are perfect partners. If offering just one type of bread, opt for a plain, sliced French baguette. It's mild, delicious and never dominating. For extra appeal, experiment with assorted specialty breads. Try cranberry-walnut with cheddar or blue; sesame boule with brie or mixed-milk cheeses; pita with feta; marble rye with Swiss or alpine cheeses.

Crackers come in a myriad of shapes, sizes and flavors. Select the cracker styles according to the cheeses being served. Pair simple water crackers with light-flavored cheeses like havarti and muenster. Heartier wheat or multigrain crackers are best with bold cheeses such as provolone, aged cheddar and blue cheese.

Pairing with Gourmet Nuts

Nuts, whether salty, spicy, candied, herbed or crunchy are a terrific textural complement to the natural creaminess of cheese. Try contrasting and complementing combinations. For example, sweet candied nuts pair well with salty blue cheese. The nutty notes in almonds enhance the nutty flavors in Swiss cheese.

Winning choices are walnuts, pecans, almonds, cashews, pistachios and hazelnuts. Pecans are a true stand out – their slightly sweet, mild flavor pairs well with just about any cheese. A couple pairings for inspiration: pistachios with parmesan and walnuts with Havarti.

Pairing Fresh & Dried Fruits

Fresh fruits, such as berries, grapes, apples, pears, melons, stone fruits and figs provide a sweet, refreshing complement to younger, fresher cheeses and soft-ripened varieties. Gouda, Havarti, fresh mozzarella and brie all make excellent cheese pairings for fresh fruit. Avoid the