



# **Outstanding Wins for Prairie Farms Cheeses at U.S. Championship Cheese Contest Prairie Farms Sweeps Cottage Cheese Category**

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EDWARDSVILLE – The 21st biennial United States Championship Cheese Contest, a technical competition for cheese, butter, and yogurt makers, was held in Green Bay, Wisconsin last week. A team of technical judges from across the country met for three days to evaluate the best U.S. cheeses from dozens of manufacturers on a variety of technical merits, including flavor, body, texture, salt, color, finish, and packaging.

After all the votes were counted, Prairie Farms received eight top cheese awards and swept the cottage cheese category.



“Starting the year with multiple awards from this prestigious contest affirms the commitment of our dairy farmers and cheesemakers to work together to produce the very best cheese. The contest judges recognized their hard work, and I couldn’t be more proud of their accomplishments,” said Matt McClelland, CEO/EVP of Prairie Farms. “As a farmer-owned cooperative, we have complete control of the farm-to-table cycle. The awards are the result of a genuine team effort between our dairy farmers and cheesemakers to convert our high-quality milk into best-of-class cheese and dairy products.”

Prairie Farms’ Quincy, Illinois Team earned an impressive 98.6 score with Small Curd 2% Cottage Cheese for the ‘Best of Class’ win. The Quincy team also achieved a second-place finish with a 98.495 score for its Large Curd 4% Cottage Cheese. Quincy went on to sweep the category with a third-place finish and a 98.25 score for Small Curd 4% Cottage Cheese.

Following the big wins for cottage cheese were top finishes for the Prairie Farms Mindoro, Wisconsin Team in the Blue Veined Cheeses Category. They earned a nearly perfect 99.675 score and second place for Pasteurized Blue Cheese wheel. Mindoro’s Heat Treated Blue Cheese wheel was not far behind, with a third-place finish and highly

notable 99.475 score. Prairie Farms' Caves of Faribault, Minnesota Team took an exciting second-place finish and 99.25 score for AmaGorg® Gorgonzola Cheese wheel. Prairie Farms' Shullsburg, Wisconsin Team grabbed a respectable third place finish with a 98.965 score for Sweet Peppa Cheddar™ in the Open Class: Pepper Flavored Cheese, Mild Heat category. Prairie Farms' Luana, Iowa Team wrapped up a successful week of wins for the company, receiving a bronze finish and a 98.4 score for its cream cheese brick.

The U.S. Cheese Contest awards follow big wins for Prairie Farms' cottage cheese, Swiss cheese, and yogurt at the National Milk Producers Federation Cheese and Yogurt Contest last November. Prairie Farms received 18 total awards, the most of any company competing in that contest. The United States Championship Cheese Contest is the nation's premier technical cheese, butter, and yogurt competition. The U.S. Contest is hosted by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association biennially since 1981. Entries are evaluated by a team of skilled technical judges from across the nation. Starting from a maximum possible 100 points, deductions are made for various defects found by each judge.

A Gold medal, Silver medal and Bronze medal are awarded to the three highest-scoring entries in each class. Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. is one of the largest and most successful dairy cooperatives operating in the Midwest and the South. Elements of the cooperative include more than 600 farm families, 7,000 team members, 50 manufacturing plants, over 100 distribution facilities, and annual sales of over \$4.2 billion. Prairie Farms is a nationally recognized leader in the dairy industry known for setting the standard for milk flavor innovations and producing award-winning milk, cheese, and cultured dairy products.

With headquarters in Edwardsville, Ill., the Prairie Farms distribution footprint covers over 30 percent of the United States; products are available in grocery chains, mass merchandiser stores, club stores, convenience stores, dollar stores, drug stores, schools, foodservice outlets, and warehouse distribution centers. For more information about Prairie Farms please visit [www.prairiefarms.com](http://www.prairiefarms.com).