

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Wisconsin Masters' Technical Expertise Shines at U.S. Championship Cheese Contest**

Madison, Wis. – At the March 2007 United States Championship Cheese Contest, the nation's largest and toughest technical cheesemaking competition, Wisconsin's Master Cheesemakers were well represented among top-tier winners. These veteran craftsmen have completed the rigorous three-year Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® training program and, as a result, routinely make a strong showing in national and international competitions.

In total, 12 Wisconsin Masters won 22 awards, and cheeses produced by or with the involvement of Master Cheesemakers won 15 percent of all Best of Class medals at the contest. Sponsored biennially by the Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association, the event this year drew a record 1,158 entries from all across the country.

Indeed, graduates of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program often say it's the technical expertise they gain that's of greatest value as they continue in their cheesemaking careers. Insights gained enable them to fit the many and variable pieces of the cheesemaking puzzle together; to understand not just how things work, but why; and to manipulate their products based not just on art, experience and instinct, but also on science.

“Given the skills they bring to the program and the advanced training that the Masters receive, it's no surprise that their cheeses are judged so highly in both domestic and international competitions,” says Patrick Geoghegan, senior vice president of corporate communications for the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, a sponsor of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® program. “This particular competition, which focuses exclusively on technical cheesemaking perfection, really allows their expertise to shine through.”

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The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program is the only Master program in the United States. It is administered by the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research and funded by Wisconsin dairy producers, through WMMB. Participants must be active, licensed Wisconsin cheesemakers with at least 10 years' experience. Cheesemakers can earn certification in up to two cheese varieties each time they enroll and must have been making those varieties as a licensed cheesemaker for a minimum of five years prior to entering the program.

The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, a nonprofit organization funded by the state's dairy farmers, promotes the consumption of Wisconsin Cheese and other dairy products.

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Note to Editors: A complete listing of awards won by Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers at the 2007 United States Championship Cheese Contest follows.

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Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers winning top awards at the 2007 United States Championship Cheese Contest were:

- **Ron Buholzer, Klondike Cheese Co., Monroe:** *Best of Class, Muenster*
- **Sid Cook, Carr Valley Cheese, La Valle:** *Best of Class, Vergin Pine Native Sheep; Bronze Award, Cranberry-Chipotle Cheddar; Bronze Award, Applewood Smoked Cheddar; Bronze Award, Snow White Goat; Bronze Award, Black Sheep Truffle; Bronze Award, Cocoa Cardona; Bronze Award, Cave Aged Marisa*
- **Gary Grossen, Babcock Dairy Plant, Madison:** *Best of Class, Gouda*
- **Kerry Henning, Henning's Cheese, Kiel:** *Best of Class, Heritage Colby; Best of Class, Tomato Basil Cheddar*
- **Roger Krohn, Trega Foods, Luxemburg:** *Bronze Award, Low-Moisture Whole-Milk Mozzarella*
- **Randy La Grander, La Grander's Hillside Dairy, Inc., Stanley\*:** *Bronze Award, Colby Longhorn; Bronze Award, Monterey Jack Longhorn*
- **Terry Lensmire, Trega Foods, Luxemburg:** *Best of Class, Part-Skim Mozzarella; Best of Class, Provolone*
- **Jake Niffenegger, Lactalis USA, Belmont\*:** *Bronze Award, Brie*
- **Myron Olson, Chalet Cheese Co-op, Monroe:** *Best of Class, Limburger*
- **Daniel Stearns, Trega Foods, Weyauwega:** *Best of Class, Mild Cheddar*
- **Steve Stettler, Decatur Dairy, Brodhead:** *Bronze Award, Havarti*
- **Joe Widmer, Widmer's Cheese Cellars, Theresa\*:** *Bronze Award, Washed-Rind Brick Cheese Cold Pack*
- **Bob Wills, Cedar Grove Cheese, Plain\*:** *Bronze Award, Pesto Cheddar*

\* Indicates Masters who participated on winning cheesemaking teams.

**Editor's Note:**

**For audio clips and high-resolution photos visit [www.wisdairy.com/07mcm](http://www.wisdairy.com/07mcm).**