

D. CHEESE PRODUCTION

Cheese Production Overview

Continuing a long-term upward trend, the total production of cheese in the United States reached a record high of 10.1 billion pounds in 2009, an increase of 2 percent over 2008. Production of all cheese types showed growth in 2009. Within the American style cheese category, cheddar cheese production increased by about 0.7 percent in 2009, while other American cheeses, including Colby, Monterey Jack, increased 7.9 percent over 2008.

U.S. production of Italian-style cheeses increased slightly (1.4 percent) to 4,180 billion pounds. Mozzarella, which represents more than 78 percent of this category, increased slightly (1.4 percent) in 2009.

Given that there are more than 300 varieties of cheese sold in the United States, many varieties fall into the “other natural cheeses” category, meaning that they are neither Italian nor American types. Overall, this category increased by 2.6 percent in 2009 and reached a new high of 1,727 million pounds. Individual varieties also exhibiting steady growth included Swiss (up 9.6 percent) and Hispanic-style cheeses (up 6.3 percent).

Two states dominate U.S. cheese production: Wisconsin and California. In 2009, Wisconsin remained the largest cheese-producing state. With its production of almost 2.63 billion pounds, it represents approximately 26 percent of the U.S. total. California continued as a strong second, producing more than 2.1 billion pounds of cheese in 2009. Adding in Idaho, New York and Minnesota, the top five cheese producing states accounted for almost 69 percent of all U.S. cheese production in 2009.

Data from the most recent Census of Manufacturing in 2007 show that the total wholesale value of cheese and cheese products manufactured in the United States was \$33 billion. That year, the cheese manufacturing industry employed 41,400 people with total compensation of \$2.12 billion. There were 481 plants reporting cheese manufacturing activities in 2007.