



# ENTRY PACK

NZ Champions of Cheese Awards

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2024



NZ SPECIALIST  
CHEESEMAKERS  
ASSOCIATION

# NZ Champions of Cheese Awards

## About

Founded in 2004 the NZ Champions of Cheese Awards is this country's only national cheese competition. Each year these Awards celebrate Aotearoa's finest cheese.

Local cheesemakers are encouraged to submit their cheese for consideration with the assurance judging is objective, transparent and conducted by an independent panel of experts.



## Judging

Judging is led by Master Judge, Jason Tarrant. The panel is made up of over 30 of New Zealand's leading cheese experts, food judges and chefs. The judges represent a cross-section of the industry and bring technical, culinary, scientific, and commercial expertise to the awards.

The judging venue is Wintec Te Pūkenga Hospitality School, Rotokauri Campus, Hamilton.

## What's New in the 2024 NZ Champions of Cheese Awards

A review of the existing categories has been undertaken following the 2023 Awards.

Where possible all milk types (cow, sheep, goat, buffalo, deer) will now compete in each category.

Aged Cheddar categories have been revised in Retail and Bulk categories to; less than 12 months, 13-24 months and greater than 25 months.

The Farmhouse Category definition has been broadened to include cheese made with unstandardised farmhouse milk sourced from a single farm and to include handmade by traditional methods in an open vat.

**Goats' milk cheese** – Best in Class will be awarded to the highest scoring cheese.

**Sheep milk cheese** – Best in Class will be awarded to the highest scoring cheese.

**Buffalo milk cheese** – Best in Class will be awarded to the highest scoring cheese.

# Competition Information

## Timeline

<b>Webinar on entry details</b>	Dec	2023
<b>Entries open</b>	4 Dec	
<b>Entries close</b>	21 Feb	
<b>Samples delivered</b>	28 & 29 Feb	
<b>Judging</b>	3 March	
<b>Audit</b>	4 to 7 March	2024
<b>Results sent out to entrants</b>	From 18 March	
<b>Medal Media Release</b>	26 March	
<b>Gala Dinner</b>	2 May	
<b>Trophies announced</b>	3 May	

## How to Enter

### Sending your cheese entries

**Delivery between 9 am – 4 pm  
Wednesday 28 February and  
Thursday 29 February 2024**

Please send samples to the attention of:

Keith Clark  
For NZ Champions of Cheese Awards  
c/- Wintec Hospitality  
L Block 51 Akoranga Road  
Avalon  
Hamilton 3200  
Waikato

Keith: 027 497 4706

# Entry Instructions

Congratulations on your decision to enter the 2024 NZ Champions of Cheese Awards. This is your opportunity to present your specialty cheeses to the expert judging panel for assessment.

All the important dates, competition details and Terms and Conditions are contained in this document, so please read the whole document carefully before entering to make sure that you don't miss anything.

Entries can be completed online at [www.nzsca.org.nz](http://www.nzsca.org.nz). A separate online form must be completed for each entry.

For multiple entries of more than 10 please contact Carmel Clark: [admin@nzsca.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzsca.org.nz) for a spreadsheet entry form. **(Please do not use previous versions as there have been numerous changes).**

## Entry Fees

**Members:** \$75 + GST (\$86.25) per entry

**Non-members:** \$150 +GST (\$172.50) per entry



ASSOCIATION OF  
**CHEESE**  
AWARDS



# Categories

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The NZ Champions of Cheese 2024 categories and trophies are:

NZ Champion of Champions (Commercial)  
NZ Champion of Champions (Mid-sized)  
NZ Champion of Champions (Boutique)  
NZ Champion Cheesemaker  
NZ Champion Original Cheese  
NZ Champion Blue Cheese  
NZ Champion New Cheese  
NZ Champion Soft White Rind Cheese  
NZ Champion Greek-Style or Danish-Style Cheese  
NZ Champion Fresh Italian-Style Cheese  
NZ Champion Fresh Unripened Cheese  
NZ Champion Dutch-Style Cheese  
NZ Champion European-Style Cheese  
NZ Champion Farmhouse Cheese  
NZ Champion Washed Rind Cheese  
NZ Champion Aged Flavoured Added Cheese  
NZ Champion Fresh Flavoured Added Cheese  
NZ Champion Retail Cheddar Cheese  
NZ Champion Bulk Cheddar Cheese  
NZ Champion Goats' Milk Cheese  
NZ Champion Sheep Milk Cheese  
NZ Champion Buffalo Milk Cheese  
NZ Champion Export Cheese  
Special Awards  
Cheese Lovers' Choice  
Chefs' Choice  
Sustainability Award

*Note the Aspiring Cheesemaker is judged every two years (next is 2025)*

## Supreme Champion Awards

The NZ Champions of Champions Awards 2024 categories are:

- Less than 10 tonnes (Boutique)
- 10-100 tonnes (Medium-sized cheese company)
- 101+ tonnes (Commercial or Large cheese company)

Export and Chefs' Choice Trophy winners are not eligible for Supreme Champion Awards.

## Sustainability Award

A separate entry form is to be completed for this award. The entries are assessed by representatives from Woolworths NZ and the NZ Champions Cheese Master Judge.

## Amateur Cheesemaker Award

This is judged in September, with the winners announced at the end of NZ Cheese Month. The winner is invited to accept their trophy at the 2024 NZ Champions of Cheese Gala Awards Dinner.

## Champion Cheesemaker

Cheeses are entered and labelled for judging specifically for this category. Each cheesemaker enters **three different styles of cheese**. These three cheeses are one single entry. There are no medals, only one winner. The judges will consider all three products and score each of the three products with the highest total score being the winner. Duplicate entries are permitted.

## Chefs' Choice

This is judged by a panel of chefs, with one winner chosen. There are no medals assigned in this category. Duplicates are permitted in this category as it is judged by chefs under different criteria, reflecting use of the cheese in their restaurants. **Limited to a maximum of two entries per company.**

# Category Definitions

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## A. Fresh Unripened Cheese (all animals milk)

Prepared for consumption without the flavour enhancement of ripening or curing or the addition of moulds. Usually not brined or washed and not stored at specific humidity or temperatures for the purpose of added flavour or character development; Fresh cheese ranging between mild to high acidity e.g. Fromage Frais, Quark, Paneer, Labna

## B. Blue Cheese (all animals milk)

Mild Blue Cheeses inoculated with *Penicillium Roqueforti* or *Penicillium Glaucum* and finished with a coating of *Penicillium Candidum*.

Brined, Brushed, Pressed or Natural Rind cheeses that display interior veining achieved through inoculation with *Penicillium Roqueforti* or *Penicillium Glaucum*, natural curing, and/or cave-ripening methods.

## C. Bulk or Large Block Cheddar

Cheeses that are traditionally milled and 'cheddared' to achieve correct Cheddar acidity, moisture and texture or stirred curd cheddar which is unable to be separated from the original. MUST be a whole cheese of 5kg to 20kg nominal size.

## D. Dutch-Style Cheese (all animals milk)

Entries that generally follow the original recipe for those cheeses internationally recognized as originating from The Netherlands: Edam, Gouda, Leyden, Maasdammer, Leerdammer, Smoked Gouda etc.

## E. European-Style Cheese (all animals milk)

Entries that generally follow the original recipes for those cheeses internationally recognized as originating from Old World/European countries.

Exempt: Feta, Halloumi Dutch styles, Cheddars, Blue Veined, Fresh Unripened, Soft Ripened/White Mould and Washed Rind Cheeses.

## F. Greek-Style or Danish-Style cheese (all animals milk)

Fresh cheeses prepared for consumption with flavour enhancement through minimal curing / ripening and brining. Typically, Feta and Halloumi but may include other varieties.

## G. Fresh Flavour Added Cheese

Fresh cheese younger than three months, including cream cheese or Feta, with added flavouring ingredients. e.g. nuts, herbs, seeds etc.

## H. Aged Flavour Added Cheese

Aged cheeses including Camembert, Cheddar, Havarti, Parmesan with flavouring ingredients. e.g. nuts, herbs, seeds etc.

## L. Farmhouse Cheese (all animals milk)

- Cheese must be entered and sent for judging specifically for this category. This category is NOT a tick the box as in previous years.
- Made with unstandardised farmhouse milk sourced from a single farm.
- Hand made by traditional methods in an open vat.
- Cheeses entered here must NOT be entered elsewhere.

## M. Fresh Italian-Style Cheese (all animals milk)

All Ricotta, Mozzarella, Mascarpone and fresh Italian cheeses must be entered in this category.

## N. New Cheese (all animals milk)

Cheeses entered here may be entered elsewhere. They must be launched between July 2022 and January 2024.

# Category Definitions *Continued*

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## O. Original Cheese (all animals milk)

- Cheeses entered here must NOT be entered elsewhere.
- This category is open to any New Zealand cheese that complies with three criteria:
- Of an original NZ recipe or process. Explain why or how this is unique.
- The cheese must display a local character or unique local quality that is distinctly New Zealand.
- The cheese must be distinguished with a unique name.

(Examples of New Zealand original cheese from past competitions are Egmont, Ahjette, Kikorangi, Mirandale, Arani, Sting, Mt. Hector, Aged Deer Gouda)

## R. Retail Cheddar Cheese (all animals milk)

- Cheeses entered here must NOT be entered elsewhere.
- Cheeses submitted in retail branded packaging. Stewards will remove packaging prior to judging.

(Includes Cheddar and Cheddar styles: Cheddar, Colby, Red Leicester, Gloucester, Cheshire etc)

## S. Soft Ripened Cheese – white mould rind (all animals milk)

From moulds such as *Penicillium Candidum* and *Geotrichum Candidum*. Ripening occurs from the rind toward the centre.

## T. Chefs' Choice Award (all animals milk)

This category will be judged by a panel of chefs and as such cheeses entered here MAY be entered elsewhere. Note that duplicates are permitted in this category.

## U. Champion Cheesemaker (all animals milk)

- One exhibit consisting of three separate cheeses. The winner is the cheesemaker that made the highest scoring three cheeses submitted.
- Entrants MUST submit three cheeses of different styles which will be judged, and the three scores added to decide the highest score. To assist the judges, identification of the styles of the three cheeses must be specified and accompany the cheese.
- No medals will be awarded, only the title of Champion Cheesemaker.

## W. Washed Rind Cheese (all animals milk)

Cheeses rubbed, brushed or washed in a liquid while curing. Liquid can be brine, whey, wine or spirits and may contain surface colonising bacteria such as *Brevibacterium linens*.

## X. Export Cheese

Cheeses entered here may be entered elsewhere. Limited to cheeses produced for export markets and sold internationally.

## Z. Best in Class for Goats' milk, Sheep milk and Buffalo milk cheeses

Goats' milk, Sheep milk and Buffalo milk cheeses are to be entered into the general category most closely related to the type of cheese.



# Terms and Conditions

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## Product Eligibility

1. The product must be manufactured in New Zealand.
2. Products must be commercially available in the New Zealand marketplace i.e. retail outlets, online, farmers' markets etc at the time of judging. Excludes Export products.
3. The product, its packaging and associated advertising (including official website, Facebook, Instagram, You Tube etc) must meet the requirements of all New Zealand legislation including Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, Fair Trading Act 1986 and either the Animal Products Act 1999 or the Food Act 2014.

## Entry

4. Entry forms must be accurate and complete, failure to complete the form correctly may disqualify the entrant.
5. Entry forms and payment must be submitted online during 29 December 2023 to 21 February 2024.
6. For larger company's entries may be completed via the official entry spreadsheet and invoiced. Early or late entries will not be accepted.
7. All completed entries become the property of the NZ Specialist Cheese Association.
8. You may enter any number of different cheeses, but each cheese requires a separate entry form and can only be entered in a class and category once (excluding Chefs' Choice, Export, New Cheese, and Champion Cheesemaker categories).
9. Entries in Chefs' Choice are limited to two entries per company.

10. Cheese judging samples must be sent for each entry.
11. When completing the online entry form, complete an answer in ALL boxes. If the question is not relevant put 'not applicable'. If you are unsure of which category your product should be entered under, please write TBC and it will be categorised for you.
12. By submitting an entry, you give permission for your details to be shared with NZ Champions of Cheese Awards partners.

## Fee and payment terms

13. You may enter each product for a fee of \$75 + GST (members) or \$150 + GST (non-members).
14. Entries can be completed online at [www.nzzca.org.nz](http://www.nzzca.org.nz) OR for multiple entries please contact Carmel Clark [admin@nzzca.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzzca.org.nz) for a spreadsheet entry form.
15. If payment is not received prior to 11.59 pm on 21 February, without prior communication with the organisers, the entry will not be valid.
16. There will be no refund if a product needs to be withdrawn after an entry has been paid for. However if you contact the Organisers before entries close they may be able to accept an alternative product in its place. No product details can be changed by the entrant after the entry period closes.

## Product Samples

17. All valid entrants into the competition will receive an email from the NZSCA with clear instructions on the requirements and process to be followed to get the cheese to be judged.

# Terms and Conditions *Continued*

18. Entry ID numbers will be sent to entrants electronically when all entries have been processed. Entrants must ensure that each product sent for judging is labelled with the correct ID number.

19. Winners may be asked to provide product for publicity purposes.

## Delivery

20. It is the responsibility of the entrants to ensure prompt delivery of all products for judging in the timeframe specified.

21. NZSCA will not accept responsibility in the event of any accident, loss or damage from whatever cause, arising to any cheese or non-delivery of cheese.

22. Judging will take place at Wintec Te Pūkenga Hospitality School, Rotokauri Campus, Hamilton.

23. Please use the box template label provided on all products.

24. On arrival cheeses will be held in chilled storage. On the day prior to judging cheeses will be brought to as close as 10 – 12°C as possible overnight and be at 12 – 14°C for judging.

25. The cheeses will be re-wrapped after their category has been judged with re-labelling of the unique entry number if necessary. The cheeses will be kept together as a category throughout their movement from storage to judging room and back to storage.

## Product samples for Judging

26. Small Cheesemakers

- Enough product must be entered to judge over two to three rounds, firstly the medal judging, then assuming it is a high gold medal or wins the category, it will then be judged again for the Champion of Champions, and a further sample will be tried.

- If a sample of insufficient size is submitted, it may not be possible to be judged for the final Champion of Champions round.
- A minimum of 1 kg should be submitted from the same production batch. All cheeses under 1kg should be entered whole and uncut without any brand identity.

27. Medium and Large Cheesemakers

- Whole cheeses are preferred but if this is not possible the recommended minimum is 5kg without any brand identity.
- If a whole cheese is 1 kg or under, a minimum of 1kg should be submitted from the same production batch. All cheeses under 1kg should be entered whole and uncut without any brand identity unless the conditions state otherwise. (refer Retail Cheddar category)

## Category Rules

28. In the case of a dispute, the Master Judge will have the final decision on which category a cheese falls under. The organisers will seek to communicate with entrants and resolve any uncertainty prior to deferring to the Master Judge.

29. The Master Judge reserves the right to cancel or alter categories/classes without notification.

30. Specific category criteria are included under terms and conditions and on the NZSCA website.

## Selection of medallists and category winners

31. The judges will assess all products and award medals according to judging criteria.

32. The top gold medal products in each class by Boutique, Medium and Large Cheese Company will be rejudged for the NZ Champions of Champions Supreme Awards.

# Terms and Conditions *Continued*

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## Use of the NZ Champions of Cheese Brand

33. The NZ Champions of Cheese Award brand gold, silver, bronze, and trophy medal awards stickers are available to winners and are provided in a digital format.
34. Medal award stickers may be purchased from Kiwi Labels.
35. No person or entity has the right to reproduce the medal award stickers other than the official supplier, Kiwi Labels, unless the person or entity has a specific Licensing Agreement with the NZSCA.
36. For large volume sales, the awards brand medal logos can be incorporated onto brand packaging if it forms part of a single label on a product pack. All artwork for medals must be approved by NZSCA before printing. A NZ Champions of Cheese Brand Manual is available with guidelines for correct uses, colours, sizes etc.
37. If any company is found to use the NZ Champions of Cheese Awards medals on any cheese other than that which received the medal they will risk disqualification from future entry.
38. The medal awarded applies only to the cheese entered but may include any alternative brand names listed on the entry form if these are nominated prior to judging.
39. Medals are not to be used for longer than three years from when the award is made in March each year. This means following the Champions of Cheese Awards 2024, your cheeses should only carry medals from 2021 (to March 2024), 2022, 2023 and 2024 (from April 2024).

## Changes to the Terms and Awards process

40. You acknowledge that circumstances may arise which necessitate changes to either or both of these Terms and Conditions and the NZSCA judging process.
41. The NZSCA reserve the right to amend these Terms and Conditions and the processes relating to the NZ Champions of Cheese Awards, including a postponement or cancellation of the Awards as NZSCA considers reasonable. (Including the health or safety of any person or as a result of government orders or directions).

## General

42. Judges reserve the right to buy other supplies of a product if they believe that the product supplied is not representative of the product sold to the local or export market.
43. The decision of the judges in relation to any aspect of the competition is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
44. In entering the competition entrants confirm that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest relating to the entry. If a perceived conflict of interest exists then entrants must disclose this to the NZSCA and Organisers.
45. NZSCA will collect, store, use and disclose information of entrants for the purpose of administering the competition in accordance with the provisions of these Terms and Conditions, the Privacy Act 2020 and other laws and regulations.



# Appendix One

Categories and Sub-Categories (for reference only)

Categories	Class	Class Code
<b>A. Fresh Unripened (all species milk)</b> (in brine or wrapped but not in oil)	Cottage Cheese	AA
	Crème Fraiche	AB
	Paneer	AC
	Lactic curd	AD
	Labna	AE
	Cream Cheese & Neufchatel	AF
<b>B. Blue Cheese (all species milk)</b>	Natural Rind Blue	BA
	White Mould Rind Blue	BB
	Blue Cheese – added cream	BC
	Open Class – blue cheese from mixed milks	BE
<b>C. Bulk or Large Block Cheddar Cheese</b>	American Originals – cheddar style: Colby, Monterey Jack etc	CA
	Cheddars aged less than 12 months	CB
	Cheddars aged over 12 months	CC
<b>D. Dutch-Style Cheese</b>	Gouda Cheese aged over 9 months	DA
These entries may be full or part wheel or retail packs. 3 retail portions of a minimum of 1kg, wheels also accepted but not required	Edam cheese aged over 9 months	DB
	Edam Cheese	DE
	Flavour added Dutch style cheese, includes Leyden	DF
	Gouda Cheese	DG

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Categories and Sub-Categories (for reference only)

Categories	Class	Class Code
<b>E. NZ made European-Style Cheese</b>	British Style – Cheshire, territorials	EA
(exempt – Feta, Halloumi Dutch styles, Cheddars, Blue Veined, Fresh Unripened, Soft Ripened/White Mould and Washed Rind Cheeses)	Danish Style – Havarti	EB
	French Style – Comte, Tomme de Savoie,	EC
	Grana Style – Parmesan, Aged Asiago, Montasio	ED
	Mediterranean Style – Spanish Manchego, Italian Asiago Style	EE
	Pasta Filata Style – Provolone, String Cheese	EF
	Swiss Style – Raclette, Emmental, Sbrinz, Gruyere etc.	EG
<b>F. Greek/Danish-Style Cheese</b>	Feta - Traditional	FA
	Feta – Low salt open class all milks	FB
	Feta – made by ultra-filtration	FC
	Halloumi	FD
	Halloumi Flavoured	FE
<b>G. Fresh flavour added cheese</b> (includes cream cheese and Feta)	Cheeses Flavoured – all ingredients	IA
	Open Class for all soft white mould ripened cheeses with added flavours	IB
	Open Class for all Un-ripened Cheeses with Added Flavours	IC
	Open Class for all Smoked Cheese	ID
	Cheese Marinated in Oil	IE
<b>J. Aged Flavour Added Cheese</b> (include cheddar, Havarti, parmesan)	Cheeses Flavoured – all ingredients	JA
	Open Class for all Smoked Cheese	JB
<b>L. Farmhouse Cheese</b>		LA

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Categories and Sub-Categories (for reference only)

Categories	Class	Class Code
<b>M. Fresh Italian-Style Cheese</b>	Mozzarella – Fresh in Brine	MA
	Mozzarella – Burrata Style	MB
	Pasta Filata – Mozzarella (pizza type)	MC
	Ricotta	MD
	Mascarpone	ME
	Stracchino	MF
	Scarmorze	MG
	Squacaronone	MH
	Italian-Style Smoked Cheese – Scarmorza, Stracciatella, Mozzarella etc.	MI
	Stracciatella	MJ
<b>N. New Cheese</b>	New Unripened Fresh cheese	NA
	New Blue Cheese	NB
	New Cheddar	NC
	New Cheddar Aged Over 13 Months	ND
	New Flavoured Cheese – All Milks	NE
	New Firm Cheese – All Milks	NF
	Open Class – All Milks or Milk Blends	NG
	New Soft Ripened Cheese – White Mould Rind	NH
	New other (specify type)	NZ

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Categories and Sub-Categories (for reference only)

Categories	Class	Class Code
<b>O. Original New Zealand Cheese</b>	Original Cheese	OA
<b>R. Retail Cheddar Cheese</b>	Cheddars Aged Less Than 12 Months	RA
	Cheddars 12 – 24 Months	RB
	Cheddars over 25 Months	RC
	Flavour Added	RD
	Smoked	RE
	American Originals – Cheddar-Style; Colby, Red Leicester, Gloucester, Cheshire etc	RF
<b>S. Soft Ripened Cheese:</b>	Camembert Style	SA
White Mould Rind	Open Class for Cream Added Cheeses	SB
(excluding Soft Ripened Blue Cheeses)	Open Class for Milk Blends (specify blend)	SC
<b>T. Chefs' Choice</b>	Open Class for all Milks and Cheese Types	TA
<b>U. Champion Cheesemaker</b>	Open Class for All milks And Cheese Types – enter 3 individual cheeses	UA
<b>W. Washed Rind Cheese</b>	Washed Rind Cheese	WA
	Open Class – all milk blends (specify blend)	WB
<b>X. Export Cheese</b> (cheeses made for export)	Blue Style Cheeses	XB
	Cheddar Style Cheeses	XC
	Dutch Style Cheeses	XD
	European Style Cheeses	XE
	Feta Style Cheeses	XF
	Fresh Flavour-Added Cheeses	XG
	Aged Flavour-Added Cheeses	XH
	NZ Original Cheese	XI
	Soft Ripened – White Mould Rind Cheese	XJ
	Fresh Un-ripened Cheese	XK
	Washed Rind Cheese	XL



# Thank you

