



Canadian Cheese Awards

Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens

Call for Entries

Guidelines for Canadian Cheese Producers

The mission of **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens** is three-fold:

- to promote the best in Canadian cheese of all milks,
- to create a recognized symbol of excellence for all Canadian cheese,
- to offer expert feedback to producers who submit entries by providing them with evaluation reports prepared by the judges.

We aim to honour cheese that has achieved technical excellence and exhibits the highest aesthetic qualities. In the end, it comes down to flavour, aroma and texture.

WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE

Here are the key dates for the 2016 **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens**:

- **January 7:** Online registration of entries begins at CheeseAwards.ca.
- **February 12:** Entry registration closes.
- **February 16 and 17:** Cheese shipments received at the judging venue, University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, Guelph, Ontario. Deliveries on February 17 must arrive by 12 noon.
- **February 18 and 19:** Judging takes place at University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, with Dr. Art Hill serving as Chief Judge and an Awards Jury of 12 experts in cheese.
- **March 1:** Finalists announced by the Awards Organizing Committee headed by Georgs Kolesnikovs.
- **April 14:** Results of the competition announced during an Awards Ceremony in conjunction SIAL Canada: International Food & Beverage Tradeshow at Palais des Congrès, Montréal, followed by an Awards Tasting Gala for trade and media, then open the public.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens is open to cheese produced in Canada using the pure milk of Canadian cows, goats, sheep and water buffalo—with no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives, and no modified milk ingredients. The biennial competition is open to licensed producers, federal or provincial.

As part of the entry process, you will be asked to confirm that your entry meets these essential requirements.

Cheeses must be entered as whole wheels, loaves, or blocks. Cheese must be presented in the form in which it is available for wholesale distribution. Cheddars may be submitted in 5-kilo blocks cut from larger blocks. Any individual cheese weighing less than 500 grams will require one (1) retail case of samples or a minimum of six (6) pieces.

All entries—except Best New Cheese category explained below—must be for sale to the general public on or before January 1, 2015, through the end of the competition, or for a minimum of six months. Sale to the general public includes retail shop sales, farmgate and online sales, and sales at farmers' markets. Cheeses that are sold exclusively to restaurants, or only at venues where an admission fee is charged, do not qualify.

ENTRY FEES AND DEADLINES

- \$50 for each entry registered with entry fee paid by January 31, 2016
- \$75 for each entry registered with entry paid between February 1 and February 12, 2016.

NO ENTRIES ACCEPTED AFTER MIDNIGHT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12.

Entry fees are plus HST and include permission for winners to use the high-resolution digital 2016 winner's logo to identify award-winning cheeses. The logo will be sent to winners shortly after the Awards Ceremony and Awards Tasting Gala on April 14.

A finalist's logo will be available to finalists shortly after the announcement of finalists on March 1.

FIRST STEP: SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES ONLINE

In an effort to "go green," we request that all producers use our online entry system to submit entries in **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens**.

Please go to <http://www.cheeseawards.ca/entry-registration/> and follow the link to create your company profile and begin entering your cheeses in the competition.

If you have questions on how to enter or experience problems with the online registration system, please contact the Awards Registrar, email registrar@cheeseawards.ca or telephone 1.866.865.2628.

If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Awards Registrar and we will send you a paper entry form. Telephone 1.866.865.2628.

CATEGORY SELECTION

There are 17 categories for cheese in the competition. Your entry in one of the 17 categories will put you in the running with other cheeses in that category AND you also will be eligible for eight special awards, five regional awards and Grand Champion of 2016, the Canadian Cheese of the Year.

Visit <http://www.cheeseawards.ca/categories/> for information on categories and special awards.

All entries are reviewed by the Awards Registrar and Awards Organizing Committee, and, if necessary, the Chief Judge. We reserve the right to assign cheeses to the correct category when an obvious mistake or incorrect choice is listed for an entry. We may contact you for clarification regarding your entry. We will report any category changes to you prior to the competition.

We also reserve the right to split one category into two when the number and type of entries require it.

For example, we list only one category for Gouda Cheese. We recognize there are many different types of Gouda. We encourage you to enter your Gouda, regardless whether it is mild or aged or whatever. If we receive many aged entries, for instance, we will create a category for Aged Gouda Cheese. For another example, Washed Rind Cheese, as a result of the number of entries, might be split into Semi-hard Washed Rind and Hard Washed Rind.

The Best New Cheese category is open to cheese introduced during 2015, ie, between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2015. If you have a new cheese, enter it in one of the 17 main categories. It will be judged in that category and be eligible for a category win. Additionally, it will be scored against other new cheeses in the Best New Cheese category.

Please note: It is NOT permitted to enter the same one cheese in multiple categories.

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

Cheese that has been entered online by February 12 will be received at the judging venue at University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, in Guelph, Ontario, on

Tuesday and Wednesday, February 16 and 17. Deliveries on February 17 must arrive by 12 noon.

Product submitted will be handled/treated with the utmost of care by people who understand and care about cheese. We'll do all we can to ensure the integrity of your cheese from the moment it is received until judges perform their evaluation and scoring.

After you have registered your entry online, you will receive confirmation and instructions about your coded competition entry label for each cheese and a shipping label for you to use.

The responsibility to ensure cheese arrives in good condition and on time lies with the producer. Cheeses not received in good condition/on time will not be accepted for the competition and entry fees will be forfeited.

REMOVE ALL LABELS FROM ENTRIES

Cheeses submitted for judging must be identified **ONLY** with their coded competition entry label which will be available for each entrant to print on our website prior to judging. We will notify all entrants via email when these labels are available to be printed.

Please remove, mask, mark over, or otherwise obliterate all labels. Cheeses that require a pre-printed label or container must be submitted in generic, transparent plastic deli cups with only the entry number for your cheese attached to the cup.

Cheeses shipped to the competition with any identifying labels or markings will be rejected from judging and the entry fee will be forfeited.

HOW ENTRIES ARE JUDGED

Judges work in teams of two: one Technical and one Aesthetic.

Technical Judges deduct points for flaws and defects from a perfect score of 50. Aesthetic Judges award points for outstanding characteristics and qualities to a maximum of 50. The two scores are added to obtain the total score for an entry.

Evaluation is largely based on flavour, aroma and texture.

HOW AWARDS ARE DECIDED

Standards of excellence apply to all entries. Each entry is evaluated on its own merit. Cheeses do not compete "against" each other for awards.

Yes, it's wonderful to win a category or a special award or be named Canadian Cheese of the Year. Far more important for cheese producers is the expert feedback from judges. All producers who submit entries are provided with evaluation reports

prepared by the judges. These reports will be issued shortly the Awards Ceremony on April 14.

Depending upon the number of entries in a category, the Chief Judge may set minimum scores that are required to earn awards. It is possible that awards are not earned within a category if no entry achieves a minimum number of points.

When there is a tie in scores, or the scores are extremely close, the Chief Judge may request Judges to perform an additional round of evaluation and scoring. This will be especially important in the case of special awards, regional awards and Canadian Cheese of the Year.

We want the Awards to be definitive and above reproach; thus, the Jury will take the extra time needed to arrive at the final list of winners, clearly, the best cheeses in Canada in 2016.

GETTING YOUR SCORES

After the judging on February 18 and 19, finalists will be announced March 1 by email to each participating producer and in an announcement online and via news media.

Finalists and all entries will be invited to the Awards Ceremony and Awards Tasting Gala on April 14 in Montréal. Winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony and their cheeses displayed at the Awards Tasting Gala open to the trade and media, and later open to the public.

Winners present at the Awards Ceremony will be presented with a high-quality medallion.

Shortly after the presentation, you will receive a copy of the score sheet(s) for each of your entries, including the judges' comments, and the number of entries per category.

Winners will also receive an Awards Ribbon and Awards Certificate for each winning entry. Additionally, a high-resolution digital winner's logo to identify award-winning cheeses will be sent to winners shortly after the Awards Ceremony.

The full extent of marketing support and promotion for the Cheese of the Year and other winners will not be known until after sponsors are confirmed in February and March.

ABOUT US

The biennial **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens** is organized by Cheese Lover Productions, producers of The Great Canadian Cheese Festival, as a service to the cheese industry and as a guide for consumers to the best in Canadian cheese. The Festival's founder and director, Georgs Kolesnikovs, serves as Awards Chairman.

Dr. Arthur Hill, Chair and Professor, Department of Food Science, University of Guelph, has kindly offered his expert services as Chief Judge. He will head the Jury and evaluation and scoring of cheese. All members of the Jury—Chief Judge and Judges—are volunteers, freely giving of their time in the advancement of cheese in Canada. Read more about the Jury here: <http://www.cheeseawards.ca/judges/>

The inaugural **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le concours des fromages fins canadiens** took place in 2014 in Toronto. It was the first cheese competition in Canada open to all milks used in cheesemaking—cow, goat, sheep and water buffalo—with only pure natural cheese accepted for judging, without artificial colours, flavours or preservatives, and no modified milk ingredients.

Right away, the new and independent competition became the biggest cheese competition in Canada—with 76 producers from Newfoundland to British Columbia submitting 291 cheeses for judging.

The inaugural Awards/Concours received excellent coverage in media across Canada:

- http://www.thestar.com/life/food_wine/2014/04/08/quebecs_le_baluchon_name_d_cheese_of_the_year_at_new_awards.html
- <http://canadaam.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=321441>
- <http://www.lapresse.ca/le-nouvelliste/actualites/201404/10/01-4756256-le-baluchon-nomme-fromage-de-lannee-au-canada.php>

Judging took place in February at University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, headed by Dr. Arthur Hill, Chair and Professor in Food Science and an internationally recognized authority in cheese technology. Finalists in 18 main categories were announced March 7. Winners were revealed during an Awards Ceremony, Reception and Tasting on April 7 at historic St. Lawrence Market in Toronto. Le Baluchon made by Fromagerie F.X. Pichet in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade, Québec, was named Canadian Cheese of the Year.

GET THE WORD OUT!

If you know other producers interested in entering the 2016 **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens**, please direct them to our website at CheeseAwards.ca or let us know. We'll be happy to send information.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the Awards Registrar at 1.866.865.2628 or registrar@cheeseawards.ca and your questions will be forwarded to the appropriate individual.

We look forward to seeing you at the Awards Ceremony on April 14 in conjunction SIAL Canada: International Food & Beverage Tradeshow at Palais des Congrès, Montréal, followed by an Awards Tasting Gala for trade and media, then the public.