



Canadian Cheese Awards

Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens

# Call for Entries 2018

## Guidelines for Canadian Cheese Producers

The mission of **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens** is to promote the sale and consumption of Canadian artisan and farmstead cheese. We aim to:

- promote the best in Canadian cheese of all milks,
- create a recognized symbol of excellence for all Canadian cheese,
- offer expert feedback to producers who submit entries by providing them with score cards 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 **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens 2018**:

- **January 2:** Online registration of entries begins at [CheeseAwards.ca](http://CheeseAwards.ca).
- **February 16:** Entry registration closes.
- **February 15, 16, 20 and 21:** Cheese shipments received at the judging venue, University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, Guelph, Ontario. Deliveries on February 21 must arrive by 12 noon. No cheese received on February 19 due to Family Day holiday.
- **February 22 and 23:** Judging takes place at University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, with Dr. Art Hill serving as Chief Judge and an Awards Jury of 14 experts in cheese.
- **March 5:** Finalists announced by the Awards Organizing Committee headed by Georgs Kolesnikovs.
- **June 6:** Results of the competition announced during the Canadian Cheese Awards Ceremony at historic St. Lawrence Market, North Hall, Toronto, followed by an Awards Tasting Gala for trade, media, and special guests. Presentation of winners

- in 17 main categories, nine special categories, five regional division, plus the coveted Cheese of the Year.
- **June 6:** Cheese Industry Conference with seminars, workshops, business-to-business break-out sessions, addressing the challenges facing Canadian cheesemakers in light of free-trade agreements that mean increased competition. Held prior to the Awards Ceremony and Tasting Gala.
  - **June 7:** Canadian Cheese Expo trade show for cheese industry, hospitality industry, chefs, media, food writers and bloggers, etc., at historic St. Lawrence Market, North Hall, Toronto.
  - **June 7:** Canadian Cheese Awards Night Market consumer show featuring winners and finalists in the cheese competition, and products such as charcuterie, baked goods, wine, beer and cider, in two three-hour sessions to avoid over-crowding. Consumers can sample and purchase products. 19+. At historic St. Lawrence Market, North Hall, Toronto

## **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 competition is open to licensed producers, federal or provincial, or, in the case of sheep's milk cheese in Ontario, municipal.

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, 2017, through the end of the competition. 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. Cheeses that are sold as private label products, such as President's Choice, Compliments, Master Choice, Irresistible, Social Club and Farm Boy, must be entered by the actual producer, not the distributor or retailer, as the competition is about cheesemaking, not marketing.

## **ENTRY FEES AND DEADLINES**

- \$50 for each entry registered with entry fee paid by January 31, 2018
- \$75 for each entry registered with entry paid between February 1 and February 16, 2018.

## **ENTRY REGISTRATION ENDS MIDNIGHT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16.**

Entry fees are plus HST and include permission for winners to use the high-resolution digital 2018 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 June 6.

A finalist's logo will be available to finalists shortly after the announcement of finalists on March 5.

### **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](mailto:registrar@cheeseawards.ca) or telephone 1.613.893.0959.

If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact the Awards Registrar and we will send you a paper entry form. Telephone 1.613.893.0959.

### **INFORMATION REQUIRED**

You will be required to provide the date of manufacture for each cheese entered and expected maturation time.

Please indicate type of lactic coagulation if the milk is fermented to pH below 5.0 before cutting or breaking up the curd. Lactic cheeses include, for examples, cream cheese, cottage cheese, fresh goat cheese, and some surface ripened cheese such as Valencay.

Carefully consider rind treatments when selecting the appropriate category for your cheese with respect to washed versus bloomy (white mold) versus mixed rinds. As much as possible without giving away trade secrets, describe the ripening process, especially special rind treatments.

Please describe special treatments required at the consumer level. This will help the judges assess quality in the context of the intended use of the cheese. For example, frying cheeses or ethnic varieties or otherwise unique varieties.

### **CATEGORY SELECTION**

There are 18 categories for cheese in the competition. Your entry in one of the 18 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 2018, the Canadian Cheese of the Year.

Visit <http://www.cheeseawards.ca/categories-e/> 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 re-assign cheeses when it appears that they fit better in a different category. 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 2017, ie, between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017. 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 cheese in multiple categories.

## **SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS**

Cheese that has been entered online by February 16 will be received at the judging venue at University of Guelph, Department of Food Science, in Guelph, Ontario, on Thursday and Friday, February 15 and 16, and Tuesday and Wednesday, February 20 and 21. Deliveries on February 21 must arrive by 12 noon. No cheese will be received on February 19 due to Family Day holiday.

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 sent to producers by the Awards Registrar beginning in February.

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 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 score cards prepared by the judges. These reports will be issued shortly the Awards Ceremony on June 6.

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 2018.

## **GETTING YOUR SCORES**

After the judging on February 22 and 23, finalists will be announced March 5 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 June 6 in Toronto and the inaugural Canadian Cheese Expo for the trade and the first-ever Canadian Artisan Cheese Night Market on June 7. Winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony and their cheeses displayed at the Awards Tasting Gala.

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.

## **CASH PRIZES**

The producer whose cheese is named Grand Champion—otherwise known as the coveted Cheese of the Year—is awarded a cash prize of \$5,000 presented by Loblaw Companies. That money is to be used in support of a marketing campaign by the producer to promote its achievement of its cheese being crowned Cheese of the Year for 2018.

The winner of the Best Cow's Milk Cheese Award receives a cash prize of \$5,000 presented by Dairy Farmers of Canada. That money is to be used in support of a marketing campaign by the producer to promote its achievement of its cheese being crowned Best Cow's Milk Cheese of 2018.

Only cheeses that bear either the new Dairy Farmers of Canada certification mark of origin or the 100% Canadian Milk symbol (blue cow) on their packaging are eligible for the cash prize presented by Dairy Farmers of Canada.

Additional cash prizes may be presented to other winners as more sponsors are confirmed.

## **ABOUT US**

**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 14 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-e/>

The inaugural **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le concours des fromages fin 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.

Le Baluchon made by Fromagerie F.X. Pichet in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade, Québec, was named Canadian Cheese of the Year in 2014, with Avonlea Clothbound Cheddar made by Cows Creamery of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, the Grand Champion in 2016.

## **GET THE WORD OUT!**

If you know other producers interested in entering **Canadian Cheese Awards/Le Concours des fromages fins canadiens 2018**, please direct them to our website at [CheeseAwards.ca](http://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 1.613.893.0959 or [registrar@cheeseawards.ca](mailto:registrar@cheeseawards.ca) and your questions will be forwarded to the appropriate individual.

The judging and competition—the biggest cheese competition in Canada—has taken place every two years, Toronto in 2014, Montreal in 2016. Starting in 2018 with Toronto, the judging and competition will take place annually.

Canadian Cheese Awards and related events are produced by Cheese Lover Productions Inc. with the support of Loblaw Companies as Marquee Sponsor and Dairy Farmers of Canada as Principal Partner for Cow Milk Cheese.