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REAL CALIFORNIA MILK LAUNCHES GRILLED CHEESE CONTEST TO CELEBRATE ICONIC COMFORT FOOD WITH A CALIFORNIA TWIST

Tracy, Calif. – August 5, 2025 – The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) today announced the launch of the 2025 Real California Grilled Cheese Sandwich Contest, a national foodservice recipe competition inviting professional chefs to reimagine the classic grilled cheese sandwich using California’s rich array of artisan cheeses and butter.

Following the success of the Great Mozzarella Showdown and other virtual competitions, this latest online contest celebrates the beloved grilled cheese in two creative categories:

- **California Classic:** Featuring up to three California cheeses, no additional ingredients.
- **California Freestyle:** Featuring one to three California cheeses plus unlimited additional ingredients (as long as cheese makes up at least 50% of the sandwich).

Influential foodservice judges will select eight winning recipes from the online submissions based on strict criteria, including use of California cheese, recipe innovation, and flavor expectations. CMAB’s team of professional chefs will conduct a cook-off of the winning recipes and grand prize champions will be named for each category.

Each chef finalist will receive \$1,000, with the two winning dishes receiving an additional \$1,000 for a total of \$2,000 to each category winner. In total, the CMAB will award \$10,000 in prize money.

“Grilled cheese continues to grow as a creative and profitable opportunity for chefs and restaurants looking to offer something familiar, yet elevated. California’s high-quality cheeses are the ideal foundation for innovation, helping chefs craft flavorful sandwiches that stand out on any menu,” said Mike Gallagher, Business and Market Development Consultant for the CMAB. “We’re excited to see the original recipes chefs submit in this contest and how they showcase the versatility of California dairy.”

The recipe submission period is August 1- September 19, 2025. The eight final recipes/chefs will be announced on October 13, 2025, with two grand champions named in mid-November. For more information, including entry details, visit <https://realcaliforniamilkfoodservice.com/grilled-cheese-contest/>.

California is a reliable, consistent source of sustainable dairy products used by chefs and culinary professionals throughout the world. As the nation’s largest dairy state, California boasts an impressive lineup of award-winning cheesemakers and dairy processors that are helping to drive dining innovation.

California is the leading producer of fluid milk, butter, and ice cream as well as Mozzarella and Monterey Jack. California milk and dairy foods can be identified by the Real California Milk seal, which means they are made with sustainably sourced milk from the state’s dairy farm families.

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About Real California Milk / The California Milk Advisory Board

The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is funded by the state’s dairy farm families who lead the nation in sustainable dairy farming practices. With a vision to nourish the world with the wholesome goodness of Real California Milk, the CMAB’s programs focus on increasing demand for California’s sustainable dairy products in the state, across the U.S., and around the world through advertising, public relations, research, and retail and foodservice promotional programs.

The Foodservice Division of the CMAB supports foodservice operators and distributors that use Real California dairy products. The CMAB offers marketing and promotional support for foodservice operators that purchase dairy products with the Real California Milk seal, which means they are made with milk from California’s more than 1,000 family dairy farms, using some of the most sustainable dairy practices in the nation.

For more information on sourcing cheese from California, contact the foodservice team at 209.883.6455 (MILK), email businessdevelopment@cmab.net, or visit RealCaliforniaMilkFoodservice.com, [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).