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Real California Cow's Milk Cheeses Bring Home 36 Awards at American Cheese Society Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky

*California Cheese and Dairy Producers Win a Total of 57 Honors in
Annual Celebration of North American Makers*

TRACY, Calif. – July 9, 2026 – Cow's milk cheese and dairy processors that use the Real California Milk seal brought home 35 awards during the 2026 annual cheese competition held by the [American Cheese Society \(ACS\)](#) in Louisville, Ky.

The American Cheese Society recognizes the finest cheeses and dairy products made in the Americas. A total of 1,500 cheese and cultured dairy products were entered into the competition.

California cheesemakers won a total of 57 awards – with Real California cow's milk cheeses bringing home 36 prizes: 12 first place, 13 second place and 11 third place awards in this year's judging. Highlights from these wins include:

- Marquez Brothers International Inc., San Jose – 6 awards, 1st place for each Mango Drinkable Yogurt, Strawberry Drinkable Yogurt, and Queso Mozzarella; 2nd place for Strawberry Banana Drinkable Yogurt; 3rd place each for Coconut Drinkable Yogurt and Queso Cotija.
- Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma – 5 awards, 2nd place each for Petite Breakfast Everything and Petite Breakfast; 3rd place each for Petite Breakfast Chive, Petite Camembert, and 8 oz. Triple Crème Brie.
- Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co., Point Reyes Station – 6 awards, 1st place for each Point Reyes Original Blue, Point Reyes TomaRashi, and Point Reyes Young Gouda; 2nd

place for each Point Reyes Brie 8.5 oz., Point Reyes TomaProvence, and Point Reyes TomaTruffle.

- Sierra Nevada Cheese Company, Willows – 5 awards, 1st place for Kendall Farms Crème Fraîche; 2nd place each for Gina Marie Cream Cheese, Gina Marie Farmer Cheese, and Graziers Plain Yogurt; 3rd place for Organic Unsalted Butter.
- Central Valley Cheese/Karoun Dairies, Turlock – 4 awards, 1st place for Panela; 2nd place each for Labne and Marinated String Cheese; 3rd place for Cremoso Creamy Honey Yogurt.
- Cowgirl Creamery, Petaluma – 2 awards, 1st place for Wagon Wheel (also advanced to the Best of Show round as one of the competition's Top 11 cheeses); 2nd place for Hop Along.
- Joseph Farms, Atwater – 2 awards, 1st place for Monterey Jack; 3rd place for Whole Milk Mozzarella.
- Oakdale Cheese, Oakdale – 2 awards, 1st place for Jalapeno Gouda; 3rd place for Stanislaus Reserve.
- Belfiore Cheese, Berkeley – 1 award, 3rd place for Belfiore Smoked Mozzarella.
- Cheese Bits, Riverbank – 1 award, 2nd place for Cheese Bits Original Pearls.
- Nicasio Valley Cheese Co., Nicasio – 1 award, 3rd place for Foggy Morning Jalapeño.
- Stuyt Dairy Farmstead Cheese Co., Escalon – 1 award, 1st place for El Capitan.

In total, 12 Real California cow's milk cheese and dairy companies won awards for products made with Real California Milk from the state's family dairy farms using some of the most sustainable dairy practices in the world. Bellwether Farms and Sierra Nevada Cheese Company also received awards, five and three respectively, for non-cow's milk cheeses that do not carry the Real California Milk seal.

Non cow's milk California cheesemakers had a strong showing with Laura Chenel picking up five awards, Harley Farms winning four, Cypress Grove winning two, and Pennyroyal Farm and Stepladder Creamery both winning one each.

California is the second largest cheese producing state in the nation, responsible for more than 2.4 billion pounds of cheese each year. Real California cheeses and dairy products are available at retailers throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Asia. For more information, visit:

RealCaliforniaMilk.com.

About Real California Milk/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.

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