

Entry Information

THE BIG E

2023 Gold Medal Cheese Competition



2023 Competition Dates to Remember

June 26 Competition entry forms and fees due

July 5 Deadline for your entries to arrive at Eastern States Exposition

* July 6 by appointment only

* Please plan around the July 4 holiday

* Deliveries will start being accepted on June 28

July 7 Contest judging day

Cheese Competition Entry Rules

1. An entry form and entry fee of \$25 for each entry must be received by Eastern States Exposition no later than June 26, 2023 to be eligible for competition.
2. Cheeses made in New England by a New England licensed cheesemaker in a licensed dairy facility are eligible to compete.
3. Classes will be determined based upon entries. Remember: all cheese are based on their individual merit and not based on the best in class. Classes that receive less than three entries may be eliminated and entries moved to the appropriate Open Class. Competition Judges or Show Management reserve the right to move product that appears to be misclassified into the correct cheese class.
4. Cheeses with federal standard of identity must conform to those standards.
5. Send your cheese in its original form. Cheeses may not be plugged and/or resealed. Cheeses must be entered as whole wheels, loaves, or blocks. Exceptions will be made for larger form cheeses, i.e. Emmental and Cheddar. These cheeses must be presented in the form in which they are available for wholesale distribution. (For example, 10-pound Print, 5-pound Brick, 20-pound Wedge, etc.) Any individual cheese under one pound weight will require a minimum of 3 pieces or samples. Any yogurt, fermented dairy drinks or other fermented dairy products require a minimum of 3 8-ounce samples or the equivalent.

Cheese Competition Judging Rules

1. Cheeses are judged by deducting points from a 100 point scale, based on defects for technical judges and desirable qualities for aesthetic judges. Judges' score sheets will be returned to participants. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals will be awarded, based on the following:
 - Gold 95 to 100 points
 - Silver 90-94 points
 - Bronze 80-89 points
 - All cheeses placing below 80 points will be awarded a no medal.
2. All Gold Medal winning cheeses are eligible for Best in Show. Best in Show is determined by all judges as the overall best cheese of the day regardless of previous score.
3. Each cheese will be evaluated by a panel of at least two judges: one Aesthetic judge and one Technical judge. A Guest Judge may join a panel. Aesthetic and Technical judges scores will be counted towards the overall score. Guest Judges are invited chefs, local cheese writers, and cheese enthusiasts who work with the judges to learn more about New England Cheeses. Guest Judge scores do not count, but they do receive copies of their score sheets to utilize in future cheese opportunities.
4. Cheese entries become the property of Eastern States Exposition and are used for promotional purposes.

Cheese Competition Promotion and Results Release

1. All cheesemakers entered in the competition are invited to participate in the Farmers Market as part of The Big E, September 15 – October 1, 2023. Promotional material or placards are encouraged and used for display. Materials should not be reflected on actual entries for judging. Remaining cheese is used in throughout the Fair at various tasting events. If additional samples of cheese are needed, the cheesemaker will be contacted. Additional opportunities for cheese promotions will be given as information becomes available.

How to Enter

Step 1: Send in Your Product Entry Forms and Fees

The official entry form for the 2023 Big E Gold Medal Cheese Competition is below.

1. Fill out one entry form per entry. Feel free to photocopy the entry form.

Entries can also be submitted online (preferred): <https://thebigech.fairwire.com>

2. Each contest entry must be accompanied by a \$25 entry fee. Make checks payable to Eastern States Exposition. MasterCard, Visa and Discover will also be accepted.

Online Entry is available. Online Payment options: MasterCard, Visa, Discover and mail in by check.

3. Entry forms and fees must be received **by June 26, 2023**. All entrants will receive labels from ESE.

**Mail Forms and Fees To:
Eastern States Exposition
Agriculture & Education Department
Mallary Complex
1305 Memorial Avenue
West Springfield, MA 01089**

Step 2: Ship Your Entries to Eastern States Exposition

Please make sure your ESE labels are securely affixed to your entries. Securely wrap or box your entries to ensure safe delivery. All products should not have any markings or labels of any kind other than your ESE designated labels.

Entries should arrive before 4PM on the day of delivery, and must arrive on July 5, 2023.

Deliveries will start being accepted on Wednesday, June 28 (depending on the nature of the cheese).

Deliveries will not be accepted on Saturday, Sunday, and July 4.

Please plan around the July 4 holiday

Ship Entries To:

**Eastern States Exposition
Agriculture & Education Department
Mallary Complex
1305 Memorial Avenue
West Springfield, MA 01089**

If you have any questions about entering or shipping your entries, please contact Paige at (413) 205-5015

Cheese Classes

All classes are open to all milks. Please remember that cheeses are judged on individual merit. Classes maybe reorganized in the best interest of judging at the discretion of competition management.

- Class 1** **Cheddar** - Aged up to 12 months
- Class 2** **Cheddar** - Over 12 months
- Class 3** **Colby, Monterey Jack, Brick, Muenster** - Includes Colby-Jack blends
- Class 4** **Swiss Styles** - Swiss & Baby Swiss cheese, Gruyere
- Class 5** **Italian Style Cheeses** – Including, but not limited to Mozzarella, String Cheese, and Provolone
- Class 6** **Blue Veined Cheeses** - Blue, Gorgonzola, Stilton
- Class 7** **Flavored Soft Spreads** - Flavored spreadable natural cheeses
- Class 8** **Flavored Soft Cheese** – Flavored natural cheese with 51% or higher moisture content. If cheese is intended to be used as a spread – please see class 7.
- Class 9** **Flavored Semi-Soft Cheese** – Natural flavored cheese with 40% to 50% moisture
- Class 10** **Flavored Hard Cheese** – Natural flavored cheese with 39% moisture or less
- Class 11** **Wash Rind/Smear Ripened Cheese** – Includes all natural smear (surface) ripened cheese.
Example: Tilsiter, Limburger, Brick, Gruyere (washed rind only) and other soft, semi-soft or hard smear ripened cheese, flavored or unflavored.
- Class 12** **Soft Cheese** – Unflavored natural cheese with 51% or higher moisture content. If cheese is intended to be used as a spread – please see class 13.
- Class 13** **Soft Spreads** - unflavored spreadable natural cheeses.
- Class 14** **Smoked Cheeses** – any and all smoked cheeses, regardless of previous class listing should be entered in this class.
- Class 15** **Feta** – unflavored feta.
- Class 16** **Flavored Feta** – flavored feta.
- Class 17** **Alpine Style** – Includes all Alpine style cheeses.
- Class 18** **Mold Ripened Cheeses** - excludes blue veined cheeses [please see class 6].
- Class 19** **Open Class for all other cheeses** - Further classes maybe created based on entries at the discretion of competition management.
- Class 20** **Yogurt** – from all milks.
- Class 21** **Fermented Yogurt Drinks** - including but not limited to Keifer from all milks.
- Class 22** **Other Fermented Dairy Products** – from all milks.
- Class 23** **Butter** – all milks.
- Class 24** **Butter with Flavor Added** – all milks.