

La Route des fromages. . . Leads to Québec!

A host of Quebec cheese companies received top honors at the 2002 World Championship Cheese contest held in Madison, Wisconsin on March 18-22, 2002. Winning 11 awards in 8 different classes of cheeses, Quebec proved more successful than any of the other non-US nations present.

Quebec winners included:

Agropur

Class 2 Aged Cheddar- **Best of Class**

Class 2 Aged Cheddar – **Third Award (aged 3 years)**

Class 15 Feta- **Best of class for Danesborg Feta**

Class 12 Edam Gouda- **Second award for Gouda**

Fromagerie Tournevent

Class 29 Soft Goat's Milk Cheese- **Second Award for Le Biquet, soft unripened**

Class 30 Semi-Soft Goat's Milk Cheese- **Third Award for Le Chèvre Fin**

Class 31 Hard Goat's Milk Cheese- **Second Award for Le Chèvre Noir**

Damafro

Class 21 Open Class Soft Cheese- **Best of class for Ricotta**

Class 14 Brie & Camembert- **Second Award for Damafro Brie**

Class 31 Hard Goat's Milk Cheese- **Third Award for Gouda Chèvre**

Fromagerie Perron

Class 2 Aged Cheddar- **Second Award**

Quebec winners were excited about the competition results. "We are extremely proud to hear of our victory in four classes of cheese at the World Cheese Competition," said Philippe Bonnet, owner of Damafro Inc in St-Damase Quebec. "As third-generation French cheesemakers, we have worked for the last 16 years to achieve our rightful place among world-class cheese manufacturers and look forward to many more victories in the

future." As a first-time participant in the competition, Fromagerie Albert Perron was also honored to win a top prize. "With a century of experience, we have acquired the know-how in the manufacturing of our cheddars to make them of an uncontested quality and excellence," commented Perron's Director Sylvie Beaudoin. "As our founder Albert Perron used to say, "Cheese making is a wonderful trade, but being a maker of high quality cheese is more than that. . . . It's an art!"

Since 1957, this internationally recognized competition has been organized by the Wisconsin Cheesemaker's Association and is now the largest international cheese and butter competition in the world. The 2002 Contest marked the 24th biennial event and surpassed all previous World Championship Cheese Contests, receiving record 1,132 entries from 19 participating nations. It is the only world contest that is recognized and supported by all major dairy-producing nations. From cheesemakers and specialty cheese buyers to chefs from around the world, the results from the 16-member panel of international judges are anxiously awaited by the dairy industry worldwide. In addition, this international event points each year to future trends in specialty cheesemaking and consequent marketing strategies.

Judges of the 2002 competition included Patrick Tirard-Collet, a professor of cheesemaking technology at *the Institut de Technologie Agro-alimentaire* in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. "I was impressed by the diversity and quality of the products entered into this competition," commented Tirard-Collet. "Our participation in this event gave Quebec, and more so the Food Research and Development Centers of St-Hyacinthe and the ITA, great visibility among the representatives of different US regions and other international participants." Prof. Tirard-Collet has taught at the Institut since 1987 and has taught cheesemaking since 1992. In 1999, he oversaw the creation of Quebec's new cheese competition, the *Selection Caseus des fromages fins du Québec* and has served as the head judge each year. This was Tirard-Collet's first time as judge at the World Championship Cheese Contest.

To learn more about the Quebec Cheese Industry, please visit the International Cheese Technology competition on April 25, 2002, where Claude Lambert, President of the Québec Dairy Industry Council, will speak on Québec as an emerging specialty cheese market

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