

KEEP IT AT PEAK

Shipping Your Cheese to ACS Judging & Competition

Courtesy of Pat Elliot, Veteran Cheesemaker, Everona Dairy

When you ship your cheese to the ACS Judging & Competition, you want it to arrive in the best possible condition as when it left your loving care. After it arrives, ACS handles it with equal care. BUT, it is the transport that is tricky. Here are some ideas that will help:

1. Be aware of when your cheese must arrive and when you need to ship to get it there on time. ACS provides this information at <http://www.cheesesociety.org/competition/enter>. Once you've figured out your game plan, WRITE IT DOWN.
2. Put the packing slip and shipping labels where you can find them (clipped to the calendar, for instance). These materials are provided by ACS.
3. Select the cheeses you wish to enter ahead of time. You can't use a trier on them, but do some Sherlock Holmes style observation. Get their surface right! This is tricky – a little drier than usual is probably better.
4. On shipping day, wrap the cheese in butcher paper, or waxed paper. Unless your product is vacuum sealed, do not let plastic touch the cheese! Only allow for identification!
5. Affix proper labels, which are sent to you from ACS headquarters.
6. Place cheese in a foam or foil-lined shipping box. Cushion with bubble-wrap preferably (avoid using peanuts).
7. **Add 2-3 pounds of ice packs per 5 pounds of hard cheese.** Protect the ice packs so they don't get the cheese damp by osmosis. Remember: the average summer temperature in many conference host cities is quite high. You need to be able to keep your product cool for 48-72 hours out of refrigeration.
8. Completely fill out a packing slip for each box in your shipment and place one inside each box. Make additional copies of the packing slip(s) as needed. Any extra labels should go in the box, as well.
9. Mark the outside of the box with the box number and total number of boxes, i.e. BOX 1 of 3, BOX 2 of 3, etc.
10. Keep your shipment tracking information on hand!

Good luck! Pat