



## About this Report

The inaugural State of the U.S. Artisan/Specialty Cheese Industry Report was prepared in 2016. This 2018 report builds on the findings reported in 2016 and works to identify potential trends and provide much-needed information about the artisan, farmstead, and specialty cheese sector in order to support cheesemakers and their businesses.

Researchers at the University of Missouri conducted the 2018 survey on behalf of ACS. Nearly 1,000 artisan, farmstead and specialty cheesemakers operating in the U.S. were invited to participate in the survey. The response rate was deemed statistically reliable with 95.5% confidence, and many findings are similar to comparative data reported in 2016.

This report highlights key findings in six areas:

1. **Demographics** – location, years in business, facility size, profitability, employees, business operating expenditures
2. **Production** – volume, cheese styles, milk types and sources, aging
3. **Marketing** – labeling, distribution
4. **Food safety** – microbial and pathogen testing, inspections and audits, sourcing
5. **Industry participation** – ACS and state, regional, or local council or guild membership
6. **Attitudes** – perceptions regarding cheesemakers' own businesses and the wider industry

For the purposes of this report, all cheesemaker-respondents are referred to as “cheesemakers.”

Data shared in this report were collected in the 2016 and 2018 surveys commissioned by the American Cheese Society. In some cases, survey questions asked cheesemakers to record information about their operations in 2015 and 2017, and in other cases, cheesemakers provided responses to reflect their current attitudes and experiences. As a result, multiyear data presented in the report may be labeled as 2015 and 2017, or 2016 and 2018, depending on the structure of the question and the time period that the data represent.

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