



2023 Cheese Category Review

Background:

- Across the years categories have been added to the awards to cater for the increasing diverse range/products entering the market.
 - Over time this has resulted in a large number of categories (>25) that may not provide the competition or desired value the awards set out to do.
- A review of the existing categories was commissioned with the goal to ensure each category offers best value to the Cheese Producers, ensure categories are well contested and sponsorship value is maintained/maximised.

Methodology of Review:

- Feedback from members
- Feedback from Judges during and post awards
- Feedback from Sponsors
- Trend analysis of previous 5 years entries by category
- Competitions Committee analysis (Including Master & 3 Senior Judges)

Suggestions:

1. Where possible combine all Milk Types (Cows, Sheep, Goat, Buffalo, Deer) ie; have one category irrespective of Milk Type.
 - Add best in Milk Type for Goat, Sheep, Buffalo (subject to review)
2. Expand on definition of Farmhouse Cheese Category
3. Review the age categories of Retail Cheddar (currently 6)
4. Consider combining fresh and aged flavoured categories
5. Review New Product Under Development Award
6. Review Innovation Award

Analysis:

NZ Champions of Cheese Awards entry comparison							
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	ProRata	% of Entries
SoftRipenedCheese	17	12	19	22	25	16	10.4%
FreshItalianCheese	28	25	21	19	23	13	9.5%
DutchStyleCheese	22	24	25	25	21	18	8.7%
Aged Flavour added				24	16	17	6.6%
BulkorLargeBlockCheddar	n/a	16	23	22	16	16	6.6%
BlueVeinedCheese	18	13	20	23	15	16	6.2%
RetailCheddar	18	11	12	14	13	10	5.4%
ChefsChoice	n/a	26	18	16	12	11	5.0%
FreshUnripenedCheese	6	5	14	6	9	4	3.7%
Export Cheeses	6	2	9	6	8	4	3.3%
Aspiring Cheesemaker					4		1.7%
WashedRindCheese	6	6	10	5	3	4	1.2%
NZMadeCheesesEuropean	13	15	18	30	17	21	7.1%
GreekCypriotCheese	6	8	14	27	13	19	5.4%
EweMilkCheese	18	9	16	21	12	15	5.0%
Champion cheesemaker	n/a	19	19	13	7	9	2.9%
OriginalNewZealandCheese	13	8	11	14	7	10	2.9%
NewCheese	10	7	4	13	6	9	2.5%
GoatCheese	21	21	23	17	7	12	2.9%
Fresh Flavouraddedcheeses	23	26	28	17	6	12	2.5%
FarmhouseCheese	n/a	16	11	8	1	6	0.4%
Total	180	304	275	342	241	372/241	100%

Recommendation:

- 1. Combine all Bovine and non-Bovine derived milk categories
 - Basis: Our Sheep, Goat, Buffalo derived cheese producers are now readily accepted in our markets. With this in mind it makes sense that the Cheese Types rather than Milk Types compete against one another on an equal stage.
 - Additionally it is recommended to retain a Best Goat and Sheep Cheese Award(subject to review from main class results– discussion on Buffalo?)



Recommendation:

- 2. Expand definition for Farmhouse Category
 - Basis: Only one entry in this category in 2023, lack of guidance in description.
 - Add following terms for entry
 - Made with unstandardised farmhouse milk sourced from a single farm
 - Hand made by traditional methods in an open vat

Recommendation:

- 3. Retail Cheddar - Reduce age categories
 - Basis: Excessive age ranges clutter the category and add unnecessary complexity.
 - Mild Cheddars Aged Less than 6 months
 - Cow's Milk Cheddars aged less than 12 months
 - Cheddars aged up to 19 months
 - Cheddars aged up to 25 months
 - Cheddars aged between 26 and 36 months
 - Mature Cheddars aged over 37 months
- Reduce age categories to <12 months and >12 months

Recommendation:

- 4. Combine Fresh and Aged Flavoured Cheese Categories
 - Basis: Excessive sub-categories add unnecessary complexity.
 - Fresh Flavour Added Cheeses
 - Flavoured with Peppercorns or Seeds
 - Cheeses Flavoured with Capsicums, Chili Peppers and Garlic
 - Cheeses Flavoured with Herbs, Flowers or Fruits
 - Cow's milk Cheese Flavoured with Herbs and Garlic
 - Feta with Flavour Added - all milks or milk blends
 - Open Class for all soft white mould ripened cheeses with added Flavours
 - Open Class for all Un-ripened Cheeses with Added Flavours
 - Open Class for all Smoked Cow's Milk Cheese
 - Cow's Milk Cheese Marinated in oil
 - Buffalo or Mixed Milk Cheese Marinated in oil
 - Aged Flavour Added Cheeses
 - Flavoured with Peppercorns or Seeds
 - Cheeses Flavoured with Capsicums, Chili Peppers and Garlic
 - Cheeses Flavoured with Herbs, Flowers or Fruits
 - Cow's milk Cheese Flavoured with Herbs and Garlic
 - Firm Cheese with flavour added e.g. Cheddar with Port Wine, Beer or Whisky
 - Open Class for all Smoked Cow's Milk Cheese
- Recommend maintaining status quo for 2024 and review based on category trend

Recommendation:

- 5. Review New Product Under Development Category
 - Basis: Zero entries
 - Producer will carry out their own intelligence on deciding whether to launch a product.
 - Out of scope for the purpose of the awards – limited value.
 - Recommend removal of this category

Recommendation:

- 5. Review Innovation Category
 - Basis: Zero entries
 - This category was introduced to cater for products that may not normally fit a typical category eg Belle Chevre Raspberry Bonbons
 - Out of scope for the purpose of the awards – limited value.
 - Recommend removal of this category

Feedback...