Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program

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About the Program

When the first class from the Wisconsin Dairy Short Course graduated over 100 years ago, it began a process that set leading standards for cheese manufacture. Cheesemakers took their training to the rolling Wisconsin farmland and pioneered the techniques from which modern cheese manufacturing methods have grown.

The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program was established as an advanced education program for experienced cheesemakers.

This program, the only one in the United States, is intended to give Wisconsin cheesemakers a formal sequence of courses for cheese education. This extensive education will add value to cheese made by “Master Cheesemakers,” like those of European tradition.

For more information contact:

Marianne Smukowski, Coordinator
Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program
Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research
1605 Linden Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
msmuk@cdr.wisc.edu
Phone: 608-265-6346
Fax: 608-262-1578
Applicant Requirements

- The applicant must be an active Wisconsin cheesemaker and have held a Wisconsin cheesemaker’s license for a minimum of 10 years immediately prior to application.

- The applicant must be a full-time employee and have day-to-day direct authority and responsibility in making decisions to maintain and improve cheese quality.

- The applicant must select 1 or 2 specific natural cheese varieties for certification. For example: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Brick, etc., or as defined by the board of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program.

- If any candidate accepted into the Program seeks certification in any cheese made exclusively from goat or sheep milk; the candidate must pay for all direct costs associated with their participation in the Program. If the candidate accepted into the Program seeks certification in any cheese made from mixed-milk (cow plus sheep/goat); the applicant must pay for 60% of all direct costs associated with their participation in the Program.

- The applicant must produce each variety of cheese for a minimum of five years before entering the program.

- The applicant must be employed at a cheese plant that has a current Food Safety program in place including a HACCP plan. A CDR staff person will review the HACCP plan.

**If there is no Food Safety program in place at the time of application and initial interview then a 2nd plant visit is required prior to the final exam. Every plant must have a Food Safety program in place before the cheesemaker finishes the program.**

- The applicant must complete and submit an application form by May 15 to the Master Cheesemaker Program Coordinator, Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, 1605 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706

- The applicant must complete the Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course and another required or elective course before applying to the program.
Applicant Requirements cont.

- The applicant must submit documentation/certificates of required and/or elective short courses with the application and throughout the program.

- Any Master accepted into the Program after 12/09 is required to take a board pre approved course once every 3 years after the completion of the initial Program requirements.

- A CDR representative will contact the applicant to schedule an interview and plant visit.

- All aspects of the cheesemaking process will be discussed when one representative from the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board and CDR conduct an interview and plant visit.
The applicant and/or a plant representative have the opportunity to approve the interview team.

**Interview and Plant Visit**

**Purpose**
The purpose of the Interview and Plant Visit is to evaluate the applicant's knowledge of cheesemaking and to evaluate the condition of the cheesemaking facility.

**Procedure**
- A Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker board member and a CDR staff person will conduct the interview and plant visit.
- The board representative will ask the cheesemaker questions regarding cheesemaking procedures and regulatory guidelines.
- The board member and CDR representative will evaluate the cheesemaking facility based on current State of Wisconsin regulations.
- The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board will review the information collected during the oral interview and plant visit during their Summer Board meeting.
- Successful completion of the oral exam and plant inspection is one requirement for acceptance into the program.
Notification Procedures

- The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board will review the information collected during the interview and plant visit along with the written application and course documentation during the Summer Board meeting.

- The Board will vote on each applicant’s acceptance into the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program as a Master Candidate.

- Applicants will be notified by the program coordinator in writing within one month of the Board vote.

Graduation Requirements

- The Master Cheesemaker Candidacy should be completed within 2 ½ years of acceptance into the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program.

- The Candidate must fulfill all Program requirements before the written exam is taken. The written exam will be given at the end of the Master Candidacy.

- The Candidate will submit documentation/certificates of courses completed.

- The Candidate will have all cheese sampling for certification completed within 2 ½ years of acceptance into the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program.

- The participating plant where the Candidate is employed must have a Food Safety program in place at the completion of the Master Candidacy.
Master Candidate Education Course Work

The (5) required classes and three (3) elective classes must be completed before the final written exam is given.

The Candidate must submit copies of course certificates/documentation of course completion to the Master Cheesemaker Program Coordinator, Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, 1605 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706

The following five (5) required courses must be completed before the final written exam is given:
- Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course
- Wisconsin Cheese Artisan Course
- Wisconsin Cheese Grading Short Course
- Wisconsin HACCP Workshop
- Wisconsin CIP Workshop

Three (3) of the following elective courses must be completed before the final exam is given:
- Applied Dairy Chemistry Short Course
- Milk Pasteurization and Process Control School
- Business and Marketing Short Course
- Process Cheese Short Course
- Whey and Whey Utilization Short Course
- Membrane Processing
- Water and Waste Management Short Course
- Other as designated by the board

The Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research and University of Wisconsin – Madison Food Science Department has the option to change, cancel or add classes according to industry demand.
Master Candidate Cheese Sampling for Certification

The Master Candidate’s certification process for each variety of cheese must be completed in a Wisconsin licensed cheese plant.

The certification process for each variety of cheese must be completed within a 2 ½ year time frame.

During the fall of the first year as a Master Candidate, a set of four samples of cheese must be collected by two licensed Wisconsin Cheese Graders for organoleptic quality and submission for analysis.

Microbiological (Coliform standards) and composition analysis is based on established Code of Federal Regulations (CFR’s where applicable) evaluation procedures and standards set by the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board.

Four cheese samples for each cheese must be submitted for testing. Three out of four samples must pass. If the first set of samples fails, the cheese will be sampled one more time. If two or more samples from the second set of samples do not pass, the candidate will be held back for one year in that particular cheese.

If more than one sample of the second series of samples does not meet the requirements the candidate will be held back one year. If the cheese fails sampling two consecutive years, that cheese will be dropped from the Program. The candidate can reapply with the dropped cheese at a later date.

At any time, each candidate is encouraged to ask the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research for assistance in solving any problems.

Cheese samples are required in the fall of year one, and the spring of years two and three of the Program.

Any questions, contact Marianne Smukowski, msmuk@cdr.wisc.edu, (608)265-6346 or Joanne Gauthier, gauthier@cdr.wisc.edu, (608)263-1874.
Cheese Sampling Guidelines

Purpose: To ensure cheese manufactured by a Master Candidate meets or exceeds expectations of that particular variety found in the marketplace.

Procedure: Cheese is initially sampled and graded by licensed Wisconsin Cheese Graders using the “Master” grading system. Cheese(s) will be graded using a letter grade of “AA” or “A.” Any cheese that is scored lower than an “A” will be resampled. If follow-up sampling is required the prospective Master will be contacted by CDR staff to organize sample pick-up.

Contact for grading schedule: Grading Coordinator

Contacts for grading results: WMCM Coordinator

Cheeses are graded: Year 1 – October – December
Year 2 – March - June
Year 3 – March - June

Sample size required: Approximately 1 lb

Specifications:
- Cheese samples graded by one or more Wisconsin Licensed Cheese Graders for organoleptic, texture, and visual qualities must receive a score of 92 or higher from the grader.
- Samples are then submitted for analytical testing (moisture, fat, salt, and pH) with results meeting current CFR guidelines if applicable to the specific cheese sample.
- All samples are tested for coliform with a limit less than 100cfu/g sample.
Calendar

First year

May Applications due
June –
August Plant visit, oral interview and food safety program review
August WMCM board votes on applicant
August Applicants notified of Board vote
August –
October Library books distributed
September –
December 1\textsuperscript{st} set of cheese samples collected

***Remember to take needed short courses

Second year

February Call Joanne Gauthier (608) 263-1874 for course completion update
March –
May 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of cheese samples collected

***Remember to take needed short courses

Third year

All courses must be completed by October 15 before final exam is sent out.

February Call Joanne Gauthier (608) 263-1874 for course completion update
March –
May 3\textsuperscript{rd} set of cheese samples collected
August Visit to approve food safety program including HACCP Plan if needed
October Final exams sent out – 30 days to complete
December Board announces & notifies new Masters
April Master Cheesemaker Ceremony
Course Guide

The following is a general schedule of short courses offered by the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research and UW-Madison Food Science Department:

Required Courses (R)
Elective Courses (E)

Course Schedule

January  Milk Pasteurization and Process Control School (E)
February  Process Cheese Short Course (E)
March    Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course (R)
April
      Wisconsin CIP Workshop (R)
      Wisconsin HACCP Workshop (R)
      Applied Dairy Chemistry Short Course (E)
      Whey and Whey Utilization Short Course (E) even number years
      Water and Waste Management Short Course (E) odd number years
May     Wisconsin Cheese Grading Short Course (R)
July    Milk Pasteurization and Process Control School (E)
August  Wisconsin Cheese Artisan Course (generally) (E)
September Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course (R)
          Membrane Processing Short Course (E)
October Wisconsin Cheese Grading Short Course(R)
November Wisconsin Cheese Grading Short Course (R)

Required Courses
Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course – March and October
Wisconsin Cheese Artisan Course – September (generally)
Wisconsin Cheese Grading Short Course – June and November
Wisconsin CIP Workshop - May
Wisconsin HACCP Workshop – May

Elective Courses
Applied Dairy Chemistry Short Course - May
Milk Pasteurization and Process Control School – January and August
Process Cheese Short Course - February
Whey and Whey Utilization Short Course – May in even number years
Water and Waste Management Short Course – May in odd number years
Membrane Processing Short Course - October
Business and Marketing Short Course – please check with WMMB
Quality Assurance Program

Quality assurance is an integral part of the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program. The following quality assurance program or its equivalent must be followed for Master Candidate certification:

Milk - 90% of milk used in the production of cheese is produced in the State of Wisconsin. All milk must meet or exceed the quality standards specified by Federal or State of Wisconsin Rules and Regulations.

Pasteurization - To assure product safety, when required by law, all milk must be pasteurized at temperatures and holding times defined by Federal and or State of Wisconsin Regulations. The pasteurizer must be operated properly and be in compliance with applicable Federal and or State of Wisconsin Regulations.

Facilities - Cheese must be manufactured in a plant located in the State of Wisconsin that meets or exceeds Wisconsin licensing requirements for plant operating standards. A copy of the latest third party inspection report must be provided upon request.

Cheese Specifications - Specifications developed for each type of cheese must include fat, moisture, salt, pH, coliforms, body and texture, flavor, and appearance.

Candidates must submit a spec sheet at the time of application for any cheese without a standard of identity. This spec sheet will be used to grade the cheese for compositional purposes.
General Information on Waivers

The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board is responsible for granting all waivers.

Education Waiver

Required and/or elective short course requirements may be waived when the following conditions have been met:

The cheesemaker supplies proof of satisfactory completion of other equivalent accredited courses or seminars. Any materials provided in course/seminar must be submitted with a waiver request at the time of application.

The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board must approve the waiver.

Waiver

A waiver may be granted when the following conditions have been met:

The Candidate has a Wisconsin cheesemaker’s license and has actively been making cheese for a minimum of 15 years.

The Candidate has made the specific cheese variety for a minimum of 10 years.

The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Board must approve the request for a waiver.
Application for Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program

Please print or type. Do not use pencil to fill out application. _______ Plant Address _______ Home Address

Last Name First Name E-Mail Address

Street City State Zip

Telephone/Work Home Fax

Higher Education: College, University, Vocational School, Other

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Dates Attended</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Degree Obtained</th>
<th>Date Received</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Cheese Artisan Seminar</td>
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<td>Wisconsin CIP Workshop</td>
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<td>Wisconsin Dairy HACCP Workshop</td>
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<td>UW-Madison Pasteurization Short Course</td>
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<td>Applied Dairy Chemistry Short Course</td>
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<td>Water and Waste Management</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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Short Courses, Seminars attended as required for the Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker® Program.
(Enclose proof of attendance - copies of course certificates)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Name of Course</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates Attended</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course</td>
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The applicant must be a full-time employee and have day-to-day direct authority and responsibility in making decisions to maintain and improve cheese quality.

Do you have a Wisconsin Cheesemaker’s License? Yes No
Date License Received _______________ License Number _______________

Do you have a Wisconsin Cheese Grader’s License? Yes No
Date License Received _______________ License Number _______________

Does your plant have a current Food Safety program including HACCP in place? Yes No

The applicant must be employed at a cheese plant that has a current Food Safety program including HACCP in place before the final exam is given. If there is no Food Safety program in place at the time of the first walk through, then a second walk through will be done at the end of the program before the final exam is sent out.
**Employment** (Include all relevant information relating to cheesemaking.) List in detail all positions you have held for the last ten years. Start with present position. Give nature of duties and degree of responsibility. Use separate sheet, if necessary, to complete listing or to explain all job responsibilities.

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<th>Employer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Position</td>
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<td>Duties</td>
<td>Duties</td>
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**Additional Information**
What varieties of natural cheese are being manufactured at your plant?
______________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

How often is each natural cheese produced? ________________________________________________

What variety/2 varieties of natural cheese are you being certified for? 1. __________ 2. __________

How many years have you been manufacturing each variety of natural cheese? 1. __________ 2. __________

List membership and activities in cheesemaker associations or technical organizations________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Do you enter cheese contests?  Yes  No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contest Entered/Results</th>
<th>Date Entered</th>
<th>Natural Cheese Variety</th>
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**Please Include 2 Letters of Recommendation**

1. From a person associated with the cheese industry who has knowledge of your professional ability. (Supervisor, Manager, or corporate headquarters) Letter must include examples of the applicant’s day-to-day direct authority and responsibility in making decisions to maintain and improve cheese quality.

2. From your cheese buyer indicating your ability and record in meeting their quality standards.

The information provided in this application is true to the best of my knowledge.

______________________________  __________________
Signature                      Date

**Send Completed Materials to:**  Marianne Smukowski - WMCM Coordinator
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Babcock Hall - 1605 Linden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
Phone: (608) 265-6346