



**AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY ANNOUNCES ITS  
2016 CONFERENCE & COMPETITION**

***“Cheese in the Heartland” to Be Held in  
Des Moines, Iowa from July 27-30, 2016***

Denver, CO (January 15, 2016) – *Cheese in the Heartland*, the American Cheese Society’s (ACS) 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference & Competition, will be held in Des Moines, Iowa from Wednesday, July 27 through Saturday, July 30, 2016. Events will be held at the Iowa Events Center and various locations around the city.

Presented with Marquee Sponsor [Swiss Valley Farms/Caves of Faribault](#), ACS’s first Conference & Competition in Iowa will welcome 1,200 industry members – including cheesemakers, retailers, distributors, importers, equipment suppliers, specialty food producers, and even enthusiasts who simply appreciate great cheese.

Among the rich program of educational sessions and networking events in development, highlights include:

- **Opening Reception on the farm**, hosted at Maytag Dairy Farms
- “The Power of Beliefs in Business,” an Opening Keynote by **Ari Weinzwieg**, Co-Owner and Founding Partner of Zingerman’s
- “The Art of Fermentation,” a Closing Keynote by celebrated “fermentation revivalist” **Sandor Katz**
- **5-part food safety track** covering pathogens, sanitation, testing, and more
- **BOB Talks: Bold, Original, Brief!** Timely topics presented in just 10 minutes
- **Festival of Cheese** and **Public Cheese Sale**, held together for the first time!



Also held in Des Moines in conjunction with *Cheese in the Heartland*:

- The largest competition of its kind, the 2016 **ACS Judging & Competition** recognizes cheeses of the highest quality for their aesthetic and technical merits. After two intense days of judging in Des Moines, the first-place winners in each category will be evaluated together, and a “Best of Show” will be chosen. Winners will be announced at the annual Awards Ceremony on Friday, July 29 at the Iowa Events Center. With a near-record 1,779 products entered by 267 companies in 2015, ACS anticipates strong participation in 2016. Learn more at [www.cheesejudging.org](http://www.cheesejudging.org).
- The 5<sup>th</sup> annual **ACS Certified Cheese Professional® Exam** will be held on Wednesday, July 27 at the Iowa Events Center. The exam, which encourages improved standards of comprehensive cheese knowledge and service throughout the industry, offers cheese professionals the opportunity to earn the title of ACS Certified Cheese Professional®, or ACS CCP®. There are currently 595 ACS Certified Cheese Professionals® throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. Learn more at [www.certifiedcheeseprofessional.org](http://www.certifiedcheeseprofessional.org).

Members of the public can purchase tickets to attend the Festival of Cheese, which also gets them into the Public Cheese Sale with great deals on cheeses sampled at the Festival. Cheese lovers who want to participate by volunteering behind-the-scenes receive a complimentary Festival of Cheese ticket and a special, cheesy t-shirt to commemorate the event.

Industry members are encouraged to save these important dates for *Cheese in the Heartland*:

**Certified Cheese Professional Exam®**

- March 31: Deadline to apply for the exam

**ACS Judging & Competition**

- April 6 – May 13: Regular entry period (\$60/entry)
- May 14 – May 20: Late entry period (\$85/entry)

**Conference Registration**

- May 4 – May 24: Early Bird registration (\$495 members/\$694 non-members)
- May 25 – June 28: Regular registration (\$595 members/\$794 non-members)
- June 29 – July 30: Late/Onsite registration (\$695 members/\$894 non-members)

Learn more about *Cheese in the Heartland* at [www.cheesesociety.org](http://www.cheesesociety.org).

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**About the American Cheese Society (ACS)**

ACS is the leading organization supporting the understanding, appreciation, and promotion of artisan, farmstead, and specialty cheeses produced in the Americas. At nearly 1,700 members strong, ACS provides advocacy, education, business development, and networking opportunities for cheesemakers, retailers, enthusiasts, and extended industry. ACS strives to continually raise the quality and availability of cheese in the Americas.