



615 North Main Street, Westby, WI 54667

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Westby Cooperative Creamery on top with 1st Place Award at 2019 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

March 15, 2019 (Westby, WI): *Westby Cooperative Creamery* has taken the 1st Place, Best-of-Class, Gold Medal Award in the product class category of Cottage Cheese at the 2019 *U.S. Championship Cheese Contest*. This biennial national competition was held March 5-7, 2019, at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, WI.

Organized by the *Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association*, the *U.S. Championship Cheese Contest* is the largest technical cheese, butter, yogurt, and manufactured dairy components product competition in the country. Wisconsin cheesemakers and dairy product manufacturers competed in 116 product categories ranging from Aged Cheeses to Whey Protein Concentrates. The Cottage Cheese product class category included 22 entries from five states. *Westby Cooperative Creamery* is the only manufacturer of Cottage Cheeses in the state of Wisconsin.

Westby brand 4% Large Curd Cottage Cheese topped all challengers with a 1st Place total score of 99.05 points. *Westby* brand 4% Small Curd Cottage Cheese and 2% Small Curd Cottage Cheese also earned very high scores, placing these two *Westby* brand products in the top five of all 22 product entries.

According to Ryan O'Donnell, *Westby Cooperative Creamery* Plant Manager: "We're very pleased and proud to receive this 2019 Best-of-Class/Gold Medal award. Our Cottage Cheese products have been honored with a history of top awards in this *U.S. Championship Cheese Contest*. Our *Westby* brand 4% Small Curd Cottage Cheese took the 1st Place Awards in the 2017 and 2015 competitions. That's three 1st Place Awards for our Cottage Cheese products in the past three editions of this biennial competition. On behalf of our many talented employees and our family dairy farm member-owners, we say – thanks," concludes O'Donnell.

All product entries in the *U.S. Championship Cheese Contest* are evaluated by a team of experienced and skilled technical judges from across the country. From a maximum 100 points, deductions are made by the judges for any product defects as detected; including: flavor, body, texture, color, finish, and other product category attributes. Final product scores may vary by just tenths of a single point. (www.uschampioncheese.org)

Adds Jason Levendoski, *Westby Cooperative Creamery* Quality Manager: "The *U.S. Championship Cheese Contest* is a product quality competition, with over two-thousand product entries from the leading cheese and dairy product manufacturers across the country. For *Westby Cooperative Creamery*, our product quality begins with the highest-quality milk from the small dairy farms of our member-owners; many of whom are the third, fourth, or fifth generation on their family farm. This quality is the result of experience, knowledge, daily hard work, and pride. All of which extends to the employees in our Creamery manufacturing facility."



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Westby Cooperative Creamery is the longest running farmer-owned Dairy Cooperative in Wisconsin, in continuous operations since its founding in 1903. And; the City of Westby was proclaimed, in 2018, by then Governor Scott Walker, as *The Cottage Cheese Capital of Wisconsin*. (www.westbycreamery.com)

Westby Cooperative Creamery is unique as one of just a few farmer-owned dairy cooperatives across North America to accept two types of milk from its member-owners. As defined by accepted dairy industry terms, these two milk-types are conventional-milk and certified-organic-milk. Over half of the family dairy farm members of the cooperative are certified-organic, supplying nearly 70% of all milk delivered annually by members. All milk supplied by the small dairy farms of the member-owners is Grade-A and rBST-free*.

Today, the nearly 200 family dairy farm member-owners of the cooperative supply 165-million pounds of milk annually to their Creamery manufacturing facility. This annual volume of member-milk supplied has more than doubled in the past ten years. From this milk, the total yearly pounds of award-winning dairy foods manufactured has more than tripled in the past ten+ years; from just under 7-million pounds to now over 25-million pounds. Products include Cottage Cheeses, Sour Creams, Dairy Dips, Yogurts, Cheese Curds and Hard Cheeses; for Private Label, Food Service, Ingredient, and Retail Grocery Store market channels. Approximately 40% of all products manufactured by the cooperative are certified-organic dairy food products.

Westby Cooperative Creamery is also a participating organization in *Farmers Assuring Responsible Farm Management – F.A.R.M.* – created by the *National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF)*. By participating in this National Dairy FARM Program, the dairy farm families of *Westby Cooperative Creamery* demonstrate their commitment to safe, wholesome, dairy products through quality farm management practices and the highest standards of animal care and environmental stewardship. (www.nationaldairyfarm.com)

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*No significant difference has been shown between milk from rBST/rBGH treated or non rBST/rBGH treated cows.



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