

## The Most Expensive Cheeses in the World

Olena Ostrolutska, Iryna Dovgun

*National University of Food Technologies*

**Introduction.** Conversations about good cheese, as well as about wine, are subjective. Someone perceives it as ordinary product for breakfast, but there are many people who serve as real connoisseur of cheese. They pay big money, but product with long story costs it.

**Materials and methods.** The first unequivocal evidence of cheese making dates all the way back to 5,500 B.C. in Kujawy, Poland. Earlier pieces of pottery filled with holes have been found near Lake Neuchatel in Switzerland, dating back to 6,000 B.C., and are believed to be from earlier cheese strainers but their exact use is unclear. By the time Rome became the dominant civilization in the world, cheese was an everyday food. After the fall of Rome, cheese making had its renaissance throughout Europe – Britain, France and Italy all helped to shape the art of cheese making.

**Results.** There are 5 the most expensive cheeses in the world: Extra Old Bitto, Wyke Farms Vintage Cheddar, Frome Cheese Platter, Serbia's Pule, Caciocavallo Podolico. With a value of about \$150 per pound Italian cheese Extra Old Bitto was bought by a Hong Kong Importer in the hopes of selling the aged delicacy in China, despite the fact that the market for cheese in Asia is nowhere near as strong as it is in Europe and North America. The 20 kg block of cheese that was bought was much older than the typical age of a Bitto cheese; it was produced in 1997, but typically Bitto is only sold aged at most for ten years.

By adding white truffles and gold leaf to the classic cheese Wyke Farms Vintage Cheddar the price skyrockets. A pound of this luxuriously laced cheese costs a staggering \$190. Wyke Farms has a long history of making world-renowned cheddar. The cheese maker has won innumerable awards, and these cheese experts clearly saw the potential off adding a little more class to an English staple.

With all the accoutrements and the serving trays, the luxurious collection of cheese Frome Cheese Platter is worth more than \$3,300 USD. The cheese platter was displayed at the Frome Cheese and Agricultural Show in Somerset, England. Of course, one of the world's most expensive and rarest cheeses (Pule) was included in the platter alongside Wyke Farms Vintage Cheddar infused with a gold leaf and French truffles. The silver cheese tray and fancy wooden cheese board, however, account for \$1,200 of the total value of the assemblage.

Serbia's Pule cheese, or just pule, is a cheese made from the milk of Balkan donkeys from Serbia. A distinctive dairy product of Serbian cuisine, pule is reportedly the "world's most expensive cheese", fetching 1,000 Euros per kilogram. In September 2013, the cheese was valued by a news source at \$600 per pound. It is so expensive because of its rarity: there are only about 100 Jennies in the landrace of Balkan donkeys that are milked for pule-making, each jenny must be hand-milked thrice daily, it takes 25 litres (6.6 gallons) of milk to create one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of cheese, and the cheese is then smoked.

**Conclusions.** With an average price of about \$650 per pound, the Italian cheese Caciocavallo Podolico is famous for not only its taste, but its high price tag. Even though the name of the cheese means, literally, horse cheese, horses have nothing to do with the production of this cheese. The cheese is made from the milk of an extremely rare breed of cow called the Podolica in the Campania region of southern Italy. In the summer months herds of the cows are moved up to the mountains to feast on strawberries, blueberries and cherries; this diet gives the cheese an elegant, fruity flavour.