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615 North Main Street, Westby, WI 54667



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Westby Cooperative Creamery takes home 1st Place Awards from 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

March 22, 2017 (Westby, WI): Organized by the *Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association*, the **U.S. Championship Cheese Contest** is the largest technical cheese, butter, and yogurt products competition in the country. Wisconsin cheesemakers and dairy product manufacturers dominated the 2017 competition, earning gold medals in 58 of the 101 classes judged.

Westby Cooperative Creamery earned 1st Place, Best-of-Class, Gold Medal Awards in the product class-categories of **Cottage Cheese** and **High Protein Cow's Milk Yogurt**.

- **Westby™ brand 4% Small Curd Cottage Cheese** topped eleven challengers in the product category with a 1st Place/Best-of-Class total score of 95.0 points.
- **Smári™ brand Organic Icelandic Yogurt** (Plain flavor), manufactured by *Westby Cooperative Creamery* as a private-label customer; out-scored eight competitors with a near-perfect 1st Place/Gold Medal score of 99.20 points.

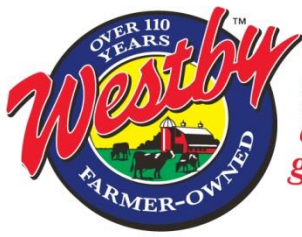
For this 2017 competition; a record-setting 2303 product entries, from 33 states, in 101 product classes, were evaluated during a two-day competition in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This included all types of cheeses and cultured dairy products made from the milk of cows, goats, and sheep; including certified-organic milk.

Says Pete Kondrup, General Manager of *Westby Cooperative Creamery*, "On behalf of our family dairy farm member-owners, and employees, we are very happy to receive these first-place awards. To, again, earn a Gold Medal in this national competition for one of our Cottage Cheese products is especially rewarding.

"As the only Cottage Cheese manufacturer in the state of Wisconsin, we are especially pleased to be judged the Best-of-Class in the United States. Even more so as one of the oldest dairy cooperatives in the country, now into our 114th year of continuous operation and ownership by generations of local family dairy farms.

"We are also one of the few dairy cooperatives in the country to receive both conventional and certified-organic cow's milk from the farms of our 220 members; all Grade-A and rBST-free. It's great news that dairy products manufactured from these two milk-types have earned these first-place awards.

"As everyone in the industry knows, the demand for organic dairy products has grown rapidly. We're very proud to be working with *Smári* brand as a customer-partner; and we obviously share in the excitement that one of their organic yogurt products has received this first-place award, with a near-perfect score from the judges," concludes Kondrup.



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There were 8 different Yogurt product classes based on flavor, fat, and protein content. Cottage Cheese was a specific cheese-type product class. As a soft-fresh-cheese, it was joined by 14 other soft or semi-soft cheese-type product classes in this championship products contest.

A team of 50 nationally-renowned judges, from 18 states; including cheese-graders and buyers, dairy science professors and researchers; scored each entry on a highly technical and independent scoring system. Product attribute scoring included aroma and eye-appeal, body and color, flavor and finish, texture and taste. Final product scores, measured to one-hundredths of a point (.01), totaled to a high of 100-points.

Westby Cooperative Creamery, as a manufacturer of cultured dairy food products; produces Cottages Cheeses, Yogurts, Sour Creams, Dairy Dips, Cheese Curds, Hard Cheeses, and more. Over 25-million pounds of these products were produced in fiscal-year 2016 as private-label retail brands, food ingredients and specialty products, for food service channels into schools/hospitals/restaurants, and as retail *Westby* brand dairy products distributed to grocery and convenience stores throughout the upper Midwest states.

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For more information, please visit these websites:

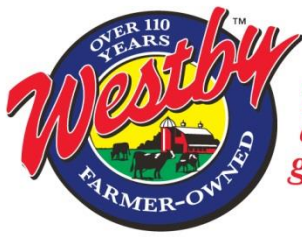
www.uschampioncheese.org

www.westbycreamery.com

www.smariorganics.com

™ Westby Cooperative Creamery, Westby, WI ™ Smári Organics, Petaluma, CA

Please see product container image and caption below:



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(image caption):

Westby™ brand 4% Small Curd Cottage Cheese topped eleven challengers in the product category at the *2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest*, with a 1st Place/Best-of-Class total score of 95.0 points. Organized by the *Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association*, the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest is the largest technical cheese, butter, and yogurt products competition in the country. As a repeat award, this product won the same 1st Place award at the *2015 United States Championship Cheese Contest*; and, took the 1st Place/Gold Medal at the *2010 World Championship Cheese Contest*, beating nine other cottage cheeses from the U.S. and Austria.