

# DELCO FOODS



## Cheese Prices: Market Update

### Cheese Market Prices

This year the average block market price through July was \$1.81/lb. That's near the highest yearly average over the prior 10 years. For pizzerias, cheese represents the biggest single item for food purchases. If your business is primarily pizza, then it may represent 35 - 40% of food purchases. It's the reason pizzerias are sensitive to high cheese prices.

What is driving up prices for pizza cheese? One reason lies in the large withdrawal of cheddar from the market due to yeast contamination. Additionally, the decline in value of the U.S. dollar created strong demand for U.S. cheese, particularly in Asia where demand for dairy products is increasing. These factors reduced the supply of cheese, and with the decline in milk production associated with record heat already high prices went higher. Usually high prices would be an incentive for farmers to increase milk production which moderates price increases. But the current high cost of grain gives farmers little incentive to increase production by feeding a more nutritious feed blend or adding cows to herds.

Recent record high prices (June and July had the highest two month average in 25 years) moved U.S. prices above international levels. This reduced export demand and helped reduce the block price by \$.30/lb. from the top. But as of September 1, 2011 the price is still \$.30/lb. higher than last year's average and \$.20/lb. higher than the August 2010 average.

### Cheese Market History

To better understand cheese pricing here is a brief look at cheese prices over the last 25 years and how prices are calculated. Most cheeses (roughly 99%) are priced in relation to the price paid for milk as dictated through the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Each type of cheese requires a different amount of milk to yield 1 pound of cheese. That's one of the reasons provolone costs more than mozzarella. This, along with factors like packaging and style, freight, etc. determines how much above the block market any particular cheese costs.

Period	Yearly Average	Monthly Average Range
1986-1995	\$1.25/lb.	\$1.19/lb. - \$1.33/lb.
1996-2005	\$1.38/lb.	\$1.13/lb. - \$1.62/lb.
2006-2010	\$1.51/lb.	\$1.22/lb. - \$1.83/lb.
2011	\$1.81/lb.	\$1.46/lb. - \$2.10/lb.

The average Block Market has risen substantially over 25 years. Many factors affect the Block Market including inflation rate for the period. Look at the chart to see the change in the block market, and note

that the last 15 years has carried extreme volatility in the monthly averages.

### How to Mitigate High Prices

So what should pizzerias do about high prices? If you're an operator one of the ways to control your cheese cost is portion control. Another way is to consider switching or blending with some of the newer cheeses which have come to the market with excellent performance, flavor, and consistency.

Portion control insures that your food cost stays in control and may reduce your purchase dollars. (Additionally your product will be more consistent.) Here is an example of how it affects food cost and purchase dollars. Say for a given pizzas size your target cheese portion is 10 ounces. You average 11 ounces with no portion control; a 10% increase, meaning your cheese costs are 10% greater than required with every purchase. If you met your 10 ounce target and made 640 pies you would need 400 pounds of cheese. Because you were at 11 ounces you needed to buy 440 pounds, which is \$100 of extra cheese.

### Portion Control Guide

Either weigh or measure cheese. Weighing is more accurate but measuring also works. For weighing buy a portion scale if you don't have one. If you're measuring buy a clear large measuring container and mark the various portions on the outside of it with a permanent marker. You might have to experiment to figure where the mark should go. Train your team and insist they measure every portion. How long can it take? 5 seconds more to weigh or measure? If you made 50 pizzas in an hour that is 250 seconds or just 4 minutes longer to make all 50 pies.

### Alternative Cheeses

Another tactic might be to test alternative cheeses at a more affordable price point. There are several new cheeses available that are reasonably priced that may meet or exceed the performance of your current cheese. Try blending an alternative cheese with your regular cheese to cut down on price, or offer several recipes that use an alternative cheese.

Try Bellissimo Pizza Cheese for a quality cheese that consistently performs well in a variety of oven and temperature formats. Bellissimo Pizza Cheese is easy to work with, has great appearance, stretch and color. Contact your Bellissimo Distribution center for a sample or cutting of the Bellissimo Cheese products today. Cut your cheese costs without sacrificing quality.

By Richard Walker, VP, Bellissimo Foods





# The Beauty of Blends

Cheese blends are an effective way to create your ultimate pizza cheese. Approximately 40 percent of independent pizza restaurants use a cheese blend, and that number is on the rise due to the manufacturers ability to create certain small batch blends. A blended cheese is an easy way to create a flavor that is different than the competition.

There are two broad types of blends: i) a blend of two natural cheeses, and ii) a blend of a natural cheese with a substitute cheese. Given an operators oven configuration, and personal preference different blends will yield different flavor, stretch, color and burn. Most blends are made primarily of

with one to smaller give their additional For most owners cheese stretch, and effective achieve cheese is to mozzarella



mozzarella cheese three other added in quantities to pizza some attributes. example pizzeria like with an way to stretchy blend with provolone.

Another rising trend among pizzerias has been to add a sauceless pizza to the menu – often called ‘white pizza’. Most preparations begin with spreading soft uncured cheese, such as ricotta, over dough and topping it with more cheeses. Not having sauce can give you an opportunity to try more unusual cheese on your pizza. Try some of these blends for a great white pizza:

- Mozzarella – Romano – Parmesan
- Mozzarella – Gorgonzola – Parmesan
- Muenster – Brie – Blue
- Brick – Smoked Gouda
- Fontina – Gruyere



## MEAT YOUR PIZZA

Over 1,200 ways to Meat Your Pizza

**BURKE** 800.654.1152  
BurkeCorp.com



For all your *spice and ingredient* needs.



Talk to your distributor about *custom blending* your ingredients, and let us help you make it *consistently* the best every time.

**1-800-ALLSPICE**

[www.allseasonings.com](http://www.allseasonings.com)

1043 Freedom Dr. / Oneida, NY



ALTISSIMA  
Qualità

VANTAGGIO

Bellissimo

Tolivia

REAL ITALIAN PASTA  
SPENDIDA  
MADE WITH WHEAT  
Salsone

## The Impact of Aging

Mozzarella cheese, like any cheese, changes as it is aged due to the ingredients that are used to produce it. The aging or curing process is a vital part of cheese quality and is greatly affected by temperature, moisture and salt content. Most mozzarella cheese is shipped out of the manufacturing plant within 7 days of production, so the majority of the aging occurs in between the distribution channel and your pizzeria. Depending on your preference and oven type, most mozzarella for pizza should be aged between 2 and 4 weeks if held at an average 36 to 40 degrees F. Low moisture cheeses, and pizza cheeses made with starch, will last significantly longer.

Aging affects both the flavor and texture of cheese. If a cheese is under aged it is usually a little harder, and has a rubbery and bland taste. It also doesn't cook well, meaning it takes longer to melt, browns quickly, and doesn't have good stretch. A mozzarella that has been aged appropriately generally has a slightly yellow color, a sharper flavor, and it is softer in texture. It will have good melt, stretch, and brown better when baked. Over aged mozzarella will be too soft which makes it hard to chop, dice, or shred. It will have a pasty texture, and look runny and oily after baking.



Although aging cheese between 14 and 28 days is generally thought to be the aging standard, some manufacturers have been producing pizza cheese that has a significantly longer shelf life and will allow strong performance from 7 to 90 days.

In either case, with each new batch of cheese that you receive you should try it at whatever age it arrives at to ensure that it is not over aged and to determine how long it needs before use. To guarantee your cheese is easy to work with and yields the best results ensure that your cheese is kept at a consistent temperature between 36 and 40 degrees, try not to unwrap the cheese significantly before its use, and keep it in a dry space in your refrigerator.

*A Family Tradition*

### CORA Cannoli Shells

*Taste the Family Tradition*

*CORA Brand Imported Cannoli Shells* are made using a traditional Sicilian recipe that's been passed down for generations. Cora Cannoli Shells are made with the finest '00' flour, are easy to fill, and keep an unmistakable fresh made fragrance and crispness. Available in all sizes.

*Call For a Sample Today - 888-724-4737*

Quality, Authenticity, Value  
**In every bite.**

**Bellissimo**  
Authenticity. The World's Best Ingredients.

Whether it's to broaden your menu variety or upgrade your current pasta choices, keep your customers coming back more frequently with Bellissimo pasta. Made to our exacting standards in the hills of San Vito, Italy, it's processed slowly using only the finest durum wheat mixed with cool, clear mountain water. Bellissimo pasta delivers authentic Italian taste and consistent results time after time, even when partially-cooked, refrigerated or reheated.

Bellissimo has a variety of cuts to suit your every menu need.

Short cuts				
Long cuts				

Please visit [BellissimoPasta.com](http://BellissimoPasta.com) or call 800-813-2974 to locate a distributor in your area.

**BELGIOIOSO®**  
**ARTISAN. HAND-MADE.**  
**CLASSIC ITALIAN CHEESES.**  
*A BelGioioso Commitment.*



**ASIAGO**

BelGioioso Asiago is a firm table cheese that is aged for 5 months to produce a wonderfully, pronounced flavor that is slightly sweet and hard to resist.



**MASCARPONE**

BelGioioso Mascarpone is naturally sweet and made from the freshest cream. Its soft, creamy texture spreads with ease and blends well with other ingredients.



**BELGIOIOSO®**

*"Classic Italian Cheeses Made In The U.S.A."*  
 877-863-2123 [belgioioso.com](http://belgioioso.com)



Homeland Hard Salami (#1001747)



All delicious...  
**All Hormel**

Roast Beef w/Au Jus  
 (#260711)



Austin Blues  
 Rib Tips (#260450)

**CASA DI LISIO ANNOUNCES:  
 NO NUT PESTO AND VEGAN PESTOS**

*Made the same way for  
 the past 38 years...  
 With only Fresh Basil  
 and Fresh Herbs!*



**VEGAN PESTOS:**

- Vegan Pesto Basil
- Sun Dried Tomato Pesto (Vegan)
- Roasted Red Pepper Chipotle Pesto (Vegan)
- Roasted Garlic Pesto (Vegan)

**THE REST OF CASA DI LISIO'S PRODUCTS ARE:**

Fresh Basil Pesto, Walnut Pesto, White Clam Sauce, Creamy Alfredo, Puttanesca Tomato Sauce, Sauce Provençal, Cilantro Pesto and Napolitano Tomato Sauce

**ARE DIETARY REQUIREMENTS DRIVING YOU CRAZY?**

Casa Di Lisio sauces can enhance your menu with no extra work in the kitchen and labor costs disappear!

**ALL SAUCES ARE:**

- Gluten Free
- All Natural
- No Salt Added
- No Trans Fats
- Concentrated
- Cost Effective



For the Distributor in your area call:

**800-247-4199**

Visit our new website, [www.CasaDiLisio.com](http://www.CasaDiLisio.com)  
 for code #'s and recipe ideas



## Employee Spotlight



Lucas Glenn      Aaron Basham

If you come to visit Delco Foods you may, on occasion, hear what sounds like someone bowling on the floor above. Don't be alarmed. The ceiling is not about to collapse. You are actually

hearing the print room hard at work creating custom pizza boxes for our customers. This month we'd like to introduce you to the men making all that noise.

Lucas Glenn has been Delco's Printing Press Operator for almost 11 years. The biggest change he's seen in that time has been the increase in the number of boxes he prints. "When I started in October 2000, we were only printing 350 to 450 cases per week. We now print over 1400 cases per week," he explains. The increased number accounts for the hardest part of his job – meeting deadlines and making sure each job is done well. Lucas takes care to make sure each print run will meet the standards of the restaurants. His degree from Ivy Tech as well as his Graphics Arts certificate from Tech High School make him more than qualified for the demands. Lucas has a philosophy that helps with any pressures the day may bring – "Keep it simple, do my job and the little things will take care of itself," he says.

Lucas's co-worker, Aaron Basham has a similar outlook living by the mantra to "take life one day at a time." Aaron has been running the print machine when needed and wrapping all the boxes to prepare them for shipment for the past four years. Before joining the Delco family, Aaron worked as a sales manager for an automotive repair facility and has experience as an auto mechanic. For Aaron, the hardest part of his job is keeping up with the deadlines when box demand is high. The most satisfying is the sense of completion with a job well done. "The best part of my job is when all the orders are done every week," he says.

When the print room is not producing boxes, they enjoy varied interests. Lucas likes fishing, gambling, travelling and following sports. He is the youngest of four – with one brother and two sisters. Aaron is the second oldest of five – with one brother and three sisters. In his spare time, he loves to work on cars and ride motorcycles. Aaron is also an avid softball player. He says that softball consumes most of his time outside of work in the spring, summer and fall.

Delco Foods is lucky to have such a dedicated crew working to produce quality print boxes every week and keep up with the ever-increasing goals. Delco Sales Manager, Rob Shirley, says it best, "Lucas and Aaron have been a dependable part of the Delco team. They are always willing to go the extra mile to satisfy our Delco customers. We appreciate the pride they take and the positive contributions they bring each day."



We can't write about the print room without at least mentioning Al House. Al has been the print room supervisor for the past 13 years, but he insisted that this article focus on Lucas and Aaron. Thanks, Al, for all that you do!

### Savings Online

Be sure to check out the Delco Foods Promotions page for all the latest deals and savings...

[www.delcofoods.com/promotions](http://www.delcofoods.com/promotions)

Forgot the password? E-mail Theresa Wells – [twells@delcofoods.com](mailto:twells@delcofoods.com) – and

she'll send it to you. And don't forget to "Like Us" on Facebook to keep up with all the latest Delco products, tips and savings!



**Remember to follow delcofoods on Twitter!**

### Comments, Questions & Suggestions

Please contact us toll free at **800.536.1234**, locally at **317.876.1951**, or visit us online at [www.delcofoods.com](http://www.delcofoods.com). We truly value your opinion.

As always, our number one goal is to keep you happy. Our newsletter is just one way we share new information about the products and services we offer, as well as industry news we think may be interesting and useful. For personal service and support, please contact your Delco Foods sales representative.



# Chef's Corner Cheese Processing Methods

Pizza in itself is an art form, from carefully crafting recipes, to the preparing the ingredients, to the making and presentation of every pie that goes out your door. In order to craft the pizza you are looking for you have to process any loaf or block cheese you order. Here are some methods you can use in processing your cheese so it meets your pizza needs.

## Slicing

In order to slice cheese it must be a firm variety of cheese. Softer cheese, such as mozzarella, can be sliced but its often difficult and tends to stick to the slicer cause the block to bounce. To reduce this spray the blade with cooking oil before you begin, try slicing the cheese as soon as you get it so it hasn't aged and become too soft.

## Grinding

The process of grinding cheese involves placing your cheese into the large screw shaped shaft that will chop it into pieces and force it though small holes in a metal disc. For grinding cheese, you must first chop the cheese into rectangles about the size of a ¼ - pound butter stick. Then push the cheese into the grinder one at a time. Grinding yields short cylinder pieces roughly ¼ to 1/8th inch in diameter. Cheese grinding is slow, time consuming, and is very hard to clean up.

## Shredding / Grating

Shredding is the preferred means of processing pizza cheese. Pizzerias that shred cheese usually use a vegetable cutting attachment mounted on their mixer, but you can get a separate shredding machine if your operation requires it.

For shredding with an attachment on a mixer, block cheese must be cut into blocks of 1-1/2 inches. This is important because the length of the block determines the length of the shred. If you want a longer shred then cut a larger block and vice versa. Your shred plate will determine the thickness of your shred, but generally speaking a thicker cut is better as it will not dry out as quickly during baking. Shredding cheese that is too soft as a result of over moisture or over aging gives an inconsistent portioning and slower pizza making as it tends to stick together.

## Chopping

Cheese can quickly and uniformly be chopped in a cutter-mixer. This process is also great for making cheese blends as it disperses the cheese uniformly while chopping. For the best results chop your cheese into blocks of 2-1/2 lb. pieces (5# loaf cut in half), stacked on the blade with the lid closed and let the machine run for about 20 seconds.

When using a higher moisture cheese, the cheese granules tend to ball up or form into marble sized pieces. This can slow down the pizza making, but can also be used as an alert for cheese that has excess moisture.

