



**BEEMSTER**<sup>®</sup>

PREMIUM GOURMET DUTCH CHEESE



## Classroom Presentation Program



# Presentation Points

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Beemster is in The Guinness Book of World Records with the largest cheese in the world.

In 2006, Beemster produced the largest cheese in the world, weighing in at a whopping 1,323 lbs!



# Well begun is half done

So you want to give a presentation on cheese? Specifically, on Beemster cheese. Good choice; after all, there is a lot to say about it. Better yet, we have already done a lot of the research for you and compiled it here. Not only useful facts but also nice illustrations and fun trivia for you to use. All about the history of cheese, the Beemster polder, our cheese dairy and the many delicious varieties of cheese that Beemster makes. Basically, there is more than enough here to put together an interesting presentation regardless of how long you must speak.

Beemster Mini's to share with the class



## Cheeses for the whole class!

We can tell you that Beemster is the most delicious cheese in the Netherlands, but of course you will want to taste it yourself. And so you should! That is why, in addition to this infopack we can send you a box with samples for the class! We will send some yummy cheese for you to serve in your classroom (and the teacher's lounge if is any left). Enjoy!

On average, every Dutch person eats 17kg (37.5lbs) of cheese each year!!!



# A successful oral report every time...



**First, really think about what you want to say, and keep in mind how much time you have for the presentation: too short is not what you want, but you do not want to go into more details than your audience is able to understand.**



**Read our presentation pack thoroughly, and use only the information that you need. Visit the websites listed at the back for additional information.**



**Use photos and images that you can download from the Internet, for example from [www.beemstercheese.us](http://www.beemstercheese.us). This will help liven up your presentation and make it more understandable for students.**



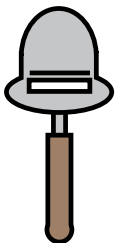
**Pay close attention to sequence: write down the most important words on paper in the right order.**



**Do not copy entire sentences from the presentation packet. Otherwise, chances are that you will simply read aloud to the class rather than give a presentation – your enthusiasm for cheese will not shine through to the class as bright!**



**If you come across a word that you do not understand, look it up in the dictionary or email us!**



If you want to, you can tell us what you thought about the Classroom Presentation Packet and how your presentation went – we love feedback!

Send your e-mail to:  
**[info@beemstercheese.us](mailto:info@beemstercheese.us)**

*'Kaaskoppen' or 'cheese-heads' are actually wooden barrels that were used for pressing cheese in the old days*



# How old is cheese?

**Cheese has been around since prehistoric times. But how did the first cheesemaker know how to turn milk into cheese? It happened by accident. According to an Arabian legend, a herder set off to round up his herd. He brought along some milk in a pouch fashioned from a calf's stomach that had just been cleaned. When he went to take a sip of milk, he found that there were all sorts of chunks in it. Curious, he took a nibble only to find that this 'cheese' tasted delicious!**

## Dutch cheese since 800 B.C.

So, cheese was originally discovered somewhere in the middle of the desert. Hard to believe that cheese is that old isn't it? Cheese was definitely being produced in the Netherlands as early as 800 BC. Archeologists have unearthed pots with holes in the bottom. These were used to separate the "chunks" in the milk from the remaining liquid. In cheesemaking, we refer to this as separating the curds and whey.

*Cheese was accidentally discovered by a prehistoric herder who was carrying milk in a calf's stomach*



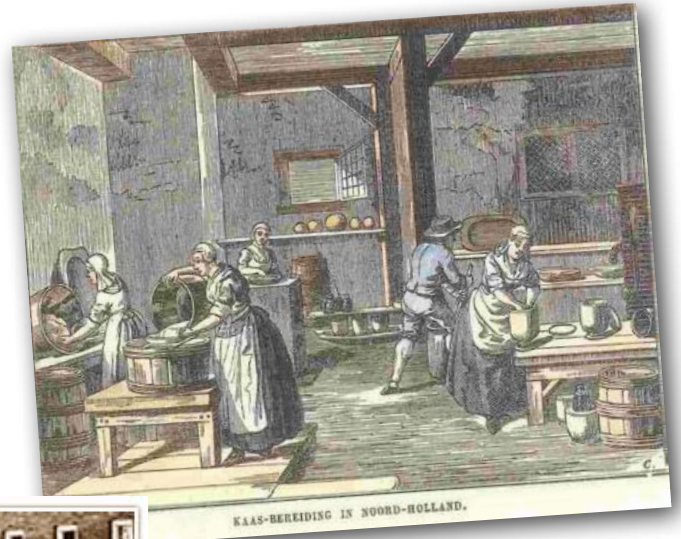
## Caesar refers to the Netherlands as 'cheese country'

Roman emperor Julius Caesar also noted in 57 BC that the Netherlands was a nation of cheese eaters. In his world-famous book, *De Bello Gallico*, he wrote about our ancient ancestors: "They do not farm; their food consists mainly of milk, cheese and meat."

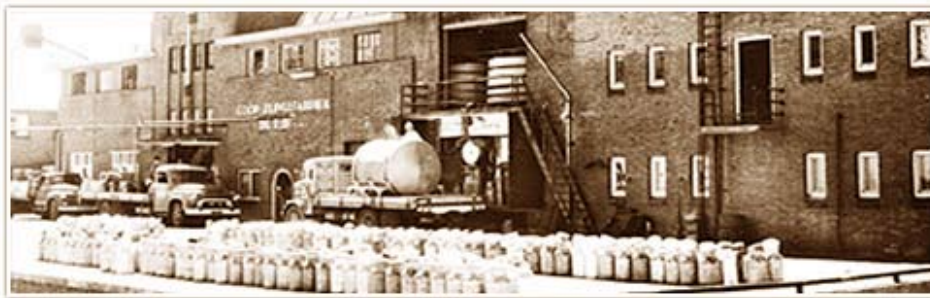
Julius Caesar

### Farmers become cheesemakers

The Dutch coastal provinces of Noord and Zuid Holland as well as Friesland were best suited for the farming of dairy cattle on account of the low-lying, wet soil. Starting from the beginning of the Common Era, the farmers here specialized in making cheese, not only for their consumption but also for the populations in the rapidly growing cities.



Cheesemaking in the Golden Age



The old Beemster cheese dairy

### 'Cheeseheads' in the Golden Age

The export of Dutch cheeses began in the Middle Ages. During the Golden Age (1700-1800), the Netherlands already enjoyed a reputation abroad as a true cheese nation. Cheeses were sold on the markets in renowned cities such as Gouda, Alkmaar and Edam. The Dutch earned the nickname "cheeseheads" back then. 'Kaaskoppen' or "cheeseheads" are actually wooden barrels that were used for pressing cheese in the old days.

### Beemster cheese since 1901

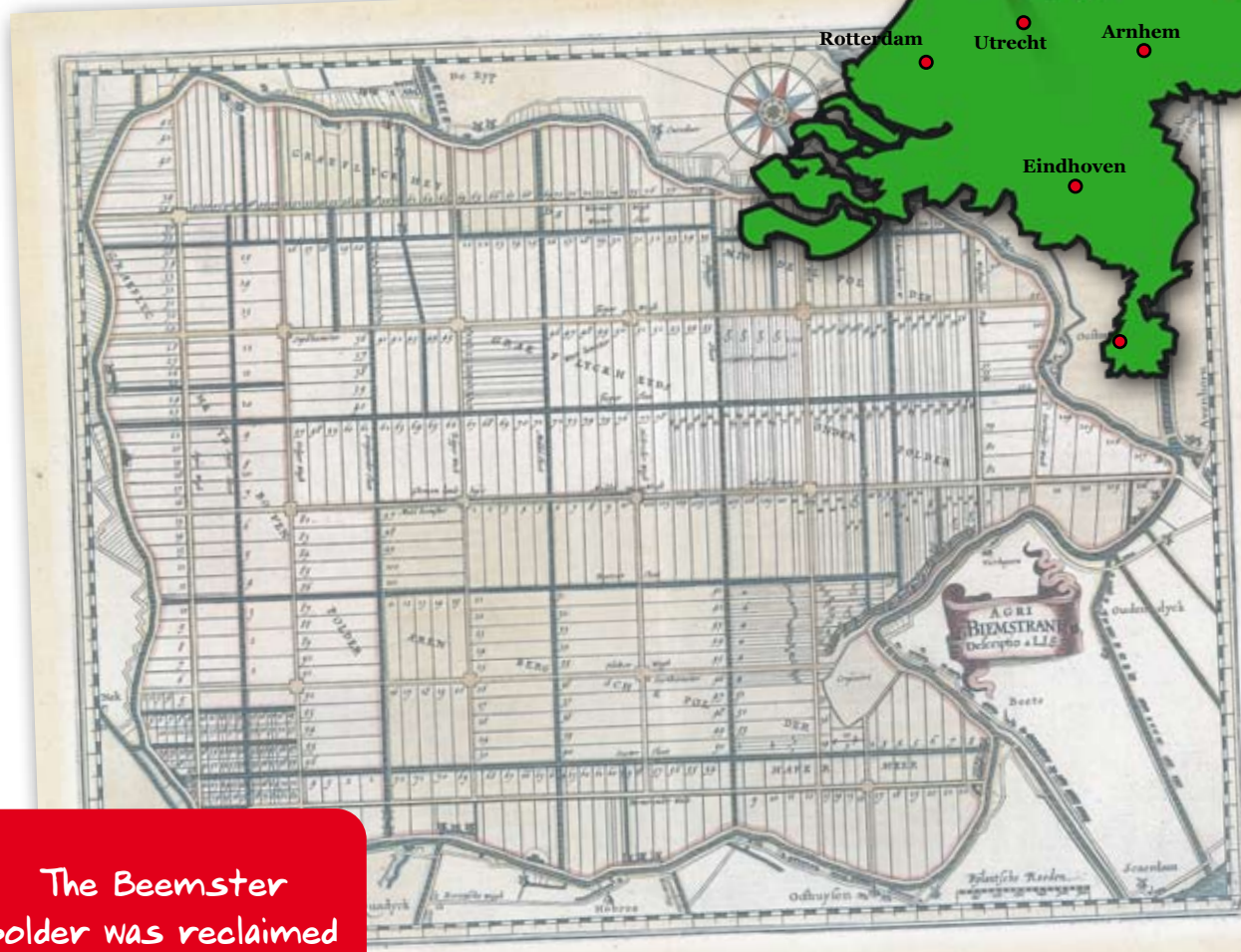
Up until the end of the 19th century, cheese was made on the farm by the farmer's wife in most cases. This changed with the advent of the first cheese dairy. These dairies were usually established by the farmers in so-called 'cooperatives.' In 1901, the Beemster cheese dairy was one of the first cooperative dairies where farmers sold their milk. In other words, Beemster has been in business for over 100 years!

Archeological evidence shows that cheese was being made in the Netherlands all the way back in 800 BC



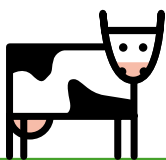
# Where is the Beemster polder?

The origin of Beemster cheese is in the quiet, canal-lined meadows of the Beemster polder. This polder in Noord-Holland between Purmerend and Alkmaar is one of the oldest, most beautiful and most famous polders in the Netherlands. What is a polder you ask? There is no direct translation into English, the best we can do is: 'Area reclaimed from the sea.'



The Beemster polder was reclaimed in 1612 using 106 windmills

An old map of the Beemster polder





### UNESCO World Heritage

The Beemster polder is so famous that in 1999 UNESCO – part of the United Nations – added it to the world heritage list, alongside the pyramids of Egypt, the Great Wall of China and many other remarkable sites. Quite an honor for a little Dutch polder!



Traditional Dutch farmhouse shaped like a cheese cover, meadows and cows



2 of the 106 windmills



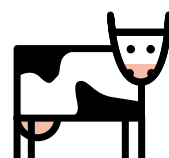
### One of the oldest polders in the Netherlands

The Beemster polder was reclaimed in 1612 using 106 windmills. Cows have been grazing there, 20 feet below sea level, ever since. They spend more time grazing in the meadow than most other cows in the Netherlands, which means their diet consists almost entirely of delicious tender grass - without any pesticides! We at Beemster feel this is important; after all, happier cows supply healthier milk, which makes for tastier cheese.

### Cheesemaking starts in the meadow

As you can see, making Beemster cheese already starts in the meadow with the cows. The unique blue sea clay in the Beemster polder cause the grasses grow differently. All the minerals that make up the sea clay, which used to be 20ft under the sea for millions of years, make the milk softer and sweeter! Amazing that the clay that grasses grow on can make cheese taste different, isn't it? Thanks to this rare milk that the cows from the Beemster polder give, we can cut back the amount of salt we add during the cheese making process by a whopping 20% when crafting a wheel of Beemster!

Beemster pays farmers an annual meadow premium of € 1.4 million in order to keep the cows grazing. They do have to go into the barns in the winter.



# The Beemster cheese dairy

**Beemster cheese is produced in the middle of the Beemster polder in a dairy owned by the 550 farmers that make up the Beemster cooperative, which was founded in 1901. The Beemster cooperative is the smallest cooperative in Holland and is currently the only one still making cheese by hand.**

## 66 million pounds of cheese every year

Using only traditional methods, 30 cheesemakers turn the 300 million liters of milk supplied by the dairy farmers into approximately 66 million pounds of cheese every year. In other words, each cheesemaker produces just over 2 million pounds of cheese a year! Beemster cheese is sold primarily in the Netherlands, but nowadays it is also sold in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, Japan and China.



The Beemster cheese store

## The only cheese supplier to the Dutch court

In June 2001, CONO Kaasmakers was the first and only cheese producer in the Netherlands to be granted the title, 'Supplier by appointment of the Royal Court of the Netherlands' by Her Majesty the Queen.



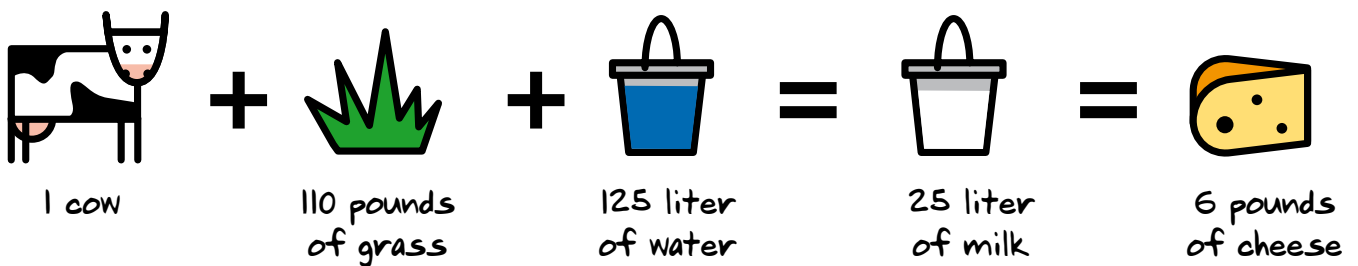
## How to be sure it is really Beemster?

Only cheeses that meet the very highest demands of our cheesemakers earn the unique 'Beemster coat of arms,' featuring a red cow and a yellow lion on the label and the band around the cheese, called the banderole. This is the one and only true guarantee that this is genuine BEEMSTER CHEESE. Beemster is available in many major supermarkets and gourmet cheese shops.

# Straight from the horse's, er, cow's mouth

**The fact is: making cheese already starts in the meadow. See, for years now it is common knowledge that cows that get to roam freely outdoors, grazing on fresh grass produce milk that is higher in unsaturated 'good' fats. This not only makes the milk taste better, it also makes it healthier.**

Average daily milk production for one cow:



Don't moo-ve us indoors!

## A daily average of 25 liters of milk

Cows are usually milked in the morning and again at night. These days, this procedure is becoming increasingly automated in order for the farmer to keep track of how much milk each cow is producing. On average, a cow produces 25 liters of milk each day. The milk is collected in a huge refrigerated tank every day by the Beemster tankers.

## Cows belong in the meadow

Nowadays, throughout the Netherlands and the world more and more farmers are keeping their cows indoors all year round because it is easier and cheaper. Beemster thinks this is unnatural. Therefore, we give our dairy farmers extra money (€ 1.4 million) to keep their cows in the meadow longer. After all, the happier the cows, the healthier the milk, and the tastier the cheese!

## The Mobile Milk Collection

The tanker that collects the milk is part of the Mobile Milk Collection or MMC system. The MMC driver first takes a sample from the milk tank to determine the quality and the fat and protein content. The price that the dairy farmers receive depends on the quality of the milk. Next, the milk is pumped into the tanker. When it arrives at the Beemster cheese dairy, the milk is transferred into huge tanks.

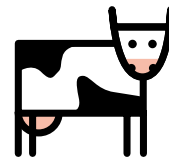
# Cheese according to top secret recipe

Beemster cheese is made according to an old Dutch recipe that has been kept top secret since 1901. Why? It is very simple: because this secret recipe produces the very best cheese in the Netherlands and we prefer to keep it that way!

## 1 First pasteurize the milk

For the natural and traditional Beemster method of preparation, fresh milk is delivered every day. After it arrives, the milk is pasteurized. This is the process of heating it very briefly in order to destroy any bacteria which could make you sick.

You need about 10 liters of milk to make 2 pounds of cheese

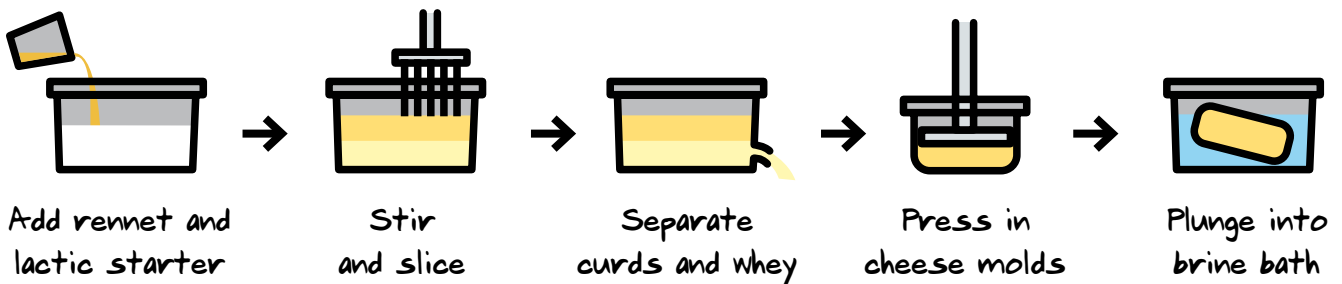


## 2 Rennet separates curds and whey

Rennet is added to the pasteurized milk. Rennet is a substance that makes the proteins and fats in the milk coagulate into a thick mass called curds. The leftover liquid in which the curds float is called whey.

## 3 Lactic starter for a special flavor

In addition to rennet, lactic starter is added to the milk. This special strain of lactic acid bacteria adds more flavor to the cheese and gives it a longer shelf life. Beemster uses a secret lactic starter that produces a very special, full flavor – it's a 'good' bacteria that is all natural and completely safe for everyone despite sounding scary as a bacteria.



#### 4 Manually stirred and sliced

The curds and whey mixture is now stirred and sliced until a grainy mass is formed. The Beemster cheese dairy is the only one of its kind in the Netherlands that still employs this traditional manual method. Next, the whey is drained, leaving the dry curds.



#### 5 The Beemster quality mark guarantee

Just before pressing, a circular tag is placed on the cheese: the Beemster quality mark. It includes a code number for tracing the date and time of production. The mark is a certificate of quality for the high quality of the cheese.

#### 6 The cheese is pressed into shape

The curds are now sliced into blocks and placed in circular tubs. Next, the remaining whey is pressed out of the cheese molds, giving the cheese its flat, round shape. At the same time, a thin rind forms on the cheese.



#### 7 Longer shelf life and more flavor

After pressing, the cheese goes through one more step: the brine bath. During this bath, the cheese slowly absorbs some salt, which will help it keep longer and allow it to develop more flavor as it ages. Now the Beemster cheese can begin its natural ripening process.

# Ripening for 1 month all the way to 2+ years

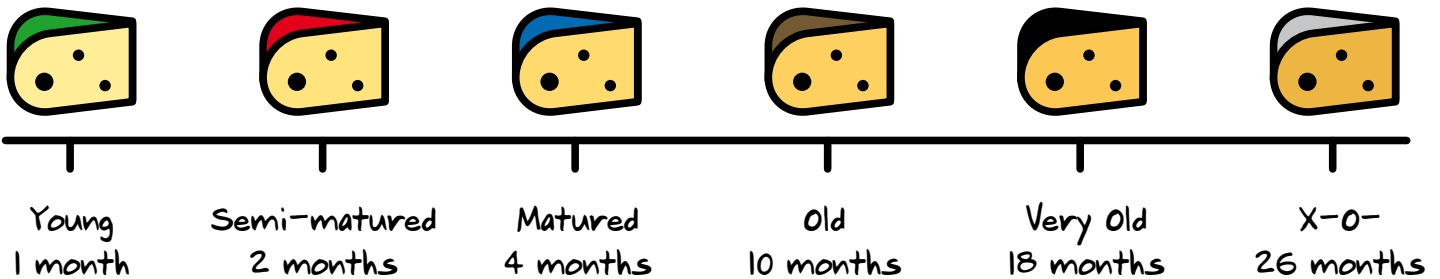
After the brine bath, the cheese is sent to the storehouse to ripen naturally, undisturbed on wooden shelves. The longer the cheese ripens, the drier and harder it gets. The flavor becomes increasingly rich and pronounced, while the color changes from a light yellow to a darker yellow. Young cheese ripens for approximately one month, while mature cheese stays on the shelf for over two years.

## Turn, sample, taste and rate

During the ripening process, the cheese resides in warehouses dating back to the 1600's and is turned regularly in order to maintain its proper shape and to make sure that the flavor develops evenly throughout the entire wheel of cheese. The cheese masters also frequently take samples in order to taste and rate the cheese.



Ripening on wooden shelves



The cheese master with his cheese trier

## The cheese master's eye decides

Cheese is, and remains, a natural product. Therefore, there is no set ripening time; instead, the cheese master determines whether the Beemster cheeses are ripe for selling. He continues tasting and rating until he is 100% satisfied. Only then are the cheeses allowed to be sent to stores.

# All sizes and shapes

Beemster makes cheese in all varieties, sizes and especially ages. From mild young cheese to very old and extra sharp cheese, such as the X-O- variety. In addition to the 'regular' Beemster cheese in every possible age, there are also special varieties of cheese such as: Beemster-Lite (33% reduced fat), the very special flax cheese, and cheese with mustard seed, nettles, garlic or wasabi. You will find Beemster in superior supermarkets and in gourmet cheese shops.



## BeemsterLite: 33% less fat

Delicious Beemster cheese with lots of flavor but less fat. For those who want to enjoy a superb piece of cheese while watching their fat intake.

## Beemster Vlaskaas: based on a traditional Flax Harvest Festival recipe

A hearty specialty by Beemster based on a traditional Belgian recipe. Full and creamy with a slightly sweet taste. For those who love good food.



Beemster Classic



Beemster X-O-

Beemster also makes a very unique Flax Harvest Festival Cheese named Vlaskaas



# Tasty and healthy

**Cheese is not only tasty, it is also healthy. For example, 2 pounds of Beemster cheese contains approximately 8.8 oz of protein. This makes cheese a good alternative to meat for vegetarians. Plus, Beemster contains lots of unsaturated 'good' fats, vitamins and important minerals such as calcium. And because Beemster is made using less salt than most other cheeses, it is also suitable for people on a low sodium diet. In other words, cheese is great tasting and healthy. Because it doesn't contain sugar it is a terrific snack!**



salad



quiche



sandwich



pizza



## From Dutch cheese sandwiches to Italian pastas

A 'plain' Dutch cheese sandwich always tastes great but, of course, you can enjoy Beemster in many other ways, too. For example, how about a fresh and fruity combination with grapes or strawberries? Or tangy and sharp with nuts or olives. Cheese is great to cook with, too. What about salads, pastas, pizzas, pancakes, casseroles or cheeseburgers?

Cheese is a good alternative to meat for vegetarians



# Very useful websites

[www.BEEMSTERCHEESE.us](http://www.BEEMSTERCHEESE.us)

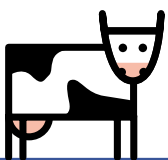
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beemster>

[http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&id\\_site=899](http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&id_site=899)

<http://www.worldheritagesite.org/sites/droogmakerijdebeemster.html>



Cows that graze outdoors and eat fresh grass are happier and produce healthier milk



# Fun trivia

CONO Kaasmakers produces some 30 million kilograms of Beemster cheese every year



Beemster cheese is the main sponsor of world champion sailors Lobke and Marcelien



Beemster cheese is sold in countries including Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, China, Japan and the United States



You can recognize Beemster cheese by the famous coat of arms with the cow and the lion



The white speckles on old cheese are protein crystals that give the cheese its delicious sharp flavor



Just like the Great Wall of China and the pyramids in Egypt, the Beemster polder is a UNESCO World Heritage site



CONO Kaasmakers produces some 66 million pounds of Beemster cheese every year



In the Netherlands, over 1.3 billion pounds of cheese are produced annually



Beemster pays farmers a meadow premium of €1.4 million to keep the cows grazing in the pastures

