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NEWS RELEASE

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USDEC Launches New Cheese Education Program.

First of its kind international certification program launched by USA Cheese Guild in partnership with ICCA Dubai, international roll out to follow.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, October 3, 2018 – As cheese continues to increase in global popularity, the U.S. dairy industry is in a unique position to meet growing demand from foodservice operators and food and beverage manufacturers as well as retailers in the Middle East and around the world.

Cheese is not, however, an ingredient or a product readily understood outside of the western world. It is a versatile food that can stand on its own or complement many culinary creations, but chefs and retail staff in growing cheese markets entrusted to work with and sell cheese have limited knowledge of this jack of all trades.

Thus, as the leading global supplier of high quality cheese, the United States has established the USA Cheese Guild™—a center of excellence for cheese knowledge and education managed by the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and comprised of industry experts. The creation of the Guild stems from the U.S. dairy industry's belief in sharing knowledge to empower and improve lives of others by providing a premiere and one-of-a-kind global cheese certification program. Designed for both foodservice and retail, this new global training—the USA Cheese Specialist™ Certification Program—consists of three, progressive certification levels (Associate, Intermediate and Master).

The first-ever course launched in partnership with the International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA) Dubai this week. The inaugural class was composed of 20 young chefs from 13 hotel properties in the UAE with students coming from nine different countries (India, Indonesia, South Africa, Syria, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Italy and the Philippines). The two-day, hands-on training course taught the basics about cheese and how to use it in culinary applications. All students graduated with a certificate of course completion for the Associate Level.

Although the United States produces highly touted, award-winning specialty cheeses, it is typically not seen as a player in this food category. “We believe educating the world about this versatile food and telling our story at the same time is essential to creating the next generation of (U.S.) cheese lovers,” said Angélique Hollister, vice president, cheese marketing and team lead for Middle East/North Africa at USDEC.

“In the Middle East, we commonly work with European and Australian cheeses, but after going through this course, it's evident U.S. cheese is excellent,” added Sunjeh Raja, director and CEO of ICCA Dubai. “Each young sous-chef who went through the program is excited about the introduction to U.S. resources and the new skills they are learning thanks to this certification program.”

The two additional courses (Intermediate Level and Master Level) provide more in-depth information about additional technical applications, nutrition and global trends and will be rolled out in early 2019 with the first graduating classes expected by the spring. Upon completion of all three courses, graduates will receive the designation of USA Cheese Specialist™ along with a sew-on patch for their chef coats. They will also be inducted into the global USA Cheese Specialist community, with a lifetime membership to the USA Cheese Guild



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which provides members continued access to valuable resources to keep them engaged and connected to the U.S. cheese industry throughout their careers. Such resources and features of the Guild are still under development.

In addition to the ICCA, certification courses will be offered through additional prestigious culinary institutes in Japan, as well as Middle East retail partners such as Lulu, The Sultan Center, Choithrams, Manuel and Tamimi throughout the end of the year. Additional partnerships will kick off in 2019 in other markets.

Visit ThinkUSAdairy.org for more information on these programs or for nutrition, trends and applications with U.S. cheese.

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About U.S. Dairy Export Council

The U.S. Dairy Export Council® (USDEC) is a nonprofit, independent membership organization that represents the global trade interests of U.S. dairy producers, proprietary processors and cooperatives, ingredient suppliers and export traders. USDEC aims to enhance U.S. global competitiveness through programs in market development that build global demand for U.S. dairy products, resolve market access barriers and advance industry trade policy goals. As the world's largest producer of cow's milk, the U.S. dairy industry offers a sustainably produced, world-class and ever-expanding portfolio of cheese varieties as well as nutritional and functional dairy ingredients (e.g., skim milk powder, lactose, whey proteins). USDEC, together with its network of overseas representatives in the Middle East and around the world, also works directly with global buyers and end-users to accelerate customer purchasing and innovation success with quality U.S. dairy products and ingredients. USDEC established and manages the USA Cheese Guild™.

About International Centre for Culinary Arts Dubai

International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA) Dubai is a world-class culinary training centre, delivering programs accredited by the internationally recognized City & Guilds, London. It has been featured amongst the "Top 10 Culinary Institutes in the World" and awarded the "Recognition of Quality Culinary Education" by the World Association of Chefs Societies (WorldChefs), a global authority on food standards. The "Recognition of Quality Culinary Education" award seeks to recognize the training and education that meet or exceeds the culinary standards education established by WorldChefs. The centre has won several awards, including the prestigious City & Guilds, London Lion Awards (Known as the Oscars of Skills), "International Centre of the Year Award 2016", apart from "International Centre for Excellence Award (Middle East)-2016", ProChef ME Cooking School of the Year 2016 and the Broadcast Pro Best Digital Initiative of the Year 2016, amongst several others for its application-focused innovative initiatives & continued excellence. ICCA Dubai specially trains and equips students in industry best practices for a work placement in the Hospitality & Cruise Line Industry internationally and its Graduates do it all in the food world, they are successful Chefs, Restaurant Owners, Hospitality Managers, Entrepreneurs, Food Stylists, Food Writers and More.



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