



Overview of cheese products

available in Québec between 2020 and 2025



The Observatory conducted a follow-up study on the cheese product market, five years after the initial report in 2020. A broader selection was observed, with a total of 142 products listed, accounting for 86% of the market (compared to 118 products in 2020, which accounted for 72% of the market at that time).

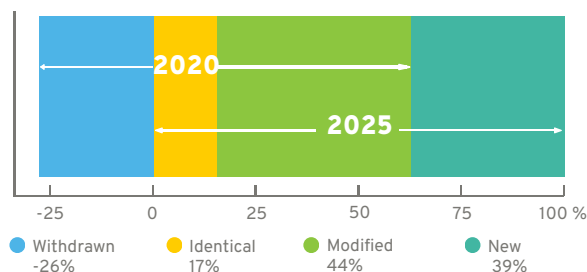
1 Cheese products listed in 2025

The greatest **variety**¹ was still found among cream cheeses (61% of the total offering). Despite a 5 pp² decline, individually packaged processed cheeses were the best-selling items (57% of sales), even though they only accounted for 34% of the total offering.

Overall, 15% of cheese products (n=22/142) featured a **fat-related claim** (e.g., reduced fat). However, they only accounted for 7% of total sales for the food category.

In regard to the **status**³:

- Most of the products were modified (n=63/142; 44%) or new (n=55/142; 39%).
- Cream cheeses accounted for the largest proportion of new products as well as modified products.



Because they generally contained less protein and calcium, **plant-based products** were not necessarily a more nutritious alternative to animal-based products.



Cheese products that have been **modified** since 2020 have generally reduced their saturated fat and sodium content while increasing their protein content.

¹Variety: number of different products.

²Percentage points: These represent the difference in market share percentages for the same category between 2020 and 2025.

³Product status: New, identical, modified or withdrawn since 2020.

2 Evolution of nutritional composition

The nutritional composition of cheese products **offered** and **purchased** (weighted by sales) in 2025 differed little from 2020, regardless of product type. However, their saturated fat content has increased by 8% since 2020. When purchases were considered, this change became negative (-9%). This suggests that consumers purchased products containing less saturated fat and/or that the best-selling products were those that reduced their saturated fat content the most. It should be noted that these variations were not significant.

In addition, cream cheeses generally contained less sodium than processed cheese products (e.g., cheese slices, cheese spreads). Processed cheese products – particularly individually packaged ones – provided more protein and calcium than cream cheeses.

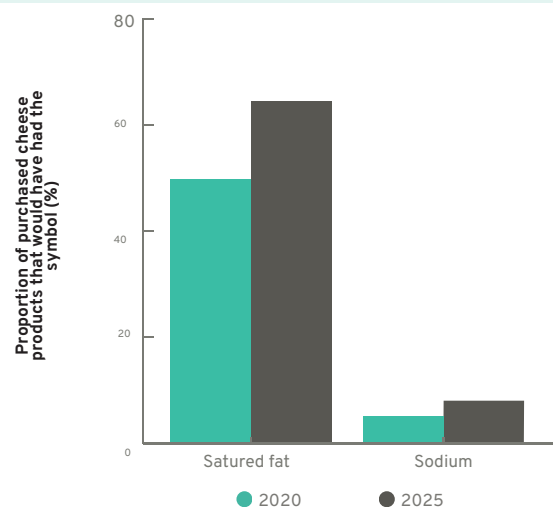
3 Front-of-package Nutrition Symbol

To determine whether a product should bear the nutritional symbol because of a high content in saturated fat, sugars and/or sodium, the **10% Daily Value (DV)**⁴ is used for cheese products. Note that some cheese products can be eligible for a nutrient-specific conditional exemption⁵.

Among cheese products available in 2025, 63% would have displayed the symbol on their packaging for at least one nutrient (representing 46% of sales).

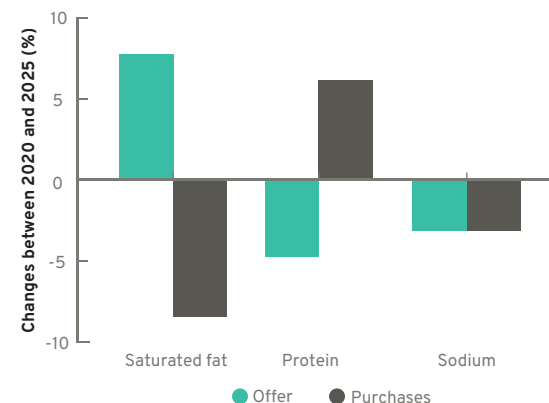
More specifically, 63% of products would have had a symbol due to high saturated fat content, and 7% due to high sodium content. This represents increases of 13 pp for saturated fat and 2 pp for sodium compared to 2020.

Overall, 7% of the cheese products offered (accounting for 1% of sales) would have been required to display the symbol for both saturated fat and sodium.



⁴ The 10% threshold of the daily value applies to products with a reference amount of 30 g or less.

⁵ Cheese products may be eligible for a conditional exemption from displaying the nutrition label for saturated fat and sodium if they provide at least 5% of the daily value for calcium and do not contain certain ingredients high in saturated fat (applies only to the symbol for saturated fat).



4 Conclusion

The nutritional composition of cheese products has not changed significantly since 2020. However, the levels of saturated fat and sodium have decreased, while protein levels have increased in **modified** products.

Reformulation efforts must be encouraged when possible, as **saturated fat** remains a nutrient of concern for this category. Indeed, **63%** of cheese products would have had to carry the front-of-package nutrition symbol for this nutrient.

Sodium is also a nutrient to watch for in processed cheese products. On average, these products provided more than 10% of the daily value for sodium per 30 g serving.

Data from this overview of cheese products comes from:



Nutritional composition



Consumers purchases

Market coverage

70% of the offer
86% of sales

For more information : observatoire.inaf.ulaval.ca/en/

With the contribution of :

