



CHEESE AFFINAGE BASICS – LEVEL 1

2-Day Training Course

Format: In-person

Location: ESNEKI Dairy Centre

Trainer: The training will be delivered by **Malen Sarasua**, accredited trainer of **MONS Formation** and member of the **MONS Formation** through ESNEKI Dairy Centre, the delegated Centre for Spanish-speaking countries. With extensive experience in the dairy and cheese sector, she acts as a key link between MONS Formation and Spanish-speaking professionals, facilitating access to the renowned MONS methodology and expertise in cheese affinage.

Target audience: Cheese producers, affineurs, ripening managers, specialty cheese retailers, and anyone wishing to deepen their understanding of cheese affinage fundamentals.

Next session: See the annual training calendar of Leartiker Dairy Centre and MONS Formation. Final dates will be announced when registration opens for each edition. Places are limited to ensure effective participation in practical activities and personalized guidance.

TUITION FEES

Registration fee: €750

The fee includes:

- Course delivery.
- Training materials.
- Technical documentation.
- Tastings and sensory analysis workshops.
- Coffee breaks and lunches during the training.

The fee does not include travel or accommodation expenses.



TRAINING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of affinage in the final quality of cheese.
- Identify the factors influencing cheese evolution during ripening.
- Understand the microorganisms involved in affinage and their sensory impact.
- Manage the environmental parameters of a ripening room.
- Apply the main affinage care techniques and treatments.
- Recognize common ripening defects and their causes.
- Assess the ripening stage of different cheese varieties.
- Use sensory analysis as a tool for quality control and product enhancement.
- Communicate and explain the organoleptic characteristics of a cheese to customers.
- Acquire the foundational knowledge required to access advanced affinage training, such as the “**MONS EXPERIENCE – Advanced Fundamentals of Cheese Affinage (Level 2)**” course.



DETAILED PROGRAM

DAY 1 – AFFINAGE FUNDAMENTALS

Time	Content
08:30 – 09:15	Participant reception, introductions, and training objectives
09:15 – 09:45	Initial knowledge assessment
09:45 – 10:45	Prerequisites for affinage: from milk to cheese. Technological factors influencing ripening
10:45 – 12:15	General principles of affinage: objectives, physicochemical and microbiological transformations
12:15 – 13:00	Sensory workshop: discovery of the main cheese families and their degree of ripening
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:00	Affinage parameters: temperature, relative humidity, ventilation, and gas exchange
15:00 – 16:30	Affinage care and tools: turning, brushing, washing, brining, packaging, and monitoring
16:30 – 17:00	Questions, experience sharing, and daily conclusions



DAY 2 – SENSORY EVALUATION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Time	Content
08:00 – 09:30	Sensory analysis applied to affinage: tasting methodology and descriptive vocabulary
09:30 – 11:30	Comparative cheese study: analysis of different technologies, manufacturing processes, and affinage strategies
11:30 – 12:30	Practical tasting workshop: comparative assessment of cheeses at different stages of ripening
12:30 – 14:00	Interpretation of results. Identification of defects and improvement opportunities. Technical discusión
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch break
15:00 – 15:30	Final knowledge assessment
15:30 – 16:00	Training review, conclusions, and presentation of the Level 2 Affinage training pathway



TECHNICAL CONTENT

Module 1. Technological Foundations

- From milk to cheese.
- Influence of cheesemaking technology on affinage.
- Composition and evolution of the cheese 's paste.

Module 2. Affinage Microbiology

- Lactic acid bacteria.
- Yeasts.
- Molds and surface flora.
- Microbial interactions.

Module 3. Environmental Parameter Management

- Temperature.
- Relative humidity.
- Ventilation.
- Monitoring and control of ripening rooms.

Module 4. Affinage Techniques and Care

- Turning.
- Brushing.
- Washing and rubbing rinds.
- Surface treatments.
- Cheese selection and grading.

Module 5. Affinage Defects

- Visual defects.
- Texture defects.
- Aromatic defects.
- Corrective actions.



Module 6. Sensory Analysis and Commercial Value

- Tasting methodology.
- Interpretation of ripening stage.
- Sales argumentation.

METHODOLOGY

The training combines:

- Theoretical presentations.
- Observation and analysis of real cheeses.
- Daily guided tastings.
- Practical exercises for defect identification.
- Exchange of experiences among participants.
- Initial and final assessments to measure learning progress.

TRAINING PATHWAY

The course **“Cheese Affinage Basics – Level 1”** is the reference training program for acquiring fundamental knowledge in microbiology, environmental parameter management, affinage techniques, sensory analysis, and ripening management.

Successful completion of this training provides access to the next stage of the training pathway:

MONS EXPERIENCE – Advanced Fundamentals of Cheese Affinage (Level 2), held at the facilities of MONS Formation (France), where participants deepen their expertise in advanced affinage techniques through practical workshops, technical visits, and advanced sensory analysis sessions.