



MONS EXPERIENCE – ADVANCED FUNDAMENTALS OF CHEESE AFFINAGE (LEVEL 2)

3-Day Immersive Training Program at MONS Formation (France)

An intensive 3-day program designed for professionals seeking to deepen their knowledge of cheese affinage through a combination of technical training, sensory analysis, and hands-on practice at the facilities of one of the world's leading cheese affineurs.

Next session: Please refer to 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 optimal participation in practical activities and individualized support.

REGISTRATION FEES

Tuition Fee: €2,000

The fee includes:

- Training delivered by the MONS Formation team.
- Translation and support provided by Leartiker Dairy Centre.
- Training materials and technical documentation.
- Practical affinage workshops.
- Technical visits included in the program.
- Accommodation during the three days of training.
- Breakfasts and lunches.
- Tastings and sensory analysis activities.

Dinners and travel expenses to France are not included.



ORGANIZATION

Instructor: The program will be led by **Laurent Mons**, one of the most respected figures in the international cheese world. As Director of MONS Formation and member of the leadership team of MONS Fromager Affineur and a leading ambassador for cheese culture and affinage expertise, Laurent Mons brings together decades of practical experience, technical excellence, and a unique vision of cheese ripening and quality. His involvement offers participants direct access to the philosophy and know-how that have made MONS an international benchmark.

Coordination, Translation and Support: led by **Malen Sarasua** accredited trainer 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.

Duration: 3 days

Location: MONS Formation and MONS Fromager Affineur (Saint-Haon-le-Châtel, France)

Places are limited to promoting practical learning and direct interaction with the affineur team.

This training is intended for professionals with prior experience or those who have completed the **"Cheese Affinage Fundamentals – Level 1"** course.

PREREQUISITES

This course corresponds to an **advanced level** and requires prior knowledge of cheese affinage techniques. Participants must demonstrate practical experience or equivalent training in this field.

Completion of the course **"Cheese Affinage – Level 1: Fundamentals of Affinage"** organized by Leartiker Dairy Centre is strongly recommended, or alternatively, participants should possess equivalent knowledge in affinage, surface microbiology, environmental parameters, and ripening management.

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that participants can fully benefit from the advanced content, practical sessions at MONS facilities, and sensory analysis workshops included in the program.



TARGET AUDIENCE

- Cheesemakers with previous affinage knowledge.
- Ripening managers.
- Professional cheese affineurs.
- Specialty cheese retailers.
- Dairy technicians and consultants.
- Participants who have completed introductory training or possess equivalent experience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the training, participants will be able to:

- Master advanced principles of cheese affinage.
- Understand the interaction between microorganisms, environment, and cheesemaking technology.
- Manage different ripening environments and facilities.
- Apply affinage techniques adapted to various cheese families.
- Interpret the role of molds, yeasts, bacteria, and surface flora in product development.
- Identify affinage defects and define corrective actions.
- Develop criteria for cheese selection, grading, and commercial valorization.
- Improve sensory analysis and technical communication skills.
- Gain first-hand knowledge of the organization, methodology, and philosophy of MONS Fromager Affineur.



DETAILED PROGRAM

DAY 1 – RIPENING ENVIRONMENTS AND AFFINAGE MICROBIOLOGY

Time	Content
09:00 – 09:30	Participant reception and course introduction
09:30 – 10:00	Initial assessment and review of Level 1 concepts
10:00 – 10:30	Fundamental principles and key factors of affinage
10:30 – 12:00	Ripening environments: caves, tunnels, cellars, modern ripening rooms, and environmental conditions
12:15 – 13:00	Sensory workshop: influence of affinage on cheeses produced using the same technology
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:00	Affinage microorganisms: bacteria, yeasts, and surface flora
15:00 – 16:00	Technologically relevant molds: development, functions, and control
16:30 – 17:30	Technical visit to the MONS Fromager Affineur ripening caves



DAY 2 – INTENSIVE AFFINAGE PRACTICE

Time	Content
08:00 – 12:00	Practical affinage workshop: observation, handling, selection, and care of different cheese families
12:30 – 13:15	Sensory workshop: comparison of different ripening stages
13:15 – 14:15	Lunch break
14:15 – 15:30	Affinage surfaces: morges, rind development, use of wood, and microbial ecosystems
15:30 – 16:30	Affinage defects: diagnosis, causes, and corrective measures

DAY 3 – AFFINAGE OPTIMIZATION AND TECHNICAL VISITS

Time	Content
08:00 – 11:00	Practical affinage workshop: decision-making and resolution of real-life cases
11:30 – 12:15	Visit to the La Collonge Tunnel and analysis of its operation as a unique ripening environment
12:15 – 13:00	Advanced sensory analysis: comparative tasting of cheese families aged by MONS
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:00	Troubleshooting session, questions, and technical discussion
15:00 – 15:30	Final knowledge assessment
15:30 – 16:00	Training review and conclusions



TECHNICAL CONTENT

Module 1. Affinage Ecosystems

- Types of ripening environments.
- Influence of the environment on cheese development.
- Management of temperature, humidity, and ventilation.
- Selection of conditions according to cheesemaking technology.

Module 2. Applied Microbiology

- Surface flora.
- Affinage yeasts and bacteria.
- Mold life cycles.
- Microbial interactions and biological control.

Module 3. Advanced Affinage Techniques

- Ripening strategies according to cheese family.
- Washing, brushing, and surface treatments.
- Natural rind management.
- Monitoring and decision-making throughout product development.

Module 4. Ripening Materials and Supports

- Wood as an affinage tool.
- Associated microbial ecosystems.
- Use and maintenance of shelves and aging supports.

Module 5. Defects and Troubleshooting

- Visual defects.
- Texture alterations.
- Aromatic and flavor deviations.
- Diagnostic and corrective methodologies.



Module 6. Advanced Sensory Analysis

- Evaluation of the impact of affinage.
- Identification of optimal consumption stages.
- Comparison of sensory profiles.
- Technical and commercial communication.

TECHNICAL VISITS AND EXPERIENCES

The training includes exclusive activities at MONS Formation and MONS Fromager Affineur facilities:

- Guided tour of the MONS ripening caves.
- Practical workshops alongside the affineur team.
- Visit to the La Collonge Tunnel.
- Guided technical tastings.
- Exchange of experiences with specialized industry professionals.

METHODOLOGY

The training combines:

- Specialized technical presentations.
- Practical affinage workshops.
- Professional visits to leading reference facilities.
- Daily sensory analysis sessions.
- Real case studies.
- Exchange of experiences among participants.
- Initial and final evaluations to measure knowledge progression.