

Beat: Business

## IN FRANCE 100 WHEELS OF COMTE CHEESE WERE STOLEN IN REGION OF FRANCHE-COMTE

### NORMALLY LOWER DOWN WISH LIST BURGLARS

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**USPA NEWS** - On Monday the owner of the Napier dairy in the town of Goux-les-Usiers, eastern France reported a break-in the previous night. Thieves had helped themselves to approximately one hundred wheels of Comté cheese, a speciality of the region of Franche-Comté...

On Monday the owner of the Napier dairy in the town of Goux-les-Usiers, eastern France reported a break-in the previous night. Thieves had helped themselves to approximately one hundred wheels of Comté cheese, a speciality of the region of Franche-Comté.

Comté is officially a protected cheese in France after being awarded the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, which means it can only be produced in that region.

'With such a quantity, you need a means of transport and a distribution network,' said Daniel Prier, Head of the Chamber of Agriculture for the Doubs region.

The Montbéliarde et Simmental breeds of cow are the only type that produce the milk that is used to make the cheese, that can spend up to 36 months maturing in a cellar.

U.K.'s Center for Retail Research, in 2011, surveyed 1,187 retailers representing more than 250,000 retail outlets across 43 countries and found out that it turns out cheese is the most stolen food in the world.

'The biggest threats for retailers are employees and shoplifters,' said Dr. Joshua Bamfield, Director of the Center for Retail Research in a phone interview with The Huffington Post. With the price of cheese rising, Bamfield says this is far from surprising given it could be seen as 'a lucrative business opportunity for small time criminals.' (Huffington Post 2011)

France produces more than 1,000 different types of cheese and is the second biggest consumer in Europe, after Greece. But products made with lait cru, or unpasteurised milk, now make up only 10% of the market, compared with 100% 70 years ago. The cheese war is particularly savage in Camembert, an area where there are now only five authentic local producers left. (Newsweek 2014)

'The multinationals don't care a fig and with the complete cooperation of the powers-that-be have swept aside 2,000 years of know-how, and now the great cheeses of France are on the road to extinction,' says Richez-Lerouge, who recently published France: Your Cheese is Going Down the Drain. 'The small guys just get crushed underfoot by companies like Lactalis with its €15bn turnover and Bongrain (€4.4bn). French cultural heritage and freedom of choice for the consumer are at stake here.' (Newsweek 2014)

The industrial fromagers have also succeeded, by legal force, in hijacking the Appellation d'Origine Protégée (AOP) bandwagon and now pasteurised, industrially fabricated cheeses make up nearly half of this protected enclosure, thus further threatening an endangered species. AOP Cantal is now 70% pasteurised; Ossau-Iraty from the Basque region is 80%, and Fourme d'Ambert is a staggering 97%. (Newsweek 2014)

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