

2017 ACS Post Conference Essay – Erin Roscoe

I ate too much cheese! I never thought those words would come out of my mouth. But, it's true, I did. I couldn't help myself. It was all so good...

Thank you to the American Cheese Society for awarding me a full scholarship to attend the 2017 American Cheese Society Conference in Denver, Colorado. It has been such a wonderful opportunity to be able to connect with people who share my passion for cheese and dairy farming. My conference experience was both inspiring and educational, more so than I had ever anticipated.

I am the Cheesemaker and Assistant Herd Manager at Hawaii Island Goat Dairy on the Big Island of Hawaii. (I was surprised at how much attention I got because of this!) I have never been to a conference before. I was told to pace myself, and to not try to do everything. I'm fairly introverted, so this advice was incredibly helpful because I realized how overwhelming it all could have been. I would say that most of my quality time was spent attending as many sessions as I could. My focuses were on cheesemaking and animal husbandry. I was also able to bashfully meet several of my cheese heroes. What an experience! People that I have been following for years. I have read their books and know so much of them and their work as cheese professionals. In fact, several of the sessions I attended, I chose based on the individuals presenting.

My favorite session was on Obsalim. I had heard bits about this idea in the past, but never knew much about it. It is a French developed method of diagnosing issues in your ruminant herd and making feed adjustments based solely on observations of the animals. Hopefully soon there will be training sessions in the United States as it has only recently been translated into English. In the session, we were given an introduction to Obsalim observation cards and worked in small groups to learn how to use them to diagnose dairy cows. I would love to continue my education on this technique when it becomes more available!

Did I mention that I ate too much cheese?! I never imagined how much cheese I would be able to sample in one long weekend. Besides attending sessions, sampling various cheeses from around the country was a fantastic way to see what other cheesemakers are creating. I know I'm stating the obvious here. We are very isolated here in Hawaii and "cheese" and "variety" are two words that you don't hear often, especially not together!

In summary, I feel that my time at the ACS Conference was incredibly important to my growth as a cheese professional. I am so fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend. Financially, the scholarship made this very possible. As a young farmer and producer, it is difficult to afford this type of education and experience. And the connections and inspiration I came home with is substantial. Below is a list of events I attended to give you an idea of my experience. Thank you again! Hopefully I'll be seeing you all in the years to come.

Sessions Attended:

- *Teaching the Trade* with Louella Hill and Ivan Larcher

- *Small Ruminant Deep Dive: Goats* with Ryan Andrus, Luis Gama, and Marques de Almeida
- *Demystifying The Complex Worlds of Cheese Crystals* with Dr. Paul Kindstedt and Pat Polowsky
- *Self Starter: Developing And Harnessing Your Own Microbes* with Peter Dixon, Mateo Kehler, Thomas Perry, and Rachel Schaal
- *Heritage Dairy Breeds In Traditional And Modern Cheesemaking* with Sam Frank
- *Obsalim: How The Animals Tell You About Their Nutrition* with Edward De Beukelaer

Events Attended:

- New Member & First Time Attendee Reception
- Resilient Teamwork & Leadership: Facing Challenge And Change On Everest, At Work, And In Life
- Annual Business Meeting
- Meet The Cheesemaker
- Opening Reception
- 2017 Awards Ceremony
- Brunch Of Champions
- Festival Of Cheese