

**J&L Grubb**  
**Cashel Blue Irish Farmhouse Cheese**  
**Est 1984**

Succession Planning of an Irish  
farmhouse cheese presented by  
Louis Grubb, founder.

# Background to the people behind Cashel Blue™ husband and wife: Jane & Louis Grubb (J&L Grubb Ltd. Est. 1984)

**Louis Grubb** BA, MSc Botanical Science TCD, previous manager for 11 years of government Agricultural Research stations, involved in far thinking projects to develop agriculture in 60's and 70's Ireland including Bamboo's and merino rabbits on the wetlands of The West of Ireland.

**Jane Grubb** Artists daughter, and chef who had trained under Myrtle Allen of Ballymaloe House Hotel and gained professional cooking experience combined with experience of travel.

An early Italian article referred to Cashel Blue as a combination of "Art and Technology" this may be true of the product but was certainly a reflection on Jane and Louis Grubb the creators of Cashel Blue™



# Background to structure of Irish farmhouse cheesemaking

- “ Farmhouse cheese-making in Ireland began in the late 70s, succession planning is key to its sustainability.
- “ Irish farms are family holdings of typically 80 acres (average herd size 50 cows), traditionally passed from father to eldest son. This sense of continuum is what underpins the strong sense of rural Irish community. In the early 1960s the Irish farmers cooperatives came together forming the Irish Dairy Board and the Kerrygold brand was born in an attempt to ensure the future viability of the small to medium sized Irish family farm holding.
- “ The Irish farmer has a strong sense of attachment to the land bestowing on it an emotional value out of proportion with its actual worth. (Euro 7,000 -10,000 per acre)
- “ Farmhouse cheese-making today can be divided into two categories: Relatively larger dairy farms with 100 to 200 cows and production in excess of 70 tons, for example Beechmount Farm, the home of Cashel Blue cheese, comparative to smaller holdings of less than 50 acres where the owner multi-tasks between milking, cheesemaking and direct sales and typically comes from a non farming background. i.e. lifestyle choice .

# Beechmount Farm, Fethard, Co. Tipperary: Home of Cashel Blue



The facts: 200 acres, 140 pedigree Friesian cows, fed grass based diet supplemented by Maize, peas and oats, all grown on the farm and mixed fresh. No composite feeds used and no growth hormones, average age of cows 5 years, average yield 25 litres/day (6.6 US gallons), milked twice daily.

# Continuing in the Footsteps: The next generation



Sarah & Sergio Furno: Met in an exchange of Risotto rice for Cashel Blue. Following a short career in the wine trade, Sergio and Sarah joined Jane & Louis, with a focus on maturation and grading.



Henry Clifton Brown: Returned home from Australia with the objective of developing a flock of milking sheep to supply his Uncle: Louis Grubb



PJ Ryan, our first 2<sup>nd</sup> generation team member, and production manager. Started work on Beechmount Farm age 14, milking the cows.



Louis Clifton Brown: BSc, MSc, Louis, returned to Tipperary after 5 years professional experience in technical sales. His role is QA , Purchasing and Environmental Manager

# Considerations in succession Planning

## “ COMMUNITY

Ensuring the sustainability of the farm and cheese dairy as part of the rural community and family. (Irish farmers see themselves as custodians of their environment as it passes from generation to generation)

## “ BUSINESS STRUCTURE

Transfer of assets without paying excessive taxes (Capitol acquisitions tax 30% and stamp duty 2%). Note Irish farmland historically carries a premium price due to the Irish man's attachment to the land.

## “ HOW SUCCESSION WILL WORK

Transfer of assets to the next generation with consideration to a future workable management structure, whereby each family member has a personal sense of ownership mitigating against jealousy and conflict and contributing to the all important sense of achievement (ref Sarah Furno 2<sup>nd</sup> generation).

The chief recipient is of the right calibre, age and motivation.

# Our Facilities



**Beechmount House:** the family home of Louis and Jane Grubb

Cashel Blue was created in the kitchen at the rear of the house. Beechmount House and its out buildings was home to Cashel Blue from 1984 to November 2010.

Total production capacity: 250 tonnes

In November 2010 Cashel Blue moved home: a new purpose built on farm dairy, one field further away from the house. Still on **Beechmount Farm** and close to the milking parlour.

Estimated total production capacity: 600 tonnes



# Louis Grubb's thoughts:

- “ Split your assets i.e.: Farm, Farmhouse, Cheese
- “ By preference keep your ownership structure simple for ease of decision making.
- “ Do not assume succession but leave the door open
- “ Encourage family to be involved from an early age
- “ Encourage next generation to get a good broad education and work experience elsewhere
- “ Where interest is expressed first employ them on a basic but professional basis gradually increasing responsibility while giving them limited freedom of expression for sense of fulfilment
- “ Gradually initiate transfer of shares taking care not to overwhelm
- “ Personally I feel that is important for one family member to have the majority share to ease decision making
- “ Finally there is no reason why the older generation cannot retain a minority share holding, giving continuity and the value of experience

# Beechmount House & Outbuildings

## The Birthplace of Cashel Blue

### The Osiery Field

Site of the New Cheese Dairy, Cashel Blue's home since Nov.2010

### The Milking Parlour

### The Cow Shed

To keep the Cashel Blue Cows warm & dry during the Winter Months

### The Calf Shed

### The Old Cheese Dairy

Home of Cashel Blue up to Nov. 2010

### Beechmount House

Cashel Blue created in the kitchen at the rear



# The Experience of Beechmount Farm and Cashel Blue Cheese

- “ 1972 Samuel Grubb passed away, his wife Phylis continued to farm Beechmount on her own until 1978
- “ 1978 Louis Grubb (1 of 4 siblings) returned to Beechmount Farm with his family. Phylis retired to enjoy her artistic interests
- “ 1982 farmhouse cheesemaking started in the farmhouse
- “ 1984 Jane Grubb created Cashel Blue from the milk of Louis’s herd. Cheesemaking continued to expand renovating and extending a premises on the farm which it did not own
- “ 2003 Sarah Furno (Louis and Jane’s only child) returns to Beechmount age 28 following 10 years away and becomes involved with Cashel Blue. Sarah’s husband Sergio also expresses an interest and relevant experience resulting in his involvement with specific relation to cheese grading and maturation.
- “ 2007 the process of transferring the farm to Sarah commences
- “ 2008 initial transfer of Cashel Blue shares to both Sarah and Sergio. Sarah and Sergio also given Directorship status to give a sense of achievement and authority
- “ 2009 completion of transfer of farm to Sarah (Age 35).
- “ 2010 completion of the new on farm cheese dairy (owned by the farm and leased by the cheese)
- “ 2011  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the ownership of J&L Grubb Ltd. transferred to Sarah and Sergio