

The American Cheese Society

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RESTAURANTS, ARTISAN CHEESES, AND RETAILERS?

by: Matthew Rubiner

Harbourne Blue from Devon, Monte Enebro from Avila, and Muscote from the Hudson Valley lay among bitter greens and quince paste at Boston's Les Zygomates. Le Forgeron, unrestrained, or a solitary egg-shell wedge of Chris Duckett's Caerphilly become the "one perfect cheese" tapas at the Mercury Bar. Artisan cheeses are finding their way, slowly, but surely, into American restaurants.

At Formaggio Kitchen, cheese and gourmet shop in Cambridge, Massachusetts, owners Ihsan and Valerie Gurdal, our staff and I, are doing our best to coax this trend into a bonafide 'cheese course' tradition. We now ripen and sell farmstead cheeses to fourteen local restaurants. We work closely with chef's and wait staffs, lending what expertise we can whether it be tips on storing, or slicing, or serving, or providing the stories about each cheese that charm and inform the customer--tales of the sparsely toothed makers of Montgomery's Cheddar, or the fields of oregano and mint that keep Cynthia and David Major's ewes fat and happy. Most of the cheese we sell is destined for cheese boards or cheese plates. Some appears in the chef's own creations: Zygomates' chicken stuffed with Reblochon de Savoie or Hamersly's marinated vegetables with Ste. Maure de Touraine.

Chefs visit our store to taste and talk and select their week's cheeses. Others leave it to us to choose what is ripe and perfect.

We make little direct profit from cheese sales to restaurants. As a retail store, we can't afford to sell at the low prices of an importer or wholesale distributor. The discount we offer to restaurants is a modest one. The cost of our cheeses can seriously strain an embattled chef's food costs. Despite the slim margins, however, we think it's good business.

So do the restaurants. The chef's we work with care deeply about the foods that come into their kitchen. They will scour a fishmonger for skate wings and cod cheeks, or reject twenty Bordeaux before selecting one. Artisan cheeses, pure and expressive works or craftsmen, compliment the chef's own artistry. They lend authenticity to a trattoria or bistro. Chefs tell us that cheese sells more wine. A wedge of Colston-Bassett Stilton sells another glass of vintage port, a wedge of Appleby's Cheshire another pint of ale.

See Formaggio Kitchen.....continued on page 10

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

by: Dick Groves

(Editor's Note: ACS members are encouraged to let us know about additional upcoming events of interest. Please contact Dick Groves at The Cheese Reporter, 608-246-8430, if you have an event you'd like to see added to this list.)

IFFCS (International Fancy Food and Confection Show) 21st Winter Show January 21-23, 1996; Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA. For information call NASFT (212) 921-1690.

Washington State Cheesemaking Workshop. March 4-7, 1996; for information call (509) 335-7516.

1996 World Cheese Championship in Green Bay, WI. March 5-7, 1996. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), for information on entering the contest contact WCMA at (608) 255-2027.

Chef Des Chef Conference & Trade Show - April 20-22 1996. Hyatt Regency at Embarcadero Center, San Francisco. For information contact Carol Platz at (800) 229-1967 ext. 69

IDDA (International Dairy Deli Association) Dairy-Deli-Bake '96, June 2-4, 1996; Minneapolis, MN. for information call (608) 238-7908.

University of California Davis, is offering sensory evaluation courses; Introduction to Statistical Methods for Sensory Evaluation of Foods, March 21-23, 1996; and Sensory Evaluation: Overview and Update, March 25-27, 1996; for information call (800) 752-0881. From Davis, Dixon or Woodland call (916) 757-8777. Micheal O'Mahoney, PhD, will teach both courses.

Mark your calendars for the **1st International Conference on Farmstead & Specialty Cheeses** Co-sponsored by the ACS, American Institute of Wine & Food and the Epirus Foundation to be held **June 14- 16, 1996**, in Metsovo, Greece.

Watch for more information regarding **Conference on Aging of Cheeses** to be held in France in 1996.

If you have information or an article you would like considered for inclusion in future newsletters, send them to:

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased at the choice of the Culinary Institute of America for the site of next year's conference. Future sales growth for really good cheese is in the hands of the Chefs and Food Writers, and this conference will begin a strong bond with both. The Culinary Institute is jazzed about the idea.

So many of us have been touched first hand by Nature's fury this last month that I hope all are well! Somerset Maugham wrote, "Nature is hostile", it seems to get more and more hostile each year.

On my 18th birthday I went to see Buckminster Fuller. He drew an imaginary picture for us of our vast Universe on the back of the stage. In the midst of this unimaginably grand Universe he picked one tiny dot of light the size of a grain of salt which he said was our galaxy. He then asked us to blow up that grain sized speck of light so that the vast imaginary picture at the back of the stage was now our galaxy, greatly magnified. He pointed again to a speck of light, and said that was our corner of our galaxy. Again we magnified in our minds and he again pointed to a speck that was our solar system and so it went until each dot of light was a house on earth seen from space. He then asked us to imagine that in this house there was a human saying "what do we need this space program for anyways?"

I hope from the bottom of my heart that many of you will join us on the American Cheese Society's trek to Greece. The brochure is in this issue, including the form necessary to send in your down payment and reserve a place. In my life, really worthwhile things come from sitting together with friends sharing ideas and experience.

What we are charging is the cost of the conference, accommodations, food, and transportation including airfare plus 200 dollars. Part of the 200 will go into the General Fund of the ACS, another part will go towards promotion and administration of the event, the other part will go into a fund to provide matching grants to small cheesemakers to make it possible for some of them to come, fulfilling our obligations under our constitution to help improve the quality of cheesemaking in America.

Please do come. You will have the time of your life, and you will be helping cheesemakers who couldn't come otherwise.

Please send in your \$500 deposit immediately, as we need to secure the good price on airfare and the great price for the conference, food, and accommodations. The airline wanted money by January 1. We are negotiating for a deadline of February 1. They will not hold the seats after that date, and we will lose the contract rate. So please act quickly, act decisively, and act generously! Unless we act quickly, we could lose the funds earmarked for the ACS and the Cheesemakers.

As it states in the brochure, we will leave from New York en masse for Greece on June 14th. Connecting flights from SF and Los Angeles will be available, hence the added cost from the West Coast. Midwesterners will have to book their own flights to New York, though our travel agent will be glad to assist with great rates.

With great love and admiration for you all, and Season's Greetings.

Dan Strongin

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CHEESE AND BEVERAGE PAIRINGS

by: Mark Todd

Last summer I had the pleasure of working with the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board in presenting a beverage and Wisconsin Cheese pairing. This tasting was part of a seminar at the American Culinary Federation's National Convention in New York City. The standing-room-only audience included several Master Chefs as well as a number of Certified Culinary Educators.

The purpose of this seven station guided tasting was twofold. First to highlight some traditional pairings, and secondly to introduce some combinations of tastes and textures that make the participant pause and consider. To achieve these goals, we expanded the usual "Wine & Cheese" tasting to include wines (red, white, dessert and Madeira), beer and even fermented Apple Cider.

The first station was a different twist on a traditional Belgian bar favorite. It featured Mascarpone from Auricchio Cheese served with quartered red radishes and a Belgian style Ale. The combination of the buttery, slightly sweet cheese, the spicy flavor and crunchy texture of the radish and the aroma of hops and yeast in the Belgian Ale was as enjoyable as it was unusual.

The second station featured Gruyere from Roth Kase USA Ltd. paired with an original Wisconsin wine, Prairie Fume from Wollersheim Winery. This fruity, somewhat sweet wine has won numerous awards including a Gold Medal at the prestigious Orange County Fair Wine Tasting in California. This wine, reminiscent of a Sauvignon Blanc, contrasts beautifully with the tangy, earthy flavors in this traditionally made Gruyere.

The third station featured Aged Asiago from Stella Cheese paired with a DeLoach Late Harvest Gewurtztraminer, walnuts and dried apricots in the fashion of an Italian dessert course. The aromas of honeysuckle and sweet spices in this wine compliment the sharp nutty flavors in the cheese.

The fourth station featured Pepato, a Romano cheese with whole black peppercorns mixed through the curd from Park Cheese. While Pepato is one of our favorite cheeses, it presented the greatest

challenge in finding a perfect complementary or contrasting beverage mate. We tried nearly two dozen different red and white wines and a number of Italian beers when someone suggested fermented Apple Cider. Voila! The perfect balance of sweet and tart to stand up to the full flavor of the Pepato.

Station five was the easiest pair to decide upon. The creamy Italian style Gorgonzola from Auricchio Cheese, with its intense earthy flavors was a natural match for the Saintsbury Pinot Noir. In fact, it seemed that the more intensely flavored the Gorgonzola, the better the cheese complimented the earthy yet fruity character of the wine.

Station six featured what many thought was the best pair - eight year old Wisconsin Cheddar and a Madeira from V. Sattui Winery. This cheddar's crumbly texture with creamy body and fully developed piquant flavors meld perfectly with the complex flavors and aromas of this superbly crafted Madeira. This pair may be even better than the perennial favorite, Stilton and Port.

Station seven was designed for the adventurous spirit featuring Surface Ripened Brick cheese from Widmer Cheese Co. and Berghoff Bock beer. This combination defines earthy flavors. The pronounced malty flavors in this beer, bordering on sweet, were put to the test when paired with this Brick cheese (akin to Limburger). But after all was said and done, this pair showed as well. However, most of the participants agreed with the placement of this pair at the end of the tasting (for obvious reasons).

This tasting was so well received by the Chefs at this event that some form of this pairing will probably be used and perfected over the next year or two. I look forward to sharing the evolution of these pairings with you in the future.

Until next time, Happy pairings!



21ST ANNUAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CHEESE CONTEST

The 21st annual World Championship Cheese contest will be held in Green Bay, Wisconsin March 5-7 1996.

Entry forms are due Feb. 16, 1996, and cheeses must arrive at the judging site by March 1, 1996. Entry and shipping information are explained in the official contest entry forms.

To receive a free entry kit, contact Judy Keller, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, P.O. Box 2133; Madison, WI 53701; 608-255-2027; Fax 608-255-4434

ACS CORPORATE MEMBERS

Andronico's
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THE SIXTH ANNUAL BON APPETITE WINE & SPIRITS FOCUS

by: Lynne D. Edelson

The first of this year's tastings was held on Monday, September 11, at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center in New York City. It was an absolutely fabulous Summer day and we had the good fortune to have our table out on the terrace. Jacques Williams and I took turns working the table, sipping fine wines, and sampling the fare of several of New York's finest restaurants. The ACS table was a huge hit as always with the attendees; many of whom had never before tasted Franklin Peluso's Teleme or Tom Dietrich's Pur Blue Chevre to name a few. The second Bon Appetite Focus was on three different days and in three of Wolfgang Puck's Los Angeles restaurants in mid-October, and the third was at the Field Museum in Chicago on November 17.



Jacques Williams at the ACS table NYC



The ACS table NYC

WINE AND SPIRITS FOCUS IN CHICAGO

by: Mark Sheldon

Imagine 1500 people, wine glass in hand, milling among perfectly preserved dinosaurs in the beautiful Field Museum. Then, add vines and spirits from around the world, throw in several first class restaurant food samplings, and top it off with a spread of the finest American cheeses available....and you have 1995 Chicago Bon Appetite Wine & Spirits Focus

The event was a huge success, despite the weather. The American Cheese Society table, featuring about 15 cheeses from makers such as Capriole, Sea Stars, Vella, Mozzarella Co., Grafton Village, Auricchio, Dietrich's Dairy, Belle Chevre, and many others, was elaborately garnished with fresh flowers and a cascading presentation. The ACS representatives were Mark Sheldon, Joey Stawski, and Dannie Ray Sullins, all of Whole Foods Market.

From the moment the doors opened, the ACS table was well received. The line extended down the walkway and never let up. Goat cheese was the hit of the night with the Sea Stars Van Goght and the Capriole Crocodile Tears running out first, followed by the Belle Chevre marinated goat cheese second. However, the Grafton Village Classic Reserve Cheddar and Auricchio Gorgonzola were also hits. The attendees marveled at the quality and presentation of the cheeses, and had great things to say about the American Cheese Society. I look forward to the show next year, and great cheeses that will undoubtedly be present.

The preparatory work for the ACS tables at these events started before the ACS conference. I've worked the ACS table for four of the Bon Appetite focuses in New York and strongly believe that events such as these are the most valuable public relations tools we have to reach the buying public and many important executive chefs - thus making them a perfect venue for our cheese maker members to get exposure for their creativity and hard work. To make these events even more successful in the future, I would like to make a few practical suggestions.

I have had to work with strict deadlines with Bon Appetite to create the copy in our ACS as for their literature. Often I get only two days to put it all together. It would be advantageous for the participants to reply quickly so I could have the complete list of cheeses that are going to be presented as well as recipes, awards won, and any other pertinent PR information that could be used to increase product awareness.

It is vital the participants provide literature and/or signs with their cheeses that are informative and compact enough to easily display near the cheese. The attendees at these events are moving by the tables quickly, and need the name of the cheese, the producer, and where they can purchase it in their area.

1995 ACS CONFERENCE - PANELS SYNOPSIS

by: Heather Lee Schroeder

• Wisconsin Cheese Making Heritage and Future

Andrea Neu, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, moderator; Lee Somerville, Heritage Hill State Park Representative; Allan Henning-Farmer, cheesemaker; Errico Auricchio, Auricchio Cheese; Steve McKeon, Ruth Kase USA; Randy Trahenbuhl, Prima Kase; Ben Logan, unpublished writer.

This panel discussed the heritage of Wisconsin cheesemakers, beginning with a richly textured description by Ben Logan of his mother making cheese and ending, Logan asked "how can cheese-making be just a business when it made my mother sing?" and "How can cheese-making be just a business when it carries such a history?"

Lee Somerville proceeded to describe the Heritage Hill Park (a museum), Green Bay, Wis., a refurbished 1904 cheese factory open to the public. The museum tells the story of an 1850 wheat crop failure in New York state that drove farmers to Wisconsin. Somerville said the cheese factories became a social and cultural meeting place for these farmers. Today, that rich tradition is carried on by cheese producers like Steve McKeon, Ruth Kase USA and Errico Auricchio, Auricchio Cheese. They told stories of their cheese plants.

Ruth Kase USA was founded in 1991 by Fermo Jaekle and Felix Roth "to protect the availability of specialty cheese." Auricchio Cheese was founded in 1978 by Errico "a fourth generation Auricchio," who wanted to conquer America, Auricchio described how he built his business.

• Tradition and Innovation: The Future of Sheep Cheeses in America.

Gerd Stern, Galilee Cheese, moderator; Walter Kugler, Estancia La Mariana; Alan Snyder, Hollow Road Farms; Paysanne; Ruth Flöre, Vermont Butter and Cheese; Sabine Veddier, Besnier; Andrea London, Draeger's

Please refer to "That Sheep May Safely Graze..." on page 8, this issue.

• Hispanic Cheeses and Cheese form Spain

Allen Hendricks, AMH Resources Inc., moderator; Paul Scharfman, Specialty Cheese Company; Linda Hook, Dan Carter Inc.; Jeffrey Shaw, Foods from Spain; Paula Lambert, Mozzarella Company; Jonathan Truesdale, Swiss Rose; Felipe Lopez Guisa, ALISA

This panel started by defining what Hispanic cheeses and cheeses from Spain are. The general consensus was that although "Hispanic" has become a catch-all phrase for specialty cheeses marketed to Spanish-speaking people, cheesemakers need to look at it as a collection of several distinct markets under one umbrella. Spanish cheeses are cheese from Spain, and they are a distinctly different category.

"I think what is very important is not to get caught up in the terms Hispanic or Latino, but to just understand that you're dealing with different cultures...people that come from different countries, and they have a mind-set and series of habits that particularly applies to food and their food preferences," explained Jeffrey Shaw.

Markets for Mexican cheeses and cheese from Spain were discussed. Scharfman defined the key cities with strong Hispanic markets: Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Truesdale said he sells the most Spanish cheeses in Florida, the New England areas and Los Angeles.

The group also discussed the end-users of Hispanic and Spanish products and how a company might market its products in the U.S. Informing the retailer, foodservice distributors and consumer and getting the consumer to try Hispanic cheese are two ways to break a Hispanic or Spanish product into the U.S. marketplace.

• "Blues"

Stacy Kinsley-Knowlton, Dan Carter Inc., moderator; William Schrock, Salemville Blue; Dave Meyer, Salmon Valley Blue; Debbie Dickerson, Zingerman's; Ig Vella, Oregon Blue; Dominique Delugeau, Auricchio Cheese; Ron Weil, Swiss American

This panel discussed the "how" and "why" of selling Blue cheese. U.S. consumption is on a four year downward trend. According to the panel, new Blue cheese manufacturers are "breaking out of the commodity mold" and moving into the specialty market.

The panel identified the two biggest trends in Blue cheese: consumers are looking for smaller portions of fuller flavor cheese: and the two biggest foodservice growth sectors - Italian restaurants and casual dining restaurants - are interested in adding Blue cheese to their menus.

Although only a small market for American Blues exists, the panel agreed that the United States can "reign with the historical kings of the blues."

"We have to bring to the market only our best cheese," said Ig Vella. "(It can be achieved through) stubborn pursuit and dedication - if the U.S. industry wishes to do it, it can be done. It's like breaking the four minute mile barrier. Nobody thought it was possible."

The group discussed strategies for the overcoming market resistance.

Spreads/Value-Added Flavoring

Debbie Haws, DKH Marketing Services, moderator; Bruce Polkes, BC-USA; Chris Glab, G&G Specialty Foods; Lynne Edelson, The Specialty Cheese Group; Bob Constantino, Avant Garde Foods

Based on an independent study conducted for the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute and Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, one of the best selling and fastest growing trends in the specialty cheese market is spreads and value-added flavorings. The category includes spreadable fresh cheese, chevres, cold pack and gourmet spreads with value-added flavorings. The panel offered information to help the small cheesemaker and farmstead cheese producers take advantage of the trend.

meaning consumers are more comfortable being connoisseurs of good food and taking "ownership of (their) senses."

The group also attributed consumer interest in fresh foods to the segment of the population approaching middle age. Because in the consumer's minds the term 'fresh food' means the food isn't processed, it follows that the food must be good for them.

• The Role of Food Editors in Educating the Consumer

Linda Funk, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, moderator; Nancy Byal, food editor, Better Home and Gardens; Pan Parseghian, food editor, Nation's Restaurant News; Anne Eagan, food and nutrition director, First for Women; Shelley Wolson, special project food editor, Women's Day Special.

These food editors discussed the trends they're seeing in specialty foods. All agreed that today's magazine readers and consumers are very well-informed and well-educated and are looking for time-saving recipes and ideas.

The panel said chefs are the innovators that begin trends in consumer eating habits. For example, a family may try a new cheese in a restaurant. If they like it, they'll try to find it in their local supermarket and use it at home.

Several consumer trends were identified by the panel, including ethnic foods, involvement of children in meal preparation, a new taste for meatless cuisine (a perfect place for cheese), an emphasis on "comfort food" and consumer desire for good flavor. Flavor is one way specialty cheesemakers can market their product effectively, the panel said. They also said they stress balance and moderation in food choices.

As a final point, the editors reminded cheesemakers that they have to know about new product in order to cover them in their magazines. Although they do as much traveling as possible, the panel said they would like to receive more press releases and information about cheesemakers' products.

• The Positive Approach to Health and Nutrition

Dick Groves, editor/publisher, Cheese Reporter; Dr. Emerita Alcantara, Dairy Council of Wisconsin

Alcantara said in this era when there is growing concern about fat

--- and when some consumers equate fat with cheese --- it's easy to forget the dairy products category contributes many nutrients to our diets.

Cheese, specifically, is a good source of high quality protein; an important source of several minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and magnesium; and also contains several vitamins including vitamin A and riboflavin. New research suggests there are additional benefits of eating dairy products.

Those who have "fat-phobia" tend to forget that dietary fat serves several important functions, Alcantara noted. She said balance, variety and moderation should be observed when eating dairy products.

Alcantara reminded the audience that an average one-ounce serving of cheese provides about 8-grams of fat, easily fitting into a total daily dietary intake of 30 percent or less total calories provided by fat.

She also said cheese gives a three-in-one package for today's busy consumers; taste, convenience and good nutrition. Cheesemakers can take advantage of these benefits by promoting "food partnering" as a platform for new product usage ideas.

• Where is the Specialty Cheese Industry Going?

Dan Carter, Dan Carter Inc., moderator; Fermo Jaeckle, Roth Kase; Jonathan White, Egg Farm Dairy; Gerd Stern, Galilee Foods; Lynne Edelson, The Specialty Cheese Group

American Cheese Society was called an Incubator for important specialty cheese companies, meeting its mission of preserving and supporting the artisan, by this panel. ACS members are successfully creating and improving on American specialty cheeses.

Jonathan White said he considers his own small dairy market a microcosm of the universe. He sees several trends there. He stressed that cheesemakers need to "democratize the market." Cheese is truly a peasant food, even though cheesemakers see it as an upscale market. It has universal appeal. White said the industry cannot risk being elitist, but must market to all consumers. The other trend White commented on was the possibility of expansion through cooperation. Cheesemakers, distributors and brokers can make more cheese available through cooperation.

Fermo Jaeckle listed the top ten trends in specialty cheese.

10. Regional distributors are becoming stronger, and they are better able to serve their markets. 9. Cheese manufacturers are dependent upon good distribution, and they will have to upgrade their up codes, boxing and box labeling. 8. A market for non-BST treated milk and organic milk is emerging. 7. Retailers and foodservice distributors want fewer vendors; so it is important for a manufacturer to have a wide variety of products and good broker contact. 6. New ethnic distributors are emerging. 5. Specialty cheese industry and certain importers are playing with fire by importing raw milk cheeses aged under 60 days. 4. Foodservice is a rewarding market to sell cheese in because consumers are not worried about fat when they eat out.

3. Consumers are looking for higher flavor profiles as they are exposed to more flavorful cheeses. The cheese industry must "see the light" and encourage cheesemakers to work with this trend. 2. Large supermarkets are cutting back on the number of specialty cheese they supply in their cases. This can be seen as an opportunity --- specialty retailers are emerging and they want to develop extensive cheese sections. 1. Retailers as a group want specialty cheeses made in America because the prices on imported cheese have risen.

The session ended with a discussion about GATT and other trends for specialty cheesemakers. With GATT reducing subsidies, which will in turn create higher prices for imports, the U.S. cheese industry will have much less competition than it has in the past. This will give American specialty cheeses and farmstead cheeses greater opportunities for growth.

Lynne Edelson, The Specialty Cheese Group, ended the session, saying the specialty cheese industry needs to go "back to the basics," selling quality cheese to retailers through marketing and strategic planning.

PANELS....continued

Several key issues were identified; packaging for retail, consumer convenience and confidence, gourmet markets versus super or mass markets, and fat in spreads. Panelists agreed that packaging is an important element in the success of a spread, especially for a small cheesemaker who doesn't have a large advertising budget. The labeling offers cheesemakers a way to communicate with their customer. Convenient packaging is another important way to reach busy consumer.

Spreads appeal to consumers because they are convenient. In addition, consumers understand how to use a spread, so they won't worry about serving the cheese incorrectly. Spreads will sell in both gourmet and super, or mass, markets. However, in both markets a demand for "cutting edge flavors" has arisen as the consuming market has been "garlic and herbed...to death."

The panel ended the session by discussing fat in cheese spreads. The consuming audience can be divided into two groups: those who will not compromise flavor and those who will only buy low or non-fat products. The panelists agreed that it's a question of whether a cheese company want to be "all things to all people."

• Starter Cultures

Jim Path, Center for Dairy Research (CDR) University of Wisconsin, moderator; Mark Johnson, CDR; John Harrits, technical manager, CHR Hansen; Dave Potter, technical representative, Rhon-Poulenc.

This panel provided background information about starter cultures and the cheesemaking process. Path likened a starter culture to music, saying as more and more cultures are added, the cheese flavor will increase, but if you can't conduct the music properly, you'll have a mess. He said complicated cultures will yield fine cheese, but a cheesemaker must know exactly how to make the cheese.

The panel discussed the importance of starter cultures. Cultures produce acid at a given rate for a given time, thereby controlling fermentation of the product. The proper bacteria choice for a particular temperature is important as well.

The group also discussed why the active bacteria in raw milk would rapidly grow and overwhelm itself and the

cheese. A starter culture allows a given rate of acid production and consistent cheese production.

The panel said there are two ways to control phage; sanitation and culture rotation. Culture rotation allows a cheesemaker to stay "one step ahead of the phage," giving it time to die. Other problems in make procedure caused by starter cultures were discussed such as bad flavor and gasses in cheeses.

The session ended with an in-depth, technical, question and answer session with the panelists fielding questions about specific problems.

• American Stores Are Going Back to the Basics; Quality and Service

Regi Hise, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, moderator; Jerry Rozak, Dominick's; Ari Weinzwieg, Zingerman's Deli; Bob Kawfelt, Murray's Cheese Shop; Ken Jackson, Corner Market.

Drawing a 'quality line' that can be maintained was the message of this panel discussion. The group discussed ways that quality and service can be delivered from the supplier to the consumer.

Weinzwieg said a retailer can bring quality and service to his/her customers by determining what the customer wants; getting it for them; and then providing something the consumer didn't ask for or expect or know they wanted. Retail customers should always leave happy --- with the service provided at the store and with the quality of the product --- the group stressed.

Kaufelt described a situation at Murray's Cheese Shop in which a bad wheel of expensive Stilton cheese was discovered. The staff blamed the manager; the manager blamed the distributor; and the distributor blamed the supplier. However, the supplier instantly covered the blame and assumed the "most guilt." This created a loyalty to the supplier because the other people in the chain of blame were "taken off the hook."

The panel defined quality and service in terms of the Murray scenario, saying building positive relationships between supplier and distributor, distributor and retailer, and retailer and customer is essential. The group said true service also begins at the top with officers serving managers who serve the staff who serve the customers. By combining these two approaches, a company can develop "outrageous service."

• Do you need Brokers? The Broker/Producer Team

Rhada Stern, Galilee Cheese Brown, moderator; Theresa Battel; Mike Petermann, Cheese & Deli Sales; John Greeley, Sheila Marie Imports; Bill McKenna, San Francisco Cheese; Jennifer Richards, Gourm-e-co

Choosing a broker to represent your company in a given marketplace is a key decision. According to this panel, the advantages of using a broker in the cheese industry far outweigh the disadvantages.

Cheese companies need a broker who specializes in perishables - excelling in service deli, wall/package meat deli case and meat departments for specialty stores, independent grocers and supermarket chains. The panel briefly discussed the difference between a broker and a distributor.

Then they got down to the basics of choosing and working with a broker. Open cooperation between broker and company and a company's respect of the broker's expert knowledge can make a broker/company relationship excellent. Patience, rapport and communication are the keys to developing a successful partnership.

Several tips for getting the most from the relationship were shared, including establishing the basics, such as orders procedure, spoils policies and contacts for problem solving; scheduling time with a broker wisely; and developing an effective relationship with an account executive.

• Food Renaissance

Dan Strongin, Andronico's, moderator; Jeanne Quan, Peleponese; Chef Odessa Piper, L'Etoile Restaurant, Madison, Wis; Sherri Zebrasky, Wegman's; and Terry Thiele,

This panel discussed the changes that have taken place in the food industry during the last decade; and specifically, now that fresh goods are readily available throughout the country, how cheesemakers might profit from this change.

The group defined renaissance as "a melding of the old and new." Quan said she especially likes to go to mid-sized cities and educate them about different foods.

The history of fresh foods was discussed. Piper said fresh fish in 1971 meant "freshly defrosted." Thiele said the temporary affluence and disposable incomes developed during the 1980's created "gourmet-ship,"

THAT SHEEP MAY GRAZE FREELY

A SYNOPSIS OF THE 1995 ACS CONFERENCE PANEL: •TRADITION AND INNOVATION: THE FUTURE OF SHEEP CHEESES IN AMERICA.

y: Gerd Stern

' A title not just as biblical edict but hopefully a prediction for this state of Wisconsin and the rest of our U.S.A. Graze and be milked, not just shorn and eaten. Is sheep cheese a comer? Will it parallel the successful market experience of goat cheeses? What is the experience from other countries?" Those were some of the topics of the panel I moderated.

Traveling from Uruguay for our conference, Walter Rugler told us how he and his family on their 700 acre ranch had started 5 years ago with 46 East Friesen dairy ewes and over 200 wool ewes and now are milking 400 dairy ewes year-round, out of 2,000 ewes on their Estancia La Mariana. The sheep graze year-round. Equipment for the dairy was made to order by Uruguayan craftsmen, who had experience with milk handling and cheese-making gear and is state of the art. The Kuglers have had help from retired Spanish and French cheesemakers. They experimented with about 20 different cheese varieties and have now settled for eight, five of which are pure sheep and three mixed sheep and cow. The products such as Manchego, Ovejero, Campero, Feta and Pecorino are sold in Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and were just introduced to the U.S. market. In keeping with ACS by-laws, which specify "Pan-American" origins for membership, Walter entered his Manchego in the ACS competition for the first time this year.



provided by Northland Sheep Dairy

Jeanne Quan of Peloponese spoke on marketing Greek sheep cheeses. She advised cheesemakers to concentrate on getting the information and personality of their cheeses and themselves out to the retailer staffs. She also emphasized the need for proper packaging and presentation telling us the problems of trying to market Greek Feta in 110 pound wooden barrels. These cheeses will in the future be aged in wood and then packed in trays for export.

Roquefort is undoubtedly "the" sheep cheese to conjure with (although many Americans who eat it don't even know it is made with sheep milk). Sabine Védie of Besnier, and Societe, a classic Roquefort brand, told us about the "appellation d'origine" the regulations which control the making of the cheese and restrict it to the area surrounding the village which gave the cheese its name. First promulgated by Charles VI, confirmed by the Parliament of Toulouse in 1785 and legislated in 1925, the French, unlike the Swiss or the Dutch, have managed to protect the name Roquefort, even though the *Penicillium Roqueforti* culture is responsible for creating most other blue cheeses world-wide. It takes 12 liters of milk from the Lacune breed to make one nearly six pound loaf of cheese and the unique cave aging is for a period of at least three months in "natural" air conditioning on oaken shelves with a daily turn. Both Walter Kugler and Sabine echoed Cassanova's

statements that sheep cheese reinvigorates passion and enhances the play of love.

Joan Snyder, past-president of ACS and with her Hollow Road Farms, one of the few sheep cheese dairies in the U.S. told us of the problems in trying to get meat sheep to produce milk. In contrast to the Kugler's 290 liters per ewe annually, Hollow Road sheep were producing only 10% of that number. When Joan got started she hoped to bring in dairy sheep from England but was quickly stopped in tracks by U.S.D.A. There has been some liberalization of animal imports through Canada and it looks as if the end of this year will be the opening of our borders to "small ruminant" animal imports from other countries. Although Joan has been the recipient of requests to study the situation she told us that the best help came from Michael Jackson's legal beagles who were on the road to get him permission to import llamas and alpacas. Joan is also active in a not-for-profit association to preserve agricultural land and practices in Hudson Valley and as part of that they are providing sheep to farmers so that they can sell milk and get a better return on investment than is now possible with cow dairying.

Please see **Sheep**...continued on page 10

AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY 13TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

August 1st thru 3rd 1996 to be held at the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY

Reservation Poughkeepsie - 914-485-5300

Marriott Courtyard Poughkeepsie - 914-485-6336

More information and reservation cards to follow in the next issue.

FORGOTTEN HARVEST - BY AVICE R. WILSON

Reviewed by: John Greeley

Ms. Wilson has illuminated the subject of cheese in its many forms of life by bringing us the story of the rise, success, and unfortunate loss of the cheese industry in the Wiltshire Vale. Through her subject we see agricultural beginnings in prehistoric times and the difference the Roman knowledge of cheese made to Britain through the Saxon and Medieval times. We learn that cheese was food for the army as well as payment for land rents and taxes. The first three chapters are heavy with detail. Ms. Wilson deduces much from a paucity of information or written document; but where there is a record of some kind she extracts complete pictures of primitive, Saxon, and Medieval farming and dairying. Ms. Wilson's investigations produce so much information and lore it is remarkable that it fits into less than two hundred pages. The author's remarkable compression of phrase and intensity of raw fact kept me re-reading passages to be sure that I had not missed all the meanings. She is fully aware of her subject, being a native of Wiltshire, a cheesemaker of cheddar and cottage cheese, and holder of a degree in microbiology.

The subjects Ms. Wilson covers are many and broad: The church's relationship with the land, language, utensils, marketing, geography, science, common sense, old sayings, capitalism, cattle breeds, other writers, cheese flavors, types and qualities, recycling, the role of women and much more. Most cheese books tell us about the many cheeses from different countries. "Forgotten Harvest" tells us all about cheese and its influences throughout the history of north Wiltshire farms. Land was kept in small tracts by the policies of the church, preventing large herds (and therefore large cheesemaking operations) on the vale before the thirteenth century. Sheep were the dominant milk animals. Vaccaries are the bridge into large cow milk dairying and are carefully explained.

Beyond land ownership, Ms. Wilson does not find any evidence that the recipes for Wiltshire cheese came from monasteries:

"This lack of influence is in direct contrast to the Yorkshire tradition where it is believed that monastic orders.....were the original source of several cheeses in the dales."

Though not sentimental, the author's love for the land's beauty finds life in her pithy phrasing:

"A seventeenth century observer, standing on the eastern edge of the Vale with the Downs behind him, would be presented with a panorama of patterned fields neatly separated by a surround of dark-hued mixed leaf hedgerows. The Avon, central to his view, meandered through the rich green meadowlands nestled in the river's twists and turns. To the west, the soft outlines of the Cotswold hills shaped the horizon."

Did you know that some English (and therefore American) town names are born from cheese?

"Wic.....derives from vicus....When combined with the prefix 'ces' (from the Latin caseus for cheese) it can denote a place of cheesemaking, e.g. Cheswick...and Keswick."

Ever wonder How we found the word "Dairy"? Ms. Wilson explains:

"Dairymaid originates from the Old English word dheigh, ... 'Dairy' evolved from this separation to designate a special room provided for the dheigh."

"Forgotten Harvest" is chock full of facts. Although we are told on page 114 that "...the dairy women of North Wiltshire never shared their skills,..." Ms. Wilson is able to detail the precise recipe for North Wiltshire cheese making in the sixteenth century right down to the use of cheese-cloths. She acknowledges the dairymaids skill "...the most crucial moment of the cheesemaking process was decided by smell, feel, experience, and a large amount of intuition!"

Ms. Wilson has a few choice words for others who wrote about cheese during the rise of Wiltshire's dairy industry:

"But with one or two exceptions, the writers seem to have little communication with the farmer himself, while contemporary writers today often underestimate the common sense workers of the soil achieve during their lifetimes."

I accept this to be often true. Many cheesebook authors in my library seem to be disconnected from the cheesemakers who create their subject. I should point out though, that the "common sense" Ms. Wilson attributes to the farmer did not prevent him from some very surprising prac-

tices as documented in "Forgotten Harvest": "...(T)he unfortunate cow spent the winter out in all weathers, not always with enough food. Spring frequently found her a pregnant bag of bones, taking a month or more of good grazing to get her into condition again. Despite recurring shortages of winter feed up to the 18th century, it did not occur to the farmer that a cow needed less food and stayed in better condition if given shelter and cover in cold weather."

"Forgotten Harvest" is a good read for any reason. The life of the farmer, dairy-maid, animals, and the land feature prominently the ups and downs of cheese economy and agriculture. One learns much that is still a mystery today and there are surprises in every chapter. Located in southwest England I expected the Jersey and Guernsey cows to be dominating North Wiltshire landscapes. Page 65:

"(Wiltshire) Cheesemakers had a pious horror of Jersey milk." Humor has its place throughout the book. Ms. Wilson is quick to inject her own experience and history into the story. The description of the pictures on page 61 is amusingly tongue in cheek as is this bit of advice:

"A claim can be made that the mites give a rich, curry flavor. For some, the greater the infestation, the more enjoyable the cheese. However, the author remembers mitey cheddar and does not recommend it to cheese connoisseurs!"

The explanation of early distributors and brokers appearing on the cheese scene in North Wiltshire as open markets and fairs came into being was revealing in how little the relationship has changed into my own experience as a "Badger" and "Higger."

Each page is a necessary story of the rise and fall of cheesemaking in North Wiltshire. Eventually the sadness of the loss of a unique cheese made in "thins", "thicks", "loaf", and "truckle" with its characteristic "bite" sets in on the reader. We are reading about the endangered species we know as farmstead, hand made cheese. The condition of our own society and economy is fragile and demanding. Avice Wilson's book about the extinction of a cheese in the twentieth century should at least remind us that the conditions for such a loss are not exclusive to North Wiltshire, England.

Sheep...continued - Andrea London, in charge of the cheese department at Draeger's in Northern California spoke about a sheep milk cheese tasting for 50 people she had given at their Culinary Center last May. This was part of a monthly program of tastings Andrea leads, to educate and motivate consumers. Most of the attendees are cheese lovers who come because they know about the series, but some customers come right off the floor attracted by announcement signs. The first 45 minutes are devoted to a talk and discussion, there is a four to five page hand-out describing the cheeses, their origin and histories in detail. The tasting consisted of 24 types of sheep cheeses, out of the 40 or so varieties which Draeger's carries. Among the information many people didn't know, was that sheep gave much less milk than cows, which partially accounts for some of the higher prices of the sheep varieties and that sheep cheeses undoubtedly preceded cow cheeses and that they are predominant over cow cheeses in some parts of the Mediterranean world. Andrea knows from experience that these three hour sessions increase the sales of the featured varieties. Recipes and serving suggestions are obviously a big help.

Regarding the parallels between goat and sheep cheeses as so-called "alternative" milk sources, Ruth Florie of Vermont Cheese and Butter advised sheep cheese makers to learn from the past decade of goat cheese marketing experiences and to cooperate rather than compete. She described the early days of domestic goat cheese production, when there was not enough milk, when a strong dollar made imports cheaper than domestic production costs and the perceptions of customers were that imports had "value added" quality. This has been changed by intensive education efforts with distributors, retailers, chefs and media. In addition she cited her company's efforts to improve herd management and to educate local farmers which has resulted in plenty of milk being available for their dairy from over 20 farms in Vermont and New Hampshire, converted to the potential. During the question period Joan Snyder brought up the fact that sheep milk at about .55 per pound was being compared to goat milk at about .28 per pound and that despite a study on sheep milk pricing she and her associates were doing for U.S.D.A. she was afraid that domestic pricing for sheep cheeses had to be very high in the foreseeable future in order to satisfy production costs.

THREE QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS

by Avice R. Wilson

The healthy choice - the message leapt out at me from the cheese section of a supermarket. "Great" I thought, and then looked closer. The healthy choice was fat free cream cheese. Now this supermarket was in a remote part of North Carolina, not a cheese eating country anyway judging from the limited shelf room allocated to a small choice of cheeses in the rest of the section - stacks of plastic wrapped Cheddar, Swiss, Gruyere, etc. To the person trying to diet or just wanting to eat sensibly, the message says other cheeses are unhealthy. And then if consumers do not like that fat free cheese, and how many people eat fat free or low fat cheeses for a lifetime?) they are not likely to try real cheese because of the message. So this poses one of the questions: Is a low fat or fat free cheese really cheese?

These remarks appeared in a promotion for my new book: "First give me leave to statize a bit about cheese, because I love it - don't you? It is aromatic, piquant, tangy, palatable, creamy, satisfying, and it makes an excellent appetizer as well as dessert, and comes in more varieties than any other man-contrived thing. Unfortunately, it has gotten negative publicity from the medical profession, which accuses cheese of being a chief villainous instigator of cholesterol in the human blood stream. Has it not been overly victimized? My doctor, after examining me last year, said 'your cholesterol is OK but stay away from cheese.' I remonstrated 'What about soft and semi-soft cheeses like Ricotta and Mozzarella? Aren't they less cholesterol-producing?' He wrinkled his nose and said 'Cheese is Cheese.' " The question: What is the cheese industry doing to educate doctors and nutritionists that fat in cheese is a variable factor?

From observation of people's eating habits, time and time again I see refusal to eat cheese, meat, bacon, eggs in order to keep cholesterol intake low. But for the rolls, bread, or toast, seldom is butter rejected, especially in a restaurant. Final question: Couldn't the message go out that no cheese has the cholesterol level of butter and most cheese varieties in the states have less than half the fat content, therefore consumption can be in larger amounts than butter?

Formaggio Kitchen....continued

For Formaggio Kitchen, restaurants are a showcase for our products, and a way to introduce artisan cheeses to a wider audience. At a restaurant, diners can try new cheeses in an environment we cannot create in our store, languishing over a long meal with wine and good friends. We learn from the ways chefs assemble their cheese courses. We learn from the way chefs bring artisan cheeses into their cooking. We learn we teach to our customers.

Restaurants are a way to market directly to an array of potential customers, hungry and eager to experience new taste, aromas and textures. Longing to recreate a special restaurant meal, customers come to Formaggio Kitchen with the names of cheeses scrawled on matchbooks and cocktail napkins.

Sales to restaurants also generate welcome publicity for our store. Restaurants are high-profile darlings of the press. Our relationships with restaurants have prompted an array of articles in the Boston press, resulting in a marked increase in cheese sales.

Admittedly, a restaurant need not turn to the retailer for its cheeses. There are many wholesalers and importers to choose from. But a wholesaler or importer can't do what a retailer can. We have a variety of cheese on hand that no wholesaler can match. We ripen each cheese to perfection before it leaves the store. We can sell the comparatively small quantities a restaurant requires, whether it be five Hubbardston Blues, a handful of Quinnisacut Crottins, or two pounds of Mountain Shepherd. Our turnaround is fast. A Tuma dla Paja ordered at 5:00 pm is part of an Insalata con Quattro Formaggi by 7:00 pm.

Formaggio Kitchen's partnerships with restaurants have served us well. They've helped us sell more farmhouse cheese to a wider and wider audience. Beyond the bottom line, they've contributed in a small but positive way to solidifying the artisan cheese tradition in this country. That serves all of us.

FROM THE EDITOR

"WHAT DO PEOPLE DO WITH CHEESE ANYWAY?"

: Regi Hise

The answer is something many of us take for granted. Quite often, we assume that most people enjoy cheese as we do and consume it in a similar fashion; as a course, a stand alone, or as a table cheese. It seems simple, doesn't it? They just eat it, right? Wrong! A number of different studies on cheese usage indicate that the vast majority of cheese consumed in the United States is as a component or ingredient in or on a cooked dish. Whether they slice, shred, or grate it, melt it on top, or mix it in, Americans definitely think of cheese as an ingredient or a component in other foods.

I've always accepted that as a fact, but it's the huge percentage that is so mind-numbing. The latest studies indicate that 97% of the cheese Americans eat is as a component or ingredient in a cooked dish, pizza, or sandwich. That means that less than 3% of cheese in the United States is consumed as a table cheese or "as is."

Growing up on a farm in upstate New York in a family of 12, much of our food came from the farm. Since we didn't make cheese on the farm, we considered it a real treat. For the most part, my mother used cheese in various recipes, always cooked. I never recalled seeing cheese out on the table unless it was a special occasion, party, or holiday. This pretty much sums up the way Americans use cheese. I never thought I'd say this, but my family was normal (average) and I didn't even know it at the time!

Several decades ago, I was lucky enough to spend several years working in Europe. I distinctly remember discovering a whole new world of food experiences, especially cheese. Enjoying cheese uncooked and all by itself seemed decadent, maybe even radical. At the time, I recall wondering whether it might be illegal to use cheese this way. I had cheese at breakfast, lunch, and at dinner, as part of a starter course and as a finish to meals. To sum it up, Americans and Europeans perceive and use cheese very differently. This means that unless you are exporting your cheese, you need to consider how it is being used since it will directly effect the way you market your products.

There are several schools of thought here. You can target the elite 3% that enjoy cheese the way we do and limit your marketing efforts to upscale, independent retailers, and upscale or white table cloth restaurants. However, keep in mind that even they need your assistance.

If you do decide to market your products in the mainstream distribution channel, information on how to use the cheese you produce is crucial. Suggest the best ways to use your cheese, what it goes best with, in, or on. For example, a retail sign that has limited space may not justify saying the 5 standard words, "Use as a table cheese." You would likely be better off making a serving suggestion such as "Grate over pasta or salads," "Shred on or in casseroles," and so on.

The other option is the most difficult one and the one that members of the American Cheese Society are more likely to take. Change attitudes, perceptions, and usage of cheese by Americans. It is by far the most difficult task we face and flies in the face of traditional marketing.

Most marketers do not try to change people's attitudes to fit the product, but instead, they design products that fit the needs and lifestyles of the marketplace. Many of the success stories of American Cheese Society members are a departure from these standard marketing rules. In part, I believe it is because most of our cheesemakers are small enough to actively and aggressively market their own production.

An article in this newsletter from Matthew Rubiner of Formaggio Kitchen in Cambridge, MA, is a perfect example of the receptivity of the marketplace to specialty cheese and a different way of marketing them. Think about it--- a retailer educating foodservice operators on how cheese adds value to the menu, how to use it as a stand alone or a cheese course, and helping their retail operations through foodservice distribution. They broke all the rules and have a great success to show for it.

Regardless of which approach you take in marketing your cheese, anything you can find out about how people use cheese will help you. Prior to the 1994 ACS conference in Santa Rosa, CA, Ari Weinzweig had submitted a possible seminar topic entitled, "What do people do with cheese anyway?" It didn't become a seminar, but I certainly think it should be one in the upcoming ACS annual conference.

We need new members. If you have any names and addresses to suggest, phon, fax, or write to ACS Membership chairperson:

Gerd Stern, Galilee/Infood

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Your Help is needed and will be appreciated