

# The American Cheese Society

E W S L E T T E R

## RAW MILK CHEESES

Dominique Delugeau

Like most of you who attended the American Cheese Society conference in de Park, I came out of the session on pasteurization angry, puzzled and concerned.

As a Frenchman and a representative of the cheesemaking community, I'd like to share my views on the subject.

As cheesemakers, we all strive to bring the best quality products to the American table. The discussion on food safety goes well beyond pasteurization. It involves milking conditions; but, also, consumer education, which is exactly what our organization is all about.

In France most cows graze on natural, permanent grassland. The older the pasture, the richer the cheese. "Le gout du roir" as they will call it. Most pastures harbor over fifty different plant species that mature at different times during the year giving the milk its aroma, flavor and a good bacterial balance.

In the U.S. most herds are on grasslands with one or two types of grass that have been chemically fertilized and sprayed, changing the soil structure drastically; or, they are being fed silage and grain. All of this affects the cheese.

The soil, minerals and plant aromas are absorbed via the plant oils into the mammary glands and end up in the milk fat. Therefore, in the cheese if we don't pasteurize.

Raw milk retains its bacteria and flavors. Pasteurization kills most of them

(however, a bacteria such as *Listeria* can survive pasteurization). Pasteurization also leaves "empty spaces" for post-contamination if the acidity is too low.

Pasteurization is not going to solve all troubles, especially if the milk is "bacteriologically dirty" in the first place; or, if the cheesemaking process doesn't follow certain guidelines (one of them being obsessive attention to details).

During my childhood in France, I have been exposed to wonderful sensory experiences. I have been raised on raw milk Camembert. I have been put through all of my father's (a cheesemaker!) experiments with cheeses similar to Maroilles or Pont L'Évêque. Les "Fromages qui puent" (stinky cheeses) were a norm in our house in the refrigerator or under the cheese dome. My mother will complain, but for some reason they kept on making their way to our kitchen for the pleasure of each one of our family members (including my sister and she was picky!) Like millions of other French people, we never got sick, and never thought of being sick, from cheese...maybe because we were drinking wine from my grandfather who...you guessed it...was a winemaker! Too bad we didn't have a baker in our family, the triumvirate would have been perfect!

Now I live in the U.S. and I am a father. Sometimes I am afraid that my son will not be able to enjoy some of the good things I enjoyed when I was a kid. I am afraid his "aseptic" stomach will not take

it. I am afraid it will not be "cool" for him to have a taste for stinky, weird-looking cheeses. But I intend to teach him to appreciate cheese and good food. This is what we should all do with our children, our friends, and our neighbors. Spread the word, if not the cheese!

Let's educate. Let's have people stop worrying about fat in cheese, and pasteurization or no pasteurization. The American public is the culprit. People have created that demand for mass-trade convenience and commodity products. They have asked the government to establish the safety guidelines that are enforced blindly.

This unscientifically-based panic regulation has to be reviewed; but, it will start with the consumers rebelling, the way the European consumer rebelled against some EEC restrictions on cheese. To help consumers understand what cheese should taste like is a challenge; but, farmstead and specialty cheeses still represent a very small part of the cheese consumption in this country, and we have to start somewhere. I hope, as a group, the American Cheese Society will intensify its education efforts so that one day my son can go to a local store in Green Bay, WI and order a slice of Livarot and 1/2 pound of Morbier without people looking at him like he was from another planet.



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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that a few years of enjoyable service to our one of a kind association would lead to ... President. As A.C.S. members, we have many things in common, and the tie that bonds us is our love for cheese. Yet our vastly different life and career experiences make us unique individuals. My perspective as a marketer for many specialty cheeses from small American producers to large multinationals varies from my predecessor Dan Strongin's and our future president Dominique Delugeau's. I bring to you an appreciation and insight to the multiple constituents within the American Cheese Society and our industry: cheesemakers big and small, other trade associations, marketers, brokers, distributors, retailers, restaurants and chefs. As we do at Dan Carter, Inc., I regard each of you as my customer. I am here to serve your needs. Please keep in mind that I need to hear from you to be able to serve you. My door, phone and (by the next newsletter) e-mail address will always be open.

Wow, what a conference. The Hyde Park memories will live on for a long time. Ruth Anne Flore, John Greeley and their team of volunteers can not be thanked enough for sacrificing so much of their time for our cause. In addition to presenting the continued experience of shared learning and tasting with others in the specialty cheese industry, they organized a conference which drew in a host of new members, created an alliance with the distinguished Culinary Institute of America, attracted media of all kinds (even CNN), and as preliminary accounts are tallied made the greatest contribution ever to our bank account. Even before the Hyde Park event came to a close, so many of us were excited for our next national conference in Seattle. Led by Paige Lamb and Jeff Bergman and their '97 conference planning team, we're assured of

continued greatness at the A.C.S.

As you can see on the left column of this page, we have ten newly elected board members at your service. I'm sure many of you members have talents to share with the A.C.S. Let it be known that we welcome and want your help. Feel free to contact Maurine at our office, myself, or the committee chairs (in bold on the board member list) to volunteer your time. In addition to our traditional roster of P.R., Newsletter, Membership, Fundraising, Judging, Finance, Conference, Nominating, Directory / Publishing, we've added a Regional Marketing Committee. Headed by Kenny Jackson and Bill McKenna, this group will be working to arrange special A.C.S. events across the country throughout the year and will work together with the Newsletter and P.R. Committees to bring you coverage of the activities.

We're entering a very important time in the history of our organization and industry. With the changing world economy and American specialty cheese's sustainable market niche, our producers are poised for phenomenal growth. Yet the challenges never cease. The skyrocketing price of milk is probably approaching what the farmstead producer has declared as a sustainable level. However for cheesemakers that must pay these unusually high prices, I hope they will be able to pass along these increases to the retailer and restaurant. And likewise that the market situation is communicated to and accepted by the customer. It still remains to be seen if we can keep our consumers during this period of change. If their primary purchase decision of specialty cheese depends on product quality, this pricing situation may be the best thing that happened to our farm based industry. Let's work towards communicating that message together.

Stacy Kinsley

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JTE: Where names appear more than once, companies and phone numbers were listed with the first appearance only for the sake of space.  
 (If any of the above information is incorrect or has changed, please contact Maurine at the ACS office.)



# CHEESE RETAILER'S WORKSHOP

A re-cap of the Cheese Retailer's Workshop held at the ACS Conference on August 2 1996

Stacy Kinsley

Like many of you, I am always interested to hear the voice of the retailer at our annual conference. Only a retailer can advise the producer to exactly how well their cheese is being received by consumers. It is so important to listen to the retailer's perspective and react to their needs and suggestions, because retailers know what sells.

The panelists from The Retailer's Workshop generously gave advice on how to sell all products to and in their category of cheeses and shared their keys to success.

The five panelists came from diverse backgrounds. Once they described and showed slides of their stores, we were able to understand the perspective of the small specialty retailer and the supermarket alike. The common thread woven between this group was a commitment to specialty cheese.

Bob Kaufelt of Murray's presented his point of view of a one store specialty retailer in the heart of Manhattan. With 15 years in retail and a supermarket background, Rob has found his niche as the sole owner of Murray's. Since the store is only 900 square feet, Rob maximizes his merchandising space. This includes hanging Provolone from the ceiling and stacking cheese outside of the refrigerated case. Within the space constraints, he has managed to section off a part of his case for American farmstead cheeses. Cheese is important to Murray's. Cheese sales represent seventy-five percent of the business or several thousand dollars per square foot per year. Rob summed up his role saying, "My job as retailers is to promote your products, not only to customers directly but to restaurants cheese boards as well."

Chris Maher of DeLuca's Markets spoke about his experience in a three store neighborhood market which was founded by Uncle Joe DeLuca in 1906. When he joined the market four years ago, Maher put in a 40 square foot dairy case. Today cheese represents ten percent of DeLuca's Markets' annual sales. Maher embraces the convenience of purchasing and stocking pre-cut cheeses which fulfill his rushed urban customers' needs and go purchasing patterns. DeLuca's successfully cross-merchandises cheese in other areas of the store. Parmesan is available in the pasta section, and fresh mozzarella can be found in the produce section. The store welcomes their cus-

tomers with a warm homey atmosphere accented with enticing food aromas, samples, and soft jazz music, Maher explained. DeLuca's is one of last neighborhood markets in Boston where customers can buy everything they need.

But Maher says "we're by no means in competition with the Supermarkets. Supermarkets are able to do things in mass quantity. We're more personalized. In supermarkets you're just a number. We on the other hand know our customers' names. We see you in the morning and in the nighttime because we're a neighborhood store and our customers come everyday."

Producers can help this type of retailer sell more of their product by providing brochures, extra labels, and point of sale tools to support newsletters, demos and samplings.

Susan Dolan and Bill McGowan of Sutton Place / Hayday Markets (acquired by Sutton Place in '95) shared insights into a rapidly expanding small chain of gourmet stores. Located in the Baltimore, Washington, New York and Connecticut areas, the stores now number nine with two more currently under construction. Depending on the location, the size of the stores ranges from 2,000 to 22,000 square feet. Sutton Place/Hayday Markets also use a mixture of different cheese merchandising vehicles: open coffin case, back wall dairy, and closed service cases. Most of the stores use marble for display work within many cases for aesthetic and functional purposes. Phil cautioned that marble does need to be slightly raised to ensure airflow and prevent freezing of the coils in the case.

Dolan stays in contact with individual store managers to customize each store's product selection to match the demands of the consumers in the store community. Although the authorized list of cheeses at certain times of the year may exceed 400 cheeses in total, on average the stores carry 150 to 225 cheeses during the busiest times of year.

Dolan uses movement reports to steer merchandising efforts, product variety and margins. Their stores' well-trained staff has relationships with customers. For example Dolan said full-service approach includes offering cheese at the perfect stage of ripeness based upon when the customer plans to use the cheese.

Training is an on going process supported by the help of the manufacturers who are willing to come to the store to train the staff again and again. The manufacturers who offer this training support their own cheese as well as all specialty cheese by teaching the handling of cheeses in general Dolan explained. "Send information, send us yourselves, send us some free goods to get the cheese into the mouths of our people as well as our customers.", she said. That's what we need... Retailers need your help educating us as to what your product is, how to romance it, how to sell it, how to get the story out there to customers, and how to handle it."

**Working with supermarkets has historically posed a challenge for the small specialty manufacturer who is accustomed to working closely with the owner or buyer of one store or small chains.** Jim Van Sickle of Tops Markets gave some good advice: "seek out the innovative supermarkets and don't be afraid of us."

There are 69 Tops Markets stores throughout western New York and the northern tier of Pennsylvania. The cheese offerings vary in the stores based upon the varying demographics and ethnic communities which include Italian, German, Polish, Northern European, and Scandinavian. Despite the varied selection, all cheese is purchased centrally by Van Sickle at Tops' headquarters.

He said the cheese selection is ever-changing with the seasons and special promotions. Tops has been very successful promoting cheese in large displays. According to Van Sickle, "large displays create an interest in eye appeal to the consumer and brings their attention to the department."

An obvious problem for most small American specialty cheese companies is that they do not have the same type of deep pockets that many national companies do. Van Sickle suggested manufacturers have to watch their price point to appeal to more people and enhance the success potential for their product. Tops is currently working with some farmstead cheeses and has many more under consideration.

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# SELLING THE IDEA OF AMERICAN CHEESE

by: Kenny Jackson



Illustration provided by Zingerman's Service Network

Something is afoot. The signs of a fire taking light in restaurants, food stores, and dinner tables are all around us; and this fire is the idea of American farmstead and specialty cheeses. This idea is not a new one to most reading this newsletter, but the fact remains that most Americans are not aware that fine hand-made cheeses are being produced in this country. Just in the past weeks the signs of a larger movement of awareness have laid themselves before us: in the June issue of *Bon Appetit*, the appliance company Kenmore ran an ad featuring a beautiful arrangement of cheese on an inset photo that had no real relevance to the ad besides visibility. Microsoft is running television ads depicting cheese brokers running through a list of cheese similar to the Monty Python skit Regi Hise viewed at last year's conference. New chefs trained in the kitchens of the American food pioneers are serving and incorporating artisan cheeses in their restaurants. And during my Spring stay with Judy Shad, the Moroccan ambassador called for information on her cheeses because they replaced the French chevre served to the royal family with Capriole's. yes, the signs are before us and the time is now to bring American farmstead and specialty cheeses into the mainstream of our food culture.

There are many things we as a body, and as individual members, can do to promote American farm and specialty cheeses as a whole. Matthew Rubiner of Formaggio Kitchen's article (in a newsletter from earlier this year) on their efforts to provide Boston restaurants with specialty cheese was a great insight on how to bridge the gap between restaurants and retail stores. Doing tastings

during restaurants' service hours provides a great opportunity to capture the minds and palettes of those in search of real flavor (Congrats to Formaggio Kitchen). What if cheesemakers could make such appearances? We can make a national effort to directly promote an understanding of the great cheeses being made by American Cheesemakers. And it is just as important, to inspire and support the cheesemakers that are ready and

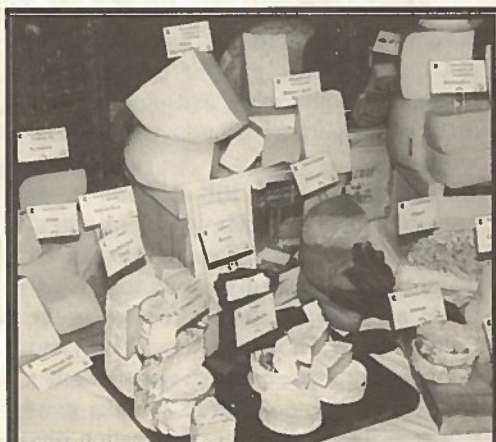


Photo by Richard Haws

Just a few of the great American cheeses represented at this year's Festival of Cheeses

able to begin making the next great cheese.

This is a time of great opportunity for the members and potential members of the American Cheese Society to step up to the challenge and make a real difference for the betterment of American cheese and all that it implies. There is a vast resource of unused talent within and without the society that can help attain a new and higher set of goals. By raising funds for national promotional efforts such as posters or handouts, we can create a greater visibility for the cheesemakers. By writing useful and relevant articles for this newsletter regarding the making, handling, distribution and selling of great cheese we can draw a larger pool of potential members. This foundation is already laid; by acting now we can encourage those who make, sell and

buy American farmstead and specialty cheeses and insure a place for these cheeses on the plates of the next century.

This is an ideal venue for connecting a food source to a consumer, but as most cheesemakers will tell you, and I will attest to after a few months spent with Judy, there are hardly enough minutes in the week to tend to normal business much less personal appearances. But what if we could coordinate our efforts for such appearances in a given time? It was with this in mind that the great American Cheese Week was born. The Great American Cheese Week is a national cooperative effort between cheesemakers, retailers and chefs that celebrated its maiden voyage in May of this year and promises to be a great vehicle for accomplishing the goal of bringing the sources of great cheeses and cheesemakers closer to their audience. Cheesemakers represented themselves in stores. Retailers promoted cheeses in some incredibly inventive ways--my favorite was the Jazz'n Blues tasting of American blue cheeses. AND for free. Also, Oakville Grocery used the week as a kickoff to a whole summer of American cheese promotion! Thanks should go to all stores and cheesemakers that participated in the week-long event for you are the cornerstone for future events of this nature.

At Capriole we celebrated a farm Field Day in which local chefs cooked, a new local brewer served his ale and about 85 interested parties came out to eat, tour the farm and be acquainted with a dozen American cheeses from all over the country. The six Louisville chefs donated their time and food, the brewer was able to sell all the beer that remained after the event, all the cheese was purchased and we still netted 1,000 dollars for the ACS marketing fund. The Great American Cheese Week received a great welcome in its first year and can only pave the way for a huge effort for 1997. Thanks to the cheesemakers, retailers and chefs that participated.



## RAW MILK CHEESE PANEL

A re-cap of the Status of Raw Milk Cheese in America panel discussion held at the ACS Conference August 3, 1996  
Cindy Major

The raw milk cheese panel included a panelist from 4 different countries: the United States, England, France, Australia. The moderator, Bernard Wharton, updated us on the situation in Canada. The panelist from France and England were connected to the conference via telephone. Stephanie Clark, a Dairy Science Ph.D. candidate at Cornell University discussed vast improvements the United States has seen in dairy product safety since 1980. At that time, one fourth of all foodborne illnesses could be traced to contaminated milk in dairy products. Today only one percent of foodborne illnesses can be traced to dairy products. Clark said the improvement can be attributed to rapid milk cooling on the farm, improved on-farm sanitation, proper milk handling, improved transportation methods, pasteurization, monitored cheesemaking methods, the use of starter cultures, the addition of salt, proper curing conditions and proper packaging. Clark also described research conducted on cheese on healthy dairy goats. She found the foodborne pathogens, staphylococcus, bacillus and streptococcus were isolated from the milk some of these species are foodborne pathogens which are easily killed through pasteurization. She also mentioned that brucellosis is still a health concern in dairy products. Ms. Clark expressed her concerns over recent trends towards minimally processed food products and the use of less salt, less nitrates and higher pH's.

British cheese producer, Nick Hodgetts of Malvern Cheesewrights spoke about Great Britain's tradition of raw milk house cheeses and about how traditional cheese is an important part of the country's history and culture. He also discussed the British government's creation and rejection of a law that was to prohibit the manufacture and sale of raw cheeses.

In 1989, the British Minister of Agriculture introduced a ban on raw milk cheese after the public became concerned about health risks associated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacteria that can cause flu-like symptoms and can cause miscarriages in pregnant women. *Listeria* can be found in pates, cold salads and soft cheeses.

Randolph Hodgson of Neal's Yard Dairy, a London-based farmhouse cheese retailer/distributor, researched *Listeria* cases and found that one hundred percent of the cases (20 cases in all) could be traced to imported, pasteurized soft cheeses. There were no cases of *Listeria* in any of the unpasteurized cheese from Great Britain. Instead of prohibiting the production of raw milk cheeses British law now requires cheesemakers to provide the government with more product information. Cheesemakers need to conduct hygiene tests on the milk and do end-product testing. In addition, Malvern Cheesewrights tests all of its milk for coliform, *E. coli*, salmonella, *Listeria* and staphylococci on intake to the dairy. The cheese is tested at 60 days and every batch of cheese is tested before it leaves their dairy.

Jean Claude Bauer who spoke to us from France; exports cheese to the United States. He explained that raw milk cheese is a part of life in France and is the natural state in which cheese is eaten and enjoyed. Cheese in France is mainly pasteurized to extend shelf life, particularly in exported soft cheeses. Raw milk cheeses leaving France need to go through a series of tests and the resulting documents stay with the cheese until they reach the importing company.

Prior to the panel discussion, Wharton spoke on the phone with Jean Filipe Grasslon, a Canadian cheese importer and distributor. Grasslon's company, Fromagerie Caron, imports 700 tons of raw milk cheese and pasteurized cheese into Canada annually.

In 1995 the Canadian government considered banning the importation of raw milk cheeses. Grasslon with the help of Canadian supporters challenged the government's intentions. Seventy-five thousand signatures were collected for a petition and a large demonstration was held in Ottawa where a selection of raw milk cheeses were brought before Canadian legislators. The Canadian government withdrew its proposed ban in 1996, and instead it instituted a labeling law. All raw milk cheese producers must now state on their cheese labels that their cheese is made from unpasteurized milk. In addition, Agriculture Canada does

strict analysis on imported cheese.

Jack Mowbray, a FDA consumer safety officer and an alternate delegate to the U.S. Codex committee on milk and milk products also spoke. Mowbray said FDA is considering evidence to determine if the 60 day aging period needs review. The high bacteria content of unpasteurized soft ripened cheese is a major concern. He also expressed concerns about unpasteurized aged cheeses. Mowbray said that although aging cheese at 60 days at temperatures over 35 F effectively reduces the number of bacteria to low levels, the evidence collected thus far does not meet the expected level of public health protection.

Kent Smith of Crowley Cheese reacted strongly to the scientific data presented by the panel. He said, "We cannot seek to live in a pathogen-free world. We are naive to think that we can it is futile to make the effort, and it is, in my judgment from a public health standpoint, dangerous. Smith also explained how American hospitals became a breeding ground for superpathogens. He stressed that it is healthy for the American public to be exposed to low levels of bacteria through unpasteurized cheese to keep their immune systems healthy and strong.

The final panelist was Andrew Wood, president of the Australian Specialist Cheesemakers Association and editor of "Divine" a fine food magazine. Wood explained that both imported and domestically produced unpasteurized cheese is banned in Australia. The one exception is Parmesan. Australia has a large Italian population and if unpasteurized Parmesan were not allowed into the country, "...they would all go back to Italy".

In 1995, the Australian Specialist Cheesemakers Association was formed and it is lobbying to change the law banning unpasteurized cheeses. The ASCA proposed that cheesemakers producing raw milk cheeses adhere to the following principles: milk may only come from the farm where the cheese is produced, the animals must be certified as healthy by a veterinarian; and a labeling law be required for all raw milk cheeses

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## IMPORTER'S PANEL

A re-cap of the Importer's Panel held at the the ACS Conference August 3 1996

by: Gerd Stern

For some years when discussing cheese types made both in this country and abroad it came to mind that comparisons of the imported prototypes with their domestic relatives deserved more analysis of the differences, similarities and variations. This year's American Cheese Society conference at the Culinary Institute of America seemed a likely venue so I set about preparing a panel on this somewhat questionable subject. Originally, we had expected a collaborative effort with the Cheese Importers Association of America but that managed to fall apart, so the title "Importers Panel" turned out to be a misnomer.

However, the program description was still apt; "Old World/New World: Cheesemakers and mongers compare their and our Gouda, Cheddar and Parmesan cheeses- three from abroad and three from the US." Originally the plans also included Blue, Swiss and Goat, but the lack of support from our fellow association and constraints of scheduling, made those inclusions impossible.

Although we were making comparisons, the primary rationale for this panel was to provide information for cheesemakers and cheese lovers. This was not a platform for value judgments regarding cheese quality. Our first set involved Gouda. Stacy Kinsley, our incoming president presented a cheese from Old Europe Cheese, a plant represented by Dan Carter Inc. and Alain Foster of Best Cheese, Uni Foods presented a cheese from Unikaas, Holland. Members of the audience had numbered, bite-size samples of the six cheeses to

taste. The contrast between the fairly creamy, relatively young example of the domestic and the well-aged, practically crystal bearing specimen from Holland demonstrated the range of Gouda possibilities and still the family taste profile was evident. Stacy and Alain spoke about the make procedures and preparation of the respective cheeses and answered questions about the characteristics and production of the cheese.

Our friends at Food from Britain, Tony and Patricia Matthews were good enough to provide travel funds for James Montgomery of Montgomery Cheddar, Somerset England to present his farmhouse Cheddar and Mariano Gonzalez joined us with the Cheddar production from Shelburne Farms, Vermont. Montgomery, whose family farms on the historic site of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table's precincts, forms classic cloth-wrapped drum shaped sixty pound cylinders; the Vermont variety is made in forty pound rectangular blocks. Gonzalez spoke about his farm's current change from year around to seasonal breeding and the changes this could effect in his cheese, which has been a consistence ACS prize winner. Montgomery's answer to a question regarding make matters, was, "When I have a problem, I don't look forward to

technology, I look back at tradition".

The Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano was represented by Nancy Radke and Dominique Delugeau presented cheese from Wisconsin's BelGioioso, Unfortunately, the previous panel on Raw

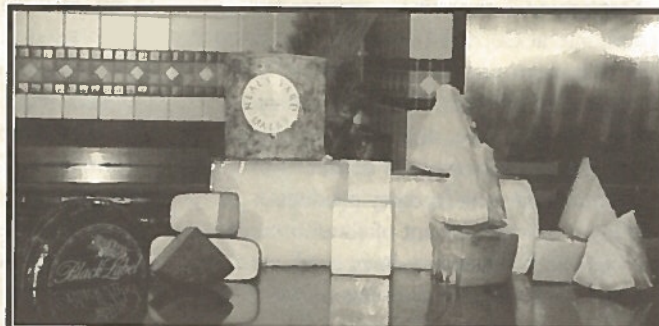


Photo by: Richard Haws

Three styles of cheeses represented at the Importers Panel, Gouda, Cheddar, and Parmesan.

Milk cheeses had run substantially over time and we had to cut our guests off short in order to stay on schedule. We lost considerable information on the nuances and health virtues of Italian Parmigiano which Ms. Radke had prepared for us. However she and Dominique were able to give the basic data on their cheeses and the taste experiences proved that each of the six cheeses had it's characteristic but individual properties to be savored and appreciated.

Given this initial working experience I hope to have a second and better prepared comparison session at our next conference in the Northwest.

**RAW MILK CHEESE ....** stating it is made from raw milk and there is a risk to the very young, the very old, and to pregnant women also said ASCA would encourage retailers to become educated about raw milk and would work with the media and government to educate the public. As of September 29, Wood updated the discussion writing: "It looks like the National Food Authority is going to reject our application outright, even though they have admitted that in their estimation it will become legal in about two years time. The NFA is now in a 3

month review period to come up with valid reasons why they have to reject our submission."

The issues presented during the "Raw Milk Cheese" panel presentation are of great importance to me personally, as a producer of raw milk cheese, to members of the ACS and to the scientific/government body whose job it is to regulate and identify pathogens in our food source. We need to work together and sell flavorful, character rich cheeses.

We were fortunate to we have the ability to learn from England, France,

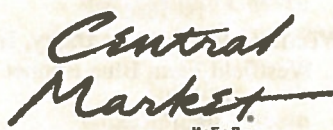
Canada, and Australia, countries that fought and are fighting to preserve their traditional food heritages- to keep them alive in this heyday of McDonalds and Coca Cola. We may be facing the same issues in the next year or two, when the FDA begins its review of our 60 day unpasteurized cheese policy. We have important work ahead of us for the pleasures of the table, the health of our people and our society as a whole.



Back to Basics



# ACS 13TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORS



KONA KAI FARMS



# AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY 13TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## CHEESE JUDGING RESULTS

### WINNERS BY CATEGORY

#### 1. Fresh Unripened Cheese Cow & Other

1st Place  
**B-C USA**  
Zausner Whipped Cream Cheese

2nd Place  
**Lov-It Creamery, Inc.**  
Cream Cheese

3rd Place  
**BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.**  
Mascarpone

#### 2. Fresh Unripened Cheese - Goat

1st Place  
**Mozzarella Company**  
Goat Mozzarella

2nd Place  
**Sea Stars**  
Fromage Blanc

#### 3. Soft Ripened Cheeses - Cow & Other

1st Place  
**Marin French Cheese Company**  
Camembert

2nd Place  
**Marin French Cheese Company**  
Brie

#### 4. Soft Ripened Cheeses - Goat

1st Place  
**Capriole**  
Crocodile Tear

2nd Place  
**Westfield Farm Goat Dairy, Inc.**  
Westfield Farm White Buck

#### 5. American Originals

1st Place  
**Yerba Santa Dairy**  
Shepherd's

2nd Place  
**The Organic Cow of Vermont, Inc.**  
Tunbridge

3rd Place  
**LeRaysville Cheese Factory**  
Penna Jack

#### D. American - Made International Styles - Cow

1st Place  
**Roth Kase USA Ltd.**  
Gruyere

2nd Place  
**B- C USA**  
F. J. Kolb Baby Swiss

3rd Place  
**Westfield Farm Goat Dairy Inc.**  
Westfield Farm Hubbardston Blue Cow

#### D. American-Made International Styles - Goat

1st Place  
**Capriole**  
Banon

2nd Place  
**Westfield Farm Goat Dairy Inc.**  
Westfield Farm Classic Blue Log

3rd Place  
**Cypress Grove Chevre**  
Pee Wee Pyramid

#### E. Cheddars - Goat

1st Place  
**Cypress Grove Chevre**  
Goat Milk Cheddar

#### E. Cheddars - Cow

1st Place  
**Organic Valley**  
Raw Sharp Cheddar Organic

2nd Place  
**Cabot Creamery**  
Vintage Choice Aged Cheddar

3rd Place  
**The Organic Cow of Vermont, Inc.**  
Tunbridge Cheddar

#### F. Blue Veined Cheeses - Milk Type

Insufficient Entries to Award

#### G. External Blue Cheeses

1st Place  
**Westfield Farm Goat Dairy, Inc.**  
Westfield Farm Blue Bonnet

2nd Place  
**Westfield Farm Goat Dairy, Inc.**  
Westfield Farm Classic Blue Log

### JUDGING CRITERIA

**Thanks to all who submitted cheeses for judging and a special thanks to all the judges led by Russ McCall.**

Unlike other competitions where cheeses are judged on their technical merits only, the American Cheese Society's goal is to give positive recognition to those cheeses which are of the highest quality in all aspects-flavor, aroma, texture, as well as technical evaluation. The highest quality cheeses are those which the society feels deserve the recognition of an American Cheese Society Judging is to give recognition to the best American made cheese submitted for annual judging.

### Best of Show

**Westfield Farm Goat Dairy Inc.**  
**Westfield Farm Blue Bonnet**




Photo by Richard Haws

**THE WINNERS**  
From left to right: Russ McCall, Ricki Carrol, Ruth Flore, Bob & Letty Kilmoyer (Westfield Farm), and John Greeley




Photo by Richard Haws

**Westfield Farm Classic Blue Log**  
The Blue Bonnet is not pictured because there was none left to photograph!

#### H. Pasta Filata Cheeses

1st Place  
**BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.**  
Manteche

2nd Place  
**Cappiello Dairy Products, Inc.**  
Large Smoked Braid

3rd Place  
**California Mozzarella Fresca**  
Mozzarella (Fresh)

#### I. Feta

1st Place  
**Cucina Classica Italiana, Inc.**  
Feta

#### J. Low Fat/Low Salt Cheeses - All Milks

1st Place  
**The Coach Dairy Goat Farm**  
Low Fat Stick

2nd Place  
**Vella Cheese Company of CA, Inc.**  
Partly Skim Rosemary Jack

3rd Place  
**Washington State University**  
Reduced Fat Viking

#### K. Spiced, Herbed and Flavored Cheeses - Cow

1st Place  
**Vermont Butter & Cheese Co., Inc.**  
Torta Basil

2nd Place  
**B-C USA**  
Alouette Elegante Sundried  
Tomato/Garlic

3rd Place  
**Mozzarella Company**  
Queso Blanco Chiles

#### K. Spiced, Herbed and Flavored Cheeses - Goat

1st Place  
**The Coach Dairy Goat Farm**  
Green Peppercorn Tome

2nd Place  
**Sea Stars**  
Herbed Fromage Blanc

3rd Place  
**Cypress Grove Chevre**  
Herb Chevre

#### I. Smoked Cheeses

1st Place  
**Grafton Village Cheese Company**  
Maple Smoked Cheddar

2nd Place  
**Redwood Hill Farm Grade A Goat  
Dairy**  
Smoked Cheddar

3rd Place  
**Shelburne Farms**  
Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Smoked  
Cheddar

#### M. Farmhouse Cheese - Cow & Goat

1st Place  
**Capriole**  
Wabash Cannonball

2nd Place  
**Rollingstone Chevre**  
Idaho Goatster Farmhouse

3rd Place  
**Goat's Leap Cheese**  
Carmela III

#### M. Farmhouse Cheese - Sheep

1st Place  
**Bellwether Farms**  
Fresco

2nd Place  
**Bellwether Farms**  
Toscana

#### N. Fresh Goats' Milk Cheeses

1st Place  
**Fromagerie Tournivant, Inc.**  
Le Bignet

2nd Place  
**Laura Chenel's Chevre**  
Log

3rd Place  
**Cypress Grove Chevre**  
Chevre

#### O. Fresh Sheep's Milk Cheese

Insufficient Entries to Award

#### P. Cheeses Marinated in Oil

1st Place  
**Laura Chenel's Chevre**  
Cabecou

#### Q. Cultured Products - All Milks

1st Place  
**Hollow Road Foods**  
Sheep's Milk Plain Yogurt

#### R. Butters

1st Place  
**SW WI Dairy Goat Products Co-op**  
Goat Milk Butter

2nd Place  
**Egg Farm Dairy**  
Cultured Sweet Butter

#### S. Cheese Spreads - All Milks

1st Place  
**The Coach Dairy Goat Farm**  
Tomato Curd

2nd Place  
**B-C USA**  
Alouette Sundried Tomato/Basil

3rd Place  
**Shelburne Farms**  
Shelburne Farms Cheese Spreads

#### T. Aged Sheep's Milk Cheeses

1st Place  
**Bellwether Farms**  
Toscana

2nd Place  
**Major Farm**  
Vermont Shepherd



## CONFERENCE SPONSORS IN KIND

**Adair Vineyard**



**Adrienne's Gourmet**

**Baldwin Vineyards**

**Brimstone Hill**

**Brotherhood Winery**



**Fetzer Vineyards**

**Mountain Valley  
Brew Pub,  
Home of Rufian Ales  
& Lagers**

**Riverview Winery**

**Wine Alliance  
Healdsburg, CA.**

## WINE AND CHEESE PAIRINGS

by:Mark Todd

It finally happened. As I went through the business mail the other night, I found It. There It was, staring at me, a letter from a local catering company telling me that it's not too early to start planning our company Christmas Party! Aside from the fact that my company consists of my partner and myself, and we don't really HAVE a Christmas Party, what really flooded me was the postmark date on the envelope-27 Aug 96!

It wasn't even Labor Day yet and they're planning Holiday Parties.

By the time I sat down to write this article, I could see that the change of season was complete. My junk mail had changed from gardening catalogs and Mexican Resort Timeshare Condo offers to the unbelievable mountains of Christmas catalogs and holiday hype. In an effort to avoid the early-season Hum-Bug, I turned my thoughts to the parts of the holidays that always bring a smile to MY face. Namely, great food and Champagne!! (I'm sure these thoughts reveal a great deal about my psychological make-up, but that's a subject for another day and another article.)

With that in mind, I set out to find a few great cheeses to pair with my favorite Holiday libation. As always, I attempt to pick cheese manufacturers from different regions of the country. I also try to select cheeses and cheesemakers that have been honored recently at competitions and tastings. Thirdly, I consult fellow cheese junkies for any great tips they may have (Thanks this round to Debbie Haws!) and take recommendations from readers, so keep those cards and letters (and cash bribes) coming!

This all lead to my choices for this issue. From the East Coast, I picked two cheeses from the Westfield Farm Goat Dairy in Hubbardston MA, the Classic Blue Log and the White Buck. From the Central region, I chose Texas Goat Cheese from The Mozzarella Company in Dallas TX. From the West Coast, I selected Herb Chevre from Cypress Grove Chevre in McKinleyville, CA.

For the wines, I chose two well-known Sparkling wines from California that are both available and affordable. From Sonoma County, Korbel Brut and from Napa Valley, Chandon Brut Cuvée. Both are non-vintage blends designed to have similar characteristics from year to year. While these wines are both labeled Brut, they have very different flavors and aromas.

To start, I selected the Herb Chevre from Cypress Grove. This is a traditional goat cheese that has a light covering of fresh herbs. I found this cheese to be creamy and moist, with mild flavors of sweet, savory

herbs. After trying both wines, I (This time, "I" really includes a small group of food hedonists, whom I also call my friends) thought the Chandon Brut Cuvée paired very well. It really brought out the sweetness of the herbs while enhancing the tartness of the cheese. The wine's distinctly toasty and yeasty flavors worked well with this cheese. The result is a combination of tastes and textures that please the palette and deliver a lasting finish.

Next, I tried the Texas Goat Cheese, which derives its name and flavors from the Hoja Santa leaf in which it is wrapped. For the uninitiated, Hoja Santa leaves are heart shaped and have a distinctive sarsaparilla (root beer) taste with a touch of anise. The plant is indigenous to Mexico where it has been used in Mexican cuisine for hundreds of years. When paired with the goat cheese, the soft, creamy Chevre takes on the distinct flavors of anise and sarsaparilla. It is as flavorful as it is distinctive. Here, the Korbel Brut was the favorite. The fruity flavors in the wine showed through the pronounced herbal flavors of the cheese to create a good balance between the two.

Lastly, I tasted the two cheeses from Westfield Farm. The Classic "Blue Log" has a beautiful blue, edible rind that is formed naturally by the blue *Roquefortii* mold during aging. The inside of the cheese is white and has a creamy, firm texture. The flavors are intense and complex with a distinct Roquefort character. Of the two champagnes, I liked the "Blue Log" best with Korbel's Brut. The more pronounced fruit flavors in this wine (apples and pears) contrast well with the tangy, earthy flavors in the cheese. This cheese also nicely rounded out the wine's acidity.

As the name implies, the White Buck is white both inside and out. Aged using *Candidum* mold, the result is a white, chalky rind that surrounds a soft, flavorful interior. Just like Brie, this cheese becomes sharper and more intense as it ripens from the surface towards the center of the cheese. Here, the Chandon Brut Cuvée was a better pair. The Champagne benefited from the creamy, tart flavors in the cheese and played well with the acidity in the wine.

I think the more prominent flavors of yeast and smoky wood in this wine are a wonderful foil to this somewhat delicate, earthy notes in this cheese.

So as the giant retail machine that is "The Holiday Season" rolls inexorably forward, take some time to enjoy the finer things in life-great food, great wine and great friends!

Happy Pairings!



# PRESERVING AND EXPANDING MOUNTAIN FARMING TRADITIONS

by: George F. W. Haenlein

## A NEW FEATURE ... DAIRY MANAGEMENT COLUMN

*This is the first in a series of articles that Dr. George Haenlein will be contributing to the ACS newsletter. They are part of a monthly column that George writes for the University of Delaware, Cooperative Extension, College of Agricultural Sciences. The mission of the Delaware Cooperative Extension is to "enable people to improve their lives and communities by developing learning partnerships that put knowledge to work." A special thanks to Dr. George Haenlein and the University of Delaware for sharing their work with the American Cheese Society.*

Have you ever heard of Metsovo?

I had never heard of Metsovo before this June when I was invited to give a seminar on my views of mountain farming by the American Cheese Society International Conference on Farmstead Cheeses, held in Metsovo, Greece.

Why was I invited? Well, I had grown up in the mountains behind Heidelberg, Germany, on a small dairy and mixed farm. By small, I mean that we milked six to eight cows in addition to a little bit of every thing else in agriculture just to survive. So I have an inborn feeling and experience for what mountain farmers with small holdings are up against. Then, as a student, I had worked in the Swiss mountains making Swiss cheese and kept my hand in mountain agriculture there. And later, as a part of the University of Delaware Student Abroad Program, I was a resident and program director for 30 University of Delaware students for a semester in Vienna, Austria. We studied, among other topics, farm preservation in the Austrian mountains, spending time in the mountains and on mountain farms.

Why should Metsovo be of interest to you? The answer is farm preservation, a topic close to our own concerns locally and around the United States. Metsovo is a little town of 4,000 people in the northwestern corner of Greece, glued to the slopes of the Pindus mountains at about 4,000 feet above sea level. It is situated between Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia. This small town has become a symbol of what can be done to preserve agriculture, specifically mountain agriculture.

Farm preservation can be pursued in several ways. Here in Delaware the official strategies

are threefold: 1) purchase of development rights, called PDR, meaning that the state buys a farmers right to sell the farm to housing developments for a certain price per acre; 2) transfer of development rights, called agricultural TDR, meaning that developers buy a farmers right to develop; and 3) incentive transfer of development rights, called Incentive TDR, meaning that in a slightly modified form, developers again buy a farmer's right to develop. Whether these strategies will work to achieve the objective of preserving family farms and farmland here, remains to be proven.

My experience in the mountain countries of Germany, Switzerland and Austria are different. Their different strategies have actually succeeded in keeping mountain farmers on mountain farms. There, the program is based on insuring a decent farm income and standard of living, such that the farmers children have no overwhelming urge to leave the farm for city life, and will continue farming with their parents. How is this achieved?

Family farms in those countries are not subject to inheritance tax, so a farm does not need to be sold to pay these taxes, as is often the case in the United States. Also, farmers have a pension plan, so that their old age needs are covered. They do not need to sell their farms to take care of themselves when they can no longer work. Family farms are not asserted at real estate values but at farm productivity values, which are based on soil types, climate, elevation and slope of fields. These factors combined actually make certain farmers eligible for subsidies in machinery and fertilizer purchases, when the location of the farm is in difficult to manage locations, such as steep slopes and high mountains.

The subsidies are favored not only by soil conservation agencies but by legislation supported by the tourist and hotel industry. The presence of farmers not he mountains herding their cattle, heifers, sheep and goats attracts tourists who hike mountains in the summer and who enjoy seeing the grazing animals along mountain trails. And the skiers in winter want clear slopes without trees and brush encroachment, which the grazing herds assure. Thus hotel owners and managers want to encourage farmers to stay on the farm. They even pay farmers a certain percentage royalty for the income of ski lifts and mountain cable cars.

As a result, mountain farmers do not have to be envious of city people vacationing in the

mountains. The more tourists that come, the more income to farmers who, happy and content with mountain life, do not long for the "better" life in the city. And they will not sell their farms. Farmland is preserved by simple economic principles of a decent farm income and good prospective income for the next generation.

Now, how does all this relate to Metsovo? it is not located in Switzerland, Austria or Germany. In 1948, a wealthy Greek, Michael Tossizza, from an old Metsovo family was living in Switzerland. Along with his adopted son, Evangelos Averoff, he put their money into a foundation for the purpose of improving the life of mountain farmers in the Metsovo region.

Improved cows and bulls were imported from Switzerland and the island of Jersey. Young farmers were sent to Italy to learn new cheesemaking techniques. A cooperative was started among the sheep, goat and cow farmers and cheesemakers. A cheese factory was built, where now milk is delivered twice a day by truck and on horseback from nearby mountain farms. They produce several new cheeses: Parmesan from cow milk; a Provolone type called Metsovone, which is 90 percent cow milk and 10 percent goat milk; a Gruyere type called Graviera, which is 100 percent sheep milk; and a Chevre type from 100 percent goat milk. Production of any cheese depends on when which milk is mostly available in the mountains and in what season.

The result of the foundation's efforts is that new superior quality cheeses are produced under well-trained technical professional supervision, promoted better and sold better, and mountain farmers have a better product outlet and market for their work. Farmers are paid a high price for their milk because of these successful efforts. In comparison to our present Delaware prices, their sheep milk price to the mountain farmer is about 3 times the price for our cow milk, their goat milk about 2 times and their cow milk about 1/3 more than our cow milk price.

In addition, the town itself has become a tourist attraction. To draw visitors, the town built a ski lift, a wonderful conference center with the latest in electronic facilities, restaurants, a museum, a hotel and adult

*continued....page 15*



# MACEDONIAN DELEGATION LEARNS TO MAKE CHEESE IN DALLAS

llas, Texas)-- Three Macedonian men recently completed a week of alized cheesemaking training at the arella Company. They will take the information to their jobs in je, Macedonia.

he Mozzarella Company, the delega- members donned rubber aprons and ets and worked with Dallas cheese- rs for a week. They learned to make

Dallas Mozzarella, Oaxacan can String Cheese, Texas Goat se, as well as Caciottas laced with western chiles and herbs.

group, exhibited a sincere interest in facet of the cheesemaking process, ng at 5 am each morning and work- til the last cheese was made. As a they learned many skills to teach

Macedonian cheesemakers back home. Most likely, this will result in new Macedonian cheeses with a Texas twang Lambert adds!

Believing that learning is the best accom- plished through practical experience, Land O'Lakes implemented this US-based pro- gram, which was funded by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The visit was a direct result of Mozzarella Company's founder and presi- dent, Paula Lambert's recent trip to Greece where she met another Paula...Paula Higgins, Land O'Lakes Project Manager for Macedonia.

The two Paulas put their heads together and decided that Macedonian field agents could benefit from a hands-on experience in cheesemaking and that Mozzarella

Company cheesemakers also could benefit from the exchange.

Founded in 1982, the Mozzarella Company produces a wide selection of award-winning gourmet cheeses. All are handmade from fresh cow, goat and water buffalo milks in a tiny factory near down- town Dallas. The cheeses are sold to fine restaurants, hotels and gourmet shops across the country. They can also be pur- chased directly from the cheese factory in person and via mail order. Gift baskets are also available year-round.

Land O'Lakes is a Minnesota-based food and agricultural cooperative owned by farmers, ranchers and local cooperative in 15 states. It manufactures and markets over 600 food products in the USA.

## A CHEESE LOVER'S RECIPE

rd Stern

unne Gold author of the award-win- "Little Meals: A Great New Way to nd Cook", consulting chef to the ow Room and Windows on the and first chef to former New York : Ed Koch has written a new cook- "Recipes 1-2-3; Fabulous Food Only three Ingredients".

e this new volume contains at least ipes with cheese as one of the three ients, and I believe American e Society members will realize how l such a guide to using cheese as an ient can be in our efforts to promote use of farmstead and specialty s from these United States.

old assures us that "This is not an I cook book. These are extremely icated offerings and while you will uch time both in shopping and ng only three ingredients, these are simplistic nor basic preparations." l cheese laden recipes include Tiny Cheese Crackers; Radicchio and d Mozzarella; Brie and Pear Soup; and Pencil Asparagus,

li Mascarpone; and Nicoise Socca Marinated Goat Cheese. We will one recipe to whet your appetites. ally, this book with more than 250

recipes is not limited to our major sphere interest alone. Recipes 1-2-3- is organized by courses, has a list of ingredient sources and contains a selection of Fat- Free, Lowfat, and Low-Calorie offerings as well as richer fare.

### RECIPES 1-2-3

by Rozanne Gold  
published 1996 by Viking  
306 pages \$22.95

#### *Nicoise Socca Crepe Marinated Goat Cheese*

Socca, a kind of pizza made from chick- pea flour, is a common snack in Nice. In this recipe from Rozanne Gold's Recipes 1-2-3 it's gone upscale with trendy Goat Cheese marinated in fruity, green olive oil. Use a domestic cheese from Coach Farms or Laura Chenel, or French Montrachet. Speaking of Montrachet... a glass of this chilled white Burgundy is an impressive partner.

*8 thick slices of Goat Cheese, cut 1 inch thick*

*(Coach Farms, or Laura Chenel, or Montrachet)*

*1 1/3 cup plus 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil or Garlic Oil  
1 cup chickpea flour*

Put the cheese in large shallow bowl or plate. Pour the 1/3 cup oil over the top and sprinkle lightly with coarse salt. Let mar- inate 1 hour.

Sift the chickpea flour into a mixing bowl. Make a well and whisk in 1/2 cup water to form a smooth, thick paste. Add another one cup water, two tablespoons olive or garlic oil, 1/4 teaspoon coarse salt, and a grinding of black pepper. Stir until very smooth.

Heat an 8-inch nonstick skillet until hot. Coat the bottom with one teaspoon olive oil. When it starts smoking, pour in a 2- ounce ladle of batter to cover the bottom evenly.

When the batter has set. Turn over, adding a little more oil, and cook other side until golden. Remove to warm plates. Turn out onto a warm plate and repeat with the remaining batter to make 8 crepes.

To serve, top each crepe with marinated cheese.

*Serves 8*



# A HISTORY OF THE RESTAURANT CHEESE BOARD

re-cap of the "A History of the Restaurant Cheese Board" panel discussion held at the ACS Conference August 3, 1996  
by: Matt Rubiner

## Presenters

**Carole Goodrich -**  
**DeChoix Specialty Foods**

**Matthew Rubiner -**  
**Formaggio Kitchen**

**Max McCalmen-**  
**Picholine**

## Moderator:

**John Greeley -**  
**Sheila Marie Imports**

Montgomery's Cheddar and Bluebonnet at New York's Gramercy Tavern. Monte Nebro and White Buck at Picholine. Farbourne Blue and Humboldt Fog at Boston's Rialto. Artisan cheeses, from the Cascades to the Dales to the Vosges, from the Hudson to the Rhone to the Po, are appearing on the tables of America's finest restaurants.

The "History of the Restaurant Cheeseboard" looked at this budding American "cheeseboard" tradition. John Greeley, after televised comments from a noted authority on the sensual pleasures of the table, led participants through the past two centuries of restaurant cheese courses. Three panelists - an importer, a retailer, and a restaurateur - then discussed the distinct role each plays in promoting the development of a cheese 'table culture' in American restaurants.

The modern restaurant cheeseboard, we are told, has its roots in 18th century Europe. Then, as now, restaurateurs sought to inspire thirst among their patrons by plying them with something salty. Cheese served this role admirably (a noble ancestor of the modern beer nut). The tradition flourished in the restaurants of the Continent and the taverns of the British Isles through the 19th century. Cheeseboards appointed the lavish dining rooms of the great trans-Atlantic liners, where Edams, Cheshires, and Gloucesters nestled in swinging wire baskets, impervious to the ship's rocking.

Cheeseboards appeared in American restaurants wherever immigrants from the

great cheesemaking countries settled, notably in the French deep south and the Germanic upper mid-west. The tradition never took more than a tentative hold, however, reaching peaks of popularity and valleys of dormancy through the 20th century.

The afternoon's first panelist was Carole Goodrich, of New York's DeChoix Specialty Foods, a leading importer and wholesaler of fine cheeses. Carole's presentation focused on the relationship between the wholesaler and the restaurant. She drew primarily from her work with the heralded Gramercy Tavern, a pioneer in bringing artisan cheeses to American diners. Gramercy Tavern offers a traditional artisan cheese board, arrayed on a trolley, and displayed prominently in the restaurant's dining room. Carole spoke of Gramercy's commitment to working closely with wholesalers such as DeChoix to learn more about cheeses and to bring to it's tables artisan cheeses from all over the world, expertly ripened and expertly served.

In the afternoon's second presentation I discussed the efforts of Formaggio Kitchen, a Cambridge cheese retailer and my employer to bring artisan cheeses to tables of Massachusetts' finest restaurants. Formaggio Kitchen occupies a unique position in the Boston restaurant wholesale market. As a retailer we can't hope to match wholesalers' prices. We compete by offering an array of cheeses and hands-on, tailored services that no wholesaler can provide. Our customers are primarily restaurants who have made a commitment to serving artisan cheeses, but do not have the staff or resources to support a major cheese board program. We offer them a vast selection of cheeses, we deliver at a moments notice in whatever quantities they need, and we provide them the educational support that helps them sell, serve and store fine cheeses.

Restaurant cheese sales add little to our immediate bottom line. The wholesale discount we offer and the labor involved whittles away at most of our margin.

However, the publicity of working with fine restaurants and unique direct marketing opportunity afforded by a dining room full of hungry people willing to spend money on fine food, have paid off significantly.

In the afternoon's final presentation, Max McCalmen of New York's Picholine discussed his role as a restaurant owner and Maitre de Fromage. Max's role in popularizing a cheese board culture in American restaurants is perhaps the most critical among the panel's three presenters. He and his staff are the front line troops. Their task is to tempt uninitiated American diners to welcome cheese as an integral part of their dining experience. Max has built a ripening cave in a disused Picholine closet where he stores as many as forty cheeses. Each evening he arranges a cascade of artisan cheeses on a marble-topped trolley. He is server and educator as the trolley is wheeled from table to table. His efforts have yielded impressive results. Picholine sells as many as fifty cheese courses per night.

The day's presentations prompted many questions. Most centered on details of mechanics of restaurant cheese course sales: how cheeses are stored in often inhospitable kitchen conditions, how they are priced and portioned, how they are served. An issue that was of particular concern to the audience is the position that American artisan cheeses occupy on the American restaurant cheeseboard. While each of the panelists dutifully pointed out American cheeses among the photographs and menus they displayed, neither the importer, nor retailer nor the restaurateur have given American cheese a paramount position among the products they supply or serve. The reasons for this are many, as anyone who has experienced the difficulty of selling American cheeses in a sea of better known, more traditional, often less costly European Cheeses can attest. Still, American cheeses seem under represented. Restaurants offer us a unique means of popularizing American cheeses. This is an issue for further discussion.



## YOU ASKED FOR IT!

Patrick Geoghegan

membership in the American Cheese Society affords you many opportunities, from networking to access to technical information, conferences, plant visits and more.

Now we want to make it even more valuable.

That's why we're announcing a new feature to the newsletter, a column where you ask questions regarding cheesemaking, packaging, distribution, promotions - anything you would like an answer to - and we go out and find the most knowledgeable

resource person to answer it. The questions and answers will appear in each edition of the newsletter.

So if you have a question, simply write it down and mail it to: You Asked For It, PO Box 2859; Cedar Hill, Texas 75106.

### RETAILER'S WORKSHOP CONTINUED...

**William Sloane of Stop & Shop taught the audience many valuable lessons on how to deal effectively with the supermarket cheese buyer.** Recently acquired by AHOLD who also owns Tops, Stop & Shop has 195 stores throughout Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Sloane said in his opening remark, "I wish I was on a first name basis with all of you like the specialty retailers are. I've been buying cheese for almost 10 years now and I don't know you and you don't know me. How come? Supermarkets can be a pain in the neck to do business with. Small specialty cheese makers can be a pain in the neck to do business with from the supermarket point of view. But that doesn't mean that we can't work together. This is the first time I've been to an ACS conference and I love it."

Because of the large number of cheese departments under his leadership, Bill has been able to decipher the trends and innovative ideas and determine what will work at Stop & Shop. Gourmet stores and supermarkets share the same customers because neither store can fulfill all of their needs, he said. Due to the varying demographics of individual stores, the supermarket can't take a cookie cutter approach to specialty cheeses.

Stop & Shop cheese sales make up only about five percent to one percent of total cheese sales. Thus, in the big scheme of things, the cheese store is not a high priority area. However specialty cheeses offer a way to differentiate the stores and they fit into the marketing strategy of the chain. Stop & Shop has an authorized list of 275 cheeses, but an average store carries 130 to 150 varieties at a time, Van Sickle said. Approximately 90 are stocked in the warehouse, and the rest are received via transportation programs. Van Sickle explained that direct delivery (UPS etc.) to the supermarkets is very difficult because "the specialty cheese manufacturer is competing with Coke and Pepsi at the warehouse door. A

distributor is vital to us to consolidate the different cheeses and get them to the store in an efficient manner."

The ideal presentation according to Bill includes the following: "This is my product. These are the stores where I would see it merchandised based upon the demographics. This is my distributor. This is a promotion I'd like to do." The turn-key approach enables a buyer to say it's a go. Due to their multiple responsibilities including managing 195 cheese stores, it is difficult to get a buyer's time. Bill recommended that a broker can help cheesemakers follow his advice.

Van Sickle also said, the best way to educate the supermarket consumer is through label, packaging and product presentation. He recommended that manufacturers think of how their products sell themselves to a customer walking by the case. Like other supermarkets, Stop & Shop offers great visibility to single store traffic of over 20,000 customers walking through the store each week.

In response to a question from the audience regarding the often prohibitive cost of entry to the supermarket, Bill acknowledged that it is expensive to do business with supermarkets. "I like to think of it in relative terms", he said. "It can be a six figure expense to slot your product in. On the other hand, it can cost nothing."

This cost depends on "having the right product in the right stores at the right time", he added.

The Retailers Workshop panel was a valuable learning experience for ACS members. The August 19 issue of Supermarket News reported: "The exchange revealed a dilemma in which cheese suppliers are pondering how to squeeze past the barriers of expensive and complicated entry into a market where, clearly, opportunity exists; and supermarket cheese buyers are hoping those suppliers can indeed find a way in - but not quite sure how to help."

The reporter did not understand the diverse membership makeup of our grow-

ing organization. Many specialty cheesemakers are or will be targeting supermarkets, and many will prefer to exclusively sell to the gourmet stores. In my opinion the panel offered a comprehensive viewpoint of retail and furthered all of our education about the various types of retailers. Depending on our targeted distribution, we'll all benefit by following the advice of these and other leading retailers.

This panel also exposed different opinions and uneven enforcement by state regulators over the ability to merchandise cheese out of refrigeration. Echoed throughout the discussion was advice to work with inspectors to reduce violations. Many retailers in the audience extolled the virtues of selling cheese this way.

"As a cheesemaker, I have many cheeses that I hope nobody is leaving out. "Judy Shad Capriole, said. I don't want the liability...To sample them out and have people taste them at ideal temperature is one thing. But my cheeses are meant to be refrigerated and stored until somebody takes them home, and then if they want to leave them out for a while, I would advise 12 hours on some of them. But leaving cheese out (all of the time, or refrigerating it overnight) is not exactly the nicest way to treat a cheese either. I mean it's beautiful for display but it's just not fair to a cheese. And I question the liability factor for doing it. It scares me to death."

### - SOLD - WESTFIELD FARMS

Letty and Bob Kilmoyer are proud to announce that the new owners of "Westfield Farm" and their award winning cheeses are Bob and Debby Stetson. The Kilmoyers are currently living with the Stetsons and teaching them their cheesemaking techniques. We wish Letty and Bob a very happy retirement; and the Stetsons the best of luck in their new venture!



## FROM THE EDITOR

by: Regi Hise

### RAW MILK HITS SOME RAW NERVES

There was a time when overt displays of contentious behavior by a large number of people made me uncomfortable. That's probably why it took me several years to appreciate the annual ACS conference.

After years of attending various industry conferences that had a all-in-agreement panels, so-what workshops, and no-rainer seminars I've gotten over the need to see everyone in the room agree with one another. In fact at this years ACS conference I remember waiting with baited breath for the first major disagreement or shouting match. I literally prayed that if one did erupt it would be in a session I was attending and not in the another one going on at the same time. Oh the anxiety! Would it start with a debate or a diatribe? As usual the ACS membership didn't let us down. It didn't take long to find a bone of contention, and you didn't need to turn up your hearing aid for question & answers.

Those of you lucky enough to attend the recent ACS annual conference at CIA in

Hyde Park, NY, saw first hand what happens when you combine a great agenda, different people, strong opinions, and a passion for cheese. A real know down drag out, donnybrook. The panel on raw milk cheeses was only one example of the level of debate typical at an ACS conference.

I've been lucky enough to work for several large Italian families, and it almost always goes without saying that they were passionate about what they did. Every day was a snapshot of living, loving, laughing and crying. Emotions were not something they easily hid. As importantly you were always allowed to disagree, as long as it was with passion!

It's wonderful to be around people who feel passionate about what they do and that always happens at an ACS conference. I hope it never changes! A huge thank you to Ruth Flores and John Greeley for Chairing a great conference, and a huge thank you to all ACS members who attended and shared their insights.

**PRESERVING AND EXPANDING CONTINUED..** educational projects. They even restored an ancient monastery. All of this brings in even more visitors, broadening the market for their products.

Thus, with a decent income for their hard work in a harsh environment and climate, farmers there can afford to stay on their farms instead of migrating to the cities. Greece has a population of 8 million-4 million of whom live in the city of Athens! Of the total land area of Greece, 57 percent is mountains and 35 percent semi-mountains with little arable

land. Greece has only 80,000 dairy cows, but 10 million dairy sheep and 6 million dairy goats, all of which produce 210,000 tons of cheese, mostly from mountains!

Metsovo and it's Tossizza Foundation have made a real difference in the region of Greece, preserving small family farmers and their farmland. Maybe U.S. policy makers could benefit from using Metsovo to see how successful it is. Perhaps, then, our nation's family farmers and our green environment could also be preserved better for the future generations.

#### Articles, Illustrations and Photos:

Dominique Delugeau - See list of Board Members

Patrick Geoghegan  
Stephen & Brady  
7850 Hoffman Street  
Madison, WI 53704  
308-241-4141 ext 254

Dick Groves - See list of Board Members

Dr. George Haenlein - University of Delaware  
348 Townsend Hall; Newark, DE  
19717-1303  
302-831-2523

Deborah Haws - See list of Board Members

Regi Hise - See list of Board Members

Kenny Jackson - See list of Board Members

Stacy Kinsley - See list of Board Members

Cynthia Majors - See list of Board Members

Matt Rubiner -  
Formaggio Kitchen  
244 Huron Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
617-354-4750

Heather Schroeder  
Cheese Market News  
PO Box 620244  
Madison, Wisconsin 53562-0244  
608-288-9090

Gerd Stern - See list of Board Members

Mark Todd  
Research Resources  
PO Box 6168  
Santa Rosa, CA 95406  
707-865-0702

Zingerman's Service Network  
216-218 N. Fourth Ave.; Ann Arbor MI, 48104-1404  
313-761-5056

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

(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.)

**American Dairy Goat Association Annual Convention & Meeting; October 19-26, 1996, Fort Meyers, FL.** For information call (941) 453-7225.

**Bon Appetit Seventh Annual Wine & Spirit Focus; Los Angeles - October 27th, 1996; Chicago - November 15th, 1996.** For information on participation please contact Lynne Edelson (212) 243-7274.

**Eastern Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association Taste Show & Exhibition; Edison, NJ October 23-24, 1996.** For more information contact EDDA at (201) 288-5454.

**California Polytechnic State University Dairy Cleaning & Sanitation Short Course; October 23-24, 1996.** For information call (805) 756-6097. Also available at Cal Poly, Frozen Dairy Desserts Manufacturing; January 28-30, 1997. Cal Poly/UCD 7th Annual Cheese Short Course 1; March 18-21, 1997. Cal Poly/UCD 4th Annual Milk Processing Technology Short Course; April 16-17, 1997.

**Center For Dairy Research, UW Producing Safe Dairy Products Workshop; October 29-31, 1996.** For more information contact Sarah Quionones @ CDR (608) 262-2217.

**UC Davis University Extension Course offers HACCP: Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points; December 3-5, 1996.** For more information call (800) 752-0881 or (916) 757-8777.

**Penn State University Workshop for the Direct Marketing of Specialty Foods; April 11-12, 1997.** For information call (800) 778-8632.

**American Cheese Society 14th Annual Conference; August 14 - 17, 1997, Seattle, WA.** More information to come in the ACS newsletter.

#### The American Cheese Society Newsletter is Published By:

Deborah Haws - Publisher  
Regi Hise - Managing Editor  
Dick Groves - Co Editor  
Gerd Stern - Co Editor  
Heather Schroeder - Co Editor  
Layout By: Richard Haws

If you have information or an article you would like considered for inclusion, or drawings and photographs we could use in future newsletters, or comments about the style or content of this newsletter send them to:

Deborah K. Haws - Publisher  
PO Box 2859  
Cedar Hill, TX 75106  
Voice 972-293-3040 Fax 972-293-7035  
e-mail dhaws@compuetek.net