

The American Cheese Society



S P E C I A L I S S U E



CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS AS WE MOST OFTEN SAW THEM

Paige Lamb - left, "So many details to handle...."

Jeff Bergman - right, "And the busses will be leaving from the South side of the building at...."



It really does take an army of volunteers to make the conference happen.

Here are just some of the people who pitched in to help set up the Festival of Cheeses Saturday afternoon.

Thanks to all the volunteers, especially Paige and Jeff for a great conference!

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Conference attendees sample and compare cheeses during Gerd Stern's panel comparing old world and new world cheeses.



A sample of the beautiful setting for the Festival of Cheeses at Snoqualmie Winery.



Best of Show.
What a great cheese!



Larry's Markets did a great job featuring ACS member cheeses in their store!



Ricki Carroll prepares to cut curd during one of her workshops



A portion of the cheese table at the Festival of Cheeses.

ROMANCING THE CHEESE AT YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL RESTAURANT

MODERATOR - JEFFREY BERGMAN

by: Regi Hise

Panelists:

- Nancy Oakes, Chef/Owner, Boulevard Restaurant, San Francisco, CA
- Tom Douglas, Chef/Owner, Dahlia Lounge, Etta's Seafood, Palace Kitchen, Seattle, WA
- Leslie Macki, Chef, Baker/Owner, Macrine Bakery and Cafe, Seattle, WA
- Alison Leber, Owner, Brie and Bordeaux Wine & Cheese Shop, Seattle, WA
- Jim Dohrman, Campagne Restaurant, Seattle WA

I want to start by saying thank you to all of the prestigious panelists who shared a wealth of information with us. Information that cheesemakers can benefit greatly from. It was an excellent session! I have found that listening to a panel and getting a feel for it is much easier than reporting on it. Especially when so much good information comes out of it. In my review I'll try to capture the essence of what we heard, indicate whether there was a general consensus or disagreement, and more importantly, try to expose the opportunities they present for cheesemakers. Last but not least I'll try to highlight some of the next steps you should consider taking to capitalize on these opportunities.

The session covered six questions that broke down into two main categories and so much good information came out of it that we are going to cover it in two parts. Part #1 will be covered in this conference issue and Part #2 will be covered in the next regular ACS newsletter.

Part #1: The first question was whether restaurants needed more education programs to effectively sell cheese on the menu. The follow-up to that question was what specific things cheesemakers could do to help facilitate this process.

Part #2: The second group of questions related to how chefs make purchase decisions, what they were doing with cheese in their restaurants, and what did they see in the future for cheese.

Part #1

QUESTION #1

"What is the importance of education for the chefs, the staff, and how does it relate to the consumer?"

ANSWERS/CONCLUSIONS:

This was really an easy one to encapsulate since everyone agreed that the importance of product education is paramount to the success

of any cheese on the menu. For that matter, the panelists were clear that this was true for anything on the menu, whether it was a recipe or a key ingredient in a recipe. A question of whether education is important or not is pretty easy if not rhetorical. Who would say no? That would be like saying "no" to mom and apple pie! However, I want to stress that even though there was a clear consensus that education is important, no one was paying this question lip service. Everyone on the panel was passionate about the need for cheese education if cheese is to be successful on the menu.

It is appropriate that this session targeted the "Favorite Local Restaurant," since it appears to be the type of operation that small and specialty cheesemakers can most effectively work with. The conference theme of "Romancing the Cheese" is equally appropriate since what the chefs asked for was the "whole story." They want information that will help romance or sell their customers.

They did not want this education process to stop with the chef either. The panelists were equally passionate about its translation from the kitchen out to the staff in the front of the house. They felt this was also critical since the wait staff were ultimately the ones selling in the menu table side. Jim Dohrman summed it up by saying that "if the wait staff doesn't promote it, it won't sell." Also if the wait staff doesn't know anything about it, they won't even try to sell it. They don't want to look silly so they sell the items or recipes that they know. The chefs also alluded to the fact that educational information wasn't just an opportunity to sell more cheese on their menu. It was really more of a necessity to effectively sell cheese on their menu.

Parallel to that was the issue of regional products. Today's American chefs are increasingly expressing their desire for fresh, quality products by focusing on those available to them regionally. That in some part means that not only do these chefs want your product on their menu, but they need it to express their regionality. It's really a win-win for the chef and the cheesemaker.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR cheesemakers:

There are great opportunities for cheesemakers to sell more cheese by educating and communicating directly with chefs and restaurant staff. The good news is that chefs want to hear from you and help sell your products. To do that, however, you must get in to meet them and tell them your story and about what makes

your cheese special.

NEXT STEPS FOR CHEESEMAKERS:

Identifying the specific opportunities for working with your local restaurants is covered as part of the follow up question:

QUESTION #2:

"What sort of information or tools do restaurants want or need to educate them on specialty cheeses to help sell them ("Romance" them) on the menu. Also what can cheesemakers do to help facilitate this process?"

Answers from the chefs ranged from information on how your cheese is made, what makes it special, what it tastes like, how to handle it, even how to pronounce its name.

Alison Leber pointed out that a chef who doesn't know how to pronounce a cheese probably won't ask for it on an order, and that wait staff who can't pronounce it, won't mention it to their customers. She detailed how she even spells out the pronunciation of cheese names phonetically to the staff in her store, and on signs for her customers. This sort of information is obviously applicable to retail sales and in the distribution channels.

Although the chefs wanted this information to get to all of their staff, there are also times that one critical contact in the restaurant does you the most good. Most all the chefs who had cheese programs or cheese courses that were successful in their restaurant credited someone in the restaurant who had a passion for cheese. Tom Douglas said that when he first offered a cheese course on his menu, it only sold about 3 plates on a night. When he asked one of his chefs who loved cheese to work with the program, they started serving over 25 cheese courses a night.

The people who mentor these programs make them a success and in many cases it was interactions with cheesemakers that inspired them in their appreciation of cheese

Once again this is not as much an option, as a commitment you must make to sell your products. Nancy Oakes was very clear on the fact that she wanted all interested parties to bring forth information to her and her staff on working with the products on their menu. Lack of information or product support was listed by her as the most likely factor to a product booted out of her restaurant.

The entire discussion to this point led to the logical conclusion that this whole process of "Romancing the Cheese" couldn't be accomplished with one magic bullet or component. It represented commitments, partnerships, and

relationship building. One of the difficulties in accomplishing this was voiced by a cheesemaker who asked how to approach or get through to talk with the chefs at their local restaurant. The chefs didn't have a quick answer for how to accomplish this other than continuing to support your cheeses through communication with the chef and staff. They said they had similar problems with turnover and didn't have a quick answer to the problem. The up side to this was mentioned by one of the chefs who encouraged cheesemakers to remember that if he moved to another restaurant, he'd probably take their cheese with him to the new restaurant. As long as you continued to service the old restaurant well, you'd retain that account and pick up a new one too.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHEESEMAKERS:

It is apparent that chefs and cheesemakers have a mutual admiration society. They have a great respect for each others' craft and artisan skills. There is a famous line from Monty Python's Holy Grail where the Pope was on the mountain and spoke "God bless the cheesemakers." What an opportunity! Chefs have a great respect for cheesemakers and want to know more about your products, so they can help you sell them. That's a real Win-Win!

NEXT STEPS FOR CHEESEMAKERS:

Basically, the chefs on the panel are interested in any information you can provide them with regard to your cheeses. How to handle it, what it tastes like, and any other information about it. They want to know the whole story! In addition to asking for personal interactions with the cheesemakers, they want this information in printed form also so that they can share it with their staff. In addition to information from the cheesemakers the chefs also asked for information like the ACS directory so they can look at the entire range of cheese available to them. Here is a brief laundry list of things that chefs asked for from cheesemakers or distributors.

- Visit the restaurants in your area and find out what is on their menus and how your cheeses may fit in. It helps to know what's on a menu before you begin to discuss your product with the chef.
- Call the chef and try to make an appointment to meet to discuss your products and to do a tasting.
- Offer to come in and do follow-up tastings or educational programs for the wait staff.
- Prepare sell sheets with information about your products and your company. Tell them what makes your products special.
- Invite the chef or others at the restaurant to visit you to see how your cheese is made.
- Consider offering samples for the chef to experiment with your cheese.

THE ROLE OF THE FOOD WRITER IN TELLING THE STORY MODERATOR - LINDA FUNK

by: Laura Jacobs-Welch

"Public relations is a passion" with Linda Funk, who has spent the past nine years with the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, following her passion. In this panel, which included Paula Lambert, Mozzarella Company; Heidi Yorshire, Food Writer and frequent contributor to Bon Appetit; Nancy Leson, Seattle food writer; and Gretchen Land, food writer for Whole Foods. She enjoined her fellow panelists to explore what PR is, how you can be involved in it and what are the key steps to accomplishing "good PR".

The panel discussion began with the importance of the cheesemaker's relationship with their local press and food writer. Linda stressed that we are all in PR, from the moment you try to convey your image to the public, no matter what your position is in the company. The following three points were stressed in creating good PR, 1) The Hook; 2) The Spin, 3) The Buzz.

Patrick Geoghegan, Stephen & Brady Advertising and P.R., offered these points to Linda, and explained: The Hook is knowing the difference that characterizes your product, what makes that difference important to the public. The Spin is how you put your own special twist to the story, the spin makes people remember and love the story. The Buzz is creating the excitement, "the buzz", that generates talk and communication about your product.

STRATEGIES

Paula Lambert is a firm believer in creating a story. Her story is one she started with 15 years ago, it's the story of how she lived in Italy, loved mozzarella and tomato salad, and couldn't get mozzarella for her tomato and mozzarella salad. SO, she decided to have a factory and make it herself. Her key message was, keep it short, make sure it tells a narrative, and is easy to remember; and it helps if it's unusual. These should be a few key points that you can repeat over and over again. As Heidi Leson pointed out that this is also referred to as your "Unique Selling Position" (or USP).

Now that your story has been "created", you must go out and make contact. When looking at the Retail and Food Service industry, you will see a blurring of the distinctive lines that used to separate them. At your local market, a look into the dairy and deli case shows many prepared items to take out. The industry buzz

has created your strategies, that is getting your product to the market they've created. Now is the time for some important questions: What is my product suited for? What is the application? and What is the functionality? When you speak to the chef or the dairy/deli manager, you must know what they need from your product.

Nancy Leson suggested that another important "avenue" or strategy would be the "Partnership" avenue. Hook up with marketing groups, offer tastings at the retail market, a local bakery, or winery. Get covered locally by agriculture, business, or environmental editors. Know your region and events, be involved, make that initial contact with writers for food, business or general news. Use the special events to get your name out, and offer to split advertising costs. Meet the public, and often-times, the food writer.

Once you meet the food writer, you can let them know you can be a resource for them about the specialty cheese industry, farmstead producers, agriculture in your region, or environmental issues that are important to farmstead producers, whatever your specialty is. You stand a good chance of hearing back from them and maybe getting covered yourself. All this brings us to the all important "printed word". What's in a press kit? How do you give them out, and how does someone become someone a food writer does a feature story on?

According to Paula Lambert, a press release is a piece of paper with information on it. A press kit is somewhat more expensive to put together and should be done well. The press kit is something that should be given out, "when a writer calls and asks for more information". The press kit should consist of a photo of yourself, any past articles about you and your business, recipes using your products, and your brochure. When a writer does a story on you, make sure and edit the copy for accuracy, and ask for a copy of the final story. Or at least find out the date of publishing, and get a copy for yourself. You can have copies made, laminate them and use these in your press kit.

According to our panel, from a writers viewpoint, if they don't know who you are, and you send them a press release, it will probably go in the circular file. (Trash basket!) However, if you've been out at a number of events, the farmers market, a charitable event, etc., they are more than likely to have made your acquaint-

tance. Each time they hear of you, see other articles about you they will begin to internalize your name. They may not know exactly what you do yet, but when you send the press release then, they will be curious.

A sample of your product, strategically timed to arrive when the food writer is in the office and can give it a try, is also a great second introduction. Once they know who you are, and then can try your product, maybe for the

second time, they will remember you. Once your local writers know who you are, they can forward your name on to the free lance journalist who often write for the bigger publications. As Gretchen and Heidi both pointed out, national publication writers often touch base or talk with local writers for information when doing regional stories.

In conclusion, Paula Lambert spoke of meeting Julia Child at a function, and Julia's take on

the importance of PR to your business was as follows:

Promotion - 40% Product Quality - 30%, and Service 30% or

If you have the greatest product in the world, and you service your customers, but you don't talk about your product, you still won't be going very far very fast! So, Get The Word Out!

EXOTIC CHEESES/EXOTIC PLACES MODERATOR - DAVE POTTER

by: Heather Schroeder

Small American cheesemakers should be grateful they can introduce any new ideas they have into their cheesemaking, Liam Callahan, cheesemaker, Bellwether Farms, Petaluma, Calif., told ACS attendees during the panel discussion titled "Exotic Cheese/Exotic Places."

Callahan, who has traveled to Italy three times since 1992, says some of the most exotic cheeses in the world are those that aren't bound by tradition as many European cheeses are. They are made by the cheesemakers who've stepped "outside the lines."

He visited Italy to get new ideas to incorporate into Bellwether Farms' products, but he says exotic, "old world" cheeses can't just be copied wholesale. Cultures, milk composition and other environmental factors all work into cheesemaking.

During one of his trips, Callahan brought back an idea for a sheep's milk cheese based on Pecorino from the Tuscany area of Italy. In addition, Callahan learned new ways to handle curd and new ideas for efficiency. Other panel members also shared their understanding of exotic cheeses. George Haenlein, professor, University of Delaware, says his students think that "anything that's not American or that's moldy is exotic."

His students are thinking, "I learned at home not to touch anything moldy and that includes cheese," Haenlein joked. However, the reality is that he often must work to overcome their prejudice and fears.

Haenlein also briefly discussed food prejudices in other countries - such as the Chinese who in general dislike cheese. The newly Chinese-occupied Taiwan has the beginnings of a cheese market, and

Haenlein said he is optimistic about changing the Chinese mind-set about cheese and cheese products. Haenlein agreed with Callahan's take on "exotic" cheese in the United States. He said ACS members have the ability and imagination to create original cheeses.

Author Avice Wilson also was on hand to discuss exotic cheeses. She said she likes to think of "exotic" cheese as "an interesting cheese," since the word exotic reminds her of dancing girls.

All joking aside, however, Wilson said to produce any cheese that's interesting, a cheesemaker needs different cultures. She calls it the "culture question."

In the United States, the trend is toward lactic acid cultures with few bacteria producing flavor. In addition, pasteurizing will "knock the flavor bacteria out," she said.

Many years ago when Wilson was an active cheesemaker, she would receive three mother cultures from Chr. Hansen's each month. These would then be mixed and cultivated according to her needs.

It's not the individual culture organisms that are important, but what a cheesemaker does with the individual organisms. They need to mix the cultures carefully so the flavor isn't overwhelmed by lactic acid, she said.

"Cheese cultures are a bit like women," Wilson said. "They need to be warmed up a bit before they can perform well, and they do well in familiar circumstances."

The only problem with culture mixing or changing a culture is that you have to wait so long to get an answer about whether it worked or not, Wilson said. Dave Potter, Rhone-Poulenc, Madison, Wis., said that cultures are much more refined and much easier to blend in correct ratios than ever before.

He also said that overseas cheeses have naturally-occurring native bacteria in them. Wilson added that a study conducted by the European Commission discovered that in European varieties of cheese, there were 3,262 different varieties of culture bacteria.

Among the more unusual cheeses discussed during this presentation were a few that Haenlein assured the audience they'd never heard of. For example, in Romania there is a product called "pine bark cheese." Strips of pine tree bark is cut into pieces and stitched together to form a small container. The container is filled with a Cheddar-type cheese which is aged and marketed in the bark.

In other countries, Haenlein said sheep's and goat's stomachs are often filled with milk. It is curdled in the stomach lining and marketed in the same container. Or in Greece, lamb stomachs are dried and broken up to create a different source of rennet.

Whey cheeses are another relatively unknown type of cheese. For many countries, the whey has traditionally been too precious to throw away, so it's made into a cheese product. For example, Haenlein said that 550,000 tons of whey is annually converted into Mizithra cheese in Greece.

Sometimes it's not just how the cheese is made, but what kind of milk it's made from, Haenlein added. A whole new dairy product industry is evolving from sheep's milk, he said. ACS members can lead in this area if they choose to do so. Beyond the exotic factor, the lipids in both goat's and sheep's milk are more beneficial than those found in cow's milk, he added. Another potential milk source is water buffaloes.

HOW THE RIGHT LABEL CAN INCREASE YOUR SALES

MODERATOR - DEBORAH HAWS

by: Deborah Haws

The panelist, ranging from specialty and natural food retailers, a regional chain Grocer, a broker and specialty cheese manufacturer, discussed the issue of why labels are important for Specialty cheeses. Shannon Loch from Nature's Markets in Portland, OR and Barbara Hoover from Central Market in Austin, TX agreed that many customers don't read signs and rely on visual recognition of labels and packaging to choose cheeses. An overview of what should be included on effective labels was discussed briefly. All panelist agreed good labels help sales.

Nature's, a six store natural and specialty food chain in the Northwest, features many American farmstead and small producer cheeses very effectively. This is important to their customers since they were originally a co-op. As a chain they placed cheeses with the wines, beers and specialty foods that require more service. They then focus heavily on staff education in these sections through innovative means, yet good labels still play a part for them since they notice customers looking for labels. Shannon pointed out that their combination of upright cases and service department means labeling needs to be on the sides as well as the top of containers or tubs. Additionally any packaging used, especially plastic containers, must be recyclable in their area. They have recycling centers in each store and will supply a list of acceptable types of containers upon request. She also stated that nutritional labels are expected by consumers today and they try to provide them for all items. They will, for a small fee, assist in analyzing products and recipes. If nutritional labels are not on the package due to size, they keep a file and provide a number where customers can call for the information.

When venturing into the world of larger chain retailers, many of whom have upscale stores with service cheese departments, labels in some form may be required before an item is authorized

for purchase. In union stores such as Dominick's Finer Foods in Chicago, panelist Joanne Nottke explained that the sell by or use by labels are required on all perishable products by union rule. Their 75 year old traditional grocery chain of 90 stores in the greater Chicago area, is expanding and changing with an average of 15 stores opening or being remodeled per year for the next several years. The newer stores focus on the fresh concept with larger floral, produce and cheese sections. Four of their stores in select locations have service cheese departments. Most stores, due to the high cost of union labor, are self service. The typical cheese department's cheese is cut and wrapped at a central commissary. With about 300 to 350 varieties of cheese in self service cases they depend heavily on labels for identification and for color; "goat and sheep cheeses are white, others are mostly white and beige." Their customers depend on the labels to lead them through the daunting array of cheese, and help them find the cheeses they like when it's time to purchase them again. She related a story about a high volume cheese Italian Pinna Romano, when the label changed dramatically they started receiving calls from the stores and the customers asking where the cheese was, the new one wasn't the same quality was the comment. Their research turned up the only change had been the label; everything else remained unchanged. There was no peace until they reverted to the old label. She also stated that providing enough repack labels is critical, they need extras for any cheeses that need rewrapped as well. Nottke added that due to their size and the union they buy through distributors only.

Panelist Gary Edward's is with Sage Marketing, a broker who works with specialty cheesemakers, and he has a retail background with G & G foods in California where they sold 3,000 to 5,000 pounds of cheese weekly. He

represents Roth Kase and Cypress Grove, among others. He knows both sides of the label issue and states that while manufacturers love to see their labels on the shelf, it is true that many retailers throw the labels out. The cost for repack labels is expensive, averaging at about 3 cents each for a 2 inch label. Panelist Ruth Anne Flore of Vermont Butter and Cheese says they addressed that problem by spending some time making arrangements to send the labels directly to some accounts so they don't get thrown out with the boxes. Hoover stated that they never throw labels out and create files for extra labels so they can be found easily. Nottke agreed with an audience member who pointed out that some service oriented specialty stores like the one she previously worked for do not use any producer supplied packaging or labels. It was agreed that labels are necessary in most situations but money can be saved by communicating with each store or chain to establish their needs. This can also save money with foodservice accounts that do not use the labels. Edward's added that most stores that do not use labels, like Oakville Grocery, tend to be very well staffed with knowledgeable people that can assist consumers. However, consumers that taste a cheese at a wine tasting or similar event look for the label in the store when they purchase the cheese.

Hoover of Central Market described the cheese department of the 65,000 square foot retail store which is part of the Texas based H. E. Butt chain. The family owned chain will open another Central Market in San Antonio. Both stores are food only and have 600 to 800 different types of cheese and, even with the staff of 12 full time cheese people, they do not have time to assist all customers. Barbara stated that many cheeses come in without any labels at all. This makes it almost impossible for both staff and customers to identify the cheese. She added that in most cases a

good label would do wonders for sales. Hoover added that it is important to talk to your retailer, you may be unaware of the way they can help small cheese producers once they have their labels, such as signage, demos and more.

Ruth Anne Flore provided the perspective of a specialty cheese manufacturer and related, as she said, a rather embarrassing story. She explained that several years ago Vermont Butter and Cheese changed their packaging to create a cohesive look for their full line of cheese. Shortly after, she was on one of her many store visits with a regular customer, a natural food store that carried at least 4 or 5 of their products. While waiting for the department manager, she looked for their products in the case and was unable to locate any. Finally she asked the assistant manager and he showed her that they were right in front of her in the case.

ENTERING A CHEESE JUDGING CONTEST

BILL SCHLINSOG

by: Dick Groves

Bill Schlinsog has judged cheese in state, national and international cheese contests for a number of years, and he shared some of his tips that can help move a cheese from the top five in its category into the top spot.

First, you should try to get as much information about the contest as possible. Find out the criteria/requirements for the contest. Do you enter as a company or as an individual? How many entries does the contest attract? Can you take a plug from the cheese before sending it in (no, in most contests)? How many classes are there? Do you have to fill out a separate form for each cheese entered in each class? Always make sure you fill out the forms legibly, and include your phone number in case there's a problem.

Scoring varies from contest to contest, Schlinsog noted. Basically, though, scoring starts at 100, and points are subtracted for defects or problems, or points are added for something that's outstanding.

There are some basics for all contests: Flavor is predominant, and carries the most scoring weight; body and texture are the second most important criteria; followed by make-up and appearance; color; and salt (which might be included in the flavor score).

Flore explained that the previous packages, a great hot pink Creme Fraiche container, for example, that everyone identified with had been altered and the new look didn't stand out in the case as well. She said she immediately went to the pay phone and, in what seemed like minutes, they decided to change the new packaging. The new packages many of you should be familiar with are brightly colored and contain the unifying logo throughout the line. They have the logo and the printing on the sides as well as the top on containers. They are easy to identify and read in any case type. Haws recommended as moderator that before spending any money you take a mock up of the new packaging or label to several stores and types of cases before you proceed with final printing.

Schlinsog offered a few tips for selecting a cheese to send to a contest. First, find a good place to examine the cheese; the location should be well-lit, among other things. Then, let the cheese warm up a little bit, to help bring out the flavor. Next, use your four "tools" to examine the cheese: sight -- look at the product, check for uniformity, hair, dirt, mold, etc.; feel -- check for soft spots all around the cheese; smell -- smell the plug immediately because odors dissipate, and also exhale through your nose when chewing; and taste -- sweet, on the tip of the tongue, comes first, followed by sour and salt on the sides of the tongue, and finally bitter on the back of the tongue.

Once you've picked out the cheese you want to enter, you have to get it to the judges in good shape. You need a good, sturdy container, and remember to label it well -- "Perishable," "Don't Freeze," "Keep Refrigerated," should be prominent on the container. You also need to protect your cheese so it doesn't get damaged when the boxes are tossed around by delivery services. But here Schlinsog urged caution. He recommended use of shredded paper or something similar, rather than "packing peanuts" that might create indentations on the cheese.

NEW TRENDS IN FLAVORED CHEESE MODERATOR MARC BATES

by: Heather Schroeder

Handling flavors in cheese can be tricky, panel members agreed during a discussion titled "New Trends in Flavored Cheese," at ACS's annual meeting. How much flavor ingredient to use, how the ingredient changes the cheese recipe and what consumers think of flavors are all issues that must be addressed. The panel members discussed these issues and gave attendees some advice on how to navigate the world of flavor usage.

Marc Bates, Washington State University, said that he believes flavoring agents are often overused. This reduces the main ingredient - cheese - to merely serving as a carrier for the flavor.

"I'm a cheese lover," he said. "And I like to know I'm eating cheese." Smoked cheese, for example, is generally overdone, the panel agreed. "Most people do too much," one panel member said. "It's way overdone." Even more important, Bates added, is that in tasting panels experiments, those cheeses with the highest level of smoke flavor were the most popular. However, when three cheeses of varying levels of smoke flavor were put into a disappearance test, the cheese that had the least amount of smoke flavor disappeared entirely. It comes down to a taste satisfaction level, and the higher levels of flavor do satisfy consumers sense of taste much quicker at the cost of volume consumed.

Hugh Renck, Fidco Industrial Division, added that flavors tend to disappear or change over time. That means manufacturers must do shelf-life studies and disappearance tests to determine how much flavor to use.

For example, if the flavoring agent is added right after the cheese is cooked, it will begin to lose flavor. However, if it is added "at the table" which is least expensive, it will maintain flavor intensity longer.

Other difficulties can arise. When Roth Kase began producing a Havarti with jalapeno peppers, the company found that the peppers were preserved in vinegar.

This changed the cheese enough that the make recipe had to be altered to cope with the problem, Steve McKeon, president/COO, explained. Another challenge - dry flavors can change the moisture level of the finished product.

Stacy Kinsley, Dan Carter Inc., said that when her client Meister Cheese ventured into a line of upscale flavored cheeses, it had to bring the moisture level of each cheese to the same level to combat these types of problems.

Flavoring materials, in and of themselves, are a good thing, Bates said. However, if they are thrown together haphazardly, they can "create something less good." The safety and quality concerns involved with flavored cheeses should be paramount, he added. For example, when green olives are added to cheese, the rising pH level and the salt content can

encourage organisms to grow to the point where the cheese will literally explode.

McKeon agreed, saying that since fresh vegetables, sundried tomatoes and other ingredients have been found to be contaminated with E. coli, Roth Kase's outlook on using raw flavoring agents has changed dramatically. The company now tests all of its flavored products for a cross-section of six different bacteria in an outside lab. It is held a minimum of 48 hours before it's released for public consumption.

He admitted that the best flavor profiles come from fresh ingredients; but a company will pick up a large cost factor to guarantee safety levels.

"At this point, for the industry, there's a lot of work to do," he said. "We are nowhere near the knowledge we need to be safe about this." Some cheesemakers

aren't willing to tolerate an artificial flavor - even if it's easier to handle. Mary Keehn, Cypress Grove Chevre, is one. She chooses to use freeze-dried herbs in her products, which include an Herbs de Provence and cracked peppercorn chevre.

Bates said safety should be a prime concern since what's good and safe in the test kitchen will definitely be challenged commercially. The commercial market is a very difficult environment for food products. The potential for mishandling during distribution and once it arrives at its destination are great, so a company should think ahead to consider what will happen to its product, he said.

In addition to discussing flavor trends and challenges, the audience was able to sample a number of flavored cheeses for comparison.

ACS WEBSITE

by: Richard Haws

Richard Haws made a presentation covering the new American Cheese Society website. He loaded the site onto a laptop computer and used a large screen projector to walk us through the site.

He began his presentation by reviewing the objectives of the website:

- Increase public awareness of ACS
- Increase public knowledge of specialty and farmstead cheese
- Increase membership levels
- Provide technical resources for members
- Provide an easy way for members to contact and communicate with each other
- Increase sales of member products

He then went on to explain that the only way to do this effectively is to get information from and about members. Information such as who you are, what you make or sell, what makes your products unique, how to use your products, how to purchase your products, how to contact you, do you have a website, etc. We also need information from our members that will be of broad interest to the public such as recipes, tips on purchasing, handling, storing, or preparing cheese as well as reference material about cheese in general.. Richard explained that the goal is to make the site the most useful and informative cheese site on the internet so that we generate as much traffic as possi-

ble. This way we can achieve all of the objectives listed above.

The walk-through of the site revealed that the site is separated into two sections; a public access portion and a members only portion.

The public access portion begins with a "Tip of the Day" which provides a short, useful tip or interesting fact about cheese. Members who provide information used for a tip will receive a credit below the tip and a link to their website if they have one. The public portion also contains a list of members (without addresses and phone numbers), a list of member cheesemakers, links to all member websites, a list of members who do mail order, a recipe section, a reference section, a sample newsletter, upcoming conference information, judging results from the last conference, the newsletter store, and a featured cheese section. (Only products eligible for judging in the annual contest can be featured here.) Richard stressed again that if members send information that can be used in any of these sections they will be credited with providing the information and will have a link to their website wherever the information is used.

The members only portion requires a username and password to access. These can be obtained by calling the office, or sending an e-mail to access@cheesesociety.org or dhaws@pcis.net. The mem-

bers section contains the full directory which is searchable by last name, company name, profession, or geographic location. There is a reference section which contains useful technical information and a list of links to non-member websites which may be of use to our members.

All of the past newsletter issues will be archived here also. Finally, there is a bulletin board where members can post and respond to messages, discussions, etc.

If you have information which you would like to see on our website, send it to

ACS Website
RR 1 Box 298
Fordland, MO 65652

or e-mail it to dhaws@pcis.net.

We would prefer to receive the information in electronic format, either on a disk or e-mail. Information received in this format can be placed on the website relatively quickly and easily and results in a higher quality image. We will accept hard copy materials also but they require much more time and effort to get onto the site. There is a finite amount of time available every month for updating the site. We make every effort to get as much done as we can every month.

If you have not been to the website yet, check it out at:

www.cheesesociety.org

ROMANCING THE CHEESE AT RETAIL: "TELLING THE CHEESEMAKER'S STORY"

MODERATOR - THERESA BATTEL

by Heather Schroeder

It's the cheesemaker's story that can really sell the cheese, panelists agreed during the ACS panel discussion titled "Romancing the Cheese at Retail: 'Telling the Cheesemaker's Story'." The cheesemaker can reach the people who sell his or her cheese, explained Maura Sell, specialty team leader/cheese buyer, Whole Foods Market, San Rafael, Calif. And those people - the retailers - can reach the consumers who buy the product, added Shannon Loch, Nature's Fresh Northwest.

"You didn't just make the cheese - there's a story behind that," Loch said. "We don't need to be creating romance because the romance is already there." Passing ownership of products on to the retailer is a personal way to sell it, she said. Since the quality of the product is a given - very high, and the packaging and labeling already meet the requirements, it becomes a matter of how the cheese is retailed.

"Except for the cheesemaker's job, the retailers' job is the most difficult in the business," said Debra Dickerson, Neals Yard Dairy. Retailers must differentiate cheese for the customers, and tell each product's story. Neals Yard Dairy, for example, comprises a number of cheesemakers in England who make cheese that Neals Yard buys and then resells. It's a retail shop that's passionate about traditional English farmstead cheese, Dickerson says.

However, Dickerson pointed out that "passion" is about reality, and it's only when a retailer sees the "reality of the situation" that they can get excited about the cheese. Thus, Dickerson travels throughout the United States telling retailers about the cheesemakers - where they live, what their health is and who their families are.

Loch said it's important to tell stories about product in a somewhat formalized oral tradition. By educating the retailers and their staffs, a cheesemaker can create a vehicle for their stories. And a sense of ownership creates a desire on the part of retailers to pass a good story along. Loch strongly recommended creating a tasting panel of managers and buyers for retail

deli departments. Allow them to taste the product, explain the labeling and describe the types of support that you can provide, she said, and when faced with two comparable cheeses, those retailers will be more likely to choose the cheese whose story they know.

It doesn't have to be a fancy story either. It must convey a sense of place and humanity, particularly since most urban consumers are very disassociated from their food sources. The story can almost be mythical, Loch said, but it should help create an urban-rural partnership.

"People really want to know about you - I've seen it again and again," Loch stated.

Sell said romancing the retailers is where creating romance at the retail level begins. For example, Sea Stars Goat Cheese sent out birth announcements for its new baby goats. Articles, silly snapshots or pictures of on-farm/in-plant activities and other news about your business are other components that can be used to create "romance."

Those cheesemakers that can actually visit a store and demonstrate and speak to the employees also will create an advantage for their product, Sell said. Redwood Hills recently brought three baby goats in a playpen to a retailer. Once there, the company demonstrated product and told its story. Other ideas were shared by the group as well. Loch actually created a food show for her company's upper management. The executives were able to taste products, learn about them and review point-of-sale materials. This helped create advocates in the general staff for certain products, and it created a real interest in cheeses, she said.

However, the panelists agreed that one key ingredient for romancing retailers will never change - quality.

"If what the customer tastes isn't good, then you're sunk," Dickerson said. If the product quality is there, then cheesemakers can blend their story with the great product for a winning package and real retail romance.

AMERICAN DAIRY GOAT PRODUCERS

MODERATOR - MARY KEEHN

by: Patrick Geoghegan

In a wide ranging slide presentation of goat's milk production techniques and cheesemaking approaches, panelists here agreed that the production and/or procurement of quality milk is the most important factor in producing quality goat's milk cheeses.

Producers from Haystack Mountain Dairy, Redwood Hill, The Mozzarella Co., Vermont Butter and Cheese, and Cypress Grove shared information on milk and cheese production techniques from their far-ranging operations around the country.

Today, after starting out in business with \$400 and 40 goats, Steven Schack and Jennifer Bice from Redwood Hill, boast a modern new pipeline milking system which milks 10 goats at a time which allows one person to milk 165 in about four hours.

"One of the factors that accounts for our success is the quality of the milk we are able to produce and part of that is the wonderful climate in which we live," said Steven. "We're fortunate too, because we live close to the San Francisco Bay area, which is one of the best markets for goat milk products," he said.

The underlying message of the session was that goat's milk producers are becoming more sophisticated in production techniques and in their cheesemaking, often producing unique varieties which are tailored to local tastes.

Paula Lambert of the Mozzarella Co., on the other hand, is producing Montassio, an old world washed curd cheese. The hallmark of nearly all the work that's being done in the category, however, is labor-intensity. Whether it's working with the goats on the farm or producing cheeses, it is a hands-on proposition. Each of the producers mentioned the need to be careful of costs and the increasing competitiveness of goat cheese production in the U.S.

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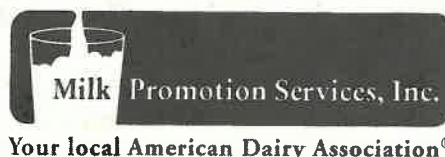
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American Cheese Society 1997 Judging

Seattle, Washington
August 16, 1997

The American Cheese Society is an active, not-for-profit organization which encourages the understanding, appreciation and promotion of America's farmstead and natural specialty cheese.

By providing an educational forum for cheesemakers and cheese enthusiasts, the society fills an important gap in today's specialty food world.

The cheeses listed in the following pages represent all the entries for the 1997 competition. Winners in each category are listed separately.

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 and texture, as well as technical evaluation. The highest quality cheese are those which the Society feels deserve the recognition of an American Cheese Society ribbon. The goal of the American Cheese Society Judging is to give recognition to the best American-made cheeses submitted for the annual judging.

A Message from Russell McCall *ACS Director of Judging, ACS Board Member*

My reflection on this year's judging and conference comes packaged in a word – superlative.

Our twelve professional judges arrived from all parts of the USA. They tasted and deliberated carefully and thoughtfully, as their written comments illustrate. On Thursday, August 14, 1997 the panel of judges and assistants spent eight hours determining the best of each category, and finally, after great theater and very little conversational restraint, selected the Best of Show.

This 14th annual event (certainly the most prestigious in the USA for farmhouse style, hand-crafted cheese), was extraordinary in that the quality and cheesemaker dedication was immediately apparent to the judges. We wish to thank the producers for their individuality and obvious hard work.

Russell C. McCall
Director of Judging

Best of Show

Yerba Santa Dairy
Shepherd's

Winners By Category:

A. Fresh Unripened Cheese - All Milks

1st Place

BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.
Mascarpone

43
Entries

2nd Place

California Mozzarella Fresca
Fresh Ricotta

3rd Place

Maple Leaf Cheese Co-Op
Queso Blanco

B. Soft Ripened Cheese - Cow

1st Place

Chateau Dumas, Inc.
Coeur A La Creme

15
Entries

2nd Place

Besnier America Belmont, Inc.
Brie "President"

3rd Place

Kolb-Lena Cheese Co.
Soft Ripened Cheese 1 Kilo Brie

B. Soft Ripened Cheese - Goat

1st Place

Cypress Grove Chevre
Pee Wee Pyramid

6
Entries

2nd Place

Redwood Hill Farm
Camellia

C. American Originals - Cow

1st Place

Maple Leaf Cheese Co-Op
Monterey Jack Wheel

20
Entries

2nd Place
Yerba Santa Dairy
Shepherd's

3rd Place
Blythedale Farm
Aged Mountain

C. American Originals - Goat

5
Entries

1st Place
Cypress Grove Chevre
Humboldt Fog

D. American-Made International Styles - Cow

1st Place
Samish Bay Cheese
Aged Gouda

25
Entries

2nd Place
Oakdale Cheese & Specialties
Gouda

3rd Place
Organic Valley
Organic Parmesan

D. American-Made International Styles - Goat

6
Entries

1st Place
Redwood Hill Farm
California Crottin

2nd Place
Cypress Grove Chevre
Bermuda Triangle

E. Cheddars - Cow

1st Place
Tillamook County Creamery Assoc.
White Sharp Cheddar

13
Entries

2nd Place
Cabot Creamery
Vintage Choice Aged Cheddar

3rd Place
Bandon Cheese, Inc.
Full Cream Extra Sharp Cheddar

E. Cheddars - Goat

5
Entries

1st Place
Redwood Hill Farm
Goat Milk Cheddar

F. Blue Veined Cheeses

1st Place
Salemville/Dan Carter, Inc.
Salemville Amish Gorgonzola

9
Entries

2nd Place
Stella Foods
Blue

3rd Place
Great Hill Dairy
Great Hill Blue

G. External Blue Cheeses

0
Entries

Insufficient Entries to Award

H. Pasta Filata Cheeses

1st Place
BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.
Caciocavallo Sharp Provolone

29
Entries

2nd Place
Calabro Cheese Corp.
Fior di Latte

3rd Place
Tutto Latte
Provela

I. Feta

1st Place
Sea Stars
Feta

11
Entries

2nd Place
Redwood Hill Farm
Goat Milk Feta

J. Low Fat/Low Salt Cheeses - All Milks

11
Entries

1st Place
Stella Foods
Reduced Fat Mozzarella

2nd Place
Washington State University Creamery
Reduced Fat Viking (33% less)

3rd Place
Cabot Creamery
Light Mediterranean Cheddar

K. Spiced, Herbed and Flavored Cheeses - Cow

1st Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.
Basil Torte

**35
Entries**

2nd Place
Washington State University Creamery
Cracked Pepper and Chive

3rd Place
Kolb-Lena Cheese Co.
New Holland: Garlic 5lb. Loaf

K. Spiced, Herbed and Flavored Cheeses - Goat

1st Place
Cypress Grove Chevre
Herb Chevre

**14
Entries**

2nd Place
Coach Dairy Goat Farm
Aged Green Peppercorn Tome

3rd Place
Sea Stars
Monet Chevre

L. Smoked Cheeses

1st Place
Shelburne Farms
Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar

**24
Entries**

2nd Place
Maple Leaf Cheese Co-Op
Smoked Gouda Wheel

3rd Place
Kolb-Lena Cheese Co.
Smoked Baby Swiss 5 lb. Wheel

M. Farmhouse Cheese - Cow

1st Place
Sontheim Fine Cheeses
Soft Tilsit

**10
Entries**

2nd Place
Shelburne Farms
Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar

3rd Place
Sontheim Fine Cheeses
Tilsit

M. Farmhouse Cheese - Goat

1st Place
Yerba Santa Dairy
Shepherd's

**12
Entries**

2nd Place
Capriole, Inc.
American Alpine

3rd Place
Juniper Grove Farm
Buche (Aged Log)

N. Fresh Goats' Milk Cheeses

1st Place
Fromagerie Tournevent, Inc.
Biquet

**16
Entries**

2nd Place
Redwood Hill Farm
Chevre

3rd Place
Mozzarella Company
Texas Goat Cheese

O. Fresh Sheeps' Milk Cheeses

1st Place
Bass Lake Cheese Company
Canasta Pardo

**3
Entries**

P. Cheeses Marinated In Oil

1st Place
Sea Stars
Chevre In Oil

**5
Entries**

Q. Cultured Products - All Milks

1st Place
Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.
Creme Fraiche

2nd Place
Straus Family Creamery
Cottage Cheese

**8
Entries**

R. Butters - All Milks

5
Entries

1st Place
Organic Valley
Organic Cultured Butter

2nd Place
Mt. Sterling Cheese Co-Op
Goat Milk Butter

S. Cheese Spreads - All Milks

11
Entries

1st Place
Shelburne Farms
Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar

T. Aged Sheeps' Milk Cheeses

4
Entries

1st Place
Major Farms
Vermont Shepherd

List of Entries

The Antigo Cheese Company

Contact: Leo Malone
907 9th Ave. • Antigo, WI 54409
(715) 623-2301

Cheeses Entered:
Stravecchio • Parmesan • Asiago

Appel Farm

6605 Northwest Rd. • Ferndale, WA 98248
(206) 365-9049

Cheeses Entered:
Quark, Non-fat • Quark, Traditional • Paneer

Bandon Cheese, Inc.

Contact: Joe Sinko
680 E. 2nd • P.O. Box 1668 • Bandon, OR 97411
(541) 0347-2456

Cheeses Entered:
Full Cream Extra Sharp Cheddar • Reduced Fat Cheddar •
Organic Sharp Cheddar • Smoked Cheddar

Bass Lake Cheese Factory

Contact: Scott Erickson
591 Valley View Trail • Somerset, WI 54025
(715) 247-5586

Cheeses Entered:
Muenster Del Ray • Aged LaRosa •
Dill Spiced Sheep Cheese • Canasta Pardo

BelGioioso Cheese, Inc.

Contact: Jamie Rauscher
5810 County Road NN • Denmark, WI 54208
(920) 863-2123

Cheeses Entered:
Mascarpone • Pepato • Gorgonzola • Caciocavallo Sharp Provolone

Bellwether Farms

Contact: Liam Callahan
9999 Valley Ford Road • Petaluma, CA 94952
(707) 763-0993

Cheeses Entered:
Carmody • Crescenza • Fromage Blanc •
Ricotta • San Andreas

Besnier America Belmont, Inc.

Contact: Remy Colas
218 Park St. • Belmont, WI 53510
(608) 762-5173

Cheeses Entered:
Brie "President" Plain • Brie "President" Tomato/Basil •
Feta "President" Plain

Besnier America Turlock

Contact: Lenny Bass
1400 West Main St. • Turlock, CA 95380
(209) 667-4505, ext. 202

Cheeses Entered:
Fontina • Reduced Fat Feta (25% less total fat; 3% salt) •
Feta w/Mediterranean Herbs

Black Diamond/Dan Carter, Inc.

Contact: Linda Hook
P.O. Box 106 • Mayville, WI 53050
(414) 387-5740
Cheeses Entered:
Black Diamond 2 Yr. Old Aged Cheddar

Blythedale Farm

Contact: Karen Galayda
P.O. Box 462 • Corinth, VT 05039
(802) 439-6575
Cheeses Entered:
Vermont Brie • Camembert Vermont •
Aged Mountain • Vermont Brie

Bravo Farms

Contact: William Boersma
34292 Road 124 • Visalia, CA 93291
(209) 627-3525
Cheeses Entered:
Bravo Farmstead White Cheddar (Aged)

Bresse Bleu

Contact: Renee Haase
N2002 Hwy. 26 • Watertown, WI 53098
(414) 261-3036, ext. 23
Cheeses Entered:
Smithfield Cream Cheese • Saladena Feta Wedge • Saladena Feta
Mediterranean Crumble • Classic Montrachet • Classic Montrachet in
Oil w/Herbs • Alouette Elegante Sundried Tomato & Garlic

Cabot Creamery

Contact: Joe Fee

100 Grandview Road • Suite 214 • Braintree, MA 02184
(617) 356-0991***Cheeses Entered:***Vintage Choice Aged Cheddar • Light Mediterranean Cheddar •
Peppercorn Cheddar • Corn Cobb Smoked Cheddar •
Cabot 83 Butter**Calabro Cheese Corp.**

Contact: Frank & Rose Angeloni

580 Coe Ave. • East Haven, CT 06512

(203) 469-1311

Cheeses Entered:Ricotta • Queso Blanco • Primo Sale • Fior di Latte • Mozzarella •
Caciocavallo • Mozzarella w/Prosciutto • Primo Sale w/Black Pepper
• Mozzarella (Mixed Hardwoods) • Caciocavallo (Mixed Hardwoods)
• Mozzarella w/Prosciutto (Mixed Hardwoods) • Fior di Latte
(CilieGINE Packed in Real Marinade) • Scamorza • Caciotta**California Mozzarella Fresca**

Contact: Andrew Branagh

538 Stone Rd. • Suite C • Benicia, CA 94510

(707) 746-6818

Cheeses Entered:

Fresh Mozzarella • Fresh Ricotta • Fresh Mascarpone

Capriole, Inc.

Contact: Judy Schad

10329 Newcut Road • Greenville, IN 47124

(812) 923-9408

Cheeses Entered:Mont St. Francis • American Alpine • Old Kentucky Tomme •
Crocodile Tear • Banon (2 ages)**Cascade Mozzarella**

Contact: Amy Shaftel

P.O. Box 653 • Redmond, WA 98052

(425) 869-5008

Cheeses Entered:

Hazelnut Smoked Mozzarella w/Roasted Hazelnuts

Chateau Dumas, Inc.

Contact: Patty Dumas

P.O. Box 250 • Duvall, WA 98019

(425) 788-7309

Cheeses Entered:

Mascarpone • Coeur A La Creme

CIBO

Contact: Deborah Nease

1914-A Occidental Ave. S. • Seattle, WA 98134

(206) 622-1016

Cheeses Entered:CIBO Cream & Goat Cheese Spread • CIBO Basil Roasted Walnut
Spread • CIBO Smoked Jalapeno Spread • CIBO Garlic Sundried
Tomato • CIBO Pesto Torta • CIBO Dried Cranberry Torta**Coach Dairy Goat Farm**

Contact: Miles Cahn

105 Mill Hill Rd. • Pine Plains, NY 12567

(518) 398-5325

Cheeses Entered:Aged Wheel • Low Fat Stick • Aged Green Peppercorn Tome • Log •
Marinated Goat Cheese • Coach Farm Yogurt**Cypress Grove Chevre**

Contact: Mary Keehn

4600 Dows Prairie Rd. • McKinleyville, CA 95519

(707) 839-3168

Cheeses Entered:Fromage Blanc • Pee Wee Pyramid • Humboldt Fog •
Bermuda Triangle • Cheddar • Herb Chevre • Fresh Chevre**Dan Carter, Inc.**

Contact: Stacy Kinsley

P.O. Box 106 • Mayville, WI 53050

(414) 387-5740

Cheeses Entered:

Salemville Amish Gorgonzola

Decatur Dairy, Inc.

Contact: Steve or Glennette Stettler

W 1668 Hwy. F • Brodhead, WI 53520

(608) 897-8661

Cheeses Entered:

Havarti

Egg Farm Dairy

Contact: Jonathan White

2 John Walsh Blvd. • Peekskill, NY 10566

(914) 734-7343

Cheeses Entered:

Cultured Sweet Butter • Hudson • Lost Pyramid • Muscoot

Fanny Mason Farmstead Cheese

Contact: Sharlene Beaudry

RR1 Box 354 • Walpole, NH 03608

(603) 756-3300

Cheeses Entered:Farmstead Baby Swiss • Farmstead Smoked Baby Swiss
(smoke from corn cob & maple shavings)**Fleur de Lait Foods**

Contact: Lauren Heist

400 S. Custer Ave. • New Holland, PA 17577

(717) 355-8620

Cheeses Entered:Zausner Whip • Smithfield 3 lb. • Mascarpone • Chevre •
Spreadable Montrachet • Creme Fraiche • Alouette Sundried Tomato
• Alouette Garlic • FDL Light Strawberry Spread**Fromagerie Tournevent, Inc.**

Contact: John Eggena

7004 Hince • Chesterville, Quebec, Canada G0P 1J0

(819) 382-2208

Cheeses Entered:

Chevre Noir • Feta Tradition • Veloutin • Biquet

Goat's Leap Cheese

Contact: Barbara & Rex Backus
 3321 Hwy. 29 North • St. Helena, CA 94574
 (707) 963-2337
Cheeses Entered:
 Goat's Leap Finest

Grafton Village Cheese Co.

Contact: Peter Mohn
 Box 87 Townshend Rd. • Grafton, VT 05146
 (802) 843-2221
Cheeses Entered:
 Classic Reserve • Premium Cheddar • Maple Smoked Cheddar •
 Garlic Cheddar • Sage Cheddar

Great Hill Dairy, Inc.

Contact: Tim Stone
 160 Delano Rd. • Marion, MA 02738
 (508) 748-2208
Cheeses Entered:
 Great Hill Blue

Holland Farms

Contact: Jules Wesselink
 32605 Holland Rd. • Winchester, CA 92587
 (909) 244-4172
Cheeses Entered:
 Original Gouda • Jalapeno Gouda • Cumin Gouda

Junpier Grove Farm

Contact: Pierre Kolisch
 2024 S.W. 58th St. • Redmond, OR 97756
 (541) 923-8353
Cheeses Entered:
 Fromage Blanc w/Herbs & Garlic • Buche (Aged Log) •
 Smoked Crottin (Natural Fruitwood Smoked)

Karam's

Contact: Mylang Anis Karam
 340 154h Ave. E. • Seattle, WA 98112
 (206) 324-2370
Cheeses Entered:
 Karamage

Kolb-Lena Cheese Co.

Contact: Leisa Hubb or Rene Weber
 3990 N. Sunnyside Rd. • Lena, IL 61048
 (815) 369-4577
Cheeses Entered:
 Soft Ripened Cheese • Baby Swiss • F J Kolb • New Holland Natural
 • Herb Soft Ripened Cheese • New Holland Flavored •
 Creme De Brie

Level Valley Creamery, Inc.

Contact: Jane Krimmer
 807 Pleasant Valley Rd. • West Bend, WI 53095
 (414) 675-6533
Cheeses Entered:
 Neufchatel Cheese • Premium Cream Cheese

Major Farm

Contact: Cynthia Major
 RFD #3 Box 265 • Putney, VT 05346
 (802) 387-4473
Cheeses Entered:
 Vermont Shepherd

Maple Leaf Cheese Corp.

Contact: Jeffrey Wideman
 10890 Twin Grove Rd. • Monroe, WI 53566
 (608) 934-1234
Cheeses Entered:
 Queso Blanco • Monterey Jack Wheel • Raw Milk White Cheddar •
 Pesto Monterey Jack Wheel • Smoked Gouda Wheel

Marin French Cheese Company

Contact: Kandace Aggio
 7500 Red Hill Rd. • Petaluma, CA 94952
 (707) 762-6001
Cheeses Entered:
 Schloss • Camembert • Brie • Pesto Brie • Breakfast Cheese •
 Triple Cream Cheese Brie

Meister Cheese

Contact: Scott Meister
 960 E. Nebraska St. • Muscoda, WI 53573
 (608) 739-3134
Cheeses Entered:
 Herb de Provence • Morel & Leek • Tomato & Basil • Jamaican Jerk
 • Olive Rosemary • Caesar • Chipotle

Meister Cheese/Dan Carter, Inc.

Contact: Dan Carter
 P.O. Box 106 • Mayville, WI 53050
 (414) 387-5740
Cheeses Entered:
 Great Plains Morel & Leek Monterey Jack •
 Great Plains Caesar Jack

Mt. Sterling Cheese Co-Op

Contact: Kent Saimon
 310 Wagonal • P.O. Box 103 • Mt. Sterling, WI 54645
 (608) 734-3151
Cheeses Entered:
 Sharp Raw Goat Milk Cheddar • Feta • Goat Milk Butter

Mozzarella Company

Contact: Paula Lambert
 2944 Elm St. • Dallas, TX 75226
 (214) 741-4072
Cheeses Entered:
 Crescenza • Burrino • Mozzarella • Capriella • Ricotta • Caciotta •
 Montasio • Hoja Santa Goat PC • Caciocavallo • Scamorza • Feta •
 La Cocina Caciotta • Queso Blanco Chiles • Smoked Scamorza •
 Texas Goat Cheese

Oakdale Cheese & Specialties

Contact: Walter Bulk
 10060 Hwy. 120 • Oakdale, CA 95361
 (209) 868-3139
Cheeses Entered:
 Gouda • Smoked Gouda

Oakville Grocery

Contact: Albert Katz

860 Napa Valley Corporate Way • Suite A • Napa, CA 94558
(707) 257-7050***Cheeses Entered:***

Fresh Napa Valley Goat Cheese (Plain & Flavored)

Old Chatham Sheepherding Company

Contact: Jodie Wische

P.O. Box 94 - Shaker Museum Rd. • Old Chatham, NY 12136
(518) 794-7733***Cheeses Entered:***Fresh Ricotta • Nancy's Hudson Valley Camembert • Feta •
Peppered Mini Wheel • Shepherd's Wheel •
Fresh Sheep's Milk Cheese • Sheep's Milk Yogurt**Orb Weaver Farm**

Contact: Marian Pollack

Lime Kiln Rd. • New Haven, VT 05472
(802) 877-3755***Cheeses Entered:***

Orb Weaver Farmhouse Cheese

The Organic Cow of Vermont, Inc.

Contact: Peter & Bunny Flint

P.O. Box 55 • Tunbridge, VT 05077
(802) 685-3123***Cheeses Entered:***

Tunbridge Havarti • Unsalted/Cultured Butter

Organic Valley

Contact: Helen Jo Gudgeon

P.O. Box 159 • 507 W. Main St. • La Farge, WI 54639
(608) 625-2602***Cheese Entered:***Organic Cultured Butter • Organic Aged Swiss • Organic Petite Swiss
• Organic Parmesan • Organic 2 Yr. Old Raw Sharp Cheddar**Pollio Dairy Products**

Contact: Lori Otto

8600 Main St. • Campbell, NY 14821
(607) 527-4584, ext. 283***Cheeses Entered:***

Whole Milk Mozzarella • Whole Milk Ricotta • Fior Di Latte

Quail Croft

Contact: Alayne Sundberg

3740 False Bay Rd. • Friday Harbor, WA 98250
(360) 378-5764***Cheeses Entered:***

Fresh Cheese w/Basil & Garlic • Fresh Goat's Milk Cheese

Redwood Hill Farm

Contact: Jennifer Bice

10855 Occidental Rd. • Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 823-8250***Cheeses Entered:***Camellia • California Crottin • Goat Milk Cheddar •
Goat Milk Feta • Smoked Cheddar • Chevre**Rollingstone Chevre**

Contact: Karen Evans

P.O. Box 683 • 27349 Shelton Rd. • Parma, ID 83660
(208) 722-6460***Cheeses Entered:***

Idaho Goatster w/Porcini • Idaho Goatster

Samish Bay Cheese

Contact: Bill Spyksma

1311 Bow Hill Rd. • P.O. Box 45 • Bow, WA 98232
(360) 766-6412***Cheeses Entered:***

Aged Gouda • Montasio • Garlic Gouda

Sea Stars

Contact: Nancy Gaffney

5407 Coast Rd. • Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(408) 423-7200***Cheeses Entered:***Fromage Blanc • Feta • Herb Garlic & Fresh Cheese •
Cranberry/Walnut Torte • Chevre Log • Chevre In Oil •
Monet Chevre • Kyprus Feta**Shelburne Farms**

Contact: Mathias Dubilier

102 Harbor Rd. • Shelburne, VT 05482
(802) 985-8686***Cheeses Entered:***

Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddars

Simplot Dairy Products/Olympia Plant

Contact: Gary Sauriol

3145 Hogum Bag Rd. N.E. • Lacey, WA 98516
(360) 491-5330***Cheeses Entered:***Danish • Hot Pepper Jack • Mascarpone • Provolone • Cajeta • Lox
Cream Cheese • Blue Cheese Wheels • Gorgonzola**Skyhill Napa Valley Farms**

Contact: Amy Wend

2431 Partrick Rd. • Napa, CA 94558
(707) 252-0648***Cheeses Entered:***

Feta - Goat • Flavored Cheese • Smoked Cheese • Farmhouse Cheese

Snoqualmie Valley Gold

Contact: Terry Trim

15728 Main St. N.E. • P.O. Box 188 • Duvall, WA 98019
(425) 788-8273***Cheeses Entered:***Smoked Parmesan • Smoked Pepper Jack • Smoked Garlic Jack •
Smoked Extra Sharp Cheddar • Smoked Brie**Sontheim Fine Cheeses**

Contact: Anna Blaum

16755 Hwy. 149 • Powderhorn, CO 81243
(970) 944-8112***Cheeses Entered:***

Bergkaese • Edamer • Tilsit • Soft Tilsit

Stella Foods

Contact: Christina DeYoung
 25 Tri-State International Center • Suite 250 • Lincolnshire, IL 60069
 (847) 267-3272

Cheeses Entered:

LMPS Mozzarella • Whole Milk Mozzarella • Reduced Fat Mozzarella • Provolone • String • Blue • Gorgonzola • Asiago • Parmesan • Romano • Ricotta • Lorraine

Straus Family Creamery

Contact: Michael Straus
 P.O. Box 768 • Marshall, Ca 94940
 (415) 663-5464

Cheese Entered:

Nonfat Quark • Nonfat Plain Yogurt • Sweet Butter • Aged Jack • Medium White Cheddar • Cottage Cheese • Cream Top Whole Milk Plain Yogurt

Sugarbush Farm

Contact: Betsy Luce
 RR 1 Box 568 • Woodstock, VT 05091
 (802) 457-1757

Cheeses Entered:

Hickory & Maple Naturally Smoked

Sweet Home Farm

Contact: Alyce Birchenough
 27107 Schoen Rd. • Elberta, AL 36530
 (334) 986-5663

Cheeses Entered:

Dry Curd Cottage Cheese

Tillamook County Creamery Assoc.

Contact: Dale Baumgartner
 P.O. Box 313 • Tillamook, OR 97141
 (503) 842-4481

Cheeses Entered:

Jack • White Sharp Cheddar

Tutto Latte

Contact: Massimo Navarretta
 (818) 337-8154

Cheeses Entered:

Mozzarella • Scamorza Smoked • Provela • Mascarpone • Capriella • Mozzarella Loaf • Tutto Latte Fiore

Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.

Contact: Ruth Anne Flore or Rich Chambers
 Pittman Rd. • P.O. Box 95 • Websterville, VT 05678
 (800) 884-6287

Cheeses Entered:

Crema Fraiche • Fromage Blanc (0% Fat) • Quark • Mascarpone • Basil Torte • Salmon Torte • Cultured Butter • Chevre • Impastata • Cheddar • Chevrier (Soft Ripened) • Fontina

Washington State University Creamery

Contact: Marc Bates
 P.O. Box 646392 • Pullman, CA 99164-6392
 (509) 335-7516

Cheeses Entered:

Cougar Gold • Reduced Fat Viking (33% Less) • Cracked Pepper and Chive • Dill Garlic • Smoky Cheddar • Italian

Westfield Farm

Contact: Bob Stetson
 28 Worcester Rd. • Hubbardston, MA 01452
 (508) 928-5110

Cheeses Entered:

White Buck • Hubbardston Blue Cow • Chocolate Capri • Hickory Smoked Capri • Capri 5 oz. log

Widmer's Cheese Cellars

Contact: Joseph Widmer
 214 W. Henni St. • Theresa, WI 53091
 (414) 488-2503

Cheeses Entered:

Surface Ripened Brick

Yerba Santa Dairy

Contact: Janis Eckert
 6850 Scotts Valley Rd. • P.O. Box 1048 • Lakeport, CA 95453
 (707) 263-8131

Cheeses Entered:

Shepherd's • Chevito

PRODUCT DONATED BY

Queen Anne Thriftways

The Peterson Company

Encore Brokers

Antigo

Apple Farms

Belifore

Carr Valley

Carr's Crackers

Charlie's Produce

Chateau Dumas

Cibo

Complete Kitchen

Crown Kitchen

Macrine Bakery

Mezzeta

Nikki's

Pepsi