

# The American Cheese Society

N E W S L E T T E R

## A VERMONT CHEESEMAKER

by: Fred Ferretti

"Oh sure I've tasted other cheeses," Scott Fletcher is saying. "A few are pretty good. You know, there are some Cheddars that are made by fellows sitting in front of computers pressing buttons. They make more in a week than we make in a year. But their hands never touch cheese. I could never make cheese that way."

Fletcher is in his cheesemaking kitchen in a clapboard building on a country road in Grafton, a small village in the hills of southern Vermont. In a large steel vat, fresh milk from brown Jersey cows is being heated - the beginning of a process that will bring it to the point where he will consider it cheese.

Wearing starched white coveralls belted with a plastic apron, calf-high rubber boots, and a white hard hat that identifies him as "Fletch," this man who has been crafting Cheddar cheese by hand for the Grafton Village Cheese Company for thirty years gently lowers his forefinger into the milk, to which cultures and rennet have been added. It is gradually becoming quite like a custard. He extends his finger under the surface and lifts it out. "When it splits in a line, it's ready," he says. "That's how you tell. Few more minutes."

Fletcher is a big man with big shoulders, face wreathed by reddish hair and beard, his eye squints of satisfaction because he is happy with this morning's flow of milk. "It's all Jersey," he says.

"Vermont Jersey, the best there is for Cheddar; high butterfat, high protein. And it'll give us more cheese today. A good day."

Most of Fletcher's working days are good, he suggests, because he is a contented man. He is unassuming, yet his pride in his job as head cheesemaker is evident. "It's been a fine job for me. They say it builds muscles," he says grinning. "It does. Never been laid off. We

**"I LOOK AROUND  
AT THE CHEESE  
AND I SAY  
I DID THAT,  
WITH MY HANDS."**

get busier every year, and every day there is satisfaction of the finished cheese. I look around at the cheese and I say I did that, with my hands. Then when the cheeses get that two years age...Man!"

Fletcher has never worked at anything else, never lived anywhere else but in this little niche of Vermont, except for his time in the Air Force. He was born in nearby Townsend, then lived in the crossroads town of Cambridgeport and later in Saxtons River, both tiny junctions along Route 121, the winding lane that leads to

Grafton. Now forty-seven, he came to the cheese company in 1967.

His arrival coincided with a little wedge of Vermont history. Grafton, settled in 1780, had prospered as a farming and sheep-raising center and was once important enough to have Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ulysses Grant, and Rudyard Kipling stop over on their stagecoach journeys from Boston to Montreal. The village also became the home to what was then called the Grafton Cooperative Cheese Factory, created in 1892; local dairy farmers delivered their milk to the factory and received cheeses in return. In 1912 the cooperative was destroyed by fire, and cheesemaking ceased in that corner of Vermont. Grafton itself underwent an economic decline. Then, in 1963 a nonprofit organization called the Windham Foundation set about restoring nearly half of the town's buildings. Four years later, with the help of the University of Vermont, the foundation rebuilt the cheesemaking facility, with steel instead of wood vats, and asked local farmer and cheesemaker Edward McWilliams, to reestablish the factory.

"That was Ed Senior," Fletcher says. "He hired me out of high school. I graduated on Wednesday, began full time the next Monday. You know, I didn't really like cheese as a kid," he adds laughing.

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Family reunion. What response do those two words invoke in you? O.K. now clear your mind of any negative connotations (in-laws, bratty kids, hearing the same story over and over from your great uncle). Focus on the reason you go. It is usually held in the summer. It will be full of old friends and soon to be new friends. The central theme is food and fun. It's planned far in advance. Isn't it neat to think that you can find all of these things (and so much more) at the annual American Cheese Society Conference.

A busy Spring season of trade shows is finally past and summer is in full swing. As I reflect on the recent industry events, I am pleased with what I accomplished for my company and my clients, but can't say that I got much out of the experience for me. I know I am not alone in my tendency to plan for the future and work hard to achieve my goals. Yet this admirable mission often drives many of us to speed through today as we prepare for tomorrow.

As an old Swedish proverb goes, "All those days that came and went. I did not know that was life!" How comforting it is to honestly say that our upcoming conference elicits in me the happy anticipation of a family reunion. Summer, old friends & new friends, food and fun. There is no other event in the cheese industry that invites us to expand the breadth of our knowledge about cheese and network with so many people in such a relaxed setting. It is a truly rewarding experience, both professionally and personally. I hope you will take the time and make the effort to join us this year in Seattle. Your input and exchange will enhance everyone's shared experience.

Stacy Kinsley

### Editor's Note:

We sincerely regret that Fromartharie Inc. was left off the list of Corporate Members in the last newsletter. Fromartharie Inc. functions as a manufacturer's rep for upscale deli cheeses &

meats, facilitating sales/broker management, and strategic planning development.

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\* NOTE: 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.)



# MAX McCALMAN'S CHEESE TROLLEY

by: Avice Wilson

Last year at our Hyde Park conference, Max McCalman gave members of the ACS a history of the restaurant cheese-board. Since then, I have twice had the privilege of seeing Max set up his cheese trolley at the Picholine restaurant, 35 West 64th Street, NYC. The first time I found the experience so absorbing that I did not take any notes. So recently I returned, to latch on to the finer details of the process, while recording some of Max's encyclopedic knowledge of today's cheese world and how he uses it in his work as Maître Fromager at Picholine.

Every day Picholine offers their customers a cheese course, served before or at the end of a meal. Max takes the loaded trolley to the diners' table and discusses the cheeses he is presenting that day. Any number can be chosen by the customer, who is charged \$14 for the first three, and \$4 for each additional cheese. Those requesting the course are usually knowledgeable about cheeses, but a novice to a cheese board will be offered a piece each of a sheep, goat, and cow milk cheese, a blue rind, washed rind, and a hard pressed cheese. All of which can originate from six different countries! Max will suggest in which order to eat the cheeses and aid in the choice of a wine or beer to pair with the cheeses if requested. In the near future he hopes to stock NYS hard cider to pair with certain Normandy cheeses, such as Livarot and Pont l'Évêque.

Max pays a great deal of attention to the attitudes of each customer before suggesting a cheese to try. Here his degree in psychology is an advantage. The majority are educated to cheese, especially French customers, but he often finds that they know nothing about American or Spanish cheeses. He will introduce the cheeses of these countries through comparison with a French cheese, not always an easy task. Customers usually prefer a cheese with a definite flavor, and so find most American artisan-made cheeses very

mild. At the other extreme it seems a fashion at present, perhaps a type of snobbery, to be bold and choose the strongest tasting cheeses. So one or two cheeses on the trolley do betray their ripeness at times!

Watching Max prepare the cheese trolley must surely be a unique experience. Where else can one see up to 50 different cheeses at the peak of perfection, from at least eight countries, all arranged on one board. How is this feat achieved?



Photo by: Susan Ludmer-Glebe

Max surveys his trolley before presenting it to customers.

It is not at all straight forward. It began only a few years ago when Max discovered his affinity for cheese at a tasting pairing wines and cheeses of France. Later, while working as Maître d'Hotel at Picholine, it was decided to add a cheese course to the menu. Chef Terrence Brennan suggested creating a storage and ripening area, giving access to more cheese at any time. Now, two years later, the course is so popular that not only does it take up all of Max's time preparing and serving the cheeses, but he is training an assistant.

Max obtains the cheeses from 10-12 different wholesalers here and in Europe. Most of the American cheeses comes

directly from their maker. A few cheeses come in 'by hand' in other words, a direct import. Depending on the ripeness and maturity, some cheeses will be consumed in a few days, others will be on the premises for a month or more. Picholine holds \$3,000-\$4,000 worth of cheeses at any time. The restaurant has adapted a shelved ventilated closet within a wine room for holding the cheeses. They are stored at a temperature of 48-50°F and an 80% humidity. Here also cheeses can

continue to ripen if necessary, in an area referred to as 'our cave.' This is another special for Picholine, seldom does a restaurant to do its own affinage.

When the cheeses arrive from the wholesaler, Max takes them out of their original packing. Allowed to breathe for a while, they are then lightly wrapped and then placed in the closet to join others already in use, or waiting to be utilized in the trolley display. Each day Max chooses 40-50 cheeses ready for serving from the 80 or so in the closet. He unwraps them. From a large cheese a serving portion is correctly cut from it, then rewrapped and returned to the closet. Small cheeses are displayed intact on the trolley. Each cheese is sniffed, some are tasted to check their quality, one or two may be discarded if not up to standard. It is at this stage Max's prodigious memory

comes into play, for most pieces, having been supplied with new wrapping on arrival, are now anonymous and the smaller ones on the trolley do not often carry their labels. So they have to be remembered by their appearance (or smell!). Try that with several cheddars or blues all together! Max treats each cheese as gently as a baby, and indeed, I suspect he feels that they are all his children. He instinctively knows what each cheese requires and expects in order to be presented at its best. As mentioned before, some cheeses he considers over-ripe seem desirable

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## DAIRY MANAGEMENT COLUMN

1996 and the beginning of 1997 have been rough for many in the dairy business, especially in the West and Midwest, but there has also been some sunshine between all the snow storms, ice, rain storms, floods, the wettest year since 1883, high grain prices for feeding, only some fleeting good milk prices before another slump, the worries about the cheese auction influence in Wisconsin, and the uncertainties of the reorganization of our milk marketing orders!

However, I want to add to this some thoughts, why we still should feel good about being in the milk, cheese, and dairy products business, from cows, goats, and sheep. We as dairy farmers are known as "milking fools", working with our animals, dairy cows, dairy goats and dairy sheep, twice or three times a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, mostly without vacations, feeding and breeding our animals to ever higher performance just to stay in the business and ahead of the creditors, working with animals that are themselves "milking fools" with their yields exceeding 100 lb per day for cows or 15 lb per day for the little goats, and nearly as much for some dairy sheep, adding up to 20,000+ lb cow milk per 10-month lactation or as much as 5,000 lb goat milk per lactation; and even that was unheard of just a few years ago; and with an average short lifespan of only 4-5 years for most dairy cows, which defies the economics of longevity. Yet we are producing from the mother of all food animals the best food in the world, milk, which excels all other foods in its "real" natural quality and its contribution to people's nutrient requirements.

My thoughts about the dairy business are always full of thanks for all the two-legged and four-legged milking fools that provide us with that wonderful milk supply despite all the hardships and economic questions. There is no other food like milk, with complete nutrition and refreshment all packaged in one, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals. And because of that complete balance of nutrients, **milk is the only food, which never spoils.**

If you put a piece of hamburger and some apples and a glass of milk on a table, leave them sit for 4 weeks and come back to check on each, you will find that the hamburger and the apples spoiled and putrefied so that they can not and should not be eaten

anymore; not true for the milk, the only thing that happened to the milk is that it turned sour, became like yoghurt and more likely already is in the state of a cheese, just fermented, surrounded by edible whey, only changed in appearance and structure, but perfectly fine to eat, for some people even more delicious than the original milk - and all this without any addition of any preservatives! ! !

Thus, milk is not only a perfectly balanced food with its proteins, carbohydrate and fats, but it also has uniqueness in its composition. Previously, I discussed some of the unique values of short-chain and medium-chain

length fatty acids. These make up butter, out of milk fat, to a significant degree, giving us fatty acids, which are not fattening but provide direct energy. And indicated that that feeding cows differently can increase or decrease these beneficial fatty acids in butter.

The most unique content of milk is cal-

cium, the mineral that we people need daily in recommended digested and absorbed amounts of 800 milligrams; nursing mothers and young children need even more per day, up to 1,500 milligrams. Notice, I said digested and absorbed, because many calcium pills including just chalk are poorly digested and absorbed, only between 10% and 30%. That means, you have to eat not 800 but about 2,700 - 8,000 milligram per day to get your recommended calcium amounts, preventing osteoporosis, tooth problems, even some colon cancer, also avoiding muscle fatigue and nervousness. Why is milk calcium different? Because of the synergy of vitamin D in milk and the milk sugar lactose. Both greatly aid in the

digestion and absorption of calcium. So, if you do not like milk, where do you get your calcium?

Yoghurt and cheese are excellent alternative sources of calcium, especially for people, who have lactose tolerance problems. The lactose in yoghurt is partly fermented and there is no lactose in most cheeses, besides now there is milk fortified with the enzyme lactase, which helps those lactose intolerant people.

How much milk or yoghurt or cheese or other foods do we need to get our 800 milligrams per day? Here is a table of the best sources:

	CONTENT MILLIGRAMS	FOR 800 MILLIGRAMS
Skim Milk	302 per 8 ounce cup	2.6 cups needed
Whole Milk	288 " " " "	2.8 " "
Chocolate Milk	280 " " " "	2.9 " "
Plain yoghurt	415 " " " "	1.9 " "
Fruit yoghurt	314 " " " "	2.5 " "
Ice cream	330 " " " "	2.4 " "
Cottage cheese	310 " " " "	2.5 " "
Ricotta, part skim	674 " " " "	1.2 " "
American cheese	174 per 1 ounce	4.6 ounces needed
Roquefort	188 " " " "	4.2 " "
Cheddar	204 " " " "	3.9 " "
Monterey Jack	212 " " " "	3.8 " "
Swiss	272 " " " "	2.9 " "
Parmesan	390 " " " "	2.0 " "
Dry milk	120 " " " "	6.6 " "
Sardines + bones	101 " " " "	7.9 " "
Salmon + bones	81 " " " "	9.9 " "
Mustard greens	46 " " " "	17.4 " "
Collard greens	38 " " " "	21.0 " "
Tofu	37 " " " "	21.6 " "
Turnip greens	34 " " " "	23.5 " "
Broccoli	25 " " " "	32.0 " "

We can see from this table that milk, yoghurt, and cheese are by far the best sources of the vital mineral calcium for us, at least in those amounts of food which we could reasonably be expected to eat everyday, compared to all other food types. Are you willing to eat 7.9 ounces of sardines with the bones or 21 ounces of collard greens every day to get the necessary 800 milligrams of recommended calcium amounts per day?

The above list gives only the best foods in terms of calcium consumption. That is why I feel good about being part of our "milking fools", two-legged and four-legged in the dairy business; I thank them for their hard work, and I hope you do too.

# THE ART OF AFFINAGE

by: Chantal Plasse

Translated by: Stacy Kinsley

Entirely separate from the cheesemaking technique, affinage is a work which is dependent upon production and in some cases distribution. The fromager-affineur has two tasks to perfectly master, the maturation and the life of the cheese. Affinage is truly a craft.

Several conferences ago, I had the chance to speak to the A.C.S. At the time I was pioneering my trade as Affineur in San Francisco. As I told you then, I keep three words close to my heart: affineur, affiné, affinage. Many of you will remember using the word affinage without ever looking for any equivalent translation. (Translators note: the closest English translation of affineur, affiné, affinage is ripener, ripened, ripening.)

## A STAGE IN THE LIFE OF A CHEESE

Even if today, thanks to you, the word affinage is not entirely unknown by Americans, I'd like to review its proper administration. The rules of the art of affinage would not exist without cheese, and on the other hand, without the art of affinage the cheeses themselves would not exist. To surmise this technique in a concise way is to simply say that it is a state in the life of all cheese, with the exception of fresh cheeses which can be sold within 48 hours of production. After the draining process, all other cheeses should experience an additional phase, the affinage. This process begins from 48 to 72 hours after production. It's the last link of the chain; one could call it the ultimate work done to a cheese before it goes to market. But more precisely, it is an essential step, an absolute necessity. There is no such thing as a cheese with a rind without affinage. If cheese producers want to be good affineurs, it's a question of two complementary crafts, associated but totally distinct.

## FROMAGER-AFFINEUR, A TRUE CRAFT

If the cheese producer, like the wine producer, has a quasi-instinctive knowledge of the development of his products, he recognizes that affinage should be done with such sensitive attention to detail. Due to the sensitive nature of affi-

nage, the producer often turns his cheese over to a fromager-affineur. This professional should, before all else, master perfectly the raw material, the unripened cheeses. Affinage begins using a cheesemaking technique of reuniting the interrelated conditions of temperature, humidity, and ventilation. The quality of the finished product depends on these three parameters. But that's not all there is to ripening a good cheese. Man has his input, a personal touch to give. Thus the cheese finished by the same producer would often have a taste unique to its affineur and the place of affinage. Because of this in Europe, and particularly in France, the Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée (A.O.C.) implements strict regulation on production and affinage.

Thus a camembert designated as A.O.C. is produced in approximately 85% humidity at about 8° C under light ventilation for a full four weeks. As for Roquefort, the first French cheese to have the A.O.C. designation, it must be aged in conditions established when the cheese was first produced and are still enforced today. Roquefort's ripening can only take place in the natural caves situated in the town of Roquefort, where the level of hygrometry is around 95 to 98%. In addition, Roquefort is affiné at a temperature of 8 to 10° C and benefits from the natural humidity and ventilation of its surroundings. The cheese must remain in the caves for a minimum of 4 months before it can be sold. A Crottin de Chavignol must be aged at 70% humidity at 8° C under light and dry ventilation for at least 3 weeks and improves with more time under these conditions. As for Salers, the humidity during its affinage reaches from 75 to 80%; the temperature must remain at 8° C and the ventilation must be practically nonexistent. The sale of an A.O.C. Salers cannot occur until the cheese has been aged for 6 to 8 months. During this entire aging process, it must be washed three times a week with salt water. This aging time is necessary for the cheese to develop a character typical of an old Cantal. The more it is affiné, the better it is.

In the face of all of these constraints, so many rules to follow to a tee, it is easy to

understand why affinage is best handled by a specialist. Without a system, without controls, without rigorous measures, the slip ups can be numerous. Lured by the profits, certain people can be tempted to sell cheeses which are not totally affinés. The opposite also exists. Indeed the affineur must come to know patience, sometimes for several months before finally selling product. The affineur must also prove his business ethics by not putting on the market a cheese that is too old. Who hasn't eaten a cheese which tastes like ammonia? Not only is it an unfortunate experience, but it is also detrimental to people like me who fight to get affinage recognized as a cheesemaking technique in its own right, a true art.

## TO KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN, IS TO KNOW HOW TO SELL

Affinage, it's true, is also a question of feeling. The affineur must take to touch his products. He must know his product, smell it, watch the rind evolve. A good affineur must also know how to sell his products. He must be able to explain his selection. He must be able to recommend a cheese in different stages of its life. This ability is fundamental to his skill as well as his ability to justify the price differences of cheese that is affiné. Such is the definition that I would give to the art of affinage.

It is obvious that a cheese at 3 weeks does not have the same cost as a cheese at 6 weeks. This needs to be explained. Even if it is understood here in Europe-as a given. The consumers of the "old world" prefer to buy at a shop of an affineur than in a supermarket. Here we know that maturity has a cost. That it is work often everyday washing, humidifying, turning, taking off paper while working with the cheese. This way of thinking is becoming more and more obvious in America and I am extremely happy of that.



# WAR OF THE CHEESES

by: Robb Walsh

This article first appeared in the June 1995 edition of American Way magazine and is reprinted here by permission.

The flag of Gruyère flutters over the stone ramparts of an ancient walled castle on an Alpine cliff. In the middle of the white banner, stands a fierce-looking bird. Legend has it that the first ruler of Gruyère went out hunting one day with the intention of naming his domain after the first thing he killed. He killed a crane (a *grue* in French), and thus named his lands Gruyère, and himself count of same.

I thought I'd run across some cheese makers here in the walled village of Gruyères (the name of the village is spelled with an *s* on the end to distinguish it from the name of the district), but there aren't any. As it turns out, this fortified village wasn't built to produce the stuff—it was built to defend it. Defending cheese may sound like a pretty strange idea, but by now I'm used to it. In fact I've traveled all the way from my home in Texas to the Swiss Alps because I'm feeling so defensive about cheese.

It all started with an article I wrote. Who would have thought that a recipe for cheese enchiladas would end up turning me into a target for European nationalists, an enemy of a secret society, and ultimately a combatant in an ancient and bitter international rivalry? All I said was that a Gruyère enchilada I ate at a Tex-Mex joint in Paris was one of the best I'd ever had [*"Enchiladas, S'il Vous Plaît,"* American Way, September 15, 1993]. And no wonder, I commented, seeing that the French do have the world's best cheeses. That little aside was enough to suck me into an improbable international food fight.

A reader in California wrote to the editor to challenge my veracity on the subject of cheese and to suggest that I must be something of a yokel. "Gruyère is a cheese made only in Switzerland," the reader stated. "Your writer should get out of Texas more often."

I was sure that Gruyère was made in France as well as Switzerland since I'd eaten a lot of French Gruyère, so I looked into the matter. Then I naively called the reader at his home one day and read him a citation from Larousse Gastronomique, the French food encyclopedia. The article stated that Gruyère was made in both

France and Switzerland. But this did not impress my challenger: The fact that the encyclopedia was written by Frenchmen just made the information all the more dubious to him.

This was starting to reek of a larger contrölee.

Larousse went on to explain that both the French and the Swiss claim to have invented Gruyère and that the argument has never really been settled. As a food writer who has judged hot-sauce contests, beer tastings, and bagel bake-offs, I figured I'd make the call. I'd take the readers' advice: I would get out of Texas, taste the cheeses on their home turfs, and vindicate the authenticity of French Gruyère.

But what looked to me like a cheesey little argument over bragging rights turns out to be a major cultural battle, one of the longest running trade disputes in food history. It is not a subject to be joked about, at least not within the confines of this Swiss castle.

In the courtyard of the Château de Gruyères, a secret society assembles to repeat its ceremonial rites. Dressed in flowing white robes with bright red-and-yellow sashes, each member wears a medal depicting a crane standing on a wheel of cheese. In front of the solemn participants is a table spread like an altar with the implements of cheese-making. In the center, a huge wheel of Gruyère is elevated on a wooden yoke once worn by the farmer to carry wheels of cheese down from the mountains.

Placing one hand on the cheese, each member of the Twenty-Seventh Chapter of the Confrérie du Gruyère swears to uphold the honor of the beloved Gruyère. New members are taught the secrets of the society. "We teach them how to love Gruyère," says the group's governor. "It's a holy mission."

But the mission of the Confrérie du Gruyère isn't just to run around in flowing robes and pledge allegiance to the cheese. The society is also involved in a long-running crusade to convince the world that only the Swiss make true Gruyère. And to combat infidels like me who say otherwise.

In fact, the Swiss have been trying to secure exclusive rights to the name

Gruyère in international legal skirmishes since 1939. The treasured AOC (appellation d'origine contrôlée) designation-- the same territorial guarantee that applies to Bordeaux, Champagne, and Roquefort -- would greatly increase the value of the more than 7,000 tons of Gruyère cheese that Switzerland exports each year. And that would make the members of the Confrérie du Gruyère very happy.

The border between Switzerland and France cuts straight across the top of the Jura mountain range. On the French side is the province of Franche-Comté. They make cheese here, too. For centuries, they called their cheese Gruyère.

The Swiss claim that the French usurped the name. Not so, say the French. In the Middle Ages, an officer of the French government called a *gruyer* presided over forest lands and collected taxes-- in the form of cheese. It is this *gruyer* that the cheese is named after, claim the French, and they can show tax records dating back to the 1100s to prove it.

With the assistance of an army of scholars, historians, and lawyers, the French have successfully foiled every attempt the Swiss have ever made to lock up the name of Gruyère. The legal issue boils down to one simple question: Was it the Swiss or the French who made Gruyère cheese first?

"It was neither," says Jean Arnaud, a seventh-generation French cheese man. "I have 150 books in my library about this cheese." He smiles. "Twenty-five of them are just about the subject of the competition between the Swiss and the French over the name Gruyère."

Arnaud's family business, Fromageries Arnaud Frères, is in Poligny, just across the mountains from Switzerland. In a meeting room above the cheese-ripening vaults, he gives me the benefit of his own considerable knowledge on the subject. On a blackboard he draws a big oval. "You see, this is the Jura mountain range," he says. "In Roman times, the Jura region was the homeland of an ethnic group called the Sequanes," he says, writing its name inside the oval.

*continued....page 15*

# ISRAELI KIBBUTZ MINI-DAIRIES AT ACS - SEATTLE

by: Gerd Stern

Some years ago a Kibbutz (cooperative settlement), Ein-Harod Meuhad, in northern Israel, decided that they wanted to make dairy products for their own use out of some of the milk their cows produced which was sold to the national dairy cooperative Tnuva. With previous experience in design and fabrication of equipment and by a process of experimentation and experience they soon had an operating mini-dairy producing liquid milk, yogurts, soft cheeses and semi soft cheeses for the use of the Kibbutz families. The venture was a success within the kibbutz community and as word of mouth spread, other parties visited and asked how the equipment and techniques could be made available.

Opportunity knocked and members of the kibbutz responded. For some years now, under the name Pladot, Kibbutz Ein-Harod has been marketing and

installing turn-key mini-dairies in the mid-east, Africa, and in eastern and western Europe. Last year when I attended the Agritech exhibition in Israel I saw Pladot's presentation and told them about our American Cheese Society.

Subsequently, they agreed to attend our annual conference in Seattle to show selected pieces of gear and to be available to talk about their capabilities. Pladot's marketing manager, Mr. Rafi Shamir, and their general manager, Mr. Eyal Levite, will be on hand throughout the conference.

The make up of the Pladot mini-dairy is extremely flexible. Different levels of facilities can manage one or more product lines for pasteurized and skim milk, yogurt and fermented products, sweet and sour creams, butter and cheeses. The concept is designed to allow a dairy farmer to give added value to his produc-

tion. In addition to equipment, Pladot supplies assembly, start-up operation and technical information and training on-site.

Pladot's equipment is a "soup-to-nuts" package, but for economy can incorporate local elements such as tanks, etc. The pasteurization systems are innovative and state-of-the-art. Separators, pumps, butter churn, yogurt incubators, cooling and heating system, and tanks of all sizes are available. Pladot's standard packages process from 1,00 to 10,000 liters per day.

Our impression is that the development of the mini-dairy concept has a natural and important fit with the efforts of our American Cheese Society in the further development of specialty and farmstead cheese and dairy production on the American continents.

## PLADOT MINI-DAIRY

### DAIRY LOCATION

The dairy can be located on a farm where raw milk is produced, or in any place near the farm. The raw milk should be cooled as soon as possible, otherwise milk spoilage will occur and this process is irreversible.

### MILK RECEPTION

The raw milk should be delivered to the dairy in churns, or any other sanitary vessels. In the dairy, a sample of the milk will be taken for platform tests, mainly taste and odor, titratable acidity and sediment test.

The milk will be cooled by PHE (Plate Heat Exchanger) or in the storage tank which is equipped with cooling facilities.

### PASTEURIZED MILK PRODUCTION

The milk flows through the pasteurizer. The pasteurization temperature for HTST (High Temperature Short Time) pasteurized milk is 75° C for 20 seconds. A sensor, (before the holding tube) transmits a signal to the temperature controller. As soon as this signal drops below a preset value, corresponding to a specified minimum temperature, the controller switches the flow diversion valve to diversion flow and the milk returns to the balanced tank.

After pasteurization, the milk is cooled to a temperature of 16°C (4°C if ice water is used) and stored in a pasteurized storage tank. A milk sample should be taken for

phosphatase test in order to assure that the milk is completely pasteurized. The filling is done in plastic (polyethylene) bags that are sealed after filling. The final product should be kept under low temperature in a storage room until marketing. The size of the packing should be determined by the customer. The filling machine is capable of filling in a range of 250-1000 ml.

### FRESH CHEESE PRODUCTION

Pasteurized milk flows out at 28°C. Mesophilic lactic bacteria as well as coagulation enzymes should be added to the milk. The fermentation will take place in an insulated tank.

At the end of the acidification and coagulation, cheese curd is formed. The curd is stirred and then transferred to cloth bags and stored in a cold room, enabling the whey to drain off and to cool the curd. When the curd reaches the desired dry solids content, the cheese is ready for packing. The cheese can be mixed with spices can be packed as a natural flavor.

The cheese is packed by a packing machine into plastic cups.

The size and weight of the products can be easily regulated and calibrated by the packing machine with great accuracy.

### YOGURT PRODUCTION

Milk for yogurt production is pasteurized at a temperature of 90°-92°C and cooled to an inoculation (process) temperature which is 45°C. Set yogurt or stirred yogurt can be

produced.

Set Yogurt - to a natural or flavored milk, yogurt bacteria is inoculated. The product is filled into plastic cups and held in an incubator where the proper temperature is maintained.

After the milk has coagulated (3-4 hours), the product is transferred to a cold room to complete the process.

Stirred yogurt - the milk processing is the same but the incubation takes place in containers rather than in cups.

When the product is ready, the yogurt is stirred. At this stage additives such as fruit can be mixed with the yogurt, or the yogurt can be left natural. The stirred yogurt is transferred to the filling machine and packed into plastic cups.

### SOUR CREAM PRODUCTION

The process is very similar to the process of Set yogurt production but with the following differences:

- The incubation temperature is 28°-30°C.
- The bacteria are: mesophilic lactic bacteria.
- The duration of the coagulation is 8-9 hours

### BUTTER PRODUCTION

Cream is transferred to a butter churn for the processing of butter. The finished butter is manually or machine packed, into cups.



# THE CHEESEMAKER'S ART, ANGUISH

by: Steve Reed

This article first appeared in the April 25, 1997 edition of the Gunnison Country Times and is reprinted here by permission.

When Bruno and Silvia Sontheim made their leap of faith, they never dreamed it would take them so long to land on solid ground.

At first they floated. Quebec was nothing like their native Bavaria. But with Bruno having grown up on his parents' dairy farm, there was a comforting familiarity in the daily routine of the milking operation they bought in 1989, a year after their arrival.

In Quebec, they learned French and sold milk. Life was good but they continued to float. They would not land until they fulfilled a dream. The Sontheims yearned to make cheese. Fine, gourmet cheese. Only the best. Cheese that would bear their name, earn them a reputation and a living.

As it turned out, they were not free to make cheese. Things didn't go bad until 1992 but when they did, events unfolded in the suffocating way peculiar to a socialist, French-Canadian province.

After three years of frustration and red tape, of being told by government from whom they could buy hay and how much milk they could produce and to whom it had to be sold for processing before it was bought back - by now unfit for the gourmet product they envisioned - they left Canada for Colorado because someone had once described it as "the nicest

place in the United States."

Their leap of faith accelerated to freefall in the months after their arrival in the summer of 1995.

They bought 40 acres of a former sheep ranch up a rutted dirt road two miles west of Highway 149 intending to build a home, a dairy barn and a small cheese factory.

Silvia can tell the story almost matter-of-factly to this point, but the tears flow when she recounts the first year in her beautiful Powderhorn Valley.

For three months, she and Bruno and their four children, then ranging in ages from 2 to 13, lived in a tent. When it began to turn cold, a neighbor provided them with a cottage. Neither the tent nor the cottage had a bathroom. Another neighbor offered them bathroom privileges. The distance from cottage to toilet was one mile each direction.

Everything - everything - went more slowly than expected as they tried to build their house, barn and factory, to find milk cows to buy and hay to feed and to get the government permits to enable them to make cheese. Facing so many immediate problems there was little time to think about finding outlets for the cheese they were exasperatingly eager to produce.

• • •

In the late 20th century the Sontheims' sojourn is an anachronism and an anomaly. Today they stand out, though few would have noticed them had they joined the throngs of Europeans who headed for America 125 years ago. Agricultural land still was concentrated in the hands of a few in Europe. But even family farms presented problems. If the eldest son took over the operation of the farm as the parents aged, what were the younger sons to do? Land was scarce and expensive. But in America, land was fertile, limitless and cheap and so they came by the millions.

Bruno Sontheim's ancestors stayed behind. By the time Bruno reached adulthood, his parents were operating a very small farm of only 20 cows. They also were making very good cheese. This was supposed to be Bruno's inheritance and his destiny.

"And then his parents sold the farm," Silvia explained in the shadows of a spotless but temporarily idle and unlit cheese processing room. "There were financial difficulties. It's very sad."

Bruno and Silvia did not have enough money to buy even a small farm in Germany. Roughly a century after the great European exodus, they too headed west.

Canada was more affordable and they were able to purchase a dairy farm of 36 cows. Everything went relatively smoothly until they tried to move from milk production to cheese making.

"The national government decides who can have a cheese factory," Silvia explained. "We didn't know that. It was a bad wake-up. We didn't want to live on government subsidies."

Bad went to worse and by October 1994 Silvia was in Colorado on a scouting trip.

"I wanted in mountains, in nice quiet area, not too big towns," she said in heavily accented but quite understandable English. In 1994, the English was, well, perhaps a little less understandable as she drove from Cortez to Durango to Pagosa Springs and Del Norte, stopping in real estate offices to inquire about farms.

*continued....page 13*



Photo by Steve Reed

Bruno turning cheese



# AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY 14TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## "ROMANCING THE CHEESE"

### AUGUST 14 - 16, 1997

#### Conference Chairs:

Paige Lamb, Consultant, The Food Paige  
Jeff Bergman, Director of Specialty  
Foods, Larry's Markets

#### Schedule of Events:

#### THURSDAY AUGUST 14TH

8:00 - 5:00 p.m. **14th Annual Judging of Cheese Entries** - Sheraton Hotel (closed event)

10:00 - 4:00 p.m. **Conference Registration**  
- Sheraton Hotel, 3rd floor-Metropolitan Room Lobby

#### *Pre-conference Event*

10:30 - 4:00 p.m. **Cheesemaking Workshop** - with Ricki Carroll  
Encore Brokers  
Learn how to make delicious cheese including Fresh Ricotta, Mexican Queso Blanco, Fresh Fromage Blanca, Creme Fraiche, Italian Mozzarella, Mascarpone, Dutch Gouda, and more. Have fun with other cheese lovers, learning the basics of hard and soft cheesemaking. Limited space is available, register early, class will fill up fast. Box lunches from Larry's Markets will be provided.

6:30 - 9:00 p.m. **Reception:**

#### *"Romancing the Cheese at Retail:*

Larry's Markets at Queen Anne Store.

Enjoy fabulous appetizers made with American farmhouse and specialty cheese, and our favorite Northwest wines and microbrews. Then wander through one of the country's leading specialty retailer ....Larry's Market and see how they make cheese a major focus throughout the entire store. *Sponsored by Larry's Markets and the Peterson Company.*



8:30 p.m. **Dine Out Nite -  
Romancing the Cheese in Seattle's  
Premier Restaurants**

Four of Seattle's leading restaurants will delight your taste buds with their incredible creations. Register Early, space is limited.

**Palace Kitchen:** offers a rustic menu, featuring nightly rotisserie specials from a wood-fire grill. Executive chef owner, Thomas was awarded The James Beard Association Award for Best Northwest chef in 1994.

**Flying Fish:** Located in the popular Belltown district, this "seafood bistro" has been selected by *Bon Appetit* as one of the top new restaurants across the country" and by *Seattle Magazine's* 1996 Reader's Poll as "Seattle's Best New Restaurant." This contemporary seafood restaurant combines local ingredients with the flavors of the world.

**Campagne:** Located just off the courtyard of the Inn at the Market, offers award-winning Southern French cuisine in the heart of Pike's Place Market. Jim Drohman, executive chef, will be conducting a Cheesemaker's dinner featuring cheeses from Quillasacut and Cheesemaker Laura Lee Misterly. *Gourmet Magazine* has rated Campagne as one of Seattle's Top Ten Restaurants.

**Cafe Lago:** This exuberant and friendly little restaurant comes closer than almost any place in town to the essence of a genuine Italian trattoria. It was rated as one of Seattle's Best Places.

#### FRIDAY AUGUST 15TH

8:00 am **Opening Remarks:**  
Stacy Kinsley - A.C.S. President  
Paige Lamb & Jeff Bergman -  
Conference Co-Chairs  
CNN on ACS tounge-in-cheek coverage  
of last year's conference

8:30 - 10:00 a.m. **Romancing the  
Cheese in your favorite local restaurants!**

Moderator and Co-Chairman Jeffery Bergman will lead this panel in a discussion on how to help create further communication ties and promotional opportunities for the Cheesemaker in today's contemporary restaurants. They will explore the success of the cheese course, how restaurants select cheese to cook with and uses for cheese in baking pastries and breads. They will also cover promotional opportunities such as cheesemaker's dinners and the importance of cheese education in the restaurant environment to further the success of American Farmstead and specialty cheese. Panel members; Nancy Oakes- San Francisco chef and restaurant owner of "Boulevard", Tom Douglas- Seattle restaurant owner and Executive chef of the "Palace Kitchen", "Etta's Seafood", and the "Dahlia Lounge", Leslie Macki- Seattle Master Baker, chef and owner of "Macrine Bakery and Cafe", Alison Leber-owner of "Brie & Bordeaux" and Jim Dorhman-executive chef of Campagne.

10:00 - 10:15 a.m. **Break**

10:15 - 10:30 a.m. **Cheesemaking  
Video (comedy)**

10:30 -11:30 a.m. **Old World / New  
World**

Moderator Gerd Stern and a panel of cheesemakers and mongers from America and abroad compare their cheese of the same and similar types, complete with a tasting for the audience and plenty of time for questions.

11:30 - 1:00 p.m. **Lunch - Cirrus Room  
ACS Board Member meeting and lunch  
- location to be announced.**

**1:00 - 2:00 pm The Role of the Food Writers in Telling the Story!**

Moderator: Linda Funk Vice President of Marketing for the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board will lead a panel discussion on the importance of the Cheesemaker establishing a relationship with their local press and the food writer and how this media can better tell their (Cheesemakers) story. Panel members Paula Lambert-cheesemaker and entrepreneur, of the Mozzarella Company, Heidi Yorkshire- a food writer and frequent contributor to *Bon Appetit*, from Portland, Oregon, Nancy Leson-a food writer from Seattle, and Gretchen Lang-food writer for Whole Foods.

**2:00 - 2:30 p.m. Panel Change The Mini Dairy, New Mini Equipment.**

Speaker: Rafi Shamir, marketing manager for Pladot, located in northern Israel, will speak on their turn-key mini dairy operations. (see article page 7 of this newsletter)

**2:30 - 2:45 p.m. Break**

**2:45 - 3:30 p.m. Exotic Cheeses / Exotic Places**

Many cheesemakers have not ventured far from their farm and only a few have actually made it to Europe. Moderator and panel members will show us what kind of specialty cheese are out there and what opportunities there are for cheesemakers. Lynne Edelson will talk about her recent experience in Kazakhstan.

**3:30 - 4 p.m. General Membership Meeting**

**6:00 p.m. Reception and Dinner - Port of Seattle**

Come aboard the Spirit of Seattle and cruise along scenic Puget Sound while you enjoy a beautiful reception organized by the cheese lovers at the Queen Anne Thriftways. Seventeen Cheesemakers from the across the Northwest will be delighting you with their luscious array of cheeses. After the 45 minute cruise, you'll arrive at Blake Island Marina State Park, home of fabulous Tillicum Village. There you'll enjoy an Native American Salmon Bake and be entertained by Northwest Native American Dancers.

**SATURDAY AUGUST 16TH**

**8:00 - 8:45 a.m. How The Right Label Can Increase Your Sales!** *Sponsored by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board*

Moderator, Debbie Haws will take us a step further in "Telling The Cheesemakers Story" by tackling how the look of your label and packaging can increase or decrease sales. She will discuss how Cheesemakers can objectively evaluate their current labels and show us what steps may need to be taken to maximize sale opportunity. Debbie will tell us about the current label information requirements, what size labels you should consider, and talk about the latest trends in labeling. Next, listen as Top Retail Buyers from the Northwest and across the country tell real life stories on how packaging influenced a buying decision.

**8:45 - 9:30 a.m. Entering a Cheese Contest** *Sponsored by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.*

Bill Schlinsog brings his informative class from the University of Wisconsin Cheese Technical Short Course Program. Bill will cover what the judges look for and how to avoid the most common errors.

**9:30 - 9:45 a.m. Break**

**9:45 - 10:45 a.m. New Flavor Trends in Cheese**

Moderator Marc Bates, Creamery Manager of Washington State Creamery, maker of Cougar Gold Cheese, will lead a panel discussion on the technical aspect and safety concerns of adding new flavor ingredients to cheese, the latest trends in flavor, dry vs. fluid flavors and conduct a tasting. Panel Members; Mary Keehn of Cypress Grove, Steve McKeon of Roth Käse, Stacy Kinsley for Meister's Great Plains Monterey Jacks, and Hugh Renck Vice President of Fidco Industrial Division.

**10:45 - a.m. ACS Web Page Review-** Richard Haws will walk us through ACS's New Web Site.

**11:30 1:00 p.m. Lunch Cirrus Room** *Sponsored by Stella Foods Inc*

**1:00 - 1:10 p.m. Cheese Tour Video**

**1:10 - 2:10 p.m. Romancing the Cheese at Retail "Telling the Cheesemakers Story"**

Theresa Battel will lead a panel discussion on how "Telling the Cheesemaker's Story" can increase sales and exposure

for ACS Cheesemakers. Panel Member Debra Dickerson of Neals Yard Dairy will take us through the steps they take to get the word out. Then listen as Retail panel members, Maurine Sell of Whole Foods-California and Shannon Loch of Natures-Portland, Oregon, talk about how they convey the Cheesemaker's Story through merchandising, training and promotion... and how they in turn *Romance the Customer.*

**2:10 - 3:15 p.m. ADGPA, the American Dairy Goat Products Association**

Moderator Mary Keehn of Cypress Grove and a ADGPA Chairperson will take us on a informative, picture packed journey into the world of Dairy Goat Cheesemaking 1997. Panel Members Jennifer Brice and Steve Schack of Redwood hill Farm, Jim Scott of Haystack Mountain, Allison Hooper of Vermont Butter and Cheese, and Paula Lambert of the Mozzarella Company. Presentation will also include slides from Alan Tobie at Bresse Bleu and Judy Schad of Capriole.

**3:15 - 3:30 p.m. Closing Remarks**

**6:00 p.m. Annual Festival of Cheeses, Awards Banquest, and Dinner Snoquaimie Winery.**

The winery sits among the foothills of the Cascades and overlooks part of the Snoqualmie Valley. With such a spectacular view, it is the perfect place to toast the winning cheesemakers and sample America's best farmhouse and specialty cheeses. Enjoy a light Northwest meal, served by Larry's Markets, then finish the night dancing as the sun sets. *Sponsored by Larry's Markets*

*Buses leave the hotel at 5:15 p.m.*

**SUNDAY AUGUST 17TH**

*Post-conference Event:*

**Sunday's Cheesemaker and Retail Tour**

**Queen Anne Thriftway at Admiral**  
A perfect place to get our morning Lattes and pastries...

This up-scale market is one of three in the area privately owned by Terry Halverson and Melinda Wilker.



Deli Business magazine recently highlighted their Proctor location in an article of America's most successful supermarket delis in "Delis of Distinction." The Admiral location has since undergone an extensive remodel resulting in an impressive market. Large bakery counters full of Seattle's best breads and pastries, a chef filled deli, espresso counter and an impressive house wares department full of French items sourced when the owners sent all the key management to France. Throughout the store are incredible displays of imported Northwest specialty items mixed with the textures of nature; broken slate, dried leaves, bare branches and pieces of glass. However the shining star of this store is its Full-service Cheese shop. Twelve feet of fresh cheeses draws you in. Cheese from across the country and the world cover the counters and fills this case. Choose local Fresh Mozzarella or how about and imported Chevre being aged in its plexi glass aging boxes. Walk around the back side of the Cheese Island and you realize the walls of the department make up 4-8 ft. upright cases filled with even more cheese, totaling over 400 varieties. Ask Shannon Thorn, Cheese Manager, what's next she'll tell you the Queen Anne stores are getting serious about aging cheeses. So serious they are returning to France to study Affinage.

#### **Tour of Samish Bay Organic Cheese in Bow Washington**

Samish Bay Cheese, located in Bow, Washington is owned by Bill and Nancy Spyksma and their children Alyssa, 16 and Charly, 14. The Spyksma's have been in the dairy business for 12 years and at their current location for 9 out of 12. Spyksma's were the Skagit-Island County Dairy Family of the Year in 1996. They were also voted the Washington State Innovators of the Year by the Washington State Dairy Federation. The dairy was Certified Organic in 1995, and began producing cheese that same year. The farm makes Gouda's, Monterey, and Montasio cheeses.

*A picnic lunch along Washington's picturesque coastline will be provided by "Brie & Bordeaux."*

## **A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY**

### **ACS CONVENTION CO-CHAIR JEFF BERGMAN**

by: Pat Geoghegan

Jeff Bergman, the co-chairman of this year's American Cheese Society conference in Seattle, was one of those lucky people who at an early age knew what he wanted--to work in the food industry.

"I was one of those people who at nine years old, at the knee of my grandmother, was concocting things from her garden," he says. "Food was and remains my passion in life."

The hard part for Jeff was figuring out which aspect of the food business he would focus on.

By the age of 15 he had gained the enviable allowance to leave his fellow ninth graders one day each week to attend a cooking class. And even though he for a time considered studying pre-law and even medicine, he eventually returned to his real interest, food.

Still he wasn't sure how he would turn his love for food into a career.

"I had originally thought I'd be a chef," he says. Working with a Seattle based French chef Michele DeVile, Jeff served an apprenticeship for a year and a half.

"It was very enriching, I learned so much from him," he said. "But even though I loved the restaurant business, I found that I really wanted to focus on other aspects of the food industry."

One of the areas Jeff says most intrigues him are the cultural differences in food, which prompted him to become involved in the fledgling Northwest Culinary Alliance, a group whose primary mission was to foster the growth of Northwest food producers.

At about that time Jeff had begun a 7-year product development stint at Pasta & Co. He also helped the Seattle-based business produce its first cookbook. For the past decade Jeff has been with Larry's Market, the nationally renowned Seattle retailer, helping bring the highest quality perishable and non-perishable items to its shelves.

"I think I've found my niche here at Larry's," he says, "even though my job seems to change so much every few years."

The business axiom of "the only constant is change", is applied no more appropriately than when applied to the current U.S. food scene.

The American fresh food revolution of the past 20 years has been an exciting ride--not only for food professionals like Jeff, but for producers as well. It has put the spotlight where it belongs--on the food, on those who produce it and on the ways in which they grow it or make it.

In categories where foods are crafted, such as specialty cheese, consumers are increasingly interested in origins--the story behind the product. For specialty cheese, the stories are cultural, historical and to the American food lover, endlessly interesting. This gives food purveyors like Jeff a strong hook with which to sell their product.

"I really enjoy the educational process of making consumers aware of quality ingredients, of helping them understand where food comes from and how it is grown and produced," he says.

In fact, Jeff says he is most excited about taking his consumers to the next level in terms of how "good food can be an important part of their lives."

"We have some fabulous small producers here in the Northwest and around the country," but he adds dauntingly that "if consumers don't know about them, they won't survive."

So his mission at Larry's, just as it was with the now-defunct Northwest Culinary Alliance, is to not only provide the products that his customers want--which often means challenging them to try new foods--but to help artisanal producers. This role melds well with the mission of The American Cheese Society and this year's conference in Seattle.

"The cultural history of foods and educating consumers about these foods and the skills necessary to produce these foods is so important to the ultimate success of the whole gamut of specialty food producers, and especially cheesemakers."

The key to success, Jeff says, is that people must stay excited about what we have. "If people stay energized about these foods we are producing we can realize tremendous growth," he says. "I try to have a continuous focus to do as much as I can to bring new products to consumers so they can taste food and really understand it."

Continued .....page 12

**Pikes Place Market** - This colorful farmers market is the oldest continually operating market in the nation. Experience the local flavor of this open market where over 250 vendors sell everything from fresh fish, vegetables and flowers to hand-crafted specialty items. Take time to visit DeLaurenti's, an Italian Specialty Market who carries over 200 varieties of cheeses, or Quality Cheese Company, who's business cards are a work of art.

#### General Information Conference:

The ACS conference will be held August 14 - 16, at the beautiful Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Tower, in the heart of Seattle on Sixth Avenue. The opening conference reception will be Thursday, August 14 at 6 p.m. The "Festival of Cheese" is Saturday evening, August 16th, at the Snoqualmie Winery and a post conference tour will be held on Sunday, August 17th.

#### Hotel Accommodations:

A special conference rate at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Tower has been arranged for \$120 a night, single

occupancy (regularly \$160 per night, single occupancy). Please mention that you are with ACS to receive this rate. For reservations call (206) 447-5555.

#### Airfare:

Save 6 percent on American Airlines lowest published fare with a Saturday night stay over and save 10 percent on Southwest Airlines' lowest published fare with a Saturday night stay over. Travel arrangements need to be booked through Triangle Travel to receive these discounts. Call Rena Harris, Triangle Travel, Beaverton, Oregon.  
1-800-577-3778, ext. 224.

## AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY 1997 CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

It's not too late to become a conference Sponsor and receive all the great benefits listed below. Contact Paige Lamb at 253/852-8361

#### Platinum Conference Sponsor \$10,000

- Recognition as Platinum Conference Sponsor at the conference
- Listed in the ACS conference report as Platinum Conference Sponsor
- Includes one ACS Corporate Membership for four (\$525 value)
- Four complimentary ACS Full Conference Registrations including Thursday night reception, Friday Nights reception and dinner and entrance to the Festival of Cheeses
- Includes dinner for four on Thursday night's "Dine Out Night"
- One full page ad in the ACS conference report.
- 10 complimentary tickets to the Festival of Cheeses

#### Gold Conference Sponsor \$7,500

- Recognition as Gold Conference Sponsor at the conference
- Listed in the ACS conference report as Gold Conference Sponsor
- Includes one ACS Corporate Membership (\$325 level)
- Two complimentary ACS Full Conference Registrations, including Thursday night reception, Friday night's reception and dinner, and entrance to the Festival of Cheeses.
- Includes dinner for two on Thursday night's "Dine Out Night"
- A half page ad in the ACS Conference Report

#### Silver Conference Sponsor \$5,000

- Recognition as a Silver Conference Sponsor at the ACS conference.
- Listed in the ACS conference report as a Silver Conference Sponsor
- Includes two ACS memberships (\$100 level)
- Two complimentary ACS Full Conference Registrations, including Thursday night reception, Friday night's reception and dinner, and entrance to the Festival of Cheeses.
- A one quarter page ad in the ACS conference report

#### Bronze Conference Sponsor \$2,500

- Recognition as a Bronze Conference Sponsor at the ACS conference.
- Listed in the ACS conference report as a Bronze Conference Sponsor
- Includes one ACS membership (\$100 level)
- One complimentary ACS Full Conference Registration, including Thursday night reception, Friday night's reception and dinner, and entrance to the Festival of Cheeses.

#### Conference Sponsor \$1,000

- Recognition as a Conference Sponsor at the ACS conference.
- Listed in the ACS conference report as a Conference Sponsor
- Includes one ACS membership (\$100 level)

## SPONSORS AT PRESSTIME

### Silver Conference Sponsors

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### Bronze Conference Sponsors

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- WATERBURY SPECIALTY FOODS •

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thanks to the staff at *Cheese Market News* for providing this calendar of events.

**July 17, 1997: Wisconsin Dairy Products Association (WDPA) Cheese & Butter Evaluation Clinic**, Wisconsin Dells, Wis. Contact WDPA, 608-836-3336, FAX 608-836-3334.

**July 23, 1997: Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) Annual Summer Golf Outing**, Green Lake, Wis. Contact WCMA, 608-255-2027, FAX 608-255-4434.

**July 27-30, 1997: American Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting**, Toronto. Contact Nancy Knight, 515-233-3202, FAX 515-233-3101.

**July 29-30, 1997: Nantwich International Cheese Show 1997**, Nantwich, England. For cheese competition information, contact Karen Wright, 44-1948-830-538. For trade show information, contact Andrew Hung, 44-1270-811-172. Or contact Sue Sadinski, U.S. Dairy Export Council, 331-4455-0129.

**July 30-Aug. 1, 1997: Association of Sales and Marketing Companies (ASMC) Executive Conference**, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact ASMC, 703-758-7790, FAX 703-758-7787.

**Aug. 14-15, 1997: Idaho Milk Processors Association Annual Convention**, Sun Valley, Idaho. Contact John Montoure, 208-885-7162, FAX 208-885-2567.

**Aug. 14-17, 1997: American Cheese Society (ACS) Conference**, Seattle. Contact ACS, 415-344-0958, FAX 415-344-1588.

**Aug. 17-19, 1997: Wisconsin Dairy Products Association (WDPA) Annual Meeting**, Elkhart Lake, Wis. Contact WDPA, 608-836-3336, FAX 608-836-3334.

**Aug. 23-26, 1997: Food Industry Suppliers Association (FISA) Annual Conference**, Traverse City, Mich. Contact FISA 910-274-6311, FAX 910-691-1839.

**Aug. 24-26, 1997: Midwest Dairy Foods Association Annual Convention**, Nashville, Ind. Contact Don Buckley, 614-486-6000, FAX 614-486-4711.

**Aug. 26-29, 1997: SIAL-MERCOSUR 97**, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Contact Julie Halas, IMEX Management, 704-365-0041, FAX 704-365-8426.

**Sept. 9-11, 1997: U.S. Dairy Export Council's Annual Export Seminar**, Chicago. Contact the Jerry Dryer Group, 800-243-7037, FAX 888-243-7037.

**Sept. 14-16, 1997: MealSolutions**, Los Angeles. Contact Jennifer Richwine, Food Marketing Institute, 202-429-8472, FAX 202-429-4519.

**Sept. 17-18, 1997: Marschall Italian & Specialty Cheese Seminar**, Madison, Wis. Contact Jo Ann Sterenberg, Rhone-Poulenc, 219-264-2557, FAX 219-266-7054.

**Sept. 19-21, 1997: 29th National Deli Seminar**, San Diego. Contact the Delicatessen Council of Southern California, 562-929-6788, FAX 562-929-1978.

**Oct. 6-8, 1997: Statistics and Measurement in Sensory Evaluation Seminar**, Palo Alto, Calif. Contact Julie Olson or Diana Williams, Tragon Corp., 415-365-1833, FAX 415-365-3737.

**Oct. 8-10, 1997: Quality Management in the Food Industry Course**, Ithaca, N.Y. Contact Dean Duxbury, Institute of Food Technologists, 312-782-8424 ext. 171, FAX 312-782-0045.

**Oct. 13-16, 1997: International Exposition for Food Processors & Pack Expo West**, Las Vegas. Contact Nancy Janssen or Cheryl Clark, 703-684-1080, 800-833-4337, FAX 703-548-6563.

**Oct. 15-16, 1997: North Central Cheese Industries Association Annual Meeting**, Minneapolis. Contact Sybil Woutat, 612-624-1764, FAX 612-625-5272.

**Oct. 16-17, 1997: Europartenariat France-Massif Central 1997**, Clermont-Ferrand, France. Contact Derek Parks, Matchmaker Trade Delegation, U.S. Department of Commerce, 202-482-0287, FAX 202-482-0178.

**Oct. 16-19, 1997: National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) Special Conference**, Rosemont, Ill. Contact Leon Townsend, telephone/FAX 502-695-0253.

**Oct. 20-21, 1997: Fifth California Cheese Symposium**, Sacramento, Calif. Contact University Extension, University of California, Davis, 800-752-0881, 916-757-8777, FAX 916-757-8558.

**Oct. 20-23, 1997: Packaging Basics for the Food Industry Short Course**, East Lansing, Mich. Contact Dean Duxbury, Institute of Food Technologists, 312-782-8424 ext. 171, FAX 312-782-0045.

**Oct. 27-29, 1997: International Whey Conference**, Rosemont, Ill. Contact Dr. Warren Clark Jr., American Dairy Products Institute, 312-782-5455, FAX 312-782-5299.

**Oct. 30-Nov. 2, 1997: Worldwide Food Expo**, Chicago. Sponsored by Dairy and Food Industries Supply Association (DFISA), International Dairy Foods Association and National Food Processors Association. Contact Mary G. O'Dea or Liz Overstreet, DFISA, 703-761-2600, FAX 703-761-4334, 24-hour fax-on-demand 888-246-3277, 503-402-1352.

**Nov. 3-4, 1997: Codex Procedures and Their Importance: The New World for Dairy Products Symposium**, Chicago. Contact Anne Divjak, International Dairy Foods Association, 202-737-4332, FAX 202-331-7820.

**Nov. 3-5, 1997: Quality Control and Stability Testing Seminar**, Palo Alto, Calif. Contact Julie Olson or Diana Williams, Tragon Corp., 415-365-1833, FAX 415-365-3737.

**Dec. 9-10, 1997: Agribusiness Executive Management Program, Module One: Managing Capital and Financial Resources**, Madison, Wis. Contact Joan Gillman, 608-262-9982, FAX 608-263-0818.

**Jan. 27-28, 1998: Agribusiness Executive Management Program, Module Two: Managing People**, Madison, Wis. Contact Joan Gillman, 608-262-9982, FAX 608-263-0818.

**Feb. 24-25, 1998: Agribusiness Executive Management Program, Module Three: The Structure of Agricultural Markets**, Madison, Wis. Contact Joan Gillman, 608-262-9982, FAX 608-263-0818.

**March 2-4, 1998: Principles of Sensory Evaluation Seminar**, Palo Alto, Calif. Contact Julie Olson or Diana Williams, Tragon Corp., 415-365-1833, FAX 415-365-3737.

continued.....page 16



VERMONT CHEESEMAKER.... "But a job was a job. Ed Senior showed me what to do and I worked for him and Ed Junior for years." Senior has passed away, Junior is retired, and Fletcher has moved into the top spot.

"Just a minute," Fletcher says. Again he inserts his finger into the vat and lifts it out. "Almost there, almost there." Fletcher has been in his kitchen this morning since just after dawn to taste and touch, to begin the process that turns Jersey cow's milk into blocks of Cheddar. The milk has been pumped, 1,500 gallons of it, into a steel vat and heated. "We don't pasteurize the milk. Close to it, but it's still considered raw. That's the best for the cheese." He has brought the milk to 155 degrees Fahrenheit, cooled it to 80 degrees, then added culture--bacteria that starts fermentation. The milk is stirred by large rotating paddles for an hour and then the rennet is incorporated. "We used to use animal rennet," he says, "from calves' stomachs. We stopped that ten years ago because we couldn't find it easily and it's very expensive. Now we use one that is not animal based."

The rennet has transformed the milk into a soft mass, and Fletcher draws curd knives through it. These are steel screen-like frames that break up the mass, allowing the curds to begin forming and the whey to separate from the solids. He allows this altered milk "it's still milk" to rest for fifteen minutes, then heats it back up to 100 degrees to finish "cooking" while the paddles stir the mixture to prevent it from sticking.

"I go by time and temperature," he says, "and feel. I can feel when the curd is cooked." The acidity has to be just right too, and he tests it periodically by drawing off a sample and measuring it chemically. When the whey has separated from curds, Fletcher fishes out a bit of curd. "When they're cooked right, these curds will bounce when you drop them," he says, and to prove it he drops the piece to the red tile floor. It bounces.

Then the whey is extracted from the vat and pumped into tanker trucks to be used as animal feed and fertilizer. The curds are raked against the sides of the vat, becoming cohesive clumps that Fletcher cuts with a twin-bladed knife into long slabs. "It's beginning to look like cheese," he says. For the next ninety minutes, the slabs are turned so that they release as much whey as possible. "If

you tear a piece it will have a texture like cooked chicken breast," he says. He does so and pronounces himself satisfied. "We can call it cheese now," he says.

He then "mills" the slabs by feeding them through a multi-bladed cutter that slices them into small white lengths, rubbery to touch and with the look of potatoes cut to be French fried. As the paddles turn these cut cards over, Fletcher strews salt over them with a motion he describes as "Feeding the chickens." Has he ever studied cheesemaking as theory, I ask. "No, never read about it. Never studied it. Learned about it from Ed McWilliams, Senior. Just did it." Has he ever visited Cheddar in England, the font of all Cheddar? "Nope." Had he an interest in going? "Nope." I'd rather hunt and fish. Had a great trip to Alaska recently." He smiles slightly.

"Taste this," he urges me, changing the subject and handing me one of the stubby chunks of curd, slick and shining with dissolved salt. "We call this squeaky Cheddar." And so it is, chewy and with a sweet, defined taste that I would associate with the best of mozzarella, a bufala, that one might find fresh on a morning in southern Italy.

The final step is to shovel these salted curds into steel "hoops," rectangular boxes that are actually molds. The curds will be pressed in them overnight and any residual moisture will be drained off. The cheese curds and the hoop together weigh sixty-one pounds--significant bits of lifting, particularly when each vat of milk will yield thirty of them. "I told you about muscles, didn't I?" Fletcher says. "When the moisture is drained and the cheese removed from its hoop, it will be a block of Cheddar weighing about forty-two pounds."

These blocks are moved into cool curing rooms and allowed to age either for a year, to become Premium Cheddar, or for two years, to become Classic Reserve Extra Sharp Cheddar. The Cheddars are white, yet yellowish because of their high butterfat. Grafton's Classic Reserve has in recent years won a host of gold and silver statuettes, medals, and blue ribbons. "We also have a block of eight-year-old," he adds. It's reserved for staff snacks and occasionally for guests.

"How is it?" I ask.

"Good, real good," Fletcher replies. "Gets smaller by the week."

The blocks of aged Cheddar are cut for

waxing and packaging into blocks ranging in size from four ounces to twenty pounds. They also mold two-pound cylinders called "baby longhorns" and twenty-three-pound "daisy wheels," which usually are earmarked for country stores.

How much of his own cheese does Fletcher eat?

"Oh, I nibble when I'm cutting it. Not too much, I guess. I love cheese and crackers, and macaroni and cheese. And you take some of that squeaky Cheddar and you throw it on top of a pizza and you really have something."

What he fancies most, however, is what he calls a "Cheese dream sandwich," his own creation. "I take two pieces of white bread, dip them--one side only-- into a batter of eggs, milk and sugar, then brown them on a griddle. Then I put a couple of slices of Cheddar on one piece, cover it with the other, and grill the sandwich until the cheese melts. Then I eat it with maple syrup. It's great!"

Neither of Fletcher's sons, "Scott the third" and Gregory, has any interest in becoming a cheesemaker, although Scott worked here one summer when he was going to college. "The boys just like to eat it," says Fletcher. He is not a demonstrative man and has not tried, except in an occasional, perfunctory way, to communicate to them the immense satisfaction he experiences as each vat of milk becomes, under his hands, blocks of extraordinary Cheddar cheese. "If they decide they want to, they'll do it."

The vice president of the Grafton Village Cheese Company, Peter Mohn, who confesses that he is awed by Fletcher and by the effortless manner in which he works, tells a tale of how one morning he raced into the cheesemaking kitchen to share with Fletcher the news that the Classic Reserve Cheddar had won its first international gold trophy. "Scott looked up at me through his glasses and said, 'I always knew it was good cheese.'"

*This article first appeared in GOURMET magazine, February 1997. It is reprinted here by permission.*



**Cheese Wars continued...** "Roman texts dated from 40 BC describe the cheese process used in Sequany -- the wood, the milk, the salt. It is the same process."

He slashes a chalk line down the middle of the oval from north to south, dividing the ancient land of Sequany in two.

"This is the modern border between France and Switzerland," he informs me. "The first Gruyère was neither Swiss nor French, because in 40 BC neither *contrôle* existed."

But that's just ancient history where so many francs are at stake. In 1959, after decades of fighting over the name, cheese makers in the Franche-Comté region decided that protecting the name Gruyère was hopeless, and applied for an appellation under the name Comté. "In France, everybody knows the name Gruyère, but Comté has a problem," Arnaud explains. In light of the confusion, Comté cheese producers market their cheese as Comté, the king of Gruyères."

"Comté is still a Gruyère," Arnaud says as we descend the stairs to his underground cheese vaults. But nowadays, the term Gruyère has come to describe a family of cheeses, he says. Down in the vaults, I get a practical lesson in the Gruyère family history.

With a tool that resembles a hollowed-out ice pick, Arnaud cuts a core sample

out of a huge wheel of Comté. After I break some off to taste, the little cylinder of cheese is neatly plugged back into the wheel. Then he takes similar sample out of a Swiss Gruyère. There is a big difference in flavor. The Comté is mild and nutty; the Swiss Gruyère is stronger and creamier.

Both cheeses are outstanding, but I confess to Arnaud that I am partial to the stronger flavor and creamier texture of the Swiss. In that case, Arnaud insists, I must taste Beaufort, another French Gruyère from the Savory region.

Beaufort is made the old-fashioned way. While Comté and Swiss Gruyère are made in large cooperatives these days, there are still farmers who make cheese in the mountains as they did in the Middle Ages. Called *fromage d'alpage*, this kind of cheese is made from the full milk of one herd of cows that have been grazing on the sweet grass and wildflowers of a mountain pasture. The Beaufort sample is buttery and fruity, without a doubt the fullest-flavored Gruyère cheese I have ever tasted.

Of course, the Swiss have their own *fromage d'alpage* called L'Etivaz, which I also taste in Arnaud's cellar. It is even stronger than the Beaufort -- a wonderful, rich cheese with a creamy texture and nutty aftertaste. I can't decide whether I like the Beaufort or the L'Etivaz better,

but I imagine either would make a pretty awesome enchilada.

After tasting my way through the family, I can understand why the Swiss are having so much trouble trying to insist that one kind of cheese is the true Gruyère. Arnaud points out that cheeses called Gruyère are also made in Wisconsin, Argentina, and Australia these days. Surprisingly, Arnaud confesses that he has recently been consulted by a delegation of Swiss cheese authorities who asked his advice on their latest effort to gain their own appellation.

"I told them it would be nearly impossible to get an appellation for Gruyère now," Arnaud says. "Swiss Gruyère is really good cheese and I hope we find a way to recognize it, but it's just too hard at this point to tell everybody else in the world to stop. Maybe they can get an appellation if they call it Gruyère of Switzerland or Fribourg," he says with some sympathy.

And so the cheese feud continues. The Swiss maintain that theirs is the only true Gruyère, and the French refuse to concede. The two sides will argue their case once again before AOC authorities in 1998.

And I thought my friends back in Texas were passionate about barbecue.

## THE ANNALS OF CHEESE

When you consider that the Swiss region of Gruyère's culture and history are built on cheese, it becomes easier to understand why people would swear oaths on the stuff. The story of Gruyère cheese is one of the most fascinating yarns in food history.

The Romans first encountered the hard cheese of the Jura Mountains when they invaded the area around 40 BC, but it was in the Middle Ages that Gruyère cheese became a central part of Swiss life.

The Gruyère culture began when the farmers in the valleys of the Jura Alps all began to take their cows up into the mountains for the summer. The idea was to save the grass in the valleys for winter hay. With the timber they cleared to create mountainside pastures, they built the summer houses known as chalets. But

the summer pasturing created another problem: what to do with all the milk? They couldn't carry it down the mountain and they couldn't store it. So they started making it into cheese using the ancient process of the Sequanes.

Cheese had been around a long time. But this kind of hard cheese was unique because, unlike the soft variety, it would keep for years. It was handy for feeding the family, but since a herd of only thirty cows would produce a seventy-pound wheel of the stuff every day, soon the Swiss farmers had a lot more cheese than they knew what to do with. So they started trading their cheese wheels for other things. Before long, their hard cheese had become a famous and valuable commodity.

It wasn't a gourmet who first realized just how valuable hard cheese really is; it was a military man. One of the biggest problems of marching a large army around the snowy Alps was feeding the men. The hard cheese of the Juras was

one of the best nonperishable food sources available. And therefore, the storehouses full of cheese became like banks -- huge reserves of accumulated wealth. Predictably enough, people started robbing the banks.

The walled village of Gruyères was founded to keep the local farmers' cheese and grain safe from thieves and freelance armies. And for the protection of their wealth, the farmers paid a tax to the counts of Gruyère in the form of -- you guessed it -- cheese.

Eventually the counts got into debt, borrowing money from the Swiss bankers to finance their military expeditions. When they defaulted, the Swiss banking system took over the county and the cheese and became the dominant political force of the region.

And you thought cheese was just something to put on a ham sandwich.

--R.W.

**CHEESE TROLLEY...continued.** to customers and are hence displayed - but these do not include Limburger, ripe or over-ripe, due to its dominating aroma.

The top of the trolley, approximately three feet by two, carries a marble slab. Taller pieces of cheese back the display. Sheep milk cheese is separated from goat milk cheese. British cheeses are grouped together as they vary considerably in size, and so can create a staggered effect. A pale cheese will be next to a dark cheese, an irregular piece by a regular shape, all to create visual interest.

After 30 or more cheeses are on the trolley, Max begins to nudge them around to allow more to fit into the display. Suddenly the arrangement looks just right and Max relaxes. Any cheese not used is returned to the closet. Knives are wiped, old wrappings and cheese bits are cleared away. The trolley then rest for an hour, allowing the cheeses to come to room temperature and their full flavor before being served.

To accompany the cheeses when being eaten, several alternatives are offered, Medjool dates for instance. Quince paste is another unusual accompaniment. Recently Max innovated a choice of fruit

cake, either fig or plum. When in season fresh figs appear on the trolley. Baguette and raisin bread are always available. All enhance the tasting experience of the cheese course, the concentrated fruit flavors complementing the milkiness, their sweetness contrasting the saltiness, of the cheeses.

Here is a record of one day's display of American farmstead or specialty cheeses. Vermont Mountain Shepherd, Catahoula (a pungent cheese from Louisiana, one of Max's Favorite American cheeses.), Cypress Grove's Humboldt Fog, Capriole's Cannonball, Westfield Farm's Classic Blue Log, Muscoot from Egg Farm Dairy.

Asked to compare American cheeses with those from Europe, Max commented on their lack of flavor depth, and that so few are made with raw milk, which always increases interest in a cheese. He would like to feature more American cheeses, but their flavor is too bland for most of his customers, especially when eaten alongside European specialist cheeses. If you are a cheesemaker and would like Max to use your cheese on his trolley, make sure it has flavor and character before sending him a sample! His

belief that American cheesemakers lack understanding of the correct use of cheese cultures to create the maximum flavor and character is a tenet heard before in ACS circles. He is certain that raw milk without good cultures cannot produce an outstanding cheese, and if a pasteurized milk with poor cultures is used, the result is 'impossible.' He finds cheese made with animal rennet preferable to those made with vegetable rennet, the former producing flavors which develop in the mouth and linger longer. He feels very strongly that over the past five years the quality of American specialist cheeses is growing too slowly when the amount of effort, time and money cheesemakers put into their production is taken into consideration.

Finally, I asked Max whether he thought that the ACS was doing a good job for cheesemakers in this country. He composed his reply carefully, saying: 'At present, yes, but there is always the danger that retailing will be put before education, of which much is still needed.'

Customers had begun to arrive at the restaurant. I watched Max wheel his trolley into the main room. Yes, it was a work of art, to be enjoyed with all senses.

**March 11-13, 1998: 28th Western Dairy Conference,** Silverdale, Wash. Contact Washington State Dairy Federation, conference coordinators, 360-412-0875, FAX 360-412-0876.

**March 17-18, 1998: Agribusiness Executive Management Program, Module Four: Management,** Madison, Wis. Contact Joan Gillman, 608-262-9982, FAX 608-263-0818.

**May 4-6, 1998: Descriptive Analysis Seminar,** Palo Alto, Calif. Contact Julie Olson or Diana Williams, Tragon Corp., 415-365-1833, FAX 415-365-3737.

**May 12-13, 1998: Chr. Hansen Cultured Products Symposium.** Contact Lisa Lecher, 800-247-8321, FAX 414-476-2313.

**June 14-16, 1998: Dairy-Deli-Bake '98,** Philadelphia. Sponsored by International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDA). Contact IDDA, 608-238-7908, FAX 608-238-6330.

**Oct. 7-8, 1998: Regional Northeast Pizza Show,** Philadelphia. Contact Sheila Burski, 320-393-3444, FAX 320-393-3450.

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Gabe Vecchi, Dr. Kosikowski's' grandson, will be at this year's conference in Seattle and have a table at the Festival of Cheeses. Books can also be purchased at that time.



"I learned quick," she said about her English. "But one guy lost his patience with me and said, 'I know a guy in Lake City. Go to him!'"

Bill Hall, the guy in Lake City, became the Sontheims' real estate agent and, over time, their guardian angel.

The 1994 trip was fruitless in terms of land acquisition but Silvia was hooked on the area and on Hall's reliability.

"Mr. Hall said we'll keep in touch," she said. He also encouraged her to consider the area between Montrose and Grand Junction where it might be possible to find more affordable land or an existing dairy farm.

"It's not what we want," Silvia said. "We want to be small to start. Montrose and Grand Junction, we did not want to live there."

She returned to Canada for the winter but was back in Hall's office in June 1995.

"Twenty-eight, June, 1995, 6 o'clock we first saw this place," she recalled. "We saw 60 elks and we was alone and we loved it. We thought it would be perfect."

Hall remembers the event similarly.

"She was driving through the western United States trying to find what she envisioned as the perfect spot," he said. "When we got to Powderhorn she said, 'This is it.'"

"We'd tried two or three places that did not work. They just fell in love with the area. Nothing else would do. She had to do it right here."

• • •

If Powderhorn was perfect at first blush, it became Paradise Lost - or at least Paradise at Risk as weeks gave way to months in the tent and in the toilet-less cottage.

It was late last summer before they were able to erect the beams for their house. Their impatience for the work to proceed resulted in a dispute with their carpenter whom they said showed up at 11 a.m. on the average day, worked for an hour, took a lunch break and quit at 4 p.m. When hunting season came, they say the workman disappeared for long stretches.

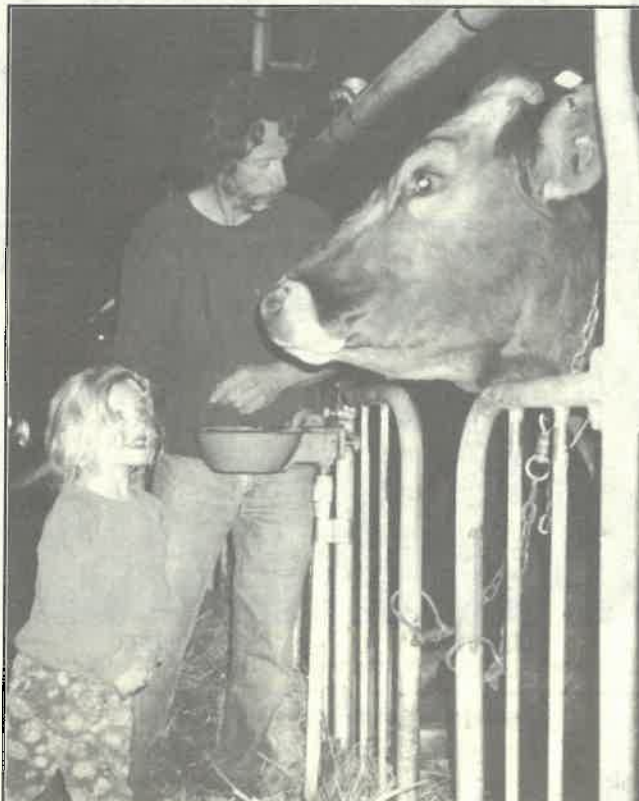
The other side of that story has the carpenter working hard to accommodate the impatient Sontheims and being wrongly accused of lolly-gagging on the job. At

one point the sheriff got involved when the carpenter reported Silvia had sicced the family rottweiler on him - an accusation she denied.

"I had no idea how naive they were," Hall said. "They contacted people themselves to do their building - reputable people, but when hunting season came you couldn't find any workers. They just had a lot of problems getting things finished and getting to the point of having their health department inspection (and state certification)."

Suffice it to say everyone was feeling a lot of pressure. The Sontheim family did not get into their house until Dec. 6 - less than five months ago. Even then, it did not have, windows, Silvia recalled with a shiver.

Meantime they had purchased 40 brown Swiss milk cows from a dealer in Brush.



Bruno and 4-year old Melanie make friends with one of the brown Swiss

"Two days later, one died," Silvia recalled. "Another was coughing. One couldn't stand up. One died and the vet cut it open and found a wire in its stomach. They died of everything. We lost one third of the herd."

Each cow was valued at \$1,300. Hall says the cattle dealer "tried to do what was right" by offering the Sontheims credit for the cows that died and agreeing

to deliver replacements.

But the deaths and delays only added to the tension.

"It was hell," Silvia said, tears flowing in the peaceful darkness of the milk factory.

If the darkest hour really is just before dawn, the sun popped up over the Sontheims' horizon about three months ago.

"We started making cheese on twenty-second January," Silvia said.

Making cheese meant they finally had their cows, their barn, their milking and processing equipment, their state health department permits and that everything was working.

The freefall was over. The leap of faith had landed them on solid ground. They were producing cheese - gourmet tilsit, edamer and bergkaese made from unpasteurized milk given by cows fed on

Gunnison Basin hay and handfuls of corn. No supplements, no steroids. Only natural base rennet and cultures find their way into the milk.

The Sontheims enjoyed a blissful late winter and early spring.

But cheese, even high quality, all-natural, gourmet cheese made in the finest German tradition, has to have a market. This, after all, is America where you've gotta have swoosh, packaging, promotion, glitz and maybe even buy some ads. How else is anybody gonna know about your fancy cheese?

• • •

It must have been quite a sight. Silvia, two kids, a thousand pounds of cheese and Anna Blaum, who is a friend of the Sontheims and an employee of Hall's real estate office, all loaded up in a Chevy Suburban and heading off to Texas.

Texas? Fredericksburg and Muenster.

Good old German-American communities settled by the earlier wave of immigrants. They looked like natural places to sell natural German cheeses.

"It was a disaster" said Silvia.

"It was a disaster," said Blaum.

Most of the Germans are long gone. Both towns are modern American, heavily into packaging, promotion and mass-produced foods bought at supermarkets or

*continued..... page 18*

huge, discount warehouses but happy to cling to the myth of European quaintness.

Sontheim didn't sell any cheese at either place.

If nothing else, the expedition illustrated both the naivete and blind faith of the Sontheim family.

Silvia's plan of action consisted of driving around Texas, stopping at grocery stores, walking in, asking for the dairy manager, introducing herself and explaining that she and her husband and children were the makers of fine German cheeses which the store might consider stocking to the benefit of its quality-conscious customers.

The scenario is improbable, but in America, even today, anything is possible.

A visit to a specialty food store in Austin found a receptive dairy manager. He was so impressed with Sontheim cheese that he called the managers of other stores in the Whole Foods chain in Austin and Dallas urging them to consider stocking the product when Silvia stopped in.

Still, it was a store-by-store process replete with hits and misses.

The best development involved a near promise that a huge south Texas supermarket

chain would stock Sontheim cheese in its upscale markets beginning in early May.

The Texas trip behind her, Silvia set out with the other two kids (all four of her offspring are homeschooled) for New Mexico, Las Vegas and Salt Lake City in early April. Again, she carried with her 1,000 pounds of cheese packed carefully into coolers to retain the freshness.

The trip rang up even fewer sales. In Las Vegas, she never found the nicer neighborhoods with the upscale stores that might have welcomed or at least listened to her sales pitch. She found Salt Lake City to be a closed market.

No one who knows the family is surprised that she and Bruno are undeterred. Having read of a merger between Wild Oats and Alfalfa's, they contacted the Boulder-based specialty food chain.

"Somebody from there came to her place and looked at the installation and sampled the cheese and thought it was just great," said Hall. "We don't know how much they're going to buy. It would be great if they would buy in bulk and distribute."

As of now it appears that the Texas and Colorado grocery chains prefer to have the

Sontheims deliver the cheeses, probably on a monthly basis. For the family to ship by any other manner is cost prohibitive.

They have had no luck cracking the Gunnison-Crested Butte market.

Since cheese production began, the situation has not been helped by the fact that the Sontheims do not have a telephone (a long story of an installation order being placed last year but the hook-up never occurring). The closest they have to a business contact is Hall's real estate office in Lake City (970 944-8100 or e-mail rayblaum@lakefork.com). He is only too happy to continue to help.

"They are the hardest working couple I've ever met," said Hall. "They work night and day. They've spent every penny they brought with them plus.

I've tried to support them and help them all I can and will continue to do so because they're the kind of people we need. They provide a new type of agricultural endeavor in this area....

"They hope to get to 40,000 pounds per year. That will make them a very decent living and let them pay back their debts and get on with their lives and be successful. They're a great family."

## AMERICAN CHEESE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER STORE

\*Any proceeds benefit the American Cheese Society

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## Book Corner

### Cheese Primer

by Steve Jenkins

Members

13.95

Non-members

16.95

(plus postage and handling on both)

### Forgotten Harvest

by Avice Wilson

Members

14.50

Non-members

17.50

(plus postage and handling on both)

### The Great British Cheese Book

by Patrick Rance

Members

25.00

Non-members

35.00

(plus postage and handling on both)

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American Cheese  
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**and \$ 5.75 tote**  
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## FROM THE EDITOR

by: Regi Hise

### THE ACS WEBSITE HAS ARRIVED!

In the last newsletter we told you our Website was about to go on line and indeed it has. ACS is now on the World Wide Web. To receive your access code for the members only areas of the site simply e-mail [access@cheesesociety.org](mailto:access@cheesesociety.org) with your name, address, and phone number. You can also call the ACS newsletter office at 417-767-2586. Member websites will be linked as part of your membership benefits. If you would like to be linked to the ACS website write to us at:

ACS Website  
Route 1 Box 298  
Fordland, MO 65652  
E-Mail [dhaws@pcis.net](mailto:dhaws@pcis.net)

The website was designed by Daryl and Paul Kelly, of Panther Creek Information Services, and they did a great job, it's a beautiful site. The web site is being organized by the newsletter committee and for those of you who know how to read between the lines that means Debbie Haws did it. Or better yet, Debbie and Richard Haws. If you want to know more about the website and you're planning on being at the annual conference in Seattle, Richard will walk us through the site and answer questions.

### OVER TWO YEARS OF NEWSLETTERS!

Several years ago we let our newsletter go unpublished for almost a year, and it really hurt membership levels. We got together at our 1994 conference in Rohnert Park, organized a committee and got the newsletter going again. Over the last two years we've once again gotten

used to our newsletter arriving on a regular basis and it's due largely to the huge commitment of time and resources from Debbie and Richard. Add to that the work they've done to organize the newsletter store and the website and you'll see why we owe them such a huge thanks for their work. There has been regular support from a number of people including Gerd Stern, Dick Groves, Heather Schroeder, Avice Wilson, and Lynne Edelson, to name a few. Thanks to everyone for helping bring back our newsletter.

### ACS 1998 ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN ?

The 1997 ACS annual conference in Seattle is just around the corner and we're already thinking about next year's conference. The annual conference usually rotates from the west to the midwest on it's way to the east coast and some of the locations we're considering at this time are Chicago, Minneapolis, and St Louis. There are several volunteers ready to help as co-chairs in these areas and if you'd like to be involved, or have another location considered, let us know.

Finally, I think we all owe tremendous gratitude to Stacy Kinsley for her tireless efforts and great achievements as ACS President this year. Her commitment to improving the Society and her ability to exercise sound judgement while keeping the best interests of all our members in mind has gone a long way toward helping to build a stronger, more beneficial organization.

## WOOLRICH DAIRY MOVES

Woolrich Dairy has moved! The other factory has been closed and they have relocated into the city of Orangeville in Ontario, Canada. This new facility is a state of the art cheese factory.

Woolrich Dairy has won many awards over the years in Canada as well as International competitions.

Woolrich is Canada's largest and leading goat's cheese producer. They distribute their products throughout Canada and the United States. Into the specialty food stores, health food stores, all the large supermarket chain stores and of course into the best restaurants in Canada and the USA. They pride themselves on quality and dedication to only supplying the best to their customers. They have been in business for about 12 years. They are a family owned and operated business.

Their new 30,000 square foot cheese factory has a retail store attached and from this store there is access to a "customer viewing gallery" where people can watch the award winning cheeses being made, packaged, and labeled.

Woolrich Dairy products are all made from 100% goat's milk, they contain no preservatives, no additives, and no rennet. Their products are made from fresh Ontario goat's milk. They have farmers throughout the Province of Ontario that milk the goats, and then we have two large stainless steel milk trucks that pass around to the farmers collecting all the milk for our usage.

For more information, contact Olga Dutra at (519) 941-9206.

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