

The American Cheese Society

NEWSLETTER 4TH QUARTER 2004

How to build cheese case sales

ACS Panel Report: retailers share ideas

By Kate Sander

Cheese Market News

Excerpted from the July 30, 2004, issue of *Cheese Market News*

There was a little something for everyone during a panel presentation by retailers at the American

Cheese Society's annual conference this summer.

From how cheesemakers — particularly small specialty cheesemakers — could better work with specialty retailers to how retailers can generate more excitement at the dairy case, the panel of retailing executives offered an array of information based on their daily experiences.

For cheesemakers, the advice Geof Ryan of Whole Foods Market had was this: "Don't sell us products that we don't understand or we don't know how to sell, at least until we do know what they are and how to sell them."

The marketing concept of "end user" shouldn't refer to retailers, but to consumers, Ryan adds.

"I'd caution you as cheesemakers to think of the customer as the end user and not just getting your product to shop," he says, adding that



In a cooled cheese room at Sendik's in Milwaukee, 540 cheeses, arranged in appealing rows, sell themselves. Sendik's sells 4-500 lbs. each day.

cheesemakers and retailers should be working together to resolve issues that arise regarding cheese handling, distribution, promotion and sales.

Your ideas wanted

Steve Ehlers, owner/manager, Larry's Market, Milwaukee, notes that while specialty cheese allows the company's chefs to be creative with their foodservice offerings, new ideas always

are appreciated.

"What I'd like to see from some of the cheesemakers is some more ideas on how to utilize your cheese, how does it cook well, things like that," Ehlers says.

Differentiating American-made cheese also is key, says Grace Singleton, managing partner of Zingerman's Delicatessen, Ann Arbor, Michigan be successful, she continued on page 4

ACS Mission Statement

To uphold the highest standards of quality in the making of cheese and related fermented milk products.

To uphold the traditions and preserve the history of American cheesemaking.

To be an educational resource for American cheesemakers and the public through sharing knowledge and experience on cheesemaking as a hobby or as a commercial enterprise, with special attention given to specialty and farmhouse cheeses made from all types of milk, including cow's, goat's and sheep's milk.

To encourage consumption through better education on the sensory pleasures of cheese and its healthful and nutritional values.

The American Cheese Society

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NEWSLETTER

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The ACS Quarterly Newsletter is published by ACS and contains articles and information pertaining to its members. Views of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the ACS. We encourage you to submit articles, letters, news items or photos for consideration.

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Greetings From the President.....

Dear ACS Members.....

Welcome new members and existing members. What an exciting conference we enjoyed in Milwaukee. It encompassed the cheese industry as a whole. My, we have grown!

I believe the experience of all attendees was not only successful but also provided food for thought as we returned home. My congratulations to Dana Tanyeri and her committee for putting this marvelous conference together. The programs were designed to meet the needs of all our membership and, judging by attendance, we certainly accomplished that. Indeed, we had standing room only at quite a few sessions. We will have to plan for more space in future. The reception at the Milwaukee Art Museum, new member's reception, the dine-around, and of course, the Festival, all showcased the terrific variety of cheeses being produced by our membership.

In addition, I would like to offer congratulations and thanks to John Greeley and the judging committee for their many hours of hard work, ensuring that all 730 cheeses entered in this year's competition were treated with unwavering care and discrimination.

And finally, I must acknowledge all our incredible volunteers, without whom we would not have been able to put on such a marvelous conference. In particular, special thanks are due to volunteers, Chisty Alire and Candy Bland-Rhinehart, for their extraordinary commitment to this organization. They both were integral participants in the judging and festival of cheeses and I can't thank them enough.

We elected new board members and appointed new officers in Milwaukee. Welcome to David Grotenstein, Jennifer Bice, Tom, Kooiman, Joan Kimball and Steve Ehlers. They have all commit-

ted to a three year term, and in doing so have promised to embrace the needs of our diverse membership in their thoughts and visions as we plan ahead.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the past board members who dedicated many years to this organization and did such amazing work. Without their vision and commitment we would not be the success we have become. Although they have left their work on the board, they remain active members within the society. We give our many thanks to you, Debra Dickerson, Kathleen Shannon-Finn, Nancy Fletcher, Dan Carter, Mary Keehn, and Judy Schad.

Now, without being facetious, the idea of involvement may seem like a new concept, and perhaps it is for some. I know that the reason I first joined the board of directors was to be more involved in this organization, thinking that was perhaps the only way to do that. Not so. There are many ways for you as members to become more involved without sitting on the board. So I'm asking you all to join our previous directors and others, already embracing the mission of this organization. Truly we are only as strong as the work being done by our members as a group. We can accomplish so much more with your participation. You all have ideas and we encourage you not only to share them but also to join a committee and help to do what's needed.

Please talk to Barry King about where your energies might be best utilized, or reach out to the committee chairs listed in both the newsletter and website.

I am very excited and honored to serve this organization and look forward to hearing from you all as to how we can better serve you.

Congratulations to all on the awards they won!

Best,

Jodie Wische

Our winning members

At the LA County Fair Fiscalini Cheese Company entered 13 cheeses, and received 12 golds and one silver. Gold medal winners were San Joaquin Gold, Cheddar, Annuciata (Parmesan), and the following flavored cheddars: caraway, dill, garlic, pepper, saffron, sage, tarragon, smoked, and Purple Moon (cabernet soaked). The young cheddar received a silver.

At the World Cheese Awards in London, England, Fiscalini received a Gold medal for their San Joaquin Gold, a sil-

ver award for the 30 month bandaged cheddar, and a bronze for the Annuciata.

At the World Cheese Awards in London, England, FireFly Farms cheeses won awards for their Merry Goat Round: Silver and MountainTop Bleu: Bronze

Willow Smart and David Phinney, of Willow Hill Farm, entered the World Cheese Awards this year for the first time and were awarded four medals, the most of any US company. Autumn Oak won Gold, Summertomme and Cobble Hill each received a Silver and Vermont Brebis won Bronze.

Upcoming Topic

1st Quarter 2005

The Dreaded Recall

Members who have been through the process tell their story and we offer tips and suggestions.

We welcome feedback and your comments about any story in the newsletter. We also welcome stories written by our members.

Please contact

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From the Desk of the Executive Director.....

Dear ACS Members....

First, I want to thank all of you who attended the annual conference in Milwaukee, and to thank everyone who participated as sponsors, session panelists and moderators, judges, event coordinators, volunteers and just general "worker bees" as one person called himself. It was a great conference and it seems that a great time was had by all.

During the conference, I had several conversations with members regarding conference site selection and the criteria used in selecting hotels and venues for conference activities. I must say that this is one of the most perplexing aspects of my job as your executive director, because I have to consider so many factors: airport access and transfer costs, hotel availability, number of guest rooms available, room cost, amount of meeting space, food cost and use of sponsor donated products, competition receiving facilities and storage accommodations, off-site facilities and points of interest, and the community support and desire to host the organization. And still try to maintain the East, West, Midwest rotation!

Unfortunately, a good number of places become immediately unavailable due to our list of "must haves." Often, great areas don't have the dates available, enough hotel rooms at a decent cost, enough meeting

space for seminars and general sessions, the competition or festival accommodations or they are just not affordable. For example, finding a site in the northeast that is easily accessible, with a hotel that is large enough to contract 225 peak room nights, and willing to turn over its entire facility to us for a week is nearly impossible. Plus, summer is high season for many cities, and the room rates hover near \$250 per night!

In some cities, like Boston and Philadelphia, a hotel can contract a single four-hour wedding reception that generates more income than we do in an entire week. Likewise, other cities, like New Orleans, are extremely affordable and accommodating, but could the cheeses shipped for the competition survive the excessive heat? Hopefully, you begin to see the problems we face with site selection and its many variables

There's an unwritten guideline that meeting planner's always keep in mind: "the Rule of *TOO's*" – "If it's *too* far, *too* difficult to get to, *too* expensive, *too* cramped, *too* cold, *too* hot, or just plain *too* anything, nobody will come." Keeping that in mind, it's the goal of your Board and my personal goal to make the annual conference as affordable as possible, and for you to always want to attend the conference. And I hope that is always the case.

Best regards to all,
Barry

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Building the case for cheese sales

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believes that American-made cheeses shouldn't be compared to European cheeses. Instead the differences should be celebrated.

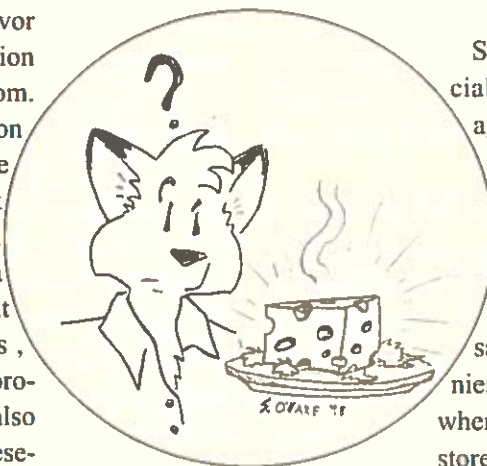
Provide information

Zingerman's tries to provide consumers with a flavor profile as well as information on where the cheese is from. If someone is from a region or has visited an area, the cheese can bring back good memories, Singleton says. And Patrick Moore, a cheesemonger at Lund's/Byerly's, Minneapolis, says that promoting regional cheeses also provides a way for cheese-makers to get into the store to sample their cheeses and tell their stories.

When people come into the store, the staff at Zingerman's often asks a few leading questions, Singleton says, because though consumers may know Stilton by name, they often don't know the difference between Stilton, Roquefort or Point Reyes' blue. Finding out what the consumer wants to use the cheese for and sampling the cheeses are ways Zingerman's educates consumers about the differences.

"You do have to turn your customers on to new experiences," says editor and author Jim Mellgren of *Gourmet Retailer* magazine, who moderated the panel. "That's why they go to a specialty store. They go to Costco if they just want to buy cheese. They want somebody that knows something, somebody that's

maybe going to steer them in a slightly different direction. But they're too intimidated themselves to ask for it. They can't pronounce half the cheeses so they're not just going to say, 'oh give me that.' They want to be led."



However, it was clear from the comments made by the panelists as well as some of the questions asked by attendees that the same enthusiasm for artisan cheese being radiated by conference attendees isn't always found in stores.

Passion is important

Passion is important, the panelists say.

"I watch some of the people our company has hired and can only look on in positive disbelief. 'Oh I love cheese.' Well, it turns out they like Colby," Moore says. "It's critical to find someone who actually cares for cheese. Not just a little bit, but a lot."

It can be a struggle to balance operational and service labor, Ryan notes. Most employees find it easier to cut and wrap a piece of cheese than to go up to a stranger and try to figure out what they

want.

A person can't necessarily be trained to be passionate about artisan cheese, Ryan adds, noting that it's better to hire for enthusiasm and then train how to handle artisan cheese products.

Staff is important

Sherrie Zebrasky, a specialty foods consultant, agrees that staffing is important for a successful cheese department.

"They need to rotate the cheese, they need to know what is there," she says, adding that companies also need to evaluate when customers are in the store so that staff can be on hand to can talk to consumers about the cheese of the day or the cheese of the week being promoted.

Sampling is important

Sampling remains an important marketing tool, the panelists agree.

If product is questionable, it should be pulled from the case — either tossed or, if it's just past its prime, fed to someone, Ryan adds.

At Larry's Market, a lot of the company's catering is pickup trays, and the cheese tray is a great opportunity to introduce a party of 30-40 people to 6-10 different American artisanal cheeses, if they are labeled well, Ehlers says. The company's foodservice business also is a good way to work the cheese case, he says. Integrating cheeses that need to move into cheese trays and the kitchen helps the cheese case look fresher.

Feedback from our Members

At the recent ACS conference, Nancy Radke, Director, U.S. Information Office, Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano-Reggiano, attended a workshop entitled "What's in a Name". At the end of his presentation Prof. Rusty Bishop read an article from The Financial Times penned by Leslie Crawford, their Madrid bureau chief, stating in brief that cheese made in Spain was being shipped to Italy, stamped with the Parmigiano-Reggiano mark and marketed as authentic. Nancy sent the following to me, part of a letter she sent to Prof. Bishop:

"... upon careful reading of the article I would like to bring several things to your attention. First of all, it does not seem that any of the information that was reported was in any way cross checked—something that you would expect from a good journalist and especially a bureau chief. If Ms. Crawford had indeed done her homework she would have known that wheels of Parmigiano-Reggiano® weigh a minimum of 30kg and that the regional appellation certificate is not "stamped" on the cheese. Ms. Crawford reported that the wheels from Arzuà weighed 12kg (a bit more than one fourth the size of a wheel of Parmigiano-Reggiano) and she seemed not to know that the Consorzio's mark of origin—the pin dot logo—can only be impressed into the rind the first night after production, before the cheese rind has hardened. The rinds of cheese made in Spain would be hard by the time they arrived in Italy and so it could never be given an authentic look. Had she made an effort to check her facts, she might have

discovered that the story that her "sources" gave her was suspicious."

On Wednesday July 28, 2004 the Financial Times printed the following Clarification:

The Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano-Reggiano, the consortium of Parmesan cheese producers, has taken issue with an article "Chewing over the cheese question" (July 3), which reported claims that Arzuà cheese was sold in Italy as Parmesan. The Consorzio is the exclusive owner of the European Union-protected Parmigiano-Reggiano Designation of Origin, including Parmesan. It accepts that a type of hard cheese may be sent from Arzuà, in Spain, to Parma province, among other places, but emphasizes the strict controls imposed by the Consorzio. It categorically denies that Arzuà cheese is sent to the Consorzio so that it may benefit from, without complying with, designation of origin protection and be sold as the genuine article. It points out that the designated minimum weight is 30 kg. This contrasts with the cheeses mentioned in the article, which weigh 12 kg. It is conducting a full investigation into the allegation, in order to ensure that its intellectual property rights are enforced.

Due to the suspicious nature of this article and the potentially damaging statements made, the Consorzio is determined that the record be set straight. Therefore, while an investigation into this matter is ongoing the Consorzio requested that Prof. Bishop not continue to include a reading of this article in presentations and discussions with individuals, be they members of the trade or press, because Consorzio trusts that Prof. Bishop would not want to be repeating potentially false information. Currently the Consorzio's attorney in Spain, in collaboration with the appropriate Spanish and Italian authorities, is addressing this issue, and Nancy Radke will continue to keep ACS members informed.

Everything you wanted to know about goats

Editors Roberto Rubino, Pierre Morand-Fehr and Lucia Sepe have collected into one book, 210 goat products, from 28 countries around the world. The 384-page, full colour *Atlas of Goat Products* includes traditional and new products, with more than 140 cheeses, meat (fresh and processed), cooking specialties, sweets and candies, musical instruments, medications, tools,

and more.

Ordered by continent, each product is described with photo, a location map and information on its origin, techniques and scale of production, trade, uses, etc.

A useful reference book, it's available from Caseus for 35 EURO (approx. US\$43). For further details or to purchase it, visit www.caseus.it Or e-mail: caseus@anfosc.com.



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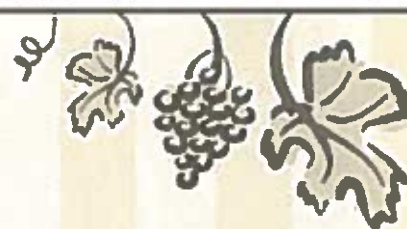
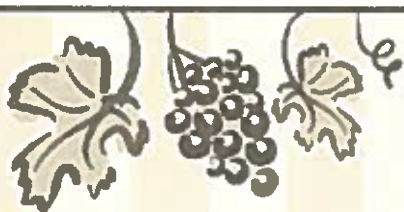


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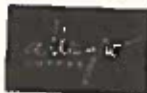
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Pacific Cheese

And the winners are.....

Following is a complete list of the winners at the 2004 ACS Competition. In some classes, there was no award given for first or second place because a minimum score required for those places was not received. The cheeses were each judged by one technical judge who subtracted points and one aesthetic judge who gave points. First place cheeses competed for Best of Show and were evaluated by all contest judges. "Our judges all have great credentials - depth of experience in different aspects of dairy science or cheesemaking as well as in the retail sector. While it's an honour and we have volunteers, I try to seek out judges who can provide balance and depth. We don't solicit judges from the broker, cheesemaking or manufacturing communities," John Greeley, chair of the judging, said. "Personally, I feel the ACS has been a beacon in the journey of American cheese to find its own identity and traditions, and has led cheesemakers to a common place where they share knowledge and be seen by the rest of the world."

• Fresh Unripened Cheese: Cow's Milk

First: Cantare Foods, Baldwin Park, Calif., Burrata

Second: Champlain Valley Creamery, Vergennes, Vt., old fashion organic cream cheese

Third: Sierra Nevada Cheese Co., Willows, Calif., cream cheese

• Fresh Unripened Cheese: Goat's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Cypress Grove Chevre, McKinleyville, Calif., Chevre log

Third: Redwood Hill Farm Goat Dairy, Sebastopol, Calif., Chevre; Harley Farms Inc., Pescadero, Calif., Ricotta

• Fresh Unripened Cheese: Sheep's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Shepherd's Way Farms, Nerstrand, Minn., Shepherd's Ricotta

Third: Old Chatham Shepherding Co., Old Chatham, N.Y., Ricotta

• Fresh Unripened Cheese: Cow's Milk Mascarpone

First: No award given.

Second: Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Waterloo, Wis., Mascarpone

Third: Mozzarella Co., Dallas, Mascarpone

• Fresh Unripened Cheese: Cow's Milk Ricotta

First: Belfiore Cheese Co., Berkeley, Calif., Ricotta

Second: Mozzarella Co., Ricotta

Third: Sprout Creek Farm Co., Poughkeepsie, N.Y., Ricotta

• Soft Ripened Cheese: Open Class for All Cheeses Made from Cow's Milk

First: Cowgirl Creamery, Point Reyes Station, Calif., Mt. Tam

Second: Bittersweet Plantation Dairy, Gonzales, La., *Flour-de-tache Fromage Triple Cream with Ash*; Sweet Grass Dairy, Thomasville, Ga., *Green Hill*

Third: Bittersweet Plantation Dairy, *Flour-de-tache Fromage Triple Cream*

• Soft Ripened Cheese: Brie Cheeses Made from Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Marin French Cheese Co., Petaluma, Calif., *Triple Cream Brie*

Third: Marin French Cheese Co., Brie

• Soft Ripened Cheese: Camembert Cheeses made from Cow's Milk

First: Marin French Cheese Co., Camembert

Second: Groupe Fromage Cote, Boucherville, Quebec, *Triple Creme DVDW*

Third: Lactalis USA-Belmont, Belmont, Wis., Camembert

• Soft Ripened Cheese: Cheeses Made from Goat's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy, Niwot, Colo., *Haystack Peak*

Third: Cypress Grove Chevre, *Pee Wee Pyramid*

• Soft Ripened Cheese: Flavor Added (Spices, Herbs, Seasoning, Fruits, etc.)

First: Lactalis USA-Belmont, *Brie with pepper*

Second: Lactalis USA-Belmont, *Brie with herbs*

Third: Marin French Cheese Co., *peppercorn Brie*; Bingham Hill Cheese Co., Fort Collins, Colo., *Queso del Sueno*

• Soft Ripened Cheese: Cheeses Made from Sheep's or Mixed Milks

No awards given.

• American Originals: Open Category Made from Cow's Milk

First: Carr Valley Cheese, La Valle, Wis., *cave-aged Cheddar*

Second: Groupe Fromage Cote, *Cantonnier DVDW*; Cowgirl Creamery, *Pierce Point*

Third: McCadam Cheese Co., Chateaugay, N.Y., *Muenster, Eastern style*

• American Originals: Open Category Made from Goat's Milk

First: Carr Valley Cheese, *Cocoa Carolina*

Second: Carr Valley Cheese, *Bandaged Billy*

Third: Fromagerie Bergeron, St-Antoine de Tilly, Quebec, *Patie Blanche*

• American Originals: Open Category Made from Sheep's Milk and/or Mixed Milks

First: Carr Valley Cheese, *Virgin Pine Native Sheep*

Second: Carr Valley Cheese, *Mobyay*

Third: Bass Lake Cheese Factory, Somerset, Wis., *Carasta Pardo*

• American Originals: Monterey Jack Made from Cow's Milk

First: Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Montpelier, Vt., *Monterey Jack*

Second: McCadam Cheese Co., *Monterey Jack*

Third: Organic Valley, La Farge, Wis., *W raw milk, Jack style*

• American Originals: Monterey Jack with Flavors, Made from Cow's Milk

First: Fagundes Old-World Cheese, Hanford, Calif., *Hanford Jack-Jalapeno*

Second: Sierra Nevada Cheese Co., *Sierra Jack Garlic and Chive*

Third: Fagundes Old-World Cheese, *Hanford Jack-San Joaquin*

• American Originals: Colby Made from Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Widmer's Cheese Cellars, Theresa, Wis., *Colby*

Third: Sweetwater Valley Farms, Philadelphia, Tenn., *Colby*

• American-Made International Style: Dutch Style, All Milks (Gouda, Edam, etc.)

First: Meadow Creek Dairy, Galax, Va., *Galax Gouda*

Second: Fromagerie Bergeron, *classic Gouda*

Third: Wilamette Valley Cheese, Salem, Ore., *farmstead Gouda*

• American-Made International Style: Open Category, Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Denmark, Wis., *American Grana*

Third: Fair Oaks Dairy Products, Fair Oaks, Ind., *Sweet Swiss*

• American-Made International Style: Open Category, Goat's Milk

First: Capriole, Greenville, Ind., *Pipers Pyramid*

Second: Fromagerie Toumevent, Chesterville, Quebec, *Chevre Noir*

Third: Cypress Grove Chevre, *Amour*; Cypress Grove Chevre, *Bermuda Triangle*

• American-Made International Style: Sheep's or Mixed Milk

First: Carr Valley Cheese, *Caso Bolo Meltage*

Second: Willow Hill Farm, Milton, Vt., *Summertomme*

Third: Carr Valley Cheese, *cave-aged Meltage*

• Cheddars: Aged Cheddars, All Milks

First: No award given.

Second: Cabot Creamery Cooperative, *Private Stock Cheddar*

Third: Hoch Enterprises Inc., New Glarus, Wis., *Braun Suisse Kase Aged Cheddar*; Ficalini Cheese Co., Modesto, Calif., *San Joaquin Cheddar*

• Cheddars: Flavor Added, Any Age

First: Cabot Creamery Cooperative, *five peppercorn Cheddar*

Second: Maple Leaf Cheese Co. Co-op, Monroe, Wis., *horseradish Cheddar*; The Rogue Creamery, *Kalamata olive Cheddar*; The Rogue Creamery, *Central Point, Ore., pesto Cheddar*; Spring Hill Jersey Cheese, *Petaluma, Calif., sage Cheddar*

Third: Sweetwater Valley Farm, *Cheddar-flavored*; The Rogue Creamery, *rosemary Cheddar*

• Cheddars: Cheddar from Cow's Milk (aged less than 12 months)

First: Organic Valley, *pasteurized sharp Cheddar*

Second: McCadam Cheese Co., *New York Cheddar*

Third: Ficalini Cheese Co., *San Joaquin Cheddar*

• Cheddars: Cheddar from Goat's Milk (aged less than 12 months)

First: No award given.

Second: Carr Valley Cheese, *goat Cheddar*

Third: No award given.

• Cheddars: Mature Cheddars (aged longer than 25 months)

First: Carr Valley Cheese, *eight year Cheddar*

Second: Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, Vt., *25 month Cheddar*

Third: Widmer's Cheese Cellars, *Cheddar two-and-a-half years*

• Cheddars: Mature Cheddars (aged longer than 35 months)

No award given.

• Blue Mold Cheese: Blue-Veined Made from Cow's Milk

First: The Rogue Creamery, *Crater Lake Bleu*; Golden Ridge Cheese Cooperative, Cresco, Iowa, *natural rind Bleu*

Second: DCI Cheese Co., Mayville, Wis., *Black River Gorgonzola*

Third: DCI Cheese Co., *Saltville Gorgonzola Cheese*; The Rogue Creamery, *Oregon Blue*

• Blue Mold Cheese: Blue-Veined Made from Goat's Milk

First and Second: No award given.

Third: Freely Farms, Blittinger, Md., *Mountain Top Bleu*

• Blue Mold Cheese: Blue-Veined Made from Sheep's or Mixed Milks

First and Second: No award given.

Third: Shepherd's Way Farms, *Big Woods Bleu*

• Blue Mold Cheese: External Blue Molded Cheeses, All Milks

First: The Rogue Creamery, *Rogue River Bleu*

Second: Westfield Farm Inc., Hubbardston, Mass., *Hubbardston Bleu*

Third: Westfield Farm Inc., *Hubbardston Bleu Cow*

• Hispanic and Portuguese Style Cheese: Ripened Category, All Milks

First: Roth Kase USA Ltd., Monroe, Wis., *Gran Queso*

Second: Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, *Oaxaca*

Third: Rizo-Lopez Foods Inc., *Riverbank, Calif., Oaxaca*

• Hispanic and Portuguese Style Cheese: Fresh Unripened Category, All Milks

First: Fagundes Old-World Cheese, *Maria's Panela*

Second: Fagundes Old-World Cheese, *Maria's Queso Fresco*

Third: Rizo-Lopez Foods Inc., *Queso Fresco*

• Italian Type Cheese: Pasta Filata Types

First: No award given.

Second: Roth Kase USA Ltd., *Fontina*

Third: Mozzarella Co., *Caciocavallo*

• Italian Type Cheese: Grating Types

First: BelGioioso Cheese Inc., *Porrano*

Second: Ficalini Cheese Co., *Anuncata*

Third: Carr Valley Cheese, *Canaria*

• Italian Type Cheese: Mozzarella Types, All Milks

First: Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, *String cheese*

Second: Valley Gold LLC, *Gustine, Calif., part skim Mozzarella*

Third: Karoun Dairies Inc., *Sun Valley, Calif., Mozzarella String cheese*

• Italian Type Cheese: Fresh Mozzarella Types

First: No award given.

Second: Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, *fresh Mozzarella*

Third: Blue Ridge Dairy Co., *Leesburg, Va., fresh Mozzarella-Oleagine*

• Feta Cheese: Feta Made from Cow's Milk

First: Kiondike Cheese Co., Monroe, Wis., *Feta*

Second: Karoun Dairies Inc., *Feta*

Third: Sierra Cheese Manufacturing Co. Inc., Compton, Calif., *Feta*; Carr Valley Cheese, *cow Feta*

• Feta Cheese: Feta Made from Goat's

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Carr Valley's Gran Canaria - Best of Show

New Members cont'd

story courtesy of Cheese Market News

Gran Canaria, a mixed milk cheese made by Sid Cook of Carr Valley Cheese, La Valle, Wis., won best of show at the 2004 American Cheese Society (ACS) Competition.

"I was absolutely thrilled," Cook says. "It's so difficult to win. This year there were over 700 cheeses, and to get that honor is very, very special."

Aged for more than two years and cured in olive oil, Gran Canaria has a texture similar to Parmesan but with a more complex flavor profile, featuring floral notes, Cook says.

The Best of Show award was one of 20 Carr Valley Cheese won at the competition. Cook says he is "pleased and proud to have won so many prizes."

While Cook considers Gran Canaria, made with sheep's, goat's and cow's milk, a "very good cheese," he says that there was not any one of Carr Valley's Cheese that stood out



Sid Cook won Best of Show.

to him as specifically Best of Show.

"I have quite a few really good cheeses," he says. "It's hard to know which will win."

Carr Valley Cheese has experienced increased success over the past few years. Last year, the company took home 16 prizes from the ACS Competition, Cook says. The company also did very well at the 2004 Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest, taking first in the Cheddar category and taking first, second, third and fourth places in the sheep's and goat's milk class.

Cook attributes the ever-increasing quality of his cheese to several factors. Completing

the Wisconsin Master Cheese Maker program for Fontina and Cheddar "has helped tremendously," he says, as have educational opportunities through the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research. Visiting other cheesemakers around the world has proved very valuable as well, Cook says.

Above all, 40 years of experience in cheesemaking makes the biggest difference, Cook says. A fourth-generation cheesemaker, he grew up in a cheese plant and was exposed to cheesemaking at an early age.

Cook is "ever hopeful" about Carr Valley Cheese's prospects at next year's ACS Competition and other cheese contests. Currently, he is working on new cheeses set to be released next year while looking to improve the varieties the company makes now, Cook says.

For right now, though, Cook is still recovering from his success at the ACS Competition.

"It's pretty fantastic that we won all those prizes," he says.

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Milk

First: Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.,

Websterville, Vt., Vermont goat's milk Feta.

Second: Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy,

Haystack Feta.

Third: Harley Farms Inc., Feta.

• Feta Cheese: Feta Made from

Sheep's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: No award given.

Third: Old Chatham Sheepherding Co., Feta.

• Feta Cheese: Flavor-Added, All Milks

First: No award given.

Second: Lactalis USA-Belmont, Feta with herbs.

Third: No award given.

• Lowfat/Low Salt Cheese: Flavor-

Added

No award given.

• Lowfat/Low Salt Cheese: Fat-Free and Lowfat Cheeses (limited to cheeses with three grams or less total fat per serving size)

First: No award given.

Second: Coach Dairy Goat Farm, Pine Plains,

N.Y., Lowfat Log — Dil.

Third: Hendrick's Farms and Dairy, Telford, Pa.,

Cowart.

• Lowfat/Low Salt Cheese: Light/Lite and Reduced Fat Cheeses (limited to cheeses with 25-50 percent reduction of fat per serving size when 50 percent of calories in the serving size comes from fat)

First: No award given.

Second: No award given.

Third: Roth Käse USA Ltd., reduced-fat Havarti.

• Flavored Cheeses: Cheeses Flavored

with All Peppers, All Milks

First: Karoun Dairies Inc., soft yogurt

cheese/jalapeno.

Second: Spring Hill Jersey Cheese, Mike's

Firehouse Cheddar.

Third: Winchester Cheese Co., Winchester,

Calif., jalapeno Gouda; Amalthia Dairy LLC,

Belgrade, Mont., spiced peppers Chevre.

• Flavored Cheeses: Flowers, Syrups

First: OC's Jersey Creme, Spring Valley, Wis.,

Black Cherry Creme Yogurt; Bingham Hill

Cheese Co., Wasabi fresh farm cheese.

Second: Silvery Moon Creamery, Westbrook,

Mich., Rosemary's Waltz.

Third: Maple Leaf Cheese Co. Co-op, Veggi

Jack PastureLand, Dodge Center, Minn., herb

Gouda.

• Flavored Cheeses: Cheeses Flavored

with Crushed or Whole Peppercorns

or Savory Spices

First: No award given.

Second: BelGioioso Cheese Inc., Pepato;

Silvery Moon Creamery, Tally Ho with pepper-

corn; Fromagerie Bergeron, Coureur des Bois.

Third: Maple Leaf Cheese Co. Co-op, tomato

basil yogurt.

• Flavored Cheeses: Open Category

Made from Goat's Milk

First: Cypress Grove Chevre, herb Chevre;

Cypress Grove Chevre, Fromage A Trois.

Second: Surfing Goat Dairy, Kula, Hawaii,

Tahitian Lime Quark.

Third: Amalthia Dairy LLC, Roasted Garlic &

Chive Chevre; Coach Dairy Goat Farm, Green

Peppercorn Pyramid.

• Flavored Cheeses: Open Category

Made from Sheep's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Everona Dairy, Rapidan, Va., pepper.

Third: Bingham Hill Cheese Co., Blue cheese

spread.

• Smoked Cheeses: Open Category

Made from Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Roth Käse USA Ltd., St. Bernards;

Roth Käse USA Ltd., Rotunno; Bass Lake

Cheese Factory, smoked Gouda & peppercorn.

Third: Fagundes Old-World Cheese, Hanford

Jack-Smoke.

• Smoked Cheeses: Open Category

Made from Goat's Milk

First: Westfield Farms Inc., smoked Capri.

Second and Third: No award given.

• Smoked Cheeses: Open Category

Made from Sheep's Milk

First and Second: No award given.

Third: Carr Valley Cheese, Auricho.

• Smoked Cheeses: Smoked Italian

Styles

First: No award given.

Second: Mozzarella Fresca, Benicia, Calif.,

smoked Mozzarella.

Third: Valley Gold LLC, smoked Provolone.

• Smoked Cheeses: Smoked

Cheddars

First: Shelburne Farms, smoked Cheddar.

Second: Fiscali Cheese Co., smoked

Cheddar.

Third: Sweetwater Valley Farm, smoked cheese.

Diane Connell

Fords, NJ

Michelle Denk

Giant Eagle, Inc.

Harmony, PA

Krista Dittman

Branched Oak Farm

Raymond, NE

Gwen Dolph

WI Department of Agriculture

Madison, WI

Jerry Dryer

Dairy & Food Market Analyst

Delray Beach, FL

Mark Dusza

Organic Food Brokers

Boulder, CO

Steve Duty

Farfelu Vineyards, Flint Hill, VA

Mark Elmore

Kowalskis, Minneapolis, MN

Jill Erber

Cheesetique, Alexandria, VA

Michael Farrell

Spiaggia Restaurant

Tinley Park, IL

Jose Fernandes

Valley Gold, LLC, Gustine, CA

Lorraine Garcia

Escondido, CA

Kimberly Garza

Central Market

Plano, TX

Joseph Gellert

Cheezwhse.com

Armonk, NY

Giovanni Guffanti Fiori

Luigi Guffanti Formaggi

Arona, ITALY

Ron Hirst

Cottonwood Cheese Company

South Hutchinson, KS

Barbara Hoover

Austin, TX

Will Hughes

WI Department of Agriculture

Madison, WI

James Johnston

Boulder, CO

Adrian Keyser

Kowalski's Markets

White Bear Lake, MN

Lora Klenke

WI Department of Agriculture

Madison, WI

Jack Korpi

Triton Foods LLC

Madison, WI

Lori Kunkle

Raleys

West Sacramento, CA

Patricia Laver

Raleys

West Sacramento, CA

Robert Lindsay

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Madison, WI

David Lockwood

Neal's Yard Dairy

London, UNITED KINGDOM

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New Members cont'd

Deborah Mac Millan
San Jose, CA

Julie McCue
Studio-Montage Laguna Beach
Laguna Beach, CA

Norm Monsen
WI Department of Agriculture
Madison, WI

Diana Murphy
Dreamfarm, Cross Plains, WI

Tim Pehl
WI Farmers Union Specialty Cheese
Co.
Mopnfot, WI

Wayne Philbrick
St. Catharines, ON CANADA

Trish Pohanka
European Imports Ltd, Chicago, IL

Lisa Pramann
Whole Foods Market
Minneapolis, MN

John Riemer
JAX/USA, Menomonee Falls, WI

Greg Robertson
Los Angeles, CA

Sara Roussel
Damafro Inc.
Saint-Damase, PQ CANADA

Kelli Schonher
Los Angeles, CA

Luan Schooler
Foster & Dobbs Authentic Foods
Portland, OR

Alice Singletary
Highland Hollow Farm
Jefferson, NY

Tim Smith
Woodbury, CT

Mike Sobol
Parmalat Canada
Balderson, CANADA

Carin Solganik
Solganik Food Group
Dayton, OH

Jeff Teter
Allegro Coffee Company
Thornton, CO

M. Christian Vinet
S.C.A. de L'ile-Aux-Grues
Isle-Aux-Grues, PQ CANADA

Greg Walsh
Swiss Colony
Monroe, WI

Inger Wilkerson
Milwaukee, WI

Ann Wilkinson
Wilkinson Financial
Kansas City, MO

John Williams
Roanoke, VA

Betsy Williams
Roanoke, VA

Richard Wilson
Arrey, NM

John Winterman
San Francisco, CA

Bruce Workman
Edelweiss Town Hall Cheese Co.
Monticello, WI

Joseph Woznicki
Chicopee, MA

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• Farmstead Cheeses: Open Category for Cheeses Aged Longer than 90 Days, All Milks

First: Thistle Hill Farm, North Pomfret, Vt., *Tarentaise*.

Second: Mecox Bay Dairy LLC, Bridgehampton, N.Y., *Mecox Sunrise*.

Third: Oakvale Farm Cheese, London, Ohio, *farmstead Gouda aged*.

• Farmstead Cheeses: Open Category Made from Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Fiscalini Cheese Co., *Premium Reserve*.

Third: Sweet Grass Dairy, *Velvet Rose*.

• Farmstead Cheeses: Open Category Made from Goat's Milk

First: Sweet Grass Dairy, *Lumiere*.

Second: Oro Blanco Cheese, Hudson, Colo., *Asadero*.

Third: Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy, *Queso de mano*; Harley Farms Inc., *Monet*; Pure Luck, Dripping Springs, Texas, *Basket Molded Chevre*.

• Farmstead Cheeses: Open Category Made from Sheep's Milk

First: Belwether Farms, Petaluma, Calif., *Papato*.

Second: Old Chatham Shepherding Co., *Mutton Button*.

Third: Everona Dairy, *Piedmont*.

• Farmstead Cheeses: Open to All Cheeses with Flavor Added, All Milks

First: No award given.

Second: Oakvale Farm Cheese, *jalepeño Gouda*.

Third: Oak Spring Dairy, Upperville, Va., *sun dried tomato, french herb derby*; Fiscalini Cheese Co., *Cheddar with oil*.

• Fresh Goat's Milk Cheeses: Open Category

First: Fromagerie Tournent, *Biquet*.

Second: Amaltheia Dairy LLC, *plain Chevre*.

Third: Sweet Grass Dairy, *fresh Chevre*.

• Fresh Goat's Milk Cheeses: Flavor-Added

First: Caprice, *Fromage A Trois, bourbon chocolate torte*.

Second: Vermont Butter & Cheese Co., *Vermont Chevre Herb*; Westfield Farm Inc., *herb-garlic Capri*.

Third: Mozzarella Co., *Hoja Santa Goat Cheese Bundle*.

• Fresh Sheep's Milk Cheeses: Open Category

First: Carr Valley Cheese, *Marisa*.

Second: Bass Lake Cheese Factory, *Queso de Oregá*.

Third: No award given.

• Fresh Sheep's Milk Cheeses: Flavor-Added

First: Harley Farms Inc., *chive log*.

Second: Old Chatham Shepherding Co., *garlic herb spread*.

Third: No award given.

• Marinated Cheeses: Open Category Made from Cow's Milk

First: Karoun Dairies Inc., *marinated String cheese, olive oil/herbs*.

Second: Fiscalini Cheese Co., *Purple Moon*.

Third: No award given.

• Marinated Cheeses: Open Category Made from Goat's Milk

First: Caprice, *O'Banon*.

Second: Harley Farms Inc., *Chevre in oil*.

Third: Appleton Creamery, Appleton, Maine, *Chevre in olive oil with roasted garlic*.

• Marinated Cheeses: Open Category from Sheep's Milk

First: Carr Valley Cheese, *Gran Canaria* (Best



A group of smiling winners pose for the camera.

of Show).

Second: La Moutonnierie Inc., Ste.-Helene-de-Chester, Quebec, *Cabanon* (alcohol marinated maple leaves).

Third: No award given.

• Marinated Cheeses: Flavor-Added

First: Surfing Goat Dairy, *Napa Wrap, olive oil*.

Second: Silvery Moon Creamery, *French herbed curd*.

Third: Fromagerie Belle Chevre, Elkmont, Ala., *Chevre de Provence*.

• Cultured Cheese Products: Cultured Products Made from Cow's Milk

First: Karoun Dairies Inc., *soft yogurt cheese/plain*.

Second: Sierra Nevada Cheese Co., *Crème Fraiche*.

Third: Cowgirl Creamery, *cottage cheese*.

• Cultured Cheese Products: Cultured Products Made from Goat's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Cypress Grove Chevre, *Fromage Blanc*.

Third: Fromagerie Tournent, *Chevre Blanc*.

• Cultured Cheese Products: Cultured Products Made from Sheep's Milk

First: Bingham Hill Cheese Co., *sheep's milk fresh cheese*.

Second: Willow Hill Farm, *organic sheep yogurt*.

Third: Bingham Hill Cheese Co., *mixed milk fresh cheese*.

• Cultured Cheese Products: Crème Fraiche Products Made from Cow's Milk

First: Bellwether Farms, *Crème Fraiche*.

Second: Cowgirl Creamery, *Crème Fraiche*.

Third: Vermont Butter & Cheese Co., *Vermont Crème Fraiche*.

• Cultured Dairy Products: Fromage Blanc and Quark Cheese Made from Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Cowgirl Creamery, *Fromage Blanc*.

Third: Vermont Butter & Cheese Co., *Vermont Crème Fraiche*.

• Cultured Dairy Products: Yogurts Made from Cow's Milk

First: Straus Family Creamery, Marshall, Calif., *organic whole milk plain yogurt*.

Second: CC's Jersey Crème, *Simply Crème yogurt*.

Third: Blue Ridge Dairy Co., *yogurt*.

• Butters: Salted Butter Made from Cow

First: PastureLand, *butter*.

Second: Keller's Creamery, Harleysville, Pa., *Plugra salted*; Keller's Creamery, *Keller's salted*.

Third: Cabot Creamery Cooperative, *whip cream butter*.

• Butters: Unsalted Butter Made from Cow's Milk (with or without cultures)

First: PastureLand, *butter, no salt*.

Second: McLeod Creamery, Marshall, Va., *butter*.

Third: Straus Family Creamery, *organic*

European-style sweet butter; Organic Valley, *European-style cultured butter*.

• Butters: Butter Made from Sheep's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Shepherd's Way Farms, *Shepherd's butter*.

Third: No award given.

• Cheese Spreads: Open Category Made from Cow's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Carr Valley Cheese, *Hickory Smoke*.

Third: Shelburne Farms, *roasted red pepper cheddar*.

• Cheese Spreads: Open Category Made from Goat's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: Surfing Goat Dairy, *Mandalay*.

Third: Harley Farms Inc., *garlic and herb*.

• Cheese Spreads: Open Category Made from Sheep's Milk

First: No award given.

Second: No award given.

Third: Everona Dairy, *Rapidian*.

• Cheese Spreads: Flavor-Added, All Milks

First: Family Fresh Pack, *Crab Creole*.

Second: Fiscalini Cheese Co., *pesto*.

Third: Surfing Goat Dairy, *Ole! Mozzarella Co., pecan praline mascarpone*.

• Aged Sheep's Milk Cheeses: Open Category

First: No award given.

Second: No award given.

Third: Carr Valley Cheese, *cave-aged Marisa*.

• Aged Goat's Milk Cheeses: Open Category

First: Cypress Grove Chevre, *Mt. McKinley*.

Second: Appleton Creamery, *Chevre in grape leaf*.

Third: Carr Valley Cheese, *cave aged Cardano*.

Third: Redwood Hill Farm Goat Dairy, *Bucheret*.

• Washed Rind Cheeses: Open Category Made from Cow's Milk

First: MouCo Cheese Co., Fort Collins, Colo., *ColoRouge*.

Second: Leelanau Cheese Co., Suttons Bay, Mich., *aged Raclette*.

Third: Uplands Cheese Inc., Dodgeville, Wis., *Pleasant Ridge Reserve*.

• Washed Rind Cheeses: Open Category Made from Goat's Milk

First and Second: No award given.

Third: Carr Valley Cheese, *Riverbend Goat*.

• Washed Rind Cheeses: Open Category Made from Sheep's Milk

First: Bingham Hill Cheese Co., *Angel Feet*.

Second: Carr Valley Cheese, *Riverbend Sheep*.

Third: No award given.

PR Basics: Craft Your Story, Pitch it Well

by Dana Tanyeri

For many cheesemakers, establishing a public relations strategy often isn't included as part of the overall business plan. After all, just making great cheese and keeping up with operational business demands can be all-consuming—particularly for small-scale producers. The costs involved in hiring and managing a PR agency or even a freelance publicist can be daunting, and going it alone can be confusing. It's easier and faster to just buy a few ads to get your message out, right?

Yes, and no. There are lots of reasons why devoting time, effort and budget on PR can pay off in spades — far more than purchased advertising — to help grow awareness of and respect for your products and your company, and ultimately help grow your business. As panelists at this summer's ACS Conference seminar on Marketing & Public Relations pointed out, getting publicity through PR offers three key benefits over simply buying ad space:

1. It's considerably cheaper — sometimes even free.
2. It's more credible. Coverage generated via PR carries objective, third-party endorsement. A respected journalist/author/editor has deemed the information to be relevant and of interest to his or her readers, and is telling your story for you.
3. It can deliver your message to a broader range of key targets and, by way of that third-party endorsement can open many more doors for you with key targets than can advertising.

Getting savvy about PR doesn't have to be a tremen-

dously involved process, and there are a few basic fundamentals that every cheesemaker interested in getting free publicity should get in order. A first and very important step is to carefully analyze your own "story." Many cheesemakers don't really think they're all that interesting or that they have a compelling story to tell, but most certainly do. Is yours a long-time family business? Are you a farmsteader? A

Master Cheesemaker? Do you use only milk from pasture-grazed animals? Is your product organic? Raw milk? Is it the best example of an artisanally produced classic variety? Have you won awards? Do your products carry whimsical names that in themselves have a story to tell? Do you offer tours and tastings? Are your aging caves unique? Did you leave the suit-and-tie business world for cheesemaking? You get the idea. Review every facet of your business and your background to ferret out the ingredients for a good, compelling tale. They're there, but you need to pull them together and be able to paint a picture for the media. Writers' appetites for good stories about great artisan, handcrafted products and the people who create them are virtually insatiable. Feed them well and you'll get coverage.

To start with, pick up a few of the leading consumer food magazines and leaf through them to get an idea of the types of stories they run and how they weave specific products into their features and recipes. Make a list of publications you'd love to be featured in, check their mastheads (staff listings, usually toward the

front of the magazine) and start creating a database of food editor and/or feature editor names and contact information. These become your targets. The same is true of local and regional newspapers, city and regional magazines, restaurant and retail trade publications,



radio programs that do special food-oriented shows, etc. Your PR contact list should also include names and addresses of target chefs/restaurateurs and specialty retailers with whom you already do business or with whom you'd like to do business. When you have news to share, they should get it straight from you.

Press Kit, Release Basics

Armed with your target list, you're ready to develop an initial PR "tool kit." This can be quite simple (or every elaborate, depending on your resources), and at the very least should include a basic press kit. The press kit can be nothing more than a good quality folder containing a press release about your company, information on the products you make, copies of any articles that have been done on your business/products in the past, your company's brochure and/or sell sheets, perhaps a map showing where you're located, a list of noteworthy shops and/or restaurants using your products, photos (if you have them), and any other materials that will help to convey the facts about your business and to paint a picture that will make an editor or writer want to find out more — or at the very least stash the kit away in his or her "cheese" file for future reference.

Press releases, always a component of press kits, also stand alone. They're the primary way to convey informa-

tion about your company and the most fundamental of the PR tools. They're not particularly sexy, but they're very useful and effective when done well. Among the biggest mistakes that entrepreneurs attempting to do their own press releases make is using them to try to tell the whole story. That's the journalist's job. The release should convey the facts, get them interested, and offer information on who to contact for more information. Under almost no circumstances should a press release be more than two pages long, double spaced.

A few other do's and don'ts about press releases:

◆Follow standard press-release format. Do a quick web search on "press releases" to find examples on wire services, if you need formats to look at.

◆Include a date, particularly for timely information such as awards just won or new products released. For more general releases, a specific date isn't as necessary.

◆If you're not a proficient writer, or you don't have a good writer on staff, try to hire one. Don't make the mistake of sending out a release that may have grammatical and/or spelling errors. Sloppy release rarely get a second look. If budget is very tight and there's a good university nearby, seek out the communications department for senior-level students looking for practical experience.

◆Make sure the first paragraph answers who, what, when, where and why. You must convey right up front what the story is. Don't waste the first paragraph being cute or as a set-up to the real story. Keep in mind that journalists receive hundreds of releases

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Public relations



By Liz Campbell

The beauty of public relations is that you're getting an independent third party—a respected editor or culinary leader, for instance—to tell your story for you. Unlike paid advertising, public relations, because of that third-party endorsement, has greater credibility," noted Dana Tanyeri of Tanyeri Editorial Services, moderator of an ACS panel session on marketing and public relations strategies for cheesemakers "The trick is to do the legwork to make sure that they get the story right and tell it how you want it to be told."

Media representatives on the panel were Bill Rice, retired food and wine editor of the Chicago Tribune and now a cheese-loving freelance writer; Laura Werlin, author and food writer; and Melanie Wolkoff, managing editor of Chef magazine. Offering a PR expert's point of view was Linda Funk, vice president of Food Insights, an Urbandale, Iowa-based public relations firm. Panelists shared their insights on how cheesemakers can work with the media to gain coverage of their products and their companies.

Bill Rice:

"Cheese is a hot product and cheese plates are hot. People these days are asking for a cheese plate instead of dessert. And because the quality of American cheese has improved so much, it's hot. My colleagues and I are in the information business; we have columns that have to be filled. That's an opportunity for the cheesemaker."

Suggestions:

- ◆ Make personal contact.
- ◆ Be informed about your product and your subject.
- ◆ Establish a rapport. Folksy vignettes are great.
- ◆ Be aware of the publication's recent stories. Don't suggest another goat cheese story.
- ◆ Let your product speak for

you, arrange a tasting somewhere.

- ◆ Bring in your personality and photos help a lot.
- Laura Werlin:**

"Get into the business of shameless self-promotion; we aren't culturally driven that way, but we need to be. My book is my baby, your cheese is yours." To bring home the importance of a product's story, Werlin led the audience through a tasting of two strawberry jams. She told the story of each producer, romancing one and giving basic facts about the other, and when the tasting was complete asked for a vote on the favorite jam. The one with the more interesting story won easily. The catch was that the jams were identical. The story is what sells the product, she emphasized, advising cheesemakers to give careful thought to their own story before reaching out to the media."

Suggestions:

- ◆ Have something to hand out; it doesn't have to be slick.
- ◆ Always return phone calls in a timely fashion. Because they're busy, cheesemakers often don't
- ◆ When you give your cheese to someone, make sure it's good. If you haven't really good representative cheese, tell them you'll send it in a week or two.

◆ Do things to stand out. For example, at Christmas, send out packages of food products (bake cookies, wrap cheeses) to retailers or journalists—let them know you're thinking of them on Christmas eve. You'll stand out for being thoughtful.

Melanie Wolkoff:

"Every journalist has the same problem. Our deadline was yesterday. But chefs, my magazine's audience, are passionate about their work and you're passionate about your cheese, so the fit is perfect."

Telling your story

Suggestions:

◆ Always get back to journalists right away if they call you. "Sometimes we might call last minute because we have to add a page to a story. Or we might need an image. That's your chance."

◆ When you dine at a restaurant, introduce yourself to the chef; they are delighted to meet cheesemakers.

◆ A website is very important. Always include a source guide at the end with your phone number and address. It doesn't have to be fancy. Put downloadable images for media in one area. Also, stories done on you in the past can be put here.

◆ Notify us about events like pairings with chefs, or other events.

◆ Make a small effort to build a personal relationship with me. Fax or e-mail me, with pictures on the press releases. I want to hear your story but be brief.

◆ If you sent it, trust that I got it. Don't keep calling me to see if I'm going to use it. You can however, call the magazine and ask for an editorial calendar so you know what sorts of things we're working on in the coming months.

Linda Funk:

"Public relations is all about relationships. I've tried to get to know food editors all over the country and let them know they can call me at the last minute and I'll always, if at all possible, try to respond within 15 minutes."

Suggestions:

◆ If you say you'll do something, do it. If you promise product, send it. And make sure it's perfect. You have one shot to make the best impression.

◆ Decide if you're targeting a region or the whole nation. That will depend on your budget. Get to know your region and especially local chefs and media outlets.

◆ Join regional and national organizations. These are great

for networking.

◆ Communicate with food writers regularly so when they do a story on cheese, you're the first person they think of. Don't push as to whether they use it right away. It can take months or even years to get a good hit.

◆ Thank writers who include you in their articles. A simple call or a written thank-you note is best. Many can't or won't accept gifts from story sources.

◆ Don't get angry or snippy with editors—your story may have been pulled for space; it's usually not their fault. It may take a few months before it all comes together but it will.

◆ Decide who is spokesperson for company—PR person, owner, cheesemaker, whomever it is has to be the go-to person so important queries don't get lost and so that messages conveyed are accurate and consistent.

◆ Develop a relationship with culinary schools. Today's students are tomorrow's chefs and they'll remember you.

◆ Invest in some good photography to make available for media use. Don't splash your brand on the picture; they want to see your product, not your name. That smacks of advertising so don't cross the line. Let them tell the story for you.

◆ Building PR into the business strategy is critical for cost-effective marketing, but it's even more important for when something goes wrong. In a recall situation, for instance, you may have only one shot at getting your side of the story out there quickly and you may be too overwhelmed in a problem situation to do it well yourself. In these situations, a professional PR person can do significant damage control. You may have only one shot at getting your side of the story out there quickly and you may be too stressed to do it yourself. In situations like that a PR person can do significant damage control.

Events Calendar

Thanks to Cheese Market News for kindly providing the listings

Oct. 4 - 6: Northern Bounty V: Cuisine Canada's food and beverages conference at the University of Guelph. Cheese workshop by food science professor, Art Hill. Contact Office of Open Learning (519)767-5000, e-mail: info@open.uoguelph.ca website: www.cuisinecanada.ca.

Oct. 4-8: Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course, Madison, Wis. Contact Bill Wendorff, University of Wisconsin, Department of Food Sciences, 1605 Linden Dr., Madison, WI 53706, 608-263-2015.

Oct. 11-13: Sanitation Short Course, State College, Pa. Contact Pen State 814-865-8301, e-mail: shortcourse@psu.edu, website: conferences.cas.psu.edu/.

Oct. 17-20: University of Wisconsin-River Falls Food Microbiology Symposium and Workshop: Current Concepts In Food-borne Pathogens and Rapid and Automated Methods in Food Microbiology, River Falls, Wis. Contact the Department of Animal and Food Science, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, 410 South 3rd Street, River Falls, WI 54022, 715-425-3704, FAX 715-425-3785, e-mail: foodmicro@uwrf.edu.

Oct. 19-20: California Polytechnic State University's 9th Annual Dairy Cleaning and Sanitation Short Course, San Luis Obispo, Calif. Contact Laurie Jacobson, 805-756-6097, www.calpoly.edu/~dptc.

Oct. 24-28: National Dairy Board/National Milk Producers Federation/United Dairy Industry Association Joint Annual Meeting, Reno, Nev. Contact National Milk Producers Federation, 703-243-6111, FAX 703-841-9328, website: www.nmpf.org.

Oct. 26-27: Koshersfest 2004, New York. Contact www.koshersfest.com.

Nov. 2-3: New York Pizza Show, New York. Contact Dianna Seddon, sale representative, 877-281-8134, e-mail: dseddon@infinity-expo.com, www.newyorkpizzashow.com.

Nov. 4-5: University of California-Davis and Food Protection Institute's HACCP: Verification and Validation — An Advanced Workshop, Davis, Calif. Contact Registration Office, UC-Davis Extension, University of California, 1333 Research Park Dr., Davis CA 95616, 800-752-0881, FAX 530-757-8558, website: www.extension.ucdavis.edu.

Nov. 4-6: 10th Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium, Hudson, Wis. Contact University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Conference Services, 620 Babcock Dr., Madison, WI 53706, 608-263-1672, FAX 608-262-5088, www.cals.wisc.edu/cos.

Feb. 7-8, 2005: 7th Symposium in Dairy Product Technology — Concentrated & Dried Dairy Ingredients, Shell Beach, Calif. Contact Laurie Jacobson, 805-756-6097, e-mail: ljacobso@calpoly.edu, website: www.calpoly.edu/~dptc/05symp.html.

www.calpoly.edu/~dptc/05symp.html.

Feb. 24-25, 2005: USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum 2005, Arlington, Va. Contact Outlook Forum 2005, Rm. 4419, South Building, USDA, Washington, DC 20250-3812, e-mail: agforum@oce.usda.gov.

March 8-9, 2005: Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Annual Business Conference, Arlington, Va. Contact PDPW, 800-947-7379, website: www.pdpw.org.

April 20, 2005: Cheesemaking Challenges and Opportunities Conference: Sonoma, Calif. Contact Sheana Davis, P.O. Box 1916, Sonoma, CA 95476, 707-935-7960, sheana@vom.com, website: www.sheana-davis.com.

October 27, 2004: Members of the American Cheese Society are cordially invited to participate in the American Dairy Goat Association Products Competition, which will be held at the Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid North. This marks the 100th anniversary of the Association.

A cash prize will be awarded to the Best in Show in Commercial and Amateur divisions. In addition, the Commercial entries will be served at the Wine and Cheese reception Wednesday evening following the competition. Entry details, competition rules, forms found at www.ADGA.org.

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Crafting your story

continued from page 17

each week. Many don't get read beyond the first paragraph so yours needs to catch them there or it will likely get tossed before the writer bothers to wade down to discover the real information you're hoping to get covered.

♦Make sure a name and contact information appear near the top of the page. It must be easy for journalists scanning the release to figure out how to get ahold of you. Include phone number and e-mail address, if possible. And by all means, when an editor or writer tries to reach you, **CALL THEM BACK** right away.

♦Only send out press releases when you really do have something to say or some news to share. Don't flood editors with empty releases just to keep your name in front of them. That strategy can backfire and

create annoyance vs. interest.

♦Resist the urge to call editors/writers after sending out a release to see if they received it. Trust that they did. Call to follow up only if you have some additional information to share.

♦If you're planning to send cheese samples with a release (a good idea, as tasting is believing), do so only if you've called ahead to alert the editor/writer that you're doing so and to find out when would be a good time to make the delivery. The last thing you want is for a mail room clerk to plop your precious cheese on an editor's desk whose out covering a conference for the next three days. Also, if sending samples, take the trouble to make sure that you're sending your very best. You only get one chance to make a first impression.



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- The opportunity for cheesemakers to exhibit their products at the Winter and Spring NASFT Fancy Food Shows, in San Francisco and New York

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INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP \$125 • The Individual membership includes those individuals and businesses that are involved in the production, distribution, marketing of cheese and/or related products. Individual memberships may also be held by writers, cookbook authors, and academicians in related fields. Includes the Associate benefits above, plus: • membership directory • annual conference report • ACS website listing, link to your own website, and access to members-only area • invitations to selected Society events • voting rights and eligibility for the Board of Directors. For cheesemaker members, also included in the Individual Membership are • reduced judging entry fees for the annual cheese competition • option to participate at Bon Appetit Wine & Spirit Focus • option to participate in NASFT trade shows in New York and San Francisco.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP \$750 • Benefits include those of the Individual member category above, for up to five designated company representatives (a \$625.00 value) and the ability to add additional members at the reduced rate of \$100.00 each, plus: • a one-time one-quarter page ad in the ACS newsletter (all artwork and copy to be supplied by member) • eligibility to advertise in the ACS newsletter.

MULTI-UNIT BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP \$1,875 • Designed for multi-unit retail outlets, membership is held by each of the units under the same business heading. All employees of the company would be affiliate members of the ACS via the store membership. This category includes all of the same benefits of the Corporate Membership, plus • each unit listed in the membership directory • eligibility for all employees to receive annual conference discounted rate • access for all employees to the members-only area of the ACS website.