

The American Cheese Society

NEWSLETTER

1ST QUARTER 2005

The Dreaded Recall

Recall. It's probably the most emotionally-charged word in a cheesemaker's lexicon. Those who have gone through the process agree. When the message arrives that **YOUR** cheese, **YOUR** creation, contains something that could harm someone, it's almost a personal attack. Most cheesemakers want to forget it ever happened to them. Two were willing

to talk about it but we've kept their identities private. One company survived; the other, sadly, did not in its original form. The two were willing to talk about it because, as one said, "A recall isn't good for anybody. We're a small community, a village of cheesemakers. We're all in this together. And a recall affects everyone."

Here, in brief, are their experiences and the advice they offer:

I

"When the recall notice came I was devastated. My whole life revolved around the ranch and the cheese," said one cheesemaker, who discovered that the reality can be even more devastating when faced alone. "I called my silent and absent partners and none of them came. I was left to handle it alone. It was if there had been a death in the family."

The FDA had done a routine test on two wheels of cheese from the same batch and found one contained *Listeria monocytogenes*. The contamination was outside, on the rind. No one was ill; this was a routine problem

for the FDA. But for the

cheesemaker, it was an emotional roller coaster which, she admits, she handled poorly. "I was in an emotional storm; as a result, I created more chaos," she says now. "I antagonized my key employee who quit. I did things I should not have done. I was acting out of fear and frustration. But there was no one to turn to. My partners stayed away and added to the panic phone calls."

The first step was to issue a recall letter and press release. But when asked for help, the FDA offered her none, only more threatening letters and phone calls. It was terrifying.

Help did come from the local dairy inspector who explained exactly what needed to be done. Samples from the entire plant were taken for testing. Then it was cleaned with disinfectant. Repeated checks were performed to ensure everything was safe. Within a week, everything was done. Unfortunately, it took three

weeks for the local inspector to be notified by the FDA.

The recall should have covered 19 wheels of cheese, and of these, 12

had already been consumed. Seven should have been returned. What actually came back was 28 wheels – anything with their name on it had been returned. And all were destroyed in front of the dairy inspector. The financial hit was as devastating as the emotional one. Indeed, the company did not survive, and the partnership was destroyed. The cheese, though, is still being made. The cheesemaker has gone on to form a new company alone, and she is now producing cheese again.

What has she learned? "I would never go through it alone again," she said. In fact, she has used her own dreadful experience to help other ACS members who have had to go through the same process. "I would immediately turn the whole thing over to a disinterested

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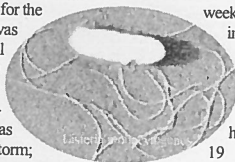
ACS Mission Statement

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.





**QUARTERLY
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,

By the time this arrives at your door, it will be the New Year! What has probably been a hectic holiday season will have passed. I hope you enjoyed the time with family, and of course, some great cheese.

I want to take this opportunity to bring you all up to date on some of the behind the scenes things that have taken place. Your Board of Directors held a board meeting in Louisville, Kentucky in early November. Amongst the issues addressed were balancing the 2005 budget for our organization, introducing our new board members to policy governance, renewing our contract with FSA, organizing our committees, the review of this past year's conference and developing means to involve more of our members in this society in an active way.

Although we face some difficult challenges, as does every organization that has grown at the sort of pace we have - our membership now exceeds 900 members - the energy offered by this group is phenomenal. We all want to offer our members improved benefits, great programs, and an absolutely fabulous conference venue. In addition we want to provide unending network opportunities throughout the year. But our pocketbook unfortunately does not permit this if we are to be fiscally responsible. We confronted this issue head on and decided to put our efforts into sponsorship, membership and conference planning.

The sponsorship committee has already raised monies in excess of their goal at this time. Many companies are excited about supporting the American Cheese Society and our efforts, and I want to thank them. We are all encouraged by this faith and support, and we commend the sponsorship committee for their success.

The membership committee has a new chair, John Eggena, who has come up with some innovative methods to bring new benefits to our members. Please look at John's new column in this newsletter.

The conference in years past was usually chaired by one or two people - too few for this incredible task. This year I am pleased to tell you we do not have to offer the sacrificial lamb, so to speak. In fact, not only do we have additional support from FSA, our management group, but a committee of nine members has also been formed to put together a spectacular conference, with programs designed to meet the needs of all our members. This year's conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky so please mark your calendars for July 22 to 24.

Those of you who have been able to attend our programs will understand that their success is dependent on our volunteers. We need volunteers. Anyone interested in sharing their time, whether it be on a committee or at this year's conference please contact our director, Barry King.

I also encourage any member that wants to be more active in this organization to let us know the area of your personal interest. And I encourage you to become more involved with this terrific organization. You will discover a host of new friends and rewarding activities.

I wish you all a great start to the new year and look forward to seeing you in Louisville in 2005.

Best wishes,
Jodie Wische



Upcoming Topic

2nd quarter 2005



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

Dear ACS Members

A very Happy New Year to all of you! I hope that it is a prosperous and healthy one for you, your families, and your friends.

As we make plans for this new year, I think it's important to take a few moments to reflect on past accomplishments and see where they are taking us, both personally and as a group with a common goal.

In reflection on the past and in anticipation of the future, it seems that the ACS and its members made and will continue to make headlines, bringing consumer attention to what has now become known as the new "American Artisanal Cheese Movement."

Food writers and authors from all over the world call the office, almost on a daily basis, wanting to discuss feature articles, television spots, and new books on American artisanal and specialty cheeses. So, the ACS and its members are well on their way to "Creating Tradition," which brings me to the theme of the 22nd Annual Conference, in Louisville (July 22-24).

Interestingly, those who contact headquarters for information want statistics, and thanks to the recent study sponsored by the

California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) on the U.S. cheese industry (September, 2004), as well as the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) State of the Specialty Food Industry report (April, 2004), we are able to illustrate how this "new" cheese movement affects the ACS in particular, showing production, consumption, demand and the dollar value of cheese produced in the U.S.

More importantly, though, the studies give validity to a lot of hard work and to the need for the industry in general, and government agencies, in particular, to support American Artisanal cheese producers with funding through grants, loans, and tax credits. These could help save a family farm or sustain a small creamery.

While the large cheese producers provide depth and can meet the huge consumer demand, as evidenced in the CMAB study, it's the artisan and specialty cheesemakers who provide breadth, sophistication and finesse to the offerings available in the American marketplace. Every producer, no matter how large or small, has a place at the table, and that is a tradition as old as America. That is a tradition of which I am proud to be a part.

Best to all,

Barry King

ACS NEWSLETTER Advertising Information

Mechanical Requirements:

ACS will not process, typeset or edit any copy or artwork, nor can it resize any ads to meet the specifications. All ads are black and white. Fine lines or small print is not recommended. Electronic artwork is preferred. Files must be 300 dpi and saved as EPS or TIFF. Ads created in Microsoft Word are not accepted. A hard copy is required for reference. Advertiser and its agency accepts full responsibility for the contents of all advertising and holds ACS free and clear from any claims, liability or damages arising out of or on behalf of advertiser.

Advertising deadlines:

1st Quarter Issue: December 1
2nd Quarter Issue: March 1
3rd Quarter Issue: June 1
4th Quarter Issue: September 1

To submit your ad, contact Barry King at ACS.

Costs shown are per issue. 20% discount for consecutive ads in two or four issues.

Ad Size	W x H	Member Cost
Full Page	7.5" x 10"	\$425.00
Half page	7.5" x 4.94"	225.00
1/4 page	3.69" x 4.94"	130.00
1/6 page	3.69" x 3.25"	90.00
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Member News and Events

WCR Gets a Taste of ACS

The historic Seelbach Hilton in Louisville hosted not one, but two food groups on the same date in November—the ACS Board of Directors, who'd gathered for annual budget and conference planning meetings, and the Women Chefs & Restaurateurs (WCR), who had come together for their annual conference. ACS board member Paula Lambert, chair of the Own Back Yard Committee, heard opportunity knocking and arranged to have ACS cheeses showcased at the WCR's opening reception. As Paula says, "It was a match made in heaven!"

Held in the hotel's Ratskeller, the reception featured several tasting stations at which the roughly 300 chefs and restaurateurs attending could sample cheeses and rub elbows with the cheesemakers.

ACS Board members participating were:

- * Mike Gingrich, **Uplands Cheese**, Dodgeville, Wis., sampling Pleasant Ridge Reserve
- * Allison Hooper, **Vermont Butter & Cheese**, Websterville, Vt., sampling Creamy Goat Cheese and Vermont Cultured Butter
- * John Eggenga, Fromagerie Tourevent, Magog, Quebec, sampling Chevre Noir and Tournevent Medallions
- * Paula Lambert, **The Mozzarella Company**, Dallas, serving Blanca Bianca, Montasio Festivo, and Goat Cheese wrapped in Hoja Santa leaves. Longtime ACS member
- * Judy Schad, **Capriole**, Greenville, Ind., sampling her Mount St. Francis, Banon and Sofia cheeses.

Manning an ACS information table were Jennifer Bice of **Redwood Hill Farm**, Sebastopol, Calif., and ACS Executive Director Barry King, who passed out membership forms and cheese information. They were almost as busy as the cheese tables!

Ashville, N.C., chef Laurey Masterson, who organized the event, remarked, "It was grand to have so much cheese to try. It really filled the room nicely and made the entire event so much richer."

Craves Find Surprises on Swiss Affinage Study Tour

Gearing up to build their own cheese aging facility later this year, George and Debbie Crave of **Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese** in Waterloo, Wis., trav-

eled to Switzerland and Austria in late October to study the art of affinage. The Craves, who craft award-winning specialty farmstead cheeses, spent a week visiting 18 cheese plants. "With the lack of knowledge of modern cheese aging caves in the U.S., visiting European facilities and talking to European cheesemakers, who have used caves for centuries, was a must," said Debbie.

Before visiting the Swiss cheese facilities and talking with dozens of master Swiss cheesemakers, the Craves said they assumed aging caves needed to closely emulate the traditional French caves of old. But what they found was quite different. "Virtually all small aging rooms were modern facilities with hard metal or plastic walls and floors and technology that closely controlled the internal environment," she said. "Our assumption that these caves needed to be large also proved to be unfounded. For white-mold cheeses aged three to four weeks, a 12'x12' space seemed to be adequate for all of the Swiss facilities."

The couple witnessed several racking methods for aging cheeses, she added. Many cheesemakers used spruce boards for longer aged cheeses, while plastic trays and metal racks were often the choice of those making younger white-mold cheeses.

The Crave's trip was part of the Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Research Program, a partnership between The Babcock Institute and UW-Madison Food Science Department, the Dairy Business Innovation Center and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. To read more about their European study tour, read the Crave's research paper at www.***

Kohler Food & Wine a Cheesey Experience

American cheese was a key ingredient in the success of last fall's Kohler Food & Wine Experience, held at the beautiful American Club resort in Kohler, Wis. A regional event backed by headline sponsor *Food & Wine* magazine, the "experience" brings in celebrity chefs, culinarians and wine experts from around the country for a weekend of sampling, education, demonstrations, pairing and networking. Many ACS members were among those adding a decidedly cheesey—and very popular—flavor to the weekend. Making two appearances on the program was author and ACS Board member **Laura Werlin**, who took attendees through a tasting of American artisanal cheeses from coast to coast. Werlin also teamed up for a wine-and-cheese pairing seminar with fellow author

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Member News and Events

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and wine expert Anthony Giglio.

When not sitting in on seminars or cooking demonstrations, guests nibbled their way through the Culinary Showcase, where local and regional food artisans—the majority of them cheesemakers—sampled and sold their products. ACS members participating included **Uplands Cheese**; the **Dairy Business Innovation Center**, which featured products from clients including **LoveTree Farmstead Cheese**, **Northern Meadows**, **Cedar Grove Cheese**, **Hook's Cheese**, **Fantome Farm**

Chevre, and **Bleu Mont Dairy**; **Carr Valley Cheese**; **Roth Kase Ltd.**; **BelGioioso**; and **DCI Cheese**.

Larry's Market in Milwaukee sampled artisan cheeses along with other gourmet products, and offered ACS brochures and membership forms at its booth.

The **Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board** sponsored a fabulous display and sampling of artisan cheeses manned by Kohler chefs at the annual Taste of the Vine kick-off reception. So prevalent and popular was great cheese at the event this year one chef attending suggested that next year the name of the Culinary Showcase be changed to The Cheese Cave, or, going a step further, the name of the entire event be changed from Kohler Food & Wine Experience to Kohler Cheese & Wine Experience...Not a bad idea.

Awards & Accolades

Never a dull moment at Dallas-based **The Mozzarella Company**! Owner/cheesemaker Paula Lambert sends news that her goat's milk Caciotta cheese won first place in the Hispanic, Portuguese and Italian Category at the 2004 American Dairy Goat Association Competition. And **The Mozzarella Company's** press clippings file keeps growing, with recent coverage in publications including *Celebrated Living* magazine (feature pairing MozzCo cheeses with Single Malt Scotchies); *The Dallas Observer* (highlighting the company as "Best Urban Cheesemaker"); and *D Magazine* (naming the company as one of their 30 all-time favorite things in Dallas).

Willow Hill Farm won first place for their cow's milk washed rind, Fernwood as well as the title of Grand Reserve Champion of International cheeses at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair held annually in Toronto in November.

At the same show, **Cowgirl Creamery** won first place for International Hare in the Variety Cheese category. Sue Conley's comment: "My, you Canadians have good taste!"

Surfing Goat Dairy was the highest decorated dairy of all 104 entries at the Cheese Competition, Commercial Division, during the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Dairy Goat Association held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They won First Place for French Dream, soft-ripened chevre flavoured with herbs and two Second Place Awards for Men's Challenge, a fresh chevre flavoured with horseradish and Swedish Heart, a soft-ripened chevre flavoured with caraway. Eva Kafsack said they were "especially happy that two of our "oldtimers" (men's and swedish heart) got the second place awards and one of our latest creations won the first place."

Cheese is good for you

While many cheeses are high in fat and calories, nutritionist Gayle Reichler, author of *Active Wellness* believes they're they're also good sources of calcium. And cheese contains conjugated linoleic acid, a "good" fat that may reduce risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes. This acid may help you lose weight by blocking the storage of fat in your body.

She suggests strong-flavored cheeses, such as feta, blue cheese and fresh (not pre-grated) parmesan, as you can use a little less without flavour loss.

Try fresh goat cheese, which you can find

at your local grocery store. It weighs in at just 23 calories an ounce, compared to cheddar's 114 an ounce.

Skip low-fat and fat-free cheeses. "Reduced-fat cheeses still have about six grams of fat per ounce; and they're not as flavorful, so we tend to allow ourselves to eat more of them," says Atlanta nutritionist Chris Rosenbloom, a spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association.

Source: *Redbook Magazine*: 7 "Bad" Foods That Are Good for Your Body by Patricia Curtis

Welcome New Members

Jeff Dye
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Delano, CA

Diana Devendorf
New Rochelle, NY

Marie-Angela Graham
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Carr Valley
Mauston, WI

Andre Grigorian
Glendale, CA

Maureen Cunnie
Cowgirl Creamery
Point Reyes Station, CA

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Kenneth McNulty Wisconsin
Cheese Mart Milwaukee, WI

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FireFly Farms Organic, Inc.
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Lactalis Groupe USA, Inc.
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**ACS Corporate
Member/Sponsors
2004-2005**
continued

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McCadam Cheese Co., Inc.
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New York, N.Y.

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Roth Käse USA, Ltd.
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**Seacrest Foods International
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**Vermont Butter & Cheese
Company,** Websterville, Vt.

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Mid Atlantic, Rockville,
Md./Midwest, Chicago, Ill.

Northern Pacific,
Emeryville, Calif.

Southwest
Austin, Texas

**Wisconsin Milk
Marketing Board**
Madison, Wis.

Zingerman's Delicatessen
Ann Arbor, Mich.

New Members

Ten Broeck Jones came to the American Cheese Society annual meeting in Milwaukee hoping to learn more about making her dream come true. She wants to be a cheesemaker. "Like many cheesemakers I've met, my interest in cheesemaking sort of accidentally fell before me," she says. "I went to Bordeaux, France my junior year of college and fell in love with the cuisine and the way food was presented and valued."

In 2003, she returned for her last year and she says, "I needed to start developing my plan for the 'The Real World'." She researched culinary schools and interviewed professional chefs who told her that professional cooking meant adhering to standards, working in an intense environment, and spending most of one's time over management and customer service.

Discouraged, she visited Borders Books where she flipped through the pages of the French Laundry's cookbook. She read about their suppliers — a lobster farmer in Maine, a mushroom hunter, and of course, a cheesemaker, Cindy Callahan of Bellwether

Farms. "As soon as I read the piece, I was hooked," she recalls. "That evening I found a very appealing side of the culinary environment. It combines my interest in good food, traveling, and nature. I immediately took action to get involved."

To complete her French and International Relations majors, she did an independent study on the artisan and commercial French cheese industry. She also started selling goat cheeses for Ginger Olson at the Davis Farmer's Market.

After graduating from UC Davis last July her parents loaned her the money to attend the ACS meeting. "It was great because I had a chance to talk to a whole bunch of cheesemakers," she said. "I realized I needed money for land and animals."

In the meanwhile, it was inevitable that Ten Broeck would find a job at a cheese shop, in fact at The Cheese Shop, in Carmel, California. "It's cool to see the retail side of things," she says. "I'm learning a lot about cheese and wine here."

Being a good ACS member, she tries to tell a story



with every cheese she sells. "Going to the conference gave me a whole bunch more knowledge," she says. "I tell as much as I know — how it was made, or I talk about the cheesemaker if I met them."

The Cheese Shop sells many American artisanal cheeses. She offers samples as soon as people walk in the door. Sometimes people are hesitant, but once they taste it they're hooked. It usually gets them excited and interested in buying more. "It's a lot more interactive than many stores," she says.

What does the future hold for Ten Broeck? "Becoming a cheesemaker is a long-term goal. Right now I'm trying to explore different facets of the cheese industry and learn everything I can about it," she says. "I'm hoping to come to the conference in Louisville this year. I'm still paying my parents for the last trip but it was so great to be there."



Kelli Schonher came to her first American Cheese Society meeting in 2004, and she was so enthused by the time she left Milwaukee, that she was more determined than ever to become a cheesemaker.

But she also listened to the cheesemakers with whom she spoke. They told her that she might like to expand her time line a little as she was probably being a

little too optimistic about starting up cheesemaking in six months.

Kelli has neither land nor animals. But she has lots of ideas. Her first hurdle was finding milk — a simple matter in San Luis Obispo with its acres of farmland covered in cows, or so she thought. The cows, she found, were being raised for beef, not milk. And at a course at Cal Poly, she learned about

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Membership Benefits Go Far Beyond the Obvious

by John Eggena

ACS Membership Committee Chair

This is the first of what I hope will be a regular column. The subject is us—ACS members—and I'm exploring ways to increase communication. I'll write a bit about who we are and what we're doing at the ACS to build a sense of community so all members can more actively participate.

We all come from diverse backgrounds but share a common interest—our enthusiasm for the specialty cheese world. Membership is most often defined in terms of receiving "benefits"—a newsletter, a membership directory, discounts on events, etc. There are, however, very important membership benefits that get too little attention. They stem from the daily, behind-the-scenes work to build the ACS community and to educate both members and the general public on major issues influencing our specialty cheese milieu.

As a cheesemaker, I became a member of ACS to be a part of a larger community. With a membership now approaching 1,000, including small and large cheesemakers, specialty cheese distributors, retailers of all sizes, chefs, marketers, media, food writers, researchers and enthusiasts, the ACS is a unique group with the potential to network on an unprecedented level. The fact that American specialty cheeses are becoming more prevalent and important in the market today is not an accident. It has been a collective effort, and the ACS has been working hard to nurture this

excitement. In the eyes of the public, the ACS speaks as our common voice. That's certainly a huge "benefit."

My intent is not propaganda, but rather to honor and compliment all the efforts made by hundreds of volunteer members over the past 15+ years. To illustrate what membership is and can be, here are just some of the issues we've worked on in small groups and as a Board that have a direct and indirect influence on all of us in the industry on a daily basis.

Mandatory Pasteurization

The ACS co-founded a national group to protect the right to make raw milk cheeses. We helped to finance a study that helped stay the FDA from repealing the 60-day aging rule. And the ACS promoted an awareness and publicity campaign through a national retail chain to educate the public on this issue.

Consumer Safety

Through many workshops at annual conferences and regional events, ACS has encouraged and helped to establish Standard Standard Codes of Practice and HACCP programs for small cheesemakers. This campaign benefits everyone, from cheesemakers to marketers and the public in general. The Society's efforts send a pro-active message that says we're concerned with consumer safety and are doing something about it in our specialty cheese community.

Publicity

As the collective "voice" for the American artisanal and specialty cheese

industry, ACS is constantly tapped for information by journalists, researchers and others. Daily, we promote all American specialty cheeses. We try to promote visibility of our fine cheesemakers at many regional and national events such as Slow Foods, Bon Appetit Tastings, the New York Sheep & Wool Festival and many others.

There are many more, but these articulate some of the issues and interests of all our members. Of course, not everything runs smoothly—someone gets overlooked, activities get cancelled, surveys go unanswered, etc., but the net gain for ACS members has been powerful over the years.

So why am I writing this? I wanted to honor the past and go forward, to take the next step in making our "network" more visible, accessible, beneficial, effective and fun, and to reach out for your help and ideas. The ACS cannot succeed in a vacuum and input from our members can only make us stronger. So, let me hear your thoughts and ideas about how we can continue to grow the ACS membership and provide you, the members, with even better programs, services and overall value.

E-mail John at jeggena@globetrotter.net



New Members

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cheesemaking, but also discovered that all the local dairies had long since closed their doors. There are two milk plants which make their own cheese. But they weren't willing to sell her enough to make her own. In fact, there isn't one licensed dairy who will sell her milk. Where could she obtain milk?

At the annual meeting, one piece of advice she was given was: focus on the animals or focus on the cheesemaking;

it's very difficult for one person to do both. She decided it would be cheesemaking, which still leaves her with the problem of milk supply.

"The conference made me realize how much I like cheese, but it also made me see the importance of the milk," she says. One cheesemaker she met through Cal Poly went to the lengths of buying her own herd of sheep in order to obtain milk for cheesemaking.

Then there's the problem of where to make the cheese. She had thought she could buy a cheesemaking plant but here too she hit a wall. She will have to build

her own.

In the interim, Kelli is experimenting with recipes. "I'm trying to make cheese made from store milk to see if I could make a good enough product to sell," she said. "I decided if I could make something that would at least pay for itself, never mind a profit, I might go ahead and build a plant. But if I was going to have to pay people to eat my cheese, that wouldn't be good."

Asked why she wants so much to make cheese, she simply replied, "That's like trying to explain why I like blue. I just do."

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party and let them work with the FDA and follow their directions. Then I would continue with business when it's done. It's too emotional to handle myself."

II

"You know, going through a recall is a bit like having a personal health problem," says the quiet-spoken cheesemaker. "At first you tell everyone, but after a few months, you wish you hadn't."

The issue was more than personally devastating, he explains. There was an immediate concern that someone somewhere might get sick, or have a miscarriage, or even die because of their cheese. So, when the call came — they had tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* — despite the initial thought, "That can't be right, not our cheese," the number one concern was to get it out of consumers' hands as quickly as possible.

"We had a Crisis Management Manual provided by the state Dairy Institute and that became my bible of what to do," he said. "I immediately started keeping a diary of events." In it, he listed with whom he had spoken, and when, and what had been said. He also noted every step they took.

This is a family business which has been around through three generations, and their

employees are numerous but close. "They were devastated too," he recalls. "They thought they had done something wrong and someone might get sick as a result. Everyone seemed to switch to another gear."

Production was halted and they did a voluntary recall. The FDA helped them to write a press release. More than 1000 pounds of cheese were pulled off the shelves. This was destroyed and credits issued to the stores. The financial implications hit hard.

What have been the lessons? He offers the following advice:

Keep HACCP standards as high as humanly possible.

Practice good governance and keep meticulous records.

Maintain good, sanitary standards of practice.

Get good insurance that covers you in the event of a recall.

Occasionally put yourself through a mock recall — let's pretend this batch is recalled; can we track every single wheel?

Keep careful records so you know where everything has gone. Otherwise the brush fire of a recall can turn into a firestorm.

Have a third party do regular checks of

your plant. You can't do it yourself. It's like not going to a doctor for check-ups; he'll find things you miss.

Use color-coded brushes for different things, eg. inside and outside, and work with your sanitation salesman to ensure everything is clean.

Have a plan in place so everyone knows what to do when it happens. You may never have to use it, but if you do, you're ready.

"It's common sense really," he said. "You have to think ahead. Assume the bacteria are around all the time. They come in on shoes, on dairy truck wheels, on clothing. You have to take precautions." And taking precautions, he emphasizes, means more than putting a foot bath at the entrance — unless it's changed regularly, it's useless.

In the end, the company not only has survived, but has grown. One reason was the way they handled the recall. Their prompt response and obvious concern for others was the measure of their moral fortitude. And people respected them for it.

When something happens, 10 percent is the problem and 90 percent is how you handle it," he says in retrospect. "I'm proud of how I did everything."

Recall Checklist

Nobody wants to think about recalls, but planning ahead and being scrupulously organized, much of the fear and confusion that emerges during a recall can be minimized. At the ACS 2004 conference, Dominique Delugeau of DCI Cheese Co., offered this checklist for heading off and/or responding to recalls.

- Keep samples of paperwork on file in proper order; update them regularly.
- Establish clear top-line responsibility within the organization for recall management. Give that person quick access to all documentation. Establish a Recall Management Team.
- Keep a current list of company contacts, including home and cell phone numbers, for 24/7 accessibility should a recall situation arise.
- Update customer lists regularly, with accurate point-person contact info.
- Conduct at least one mock recall each year. Assess the effectiveness of the run-throughs—i.e., can you identify 99% to 100% of the product produced within two hours.
- Keep all production records in order, addressing the issue of reworks. Keep

these on file for at least two years.

- Keep detailed procedures on file for all outsourced products.
- Keep quality control records in order, preferably computerized, with all pertinent information.
- Keep shipping records in order. Scale weight sheets should be kept on file for two years. BOL includes all finished products, lot codes.
- Keep updated information on all third-party warehouses, current stock by lot numbers.
- When a recall situation arises, determine its scope. Is it FDA or voluntary?
- Determine severity; assign appropriate FDA class (I, II or III)
- Conduct product identification (by lot, amount produced, timeframe...).
- Undertake communications program (public warning, recall letter, calls to customers, statement from company spokesperson).
- Submit recall reporting status report to FDA.
- Recall termination — when FDA and the company feel that all reasonable efforts have been made to remove or correct the defective product.

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A Tale of Two Cheesemakers

Uplands Brings Production to the Farm, Redwood Hill Ventures Off the Farm

Here's a tale of two ACS-member cheesemakers. One, Uplands Cheese, is in rural southern Wisconsin, near Dodgeville. The other, Redwood Hill, is in California's western Sonoma County, an hour and a half North of San Francisco. Uplands began just five years ago as an artisan "almost farmstead" producer. Mike Gingrich rented space to make a very special cheese using only the seasonal milk from his own farm's rotationally-grazed cows. Redwood Hill began nearly 40 years ago as the Bice family's grade A goat dairy and, under the guidance of second-generation owner and cheesemaker Jennifer Bice, became one of the country's farmstead cheesemaking pioneers, turning out award-winning goat cheese products from a small on-farm plant.

With demand for their products soaring, both recently took giant steps forward and moved into new digs: Uplands set up shop on the farm, while Redwood Hill found a more workable solution three miles down the road.

Uplands: Never Say Never

By Dana Tanverli

Building a true farmstead cheese plant was never in the cards for Mike Gingrich, who several years ago began making his award-winning Uplands Pleasant Ridge Reserve in rented space during off-production hours at a the nearby Cedar Grove Cheese plant in Plain, Wis., and aging it in separate rented space in Spring Green, Wis. After all, cheesemaking was a late-start second career for Gingrich and something of an experiment. He and his partner managed everything from animal health to rotational grazing and milking, to cheese-making, affinage and shipping. His hands were full and his best customers understood that his cheese was as close to farmstead as it gets without being physically made on the farm. He never wanted to do it, never thought he would do it—but now, with technical assistance from the Dairy Business Innovation Center, the Center for Dairy Research and other Wisconsin dairy support organizations, he's done it.



In the shadow of the big blue silo on the 300-acre ridgetop dairy farm owned by the Gingrich's and partners Dan and Jeanne Patenaude now sits Uplands Creamery, a 4,000-square-foot farmstead cheese plant. The first vat of Pleasant Ridge Reserve was made there in late September and, construction scars aside, Gingrich couldn't be happier.

Two key factors spurred his unlikely move to on-farm production. First, with his pasture-grazed Beaufort-style cheese an instant hit in the artisan cheese world (including taking Best of Show at ACS in its first year out in 2001), Gingrich had quickly reached capacity. "It was so inefficient shuttling among three locations, with the farm in Dodgeville, the cheese plant in Plain, and the caves in Spring Green. In addition, our caves were small and we were naturally at the scheduling mercy of Cedar Grove, where we made the cheese."

With the plant now on his own farm and his space significantly expanded, production capacity has increased fourfold. "Previously, we did about 2,200 wheels a year. We only make cheese when the cows are on full pasture, so that impacts our production, but in a good year we can now do 10,000 wheels," Gingrich says. "We can make cheese seven days a week during our peak milking season, in May and June. We can keep about 8,000 wheels here, and having the extra storage space means we'll be able to age a larger percentage of product longer. We have a lot of demand for extra-aged product, but until now haven't had the cave space to do it."

A second key factor in the decision to

build was Gingrich's desire to turn his business into a more saleable package. "I'm in my 60s. While I'm not planning to retire yet, I knew that trying to sell Uplands Cheese the way it was would be very difficult."

The new Uplands Creamery houses a 1,000-plus gallon vat in a 700-square-foot make room, three separate 500-square-foot aging caves, a 600-square-foot reception area with observation window and a 600-square-foot shipping area, among other miscellaneous spaces for coolers, storage and boiler room. Milk is pumped directly into the vat from the bulk tank in the milking parlor via a pipe buried under the driveway. Night milk is cooled to 65 degrees and blended with the next morning's milk, which comes in at "cow temperature."

Each of the three aging caves has individual controls for temperature and humidity. All are kept at a steady 55 degrees F and the cheese travels from one cave to the next as it goes through the aging process, gradually drying out the rind. "The first room is kept at 95% humidity, the second at 90% and the third at 85%," Gingrich explains. "Unlike our caves in Spring Green, these new rooms have a cooling system that has no fans, which we really like. They're extremely easy to keep clean."

Other features in the new plant that Gingrich particularly likes are the drain table and custom vertical press, built by Darlington Dairy Supply. "During the make process, the curds and whey are pumped into a drain table, or pre-press," he says. "Most of the whey drains off, to be cooled and spread on the fields. But some stays. A press plate then drops down on top of the curd mass and presses the curd under the whey. It's the traditional method for making Gruyere. At Cedar Grove, we used a traditional Cheddaring process. There's really no flavor difference, but with this press we do get a more closed bodied texture and better salt control."

Once the curds have drained for 30 minutes, yielding one large curd mass, they're hand-cut into blocks and put into 10-pound molds. The molds are then

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stacked six high in the vertical press. "The pressure applied is controlled automatically," Gingrich says. "It is adjusted at 20-minute intervals. The cheese is left on the press overnight at maximum pressure before being put on racks and rolled into the first cave."

Yet another feature that has Gingrich pinching himself is the wash tank, with an automatic water circulation system "like a whirlpool," and the dishwasher for forms and aging room boards. "We used to do all of that by hand. It saves a lot of time," he says.

Construction of Uplands Creamery began June 1, 2004, and while some aspects are still being completed, the major work was completed by early September. With 10 years ownership of the farm, the value of which has risen steadily over the years, Gingrich was able to secure equity-based bank financing to fund the construction.

"It all took longer, was more difficult and costly than I expected, but now that's it's done it was worth it," he says. "Not only is our production capacity greatly expanded, we have so much more control. Ultimately, that will lead to better product. And our quality of life is so much better. My partner moved into the house on the farm in June, when construction started, and our home is on a 10-acre parcel of land connected to the farm. We can see our cows grazing and walk over to the creamery if we want. We're all much more grounded."

Redwood Hill - A question of space

"I do miss the farm. I try to go there one day a week to work," says Jennifer Bice. "I still get my goat fix from time to time though. I take our goats to shows and exhibits. That's my hobby and my holiday. I get to hang out with them and hand milk them."

Jennifer has been on the farm most of her life. Her parents began the farm in 1968 and ten years later, Jennifer and her husband Steven Schack took it over and began to expand the business from fluid milk to yogurt and finally fresh cheese. In 1996, having outgrown the original farm, they bought a new one in Sebastopol, in Sonoma County, CA. With the move came a cheeseplant which they built right on the property, they were able to start making aged, French-style rind-ripened cheeses. "It was the



first plant we built and it was nice having it right on the farm," she says now. "But there were things we didn't know. For example, we didn't have a separate packaging area, or even a lunch room."

The herd at Redwood Hill Farm numbers nearly 400 animals comprising four of the major breeds of dairy goats in the U.S.: Nubian, Alpine, Saanen, and LaMancha. They maintain an extensive dairy goat breeding program. Indeed, promoting the benefits of goat milk products while developing a genetics program of excellence has been a top priority. The herd is regularly exhibited at major shows and fairs and continues to win awards at the national level, holding National Champions. For the past 27 years Jennifer has also served as a dairy goat judge throughout the United States and Canada; in fact, she holds the distinct honor of being selected to judge the American Dairy Goat Association National Show five times. All this, and Jennifer was making cheese.

As sales continued to increase, they put the vats on wheels so they could move them around. But it became apparent that in seven short years they had already outgrown the on-farm plant. Could they find a new farm and build a new plant on it?

The realities hit home when Jennifer tried to find land. Sonoma County has become prime wine country and its proximity to San Francisco has made land very expensive. After searching for two years, she decided that finding a farm was not as pressing a need as finding a plant. They would have to move the cheesemaking off the farm.

Sebastopol, in earlier times, was the Gravenstein apple capital of the U.S. But this varietal has fallen out of fashion and gradually the orchards have been

replaced by vineyards. Only three miles down the road, Jennifer found an apple processing complex of 60 acres, zoned agricultural, with 10 buildings. The owners had begun to lease some of these out and Jennifer was able to negotiate a 20 year lease on one, beginning in 2003. They began to remodel the building to make it a suitable cheesemaking facility.

The floors had to be jack-hammered in order to put in new drains. The walls needed re-surfacing and new walls had to be put up. Electrical and plumbing systems had to be changed and updated. It took more than a year and a great deal of work, but they are delighted with their new surroundings. "It's been a lot of stress with contractors and the aging room didn't work at the start," says Jennifer. "It's big and spacious, and the new cheese is turning out well. So I can breathe a sigh of relief."

They have now begun to make cheese, and it's turning out well. The new plant has two aging rooms: one for French-style cheeses and a second for natural rind cheeses. "I think we're going to have better cheese and we'll be able to age our cheeses longer," says Jennifer. "We'll be able to make more raw milk cheeses." Still, she laments the loss of the title farmstead cheese. "Because we've moved the plant off the farm, we're artisanal now, not farmstead," she says. "It's still the same milk, from our own goats, but we're no longer considered farmstead. But it was worth the move."

The new facility has a lunch room and a large packaging room. For the six staff members, it's a much more pleasant working environment. "One of our goals is quality at every level," says Jennifer. "We provide our staff with extensive training and we track everything using strict HACCP guidelines. Sometimes it's daunting getting everyone working on the same page but we're doing it."

It's been quite a journey for Jennifer – from her earliest beginnings with her late husband doing everything themselves, to a combined farm and dairy staff of 23 people. And although she misses the farm, she has "a terrific farm manager" so it requires less of her time than the creamery does. So her office at the farm is often empty. But she says, "Though it's sometimes difficult, we farmers and cheesemakers are so fortunate that we get to do what we enjoy."

Events Calendar

Thanks to Cheese Market News for kindly providing the listings

Jan. 21 AND Mar 19: "Recipe to Reality" Seminar, Lincoln, Neb. Contact Jill Gifford, 402-472-2819, e-mail: jgifford1@unl.edu.

Feb. 7-8: 7th Symposium in Dairy Product Technology: Concentrated & Dried Dairy Ingredients, Shell Beach, Calif. Call Laurie Jacobson, 805-756-6097, ljacobso@calpoly.edu, www.calpoly.edu/~dpte/05symp.htm.

Feb. 8-10 AND April 5-7: Principles of Food Microbiology Short Course, Seattle, Wash. Contact Silliker, Inc., 708-957-7878, e-mail: silliker@silliker.com, website: www.silliker.com.

Feb. 22-23: University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Process Cheese Short Course, Madison, Wis. Contact Jim Path, 608-262-2253, or Dr. Bill Wendorff, 608-263-2015, or website: www.cdr.wisc.edu.

Feb. 24-25: 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.

Feb. 28-March 1: "Leading with Zing!" Ann Arbor, Mich. Contact Zingerman's Delicatessen, 734-930-1919, www.zingtrain.com.

March 7-8: New York State

Cheese Manufacturers Annual Meeting, Syracuse, N.Y. Contact Janene Lucia, 607-255-2892.

March 15-17: International Dairy Foods Association Smart Marketing 2005, Atlanta, Ga. Contact IDFA at: www.idfa.org.

March 18-20: National Products Expo West, Anaheim, Calif. Contact Expo West, 1-866-458-4935, e-mail: expo@newhope.com, www.expo-west.com.

March 22-24: Washington State University Farmstead Artisan Cheesemaking, Skagit Valley College Mount Vernon, Wash. Call Marc Bates, 509-595-8652.

March 28-April 1: University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Cheese Technology Short Course, Madison. Call Dr. Bill Wendorff, 608-263-2015, www.cdr.wisc.edu.

March 30-31: Beginning Laboratory Methods in Food Microbiology Short Course, Seattle, Wash. Contact Silliker, Inc., 708-957-7878, e-mail: silliker@silliker.com, website: www.silliker.com.

March 30-April 1: International Pizza Expo 2005, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact International Pizza Expo 2005, 502-736-9500, website: www.pizzaexpo.com/2005.

April 5-6: International Dairy

Foods Association Milk Procurement Workshop, Rosemont, Ill. Contact 202-737-4332, www.idfa.org.

April 12-13: 94th Annual Oregon Dairy Industries Conference, Eugene, Ore. Contact Debby Yacas, 800-823-2357; website: oregonstate.edu/dept/foodsci/extensionfst/.

April 19-20: Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference, La Crosse, Wis. Contact Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, 608-828-4550, e-mail: info@wischeesemakersassn.org, website: www.wis-cheesemakersassn.org.

April 19-21: Practical Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Short Course, Chicago, Ill. Contact Silliker, Inc., 708-957-7878, e-mail: silliker@silliker.com, website: www.silliker.com.

April 20: Cheesemaking Opportunities and Challenges Conference 2005, Sonoma, Calif. Contact Sheana Davis, 707-935-7960, sheana@vorn.com, website: www.sheanadavis.com.

April 21-23: California Cheese and Butter Association Annual Meeting, Sonoma, Calif. Contact Lisa Walters, 925-672-8255, director@cacheeseandbutter.org, website: www.cacheeseandbutter.org.

April 26-27: International Dairy

Foods Association (IDFA) Plant Operations Conference, Chicago, Ill. Contact IDFA, 202-737-4332, website: www.idfa.org.

May 1-3: Food Marketing Institute Convention and Expo, Chicago, Ill. Contact Food Marketing Institute, website: www.fmi.org.

May 1-3: American Dairy Products Institute Annual Meeting, Chicago, Ill. Contact 630-530-8700, e-mail: info@adpi.org, website: www.adpi.org/events.html.

May 2-3: "Leading with Zing!" Ann Arbor, Mich. Contact Zingerman's Delicatessen, 734-930-1919, www.zingtrain.com.

May 3-5: University of Wisconsin-Madison Cultured Dairy Products Short Course, Madison. Call Dr. Bill Wendorff, 608-263-2015, or John Jaeggi, 608-262-2244, website: www.cdr.wisc.edu.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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The World's First Mozzarella Bar

The New York Times reports that a new restaurant in Rome, *Öbikà*, advertises itself as the world's first mozzarella cheese bar - and for the moment seems to be doing healthy business.

The idea behind *Öbikà* - Neapolitan slang for "here it is" - is to offer a valid alternative to the usual Italian restaurant: no to pasta and pizza, yes to mozzarella and buffalo cheese, no to stuffy restaurants, yes to a stark and stylish atmosphere.

Five different kinds of mozzarella cheese are shipped to the restaurant each day, and are used as the centerpiece in a variety of dishes.

The NYT writes, "*Öbikà*'s most popular dish is the buffalo mozzarella sampler, which consists of three softball-

size portions. But there is also the burrata, a creamy, even buttery mozzarella served with cherry tomatoes and spicy Calabrian

salami on the side. Also popular is a fiordilatte mozzarella, made from cows' milk, sliced and served on a platter next to sushi-style mixing bowls full of onion or fig marmalade. A sort of buffalo mozzarella wrap around salmon and arugula also has its fair share of fans."

