

The American Cheese Society

NEWSLETTER 4TH QUARTER 2005

Pathogen Paranoia

Are Current Testing Standards of Raw Milk Cheeses Enough to Protect Consumers?

By Stephanie Zonis

In March, as a result of a routine FDA inspection, Berkshire Cheese Makers recalled 13 wheels of their Berkshire Blue

because of possible listeria contamination. This incident received considerable media attention and has served as yet more fuel for arguments on raw milk cheeses and their consumption.

In North America, raw milk cheeses are produced almost entirely by smaller-scale producers who are, without exception, fiercely passionate and defensive about their products. They insist that raw milk cheeses taste better than their pasteurized counterparts and are at least as safe.

Yet there are segments of the population in this country, some in the scientific community, who believe that the consumption of raw milk cheeses is simply asking for trouble. Concerns over pathogens such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E.coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter* are, to some extent, well-founded. All



can make you unpleasantly sick or even, in isolated circumstances, prove fatal.

If you're not a cheesemaker, you probably haven't given a lot of thought to cheese testing. The FDA conducts routine inspections as well as surprise checks of cheesemaking facilities (and those can include cheeses themselves), but none of this occurs on a daily basis. Each state, while also able to conduct inspections, is responsible for devising regulations regarding pathogen testing of finished cheeses.

David Heininger, of Black Mesa Ranch in Arizona, reports that no routine pathogen tests are required of his raw milk goat cheeses, although inspectors could run any tests desired on any cheese samples they obtain from him.

Mary Falk, of LoveTree Farmstead, who makes both pasteurized milk and raw milk cheeses, declares that her state (Wisconsin) requires no tests on finished cheeses.

Grafton Village Cheese is the second-largest producer
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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.

The American Cheese Society

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February Issue: December 1

May Issue: March 1

July Issue: May 1

November Issue: September 1

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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A message from the president.....

In a high summer celebration, ACS members joined Louisville, Ky., foodies to talk about, marvel over, and plot business strategies about American cheese. Six weeks later, Americans and the world were shocked and saddened by the devastation of New Orleans.

Within days, ACS members bolted into action. Chef John Folse and company set up shop to feed thousands of displaced hurricane victims and rescue workers. Working with the Research Chefs Association and the American Culinary Federation, John dispatched trailers of food donations from around the country to supply hundreds of shelters. Included were donations from ACS members Cabot Cooperative Creamery in Vermont and Cowgirl Creamery in California.

Our colleagues in the Gulf Coast did not suffer huge damage but have experienced interruption in their regional sales. The message machine at Sweet Home Farms in Alabama still quotes store hours. Bittersweet Plantation Dairy suffered nearly 50 percent losses in local sales as well as milk suppliers. Liz Parnell had some trees down at Fromagerie Belle Chevre but no damage. This would be a good time to consider a large order of cheese from Louisiana to promote in your store or restaurant this holiday season.

There is nothing like a world-shattering event to stop us cold. We roll with the punches, move on and hope that the balance sheet will absorb it. The widespread effects of Katrina are sobering. We are receiving letters from vendors raising the price of everything. Fuel surcharges are just the beginning. Bad things happen and there is a message: Take care of core business and mitigate risk. The American Cheese Society needs to do the same.

We had a wonderful conference this year thanks to the energy of volunteers and planners. We had more attendees, great programs, excellent cheese, and a profit at the end of the day. When everything goes smoothly, the conference looks effortless. It isn't. ACS membership has nearly doubled in the last two years. Maintaining a high level of quality and the integrity of our competition is a challenge.

How do we preserve the intimacy and personality of our organization while growing and expanding? This year the

ACS Board is charged with taking care of core business: absorbing new members, and keeping veteran members engaged, especially cheesemakers.



Ironically, on the heels of conference kudos and the board's pledge to put cheesemakers first, we had an unfortunate event. The coveted judging sheets and comments that are sent out to each cheesemaker who enters the competition were lost. After weeks of searching, we could send only the scores to the cheesemakers. For many, the comments help to mollify disappointment and provide constructive comments to improve the quality of a cheese. I too, am sorry not to receive the judges' comments this year.

Still, we are grateful to our judging co-chairs, John Greeley and David Grotenstein, for maintaining the credibility of our competition. This incident is a reminder that as we grow, we must anticipate the details. FSA, our management company, has put in place a new procedure for next year to assure that the judging sheets cannot be lost.

On behalf of the board I want to thank Barry King for four years of service to the ACS. In 2002, we could barely tally our members, collect money, put on a conference and maintain a website. Barry managed us through early adolescence. He whipped the board into shape with spreadsheets and budgets and made us accountable. In turn, we converted him into a passionate advocate for American cheese. Barry and his partner are opening a new restaurant in Louisville soon. We know that the cheeses will be stellar.

Marci Wilson, our new Executive director, is diligently getting up to speed on ACS business. Before long she will know more about *brevibacterium linens* and proteolysis that she'd ever dreamed. Please welcome her.

Thanks to our 2005 conference sponsors who gave willingly and then gave more. Thanks to an entrepreneurial board of directors we have solid finances and governance. And finally, thanks to you, our members who provide volunteer initiatives and the vision for our evolution.

Allison Hooper



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

Dear ACS Members,

There is much activity here at headquarters these days, as I get settled into my new role as executive director at ACS.

Let me introduce myself. I have five years of association management as well as an academic background. I am so looking forward to meeting as many members as I can throughout the course of the year. It is very important to me that ACS members have a high level of satisfaction with their professional organization and that our benefits continue to hit the mark. I am eager to assist the board with ensuring that the American Cheese Society continues to

be the premiere resource for the cheesemaking industry.

We are still on a high from the fabulous conference in Louisville. All agreed that this was one of the best ever! We are already in the midst of planning for the 2006 Annual Conference and Cheese Competition to be held in Portland, Oregon on July 20-22, 2006. Mark your calendars to attend!

Thank you for all of the kind wishes since I took over this role. Thanks also to Barry King who has contributed so much to the success of this association in the last four years. I wish him well and hope to be able to fill his shoes.

I look forward to seeing you all in Portland.

Warm regards,

Marci Wilson, Executive Director

Committee Reports

At a loud and lively breakfast meeting in Louisville, the Cheesemaker Support Committee decided to focus on the wave of emerging and existing regional cheese guilds this year.

Participating were the New York State Cheese

Makers Guild, Vermont Cheese Council, Maine Cheese Guild, Ontario Cheese Society, the Southern Cheese Makers Guild and California Artisan Cheese Guild.

Our committee will provide support for educational programs and events directed and organized by the guilds.

We are open to suggestions from the membership

on our cheesemaker scholar award for 2006. The candidate should be an expert in our field, who can take time to attend our conference and is capable of inspiring our member cheesemakers. Please send potential candidates' names to Sue or Jennifer.

Jennifer Bice

Sue Conley

Cheesemaker Support Committee

The 2006 conference planning committee is busy already strategizing. With new members added to the committee team, we are all energized from this past conference in Louisville, Ky. and gear-

ing up for **Exploring Cheese Frontiers** – the theme of next year's conference that takes place in Portland, Ore.

Monthly teleconference calls have already been scheduled and a full day of

planning is arranged to coincide with our next board of directors meeting in Portland.

Tom Kooiman

Jodi Wische

Conference Planning Committee

Upcoming Topic

1st quarter 2006

Developing an Effective Cheese Marketing Plan

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this topic and on any story in the newsletter. Contact: Liz Campbell, editor: 416-207-9150, campbellliz@sympatico.ca



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A HUGE "THANK YOU" TO FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS !

We want to thank the amazing group of volunteers who shared their passion, creativity and skills to create the gorgeous presentation of more than 700 cheeses for this year's Festival of Cheeses! Volunteers are so important to the American Cheese Society; they enable us to pull off the massive conference with organization.

We so appreciate them and all of the other members who gave of their time to

make this past conference and festival smoother than ever; we could not have done it without you!

To quote one of our members, "They just keep getting better and better." We hope to see you all again in Portland!

If we forgot or missed anyone please let us know!!

Festival co-chairs/board members

Sara Hill and Steve Ehlers

Our List of Super Star Volunteers

Patty Peterson

Richard Silverton

Lisa Goldstein

Tom Kooiman

Karen Silverton

Brad Donnay

Bob Howald

Mary Bess Michalitz

Leanne Donnay

Kristin Sande

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Bill McKenna

David Gremmels

Eric Patterson

Lisa Gladstein

Ladonna Cullinan

PR Committee

One of the keys to the success of any conference is the public relations effort that goes into it. This year, for the first time, we hired a PR firm to handle all local PR in Louisville.

Jamie Estes Public Relations has a wide variety of local contacts, from chefs to restaurants, gourmet food shops, and perhaps most importantly, local media.

The result was a slew of media appearances, articles about the conference, print and broadcast media, and media coverage during the conference as well.

In addition, local chefs, restaurateurs, and gourmet foods stores got in on the act in a big way. Whole Foods was on board already – our PR effort wasn't responsible – but the synergy between all of these vendors was pretty terrific.

As we look to Oregon for our next conference, we hope to make similar contacts. Although it's a long time between conferences, that doesn't mean that American cheese should fall off the radar.

If you're a cheesemaker and are doing something that you think is noteworthy, if you've received a special award, or just feel like you've got something to say,

let me know! The "Features" section of our website is meant to include cheesemaker (and others) news, so let's fill it.

In addition, if you have any ideas for PR and/or wish to help the committee but haven't already signed up, please feel free to shoot me an email expressing your interest.

Thanks to those of you who have signed up. Please feel free to start sending PR ideas for pre-conference publicity as well as general American cheese and ACS publicity. The more attention we bring to our goings-on, the more respect, business, and interest we will attract.

Laura Werlin

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Congratulations, *ACS Award Winners* *from America's Dairyland*

*W*isconsin salutes the outstanding accomplishments of all American Cheese Society award-winning cheesemakers, setting new standards for excellence and artistry. Kudos to these exceptional Wisconsin companies that brought home 55 ribbons:

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Roth Käse USA

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Widmer's Cheese Cellars

Special recognition to Wisconsin Cheesemaker Mike Gingrich,
Uplands Cheese, for **Best of Show.**

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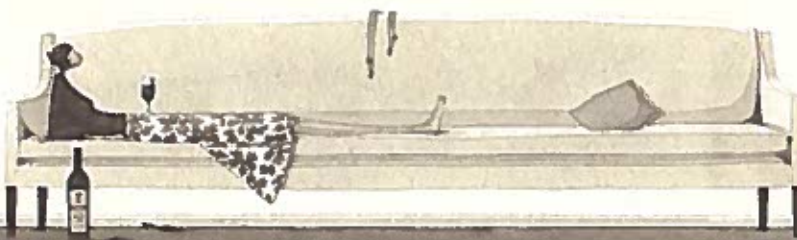
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- Appreciate.
- Sip from glass.

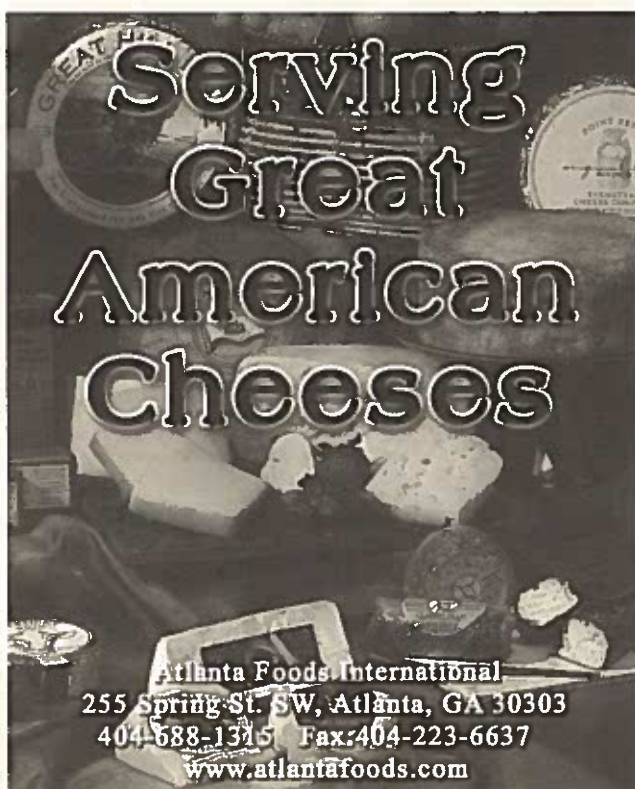


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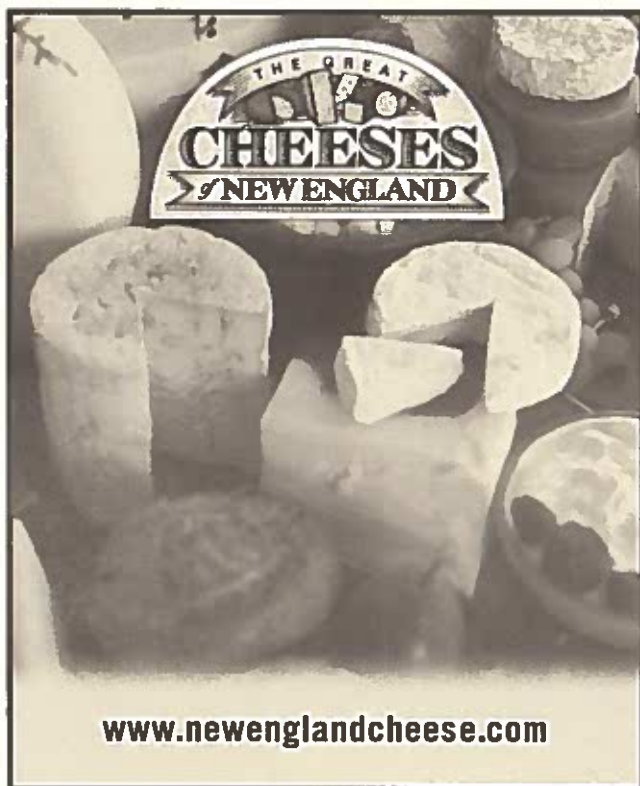
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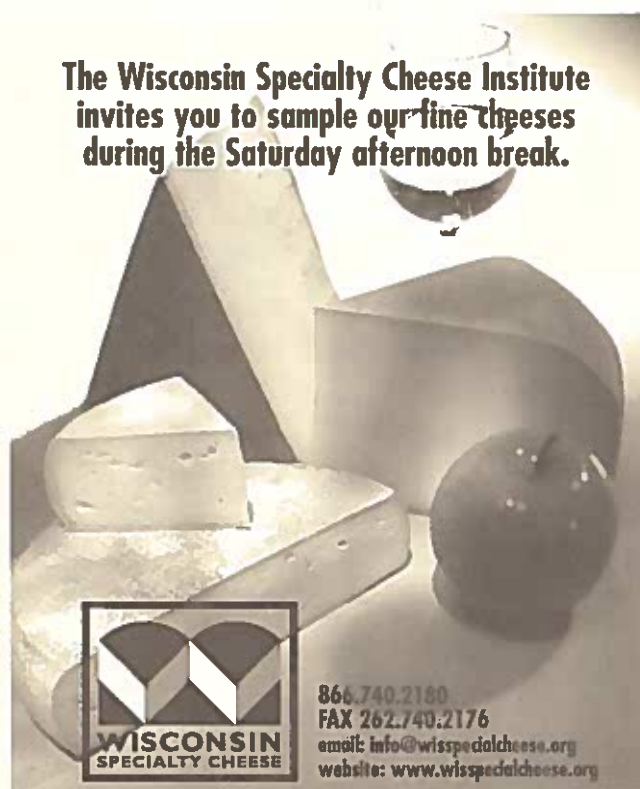
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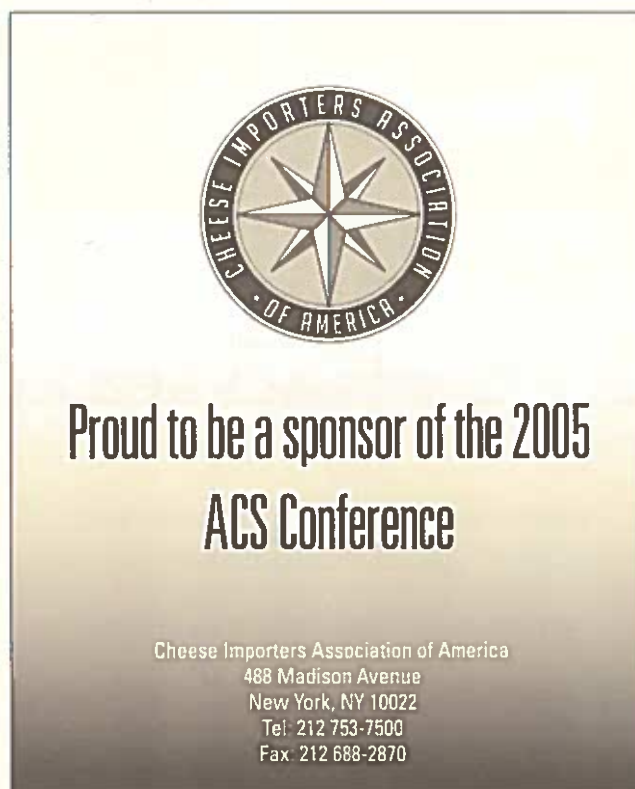



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Cincinnati, OH

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Plymouth, MN

Cliff Whatmore
Sarasota, FL

New Members

Robert Dimmick grew up on the farm he now operates with his wife Linda. Neighborly Farms, located in Randolph Center, Vt., operates on 168 acres with completely organic cropland and grazing fields for 48 Holsteins as well as a sugarhouse for producing pure Vermont maple syrup. Their distinctive red barn and white post and beam farmhouse were built in the 1800s.

In 2001, looking for a means to create added value to the wonderful milk their cows produced, they began making raw milk cheddar, colby, cow's milk feta and Monterey Jack cheeses. While Linda agrees that they don't do well in mainstream markets, their cheese has found a home in natural food stores and organic co-ops. Currently, their output of 80,000 pounds of raw milk cheddar and other cheeses including cheddars flavoured with garlic, tomato basil, sage or green onion, are selling as fast as they can produce them. Trader Joe's

bought 25,000 pounds last Christmas to sell under its own private label, and keeping up with that order proved a real challenge.

"It was very exciting and definitely a learning experience for us," says Linda. "We were really proud of the fact that we delivered on time but the extra paperwork and testing and insurance was tough."

The company has maintained a small following of regular customers, like an organic Mexican restaurant in New York that buys all its Jack cheese. However, after both their green onion and plain Monterey Jack won awards at the 2005 ACS competition, they found a distributor who will be buying their cheese for Whole Foods Markets. "We're really thrilled about that," Linda says. "It's where we really wanted to be."

Robert and Linda's cheeses tend to be aged for nine to 18 months, though this latter is rare. "We don't have the liberty that larger



companies have, to age batches of cheddar for a long time," says Linda. And while other cheesemakers are trying to produce more varieties of cheeses, they are thinking of cutting down to just one. "We've been thinking of focusing on raw milk cheddars so we can do more of that. We sell more of it than all the others combined."

After nearly five years of marketing themselves, "sending samples and calling, calling, calling," says Linda, the response to their farmstead cheese is growing. Joining the American Cheese Society has enabled them to network and enter competitions which has garnered them more recognition. And they are part of the Slow Food movement. Indeed, the future is looking very bright for this little farm.

ACS NEWSLETTER Advertising Information

Interested in getting your company's marketing message out to the ACS membership via advertising?

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 are 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 Marci Wilson 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
1/8 page	3.69" x 2.4"	45.00
Classified Ad (35-word max.)		35.00

continued from page 1

of cheddar in Vermont, a state which, according to Peter Mohn, also mandates no pathogen testing of finished cheeses.

David Gremmels, president of Rogue Creamery in Oregon, tells me that his company tests every lot of cheese for pathogens, but this testing is voluntary. And Ellen Fitzgibbons, the "dairy person" of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, informs me that cheeses in that state must be tested at least twice yearly for *Listeria* and *E. coli*, as well as a standard plate count. In the event of a problem with a facility or results from one test, testing is more frequent.

While we couldn't contact cheesemakers in every state, little of this has the ring of constant monitoring to it. If nothing else, testing every cheese for pathogens would be utterly impractical for even a small-scale cheesemaker. Is that cause for concern?

It depends whom you ask. Terry Musson, of the Dairy Practices Council, a nonprofit group concerned with milk quality, sanitation, and regulatory uniformity, worked for the FDA for 36 years before acquiring his present job. He will not consume raw milk cheeses, likening his attitude to not crossing the street if you know you'll be hit by a car. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) specifically recommend not consuming foods made from raw milk as a way to lower one's risk of listeriosis.

So why are some people such vigorous defenders of raw milk cheeses? Is it just a matter of economics for the cheesemakers? And are some consumers simply lactophilic risk-takers?

Many people enjoy the taste of raw milk cheeses, claiming they have flavors not capable of being matched by pasteurized milk varieties. But it's doubtful that that would be sufficient for most consumers if the cheeses were blatantly and consistently hazardous. The answer seems to be multi-faceted.

Indeed, one school of thought holds that pasteurized milk may be more

conducive to pathogen growth because it presents a proverbial "blank slate" for post-pasteurization contamination. Some cheesemakers and scientists credit raw milk with having beneficial bacteria that can outcompete "bad bugs". Pasteurization kills everything, so any pathogens introduced after this process enjoy a competition-free environment in which to multiply.

Falk of LoveTree has become convinced that "pathogen contamination rarely has anything to do with the actual raw milk", but is typically caused by "improper hygiene" and is "very common in pasteurized cheeses". She says



she isn't just guessing this, having once worked in a cheese factory where she witnessed many "blown" pasteurized cheeses ("Blown" cheeses are those that puff up or even break open due to post-pasteurization contamination. *E. coli* is a common source of this contamination).

There are also innumerable safeguards built in to raw milk cheesemaking. When products such as eggs, pasteurized milk, produce, or raw poultry are purchased, they are usually bought fresh. They may have been briefly stored before transporting to the grocer, but in most cases, the time and exposure to multiple environments is generally minimal.

That's not the case with raw milk cheeses. Because cheeses are exposed for some length of time to multiple

environments from milk collection through manufacturing, through aging, and because all of these environments can be suitable for bacteria growth, makers of raw milk cheeses tend to be borderline fanatic about their animals, milk supply, environment, and procedures. This is probably based as much on economic sense as it is on a belief in what they do.

Even one pathogenic incident could spell the demise of a small cheesemaking operation, and there's always the appalling possibility of a lawsuit.

At LoveTree, for example, sanitary samples are pulled from each vat of raw milk immediately prior to adding the starter culture. But even before that, Mary believes that the strength of Wisconsin's regulations lies in their "stringent protocol for on-site operation and cheesemaker education and license requirements." The state imposes regulations on other animals allowed near the barn where milk-producers are kept, type of sinks permitted and their location, types of cleansing compounds permitted, and testing of the sanitizer, among other things.

Grafton Village has the USDA out to its plant every six months on a voluntary basis, at which times that agency tests both equipment and structures for "all kinds of stuff," including pathogens. Black Mesa Ranch emphasizes herd health and well-being as a first step toward "clean" cheeses, and its goats undergo extensive testing for a multitude of diseases before any cheese is made.

Procedural choices, too, may be great determinants in whether a cheese is pathogen-friendly, starting with milk handling and continuing on to details such as the salt brine used (type of liquid with which it was made, salt strength, frequency of re-use, storage temperature, etc.). There are even anaerobic pathogens which can grow in oxygen-deprived conditions, like tightly wrapped or olive-oil immersed cheese.

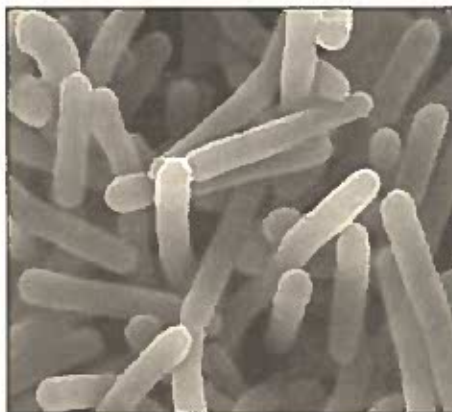
It seems to come down to knowl-

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edge, the extensive knowledge that has been gained in the more than 50 years since the FDA formulated its current raw milk cheese regulations. Those regulations stipulate that cheese made from raw milk must be aged for 60 days at a temperature no lower than thirty-five degrees Fahrenheit before it's sold or imported into the United States. This aging is thought to develop sufficient acidity and dry the curd enough to make it inhospitable to nasty bacteria.

Although some recent studies suggest that pathogens such as *E. coli*, *Listeria*, and *Salmonella* can survive beyond this two-month minimum aging process (in some cases, well beyond it), these studies began with pasteurized milk, which had far higher concentrations of pathogens added to it



A pretty crop of *Listeria* under the microscope belies the threat it poses.

than would be found in good-quality milk. Thus, it's not surprising that a significant number survived a 60-day aging period.

Additionally, it's worth considering that most other foods have caused more instances of illnesses than all types of cheeses in recent years.

According to CDC statistics, from 1990 to 1997, beef, chicken, shellfish, and vegetables, to name a few culprits, were each responsible for more outbreaks of foodborne illnesses than were cheeses.

I know much more than I did before writing this article about the manufacture and testing of raw milk cheeses in the United States, but I am not a scientist or an epidemiologist. I'm also not reckless by nature. I'm merely a cheese enthusiast who wants to have a choice in the type of cheese I eat, especially after looking at the CDC numbers and understanding the conscientious nature of raw milk cheesemakers.

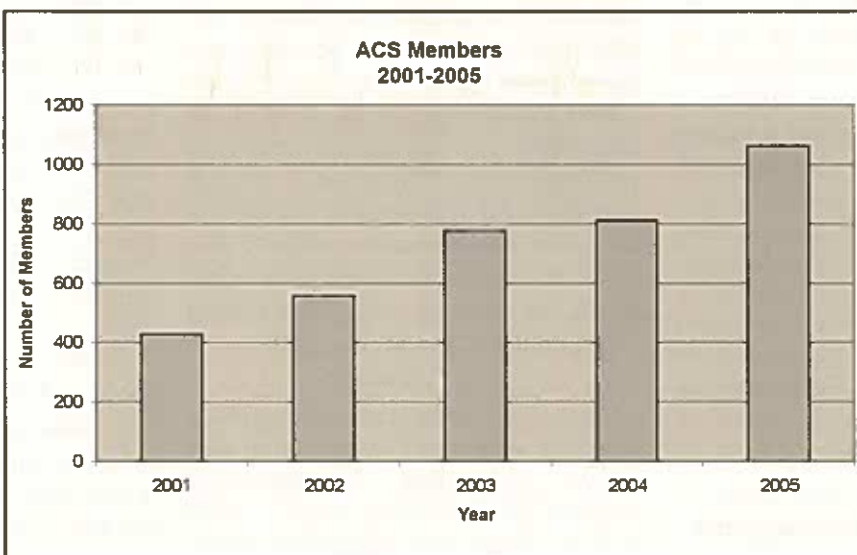
I believe the current testing standards are sufficient. But, as in politics, consensus on this hot-button topic is a very long way off.

2005 Brings Rapid Membership Growth

The American Cheese Society is the preeminent specialty cheese organization in North America, focusing on every facet of the American specialty and artisan cheese trade. We represent all segments of the specialty cheese world – including cheesemakers, retail cheesemongers, distributors, marketers, food writers and chefs.

This is an exciting role for ACS to play, particularly since interest in American specialty cheese has never been stronger. American cheeses are achieving the quality, respect, and marketability once reserved for European varieties.

The national, non-trade media is taking notice. Awareness has reached more mainstream channels such as the *Wall Street Journal* who ran an article in October 2004 and the April, 2005 issue of *Saveur* magazine which focused on U.S. artisan



cheeses. Cheese consumption is rising sharply with the growth in higher quality cheeses. Furthermore, higher prices for imported cheeses provide opportunity for American producers.

Membership in ACS reflects this upsurge in interest. In the past five years, membership has more than doubled, with more than 30 percent growth in the last year alone (see chart). Currently 1,061 members strong, ACS is still growing.

We are excited to welcome all of you. We also want to maintain our

reputation for being accessible, welcoming, and helpful.

The diversity of professionals within the artisan cheese industry allows us unsurpassed networking opportunities, valuable educational resources, and ongoing professional and business development experiences. However, we want to keep providing the support and services

that meet the needs of you, our members.

In the months ahead, we will be reaching out for your ideas on how we can provide the benefits that reflect the diverse needs of our exploding artisan cheese community. We hope that you will help us continue to grow in numbers and in serving the needs of our members.

Carole Palmer,

ACS Membership Committee
cpalmer@goodtastemarketing.co

The Elephant in the Room

At the ACS conference, Dan Strongin took a look at the high cost of American artisan cheese from the perspective of the cheesemaker, retailer and distributor

The retailer needs to be able to justify price to public. You can explain that the cheese is handmade, not a commodity, but what does that imply about the other cheeses you carry?

People pay dearly for artisan bread, artisan furniture, artisan chocolate—why not for artisan cheese?

Cheesemakers

For cheesemakers, the issue is: where do you want to be on the shelf? At what price is your cheese going to sell best? Cheesemakers feel distributors mark their cheeses up too much.

Do you know how much it costs to make your cheese? Many cheesemakers don't. What's your capacity? Everything about pricing relates to that. If you have little capacity, you have to do everything possible to get the highest price.

What's the key price point in a particular market? You want to get as much capacity sold as quickly as possible. Better to have more dollars in your pocket, even at a lower price per pound. "You don't pay your bills with percentages, but with dollars."

Cheesemakers should give distributors a "delivered price" so you can control the freight cost. Everybody complains about retail margins, but many food retailers make less than 1 percent profit. And don't undercut your retailers with lower prices online.

Retailers

If you discount, you need to know what your discount is accomplishing and how to measure the results. You need to know what it takes to get people to buy more. Don't just do a "50 cents off" promotion without knowing whether 50 cents is the right discount.

A discount can be a good way to test if your original price is too high. How much more do you sell by discounting? Choose a region and do an aggressive promotion and evaluate the results. Did you make more money?

Some comments and responses

Audience: If you (the retailer) lower the price and your volume goes up, but just enough to break even, what have

you accomplished? Your volume has gone up, but not your profit.

Dan: There may be some carryover effect—people keep buying the cheese even after the price goes up again. Once they have discovered the cheese and embraced it, they may not notice that they are paying more.

Audience: With cheese, a highly perishable product, you may not want to have a 15-case price that would encourage distributors or retailers to stock up beyond what they can sell. You don't want your cheese sitting in a warehouse.

Dan: Consider bulk discounts but delayed delivery, as is done in other industries. You can do a staggered delivery.

Audience: Sheep's milk cheese costs a lot because of the high cost of milk. Retailers need to educate consumers about this.

Dan: But consumers don't care about your high costs and your low-yielding sheep. They need to believe that this is great cheese and worth the price. The cheesemaker needs to find ways to make the consumer care about the product. Consumers don't care that it costs more to make.

Distributors

"American cheeses are costing more than the equivalent import," one distributor commented, "Cheesemakers need to know what they need to make a profit. Start your discussion there. Don't let distributors hammer you."

There are weak distributors and strong ones. If you are not getting good service, if your distributor is not making life easier for you, you should switch. At the end of the day, you should be better off buying from distributor than going direct (or you're with the wrong distributor).

At Neal's Yard Dairy, said owner, Randolph Hodgson, the company partners with cheesemakers who aren't great business people. The company prepays for a season's production to guarantee the cheese is available. It's

not typically a distributor's role but it makes sense to them to keep these suppliers in business.

Audience: I'm a retailer, and I buy direct a lot. It works for me. Shipping is not that much more expensive than paying the distributor markup. Why shouldn't I do this?

Dan: FedEx shipping can be poor quality. Your cheeses will arrive in better condition if shipped in a distributor's refrigerated truck. As an aside: cheesemakers should have a lower price to distributors doing volume than they do to retailers, so you should not be paying more to get it from a distributor.

All about Price

The ultimate arbiter of price is the consumer. Everyone is talking about price per pound, but most consumers are buying by the piece. Old Chatham Mutton Button is \$3.99. The consumer doesn't think about the price per pound. So think about portion control. Most people are willing to pay \$3-6 for piece of cheese, so that determines how big your portions should be. Focus groups show that people are not looking at price per pound. "When you educate your customers, they don't complain about price," said a retailer.

On the other hand, pricing per quarter-pound may leave consumers feeling misled and cheated when they get to checkout and realize what you've done. This practice shows contempt for the customer. You ruin the customer-retailer trust.

A cheesemaker added, "Prices may be too low. It's not like people are clamoring to get into dairying. I can't find enough good milk, so the law of supply and demand would indicate that dairy farmers aren't being paid enough."

Do we want to price artisan cheese so that it is no longer everyday food? There is some risk in that. Let's not follow the wine model of making it a special-occasion food. We want cheese to be everyday food as it is in Europe.

Events Calendar

Thanks to *Cheese Market News* for kindly providing the listings

Oct. 24-25: International Dairy Foods Association Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Workshop, Chicago. Contact Shira Pisner, 202-220-3557, or e-mail spisner@idfa.org.

Oct. 26: Good Manufacturing Practices, New Brunswick, N.J. Contact Rutgers University at 732-932-9271, or visit the website: www.cookce.rutgers.edu.

Oct. 26-29: International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) Worldwide Food Expo '05, Chicago, Ill. Contact IDFA, 202-737-4332, website: www.idfa.org.

Oct. 31-Nov. 2: Artisan Cheese Practices-French Cheeses, Burlington, Vt. Contact Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese 802-656-8300, or website: www.uvm.edu/viac.

Nov. 1-2: Dairy Food and Plant Wastewater Short Course, Madison, Wis. Contact Neil Vassau, 608-833-6181.

Nov. 3: Starter Cultures Short Course, Burlington, Vt. Contact Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese, 802-656-8300, or visit the website: www.uvm.edu/viac.

Nov. 7-9: Pasteurizer Operators Workshop, University Park, Pa. Contact Pennsylvania State University, 877-778-2937, or e-mail: short-course@psu.edu.

Nov. 14-16: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point: A Basic Concept for Food Protection, New Brunswick, N.J. Contact Rutgers University, 732-932-9271, website: www.cookce.rutgers.edu.

Nov. 29-Dec. 2: National Dairy Board/National Milk Producers Federation/ United Dairy Industry Association Joint Annual Meeting, San Francisco, Calif. Contact National Milk Producers Federation, 703-243-6111, FAX 703-841-9328, web: www.nmpf.org.

Dec. 6-8: HTST Pasteurization

Workshop, Nashville, Tenn. Randolph Associates Inc., 205-595-6455, e-mail: us@randolphconsulting.com.

Jan. 15-18, 2006: 22nd Annual U.S. Dairy Forum, La Quinta, Calif. Contact International Dairy Foods Association, 202-220-3557, website: www.idfa.org.

Feb. 8-9, 2006: Quality Milk Conference, Madison, Wis. Contact Scott Rankin, 608-263-2008.

Feb. 28-March 1, 2006: Wisconsin Process Cheese Short Course, Madison, Wis. Contact Bill Wendorff, 608-263-2015 or John Jaeggi, 608-262-2264.

June 11-13, 2006: International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA) Convention and Expo, New Orleans. Contact IDDBA, 608-238-7908.

July 20-22, 2006: 23rd Annual American Cheese Society Conference, Portland, Ore. Contact The American Cheese Society, 502-583-3783.

Whatta Cheese Sale that was!!!

The annual post-Festival cheese sale, held in the parking lot of Whole Foods in Louisville, netted \$4,697 while very large pieces of cheese were shipped to the folks in Milwaukee for their Brady Street Sale. This netted another \$3,000. Great news for all of ACS and thanks due to Paula Lambert and her crew of terrific volunteers.



Left: Ron Silverston and David Gremmels set out cheese at the sale.

Middle: Paula Lambert gleefully counts the takings.

Top: Karen Silverston makes change for a customer while Barry King serves another.



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You may indicate up to four additional names to be listed as representatives of your company

1.

2.

3.

4.

ACS Membership Levels

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP \$95 • The Associate membership is designed for those who want to gain and/or increase their knowledge about the world of cheeses and cheesemaking. This level of membership is not available to those within the trade. Benefits of membership may include: • one-year subscription to the ACS newsletter • discounted registration fees for the annual conference.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP \$160 • The individual membership includes those individuals and businesses that are involved in the production, distribution, marketing of cheese and/or related products. Individual membership 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.

SMALL BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP \$450 • Benefits include those of the Individual member category for up to five designated company representatives.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP \$790 • 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 \$1,975 • 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.