

The American Cheese Society

NEWSLETTER 3RD QUARTER 2007

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What ACS members need to know about the 2007 Farm Bill

By Amelia Buragas

The 2007 Farm Bill debate is off to a blistering start after more than two years of slowly building momentum. Mainstream and agriculture press outlets have weekly, if not daily, articles detailing the latest proposals from government agencies, congressional committees and producer and processor groups.

The resulting cacophony of political jargon and maneuvering is complicated to follow and, like most extensions of bureaucracy, tempting to flat-out ignore. And, that's just what many of the nation's artisan and specialty cheesemakers choose to do.

"Cheesemakers in general are just in survival mode," says Bob Wills, Cedar Grove Cheese, Plain, Wis. "I don't think a lot of us have much time to be out there doing a lot of lobbying. We just have more important things to do at the moment.

"But I do think it is important," Wills says of the Farm Bill, adding that it sets the stage for the entire industry — big and small. "Just because you're doing specialty cheese and getting a premium for your product doesn't mean that milk prices don't affect you," he says.

• Organic programs

In addition, Wills notes the Farm Bill presents an opportunity to reallocate federal funds. In particular, the organic industry has become very vocal about its desire to receive funding on par with conventional crops. "Organic is probably the most rapidly growing area of the food system, but it is the least funded in terms of agriculture programs," Wills says.

"Organic farmers need access to the same resources that conventional farmers receive from USDA," adds Caren Wilcox, executive director, Organic Trade Association (OTA).



OTA is asking Congress to support organic agriculture through technical assistance, risk management tools, funding for economic research and enhancing the current National Organic Program.

In addition, more than 400 organizations including the Organic Consumers Association and the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service are endorsing the Farm and Food Policy Project, which is calling for a new direction in farm policy. The project calls for the 2007 Farm Bill to support the development of organic agriculture through transition assistance, cost-share programs and research.

For its part, USDA has proposed committing \$61 million to organic agriculture over the next 10 years, which OTA says is a "good first step." In addition, the House dairy subcommittee recently proposed a \$25 million extension of the Organic Research and Extension Initiative, which examines the environmental impact of organically-produced agricultural products.

The subcommittee also proposed giving organic farmers access to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program's (EQIP) Conservation Innovation grants. If approved by Congress, \$5 million will be allocated for outreach to organic and specialty crop producers annually through EQIP.

continued on page 10 →

The American Cheese Society

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Greetings From the President.....

A view from the inside

This is the first year that I have participated on the conference planning committee. As co-chair I went in with both feet. The cumulative value that has built over the past 12 months to pull off this event is formidable.

The ACS staff gives new meaning to "multi-tasking," sending forms, invoices, reminders, answering questions, asking questions, anticipating bottlenecks and communicating logistical challenges for an event that could have record breaking registrations – all of which we will learn at the eleventh hour. They are taking care of sponsors, in-kind donations, finding hotel rooms, buses, liquor licenses, taking care of presenters, their handouts, AV, even their grapes! They keep our feet to the fire by scheduling close to 60 conference calls, sticking to the timeline and getting everything printed on time. They do all of this while sticking to a budget and trying to keep the conference as affordable as possible.

The "Early Bird" registration costs \$379. We have calculated that the out-of-pocket cost of a registration is in fact \$465. What we have not included in the value of a registration are the countless volunteer hours of planning by ACS members, session presenters and cheese judges. In addition to the conference planners and coordinators, more than 200 volunteers will arrive at the Sheraton to fuel a week of labor.

Volunteers will carefully unpack and log in more than 1,150 competition entries, cut up and deliver cheesemaker sponsored cheeses to area restaurants to be served during the week, assist with book signings, set up rooms for sessions, arrive early to cut \$10,000 in donated cheese for tastings, clear the rooms after tastings to get ready for the next session, and build lavish displays of cheese for the Festival of Cheese. They will set up kitchens and deliver

ingredients for the Chefs' Cook-off; cut, wrap, and label tons of competition cheeses for the Sunday Tent sale; clean up after the Festival; and finally arrive early on Sunday to squeeze the last bit of revenue from the competition cheese by selling it to locals.



Imagine for a moment the true value of donated products, time and, finally, the generosity of our sponsors without whom ACS members would not be able to assemble once a year for our annual exchange of ideas and good fun. If members worry about the cost of attending this conference, consider the cost of not attending. If you have 10 good conversations with new customers or new vendors, new sales and affirmed relationships will pay for the conference.

If a cheesemaker can improve the process and reduce waste, it doesn't take much cheese to pay back the cost of the conference. And, if a member wins "Best of Show," it was probably a good investment. This conference is about sustainability and when we consider our own businesses, getting away from the day-to-day operation for even a day or two can do more for sustaining our enthusiasm for the business long term.

The cost is high for many small cheesemakers. Hopefully the value is higher and worth the investment if not every year but every third year. Thanks all of you for making the effort and investment to come and take advantage of this opportunity to network and learn. See you in Vermont!

~ Allison

P.S. Last year we expanded our Board to 18 members to be at full strength for our strategic planning, with the intention of not adding new Board members this year. Board members will be coming to their end of their terms in 2008.

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



Dear ACS Members....

Do you hear that buzz? That's the flurry of planning and preparation at the ACS headquarters for the 24th Annual American Cheese Society Conference and Competition this August in Burlington, Vt. Things never seem to slow down for ACS, which is indicative of the vibrancy and importance of the association in the world of specialty food.

Membership has exceeded 1,300 for the first time, no doubt fueled by stellar educational sessions and networking opportunities at this year's conference. My conversations with long-time ACS members reveal a fresh excitement surrounding the 2007 conference, set in picturesque Burlington, Vt. The combination of outstanding speakers and the largest competition in the American artisanal cheese industry is sure to produce a memorable and valuable experience. We have some impressive programming thanks to the hard work and dedication of the 2007 conference planning committee, especially Allison Hooper and Tom Kooiman, and our generous sponsors.

By now, you have received your annual conference registration brochure and hopefully have made your travel plans. There are some new and exciting features at the conference this year including the Meet the Cheesemaker event on Wednesday, Aug. 1 from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the Sheraton. Almost 50 cheesemakers have secured tables to sample their cheeses and educate about the process of creating some of the world's best artisanal cheese. On Friday, we have planned a dinner cruise on beautiful Lake Champlain aboard the Spirit of Ethan Allen III. Dinner will feature the succulent bounty of Oregon, last year's hospitable conference hosts. Details of the conference can be found on our website: www.cheesesociety.org.

I hope that you continue to share your ideas and thoughts with each other and get involved in creating an even better ACS, one that continues to flourish, grow and solidify its pre-eminent position in the world of specialty and artisanal foods. I look forward to seeing you and enjoying the annual conference together!

Warmest regards to all,
~Marci

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VERMONT FRESH NETWORK 12th ANNUAL FORUM

Theme: EAT IT TO SAVE IT: Renewing Our Farm and Food Traditions

On Sunday, Aug. 5, at Shelburne Farms, celebrate Vermont's vibrant agricultural community and rich culinary heritage with Vermont Fresh Network (VFN). Gary Paul Nabhan, Ph.D., renowned author, lecturer and conservation scientist will share his experience as the founder of the country's first eco-gastronomic conservation project, RAFT (Renewing American Food Traditions).

Afterwards, enjoy a spectacular grazing dinner showcasing local foods raised by VFN farm partners and prepared by more than 20 of Vermont's finest chefs. Attendees can also sign up for afternoon semi-

nars on related topics conducted by local and national food authorities, chefs and growers.

Workshops/Seminars

This year, there will be three to five optional afternoon workshops for which a limited number of attendees may sign up and attend before the Forum. Programs include:

* Vermont Raw Milk Cheese Tasting and Beer Pairing, Jeffrey Roberts 2:30-4 p.m. \$20 per person.

* Artisan Breads and Heritage Grains, co-produced by Northeast Organic Farming Association - Vermont. Heather Darby, agronomic

specialist with University of Vermont, 2:30-4 p.m. \$15 per person.

* Wild Edibles and Their Environments, co-produced by Slow Food Vermont. Nova Kim and Les Hook will lead a wild edibles walk, 2-4 p.m. \$20 per person.

* RAFT Maple Syrup and Clambake Nation Roundtable Discussion, co-produced by Chefs Collaborative. Gary Nabhan will lead a panel discussion focused on identified RAFT food items for the Maple Syrup Nation and Clambake Nation. 2-4 p.m. \$10 per person.

The partners groups in organizing the forum (Slow Food, Shelburne Farms, Vermont Cheese Council, etc.) will be assisting in organizing these programs.

Last year's forum sold out at more than 400 attendees. The event attracts people from all over the region and nation because of the reach of the partnership with RAFT, Slow Food USA and the American Cheese Society.

GENERAL SCHEDULE

2:00-4:00 Workshops
4:00- 4:45 Farm tours
etc.
4:00- 4:45 VIP cocktail
reception
5:00- 5:30 Reception
with hors d'oeuvres
5:30-6:30 Speaker(s)
6:30-8:30 Dinner
8:15-9:00 Ice Cream
Social (book signing, etc.)
To register, call 803-
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www.vermontfresh.net

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2007 Conference: What's Happening

Burlington Dinner Cruise

Sponsored by Dairy Farmers of Oregon and Tillamook Cheese

Share this unique cruise and networking experience with fellow ACS members aboard the Spirit of Ethan Allen II. Join us for a Pacific Northwest menu featuring the finest Oregon ingredients while cruising Vermont's beautiful Lake Champlain.

Enjoy toasted hazelnuts and whole grain breads from artisan bakeries. Sample sweet pears grown along the Columbia River and Willamette Valley berries. Enjoy Oregon Dungeness crab and taste a wonderful selection of



Oregon's finest artisan cheeses.

The cruise ship will pass the beautiful Adirondacks of New York State and the Green Mountains of Vermont that surround the lake. Voyagers will experience the scenery of Vermont and the cuisine of Oregon in one enjoyable evening.

Meet The Cheesemaker Reception - New event!



Mary Keehn of Cyprus Grove is one of many cheesemakers who will be on hand at the event.

One of the many reasons we go to the ACS conference is to learn about wonderful American cheeses. This year we are kicking off the conference with a new event on Wednesday, August 1, from 3-6 pm. Our aim is to give you face-to-face time with the creative and passionate folks who make these American treasures.

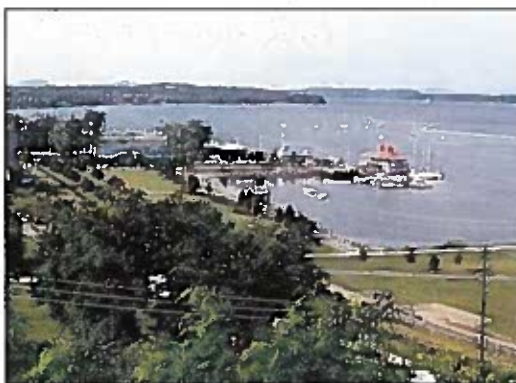
Come and meet more than 40 American cheesemakers, try their cheeses, and ask questions. This new event promises to be a highlight of the 2007 conference.

Discover Burlington, Vermont

Discover Vermont's charm and vitality! On the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, Burlington offers a variety of cultural activities, mountain views, back country roads, world-class food, fantastic nightlife, great shopping and a host of outdoor recreational activities.

The waterfront ECHO at the Leahy Center is an aquarium and science center devoted to Lake Champlain. (www.echovermont.org). Another Burlington cultural icon is the University of Vermont's Robert Hull Fleming Museum (www.uvm.edu), which houses Vermont's largest collection of art and anthropology.

Between the two lies the Historic Church Street Marketplace, eight pedestrian-only cobblestone blocks filled with shops, boutiques, cafes, restaurants, and



historic architecture. Church Street was largely responsible for Burlington's receipt of the "Great American Main Street Award" from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. (www.visit-vermont.com)

And no visit to Vermont is complete without a stop at Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Company for a tour and taste.

Welcome New Members

Check our list for new members who might be near you. Contact details are on the ACS website.

Gerry Albright
ATC-USA, LLC
Wellesley Island, NY
Susan Avery
Chesapeake, VA
Leon Berthume
St. Albans Cooperative
Creamery Inc
St Albans, VT
Rhonda Butler
Asgaard Farm, LLC
Au Sable Forks, NY
Diane Campion
Prime Line Distributors
Miami Beach, FL
Jeanne Carpenter
Word Astisan LLC
Oregon, WI
Vincent Chaput
Fromages Chaput
Chateauguay, Quebec,
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Wisconsin Center for Dairy
Research
Madison, WI
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Cypress Grove Chevre
Arcata, CA
Heather Fiscallini
Fiscallini Cheese Co.
Modesto, CA

Cheese Books

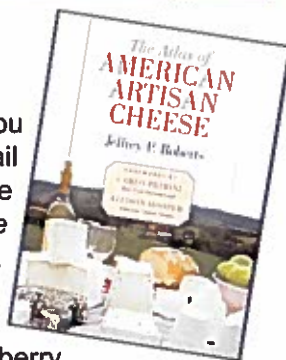
The Atlas of American Artisan Cheese

Review by Marian Burros

Now, thanks to a new book, you can have your own cheese trail adventure virtually anywhere in the United States. According to *The Atlas of American Artisan Cheese*, 43 states have artisanal cheese-makers, including Alaska, where you can buy goat cheese at Cranberry Ridge Farm in Wasilla, 45 miles northeast of Anchorage. Jeffrey P. Roberts, a founder of the Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese at the University of Vermont, has ferreted out stories of about 350 of the 400 cheesemakers he has found in America.

Each profile is filled with all the useful information a cheese fiend could want. And there are plenty of photos: the cheeses look delicious and the farmers kindly while the lambs, cows and goats look appealing. Even if you can't take a tour, the atlas provides a useful introductory course on artisanal cheeses and describes how to order many of the cheeses online.

Published June 2007 by Chelsea Green, \$35.

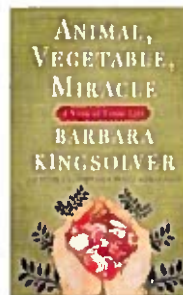


Animal Vegetable Miracle: A Year of Food Life

Excerpted from Washington Post review:

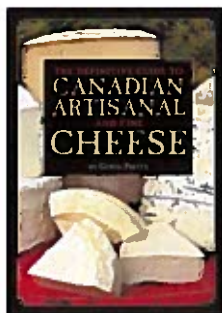
To the swelling chorus of concern about the food we grow, buy and eat, add three powerful voices, Barbara Kingsolver, Camille Kingsolver and Steven L. Hopp, the authors of *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. In a way, the book adds four voices, because its main author – novelist, essayist and poet Barbara Kingsolver – speaks in two tones. One is charming, zestful, funny and poetic, while the other is serious and dry, indeed sometimes lecturing and didactic. Both are passionate and caring.

Published May 2007 by Harper Collins, \$26.95.



The Definitive Guide to Canadian Artisanal and Fine Cheeses profiles more than 150 cheesemakers from coast to coast in Canada with superb photos, recipes, tasting notes and information on where to buy their products. Professional chef, writer and new ACS member, Gurth Pretty traveled extensively to research the book and it shows. Fascinating reading for a cheese afficianado.

Published 2006 by Whitecap Books. \$29.95.



Hosted by: Sheana Davis, The Epicurean Connection

Featuring: Juliet Harbutt, Chairman of the British Cheese Awards, food writer, and author.

Guest Speakers: Ig Vella, Vella Cheese Company; Leslie "Bees" Butler, Marketing Specialist UC Davis; Dee Harley, Harley Farms; Gordon Edgar, Rainbow Grocery Cooperative; Sid Cook, Carr Valley Cheese; Steve Ehlers, Larry's Market; Jim Yonkus, The Epicurean Connection; Juliana Uruburu, The Pasta Shop; Daphne Zepos, Essex St. Cheese Co.; Sam Mogannam, Bi Rite Market & Creamery; Ray Bair, Cheese Plus; Bill Boersma, Bravo Farms; David Evans, Marin Sun Farms.

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GOURMET NEWS

Eat Responsibly

Act Locally

Respond Politically

Marketing

This column offers ideas from a variety of accomplished marketers. We invite you to share your experiences. Send your ideas to Liz Campbell at campbellliz@rogers.com

The Second Pillar of Marketing: Pricing

By Dan Strongin

You don't set your price, the market does. Let me explain. Other hands called middlemen are involved in the selling of your product. Unfair or not, how much they charge is beyond your control. Rather than wasting time commiserating, I prefer to walk you through things you can control and help you make money.



There are three fundamentals in Pricing: Costing, Breaking Even, and Maximizing Sales. Why didn't I mention setting your price as part of pricing? See the first line.

Cost!

Forget everything you have been told about Costing. Accountants count, they don't operate. You only need the important details: use "Simplified Operational Reports," choose reasonable approximation over too many details. An important consideration is your Cost of Goods (COG): all goods that go into your products as sold: the milk, the starter, the rennet, the salt, the package and the case it goes in. The rest is the average monthly cost of "Everything Else."

It is hard for some to grasp why I don't count labor in cost of goods. Whether you make a full vat of cheese or a half, the work takes about the same time. Very few companies can tie production volumes to the number of hours per shift (they just cut shifts). If you don't give your workers enough work they leave. Now as to that salary some of you aren't paying yourselves. You can't judge how much you should charge based on making only a few wheels a week.

And you have capital investment – money that is at risk. The volume at which business makes sense from an invest-

ment point of view is around 71% of capacity (five days a week). Less and you are losing money if only by undervaluing your investment. The sooner you get there, the better. Calculate "Everything Else" at what they would be producing at 71% of capacity.

Break Even!

You need to know your Break Even. It is simple really. Whatever you charge beyond your COG pays Everything Else until paid, after it accumulates as profit. Part of the market price is the margin charged by middlemen. The rest "what the market will bear."

Every product has retail beyond which sales slow. I call it "The Price." The trick is to get as close as you can without going over.

Maximize!

If you're a very small producer, find a way to create enough value to justify \$10/lb. out the door. The rest of us have to find "The Price" for our cheese to maximize sales to make investment worthwhile. After breaking even, what is left over accumulates. Maximum possible accumulation is good!

To set your price, back "The Price" down from the consumer to the Retailer to the Distributor back down to what it cost them to get your product to their door, as they add the cost of getting the product to your price before calculating their margin. Subtract the cost of delivery to the distributor and you have your price. Trick the market into selling your cheese at "The Price" and maximize sales to 71% of capacity and you're in business!

For more information visit the DBIC website, where you'll find "Everything is Marketing." I go into more detail there, including promotional pricing strategies, and how anti-trust law affects you. You can also learn what the other Pillars of Marketing are: Go to <http://www.dbicusa.org/planningoptions/research++resources/default.asp>

Dan Strongin is the owner of Edible Solutions.

Welcome New Members

- James Gallivan**
Atlantic Culinary Academy
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- Karen Getz**
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- Dick Groves**
Cheese Reporter
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- Debra Hahn**
Hahn's End
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- Colin Knight**
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 Milton Creamery LLC
 Milton, IA
Kristen Nussbaum
 The Cheese Shop, Inc
 Orlando, FL
Michael O'Sullivan
 Springfield, MA

Dr. Cheez

Do you have a question about making, handling, or aging cheese? Neville McNaughton, president of Cheez Sorce, St. Louis, Mo., draws on many years of experience manufacturing dairy products in New Zealand and the U.S. to answer.

The road to market continued..

From the moment our cheese is handed over to a second party for transportation to a distributor, the anxiety begins. Finding effective affordable distribution that will not reduce the value of the product can become a gamble. Even when we pay the highest rate for next day delivery, some products don't make it. When shipping coast to coast, many hands handle a parcel – the pick up, the distribution center, the plane, the distribution center and final delivery. So often, that package that means so much to the producer, and ultimately the buyer, is just another package to the shipper.

Typically perishables are not treated any differently than other packages. But for a package of bolts, two hours in the sun on a dock has little impact on the quality of the shipment. For a package containing cheese, it simply eats away at the viable time line the product has to get to market in good condition. Knowing how much blue ice and the level of insulation is a bit of an art. Should a one-day package have a transit life of three days for safety's sake? How much insulation is really needed? And how much money should we spend on insurance?

For the shipper using normal distribution channels, the comfort level that the product is going to arrive safely is just as precarious. Too often I have seen a load of cheese onto a truck and everything appears great, only to get a call two days later that the product is being rejected because of issues – issues that appear could only have happened on the truck, on the dock, or in the recipients facility. How do you resolve these situations?

Reefer trucks are not particularly well insulated, just ask anyone who has tried

to turn them into an aging room. Energy costs to run them are high due to heat in the summer; in the winter they may get too cold. It doesn't take long for temperature to build if the truck unit fails unnoticed in transit. Sometimes all it takes is for your product to be surrounded by pallets from another stop that are not properly cooled prior to loading. Your pallet may gain 10 – 20F before it starts to cool again. Temperature gain and cycling are the evils of shelf life; repeated temperature fluctuations have a far more detrimental effect on product quality than simply raising the temperature and holding it.

Temperature throughout the distribution system is an issue. The maintenance of temperature is more complex than we know. Leave it up to your installer and he will operate the widest differential. The maintenance supervisor for a facility is more focused on the longevity of his mechanical equipment than the quality of the cheese. A refrigeration plant will ideally operate at maximum output for the longest time to minimize power consumption. Is this right for cheese? No. Wide differentials create a warming/cooling effect, particularly on products that are on the outer edges of pallets; products in the center are more stable. The white lactate crust found on the surface of many old rindless cheddars can be the result of poor storage conditions and excessive temperature differentials. Ideally, I push my refrigeration techs for a two-degree range.

What temperature is right for your product? Cheeses such as Bergkase, Gruyere, blue cheese, Gouda and rinded Cheddars are aged at temperatures in the 50s. What happens when these are suddenly reduced to the mid 30s? Young cheese may fare better, but aged cheese may suddenly develop lactate crystals. Calcium lactate in its soluble form is distributed throughout the moisture phase, and a drop in temperature may cause saturation and spontaneous crystals to form. These crystals may or may not be desirable. But keeping the cheese at temperatures nearer the aging temperature means the problem of crystal formation doesn't arise.

Member News

ACS members who produce, market, support or serve American cheese share what they're doing. If you have news you'd like to share with us, please send it to the editor, Liz Campbell, at campbellliz@rogers.com.

Andes Panquehue Cheese has changed its packaging to a parchment and wine label inspired look, and added Chilean Pepper flavored with Merken Pepper, an indigenous spice from Chile included in the Slow Food Foundation's Presidia Project.

Nebraska has a new farmstead artisan cheesemaker: **Farmstead First**, at **Branched Oak Farm** in Raymond, Neb., is a cooperatively run pilot plant. Cheesemaking classes are offered and equipment can be rented in order to develop and diversify farm economies and learn by doing from other farmstead producers. Classes will be offered beginning in late June. www.farmsteadfirst.com

At the World Cheese Awards, **Cabot** Vintage Choice Cheddar and Cabot Old School 5-Year-Old Cheddar won silver medals in the "Vintage Cheddar" category (cheddar made in a creamery and aged over 1.5 years). They were the highest cheddar awards won by a creamery from outside the United Kingdom. At the 14th biennial U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Cabot Jalapeño 50% Reduced Fat Cheddar was named "Best Reduced Fat Cheddar." Cabot Cheddar also came first in the Medium Cheddar class.

Casellula Cheese & Wine Cafe in New York City just opened with 35 handmade cheeses from all over the world on the menu, including some from ACS members like Estrella Family Creamery, Sweet Grass Dairy, Rogue Creamery, Uplands Cheese Co. and Jasper Hill. Fromager Tia Keenan creates pairings with an eclectic wine list. Cheese tastings, pairings and other

events start soon. More details at www.casellula.com.

DCI Cheese Co. introduces new Silly Cheese, individually wrapped, 100% certified organic string cheese in packages of six. Colorful cartoon cows on the package appeal to children and health conscious parents.



Two new reports in the Dairy Artisan Series are now featured on the DBIC website: *Making Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese in Italy*. **Fantome Farm's Anne Topham** visited Italy to learn more about making the famous cheese, using milk from a herd of 60 Holstein cows.

Terra Madre 2006: Turin, Italy is a travelogue of the experiences and impressions of the five artisan cheesemakers who attended Terra Madre 2006, in Turin, Italy.

View the reports at: <http://www.dbic-usa.com/planningoptions/research+resources/dairy+artisan+series/default.asp>

In her first-ever showing at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, farmstead cheesemaker **Brenda Jensen of Hidden Springs Creamery** (Wisc.) captured three medals, including a prestigious Best of Class gold medal for her fresh sheep's milk Driftless Cheese. Jensen, who left the corporate world to become a cheesemaker, marketer and shepherd, also earned the gold medal in the Soft and Semi-soft Sheep's Milk Cheeses category for Driftless Honey Lavender, a silver medal in the same category for Driftless Natural and fourth place for Driftless Basil & Olive Oil.

In early June, **Stephen J. Hueffed** and **Amy Turnbull** finished construction of a sheep milk parlor within a historic gambrel barn. Their dairy was certified by the State of Washington as a Grade A Dairy. **La Ferme de Metras, LLC** has started milking 77

Lacaune-Friesian crosses and will sell milk this year to a cheesemaker in Wash. and one in Ore. While they do not yet craft cheese for sale to the public, they hope to do so in 2008.

Meyenberg Goat Milk Products was awarded a gold medal in the 2007 California State Fair Commercial Cheese Competition for Special Reserved Aged Goat Milk Cheddar cheese (Open milk category for aged cheddar over 6 months) and a silver medal for Portobello Mushroom Goat Milk Jack Cheese (Goat and sheep milk category).

Montchevre's Cranberry/ Cinnamon Fresh Goat Cheese won Best of Class in the 2007 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest in the Flavored Soft Goat's Milk Cheeses Category. The company has introduced "Foodservice Solutions," hand-crafted, fresh goat cheese, gas flushed in resealable trays to extend shelf life in foodservice environments.

Heather Paxson, an ACS member since 2003, has received a research grant to conduct an anthropological study of farmstead and artisanal cheesemaking in New England, Wisconsin and California. As part of this research funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, she will conduct oral history interviews with cheesemakers to learn about their motivations, operations and concerns. For information, or to participate, contact her at paxson@mit.edu.

Rising Sun Farms won a bronze medal at the World Cheese Championship in England for Chocolate Espresso (known locally as Espresso Madness) Cheese Torta. **Elizabeth Fugas** was honored in the April 2007 *Portland Business Journal* as one of the "Top 50 women-owned businesses" as ranked by revenue 2006. Rising Sun has a new distributor in Texas and is

Welcome New Members

Stephanie Pelham
Eats Gourmet Marketplace
Albany, NY

Nancy Peppler
Nancy's Cheese
Toronto, ON

Maragaret Powers
Corboy & Demetrio
Chicago, IL

Gurth Pretty
Cheese of Canada
Toronto,

Katherine Pryor
K. Pryor & Associates
Nashua, NH

Louis Risoli
L'Espalier
Boston, MA

Karen Rogers
Dallas, TX

Amber Rollo
Plum Market
Franklinville, NJ

Bridget Ryan
Somerville, MA

Dianna Sadowski
Norwalk, CT

Bessie Sandberg
Blythedale Farms Inc
Corinth, VT

Karl Santos
Shy Brothers Farm LLC
Westport, MA

Anne-Marie Shubin
Toronto, ON

Bruce Simberg
The Wine Room
Winter Park, FL

Jean Tickler
Luke & McKenna
Nashua, NH

Lydia Trebilcock
Healthy Living Market
South Burlington, VT

Maria Trumpler
Crawford Family Farm, LLC
Whiting, VT

Eric Wheeler
Esquire Market
Brooklyn, NY

Morgan Wolaver
Otter Creek Ales
Middlebury, VT

Dana Wolle
Wisconsin Center for Dairy
Research
Madison, WI

Mark Wolowitz
The Fresh Market
Greensboro, NC

Sherri Zebrasky
Buford, GA



continued from page 1

• Dairy product support programs

USDA has proposed continuing the support price of milk at \$9.90 per hundredweight. However, the House dairy subcommittee has proposed abandoning the milk support price to instead focus on individual commodities. The subcommittee's proposals call for setting the following minimum prices: Cheddar blocks at \$1.13 per pound, Cheddar barrels at \$1.10 per pound, butter at \$1.05 per pound and nonfat dry milk at \$0.80 per pound.

The Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program has endured a love-hate relationship with producers during its five-year run. Many would like to see the program expire with the 2002 Farm Bill, while others say the program provides vital support to the nation's small dairy farmers.

USDA has proposed scaling back the program and tying payments to a reduced, historical payment rate instead of actual milk sales. USDA estimates these proposals will provide \$793 million in additional dairy payments over a 10-year period.

Eligibility would continue to be limited to 2.4 million pounds of milk marketed per year. MILC payments also would count toward a producer's overall counter-cyclical payment limit of \$110,000 per year, which USDA says will help limit payments to producers with multiple dairy operations. A proposed annual adjusted gross income eligibility cap of \$200,000 also would apply to the program.

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) has proposed using the funding allocated to the MILC program to support

a producer security program, which also would base payments on historic production data. The NMPF program would be decoupled from price, which the organization says will result in predictable payments.

• Forward contracting

The 2007 Farm Bill may bring the rebirth of the now-expired pilot program that operated from 2000 to 2004 and allowed dairy farmers to utilize forward contracts with their processors.

"A permanent dairy forward contracting program will go a long way toward improving financial certainty for thousands of dairy producers and processors, and providing a level playing field in the dairy marketplace," says Connie Tipton, president and CEO, International Dairy Foods Association.

However, the National Farmers Union (NFU) is campaigning against forward contracting, saying the program undermines the federal milk marketing order system. In addition, NFU argues that producers risk receiving a lower-than-market price for their milk when they enter into forward contracts.

In the next few months, members of the House and Senate agriculture committees will craft their respective versions of the 2007 Farm Bill. The goal is to have a unified version of the bill approved by both houses of Congress and sent to the president for his signature before the current Farm Bill expires at the end of September.

Amelia Buragas is a staff editor and writer with Cheese Market News who kindly provided her services for this story.

➔ Member News continued from page 9

exporting to Mexico and Canada.

Rumiano Cheese Company is the first cheese manufacturer to have all of its organic dairies certified under the American Humane Free Farmed Certified program. Recent awards include a silver medal in the 2007 Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association Championship for Peppato cheese in the flavored hard cheese division. At the 2007 California State Fair Commercial Cheese Contest, Natural Old Fashioned Monterey Jack, Natural Old Fashioned Pepper Jack, Peppato took golds; Dry Monterey Jack cheese took the silver.

Sheana Davis, The Epicurean Connection, presents the 6th annual Cheese Conference: Opportunities and Challenges; The Food

Chain From the Farm to the Table, March 4-6, 2008, at the Sonoma Valley Inn, Sonoma, Calif. Keynote speakers include Juliet Harbutt, chairman of the British Cheese Awards, and Dee Harley, Harley Farms Pescadero, Calif. Guest speakers include Ig Vella, Vella Cheese Co.; Leslie "Bees" Butler, marketing specialist, UC Davis; Gordon Edgar, Rainbow Grocery Cooperative; Sid Cook, Steve Ehlers, Jim Yonkus, Juliana Uruburu, Daphne Zepos and more. Reception nightly with craft brews, artisan cheese and wines. \$125 for three days/\$50 per day. www.sheanadavis.com; 707-935-7960.

Thistle Hill Farm, a repeat first prize winner in the farmstead cheese category, will begin next year to make



Mike and Carol Gingrich (posing with Stephanie and Matt Gallo, grandchildren of Ernest and Julio) won the Gallo Gold Medal.

Tarentaise at Spring Brook Farm in neighboring Reading, Vt., exclusively from milk from their herd of Jerseys. It will be aged at a cave at Spring Brook Farm.

Uplands Cheese Co. was awarded the Gallo Gold Medal Award for artisan dairy products in April at a luncheon in NYC attended by 100+ food

ACS at Canadian Cheese Festivals

By John Eggena

SIAL Montréal

This international cousin of the famous Paris Sial (Salon International de l'Agroalimentaire International) took place in April in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Even though the show has an international flavor with many countries attending, it is mostly a coveted showcase for Quebec's specialty cheeses and fine foods. What stands out in particular is the North American-French cultural mix seen in the foods and cheeses offered, the unique packaging, label colors and designs and, of course, the language spoken at the show.

For the first time, there were many Americans and ACS members visiting, navigating through the language barrier to get at that interesting cheese on display "Information, s'il-vous-plait?" And, as with all shows, everyone was hunting for that unique artisanal cheese to carry back home.

In the crowd, I spotted David Grotenstein, Steve Ehlers, Dave Giambalvo, Trish Pohanka, James Mellgren from Gourmet Retailer, Gary Edwards from Sage Marketing, all making their way around the show. Most had been invited as guests of the Canadian or Quebec governments to participate in a buyers circle. They took time out to stop at my booth and, of course, to see the beautiful city of Montreal.



French cultural affinity seems to favor tinkering with soft-ripened and washed-rind cheeses, and these were abundant at the show in all varieties and shapes. There were washed-rind bries to creamy Vacherin style cheeses as well as chevres and sheep's milk cheeses. There were excellent Canadian cheddar offerings but surprisingly, no cloth-bound or rinded cheddars – and this despite Canada's Commonwealth roots.

Many Quebec ACS members are looking forward to our Burlington, Vt., conference and plan to attend. Montreal is just 90 minutes away. It will be another opportunity to mix and learn about our common North American heritage and new cheese terroir.

Website: www.sialmontreal.com

Warwick Cheese Festival

The 13th annual cheese competition was held on June 14 with some 31 cheesemaker participants presenting more than 100 cheeses (commercial, artisanal and farmstead) representing the Quebec terroir. The festival attracts more than 25,000 visitors a year to this small city in Quebec. It's an opportunity to taste regional food products, wine, beer and cider and attend tutored cheese tastings by la Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec (presentations in French) Visit www.festivaldes-fromages.qc.ca



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Benefits of annual membership may include:

- Subscription to the quarterly ACS newsletter
- Discounted registration fees for the annual conference
- Annual membership directory
- Listing on the ACS website, with links to your own website
- Advance notice of special events in your area, including the Bon Appetit Wine and Spirits Focus
- The opportunity for cheesemakers to exhibit their products at the Winter and Spring NASFT Fancy Food Shows, in San Francisco and New York

YES, I wish to join the ACS at the membership level of:

☐ Associate (\$95) ☐ Individual (\$160) ☐ Small Business (\$450) ☐ Corporate (\$790) ☐ Multi-Unit Business (\$1,975)

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Butter Maker | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheesemaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Chef/Caterer | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant |
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- ☐ Retail Stores ☐ Mail Order ☐ Distributor ☐ On Site ☐ Website ☐ Farmer's Market
Cheeses Made:

Short Bio:

CORPORATE MEMBERS

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 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.

SMALL BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP \$450 • Benefits include those of the Individual member category for up to three 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.