

Vermont Cheese Council

Spring/Summer 2004 • Vol. 4, Issue 1

Summertime in Vermont... *and the livin' is easy...?*

Photo courtesy of Cabot Creamery; Glenn Moody, photographer



Summertime's easy livin' means 18 hour workdays for Vermont's cheesemakers. Between delivering their animals of offspring, milking the herd or flock usually twice a day and turning their farm fresh milk into a wide variety of cheeses, it's a busy, hectic, productive time of year in Vermont. And as cheese-lovers know, there's no time like it. For a list of Vermont cheesemakers you can visit, see the cheese trail map inserted in this newsletter.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cheese Trends: **The Restaurant Connection**

The past three years have seen a surge in national interest for artisanal cheeses. Who could resist? Creamy exotic Brie-styles emerged from all corners, fresh chevres found their way into restaurant dishes, and a selection of distinctly original cow's milk cheeses with rustic and romantic names entered the marketplace.

This upward trend can be attributed to favorable media coverage and the growing sophistication of the American palate, but the role of food service and retail should not be underplayed. Both sourced out and offered new cheeses to appreciative customers, and a few eventually made it their specialty.

SYSCO, for example, paired with ChefEx to carry a limited selection of boutique cheeses. Of the 15 currently offered, seven are from Vermont. Such distributors carrying more and more cheeses have broadened the horizon for small companies that were once exclusive to their local markets.

Obtaining those coveted spheres of cheesy goodness often means accepting that cheesemakers may have seasonal or limited production. Those circumstances were previously considered detrimental to breaking in to the national marketplace. But

the times are changing, and buyers are becoming more knowledgeable and casual about obtaining fine cheeses.

It is in upscale restaurants that the connection is most notable. The last few I dined at in Burlington, Vermont, proudly displayed the names of producers on the menu, and fromage was no longer merely a

separate course. Cheeses – especially farmhouse cheeses – were exciting accompaniments to grilled meats, the heat awakening aromas and flavors that would be hidden in a stand-alone offering. Cheese is also showing up next to sweet desserts – apple pie and cheddar, move over! Poached pears and honeyed bread bring out the best in washed-rind and blue cheeses. The pinnacle of cheese paradise is having wait staff suggest the best cheeses from their selection to complement a wine you have chosen.

Diners inevitably search for “the cheese they had at the restaurant,” and a cycle completes from restaurant to retail, then back again to the producer. With the enthusiastic support of chefs and distributors, Vermont cheeses will continue to go places!

Dawn Morin-Boucher
President,
Vermont Cheese Council

APPETIZER RECIPE FROM SHELburnE FARMS

Geoff Mockbee, Head Chef

Beef Carpaccio with Aged Cheddar and Arugula Pesto

To Prepare:

Heavily season the beef carpaccio (a natural cut of eye of the round) with salt and pepper. Then, sear it over high heat. When it is cooled, wrap and put it in the freezer. When the beef is sufficiently frozen, slice it very thinly. Shave the aged cheddar (use Shelburne Farms, Cabot, Grafton or other fine aged Vermont cheddar) in very thin slices and layer over the carpaccio on a serving plate.

Surround the beef and cheese with an arugula pesto. This will create bitter and savory flavors that will compliment the beef and cheese. Serve with Shelburne Farms cheddar crackers.

The Pesto:

Chop four cups arugula leaves in a blender add and blend 1/4 cup toasted almonds, 1-4 cloves of garlic, 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil and an equal amount of Reggiano cheese.



Neighborly Farms

A family-centered labor of love

Visiting Neighborly Farms in Randolph Center is like traveling back to a simpler and more wholesome time. Rob and Linda Dimmick have taken on the challenge of living the family farm life with all the hard work and uncertainty that that implies. And they do it with enthusiasm. When you visit their cheesemaking operation, you're likely to share a cup of coffee or sample their cheese while you sit at the large farm

table in the quaintly decorated retail space. The green and white-checked wallpapered and knotty pine trimmed room is a comforting oasis in a hectic world. Then Linda will lead you down the hallway and invite you to take a look into her world – cheesemaking in the pristine cheese room on the right, the tidy barn with their 90 head of cows tied up on the left.

Coming to Cheesemaking

Linda Dimmick came to cheesemaking via dental hygiene. Traits learned in that field including a compulsion toward germ-free working conditions, has translated well into the world of cheesemaking. And, while her path from there to here seems a bit round about, it all makes perfect sense when you listen to her tell her story. A petite woman in her late 30's, who looks younger despite the schedule she keeps, Linda exudes warmth and an easy friendliness. For the past few years she's been spending her days making, marketing and delivering cheese under the brand, Neighborly Farms.

"I've never worked so hard in my life," says Linda who, in her spare time, has three children to raise, an 1800 farmhouse to take care of, and a barn full of animals that she knows by name and clearly loves.

The Neighborly Farm cheesemaking operation is a model of



modern efficiency and cleanliness.

But it started as a hand-made business and a one-woman show. "It's incredibly satisfying work," says Linda who made every single pound of the roughly 10,000 pounds of cheese produced the first year and still managed to run the retail shop, host visitors who came to view the farm and cheesemaking operation six days a week, and deliver her cheeses to retailers across the state – all with a smile. And, did I mention, she and Rob, have three young children?

A Working Partnership

Though Linda would be the first to tell you, she's hardly done it alone. First and foremost, she credits her husband, Rob. He's the "common sense" behind the cheese business they launched in April of 2001 as a way of adding income to their farm revenue. He works the fields as well as having an off-farm job and maintains a farm that is entirely organic. The animals, 48 of which are milked twice daily by Rob's brother-in-law, receive no hormones or antibiotics and eat only organic

feed grown without pesticides. The fields are similarly untreated with anything but pure cow manure. The resulting cheese is organic as well. This factor appeals to a lot of Neighborly Farms accounts such as coops and Natural Food Stores across the state and into New Hampshire.

Despite the convenience of a new cheese making plant and having a refrigerated truck for deliveries, Linda and Rob Dimmick are "new age" pioneers – forging a life out of their own labor and ingenuity.

And it's life they weren't both born into but rather sought out. They live and work on a beautiful piece of property – some 168 acres of crop and grazing fields that support their organic dairy. Rob's folks bought the land in the '60s when they moved here from Connecticut. They brought Rob and his brothers up on this farm, teaching them the importance of working in harmony with the land. And it was to this place of quiet beauty and hard work that Rob wanted to return when he and Linda married in 1989 and had their first child a year later. Linda, who was born and raised in upper Michigan, took to rural Vermont naturally when first she came here to take a job in dental hygiene. By the time she met and married Rob, she felt very much at home in Randolph – a community where orchards and dairy farms dot the landscape.

Let's Make Cheese

In early 2000, after reading about the burgeoning cheese industry in Vermont, Linda suggested they use



Neighborly Farms
continued from page 3

some of their pure, organic milk in the making of cheese for sale. With the help of consultant, Peter Dixon, Linda made cheese for three days in the farmhouse kitchen before deciding what kind to go with. When the time came to start making cheese in earnest to sell, they decided to brand their cheese “Neighborly” after the kindness of the neighbors Charlie and Sandy Russell who helped them get started when they first returned to the farm. “You really rely on your neighbors,” says Linda, “In good times and in bad.” Bad times are potentially just around the corner in the world of family farming when milk prices and weather are just two of the critical factors that cannot be controlled. But what can be controlled – the care and development of the land and the tending of the animals – sets the Dimmicks aside as first class farmers.

Meeting their goals

The Dimmicks’s original estimate that they could produce as much as 80,000 pounds of cheese in a year was met within their first three years

of business. Today, Neighborly Farms’ cheesemaking operation employs four full-time and four part-time employees including a cheesemaker and an assistant cheesemaker in addition to Linda and her husband, Rob. Linda trained her assistant Melissa Komorowski to be as compulsive about cleanliness and quality control as she is. Together with the help of apprentice cheesemaker, David Goldsworthy, the two are churning out the Neighborly Farms line three-days a week, year round. Linda adds that cheesemaking days for Melissa come before and after she tends to the water buffalo calves at the Woodstock Water Buffalo Farm in South Woodstock, where her husband is the herd manager. “She’s the amazing one, these days,” says Linda, who spends her time focusing on marketing and selling 1,000 pounds of cheese a week as well as home-schooling her three children, ages 11,



12 and 13. Another generation of farmer/cheesemakers on their way.

Today, Neighborly Farms offers raw milk cheddar as well as eight varieties of flavored cheddars, Colby, Feta and Monterey jack. Their big sellers are the feta and aged raw milk cheddar. Hours are everyday, except Sunday, from 9 – 5.

Come Visit Neighborly Farms:

If your travels take you anywhere near Exit 4 off Route 89, you should treat yourself to a 10 minute detour and visit Neighborly Farm. Chances are, once you get there, you won’t want to leave. Take Exit 4 off I-89 to Randolph. Go east on Rt 66 .5 miles to Vermont Technical College. Continue on Rt 66 another .5 miles until the Y. Take a left onto Ridge Road. Go 1.4 miles and turn right on North Randolph Road. Go exactly 1.5 miles to the four corners. The Dimmick’s big red barn and farm store is on the left.

New Institute for Artisan Cheese in Vermont

The University of Vermont (UVM) will soon be home to the nation’s first comprehensive center devoted to hand-made or “artisan” cheeses. The Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese (VIAC) will provide education, research, and technical assistance for cheesemakers from across the country and across the world.

As international food language goes, cheese is as good as it gets. And Vermonters have taken that to heart. “Over the past 15 years, the growth and quality of Vermont artisan cheeses have been nothing short of

remarkable,” says Jeffrey Roberts, principal consultant to VIAC. “This state has the greatest number of artisan cheesemakers per capita in the country.”

The artisan cheese movement in Vermont was part of the impetus for the creation for the Vermont Cheese Council in 1997 which helped open national markets to small-scale cheesemakers. Others also saw the potential of small-scale food entrepreneur businesses. In 2000, UVM and Cornell University were awarded the largest-ever FDA grant for the creation of the Northeast

Center for Food Entrepreneurship. The Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese has emerged from the NECFE with Professors Cathy Donnelly and Paul Kindstedt, as co-directors.

Roberts reports that in January, the John Merck Fund appropriated \$150,000 over three years to get the Institute up and running. A matching fund of the same amount has been made by an anonymous donor. The goal, according to Roberts, is the creation of a nationally-recognized program that will help elevate the production and distribution of

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New Institute

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artisan cheeses worldwide. The main activities of the VAIC will fall into three categories: teaching, research and services. International cooperation and information

exchange will also be at the heart of VIAC's mission, says Roberts, who will continue to work with the VCC and other interested parties as the Institute evolves.

For more information, contact UVM Professor, Cathy Donnelly (802) 656-8300.

Farmers' Market Season Underway

With the melting of the snows comes the best time of the year for Vermont food-lovers: Farmers Market season. Many of Vermont's hardest to find cheese varieties can be found at outdoor markets state-wide starting mid-late May and running through Foliage season. Among the markets where cheeses are sold:

BELLOWS FALLS FARMERS' MARKET
The Way Point Center,
Fridays from 3 pm – 6pm
cheeses from: **Vermont Shepherd**

BRATTLEBORO FARMERS' MARKET
cheeses from:
Peaked Mountain Farm
Westminster Dairy

BURLINGTON FARMERS' MARKET
City Hall Park,
Saturdays, from 8:30 to 2:30
cheeses from:
Willow Hill
Green Mountain Blue Cheese
Doe's Leap

DANVILLE FARMERS' MARKET
Wednesday, 9 – 1
cheeses from:
Hope Farm (starting in August)

MONTPELIER FARMERS' MARKET
intersection of State and Elm,
Saturdays from 9 am – 1 pm
cheeses from: **Lazy Lady Farm**

NORWICH FARMERS' MARKET
Saturdays 9 – 1
cheeses from:
Cobb Hill Cheese
Thistle Hill

ST. JOHNSBURY FARMERS' MARKET
Saturdays 9 – 1
cheeses from:
Hope Farm (starting in August)

SPOTLIGHT: VERMONT SHEPHERD

Come See Cheese in the Making

Vermont Shepherd's rustic farmstand is open 7 days a week, year round. It is located at the end of their driveway, 875 Patch Road. 7 miles from I-91, exit 4 and 5 miles from I-91 exit 5 (from Exit 5 the road is called Westminster Heights Rd.) if you're coming from the north. Look for the oval Vermont Shepherd sign. They will hold an Open House at their Vermont Shepherd Cheese Cave on the following dates in 2004:

- Every Friday from May 30 to October 29, 12 – 3pm, including a demonstration of cheesemaking.
- Saturday Open Houses from 10 am – 3 pm on:
 - August 7
 - September 25
 - Saturday October 9 and
 - November 26, 27, 28 as part of the Putney Craft Tour 10am – 4pm

For a list of other cheesemakers who welcome visitors, please review the map included in this issue.



Above, Dr. Paul Kinstedt is honored as the first life-time honorary member of the Vermont Cheese Council at the April meeting. At right: newly elected officers are, from left,

President Jamie Miller of Shelburne Farms, Treasurer Mark Fischer of Woodcock Farm, and Secretary Victoria Von Hessert of Jasper Hill Farm. Vice President Jon Wright of Taylor Farms was unable to attend.





Cheesemaking Workshops

“I got a very good feel for what commercial artisan cheesemaking was all about. It helped me make a more informed decision about my artisan cheesemaking project.”

— Shannon Nichols,
dairy farmer and conservation
program specialist, Graze-NY

Late in 2003, Westminster Dairy received a Northeast SARE Grass Roots Grant to fund their cheesemaking training center so that they could expand their resources and offerings. Dr. Paul Kindstedt; Margaret Morris, consultant and owner of Glengarry Cheesemaking and Dairy Supplies in Alexandria, Ontario; and Greg Lockwood, Vermont Department of Agriculture and Markets’ dairy plant inspector are collaborators with dairy farmer Bill Acquaviva and cheesemaker Peter Dixon, owners of Westminster Dairy, on this project. Since January 2004, Westminster Dairy has played host to a series of workshops and seminars on a variety of subjects about processing milk on the farm including: cheesemaking and aging, sanitation, making butter and cultured dairy products, ice cream manufacture, regulations and compliance, practical dairy chemistry and microbiology, starter culture technology, business planning, and organic grass-based farming and its relationship to seasonal changes in milk quality and utilization for dairy products.



Peter Dixon (left) getting “hands-on” with novice cheese-makers.

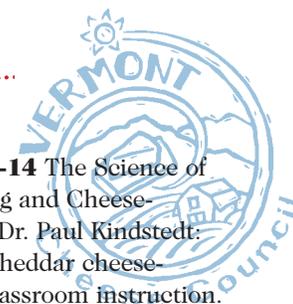
Dixon’s vision is to provide a resource that will provide farmers with the knowledge and tools to be successful at the business of processing their milk into dairy products on their farms. He hopes to expand the programs in the future to bring in instructors from other countries where farmstead milk processing is a part of the social culture. In this way,

the Training Center for Farmstead Milk Processing at Westminster Dairy can help to regenerate dairy farm processors as vital parts of their communities.

In all, Dixon and colleagues offered six, two-day workshops since January attending by approximately 30 people from states including VT, NY, CT, WA, ME, and British Columbia. Remaining

“Overall it was a very informative two days. You can be a total novice, or an experienced cheesemaker, and still get something out of the workshop. The other good part is that it takes place in an actual working cheeseroom and not some college classroom. Peter has a lot of knowledge, and like a true lover of the art, he doesn’t hold back on the “secrets”. He wants people to learn and know how all of this works. It was a good experience. One I would welcome again in the future.”

— Jamie Miller, Shelburne Farms cheesemaker



training dates this spring are:

- **May 15-16** Soft-ripened cheeses: Brie, Camembert, Aged Goat cheeses, French Tomme, Butter and Creme Fraiche.

The series will start again in the fall with a few dates already set.

- **September 18-19** Cheese of the Low Countries: Gouda, Edam,

Havarti, and Trappist from cow and sheep milk.

- **October 3** The Business and Regulation of Farmstead Milk Processing with Greg Lockwood, VT State Dairy Plant Inspector.

- **October 16-17** Alpine cheeses: Swiss, Asiago, Tomme and Toma, Butter and Sour cream from cow and goat milk.

- **November 13-14** The Science of Cheese-making and Cheese-ripening with Dr. Paul Kindstedt: Tomme and Cheddar cheese-making and classroom instruction.

Tel. 802-387-5110 or email pdixon@sover.net for details.

Strolling of the Heifers: Take 3

A community party and fundraiser to benefit agricultural programs in schools, the third annual Strolling of the Heifers parade and festival, sponsored by Turkey Hill Dairy, will kick off Vermont Dairy Month, June 4 – 6 in Brattleboro. The weekend begins with the Farm Summit, an issue-oriented event open to the public that will explore ways to support local farmers. This year’s topic “The Facts & Myths of Dairy Pricing: Who’s Getting Milked – The Farmers or the Cows.” An art exhibit of over 30 area artists celebrating Vermont agriculture opens Friday night at the Windham Art Gallery with a benefit show and silent auction entitled “The Farm Show.”

On Saturday, a parade featuring dozens of bovine beauties led by students, farmers and 4-H Club members will begin at 10 am complete with lively entertainment and colorful floats, including clowns, a dairy fairy, horses, oxen, alpacas and more. The heifers will include black and white Holsteins; brown Jerseys and russet milking short horns. The parade will be followed by The Dairy Fest & Marketplace



Flower bedecked, groomed and shining, over 75 heifers identified by name will strut their stuff up Main Street led by Putney School students, 4-H Club members and farmers from across Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts at the 3rd annual Strolling of the Heifers

(9 am- 3 pm) sponsored by Vermont Country Store at the Brattleboro Common and featuring regional farm products and Best Chefs of Vermont cooking demonstrations. Later that evening is the informal Heifer Ball at 7 pm at the Putney Inn, with Sunday, June 6 given over to Farm

Tours and the “hearty” Heifer Brunch at Adams Farm in Wilmington.

For more information visit www.strollingoftheheifers.org or call 1-877-VTSBEST. Ask for a list of farms that offer stays and other packages.



Update on New Businesses

Jasper Hill, Greensboro, Vermont

Jasper Hill owners Mateo Kehler and his brother/partner, Andy, report that after just a year in business, things are going very well. Updates on their three main cheeses are as follows:

- They are currently producing between 400 and 500 Constant Bliss per week. Demand is so high that regular accounts are back ordered 2-3 weeks. Constant Bliss is the most widely-served cheese in NY restaurants. Murrays, a New York City cheeseshop, has built a wholesale business around it.
- Bayley Hazen Blue cheese is also catching on and is getting a warm response on the cheese carts of a number of high-end restaurants across the country including Bacchanalia in Atlanta, Picholine, Gramercy Tavern and Craft, all in New York City.



Max McCalman and Mateo Kehler shown in the model kitchen at the Williams-Sonoma flag ship store in the new Turner Towers at New York City's Columbus Circle.

- Aspenhurst (cloth bound cheddar variant) is looking and tasting great, according to Mateo. The youngest wheels of this cheese have aged six months and will be aged six more before they are ready for sale. "Look for them around Christmas" says Mateo.

Jasper Hill is shipping their cheeses across the country on a weekly basis as well as servicing cheese shops and restaurants nationwide. Both cheeses are now featured at the following New York City restaurants: Gramercy Tavern, Craft, Picholine, Compass Tabla, 11 Madison and Judson Grill. In addition to direct sales, Jasper Hill now works with three distributors, Provisions in northern New England, Seacrest in southern New England and Tomales Bay Foods in the Pacific Northwest. Mateo Kehler of Jasper Hill participated at the opening of the New York City Williams Sonoma with Max McCalman, author of The Cheese Plate in March.

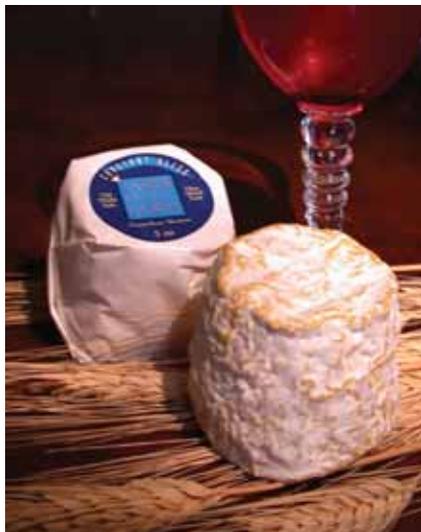
Joining the business as full-timers are Mateo's wife, Angie who is doing most of the laddling on the constant

bliss and Andy's fiancé, established Vermont cheesemaker Victoria Von Hessert who is managing the Jasper Hill Cheese aging facility.

Star Hill Dairy, Woodstock, Vermont

This past year has been witness to much growth, change and success at Star Hill Dairy, home to Woodstock Water Buffalo. In January of 2003, their first cheesemaker, Gregg Lambert joined them from Shelburne Farms. In November of last year they were also joined by an apprentice cheesemaker, Jon Capurso, who came to Star Hill with a culinary background. With the addition of these two, Owner, David Muller reports that they are now well staffed in that Creamery.

Star Hill's first product, Water Buffalo Yogurt, began shipping in April of 2003 and since then the product line has been expanded to include seven different flavors. New to the line is a Low Fat yogurt which they hope to ship before the end of 2004. In July of last year Star Hill



Jasper Hill's Constant Bliss



Star Hill's Buffalo Mozzarella

Susan Spaulding

Susan Spaulding



hosted an Italian cheese maker, Enzo Ferrara, who joined them for 7 weeks to teach them how to make authentic Buffalo Mozzarella which began shipping in September of 2003 and is now available in two different sizes ...a 6oz ball (oviline) and 10gram balls (ceiligine). They have also made some ricotta and scamorza which they intend to introduce sometime in the future. Over the past year they have increased their number of distributors from 1 to 9 and have also started up an on-line store. They now ship product all over the country, including Hawaii and Alaska.



Star Hill water buffalos

On the staffing front, Star Hill was joined this year by Tom Harty, formerly of the Ag Department. Tom is involved in a variety of things at the Creamery including market development. Steve Judge, of VT Milk fame, also recently came on board. Steve is taking charge of the

farm operation as they continue to expand their capabilities. On the farm, Star Hill has increased its herd size from an initial herd of 30 to over 225 and expects to be over 400 in the next eight months. They are currently milking about 75 and expect that to be over 100 by the end of the year. They have also started an AI program using semen imported from Italy, which they expect will upgrade their per cow production substantially.

Refrigerator Truck to Share

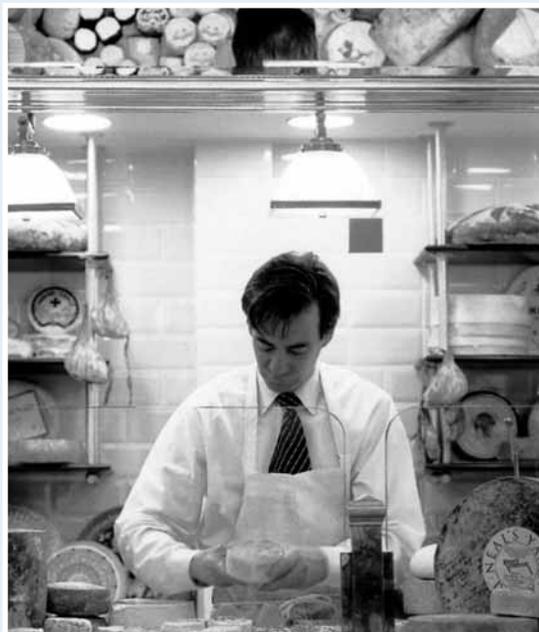
Because of all the shipping problems that small producers have in VT, Star Hill Dairy decided to buy their own refrigerated truck to make trips to Boston and New York. They are exploring the possibilities of consolidating other products onto their trips and would welcome inquiries. Contact Tom Harty at 802 457 4540 x 21.

New York Cheese Author/Expert to Taste

Provisions International Ltd. is a New England regional wholesale purveyor of fine foods located in White River Junction, VT. In conjunction with the Vermont Cheese Council, Provisions will host a very special cheese-tasting event with Max McCalman, author of *The Cheese Plate*, maitre fromager of the Manhattan restaurants Picholine and Artisanal, and one of the driving forces behind New York's Artisanal Cheese Center. McCalman is one of the nation's foremost experts on cheese and on the restaurant cheese course.

On the afternoon of Monday, May 17, McCalman he will lead a tasting of over twelve cheeses, both imported and local, at Provisions' headquarters. Cheesemakers, retailers and

chefs will have an opportunity to mingle with their peers and talk to Max about everything they want to



Max McCalman

know about cheese. There will be a special display of Vermont cheese and information about cheesemakers in Vermont. There will be ample time after the tasting to speak informally with Max and the other participants. Provisions will supply an illustrated and detailed guide of all cheese included in the tasting and autographed copies of Max's book will be available. The cost for this event is \$35.00.

Space is limited and reservations are essential. For more information or to see if space is still available please call Christopher at 802-291-6100 or email her at



SMALL BITES

Grafton Village Cheese has introduced a new cheddar...Five Star, aged on-site for a minimum of five years. Described by Peter Mohn as “Exceptionally flavorful with a dry, almost brittle texture. This cheddar quite literally melts in your mouth and the flavor is very long-lasting.” Available now in one-pound bricks, vacuum-sealed in black cryovac with a handsome gold foil label. Re-pack labels are printing now so 10# and 40# sizes will soon be available. Grafton has a viewing room to watch the cheese-making process. Hours are 8am-4pm, M-F and 10am-4pm Sat & Sun, with no cheese-making on weekends.

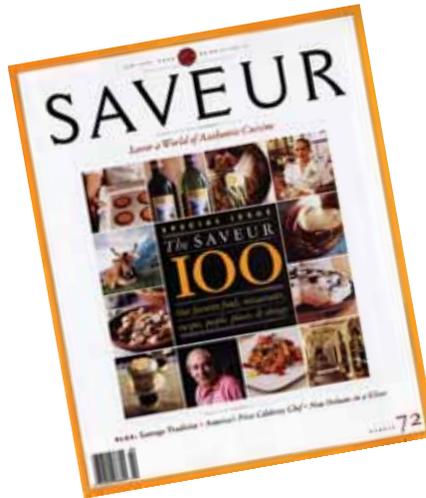


Vermont Butter & Cheese Company has produced an unsalted cultured butter in an unsalted roll, due to customer demand.



Vermont Shepherd provided a “Gourmet Cheese Selection” to the Orvis catalog during the ‘03-’04 holiday season and put together a fun, successful Valentine’s Day Promotion by co-marketing their Timson with the fun, crazy “cheese love story” by Sarah Kate Lynch book, *Blessed Are The Cheesemakers*, published by Warner Books, 2003.

Willow Hill’s Sheep’s Milk Yogurt was listed as one of 100 Best Things To Eat in *Saveur’s* Special January/February issue called the *Saveur 100*.



Vermont Shepherd was featured on the cable show, “Food Nation with Bobby Flay” on January 7th 2004 and in *New York Times* (syndicated article) by Martha Stewart, February 21, 2004. “Don’t be afraid to say cheese at your next dinner party.”



In the World Cheese Contest sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Association, **Cabot Creamery Cooperative** took a second place with a score of 98.2 out of 100 for their Five Peppercorn Cheddar and repeated with a third place ribbon for their Unsalted Butter.



A Request for Proposal has been issued by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Developed to find a cheesemaker interested in running the existing cheese making facility at the Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth, VT. One of the oldest cheesemaking factories in the state, the **Plymouth Cheese Factory** was completely renovated in recent years to bring it up to code as a contemporary cheese making facility. For information on the selection process or award, contact the office of Commissioner James Saudade, (802) 828-3211.



Farm to Table Food Fair took place on Friday, April 16, from 11am to 2pm on the lawn of the State House in Montpelier. The objectives of the event was to raise awareness of the wealth of local food in Vermont that is GMO-free and the impact GMOs could have on that wealth. Participants were grouped by county so that they could easily meet with and talk to their legislators about pending legislation affecting genetically modified foods in Vermont.





A Bigger Bite: Great Cheeses of New England News

Westminster Dairy Cheesemaker, Peter Dixon was invited to talk about cheesemaking and New England cheesemakers at two dinner events this winter in Boston to promote the Great Cheeses of New England. He was able to talk at various times during the meals and describe a farmstead cheesemaker's daily life and encourage the diners to come and visit us and buy more of our cheese!

On December 16, executive chef Eric Brennan of the Harvest Restaurant in Cambridge prepared a five course meal using Westminster Dairy's River Valley Camembert and Ricotta, Vermont Shepherd's Putney Tomme, Grafton's Four Star Cheddar and Berkshire Cheese Company's Berkshire Blue. Wine director Stephan Sink paired a wine to each

course.

On February 12 at the Hyatt Regency Boston, executive chef Bad Ozerdem kicked off a cheese dinner event with a demonstration of making cheese fondue; one using Westminster Dairy's Livewater Toma and another with Berkshire Blue. The fondues were accompanied by a cheese board, which included Westminster Dairy's Black Mountain Brie and Provolone Butter Pears, Taylor Farm's Maple-smoked Gouda, Thistle Hill Farm's Tarentaise, and Berkshire Blue. These hors d'ouvers were followed by a three-course meal prepared with Westminster Dairy's Pinnacle (Asiago-style) and Ricotta, Westfield Farm's Chevre, and Berkshire Blue. Wines were provided by Franciscan Estates and paired with each course.

The French Connection

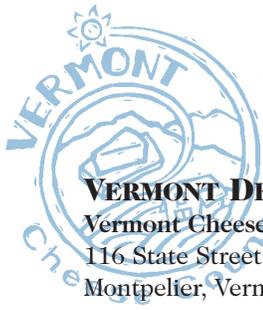
On April 22nd, Earth Day the French premier of *The Last Link* took place Pau, France in the heart of the Pyrennes. This film, made by Vermonters Tim and Ben Kahn and narrated by Willie Nelson, is a tribute to family-based agriculture. Cheese council members Nancy Wright and Steve Lidle of Cheese Traders were on hand for the event.

The film captures the rich culture of the Basque shepherds/cheesemakers who have pursued their way of life for over 5000 years. In the early 1900's, immigrants brought this culture to the American West, and now, less than 100 years later, it is in danger of being absorbed into mainstream culture, both in France and in the US. The Last Link examines the decline of this agricultural lifestyle as it becomes less profitable in our world of high technology and more mechanized practices. It underscores the need to maintain an intimate relationship with the land.

The Kahns premiered their film in Vermont last summer at Shelburne Farms. The panel leading a discussion after the viewing included Jon Wright of Taylor Farms and also three French shepherd/cheesemakers. For more information on the film, visit www.thelastlink.org.

Vermont Cheese Council Member Cheesemakers

Blueledge Farm, *Salisbury*
Blythedale Farm, *Corinth*
Bonnieview Farm,
Craftsbury Common
Cabot Creamery Cooperative,
Cabot
Cobb Hill, *Hartland*
Creek Road Cheese Company,
Irasburg
Crowley Cheese, *Healdville*
Does Leap Farm, *Bakersfield*
Franklin Foods, *Enosburg Falls*
Hope Farm, *Charleston*
Grafton Village Cheese, *Grafton*
Green Mountain Blue Cheese,
Highgate Center
Jasper Hill Farm, *Greensboro*
La Fromagerie du Royaume,
Guildhall
Lakesend Cheeses, *Alburg*
Lazy Lady Farm, *Westfield*
Maryella Farm, *E. Corinth*
Neighborly Farm, *Randolph*
Orb Weaver Farm, *New Haven*
Peaked Mountain Farm,
Townshend
Pomeroy Farm, *Londonderry*
Shelburne Farms, *Shelburne*
Taylor Farm, Inc, *Londonderry*
Thistle Hill, *North Pomfret*
Three Owls Sheep Dairy,
Granville
Three Shepherds of the
Mad River Valley, *Warren*
Vermont Butter and Cheese
Company, *Websterville*
Vermont Shepherd, *Putney*
Westminster Dairy,
Westminster
Willow Hill Farm, *Milton*
Woodcock Farm, *Weston*



VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Vermont Cheese Council
116 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2901

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

May 15 & 16

Training Center for Farmstead Milk Processing
Westminster Dairy
Westminster, VT
Workshop: "Soft-ripened cheeses"
For information, call
Peter Dixon, 802-387-5100 or
pdixon@sover.net for details

May 17

Cheese Tasting with Max McCalman
Provisions International Ltd
White River Junction, VT
For information, call Christopher
802-291-6100
Christopher@provisionsintl.com

May 17-19

Pasture To Palate:
The Art of Cheesemaking
Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, VT
Call Hilary or Caitlin 802-985-8498

for information

May 18

America's Raw Milk Cheeses
On The World's Table
7 pm, Inn at Shelburne Farms,
\$50 per person
Reservations:
Hilary or Caitlin 802-985-8498

June 4-6

3rd Annual Strolling of the Heifers
Brattleboro, VT
For information call 1-877-VTSBEST
or visit www.strollingoftheheifers.org

June 27-29

NASFT Fancy Food Show
Jacob K. Javits Center
New York, New York
For more information, call
(212) 482-6440, ext. 250.

The Vermont Cheese Council

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Contact:

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CHEESE COUNCIL**

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