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1. DBIC Surveys Raw Milk Cheesemakers for "Taste of Place" Report

A new report published today by the Dairy Business Innovation Center may help raw milk cheesemakers carve out a marketing niche by identifying a new "Taste of Place" designation for cheeses made in the Driftless region of western Wisconsin.

"Application of the Concept of Terroir in the American Context: Taste of Place and Wisconsin Unpasteurized Milk Cheeses," by DBIC Team Member Gersende (Gigi) Cazaux, explores the possibility of adapting the French concept of "terroir" to unpasteurized cheeses made in the unglaciated, rolling hills of Wisconsin's Driftless region. The full 135-page report is available on the DBIC website at http://www.dbicusa.org/dbic_sponsored_research.php

While terroir has traditionally been used to explain a product's specificity as a result of where and how it is made - including French wines like Champagne or Burgundy - today, the term has moved beyond France and is used as a method to explain the uniqueness of products, even serving as the basis to label and protect wines and cheeses made in certain regions of Europe. Today, terroir is arriving on the shores of North America as a means to promote local food. In the U.S., four projects thus far have aimed to develop an American version of terroir, renamed "Taste of Place," including: Napa Valley Wine in California, Vermont's Taste of Place for maple syrup, the Missouri Regional Cuisine Project for wine and food, and the Driftless Region Food and Farm Project in the Upper Midwest for local food products.

DBIC Team Member Gigi Cazaux, a native of France, spent more than a year in Wisconsin researching and writing the DBIC's newest paper on applying the concept of "terroir" or "taste of place" to raw milk cheesemakers in Wisconsin. The project's goal was to explore whether a geographical area could be applied to unpasteurized cheeses in Wisconsin, and whether cheeses in that area shared enough common characteristics to be collectively marketed using a "taste of place" label. To achieve that goal, the DBIC conducted a survey of all Wisconsin raw milk cheesemakers in July, 2010. Cheesemakers were asked to provide specific information about their unpasteurized cheese production, their dairy farming systems and cheesemaking practices. This information is included in the full report, along with recommendations on a future "taste of place" collective marketing approach.

In summary, Wisconsin is home to 22 raw milk cheesemaking operations: 10 farmsteads, nine creameries, two dairy farms and one cheese-aging operation. Of these 22 raw milk cheesemaking operations, 16 are located in the Driftless Region of Wisconsin. The report shows these processors share the following traits:

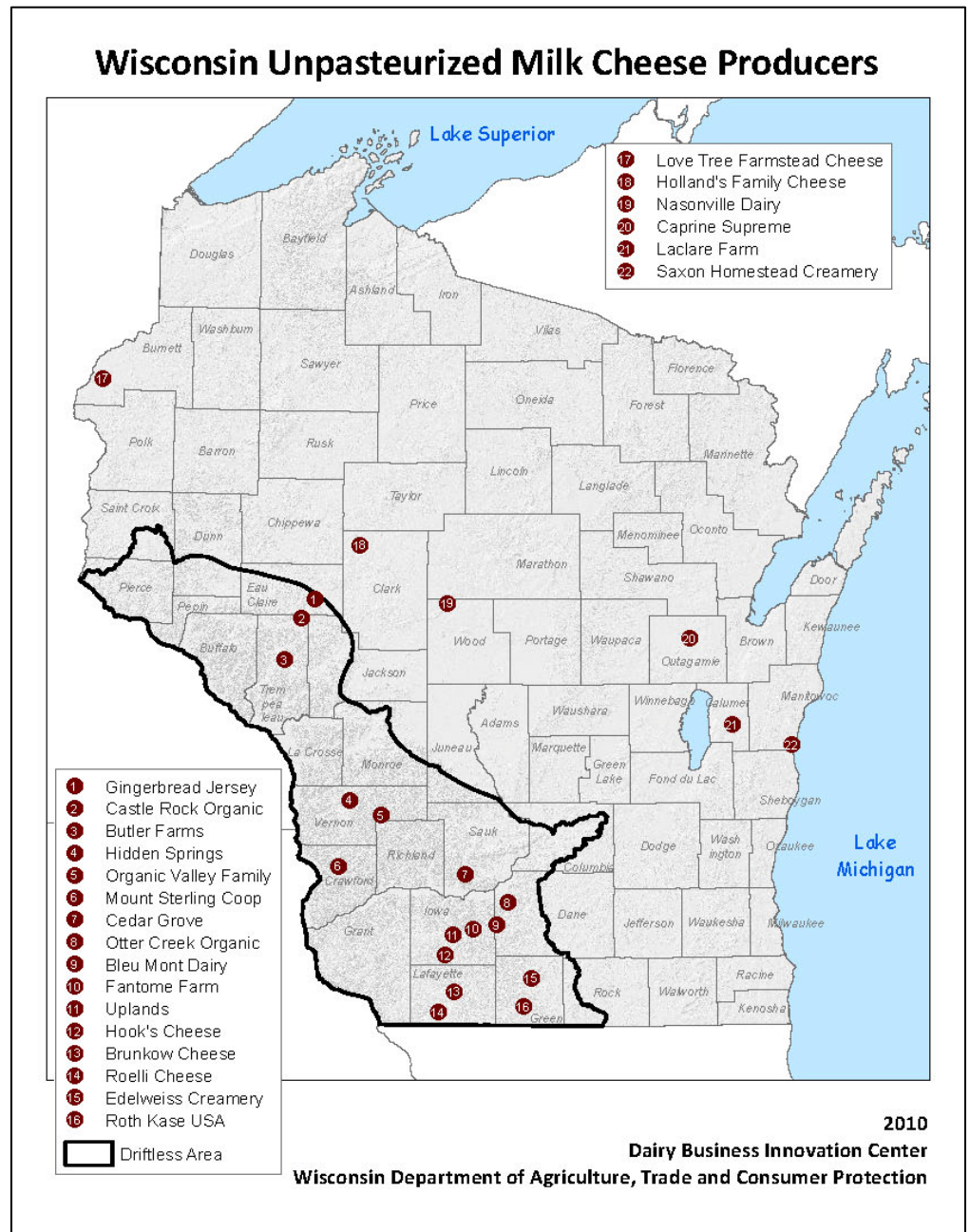
1. The use of grass-based milk: 15 of the 16 producers located in the Driftless Region use milk from farms practicing a grazing system.
2. The use of rBGH free milk: 15 of the 16 producers located in the Driftless Region use rBGH free milk.
3. The use of certified organic milk: 3 producers use organic milk for making their cheeses.

To characterize a cheese production under the taste of place, the major influencing factor is how producers approach the raw material, the milk. The report explores how cheesemakers and dairy farms produce cheeses from milk reflecting specific “aromatic” characteristics. Specifically, the analysis shows that 14 of the 22 raw milk cheese producers in Wisconsin use milk with a high aromatic potential to express the taste of place in their cheese. These producers are characterized by the following three features:

1. Maintaining a close relationship to the dairy farms that supply the milk.
2. Using a limited number of suppliers, from one to five, who practice dairy farming based on grazing.
3. Maintaining the aromatic potential of the milk by not heat treating the milk and by using it within 48 hours after milking.

The report concludes that using the concept of “taste of place” in the geographical Driftless region would be close to the concept of terroir, as 16 of the 22 raw milk cheese producers are located in this region, which is characterized by specific natural characteristics and common practices based on values that unify and bring coherence to food production from the region.

The DBIC now plans to work with the existing “Driftless Region Food and Farm Project” and take steps to create a “taste of place” for Wisconsin unpasteurized cheeses crafted in the Driftless Region.



2. Team Column: Business and Financial Planning Resources



This month, we hear from **Rich Scheuerman**, Strategy, Marketing Services & Client Manager for the DBIC. A seasoned executive with 30 years of management experience, Rich served as President and CEO of Alto Dairy Cooperative until its sale to Saputo in 2008. Alto Dairy was one of DBIC's first clients and Rich says he experienced first-hand the value of the range of services the DBIC provides in assisting Wisconsin's growing dairy industry. Prior to joining Alto, he worked as the Chief Financial Officer for Raskas Foods, a St. Louis-based cream cheese manufacturer. He began his career in various financial and planning positions with Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc. Rich earned his MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a math degree from Lafayette College. He currently teaches finance to MBAs and Statistics to undergraduates at a local college.

This month, Rich explains that by utilizing the skills available within the DBIC consulting team, companies of any size can have access to the same **Business and Financial Planning Resources** as larger companies, on a cost effective basis.

After a career with larger companies, it has been rewarding in the three years I have been a consultant with DBIC to spend time with small-to-medium sized cheese and dairy companies. Their need for business and financial planning is just as important, if not more so, than their larger counterparts. The margin of error between financial success and failure is typically much narrower for smaller companies with limited financial resources. However, they usually lack the time, resources, and sometimes the knowledge of how to think strategically about their business and project forward its possible financial outcomes.

We at DBIC have a number of clients who are great processors and/or marketers but have been unsuccessful in translating those skills to financial success. We have been developing processes to assist those clients who desire to better understand the business side of their company. The two major areas of assistance DBIC can provide in this area are 1) preparing a Comprehensive Business Assessment or 2) developing a business plan.

When asked to perform a Comprehensive Business Assessment (CBA), we assemble a team of marketing, operations and finance experts to sit down with the client and obtain a detailed view of their current business and future plans. These experts then prepare a written evaluation of the client's strengths and weaknesses in each of the functional areas as well as a suggested action plan to address any areas of concern. The client plays an active role in assisting with the preparation the CBA. In certain instances the client can reapply for DBIC services to implement portions of the action plan.

The other area of assistance is Business Planning. Whether a client is preparing to apply for a grant or loan, is seeking to apply for DBIC services, or simply wants to better understand where their company is going, we can offer help in preparing a business plan and the associated projected financial statements. We believe strongly that the business plan document is owned by the client, who should play a very active role in its development. Too many business plans are done by consultants for the client; and end up sitting on the bookshelf ... never looked at again. A good business plan is a living document that is frequently updated and serves as a reference when major business decisions are made. To that end, the DBIC Business Planning team meets with the client to explain the process and the templates we provide to organize its development ... but most of the work is done by the client. When the plan is complete, the client has spent the time to think through the major strategic factors in their business and has an action

plan that is financially feasible. A number of clients have been, or are now in this business plan development process and all of them have provided positive feedback on how it has helped them think through their business with a reasonable time effort of their part.

We especially recommend to those who are thinking of starting up a new business venture that they take themselves through this process before they make any financial commitments.

Finally, the business planning team is also available on an ad hoc basis to assist clients with the evaluation of new product development ideas, major capital expenditures or expansions. We can walk the client through the planning and financial evaluation of their project and also help identify possible grant or loan financing.

By utilizing the skills available within the DBIC consulting team, companies of any size can have access to the same business and financial planning resources as larger companies, on a cost effective basis.

3. Edelweiss Graziers Cooperative Honored for Entrepreneurial Spirit

The DBIC congratulates Bill & Roz Gausman and Bert & Trish Paris, founders of Edelweiss Graziers Cooperative, for recently receiving the 2010 Green County Development Corporation Entrepreneurial Spirit Award. In June 2006, Edelweiss Graziers Cooperative was born as a grass-based dairy cooperative to provide quality, grass-based milk to Master Cheesemaker Bruce Workman at Edelweiss Creamery in Monticello, Wis. Bruce and his staff create quality grass-based cheeses marketed by Jeff Wideman and Shirley Knox of Maple Leaf Cheese Cooperative.



Today the Edelweiss Graziers Cooperative is made up of five family farms: Bert and Trish Paris, Bill and Roz Gausman, Tim Pauli, Jamie and Deanne Holmstrom, and Cory and Carrie Brekkan. The Cooperative has strict standards for grazing and the use of reproductive hormones is only allowed for health reasons. "GCDC is proud of our support of entrepreneurs and celebrates the success of entrepreneurs with our annual Entrepreneurial Spirit Award. The key characteristics of a successful entrepreneur include creativity, integrity, and a commitment to economic growth in Green County," said Anna Schramke, executive director for the Green County Development Corporation.

4. Register Now for May 11 Export Education Seminar in Madison

Companies who need tips for improving export efficiency and avoiding the pitfalls that cost time, money and sales should register now for a May 11 Export Education Seminar in Madison. The Food Export Association of the Midwest will present information to help both experienced and new-to-export companies learn the proper steps to exporting.

The seminar is set for Wednesday, May 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. Cost is \$50 per person and attendees may register online [here](#). Topics addressed include:

- Keeping your company in compliance with federal and international laws – what you don't know can hurt you.
- Using the new "3CE" search engine to access the Harmonized System in order to determine your product's correct HS and Schedule B codes
- Understand the new terms of sale for 2011 (INCOTERMS) and how to prepare competitive quotes
- Using public and private export assistance in order to increase profitability and increase your product's marketability

The seminar will include a panel of USDA experts available to answer questions and is a rare opportunity for you to learn first-hand the process for obtaining export certificates. Attendees will have the chance to meet the officials who issue export certificates for products – including USDA officials from:

- Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS)
- Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

For more information, contact: Jen Pino-Gallagher at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. 608-224-5125 or email:jen.pinogallagher@wi.gov.

5. Upcoming April Events

- **April 13-14: Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference. La Crosse, Wis.**
Hosted by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, this conference is the nation's largest gathering of cheesemakers, buttermakers and whey processors in the nation. Processors, marketers and supplier partners also attend two days of education, networking and ideas. Learn more at cheeseconference.org
 - **April 16: Gala Tasting & Art Event Celebrating the 25 Best Cheeses of Wisconsin**
Wisconsin Cheese Originals is celebrating the rise of farmstead, artisan and specialty cheeses in America's Dairyland by hosting a gala tasting and art event on April 16 at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison. Each attendee will take home an exclusive 2-x3-foot original art print, designed specifically for the event and suitable for framing. The print showcases a professional glamour shot of 25 full wheels and wedges of cheese from 25 different Wisconsin artisan cheesemakers. Held from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Evjue Commons inside Olbrich Botanical Gardens, tickets are \$35, with all tickets sold in advance at wisconsincheeseoriginals.com. Attendees can expect to taste an array of artisan cow, sheep and goat's milk cheeses, including several World and U.S Champions. The complete list of cheeses will be unveiled at the event.
 - **April 23: All-Goat Field Day, Management, Feeding and Showing Basics**
Presented by the Chippewa Valley Dairy Goat Association, this all-day event will focus on management, feeding and showing basics for all goats. The event is hosted by Raintree Dairy Goats, N3690 Elmwood Rd., Hawkins, Wis., and will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with lunch available. Pre-registration is encouraged and appreciated. Cost of the event if pre-registered is \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 per family. For more information, contact Deb Macke: 715-585-2307, rain_treedairygoats@yahoo.com.
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6. The Last Word with Norm Monsen: Thoughts, News & Concerns



In dairy, we sometimes take for granted as absolute fact that consumers want to know a farmer, a cheesemaker, or others who make grow and make their food. The farmers market season helps remind us that consumers want this connection. Sometimes I've thought that a farmer or those who make our food could actually charge people to let them shake their hand. I really think people would pay for that opportunity.

Visits to and reports from dairy plants confirm the above radical thought. We once looked through the guest register at a cheese plant in Theresa, Wis. Guests who signed in came from Wisconsin, the Midwest, the U.S., and all around the world. We know of another cheese plant in southern Wisconsin that had to include in their expansion a bigger retail store, as they just didn't have enough room for all the customers (some even who come weekly from Chicago) in their present retail area.

Just this week we heard from a farmstead ice cream plant near Fond du Lac that only started operations early last summer. They are concerned as to how they will handle the ever increasing number of visitors. Their count of last year numbered more than 80,000 visitors. I guess the message is to farmers, cheesemakers, and all who make food, is that people respect you, want to know you, and appreciate your hard work.

And now for some news in the industry: In dairy, as in any industry, there are always new hires, retirements, position changes and so on. Many are taken for granted. Often time a retirement goes unnoticed. One upcoming retirement shouldn't go unnoticed. Tom Leitzke, who for 32 years has served as area inspector, supervisor, and bureau director for the Division of Food Safety at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, announced this week he will retire at the end of May. Many of us know Tom. During his years with DATCP, Tom has been the one who would often brief the legislature, staff public hearings, and provide information and background to requests from the Board of Agriculture. He has been a good friend and we wish him the best for his next stage in life.

Finally, a concern: two weeks ago an article in *The Country Today* pointed out that the University of Wisconsin River Falls is considering shutting down the Food Science program. This news will affect the entire Wisconsin dairy industry. The fact is that UW-RF has the only program in the United States in which a student can graduate with a Wisconsin Cheese Makers License. It is actually included as a study option. Students who graduate from UW-RF Food Science have jobs waiting for them. Furthermore, UW-RF Food Science serves as a great compliment to UW Madison Food Science and the Center for Dairy Research. Very few programs in any of our nations college/university programs have a placement record that matches UW-RF Food Science. I'm sure budget pressures and other factors will influence this decision but we do know for sure that it will impact Wisconsin dairy. I urge you all to keep an eye on this developing story.

The Dairy Business Innovation Center offers technical assistance to dairy producers and processors in developing value-added dairy products, business planning and market development. For more information, visit www.dbicusa.org or contact Jeanne Carpenter at 608-358-7837, email: jeanne@wordartisanllc.com.

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