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1. Two Wisconsin Cheese Companies Honored with Innovation Awards

Two Wisconsin cheese companies were recognized by the Dairy Business Innovation Center for their leadership and dedication to growing Wisconsin's dairy industry.

The fourth annual "DBIC Innovation Zone Awards" were presented to Hidden Springs Creamery, of Westby, and Roth Käse USA, of Monroe, to highlight the accomplishments of both companies in product and market innovation. The award ceremony took place at the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute meeting in Monroe during January.



Pictured left to right: Jim Cisler, DBIC; Paul McShane and Steve McKeon, Roth Käse USA, award recipients for Innovation in Marketing; Brenda Jensen, Hidden Springs Creamery, award recipient for Innovation in Product; and Norm Monsen, DBIC.

Hidden Springs Creamery cheesemaker owner Brenda Jensen, who just three years ago left the corporate world to pursue her dream of operating a sheep creamery, was recognized for her leadership in the creation of new Wisconsin artisan sheep's milk cheeses. She and her husband, Dean, farm the old-fashioned way with horses at their farmstead near Westby. Since 2006, Brenda has won numerous awards for her fresh sheep's milk cheese, Driftless, as well as for her Ocooch Mountain, a cave-aged sheep's milk cheese. Jensen plans to craft a new line of mixed-milk cheeses in 2009.

Roth Käse USA was honored for its continuing excellence in not only crafting and marketing its own award-winning cheeses, but for acting as a marketing partner with other Wisconsin companies to increase market share for Wisconsin cheese. Since its start in 1991, Roth Käse has won more than 100 awards for its unique line of cheeses. The company has established a world-class visitor center at its

headquarters in Monroe that has become a destination for chefs, buyers and food writers from around the world wishing to learn more about Wisconsin cheese.

“In choosing these companies, the DBIC team sought to recognize innovation in two categories: product and marketing. As one of Wisconsin’s newest dairy artisans, Brenda Jensen continues to craft innovative artisan cheeses, winning awards in every competition she enters, while the team at Roth Käse USA not only crafts its own line-up of impressive, award winning cheeses, but chooses to partner with other Wisconsin cheese companies in helping to market their products to consumers around the world. Congratulations to all,” said Jeanne Carpenter, DBIC Communications Director.

2. DBIC Monthly Message: Hard Work in 2009, Celebration in 2010



This month, we hear from **Jim Cisler**, DBIC Client Services Co-Director. Jim predicts: “**Hard Work in 2009, Celebration in 2010.**”

All indications are that 2009 is going to be a rough and wild ride for the Wisconsin dairy industry. However, if the storm can be weathered, there could be much to celebrate in 2010. Let's take a quick look at the past and then set our sights on our potential future.

Since 1988, Wisconsin milk production was in decline year after year. By 2000, it looked like gloom and doom for the dairy industry as it was heading for a slow death. It bottomed out in 2004 and has been in a growth mode every year since. Some of you may have missed the report by Ed Jesse that came out in November, 2008 that gave a great synopsis of this – you can read about “Growth and Transition in Wisconsin Dairying” at: www.aae.wisc.edu/pubs/mpbpapers/pdf/mpb96.pdf

The report justly gives the vast majority of credit for this turn-around to our great dairy farmers and processors. Additional credit is given to some newer organizations and programs: the Dairy Business Association (DBA), Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW), Wisconsin Department of Commerce’s MVP dairy loan program, and State of Wisconsin tax credits for dairy farmers & processors. Also mentioned was the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture’s Value Added Dairy Initiative, which started in 2004. The Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC) is the main component of this program and has worked the last five years with many Wisconsin dairy processors to help them in finding ways to be more profitable, expand and increase efficiency.

It appears the corner has been turned, but the prospects of 2009 do not have us out of the woods yet. 2009 will be a make or break year for many in dairy around the world. However, Wisconsin is positioned as well as anyone to make it through any adversity that can arise. Other prominent dairy areas that are struggling will be adversely affected further by the downturned economy, including: California (lack of processing capacity, drought, over regulation, and high feed costs), Idaho, New Mexico, Texas (environmental limitations and high feed costs), New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont (urban pressure), Europe (urban pressure and quota problems), New Zealand/Australia (drought).

If the Wisconsin dairy industry can continue its strong resurgence in 2009, there will be reason to celebrate in 2010. A modest continuation of growth in our milk supply in 2009 could allow us to break the all-time Wisconsin milk production record set way back in 1988. Also, the 100 year anniversary of being the leader in cheese production, a crown we took from New York back in 1910, will be marked.

To be the leader in not only quality, but volume of cheese, for that duration of time is an incredible

accomplishment. This could be the launching pad for Wisconsin to become the "World Epicenter for Cheese" and take the Wisconsin dairy industry to the next level of greatness.

So mark your calendar for June dairy month 2010 to celebrate. But in the mean time, it will take all the determination and durability of the entire Wisconsin dairy infrastructure to make this a reality with the year ahead of us in 2009. The opportunity is there for the taking. The choice is ours to make it a reality.

3. March Seminar to Highlight the Art of Coupons, the In-Store Deal

Coupons are a great way to get first-time product trial and boost sales to loyal customers, but the prospect of creating and executing a coupon program can be daunting. To help foster better understanding of the ins and outs of couponing, the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute (WSCCI) invites anyone involved in making and marketing cheese in Wisconsin to a special seminar at its upcoming meeting -- **Friday, March 6, 10 a.m.** -- at the Kalahari Resort & Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells. The seminar will detail a new Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) program designed to support Wisconsin cheese companies interested in offering in-store coupons.

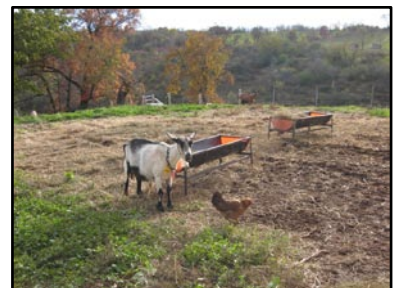


"With the economic downturn, in particular, consumers are increasing their use of coupons. It's an ideal time for cheese companies to enhance sales through couponing, but some don't know where to start or what to do to make sure it works for them," says WSCCI President Luke Buholzer of Klondike Cheese in Monroe, Wis. "WMMB's program can help, and we want to make sure everyone's aware of what's available and how they can participate."

To attend, contact Kathy Brown at info@wisspecialcheese.org or call 877-740-2180. An RSVP form is also available on www.wisspecialcheese.org, which can be filled out and faxed to WSCCI at 262-740-2176.

4. Industry News

- ❖ **Wisconsin Dairy Goat Industry Growing:** The National Agricultural Statistics Service reports that Wisconsin had 40,000 milk goats on Jan. 1. Its inventory was up more than 14 percent, or 5,000 goats, from the year before. NASS says Wisconsin continues to lead the nation in the number of milk goats. Nationally, the number of milk goats grew 4 percent in the past year to 335,000 as of Jan. 1. Wisconsin has 18,000 meat and other goats and 1,000 Angora goats. Nationwide, there's 2.55 million meat and other goats and 185,000 Angora goats.



5. Upcoming Important Dates

- **Feb. 7 – March 6: Heart of the Farm Women in Agriculture Conference. Statewide.**
This conference series addresses the needs of farm women by providing education on pertinent topics, connecting them with agricultural resources, and creating support networks. Workshops will be held across the state on different dates with different speakers. For more information or to register, visit: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/heartofthefarm/conferences/>
- **Feb. 19–21: Wisconsin Grazing Conference. Stevens Point, WI**
The 17th annual Wisconsin Grazing Conference, held at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Stevens Point, will feature over 20 workshops and 30 exhibitors. Attendees will eat outstanding local meals and enjoy thought provoking and inspiring speakers. Attendees will also have the opportunity to network with the best in graziers from around the Midwest and beyond. For more information or to register, visit: <http://www.grazingpays.com/>
- **March 17–19: U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. Green Bay, Wis.**
Create your own winning legacy: Enter your cheeses and butters in the nation's largest and longest-running cheese and butter competition. The 2009 United States Championship Cheese Contest® offers cheese and butter makers from around the United States the opportunity to vie for prestigious awards in 65 classes. This year's contest will be held in the stunning new Atrium of Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Learn more at: www.wischeesemakersassn.org
- **April 22 – 23: Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference. La Crosse, Wis.**
The 2009 Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference will be held April 22-23, 2009 at the La Crosse Center. The WCIC, co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, will be the largest cheese industry show in 2009. Learn more at www.wischeesemakersassn.org

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.