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1. State-Wide Goat Conference Scheduled for February

Producers, processors, extension agents, lenders and related resources are invited to attend a new one-day statewide goat conference featuring information sharing and advice for beginning and experienced farmers alike. "Focus on Goats: Milk and Meat Production in Wisconsin" will be held Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Deer Valley Lodge in Barneveld, Wis.

Highlights of the conference include opening remarks from Rod Nilsestuen, DATCP Secretary, a keynote address by Arnaud Solandt, President of Montchevre Betin, lunch address on Opportunities for Marketing Goats for Meat by Dave Johnson, Equity Cooperative Livestock and Judy Moses, Shepherd Song Farm, and break-out sessions focused on beginner, financial and general topics.



Session topics include:

- Basics of Goat Business Start-Ups, Larry Hedrich, LaClare Farm
- Basic Farm Accounting, Brad Harrison, Blackhawk Technical College
- Raising Replacement and Market Goats, Yves Berger, Spooner Research Station; Barry Midtling, Heartland Dairy Goat Farm
- The Why and How-to of Business Planning, Steve Kumbier, Serenity Springs Farm, LLC
- Actual Farm Costs; Adjusting Your Bottom Line, Dan Considine, Sunshine Farm
- Focus on Milk Quality, Pam Ruegg, DVM, UW-Extension
- Building and Retrofitting Facilities; Finding Information and Funding, Mark Alden, NWTC; Dave Kammel, UW-CALS
- Expansion Planning and Financing, Jim Gage, DBIC
- Trouble-Shooting to Boost Profits; improving milk quality, Amy Robinson, DVM; Lennie Schaub, Alcam Creamery, Richland Center

Register online at: <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/registration/focusongoats.jsp> . Cost is \$25 per person or \$35 after Feb. 4. For more information, contact Jeanne Meier at 608-224-5121 or email jeanne.meier@datcp.state.wi.us .

The conference is sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and the DBIC. Additional support is provided by the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association.

2. DBIC Team Member Monthly Message



This month we hear from **Jim Gage, DBIC Manager**. Jim reflects on 2006 and looks ahead to 2007.

A new year brings a time to reflect about what we have done, and excitement about what lies ahead. As manager, I see 2007 as an exciting time for us, the companies that we work with, and associated organizations that assist us in our mission to help the value added dairy industry. The following are a few thoughts on how we may approach things in the near future:

1. There is no question that local food initiatives are going to be a hot topic for 2007. The efforts of DATCP, State Senator Julie Lassa, and many other organizations are putting the words “local”, “fresh”, and “authentic” in the sensibilities of the Wisconsin consumer. (see <http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Jan07/jan04/0104lassabuylocal.pdf>). Many value added dairy producers have made this local commitment a cornerstone of their marketing and sales efforts for years through direct marketing to local stores, farmer’s markets, and through their own retail shops. One area that DBIC is beginning to investigate with earnest is how small and start-up value added dairy businesses may be able to link with existing Community Support Agriculture (CSA) efforts. CSA patrons now receiving fruits and vegetables could soon be offered the option of farmstead milk, cheese, etc. This approach offers new and established companies a way to dip their toe in the sometimes confusing water of local marketing and sales.
2. Extensive press coverage about artisan and specialty cheeses in 2006 has generated a tremendous amount of interest not only with consumers, but new entrepreneurs that would like to start value added dairy businesses. Based on our contacts, there will be a number of new farmstead milk bottlers and cheese makers in Wisconsin in 2007. The influx of new ideas, new products, and new energy that these new companies bring is great for the dairy industry; the opening of a new facility, for instance, creates buzz in the local press and often tells the story of the new company in the context of the growth and development of our industry. We see that many of the new companies are doing extensive due diligence regarding construction, equipment purchases, financing of their operations, product development, and marketing and sales approaches, and will become solid businesses in their local communities.
3. As the Dairy Business **Innovation** Center, we understand that as markets expand and consumers of all ages, sizes, and shapes demand new products, we will need to make sure that we are on the cutting edge. Innovation also inherently means we in Wisconsin are committed to quality standards that are second to none in the US and indeed the world. Innovation may mean new packaging that allows artisan cheese to be enjoyed by a consumer for a longer time period after purchase. Innovation may mean new appropriate equipment that help make better cheeses and/or help save a company money on utility bills.
4. Finally, we are also the Dairy **Business** Innovation Center and we want to help provide you with information and strategies that will help you be very successful businesses. We will continue to enhance our 1:1 approach, and supplement that through workshop and conference activities (with all range of partners) to present information and strategies in ways that you can use immediately. For start-up companies, we understand that there seem to be 100 things that need to be done yesterday to make your business successful. By working with you using solid business principles and tools (business plans, financial information, market assessments, etc), we hope that the start-up process can be facilitated a bit and save you time, money, and stress.

For established companies, we encourage you to use good business strategies and tools when you consider plant expansion, entering a new market, or rolling out a new product. DBIC can work with you on a comprehensive approach to your business, but you can also access our team members to help mitigate a single critical marketing, technical, distribution, or other issue

As the DBIC enters our fourth year, we encourage all in the Wisconsin dairy industry to help us serve you better. Please never hesitate to contact me or other team members and let us know how we should design programming to help your business.

3. West Allis Cheese Hosts "Cheeses from the Underground"

West Allis Cheese at the Milwaukee Public Market will host several of Wisconsin's finest artisan cheesemakers who have dedicated themselves to reviving the Old World tradition of aging cheeses in natural caves. On Saturday, Jan. 27 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., a celebration of these rare Wisconsin cheeses will feature a cheese tasting where the public is invited to meet cheesemakers and sample their unique products. The event will feature a one-hour talk at 11 a.m. by Mary Falk, award-winning cheesemaker from LoveTree Farmstead, who will conduct a presentation on affinage, the art and science of maturing cheese. Cost is free and event is open to the public. Participating cheesemakers include:

- *Sid Cook, Carr Valley Cheese, LaValle, WI*

Carr Valley draws on its heritage of four generations of cheesemakers to continue the care and standards it established in the late 1880s. Long known for his popular Cheddars, Sid Cook, Carr Valley's Master Cheesemaker, has begun to make cow's milk artisan varieties that include Cave Aged Cheddar (reminiscent of farmhouse Cheddars produced 100 years ago) and Virgin Pine Native Blue (a blue-veined cheese that's also cave-aged and pierced with needles to allow the defining molds to grow with the cheese).



- *Tom Torkelson, Natural Valley Cheese, Hustler, WI*

Natural Valley Cheese is proud of its longstanding Wisconsin traditions. The milk that goes into the cheeses - both cow's and goat's milks - is produced by an Amish farm families who hand-milk their animals and store and chill the milk in metal cans. Tom won four awards at the 2006 American Cheese Society Conference for his Twin Bluff Select, Lindina, Goat's milk Feta and Redstone Robust.



- *Brian Nelson, FenceLine, Grantsburg, WI*

A joint venture with the dairy farmers at Burnett Dairy Cooperative, FenceLine uses new and historic methods to create a family of Italian country cheeses respectful of the special characteristics of the milk, water and fauna of Burnett County. Using only the finest cow milk from Wisconsin's successful dairy farmers in northwest Wisconsin, FenceLine crafts award-winning cheeses like a lightly-aged Provolone and Winter Sun.



- *Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Network*

The Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Network is a group of artisan and farmstead dairy cheese, butter, yogurt and bottled milk producers from around the state. From the rolling pastures of the unglaciated

Uplands region of southwestern Wisconsin to the rocky, forested Northwoods along the shores of Lake Superior, a growing number of highly skilled Wisconsin Dairy Artisan are creating the finest quality artisan and farmstead dairy products, sweeping cheese awards across the nation. These talented people are leading a resurgence of artisan products, reintroducing recipes that many believed were lost in the United States and creating their own products and processes along the way. They will host a booth representing all of the artisan and farmstead cheesemakers from the state.

4. ZingTrain Returns to WI: Creating a Vision of Greatness Seminar in March

Have you made any resolutions for 2007? What about 2027? At this time of planning for the new year, we're reminded that without a clear picture of where we are headed, even the best intentions and ideas aren't enough to attain success. The DBIC is once again partnering with ZingTrain of Ann Arbor, MI to help Wisconsin dairy companies plan for a successful future. Zingerman's co-founder and CEO Ari Weinzweig will conduct a seminar entitled "Creating a Vision of Greatness," to be held at the Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee on March 19-20. This two-day seminar will help participants create/refine a vision of success and then learn how to use it as a tool to evaluate various opportunities for business growth/direction. Registration is limited. Please contact Heidi Busse for further details and to register your company at 608-224-5047.

5. Industry News

- **Sign-up now to be featured in the 2007 Farm Fresh Atlas of Southeast Wisconsin:** If you are a farmer or local business person who wants to attract customers, then consider participating in the 2007 Farm Fresh Atlas of Southeast Wisconsin. The Atlas features local farmers, cooperatives, farmers' markets and businesses that produce, use, or sell Wisconsin farm products directly to consumers. The Atlas includes a fold-out map and guide listing farms, food-related businesses and farmers' markets in Southeast Wisconsin. Cost to list a farm is \$50. Applications must be returned by Feb. 2 and atlases will be available for distribution beginning in May 2007. For more information, contact Rose Skora, Community Agriculture Educator for Kenosha/Racine Counties UW-Extension at 262-857-1945, rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu. Applications are also available on the website at www.farmfreshatlas.org
 - **WMMB programming wins Emmy:** A children's television show sponsored by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and produced by Discover Mediaworks Inc. has been presented with television's highest award, the Emmy. An episode of the weekly Wisconsin-based children's series Into the Outdoors entitled "Green Cows" received the award from the Chicago/Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for "Outstanding Achievement for Children's Programs." This marks the first time WMMB-sponsored programming has been accorded such a prestigious award. Over the past year, the WMMB has distributed more than 1,500 copies of "Green Cows" to Wisconsin classrooms. Downloadable curriculum geared towards elementary-aged children and an order form can be found online at www.WisDairy.com/video.
 - **Deadline approaching to sign up for Specialty Cheese Tour to Netherlands.** Sign up by Jan. 31 to visit some of the most entrepreneurial and innovative dairy producers of a leading European dairy nation, May 5-13, 2007. Aside from numerous farm visits, visit countryside stops, world-famous tourist attractions and have the unique opportunity to get to know the Netherlands at its best. For a detailed itinerary visit www.newhorizonstours.info/tours.html and click on the tour link. For more information, call 608-231-5881.
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6. Upcoming Important Dates

- **Feb. 16-17: Farmstead Cheesemaking Seminar - Producing Safe Dairy Products. LaCrosse, Wis.**
This two-day seminar will provide an in-depth review and training session for production of safe dairy products (cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream, fluid milk), focusing on issues for the farmstead producer. Workshop instructor Rane May of University of Wisconsin-River Falls will lead this hands-on course, covering the following topics: zoonosis (disease transmittal), good milking practices, antibiotic testing and requirements, sampling techniques, good manufacturing practices, pathogen control, inventory controls and recall procedures. A comprehensive exam will be given at the conclusion of the two-day session. A score of 75% will constitute a passing grade and will fulfill part of the educational requirements for the ATCP 69.02(1)(d) Cheesemaker's license in the state of Wisconsin. Registration fee is \$250, which includes all instructional materials, farmstead dairy tour, and lunch both days. To register or for further information, please contact Rane May at 715-425-3702 or email rane.j.may@uwrf.edu.
- **March 12-14: U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. Milwaukee, Wis.**
The nation's oldest and largest cheese and butter competition provides the opportunity to vie for prestigious awards in more than 50 classes. Gold, silver and bronze medals go to the top finishers with certificates to fourth and fifth place entries. A Championship Round evaluates gold medal cheeses to declare a United States Champion Cheese, as well as a First and Second Runner Up. Every maker and processor of cheese or butter in the United States is eligible and encouraged to compete. The cost to enter each product is \$60. Products must be shipped to arrive no later than March 7, 2007. Fifteen cheese and butter experts will evaluate entries during the conference and winners will be honored April 19, 2007, at a gala Awards Banquet during the Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference in La Crosse. For more information, visit <http://www.wischeesemakersassn.org/>
- **March 19-20: Creating a Vision of Greatness Seminar. Milwaukee, Wis.**
Zingerman's co-founder and CEO Ari Weinzweig will partner with the DBIC to conduct a seminar entitled "Creating a Vision of Greatness," to be held at the Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee on March 19-20. This two-day seminar will help participants create/refine a vision of success and then learn how to use it as a tool to evaluate various opportunities for business growth/direction. Special reception with Lucy Saunders (author and food historian on beer), included. Registration is limited. Contact Heidi Busse at 608-224-5047.
- **April 18-19: Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference. LaCrosse, Wis.**
More than 1,200 cheese industry leaders from around the nation will gather to gain information about the latest in cheese technology, product marketing and dairy issues affecting our industry. The show opens with a joint seminar, followed by an afternoon "Tabletop Mini Exposition" and an evening auction of Champion Cheeses. Thursday consists of a full day of seminars and closes with the United States Championship Cheese Contest Awards Banquet, open to all attendees. The conference is co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research. For more information, visit <http://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, 608-358-7837.