

In This Issue:

1. Saxon Homestead Creamery Launches Line of Signature Cheeses
2. ADD Grant Window Now Open, VAPG Grants To Open This Week
3. Industry News
4. Beyond Wisconsin: India Enters Italian Cheese Market in U.S.
5. Upcoming Important Dates

1. Saxon Homestead Creamery Launches Line of Signature Cheeses

In a testament to 15 years of innovation and determination, the Cleveland, Wis., dairy families of Saxon Homestead Creamery have launched a new line of aged raw milk farm cheeses they proudly market as "flavor, by nature."

Creamery manager and co-owner Gerald Heimerl, along with brothers-in-law Karl and Robert Klessig, who manage the family's nearby grass-based Saxon Homestead Dairy Farm, began production of unique, handcrafted, small-batch cheeses in August. This month, two of those carefully-aged cheeses debut at specialty cheese shops in Wisconsin, with plans for national distribution of additional cheeses taking shape in 2008.



"We're making some world class cheese from world class milk and sending it to market dressed in style," Heimerl said. "This project is a dream 15 years in the making, and it's finally come true with a lot of hard work and help from our families, our partners and the industry."

This month, Saxon Homestead Creamery is launching two signature cheeses bearing a unique look with embossed leaf designs on the sides and the Saxon logo on top of each wheel. Cheeses include:



► **Green Fields**, an earthy, elegant table cheese featuring a washed rind wrapped in special breathable paper.

► **Big Eds**, named for family patriarch Ed Klessig, described as an "enthusiastic cheese that hugs you back." It is a young, mild cheese with a buttery flavor.

Saxon Creamery is also crafting several additional cheeses, each distinct in its own right. Varieties in development

include: **Saxony**, featuring a subtle nutty flavor that is expected to debut in March; and **Pastures**, a sweet but complex cheese expected to launch in June. Saxon Creamery Cheesemakers Neville McNaughton, Raffaele Mascolo and Rambr Emrich are working on creating a limited edition aged goat cheese from a nearby goat dairy that will debut in July.

“Saxon’s story is the true American success story of hard work, innovation and determination,” said Jim Gage, manager of the Dairy Business Innovation Center, which partnered with many industry organizations to assist Saxon Creamery in the development process. “Congratulations to the Klessigs and Heimerls for adding value to their own dairy operation, as well as to their local community and the entire Wisconsin dairy industry.”

The cheese aging rooms at Saxon Homestead Creamery are full, and Heimerl says plans are underway for another building project in Cleveland that will add needed inventory space. The creamery itself is a former beer warehouse that sat empty. Today, the space has been transformed into a state-of-the-art creamery designed by McNaughton, featuring socks and side jets to diffuse the flow of air, stabilizing temperature, which is critical to cheesemaking.

The creamery’s milk is produced at Saxon Homestead Dairy farm, where the Klessigs and Heimerls converted their conventional dairy to a rotational grazing operation in 1989. That experience became the family’s “a-ha moment” as they turned their herd of Holstein cows out of the barn onto pasture for the first time and witnessed pure pleasure on the faces of the cows. Today, Saxon Creamery, like the farm, is installing an Environmental Management System (EMS) and applying to be Green Tier certified by the State of Wisconsin. For more information about Saxon Homestead Creamery, visit www.saxoncreamery.com or call Dan Strongin, director of marketing, at 510-224-0493.

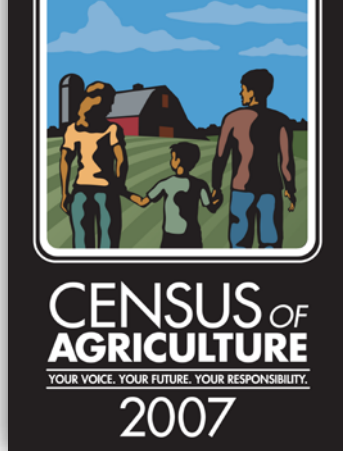
2. ADD Grant Window Now Open, VAPG Grants To Open This Week

The **Agricultural Development and Diversification (ADD) Grant Program** at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has announced \$380,000 is available to individuals, associations, agricubusinesses and industry groups for projects that are likely to stimulate Wisconsin’s agricultural economy through the development and exploration of new value-added products, new markets, or new technologies in agriculture. ADD grants are awarded competitively each year and maximum grant amount is \$50,000. Proposals are due by 5 p.m. on March 15, 2008. To download a request for proposal form and guidelines, visit: <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/marketing/val-add/add/index.jsp>



In addition, requests for proposals of the **2008 Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) Program** through USDA are expected to open this week with a 60-day application window. These grants may be used for planning activities and for working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures. In 2007, Wisconsin producers received more than \$3 million in grants from this program. For more information on the 2008 VAPG announcement and how DBIC can assist companies in proposal preparation, see <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm> or call Abby Bachhuber, DBIC, at 608-658-3392, email: awind23@gmail.com

3. Industry News

- **2007 Census of Agriculture:** Wisconsin's farmers have the opportunity to make their voices heard and help shape the future of agriculture by completing the Census of Agriculture, which arrived in mailboxes this month. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Census is a complete count of the nation's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. The Census looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures and other topics. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the nation. For more information, call the Agricultural Statistics Hotline at 800-727-9540.
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- The logo for the 2007 Census of Agriculture features a stylized illustration of a family—a man, a woman, and a child—standing in a farm setting with a barn and silo in the background. Below the illustration, the text reads "CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE" in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by the tagline "YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY." and the year "2007" in a large, white, serif font.
- **New Dairy Artisan Research Papers:** The Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Research Program, a partnership between the DBIC and the Babcock Institute for International Dairy Research and Development, announces two newly published research papers. Diana Murphy of Dreamfarm recently attended a workshop in Vermont and writes about Making and Aging Mediterranean Cheeses, while Randolph Hodgson & Bronwen Bromberger of Neal's Yard Dairy share their insights into Wisconsin's burgeoning affinage industry after a recent visit to America's Dairyland. The WI dairy artisan research program provides airfare for individuals who wish to travel abroad to gather information on dairy processing methods and practices in other countries or states. In return, program participants provide reports about what they have learned. To read the series, visit: <http://www.dbicusa.org/planningoptions/research+papers/dairy+artisan+series/default.asp>
 - **Madison Area CSA Coalition Open House:** The Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC) will host its Annual Open House on Saturday, March 29, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Olbrich Gardens, 330 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI. For DBIC clients who are interested in partnering with a MACSAC farm for the coming CSA season, NOW is the time to begin the process to participate in the Open House, which offers exposure to more than 500 interested consumers. The Open House is also an excellent opportunity to learn about how CSAs work and a chance to meet all of the MACSAC growers. For more information, visit: <http://www.macsac.org/>.
 - **Chicago Food Marketing Events:** Chicago is hosting a myriad of events in 2008, all designed to help cheesemakers and food manufacturers better understand the marketplace. Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar now: **Global Food & Style Expo**, April 27-29 at McCormick Place: <http://www.specialtyfood.com>; **National Restaurant Association Show**, May 17-20 at McCormick Place: <http://www.restaurant.org/show/> and the **American Cheese Society Conference** in Chicago, July 23-26: <http://www.cheesesociety.org/>
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4. Beyond Wisconsin: India Enters Italian Cheese Market in U.S.

DBIC Communications Director Jeanne Carpenter recently spent 17 days in five cities and remote villages in India as part of her Wisconsin Rural Leadership Group 12 international trip. While there, Wisconsin made the front page of New Delhi's The Sunday Express, with the headline: "Italian cheese sold in the U.S., Made in India."

The story reports that "Wisconsin-based Artignale Italiano" is collaborating with Man Mohan Malik, an Indian entrepreneur, who while at a food exhibition in Germany a couple years ago, saw an Italian stall promoting water buffalo milk cheese as a delicacy. Once he saw that the water buffaloes on the promo pictures were just the same as the ordinary Indian buffaloes (70 percent of the world's buffalo population lives in India), he knew what to do.

Malik was soon visiting mozzarella plants in Italy, absorbing everything he saw, and rapidly started producing mozzarella cheese with partner Raffaele Cioffi. The pair gave exclusive contracts to Indian farmers on the condition they would not mix cow or goat's milk and water buffalo milk to sell to the company.

Their cheese plant, which opened in March 2006, has the capacity to produce 14.9 million pounds a year of specialty mozzarella cheese. The company, listed on the Indian Stock Exchange, registered a 91.27 percent growth in net profits for the quarter that ended September 2007. In the U.S., the cheese will soon be available in Costco and Trader Joe's. The company's next step is to launch Italian frozen cheeses in the Indian market. The company has partnered with India's largest company, Reliance to retail its cheese in India under the brand name Bufalabella. <http://www.indianexpress.com/iep/sunday/story/260933.html>,



Photo Courtesy Antoon Cox/The Sunday Express

Raffaele Cioffi and Man Mohan Malik, an Italian-Indian collaboration, plan to market their Italian cheese in the U.S. under the brand name Bufalabella.

5. Upcoming Important Dates

- **Feb 4–March 16: Sanitation for Farmstead Dairies Online Short Course. River Falls, Wis.**
This six-week online course helps participants understand the uniqueness of their food processing facilities and ensure that proper sanitation programs are conducted. Participants work at their own pace and complete the coursework as their time and schedule permits. Participants need an Internet connection, a web browser and an e-mail address. Students will communicate with the instructor and each other through e-mail and/or discussion boards. Participants will develop a comprehensive Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures paper (SSOP). The SSOP enhances Good Manufacturing Program practices, and both are considered prerequisites for a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) System. To register or for more information, contact Rane May at 715-425-3704 or visit <http://www.uwrf.edu/food-science/institutes/welcome.html> Registration is required by Feb. 1.

- **March 4–6: Sixth Annual 2008 Cheesemaking Opportunities & Challenges Conf. Sonoma, Calif.**
The theme of this year's conference, presented by Sheana Davis, of the Epicurean Connection, is "The Food Chain, From the Farm to the Table." Keynote speaker is Juliet Harbutt, Chairman of the British Cheese Awards, food writer, and author. Also leading sessions from Wisconsin will be Steve Ehlers of Larry's Market in Brown Deer, and Sid Cook of Carr Valley Cheese. Visit www.sheanadavis.com for registration information and a full list of guest speakers and panelists.
- **March 11–13: 2008 World Championship Cheese Contest. Madison, Wis.**
Cheesemakers and buttermakers from around the world are invited to compete in the 27th Biennial World Championship Cheese Contest, hosted by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association with assistance from dozens of industry volunteers. Since its inception in 1957, the World Championship Cheese Contest has grown rapidly and is now the largest international cheese and butter competition in the world. The most recent Contest in 2006 drew a record-breaking 1,795 entries from 18 nations. The competition is open to public viewing. Key contest dates include:
 - Entry Deadline - February 11, 2008
 - Entries Delivered - March 5, 2008
 - Contest Judging - March 11-13, 2008
 - Awards Banquet - April 24, 2008Download registration forms or learn more at: <http://www.wischeesemakersassn.org>
- **April 22–24: 2008 International Cheese Technology Exposition. Madison, Wis.**
The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research will host cheese manufacturers and suppliers from across the nation and world at this biennial event. An intensive combination of morning seminars combined with two full afternoons of Expo trade show and evening events, it is the world's largest gathering devoted solely to the multi-billion dollar market for cheese and related dairy products. To learn more, visit: <http://www.wischeesemakersassn.org>
- **May 5–8: The World of Cheese from Pasture to Plate. Madison, Wis.**
This four-day short course offered at the Center for Dairy Research is for culinary professionals, end users, distributors, retailers, and marketers. The course will cover aspects of cheesemaking, cheese handling, packaging and sensory evaluation. For more information, contact Dean Sommer, 608-265-6469 or visit <http://www.cdr.wisc.edu/courses/>

*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.*
