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1. Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Research Program Seeing Results

By Jeanne Carpenter

A program designed to help Wisconsin dairy artisans expand their knowledge and skills in developing, crafting and aging “Old World” cheeses has helped launch several new “American Original” cheeses and resulted in a variety of unique affinage facilities to be built around the state.

During the last six years, 12 Wisconsin cheesemakers have traveled abroad to 10 different countries, as part of the Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Research Program. A joint project between the Babcock Institute, the Department of Food Science at UW-Madison, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and the Dairy Business Innovation Center, the program covers airfare expenses for dairy artisans who wish to conduct research on dairy production methods in other countries. In return, program participants present what they have learned to others and write a research paper about their findings, which is published and distributed to help the Wisconsin dairy industry.

“It’s amazing to be involved in a program that has opened so many doors for our Wisconsin cheesemakers,” says Karen Nielsen, Associate Director of the Babcock Institute. “When a cheesemaker has the opportunity to travel abroad and study different cultures and production methods, we can almost see light bulbs go on in their heads by the time they return. It’s been fun to watch all the new, original cheeses come from the cheesemakers who have traveled abroad.”

To participate in the program, applicants must be small dairy processing plant owners or farm-based dairy artisans, who currently manufacture and sell a finished dairy product. The grant entirely covers airfare charges. In order to be considered for the program, applicants submit letters of invitation from international dairy artisans they intend to visit, as well as an essay describing their current operation and



value of the trip, a proposed itinerary and budget, and a signed agreement saying they will write a paper and present what they have learned to an audience when they return.

Reports written by participants in the Dairy Artisan Research Program range from exploring farmstead affinage in the British Isles to making Parmigiano Reggiano in Italy. The full list of participating cheesemakers follows.

- 2009 Participants:
 - **Larry and Clara Hedrich**, are partnering with Saxon Creamery to produce a goat's milk cheese, Evalon, from their farm. They recently traveled to Netherlands to study goat dairy production processes. Their report is not yet published.
 - **Jon Metzig**, cheesemaker at Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, recently traveled to Ireland and England to study washed rind cheeses. His report is not yet published.
 - **Bob Wills**, Cedar Grove Cheese, traveled to Honduras to study its dairy processing industry as part of a pilot project for Partners for Global Dairy Development. Read the report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/willshonduras.pdf>
- 2007 Participants:
 - **Diana Murphy**, Dreamfarm, attended a course led by Peter Dixon in Vermont. She shared what she learned in making and aging Mediterranean cheeses Read the report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/dianamurphyartisanpaper.pdf>
 - **Randolph Hodgson** from Neal's Yard Dairy in London visited Wisconsin to share expertise on aging cheese with several Wisconsin cheesemakers. Read the report written by his colleague, Bronwen Bromberger of Neal's Yard Dairy, here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/nealsyard1.pdf>
 - **Anne Topham**, Fantome Farm, visited Pegognaga, Italy to learn more about crafting Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. Read her report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/parmesanreportannetopham.pdf>
- 2006 Participants:
 - **Terra Madre and Salone del Gusto 2006**: Mike and Carol Gingrich, Uplands Cheese, Tony and Julie Hook, Hook's Cheese, Willi Lehner, Bleu Mont Dairy, Anne Topham, Fantome Farm, and Heidi Busse, Dept of Agriculture, attended this international show. Read their report, titled World Meeting of Food Communities by Busse, here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/nealsyard1.pdf>
- 2005 Participants:
 - **Willi Lehner and Qui'tas McKnight** of Bleu Mont Dairy visited the British Isles to explore farmstead affinage. Read their report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/bleumont.pdf>
- 2004 Participants:
 - **Andy and Kim Large** studied the Mini Dairies of Israel. Read their report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/artisanisrael.pdf>
 - George & Debbie Crave, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, traveled to Switzerland to study specialty cheesemaking and affinage. Read their report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/cravereport2.pdf>



- 2003 Participants:
 - **Anne Topham**, Fantome Farm, studied aging cheese in France. Read the report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/cheeseaginginfranceannetopham.pdf>
 - **Mary and David Falk**, Lovetree Farmstead Cheese, visited farmstead and artisan dairies in Spain and Portugal. Read the report here: <http://www.dbicusa.org/resources/falksizingdownviaspainandportugal.pdf>

In addition to the Dairy Artisan Research Program, another opportunity, the Dairy Entrepreneur Grant, is also available through the Babcock Institute and its partners. The grant is intended for individuals who do not currently manufacture a dairy product yet are interested in exploring dairy processing facilities domestically or abroad. This grant covers half of the airfare charges. Applicants must complete a business plan as part of the application process.

For more information on the Dairy Artisan Research Program or to inquire about applying, visit: <http://babcock.cals.wisc.edu/?q=node/34> or call Karen Nielsen, 608-265-4169.

2. DBIC Monthly Message: Steady Growth in the Dairy Goat Industry



This month, we hear from **Jeanne Meier**, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Jeanne leads the Grow Wisconsin Dairy Goat Initiative and is a valuable partner to the DBIC, sharing the most up-to-date information and available resources. This month, Jeanne provides an update on “**Steady Growth in the Dairy Goat Industry.**”

I often hear dairy goat producers say, “The goat industry is where the cow industry was 15 or 20 years ago.” When I ask them what they mean, they cite the huge gains the cow industry has made in improved genetics, per cow production, cow comfort, various herd size models, and value-added enterprises. Then, they always add that they don’t want to face the kinds of up and down milk price problems that dairy cow farm families face.

And, while producers always want to get a higher price for their milk, they recognize that a glut of milk on the market will only contribute to lower prices and farmers going out of business. The reality of the dairy goat industry is that the balance between supply and demand of milk is controlled by the processors. Processors decide whether to and when to take on new producers. Often, they will limit the amount of increase in milk production that a current producer can have in any given year. This control of supply does two things for the industry. One, it assures processors that they will have the milk they need for processing based on sales projections of their products. Two, it assures producers that milk prices remain stable.

As a result of this balance of supply and demand, industry growth is steady, but not exploding. Processors report a steady increase in demand for their products, meaning they will continue to increase the demand for more milk. Farmers and their lenders know they have to make sure there is a market for their milk before they invest in the business as a new producer or before they expand their business as an existing producer.

The real story behind industry growth has been the growth in numbers of licensed farms in other Upper Midwestern states. Wisconsin leads the nation in the number of dairy goats, with 40,000—up from 28,000 in 2005. Wisconsin currently has 173 licensed farms, while Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, and Missouri

have a combined total of 318 additional farms. Most of the milk from all five of the states is being processed here in Wisconsin or at a plant in Lena, Illinois.

Trends we are seeing here in Wisconsin include not only an increase in the number of herds, but an increase in herd numbers. A number of producers have renovated or built new buildings with a focus on goat comfort and animal flow for milking ease and efficiency. In addition, more farmers are exploring value-added alternatives. There are now six licensed goat milk farmstead dairy plants in the state. Milk from Quality Dairy Goat Milk Producers Cooperative of Wisconsin is now being manufactured into goat milk ice cream at Cedar Crest in Manitowoc for La Loo's of California. La Clare Farm's goat milk is being processed at Saxon Creamery into an award-winning cheese, Evalon. Low-fat goat milk is being processed for the first time in Wisconsin and sold under the Sunshine label. Woolwich, Inc. is going strong at its new plant in Lancaster. Montchevre in Belmont is installing an anaerobic digester to handle its whey waste and provide energy for the plant.

And, not to leave out our terrific cadre of cheese makers, 30 of their goat cheeses took home awards within the last year at the American Cheese Society and the U.S. Cheese Championships.

With all these developments, we can truly say that we are the heart of the nation's dairy goat industry. To learn more about Wisconsin's dairy industry, please join us at these upcoming events:

- August 15: On Farm Field Day, Rock County, Terry and Kathleen Regenold, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Sept. 19: On Farm Field Day, Dodge County, Keith, Jane, and Tylor Schwartz, 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Oct. (TBA): Goat Seminar at World Dairy Expo, Madison, Wis.
- Oct.17: On Farm Field Day, Green County, Laura and Anthony Jay, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Oct. 30-31: Third Annual Focus on Goats conference and Annual Caprine Field Day, Sinsinawa Mound Center, Sinsinawa, Wis.



For more information about any of these events, contact Jeanne Meier at: 608-224-5121 or email Jeanne.Meier@wisconsin.gov

3. WCMA & UW-Madison Unveil Custom Training for Dairy Industry

Managers and supervisors in dairy and related industries have the opportunity to gain world-class management skills training and a certificate under a unique collaboration between Wisconsin's dairy industry and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, in cooperation with the Wisconsin School of Business and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin, announces the launch of the "Management Skills Program for Dairy Professionals."

This custom management training will consist of four, two-day training sessions or "modules" held at the Fluno Center for Executive Education in Madison. Dairy manufacturers, dairy industry suppliers and

dairy producers are invited to send personnel to earn a "Management Skills Certificate" from the Wisconsin School of Business.

The program begins July 28-29, 2009 with the first training module entitled "Leadership/Management Mindedness & Team Building." The remaining three modules are set for November 17-18, 2009 (Performance Management; Problem Solving and Decision-Making Skills), January 26-27, 2010 (Interpersonal Communication; Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution) and March 31-April 1, 2010 (Dairy Business Acumen: Basic Finance, Sales and Marketing in Dairy).

"This is a unique collaboration between the School of Business and an industry trade association," says Michael Knetter, Dean of the Wisconsin School of Business. "We're excited to work with WCMA and CALS to produce custom management training for the dairy industry in Wisconsin." CALS, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin, will work together with the Executive Education department at the Wisconsin School of Business to produce the final module – a look at dairy marketing, sales and basic finance.

"The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is pleased to contribute to this one-of-a-kind certificate program. The Management Skills Program for Dairy Professionals is another unique tool that can elevate the quality and efficiency of dairy production in Wisconsin," says Molly Jahn, Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The WCMA Board of Directors placed a high value on flexibility and ease of use when constructing this certificate program, according to John Umhoefer, executive director of WMCA. The four training modules will be repeated each year and participants will have two years to complete the four modules in order to earn a certificate. In addition, participants can enter the program with any module and take the four modules in any order.

"We encourage industry to support their staff in completing these four sessions in a single year, but the program provides the same quality training no matter how managers and supervisors arrange their participation," Umhoefer says.

The "Management Skills Program for Dairy Professionals" will be offered to all WCMA member manufacturers, processors and suppliers, as well as Wisconsin dairy producers. With class size limited to 30 persons, WCMA member dairy manufacturers and processors will receive first priority for placement.

WCMA and the Wisconsin School of Business have collaborated to bundle all participant costs into a single, special rate for each module, including the cost of instruction, education materials, meals and overnight accommodations (for two nights). The cost to attend a module is \$1,425.

WCMA receives no revenue from the program, Umhoefer explains, and will build special incentives to encourage participation. Participants earning a certificate from the "Management Skills Program for Dairy Professionals" will receive their honor at the annual, April joint meetings of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research. In addition, WCMA manufacturer and processor members will receive a \$1,000 reimbursement for their participants who successfully complete the certificate program.

Complete information on the Management Skills Program for Dairy Professionals appears on the WCMA website at www.wischeesemakers.org.



4. Industry News

- ❖ **Babcock Institute Launches New Website:** The Babcock Institute for International Dairy Research and Development has launched a new website to provide improved access to information for those involved in the dairy industry. This new site, updated daily, is part of the Babcock Institute's continuing mission to help the dairy industry of Wisconsin and the United States by linking it with dairy industries around the world. The Institute will use its tools of research, education, and trade and market analysis, to bring together communities from across the globe. Check out the new site at: <http://babcock.wisc.edu/>
- ❖ **It's Not a Cheeseburger Without Wisconsin Cheese:** The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board has launched a new website called the Cheese & Burger Society, www.cheeseandburger.com to capitalize on America's love affair with the cheeseburger. By building this fun and engaging web site featuring 30 mouth watering cheeseburgers all topped with Wisconsin Cheese, using beautiful photography, engaging copy and light hearted voiceover, WMMB hopes to energize consumers who are passionate about food. Since the launch of the website on July 1, the Cheese and Burger Society has garnered over 8,500 Facebook Fans and over 20,000 visitors to the site who spend over five minutes on average on the site.



5. Upcoming Important Dates

- **July 21 – 23: Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. Waterloo, Wis.**
Farm Technology Days is the largest agriculture exposition in Wisconsin--a three-day outdoor event that showcases the latest improvements in production agriculture. Each year, it is held in a different Wisconsin County on a different host farm. This year, hosting is the Crave Brothers Farm, LLC, located two miles North of Waterloo, WI in Dodge County. Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is \$5. More information: <http://www.wifarmtechnologydays.com/>
- **August 5 – 8: 2009 American Cheese Society Conference. Austin, Texas.**
Register for the 26th annual American Cheese Society Annual Conference and cheese competition. The conference includes both cherished annual events such as the Festival of Cheese, as well as new events such as Meet the Cheesemaker. Three full days of educational workshops and networking opportunities await you. More info: <http://www.cheesesociety.org/>
- **Oct. 30 – 31: 2009 Focus on Goats Conference. Sinsinawa, Wis.**
Save the date for this year's Focus on Goats Conference, to be held at Sinsinawa, Wis., near both the Illinois and Iowa borders, in the heart of Upper Midwest Dairy Goat operations. The conference will include several producer panels and keynote speakers. Watch for updates at: <http://www.wdga.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.