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**1. DBIC Launches New Packaging Database & Comprehensive Research Report**

In October, 2006 the Dairy Business Innovation Center sent team member Dan Strongin to Paris to attend SIAL, the largest food show for the retail industry. Dan's mission was three-fold: to understand state-of-the-art European cheese & dairy packaging, to discover which companies are capable of supplying dairies in the U.S. with such packaging, and to capture images and information for a summary report available to the public.



European yogurt packaging

During his 10-day visit to Europe, Dan conducted in-depth visits to 12 stores, as well as every dairy related booth at the SIAL show, and many other booths with related products. More than 1,200 photos

were taken and are now available in a database, available through the DBIC website. In addition, interviews were held with packaging companies and cheesemakers from France and England, and literature was collected at the SIAL show, scanned, sorted and added to the database.

Photos by Dan Strongin for DBIC

The result is a comprehensive "snapshot" in time of the state of dairy packaging at the cutting edge, in the present moment: a "snapshot" of the most successful and innovative companies in our industry worldwide. In addition, the summary report provides

comprehensive data and gives context to the database. We invite you to share in our research to grow your business.



European butter packaging

To access this new DBIC tool, visit [www.dbicusa.org](http://www.dbicusa.org) and click on "Packaging Resources".



European goat cheese packaging

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## 2. DBIC Team Monthly Message: Janet Ady



This month we hear from **Janet Ady**, Focus Study & DBIC Client Product Research Director. Janet discusses “Packaging Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them.”

You’ve put hundreds – if not thousands – of hours into product development, securing a milk supply, meeting regulatory requirements, and getting your production ramped up. You can’t wait to finally see your product on the shelf at your local grocery store or on the menu of a five-star restaurant. All you need to do now is get the product to market, and it will sell itself, right?

Your product’s packaging and labeling can have a huge impact on the success of your product once it goes to market. People buy with their eyes, and if your product’s packaging is distinctive and its labeling is informative and conveys your message well, you’re ahead of the rest of the pack.

The DBIC has sponsored countless activities designed to introduce DBIC clients to all aspects of the marketplace. These activities have included 15 consumer focus groups; numerous retail tours; merchandising training; participation at trade shows; an in-depth analysis of global dairy packaging trends (featured earlier in this newsletter); and interviews with leading brokers, retailers, distributors, and foodservice operators.

What practical, actionable lessons can be drawn from these experiences as they relate to packaging and labeling?

1. **Your packaging and labeling should be based on how you are positioning your product.** Is it for kids, working families, or foodies? Is it a wholesome product or a convenience product? The answers to these and related questions determine whether a glass bottle or plastic bottle is more appropriate, whether the imagery should feature cartoons or more classic images.
2. **Don’t clutter your package.** Drill down to find the single word or phrase that is most important to your audience.
3. **Make sure the language you use is understandable to your audience.** Some consumers don’t know what a “cream line” is, what “probiotics” are (or why they’d be desirable), etc.
4. **Don’t assume the customer knows what your product is**, especially if it is a specialty or artisan product. Describe what it will taste like: e.g., “a smooth, creamy spreading cheese made with aged cheddar and port wine.”
5. **Give serving suggestions.** These don’t have to be complete recipes, as space often prohibits that, but just enough to give the consumer one or two ideas on how the product could be used.
6. **Make the label legible.** Some labels we’ve tested in consumer focus groups use so many different fonts, colors, and graphics that consumers can’t figure out what’s important so they give up.

7. **If you plan to sell at retail, bring your product in its prototype packaging** to a real retail store, put it on the shelf where it would be displayed, and evaluate it. Does it stand out or get lost in the crowd? Can you read the label from far away? Do competitors' similar products look better, and if so, why?
8. **Take advantage of resources and experience available through the DBIC** and test your concept, label, labeling terms, and/or product through the DBIC's consumer focus groups before you roll products out. Even the most experienced marketers gain important insights through these sessions – input that can help them refine or redirect their marketing approach to help ensure their success in the marketplace.

Janet Ady is president of Voltedge, Inc., a Madison-based branding, marketing, and communications firm, and a DBIC consultant. She moderates the DBIC consumer focus groups and conducts other channel research for DBIC. You can reach her at [jady@voltedge.com](mailto:jady@voltedge.com) or at 608-663-9218.

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### 3. Brunkow Cheese Earns Editor's Pick Award at Progressive Grocer Magazine

A Wisconsin cheese plant well-known for its cheddar, colby and jack has won an Editor's Pick Award from Progressive Grocer Magazine for its new English-style artisan cheese, Avondale Truckle.

Brunkow Cheese, Darlington, Wis., recently launched a line of artisan English-style cheeses after third-generation owners Karl and Mary Geissbuhler realized their 100-year-old family-owned plant might not be around for another 100 years if they continued only making 40-pound blocks of commodity cheeses.



Photo by Jeanne Carpenter for DBIC

"We were fighting for pennies on the 40-pound block market, and now we're wholesaling artisan cheese for \$7 - \$8 a pound," Karl says. "That's a big change for us."

Not only is Brunkow's new "Fayette Creamery" line of four English-style cheeses putting them back in the black, it's also putting them on the map of Wisconsin award-winners. On Sept. 15, *Progressive Grocer Magazine* will feature Brunkow's Avondale Truckle as one of its "Editor's Picks" of the year out of 200+ product entries.

From left, Karl Geissbuhler holds a 20-pound wheel of Pendarvis, cheesemaker Greg Schulte holds the 1.5-pound Little Darling, cheesemaker and marketing manager Joe Burns poses with a 35-pound Argylshire, and Mary Geissbuhler stands proudly with the Avondale Truckle.

Brunkow worked with the DBIC team to create the recipe and a special mold for this elegant, tall, drum-shaped cheese. A cloth-wrapped cheddar, it is aged in Brunkow's unique cellar for 6 to 18 months and is made from raw milk sourced from local Lafayette County dairy farms. Round and buttery in its youth, Avondale Truckle develops a full, layered flavor and wild, earthy aromas as it matures. It joins Brunkow's complete English-style line-up including: Little Darling, Pendarvis & Argylshire -- all named after area landmarks and all aged in the Brunkow cellar.

Demand for the Fayette Creamery English-style cheeses is growing. Brunkow Cheese is currently building a new 21 x 50 foot cooler in order to utilize its unique cellar exclusively for aging the English-style cheeses. Congratulations to Brunkow Cheese from the DBIC and its partners on its recent award and success in the artisan cheese world.

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## 4. Industry News

- ❖ **New Reports from Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems:** The CIAS in Madison, Wis., has published several new Research Briefs and reports including:

- **How is cheese from pastured cows unique?**  
[http://www.cias.wisc.edu/archives/2007/02/22/how\\_is\\_cheese\\_from\\_pastured\\_cows\\_unique/index.php](http://www.cias.wisc.edu/archives/2007/02/22/how_is_cheese_from_pastured_cows_unique/index.php)
- **Life satisfaction on grazing dairy farms in Wisconsin:**  
[http://www.cias.wisc.edu/archives/2006/12/11/life\\_satisfaction\\_on\\_grazing\\_dairy\\_farms\\_in\\_wisconsin/index.php](http://www.cias.wisc.edu/archives/2006/12/11/life_satisfaction_on_grazing_dairy_farms_in_wisconsin/index.php)

Upcoming CIAS publications include a detailed report on life satisfaction on Wisconsin dairy farms, and a Research Brief on dairy farmers' opinions about custom heifer raising. For more information, contact Brent McCown at [bhmccown@wisc.edu](mailto:bhmccown@wisc.edu) or call 608-262-5200.



Photo courtesy of CIAS

This photo shows the difference between three types of cheese in a recent CIAS study. From left: cheese made from cow's milk on pasture & grain, cheese made from cow's milk on pasture, and cheese made from cow's milk on Total Mixed Ration (TMR) feed.

- ❖ **Wisconsin Eat Local Challenge:** A statewide coalition of farmers and grassroots organizations have launched challenge to increase sales of local food. The Wisconsin "Eat Local" challenge encourages consumers to spend 10 percent of their food budget on local food for ten days, Sept. 14 - 23. Here's how it works: 1) Visit [www.cias.wisc.edu/eatlocal](http://www.cias.wisc.edu/eatlocal) and sign up for the challenge. 2) Track your local food spending. 3) Share your results through the local food survey. The results of the challenge will be reported at the 2nd Annual Wisconsin Local Food Summit and the 10th Annual Midwest Value Added Conference, Jan. 24-25 in Eau Claire, Wis. For more information, contact Cris Carusi, CIAS, 608-262-8018 or Amy Bruner, DATCP, 608-224-5017.
  - ❖ **SARE Grant Window Opens:** The North Central Region (NCR) SARE program of the USDA has allocated about \$400,000 for the 2007 Farmer/Rancher Grant Program. Competitive grants of up to \$6,000 are available for individual farmers and ranchers and grants up to \$18,000 are available for groups of three or more farmers from separate operations who are interested in exploring sustainable agriculture. Proposals are due Dec. 3, 2007. For more information, visit: <http://ncr.sare.org/prod.htm>
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## 5. Beyond Wisconsin: NPR Reports Cheesemakers Taste Change in the Weather

National Public Radio recently featured interviews with cheesemakers from Vermont and France, profiling how changes in global climate could affect cheesemaking around the world. Journalist Ketzell Levine interviewed Janine and John Putnman, of Thistle Hill Farm in Vermont, who says when they taste their alpine-style cheese, they can tell what the weather was like at the time they made it.

But that may change, as it is in Europe, where the Alps are warming and French cheesemakers are trying to adapt to climate change.



Photo courtesy of Ketzell Levine, NPR

French cheesemaker Alex Pelletier, like the Putnams, makes Beaufort cheese. He's worried that the unprecedented heat in the French Alps will make his cows thirstier. Drinking more water, he says, dilutes the proteins and fats in the cows' milk. That costs cheesemakers, who must use more milk to create the same amount of cheese.

Levine reports the flora in the Alps is slowly changing, too. Pelletier is seeing plants native to the south of France starting to grow in his backyard. A change in flora might someday change the taste of alpine cheese, he says. Meanwhile, in Vermont, the Putnams say they worry about wetter and cooler weather. If the weather gets wetter, the Putnams may be forced to change cheese styles to match the changing grasses and flora from the land.

To read a complete transcript of the NPR story or listen the original broadcast, visit: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=13981929>

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## 6. Upcoming Important Dates

- **Sept. 14 – Nov. 3: Dairy Goat Education Events. Statewide, Wis.** Goat farmers, milk processors, 4-H leaders, extension agents and others interested in goats should plan to attend several goat farm field days and events scheduled across the state in the coming months. The specific focus of each event will vary but most will cover aspects of goat herd health and nutrition. These events are a great opportunity to ask questions, share information and learn how different farms operate.

### Upcoming events are scheduled on:

- Sept. 14: Third Annual Goat Seminar, Richland County Fairgrounds
- Sept. 15: 4-H & FFA Caprine Field Day, Waupaca County Fairgrounds
- Sept. 19: Farm Tours, Green & Rock County
- Oct. 10, On Farm Field Day, Zimmermann Farm, Dodge County
- Nov. 3: Caprine Field Day, Arlington Research Station, Columbia County



Photo courtesy of DBIC

For more information, contact Jeanne Meier at 608-224-5121 or email [jeanne.meier@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jeanne.meier@wisconsin.gov)

- **October 2 – 6: World Dairy Expo. Madison, Wis.**

This event is the international dairy meeting place, a five day event showcasing the finest in dairy genetics and the newest technologies available to the dairy industry. Meet many of Wisconsin's finest dairy processors at America's Dairyland Marketplace in Exhibition hall. More info: <http://www.worlddairyexpo.com/gen.home.cfm>.
- **November 2: Covering Your Brand Assets - Trademarks & Registrations. Madison, Wis.**

This marketing seminar will provide your company with valuable information and tools to help you protect one of your major investments of both time and money: the building of your brand name and the products that are marketed under that name. This DBIC seminar, hosted in conjunction with the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute, will include information on trademarks, steps and benefits of registering a trademark, working through the process by example, and branding and intellectual properties strategies. Hosted from 1 – 4 p.m. in the Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Board Room, first floor, 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison, WI. For more information or to register, contact Kathy Brown, [planningoptions@charter.net](mailto:planningoptions@charter.net) or phone 262-740-0705.
- **November 13–15: Turning Chaos Into Control - Continental Style Cheeses. River Falls, Wis.**

This three-day conference is for cheesemakers who want to make artisanal cheeses. While Continental Style Cheese has many connotations to many people, it may mean a typical Edam or Gouda from the Netherlands, Saint-Paulin from France, or any other number of European style cheeses. In any case, the manufacturing technology is basically the same, but making small manipulations at critical times in the process can result in a unique cheese. Join Neville McNaughton, Consultant Cheesemaker, and Rane May, University Wisconsin-River Falls Dairy Specialist, as conference coordinators for an enlightening technology session that can put you in control of your cheesemaking. More information: <http://www.uwrf.edu/food-science/institutes/artisanalCheese.html>
- **November 15–18: American Cheesemaker Awards. Newport Beach, Calif.**

Join thousands of Southern California foodies and cheesemakers from across the country for this unique event. The four-day conference includes an American Cheesemaker Awards Judging, a forum for cheesemakers to introduce their products to the Southern California market, and breakout sessions. Visit <http://www.cheeseawards.com/> for more information.

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*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](http://www.dbicusa.org) or contact Jeanne Carpenter, 608-358-7837.*