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1. Four Dairy Processors Receive Grants to Expand Product Lines

Four Wisconsin cheesemakers received \$78,500 in the first round of this year's Value Added Dairy Initiative Dairy Processor grants. Recipients include:

Edelweiss Graziers Cooperative, Monticello: \$25,000

This farmer-owned cooperative plans to add value to its cream by creating a small-batch, hand-packed fresh Wisconsin butter. The new product concept matches the cooperative's values and meets a growing customer demand for artisanal butter.



Local Choice Marketing, LLC, Avoca: \$12,500

Local Choice Marketing plans to market its seasonal cheddars by building upon brand awareness and increasing sales through market development. Grant funds will be used to grow distribution outlets and increase production in response to demand.

Silver Lewis Cheese Factory Cooperative, Monticello: \$13,000

To meet a growing product demand, Silver Lewis Cheese is upgrading its processing and storage area. In line with this expansion is new cheese flavor development and modernization of the plant's production system.



Widmer's Cheese Cellars, Theresa: \$28,000

Utilizing its heritage, Widmer's Cheese Cellars is developing an original product line – a washed rind, cave aged cheese, Villa Theresa. Third generation cheesemaker and owner Joe Widmer hopes to open new markets with this old-world product.

The Value Added Dairy Initiative Dairy processor grant program offers funding to individuals or groups, businesses and organizations to help fund projects geared at innovation, market development and modernization of dairy processing.

A total of \$300,000 is available this year, with a \$35,000 maximum grant award per project. Grant recruitment is broken down into three periods. Applications for the next round of grants must be received by **4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 30**. Email submissions are preferred, but mailed, faxed and hand-delivered applications are acceptable. Details on the request for grant proposals and application materials are available at www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/marketing/val-add/initiative or by calling Matt Lange, DATCP, at 608-224-5081.

The grants are part of the Value Added Dairy Initiative, funded through the support of Sen. Herb Kohl and Rep. Dave Obey. The Dairy Business Innovation Center and the Grow Wisconsin Dairy Team are key components of the VADI initiative. Since its start-up in April 2004, the program has administered \$2.9 million in grants to 300 producers, processors and dairy groups.

2. DBIC Monthly Message: Can We See the Forest or Just the Trees?



This month, we hear from **Norm Monsen**, DBIC Client Services Co-Director. Norm challenges us with a series of questions, all revolving around the age old adage: **“Can we see the Forest or just the Trees?”**

There is an old saying that goes: “You can’t see the forest for the trees.” We can take the message in that saying to tell us that sometimes we become so stuck in doing things the old way or dealing with minor problems/obstacles that we lose sight of the big picture and opportunities.

There is no doubt this saying can be applied to our everyday personal lives. But can the message also be applied to business and industry? The history of Wisconsin and U.S business is full of sad stories about leading companies no longer in operation due to their lack of ability to adopt new ways of operations. Is it perhaps because they couldn’t see the forest for the trees?

With that in mind, I’d like to go offer up a few questions regarding Wisconsin’s No. 1 industry - dairy. This being a personal column, I have added a few editorial comments about each one.

1. Why doesn’t the home office of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) have a milk vending machine? The DATCP building hosts thousands of visitors every year from all over the world. It doesn’t seem right that when a guest asks if they can purchase milk in the building, they are told they can buy soda or juices but will have to go down the street to buy milk.

2. Why can’t a person buy butter made at one of our state’s flagship dairy product research institutions: UW-River Falls and UW-Madison? The answer is neither institution has a licensed buttermaker on staff. A strict licensing procedure for buttermakers has been in place for decades. Today, Wisconsin has 39 licensed buttermakers (compared with 1,200 licensed cheesemakers) and the number is declining. The Wisconsin cheesemaking industry five years ago helped guide Wisconsin to develop new avenues to train and license cheesemakers – perhaps it’s time to revisit the original buttermaker licensing requirements as well? I think it speaks for itself when America’s Dairyland was not mentioned once in the special March 2008 “Butter” issue of Saveur Magazine, recognizing some of the best butters from around the world.

3. Why doesn't the State of Wisconsin grant a license or degree for someone who takes the aging of cheese (affinage) to a new level? An affineur is responsible for a dairy product for days, months and sometimes even years. The State of Wisconsin requires licenses for professions who sometimes handle this same product or its ingredients for a very short time, such as milk haulers, pasteurizer operators and cheese graders. Is there an opportunity to create a new recognition program for cheese affineurs in Wisconsin?

4. Does the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) have the right name? In addition to boasting the nation's most vibrant cow dairy industry, Wisconsin's goat and sheep dairy industries are renowned across the country. As the WMMB represents only the cow dairy industry, maybe it should be renamed the Wisconsin Cow Milk Marketing Board (WCMMB)?

5. Why don't dairy product contests offer classes for fluid milk that comes from a single farm? Many new farmstead or single source dairy plants in Wisconsin and across the nation have come online in the past five years. Each of these farms/plants offers unique milk that reflects the farm where it was produced. For example, we have bottlers specializing in grazed milk, specific breeds of cattle, seasonal calving, different milking systems, and different packaging styles – homogenized, cream-line, glass bottles, plastic and pouches. It may be time to consider this a new category in award competitions.

6. Why aren't local dairy foods offered in Wisconsin state agency buildings? The State of Wisconsin has committed hundreds of thousands of dollars to help promote local foods into local markets, yet local foods are rarely offered in the cafeterias of these buildings. Could this be a case of 'Do as I say, not as I do'?

The above questions will no doubt touch a few nerves. There are probably many more questions that need to be asked. But if these types of questions cause responses of: "Because that's the way we do it" or "It's just not possible" – then it's probably also time to ask the big question: "Can we see the forest? Or just the trees"?

3. October Features Dairy Goat Events Including State Conference

Dairy goat producers, processors, educators, lenders and related resources have the opportunity to participate in three dairy goat events during the month of October.

- **Oct. 4: Making the Most out of Goat Milk, Dr. William Wendorff, Monona Room, Alliant Center, Madison, Wis., 10 a.m. to noon.** Dr. Wendorff, Professor Emeritas, University of Wisconsin-Madison dairy food scientist, will speak on: Getting the Most out of Goat Milk. The event is sponsored by the American Dairy Goat Association, the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.



- **Oct. 11: Dairy Goat Value-Added Field Day, Gronndal Springs Farm, 5846 County J, Mount Horeb, Wis., 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Ethel and James Jenson will host tours of the their licensed farm kitchen, milk house where three separate bulk tanks cool milk from the three species milked on the farm (cows, goats, sheep), barn, farmstead whey management system, and farm store. Ethel Jenson is a licensed cheese maker and has developed her own unique recipes utilizing mixtures of the milk produced on her farm. She makes cheeses at a nearby licensed plant and sells the cheese at her farm store. The field day is free, but participants are urged to register in advance so that sufficient seating and refreshments are available. Attendees can bring their own

lunch to picnic or can buy lunch at the farm store. The day will end with apple cider and tasting of Ethel's cheeses and a walk to the top of her hill to view Tyrol Basin and Blue Mounds. To register for this event, email jeanne.meier@wi.gov or call 608-224-5121.

- **Oct. 31 - Nov. 1, Focus on Goats: Growing Wisconsin's Dairy Goat Industry, Devil's Head Resort, Merrimac, WI, 8:30 a.m. till 4 p.m. each day.** The conference features a broad menu of information and advice for beginning and experienced farmers, information sharing and networking. Highlights of the conference include opening remarks from Wisconsin Agriculture Secretary Rod Nilsestuen; a keynote address by Tony Dutra, CEO of Woolwich Dairy, Inc.; a panel discussion led by experienced producers Gary Libberton, Gene Zimmerman, and Larry Hedrich; a general information session with Dr. Chris Duemler, DVM; a discussion of breed traits related to production by Lisa Shepard, American Dairy Goat Association; as well as break-out sessions focused on management, financial, and general topics. The conference will also include a vendor show and Select Buck and Doe Sale.



Session topics include:

- *Goat Nutrition*, Dr. Gary Lynch
- *Managing Johne's in Goats*, Dr. Elisabeth Patton, DVM
- *NLPA Loan Program and Lender's Panel*, Scharee Atchison, NLPA; and Laurie Makos, FSA
- *Facility Design for Goats*, Dave Kammel
- *Plant and Producer Survey Reports*, Bob Battaglia
- *Focus on Milk Quality*, Pam Ruegg, DVM; and DATCP Food Safety
- *DATCP 2008 WI Goat Farm Case Studies-Profitability Report*, Paul Dietmann
- *Marketing Goat Meat*, Judy Moses
- *Diversification-Other Income-Producing Products From Goats*, Dela Ends
- *Goat Nutrition*, John Shearer

Registration will soon be available online at:

<http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/registration/focusongoats.jsp> Cost is \$25 per person for one day or \$45 per person for both days. A \$10 late fee will be assessed for registrations made after Oct.15. A block of rooms have been reserved for the conference. Please reference the conference when making room reservations to get the state rate. Rooms can accommodate 4-5 people. For more information, contact Jeanne Meier at 608-224-5121 or email jeanne.meier@datcp.state.wi.us

Joint organizers of the Focus on Goats conference are the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Additional sponsors include the Dairy Business Innovation Center, Cargill, Milk Products, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, Coburn Company, and Badgerland Farm Credit. Supporting entities include the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, and the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension.

4. Got Moola? Tap into How-To Resources When Writing Grants

Are you looking for ways to develop or expand your agricultural business? Plan now to attend one of two workshops offered this fall to help farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs develop strategies to access state and federal grants. Attendees will learn how to successfully submit a Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG), an Agricultural Development and Diversification Grant (ADD), and The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program application. These programs provide research and development, planning and working capital funds to farmers, and farmer-based enterprises to develop and implement ventures. Cost is \$10 and includes lunch and materials. Training workshops are scheduled for:



- **Tuesday, Oct. 21:** 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Heckrodt Wetland Reserve Nature Center in Menasha, Wis. To register, contact: Fred Depies at fkdepies@charter.net; 920-418-2718 or Glacierland RC&D at 920-465-3006.
- **Friday, Nov. 7:** - 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Washington Town Hall in Eau Claire, Wis. To register, contact: Pam Herdrich at Pam.Herdrich@wi.usda.gov or 715-834-9672 or River Country RC&D at 715-834-9672 or 800-226-9672.

The Dairy Business Innovation Center is committed to assisting clients with grant proposals. Given the complexity of grants, DBIC recommends any eligible client contact Norm Monsen at 608-224-5135 before Oct. 1 to discuss the timeline and requirements for assistance this year. Specifically, any clients requesting DBIC assistance with a VAPG working capital grant must complete their Business Plan and Feasibility Study by Jan 1, 2009.

5. Industry News

❖ **Wine Spectator Magazine Features 100 Great Cheeses:** It's something that never would have happened five years ago: of the "100 Great Cheeses" of the world named in the September 2008 issue of *Wine Spectator*, six are from Wisconsin. Congratulations to:



- *Ader Käse Reserve* -- Seymour Dairy Crest, Seymour, Wis.
- *Bandaged Cheddar* -- Bleu Mont Dairy, Blue Mounds, Wis.
- *Little Darling* -- Fayette Creamery, Darlington, Wis.
- *Marisa* -- Carr Valley Cheese, LaValle, Wis.
- *Petit Frère* -- Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Waterloo, Wis.
- *Pleasant Ridge Reserve* - Uplands Cheese, Dodgeville, Wis.

The cover article, titled: "Coming of Age," recognized 100 cheeses from 11 countries. Of those represented, 32 were from the United States, 29 from France, and the remaining divided between Great Britain, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Switzerland. All four milk types were represented: cow, goat, sheep and water buffalo.

- ❖ **Eat Local Challenge:** State officials, including First Lady Jessica Doyle and 61st Alice in Dairyland Ashley Huibregtse, are encouraging consumers and communities across Wisconsin to purchase locally grown and produced



products during a 10-day Eat Local Challenge, Sept. 5-14. Wisconsinites are challenged to spend at least 10 percent of their food budget on Wisconsin foods. Sign up for the challenge by visiting <http://www.eatlocalwisconsin.com/> The website allows participants to track local food purchases, network with others around the state, and link to resources for purchasing local foods, recipes and books. Also visit www.wisdairy.com to search for Wisconsin cheese companies, and visit www.SavorWisconsin.com to search for other local agricultural producers.

5. Upcoming Important Dates

For a complete listing of upcoming events, visit: www.dbicusa.org and click on Calendar of Events

- **Sept. 5: Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute Member Meeting. Cashton, Wis.**
The next WSCI meeting will be held at the Badger Crossing Pub & Eatery, 909 Front St., in Cashton at 10 a.m. The featured speaker will be Scot Wall of the Bank of Cashton. Wall led the creation of the community's green energy park and created the company, BEST Energies, Inc., to do energy work for others. Prior to the meeting, a tour of K&K Cheese near Cashton is being offered by Kevin Everhart. For more information about the WSCI or how to join, contact Kathy Brown at 866-740-2180.
- **Sept. 30 - Oct. 4: World Dairy Expo. Madison, Wis.**
This five-day international dairy event showcases the finest in dairy genetics and the newest technologies available to the dairy industry. You'll see North America's top dairy cattle compete for honors in seven breed shows. Also take advantage of free education seminars on dairy management and other industry issues. Learn more at: <http://www.worlddairyexpo.com>
- **Oct. 17-19: Madison Food & Wine Show. Madison, Wis.**
This year's 7th Annual Madison Food & Wine Show is Madison's premier gourmet tasting event, offering the opportunity to sample the best food – including Wisconsin artisan and specialty cheeses, and the finest wines from throughout the area. For more info, visit <http://www.madisonfoodandwineshow.com/>

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.