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1. DBIC Hosts Raw Milk Cheese Discovery Session, Discusses Next Steps

By Jeanne Carpenter

With more than 20 Wisconsin cheese plants making at least one type of raw milk cheese, the state has the opportunity to lead the discussion on labeling terms and production standards for this growing segment of the dairy industry, a group concluded at a discovery session recently hosted by the Dairy Business Innovation Center.

Nearly 40 cheesemakers, marketers, industry experts and government officials were invited to gather in July to discuss the subject of raw milk cheese. Participants learned about the history of raw milk cheese, discussed the current standards for production, learned more about the range of raw milk cheeses produced in Wisconsin, viewed consumer focus group footage discussing the topic, and then discussed as a group the advantages and potential disadvantages to raw milk cheese.



"The goal of the discovery session was to gather people from across the industry, so that we might all gain more insight and expand our knowledge of raw milk cheese production," said DBIC Founder and Chairman Dan Carter. "We did all that and much more."

Discovery session participants agreed that Wisconsin is on the forefront of the subject and is in the position to potentially better define what exactly is a "raw milk cheese." The Raw Milk Cheesemakers Association defines raw milk cheese as: "Cheese produced from milk that, prior to setting the curd, has not been heated above the temperature of the milk (104°F, 40°C) at the time of milking and that the cheese produced from that milk shall be aged for 60 days or longer at a temperature of not less than 35°F (2°C) in accordance with US FDA regulations."

U.S. cheesemakers, however, have a much looser definition of raw milk cheese, allowing any cheese that is not pasteurized to be labeled as "raw milk". The state Department of Agriculture conducted a survey of 20 plants producing raw milk cheese, and asked what temperature each plant heats their milk to and for how long. Answers ranged everywhere from "keep it at the temperature that comes out of the cow and

never heat" to "88 degrees for 50 minutes" to "110 degrees for 60 minutes " to "160 degrees for 16 seconds." The definition of pasteurization is heating the milk to 161 degrees for 15 seconds.

Next steps of the session will include the DBIC forming a working group of raw milk cheesemakers to determine what, if any, standards should be set for labeling cheese as "raw milk cheese" that is made in Wisconsin. For more information, or to read the documents generated from the DBIC Raw Milk Cheese Discovery Session, view <http://www.dbicusa.org/planningoptions/research+papers/default.asp>

2. DBIC Team Column: Opportunities & Challenges of Raw Milk Cheese



This month, we hear from **Neville McNaughton**, DBIC Technical Analysis Consultant. A native of New Zealand, Neville manufactured specialty cheeses for 13 years. He joined the New Zealand Dairy Board and traveled to the U.S., spending nine years as technical support manager for cheese sales. He moved to the enzyme and culture technology industries and today, as part of his own company, CheezSorce LLC, consults with cheese manufacturers around the world on quality cheese production. This month he provides insight into "**The Opportunities and Challenges of Raw Milk Cheese.**"

Capitalizing on an opportunity that is consumer led, such as the growing consumer demand for raw milk cheese, should be a dream come true. However, as is so often the case, there is a twist with delivering a product the public demands. Raw milk cheese has always been about customer demand – which ironically, was fairly low for many years, due to governmental influence in moving away from raw milk to pasteurized milk in the name of public health.

Pasteurized cheese depends on the intervention of technology in the production of milk at farms by a subsequent processor in order to produce a pasteurized milk product. The availability of this "clean-up" step by the processor has unfortunately subsequently allowed the decline in on-farm knowledge of clean milk production --the type of milk that should be able to be drunk without the need for pasteurization. It has also created a communication divide between farmer and processor.

Here's where the twist comes in. The belief that pasteurization of milk takes care of pathogen issues is almost 100 percent true, but while the farmer was not paying attention to good harvesting practices, the dairy industry cultivated a monster, one that can colonize an entire milking parlor. (Unsanitary milk parlors across the USA cause significant commercial loss every day). A few reasons that we find ourselves in this place today include:

- Poor quality installations are frequently under-engineered and often unsanitary – many are not even able to be washed by a farm C.I.P. (Clean in Place) system.
- Some dairy farmers do not know how their milking parlors work, (a transition from professional dairy men to executive dairy men).
- Chemical companies and dairy service companies do not want change, as they already make money selling chemicals.

As a resurgence of educated customers demand their milk be unadulterated, and therefore, demand the same for their cheese, a process of re-education and re-calibration of the requirements for quality raw milk are an important pre-requisite for raw milk cheese production. The communication divide between farmer and processor must be restored if a successful raw milk cheese industry is to be developed.

3. DBIC Announces Staff Changes to Meet Growing Demand for Services

For more than 100 years, the words, “America’s Dairyland” have been Wisconsin’s claim to fame. It is a title that Wisconsin takes seriously, and perhaps more importantly, does not take for granted. In the past five years, the Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC), along with its partners through the Value Added Dairy Initiative, has worked hard to assist dairy producers and processors to innovate and grow the state’s \$26.5 billion yearly dairy industry.



Since its start in 2004, the DBIC has assisted more than 170 clients, resulting in 65 new specialty dairy products launched to market. In addition, during that same period, 43 new processing plants have opened and 70 more have expanded operations. Specialty cheese production has increased 20 percent in Wisconsin since 2004 and today, 88 of the state’s 127 cheese plants craft at least one type of specialty cheese, up from 77 plants just three years ago.

These remarkable changes in America’s Dairyland reflect the fortitude of the state’s dairy industry. While the DBIC has proven itself to be a successful catalyst in helping Wisconsin’s dairy industry grow and prosper, we know past accomplishments do not guarantee future success. We are continually reassessing our services and responding to new and different challenges from our clients. Therefore, the DBIC is proud to announce the following changes in our structure:

DBIC Management News

- **Norm Monsen**, formerly the DBIC’s Co-Client Director, has been named DBIC Manager. He will lead the day-to-day operations of the organization, and with the visioning partnership of DBIC Founder and Chairman Dan Carter, will lead the DBIC into the next phase of services. In addition to farming near Stoughton, Wis., Norm coordinates the Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Network at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.
- **Jim Cisler**, formerly the DBIC’s Co-Client Director, will continue to assist the DBIC in developing dairy processor partnerships as well as remaining manager for a number of his current clients. His focus for the next year, however, will be leading a team at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture to help Wisconsin dairy producers and develop partnerships to boost milk prices.
- **Kathy Brown and Jeanne Carpenter** will continue to serve on the DBIC Executive Committee, assisting with management decisions and overall organizational focus. Kathy will continue her role as DBIC Administrator and Jeanne will continue her role as the DBIC Communications Director.

DBIC Team Member Additions

- **Jean Andreasen, Client Manager**
A native of the Twin Cities area, Jean graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minn. She most recently served as the general manager of PastureLand, a small grass-based dairy cooperative in southeast Minnesota, and worked with the co-op’s member-owners to develop all aspects of their business including marketing, sales, distribution, milk pick-up and production schedules, R&D, and contract negotiations. Jean has also served as the Midwest Marketing Coordinator for Food Alliance, and as Director of Member Services and Outreach for Mississippi Market Natural Foods Cooperative in Saint Paul, Minn.

- **Paul Dietmann, Value-Added Agriculture Specialist**

As the Director for the Wisconsin Farm Center at the Department of Agriculture, Paul leads a core team in providing services to Wisconsin farmers and agribusinesses to promote the vitality of the state's agricultural economy and rural communities. Prior to joining DATCP, Paul served as the Sauk County Agricultural Agent for the University of Wisconsin Extension program. He earned his master's degree in Continuing and Vocational Education from UW-Madison, and an undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He offers clients expertise in value-added production and marketing systems and farm financial management.

- **Lowell Thronson, Business Specialist**

Raised on a dairy farm in Blue Mounds, Wis., Lowell earned his accounting degree and MBA at UW-Madison. He offers 18 years of professional experience in management, financial planning and analysis, business planning and development. Lowell has a unique experience set with both large corporate and small businesses and has held finance positions with the Kohler Company, Kerry Food Ingredients and most recently, Covance. In addition to corporate experience, Lowell managed and later owned his family's restaurant, Betsy's Kitchen, in Barneveld, Wis. He will assist clients in the areas of financial planning and analysis, evaluating capital investments and business valuation, business planning and general management.

4. Industry News

- ❖ **New Director at the Babcock Institute:**
Karen Nielsen has been named Director of The Babcock Institute for



Babcock Institute
for International Dairy Research and Development

International Dairy Research and Development. She has served as the Institute's Associate Director since 2004. The Babcock Institute is the leader in international dairy research, development, and education. The Institute's mission is to link the dairy industry in Wisconsin and the U.S. with the dairy industries around the world to improve the quality of life and foster market development. "Karen's nearly 20 years of experience in the international dairy industry will assure the Institute's growth in education and research while fostering important international relationships for the United States' in emerging world dairy markets," says CALS Dean Molly Jahn. For more info on the Babcock Institute's programs, visit <http://babcock.cals.wisc.edu/>.

- ❖ **Wisconsin Ag Industry Reaches \$59 Billion:** A recent study by the University of Wisconsin-Extension shows the economic impact of Wisconsin agriculture increased almost 15 percent from 2004 – 2007, from \$51.5 billion to \$59.16 billion. The report also pegs the dairy industry's impact at \$26.5 billion, an increase of almost \$6 billion from UW-Extension's last analysis in 2004. The report also noted that one in 10 employees in the state are employed in agriculture industries and more than \$20 billion, or 9 percent, of the total income of the state is generated by jobs agriculture creates.

5. Upcoming Important Dates

- **Sept. 11: Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute Member Meeting. Monroe, Wis.**
Members will gather at Turner Hall Ratskellar in Monroe to hear featured speaker Jon Metzger talk about his recent trip to Europe to study cheesemaking. Tours before and after the meeting are also available. For more info, visit: <http://www.wisspecialcheese.org/>
- **Sept. 19: On Farm Dairy Goat Field Day. Juneau, Wis.**
Keith, Jane and Tylor Schwartz will host an on-farm dairy goat field day on Saturday, Sept. 19 at their farm at N6474 North Grove Rd., Juneau, Wis. From 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., listen to speakers on sanitation for better milk quality, forage options, making balage better, and take a farm tour. To register, contact Jeanne Meier at 608-224-5121 or email Jeanne.meier@wi.gov
- **Sept. 29 – Oct. 3: 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. 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. Register online after Sept. 15 and watch for updates at: <http://www.wdga.org/>
- **Nov. 6 – 7: First Annual Wisconsin Original Cheese Festival. Madison, Wis.**
Shake hands and talk shop with the current generation of Wisconsin rock star cheesemakers, sample hundreds of original cheeses, take a tour to a cheese factory, choose from a stunning line-up of six tasting seminars, or join a cheesemaker for a private dinner for 12 at one of six participating Madison Original restaurants. To learn more or to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.wicheesefest.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.

