
CHEESE PARINGS

Volume 1, Issue 1 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE CHEESE GUILD September 2003

MAINE



CHEESE GUILD

Officers:

Caitlin Hunter, President
Appleton Creamery, Appleton

Cathe Morrill, Vice President
State of Maine Cheese Co., Rockport

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1797 Farm, Auburn

Anne Bossi, Secretary
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Perry Ells, Ellsfarm, Union

Jennifer Betancourt, Smiling Hill
Farm, Westbrook (Newsletter Editor)

Eric Healy, cheesemaker-at-large,
Belfast

From the President's Desk:

It's an exciting time to be a cheesemaker in Maine. This is what I tell people who ask me how business is. Each year at the farmers' markets where I sell my cheese, I meet more and more people who are interested in finding quality locally-produced foods including unique, artisanal cheeses. I can't make enough cheese to fill the demand, and farmers' markets across the state are looking to add cheesemakers to their anchor vendors. Cheesemongers are actively searching out Maine cheeses. The opportunities are endless!

Part of the Maine Cheese Guild's mission is to encourage potential cheesemakers to develop their craft and bring it to market. We are a growing community of cheesemakers, who have come together to encourage and support each other, network, discover and share resources, provide learning opportunities, and most of all, to bring Maine cheese into the spotlight.

Please join us as we work together to strengthen Maine's agricultural heritage through artisanal cheeses.

Caitlin Hunter, President

The Guild is Up and Running

For several years a small collective of Maine cheesemakers met off and on with the intention of forming a Guild. This winter that ambition became a reality and the Maine Cheese Guild was born. The Guild is comprised of Maine cheesemakers and milk producers as well as others who have an interest in promoting Maine-made artisanal cheeses.

The mission of the Maine Cheese Guild is to support and encourage the Maine cheesemaking community. We will do this through the development of a collective voice to: promote Maine cheese and cheesemakers; educate cheesemakers and consumers; coordinate resources; and share the joy and art of regional cheeses.

So far, we're off to a great start. This spring we drafted our constitution and by-laws and will be applying for nonprofit status.

We're thrilled to be putting forth our first newsletter and are still open to suggestions for the newsletter title. Please send title suggestions to editor@mainecheeseguild.org.

Guild Gets Grant Money

In June the Maine Cheese Guild was named a recipient of a grant from the Maine Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Development Grant Program. This Market Development Grant will be used to publish a guild newsletter to inform people about the guild, to create a guild website, develop a logo and help bring instructors to host advanced cheesemaking seminars. With over 60 years of cheesemaking experience among us already, we will be holding workshops for folks interested in getting started in cheesemaking. A huge thank you to the Maine State Department of Agriculture. We are thrilled to have your support for these projects.

Maine Cheese Festival

Mark your calendars! On October 12th, 2003 from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm the Maine Cheese Guild and MOFGA are co-hosting the 2nd annual Maine Food Festival. The focus this year is Maine Cheese and the event will take place in Unity at MOFGA's Common Ground Education Center. The Guild will have a table with information on upcoming classes and membership, and individual cheesemakers and farms will have tables as well. There will be plenty of cheese sampling and talks about the craft of cheesemaking, and how best to enjoy Maine cheeses. You will even have the opportunity to observe cheese being made and see dairy animals on display. So come, watch us milk goats and make a fresh queso blanco! Try your hand at butter-making and taste the difference between cow's milk, goat's milk and sheep's milk. Sample a plethora of Maine cheeses and get excited about the breadth of artisanal cheeses available locally! There are still tables left for individuals who would like to reserve a table to sell cheese. We are also still looking for cheese donations for the cheese tasting table (can be amateur/homemade). For further info please contact MOFGA at mofga@mofga.org or (207)568-4142 or contact The Maine Cheese Guild at info@mainecheeseguild.org.

Beginner Cheesemaking Workshop

January location TBA. Further info will be posted on www.mainecheeseguild.org so please stay tuned.

Advanced Cheesemaking Workshop in November – with Peter Dixon

This three day seminar will take place November 4th-6th. Peter Dixon of Westminster Dairy in Westminster, Vermont will teach this 3-day workshop at the State of Maine Cheese Company in Rockport. Westminster Dairy specializes in fresh and aged certified organic Italian cheeses (ricotta, mozzarella, provolone, asiago and more!). Peter has over 20 years experience making cheese and is a renowned instructor. He has worked as a cheese consultant and developed and implemented many quality control programs for cheesemakers. Day 1 of this workshop will cover Italian cheese (pasta filata and grana). Day 2 will explore blue veined cheeses. The workshop will conclude on Day 3 with instruction in washed rind cheeses. The cost of the course for members is \$100 (\$200 for nonmembers). Registration will be taken on a first come, first serve basis. Register early to secure your seat in this class! Can't make it all three days? Have a passion solely for blue veined cheeses? You can register for just one or two days of the workshop for \$40 per day for members (\$75/day for nonmembers). To register please fill out the form below, clip and send it with your payment to: The Maine Cheese Guild

c/o State of Maine Cheese Co.
461 Commercial St.,
Rockport, ME 04856

If you have questions please email
info@mainecheeseguild.org.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____ Ph: _____
Email: _____

Please indicate below which day/s you would like to register for :

- All three days of this workshop
- Day 1 – Italian cheeses
- Day 2 – Blue veined cheeses
- Day 3 – Washed rind cheeses

In other News...

Guildmember Claire Mikolayunas of Belle Dairy received a SARE Farmer/Grower Grant to create a portable sheep dairy. This pasture based system utilizes a portable milking parlor right in the field (see photos below). Congratulations to Claire!



Robert Bowen of Sunset Acres also received a SARE Farmer/Grower Grant. His project will focus on using a new method of feeding the excess kids in his goat herd to simulate the feeding schedule found in dam-raised kids to improve his low-value kids to meet market demand. Congratulations to Bob!

At the recent American Cheese Society competition, Appleton Creamery took a first place for their Chevre in Olive Oil with Basil, Pine Nuts and Garlic, in the marinated goat cheese division. 616 cheeses were entered in more than 60 categories this year.

Down East Magazine recently featured several of the Maine Cheese Guild's members in an article on Maine cheeses...we've also received good press from the Casco Bay Weekly in Portland (May 29, 2003 pg. 13).

Appleton Creamery will be featured in an upcoming segment of the new Maine PBS series "What's For Suppah?" sometime this fall, with host Tim Sample.

The next edition of Slow Food's journal "The Snail" will contain an article on 1797 Farm and their "Mainecheego" aged sheep milk cheese.

Smiling Hill Farm added cheese to their list of farm-made products this year. Their expanding line of handcrafted cheeses includes fresh cheddar curd, camembert, crème fraiche and more!

This summer State of Maine Cheese Co. celebrated their 20th Anniversary. There was music and demonstrations and of course lot's of cheese!

Website

Our website is currently under construction, but check us out when you get a chance (www.mainecheeseguild.org). The site will list upcoming guild events, provide links to individual cheesemakers and milk producers, as well as other resources for cheesemakers (sources of used equipment, culture, moulds etc.). The website can promote your cheesemaking or dairy farm business! If you would like to be listed on the Guild's website, please contact info@mainecheeseguild.org. The site will also list shops that proudly carry fine Maine cheeses, and provide recipes and suggested wine pairings for Maine cheeses.

Guild Survey

The results of the 2003 Maine Cheese Survey are in! The Survey will be updated annually. Each year, as a requirement for Guild membership, a completed Survey form will be enclosed with payment. The annual Survey is vital for the following reasons: provides statistical information needed when seeking financial support, informs fellow cheesemakers about the Maine cheesemaking community, and provides information on how the Guild can better meet the needs of guild members. If you have not completed a Survey yet, please fill out the blank form in this newsletter. The answers from farms and cheesemakers will be kept anonymous. The tallied results of the Survey as a whole are published on the web, and will be used as the Guild moves forward to apply for additional grant funding.

Classifieds

Two cheese shops interested in carrying Maine cheeses:

Provisions, Int
Dondi Ahern
42 North Main St
White River Junction, VT 05001
802-291-6100
dondi@provisionsintl.com

Greg Filias
Food & Co.
49 Nubble Road
York ME 03939
207-363-0900

Linda Leadstone of the Franklin County Soil & Water is looking for someone to lead a cheesemaking demonstration at the Farmington Fair on Sept. 15, from 9:30 to 1:30 for Grades K-4.

Wanted: Experienced cheesemaker. On-farm processing plant in Maryland looking to expand into cheese. Interested individuals please contact Abby or Tony at (301)371-8565. www.southmountaincreamery.com

2003 Survey Results

75 people contacted, 30 responded. Of the 30, 13 are licensed cheesemaking facilities in Maine. The remaining people surveyed are not cheesemakers, but are dairy farmers, owners of farm animals or those interested in the Guild and making cheese.

Data below is for the 13 licensed facilities

Q.1. Number of cheesemakers in Maine

13 participated in the Survey

Eight (8) make goat's milk cheeses.

Four (4) make cheeses from cow's milk.

One (1) makes a sheep milk cheese.

No cheesemaker reported making a blended cheese from different animals'/species' milk.

Q.2. Kinds of dairy products sold:

All 13 cheesemakers responded

Most common is Fresh cheese.

85% of Maine cheesemakers make a Fresh cheese.

Two cheesemakers make a Washed Rind cheese where a brine is used to wash, rub or immerse the cheese, like feta.

Eight, or 62% make a Cooked, Pressed cheese.

Six make a Bloomy Rind cheese such as a camembert

Six make a Natural Rind cheese where no molds or washing are used to create exterior of cheese.

Only two cheesemakers make an Uncooked (non-pasteurized), pressed cheese

No cheesemaker in Maine is making Blue veined cheeses

Other dairy products being sold by cheesemakers: raw milk, pasteurized bottled milk, fudge

Q.3. Year cheesemaking Facility was 1st licensed:

First farmstead cheesemaking facility in Maine was 1979

Most recent was 2002

Chronology: 1979 (2 licensed), then one in 1981, 1983, 1984, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002
23 years of cheesemaking and a combined total of 168 years experience!

Q.4. Number of Organic facilities: 4. Number Certified Organic: 2

Q.5. Number of cheesemakers making cheese from own animals or farmstead cheesemakers: 11

Q.6. Number of cheesemakers buying milk from offsite source: 2

Q.7. Number of lbs milk processed in 2002:

Total from all who answered or 11 cheesemakers (2 did not answer): approximately 1,585,630 lbs or roughly 198,204 gallons of milk used in cheesemaking

Range of milk processed at cheesemaking facilities in Maine annually: 1350 lbs up to 1,248,000

Seven (7) goat cheese facilities reported processing a total of 335,630 lbs of milk.

Two (2) cow cheese facilities reported processing a total of 1,998,000 lbs of milk.

One (1) sheep cheese facility reported processing a total of 2,000 lbs of milk.

Q.8. Production of Cheese in Maine in 2002

123,890 lbs of cheese were made at 11 of the 13 facilities (2 did not report)

60% or 75,000 lbs were made at one facility

Q.9. How many months out of the year is cheese being made? 10 months on average.

Q.10. Where are cheeses being sold? Most common outlets are wholesale, farmer's markets, and at the farm/facility/store. Four cheesemakers use fairs or special events to sell cheese. Only three (3) reported making sales on their websites.

Other Information:

Eleven (11) farms in Maine are licensed Farmstead cheesemaking operations. These farms make cheese on the farm from the milk of their farm animals. Cheese is also being made at two licensed commercial, non-farm facilities.

Breeds of animals being milked by 11 Maine licensed farmstead cheesemaking operations:

Goats: Alpine, Sanaan, Nubian, Toggenburg

Cows: Holstein, Jersey

Sheep: Friesian crosses

Average number of animals in herd or flock:

40 milkers. Range - low of 9, high of 125 milkers

Type of farm management:

Seven of the 11 farms are pasture-based

Four of the farms are confinement operations

Become a Member

The Guild welcomes any individual who is a friend of the Maine cheese trade including all farmstead and artisanal cheesemakers, small dairy producers, sellers, suppliers, chefs, consumers and researchers with an interest in cheesemaking, dairying and cultured milk products.

Membership Levels

Principal Members: Any individual, organization or other entity that is producing cheese or milk products in Maine, milking dairy animals in Maine, or involved with getting Maine made cheese, milk, or milk products to the consumer.

Associate Members: Any other individual, organization or other entity with an active interest in the Maine cheesemaking, dairy or agricultural communities.

Membership dues have been set for \$25 for our startup year. This includes newsletters, reduced workshop fees, Guild product stickers, listing and links on the website, inclusion in promotional materials about Maine cheeses (if a cheese producer).

To become a member please make check payable to: The Maine Cheese Guild and mail to address on back of newsletter (**with your completed survey**).

2003 Survey

I. Information about you

Your Name _____

Farm/Business Name _____

Mailing Address _____

County _____

Phone number _____

Email address _____

Website address _____

II. Information about your cheese making facility

E. Are you a cheese maker _____

Do you make other dairy products? _____

If you answered "No" to both questions, skip to Question 11, Section III

2. What kinds of dairy products do you sell: (please check all that apply)

___ Fresh cheese ___ Soft-ripened, bloomy rind

___ Washed-rind ___ Natural rind

___ Cooked, pressed ___ Uncooked, pressed

___ Blue-veined ___ Other _____

3. Is your facility state licensed? _____

What year was it first licensed? _____

4. Is your facility/product organic? _____

Is your facility/product certified organic? _____

5. Do you make cheese/dairy products with milk from your own animals? _____

If "Yes," you may provide the details later, in section III.

6. Do you buy milk _____

If yes, is it.....

Fresh ___ cow ___ goat ___ sheep ___

Frozen ___ cow ___ goat ___ sheep ___

If you are buying milk let us know, in general, your procedure for procuring the milk.

7. How many gallons and/or pounds of milk did you process in 2002? _____ Gallons _____ Lbs.

Estimate for 2003? _____ Gallons _____ Lbs.

8. What was your total production of cheese in 2002?

_____ Lbs. Estimate for 2003? _____ Lbs.

9. How many months out of the year do you make cheese? _____

What month does your cheese making begin? _____ and end _____.

10. Where do you sell your cheese? (please check all that apply)

___ Farmer's markets ___ Wholesale

___ At my Facility/on the farm ___ Website

___ Fairs/special events ___ Other _____

III. Information about your Farm for 2003

11. You are a breeder of dairy

cows ___ goats ___ sheep ___

12. Are your animals organic? _____ certified? _____

13. Breed(s) of animals _____

14. Do you milk your own animals? _____

if "No", skip to Question 21, section IV

15. Is your milking facility state licensed? _____

What year were you 1st licensed? _____

16. Is your milk organic? _____ certified? _____

17. How many animals did you milk in 2002?

(please indicate # of head) _____

What is your estimate for 2003? _____

18. How much (circle one) cow goat sheep milk do you produce?

A. Total milk production per day (at peak)

_____ gallons _____ lbs.

B. Average annual production per animal

_____ gallons _____ lbs.

C. Total annual production

_____ gallons _____ lbs.

D. How long do you milk your

animals? _____ days per year.

E. What month does your milking begin?

_____ and end _____.

*If you produce milk from more than one species, please give us your additional production information on a separate sheet of paper.

19. If you are not making cheese with the milk from your animals are you selling your milk? _____

If "No," what is your outlet? _____

20. Is your farm a: (circle one)

Pasture based system - (during the growing season of approximately 6 months in Maine, animals consume the majority of their feed by grazing, and/or are in the field everyday)

Confinement system - (Animals are confined to a barnyard/exercise area all year, and during the growing season, they do not consume the majority of their feed by grazing)

IV. Maine Cheese Guild

21. What can the Maine Cheese Guild do for you?

22. How would you like to be involved with the Maine Cheese Guild?

Please return survey to The Maine Cheese Guild (address

