

Vermont Cheese Council Executive Committee meeting – June 4, 2008

Present: Laini Fondiller, Christopher from Provisions, Alison Hooper, Linda Miller, Diane Bothfield, Clay Whitney, Ellen Ogden, Scott Buckingham

Laini announced that the Vermont Cheese Council was awarded \$30,000 from a donor “angel” which will be distributed through the ARC program and the Vermont Farm Bureau and will require a 1099 to be filed. The funder requires a clear job description (see attached draft).

Discussed sending list of trade, retail, media events criteria to full membership which will be used to determine VCC participation at an event. We discussed the following criteria:

- Pairings – needs to support cost of cheese for the cheese maker
- Financial remuneration for VCC to participate
- If audience is paying for event, then VCC to be reimbursed for mileage
- Ability for audience to buy product
- Audience – a) Educational/tourism, b) Cheese buyer for restaurant/store, c) Consumer high-end buyers
- Number of days required to participate must be considered for staffing purposes
- Must represent Council member cheeses
- Supporting a cause (e.g. Stowe supports local hospital)
- If it is a trade event (stores/grocers, chefs, etc.), it will take precedence over a consumer event. (The difference is that the VCC will need to pay to participate in this type of event. Perhaps our non-profit status will help reduce entrance fees.)

Upcoming events for 2008:

- Strolling of the Heifers
- Stowe Wine and Food
- Vermont Brewers Festival
- Plymouth Cheese Festival
- Vermont Harvest hosted by Vermont Life

Discussed hosting events such as the one held last year at Provisions in the Autumn, split by Northern and Southern areas, and charging \$50-75 per event.

Discussed obtaining lists of other NE Cheese Guilds etc. for Cheese Maker Festival.

Discussed setting up an email List Serve for just cheese makers. Ellen has the list. ACTION: Ellen, Linda and Diane will work on getting this set up.

Newsletter update: Addresses have been updated and include members of the Vermont Farm Network, Vermont Specialty Grocers Association, American Cheese Society, media and University. From the survey, it appears that many members would like to receive the newsletter via email.

Discussed hosting a panel discussion about VCC history, mission, vision, etc. ACTION: Diane will compile a list of new members for past year inviting them to this event.

Discussed Department of Agriculture Risk Management program. To keep integrity pure, must be a Vermont-licensed cheese maker to participate. This program may help to track/identify quality controls, HACCP compliance plan, on-farm technical assistance. Cut rate on VIAC courses. Voluntary to participate. VCC “angel” is willing to fund this program. Discussed Vermont Seal of Quality having a higher standard. More on this in future meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Simon Miller