

# Vermont Cheese Council

Fall 2009 • Vol. 9, Issue 2

## Seasons of Change

This is a season of change among the Vermont cheesemaking community. With the falling of the leaves and arrival of cooler nights that portend the coming of the snows, most cheesemakers experience a change in production. Moving from summer grasses to the more common grains and hays of the fall and winter, produces a different array of cheeses for those who produce year-round. Some stop milking i.e. “dry off” their herd and ready for a period of relative rest from production and may concentrate more on aging the cheeses made during the spring and summer. Still others are looking to Fall as the beginning of their milking and production season. (see page 3). Many of our members are experiencing the exhilaration of public recognition with awards from The American Cheese Society and others. Such recognition can change the fortunes of a new or relatively small producer (see page 4). Change too has come for some of the older, more well-established brands in the state, as you’ll learn on page 14. Many of our members participated in a day-long Cheesemakers Festival in August that drew 1,000 participants. We also have two brand new members since the spring. All this is to say that the Vermont cheesemaking business is booming. This holiday season, take time to savor some of the extraordinary cheeses coming out of Vermont; see our pairing guide on page 7 for some suggestions on how to make the most of these. Check out our list of retailers on page 11 and websites on our back cover to learn where you can find Vermont’s finest cheeses.

*At right, an abundance of Vermont cheese at the Cheesemaker’s Festival.*



Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery/Adeline Druart



Katherine Sims/Green Mountain Farm to School

## Letter from the President

**W**elcome to the 2009 fall issue. As usual it has been a busy year for the cheesemakers and for the Vermont Cheese Council. The most exciting news came to us just a few weeks ago, when we learned that we were to be a recipient of a large grant from the USDA/RBEG. This grant will give the council a much needed boost – especially for addressing our staffing needs. The grant allows a staff person to focus on membership development, creating events, technical assistance, marketing development, one on one assistance for business planning and much more. A great deal of thanks goes to Louise Calderwood, Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Department of Agriculture, who wrote the grant for the council. These are very competitive grants, so we are pleased and grateful for the support.

Also, I wish to say thank you, on behalf of the council, for the work that was done on putting together the first annual Vermont Cheesemakers' Festival. It was a great success! We look forward to working with this group of folks for future events.

Please visit our website, [www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com), to catch the latest news and learn more about all our great cheesemakers that we have here in Vermont.

— *Laini Fondiller, President*  
**Lazy Lady Farm**

## New Members

### Sage Farm Goat Dairy, Stowe

**S**age Farm Goat Dairy was established in 2008 by sisters Molly and Katie Pindell with the help of their partners, David Wilkens and Bob Sabolefski. The farm is located in Stowe and is currently open to the public by appointment

only. At Sage Farm, they make cheese seasonally (April-December) from the milk of their small herd of registered Alpine goats; 2009 was their first season selling cheese. They produce a fresh chevre blended with herbs and are currently experimenting with a few varieties of aged and semi-aged cheeses that they

hope will be available for sale in the coming months. Check our website: [www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com) for updates.

### Mt. Mansfield Creamery, Morrisville

**M**t. Mansfield Creamery makes raw milk farmstead cheeses from the milk of some of their Brown Swiss and Holstein cows. Most of the milk from the herd is still being sold as fluid milk though plans are to transition milk from 10 cows to the making of cheese as work progresses. Currently, they make 36 pounds of cheese per batch, 8 – 12 times per month. They have built a cheese aging facility in an old creamery building below their cheese making room. Check our website: [www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com) for updates.



*Sage Goat Farm cheesemaker Molly Pindell – off and running*



# Orb Weaver

## Winter Cheese Producers

**W**hen life-partners Marjorie Susman and Marian Pollack answered an ad more than 25 years ago for a herds person in Vermont, they had little idea where that decision would lead them. Since 1981, they have called the 100-acre Orb Weaver Farm, not far off Route 7 in the Lake Champlain Region, home. Here, the seasons dictate the pace and activities of daily living, year in and year out. Unlike most cheesemakers who turn to cheese production as the spring unfolds, Marjorie and Marian give their herd of seven Jersey cows the summer off so they can focus on their three-acre organic vegetable garden — another of their passions. When the garden is at last put to bed in the fall, all their attention turns to making cheese.

The cows feast on a diet of late fall grasses and the sweetest smelling winter hay and are lavished with all the tender loving care that two women can bestow. The result is a demonstrably high quality of milk — about 350 pounds of it a day — that in turn produces an award-winning, farmhouse cheese. The cheese, Orb Weaver Farmhouse Cheese, is a mild and creamy Colby-style cheese. The pair developed a waxed cheese version first, with the intention of making a “versatile, kid friendly, mac & cheese, grilled-cheese kind of cheese.” It’s raw milk, and aged about eight months and sold in two- and six-pound wheels. In 1998, they started cave aging some of the same recipe. Now, cave aged in their on-premises cave for about a year, the aged cheese is available in 2- and 10-pound wheels. They only cave

age about 1,000 pounds/year giving it meticulous attention – turning and brushing the wheels twice a week. All told, the two produce 7,000 pounds of cheese from November to May — a relatively small amount by today’s standards but enough to support the lifestyle that they have worked so hard to achieve and sustain. Their commitment remains to keep most of their cheese local, and affordable.

It is possible to visit

the Orb Weaver Farm by calling ahead. Their cheese can be found at fine restaurants around the state and may be purchased on the farm or at stores and co-ops throughout Vermont. Mail order is also an option. You can reach Orb Weaver’s at (802) 877-3755 or by email: orbweavr@together.net.

To learn more about their labors and lifestyle, you can also visit their web site <http://orbweaverfarm.com> or read Marjorie’s blog: <http://orbweaverfarm.blogspot.com/>



Susan Spaulding

*Marjorie Sussman (left) and Marian Pollack flank “Wizard”, their friendly Jersey who seems to know that Fall means it’s time to get back to work.*



## Awards & Accolades

# The American Cheese Society Weighs In Big

This year's American Cheese Society Annual Conference and Awards Competition was held in Austin, Texas. The ACS conference—a gathering of cheese makers, enthusiasts, marketers, distributors, food writers and retailers from the U.S., Canada and Europe—celebrates the widespread enthusiasm for American specialty cheese.

The competition had a record total 1,327 entries from 197 companies. Out of 314 ribbons awarded, the state of Vermont captured 32 ribbons including 13 First Place wins, 11 Second Place wins, six Third Place wins and a number of awards that represent collaborations.

Among the happiest of Vermont winners was the team from Consider Bardwell Farm, in West Pawlett who walked away with a 3rd Prize in the Best of Show category for their cheese, Rupert. Angela Miller, co-owner of Consider Bardwell Farm said, "We were all stunned and thrilled when we heard the news about our big Rupert. We feel like *The Little Engine that Could*. And Peter Dixon, our rock-star cheesemaker, got a hats-off and a hug from all of us. We have a great cheesemaking, marketing, and farming team. And, let's not forget that the milk came from Jersey Girls Dairy, Lisa Kaiman's Chester, Vermont farm."



### Vermont's 2009 ACS Winners:

#### Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Inc., Cabot, Waterbury, & Quechee

- Cabot Monterey Jack Cheese: 3rd Place Tie – American Originals: Monterey Jack – Cow's Milk
- Cabot Tuscan Cheddar: 2nd Place, Cheddars with Sweet Flavorings, Fruits, Seasonings, Herbs, Spices, Alcohol/Spirits
- Cabot 3 Year old Vermont Cheddar: 2nd Place, Mature Cheddars (aged between 25 and 48 months)
- Cabot 75% Reduced Fat Cheddar – 3rd Place – Fat Free and Low Fat Cheeses (with 3 grams or less total fat per serving)
- Cabot Jalapeno 50% Reduced Fat Cheddar – 1st Place – Flavor Added: Spices, Herbs, Seasonings, Fruits – All Milks
- Cabot Crème Fraiche – 1st Place – Cultured Milk Products, Limited to Crème Fraiche Made from Cow's Milk
- Cabot Whey Cream Butter – 2nd Place – Whey Butter, Salted Butter, Sweet Butter, Cultured Butter, etc.

#### Cellars at Jasper Hill, Greensboro

- Jasper Hill Constant Bliss – 2nd Place – Soft Ripened Cheese – White surface mold ripened cheeses
- Cellars and Jasper Hill Crawford Family Farm Ayr – 3rd Place Tie – American Originals
- Cellars at Jasper Hill Cabot Clothbound – 2nd Place – Cheddars Wrapped in Cloth, Linen (aged up to 12 months)

#### Consider Bardwell Farm, West Pawlett

- Rupert – 1st Place in Washed Rind Cheeses aged more than 90 days with less than 42% moisture, all milks. It also took 3rd Best In Show.
- Pawlett – 1st Place – American Made, International Style



Consider Bardwell Farm's Rupert—overall 3rd Place, Best of Show.



**Franklin Foods, Enosberg**

- Hahn's Cultured Cream Cheese – 1st Place – Cheeses Made from Cow's Milk
- Hahn's Neufchâtel– 2nd Place – Cheeses Made from Cow's Milk
- Hahn's Yogurt & Cream Cheese Strawberry – 2nd Place – Flavored Low Fat/Low Salt Cheese

**Grafton Village Cheese Company, Grafton and Brattleboro**

- Grafton Duet – 1st Place – Flavored Cheddars

**Maplebrook Farm, Bennington**

- Maplebrook Farm Smoked Mozzarella – 2nd Place – Smoked Italian Styles



Maplebrook Farm Smoked Mozzarella

**Neighborly Farms, Randolph**

- Organic Jalapeno Jack – 2nd Place – American Originals – Monterey Jack with Flavors – Cow's Milk
- Organic Colby – 1st Place – American Originals – Colby Made From Cow's Milk



**Shelburne Farms, Shelburne**

- Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar 1 year (Sharp) – 1st Place – Cheddar from Cow's Milk (less than 1 year)
- Shelburne Farms Farmhouse Cheddar 2 year (Extra Sharp) – 3rd Place – Mature Cheddars
- Shelburne Farms Smoked Farmhouse Cheese – 1st Place – Smoked Cheddars
- Shelburne Farms Cheddar Cheese Spread – 1st Place – Cheese Spreads Open Category Made from Cow's Milk – Maximum Moisture 44%

**Spring Brook Farm, Reading**

- Spring Brook Farm Tarentaise – 1st Place – Farmstead Cheese Open Category Cow's Milk Cheeses (aged 60 days or more)

**Taylor Farm Cheese, Londonderry**

- Maple Smoked Gouda – 3rd Place – Smoked Cheeses – Open Category Made from Cow's Milk

**Thistle Hill Farm, North Pomfret**

- Thistle Hill Farm Tarentaise – 2nd Place – Farmstead Cheese Open Category Cow's Milk Cheeses (aged 60 days or more)

**Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery, Websterville**

- Vermont Creamy Goat Cheese Classic – 3rd Place – Fresh Goat's Milk Cheese
- Vermont Fromage Blanc – 2nd Place – Cultured Milk Products limited to Fromage Blanc and Quark made from cow's milk
- Vermont Cultured Butter – Lightly Salted – 1st Place – Salted Butter Made from Cow's Milk with or without cultures
- Vermont Cultured Butter – Unsalted – 2nd Place – Unsalted Butter Made from Cow's Milk with or without cultures



Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery Cultured Butter

**West River Creamery, Londonderry**

- Cambridge Classic Reserve – 1st Place – Cheddars Wrapped in Cloth, Linen (aged up to 12 months)

**And in Other Races:**

Vermonters continue to perform with distinction in other races as well, including:

**The 2009 World Cheese Awards:**

**Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Cabot, Waterbury & Quechee**

- Silver – Vintage Choice Cheddar – Vintage creamery Cheddar made before 5/31/08
- Bronze – Old School (5 Yr) Vintage creamery Cheddar made before 5/31/08

**Cellars at Jasper Hill, Greensboro**

- Silver – Cabot Clothbound – Traditional Cheddar made after 5/31/08

**Grafton Village Cheese Company, Grafton and Brattleboro**

- Bronze – Classic Reserve Cheddar Creamery Cheddar made after 5/31/08

**Willow Hill Farm, Milton**

- Bronze – Vaquero Blue – New cheese – blue, first marketed after 01/10/08

continued on next page



**Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery, Websterville**

- Gold – Crème Fraîche – *Fresh/cream cheese cow's milk plain*

**The 2009 World Dairy Expo Championships**

**Franklin Foods, Enosberg**

- Green Mountain Farms Vegetable Tzatziki Savory Yogurt Dip – *2nd Place – Creative & Innovative Technologies*
- Hahn's Neufchâtel – *2nd Place – Reduced Fat Cheese*

**The 2009 National Association for the Specialty Food Trade**

**Grafton Village Cheese Company, Grafton and Brattleboro**

- Grafton Duet – *Silver "Soft" award*

**Leaving Las Vegas (with cheese)**

Last spring, **Cabot Creamery** co-sponsored a virtual race from Vermont to Las Vegas for Baby Boomers (50+). By recording their daily exercise (walking, running, rowing, skiing, swimming, etc.) online, participants moved a corresponding distance along a mapped route. There were lots of winners and lots of prizes awarded.

It was so much fun, they're co-sponsoring another virtual race — this time coming back. Join them online November 2 at the virtual Las Vegas starting line (link from [www.cabotcheese.com](http://www.cabotcheese.com) and don't forget to pack some cheese for energy.

**Big E Cheese Competition Results**

**This just in..**

**A**t the 2nd Annual Big E Cheese Competition held August 28, 2009 at Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Mass, **Neighborly Farms' Organic Clothbound Raw Milk Cheddar** won top place in its category, as well as Best in Show.

This cheese, made in a wheel, wrapped in muslin instead of cheesecloth, was aged at the Cellars at Jasper Hill in Greensboro.



*Neighborly Farms' Organic Clothbound Raw Milk Cheddar (lower right) in good company.*

**New Cheeses**

**Blue Ledge Farm** is now making a custom cheese for Wasik's Cheese Shop in Wellesley, Massachusetts. It is a goat's milk cheese, aged three weeks with a layer of the famous Wasik's Chutney through the middle, lending a sweet aftertaste to this smooth, creamy cheese. It is available in Fall and Winter only at the Wasik's Cheese Shop in Wellesley.

New to Blue Ledge Farm is a raw goat's milk brie-style cheese called Dunmore. Lake Dunmore is a popular summer destination in the southern Champlain Valley, and likewise this cheese is largely made in the spring and summer months. It is wonderfully oozy under the skin, sometimes firm in the middle, and always with a powerfully tart goaty bite.



**Mt. Mansfield Creamery** Inspiration cheese is a French recipe washed with Rock Art's Holiday Lager. The complex flavor of the cheese is brought out with this seasonal lager.

**Grafton Village Cheese** Blue Ribbon Award Winning Duet represents a first-time collaboration with a cheesemaker outside Vermont. The inspiration for this cheese which sandwiches a slice of St. Pete's Blue cheese between two of Grafton's Premium Cheddar came about as a "cocktail napkin" idea between two of Grafton's sales managers and the owner of Minnesota's Faribault Dairy at a cheese event. Some testing followed, and the final product was introduced originally as a limited product during last year's holiday season. It was so successful that they decided to keep it going.





# Pairing Vermont Cheeses

**W**hen it comes to pairing cheeses with beverages, not all pairs are created equal. When planning a party, look to pair cheeses with beverages or other foods that complement both of their unique characteristics and flavor profiles.

In the spring of this year, a panel of sensory experts convened to pair Vermont cheeses with Vermont beers, wines, honey, maple syrup and apples. They began by separating the cheeses into eight distinct categories: Fresh, Flavored, Bloomy Rind, Washed Rind, Semi-Hard, Hard, and Blue Cheeses.

Following are definitions of each category and some of their pairing recommendations. Notes are provided by Montserrat Almena-Aliste, PhD, Cheese Technical Expert at the University of Vermont's Institute for Artisan Cheese, with input from wine experts Dellie Rex, former Coordinator, Wine & Beverages, New England Culinary Institute; and Bob Lesnikoski, vineyard manager/winemaker, Boyden Valley Winery; along with beer expert Steve Parkes, owner and lead instructor, American Brewers Guild; all to explain why these pairings work so perfectly.

## 1. Fresh or Unripened Cheeses

Cheese made to be consumed within a few weeks after manufacture. This category includes a diverse group of varieties, from *pasta filata* and fresh chevres, to cream cheese, mascarpone and whey cheeses like ricotta, all of which share subtle flavors with lactic notes and pleasant texture properties.

**Pairing cues:** Light beers and light bodied sparkling wines are great companions for fresh cheeses. Meads and dry wines also work very well with rich textured fresh cheeses as does honey and maple syrup.

### Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Scholten Family Farm Weybridge** with Honey Garden Black Current Mead.

*Notes: The rich texture of the cheese softens the astringent notes of the fruit while the honey balances the cheese's acidity.*



- **Champlain Valley Old Fashioned, Organic Cream Cheese** and Grade A Vermont Maple Syrup.

*Notes: Vermont Maple syrup is the perfect topping for an artisanal plain cream cheese, where cow's milk and a shot of fresh cream are the key ingredients responsible for the delicate tangy flavor and unique texture.*

- **Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery Fresh Crottin** and Vermont honey with delicate flavors.

*Notes: Delicate early season honey is the perfect match for mild, fresh goat's milk cheeses with a dense creamy texture, delicate floral notes and lemony taste. To find the most delicate honeys look for light colored versions of the product.*

## 2. Flavored Cheeses

Another large category of cheeses to describe different varieties of flavors, textures and colors, ranging from delicate fresh flavored chevres, to powerful spicy flavors and smoky harder cheeses.

**Pairing cues:** Our advice in this case is to experiment with different beers and wines to find unique combinations that suit your palate.

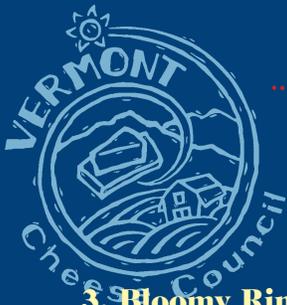
### Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Taylor Farm Maple Smoked Gouda** and Wolaver Brown Ale or Rock Art Vermonster.

*Notes: Delicate smoked goudas and smoky cheddars are perfect partners for brown ale style beers with caramel and roasted notes.*



- **Cabot Creamery's Habanero Cheddar** and **Neighborly Farms Green Onion Cheddar** with Harpoon UFO Hefeweizen  
*Notes: Flavored cheddar cheeses with added spice or herb flavors pair well with grainy, wheat ales.*



### 3. Bloomy Rind Cheeses

Cheeses coated with an edible rind associated with the “bloom” of *Penicillium candidum*, allowing the cheese to ripen from the outside in. In addition to the white mold, some bloomy rind cheeses may also include herbs or ashes. Creamy textures (from soft to runny depending on age) and lactic, grassy, mushroomy flavors are the most characteristic sensory cues of this group.

**Pairing cues:** Aromatic white wines and fruity beers. Late harvest wines and fruit meads are also great combinations for the more flavored and ripened variety.

#### Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Blue Ledge Farm Lake’s Edge** and Boyden Valley Winery Rhubarb  
*Notes: A mold ripened goat’s milk cheese with dense texture, distinctive goaty flavor and delicate mineral notes is the perfect companion for a semi-dry, fruity, light and crisp wine.*
- **Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery Bonne Bouche** with Boyden Valley Winery Big Barn Red  
*Notes: A rich and creamy bloomy rind goat’s milk cheese, with strong aromatics and complex flavor profile is a great match for bold, rich, red wines.*



- **Blythdale Farm’s Brie** with Snow Farm Vidal Blanc Ice Wine  
*Notes: Late harvest wines match well with strong flavored and well ripened cheeses.*
- **Lazy Lady Farm Valencay** with Magic Hat’s #9  
*Notes: A mild goat’s milk bloomy ash rind cheese, with a smooth dense texture and lemony taste, pairs well with a beer that has flavors of fruits (or vegetables) added during brewing.*

### 4. Washed Rind Cheeses

Cheeses washed during ripening with a brine solution and a cocktail of “good” bacteria to promote rind growth and develop flavor. Some varieties may also be washed with beer, meads, wine, etc. Each type of wash imparts its own unique flavor. Texture varies from soft to semi-hard with softer varieties usually having more pungent flavors.

**Pairing cues:** Sparkling, medium-weight fruity reds and aromatic dry wines with body and spiciness complement most of these cheeses. Late harvest wines, meads and fruity beers are perfect for the saltier and more “stinky” varieties.

#### Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Consider Bardwell Farm Dorset** with Long Trail Double Bag  
*Notes: A mellow washed-rind cow’s milk cheese, slightly salted and with a rich buttery texture, pairs well with a strongly flavored caramel malty beer.*

- **Willow Hill Farm’s Paniolo** with Vermont Pub & Brewery’s Forbidden Fruit

*Notes: A characteristically aromatic washed rind cheese, with smooth texture, delicate lactic*



*notes and a complex salty bite is the perfect companion for sweet, fruity, micro-brewed draft beer.*

- **Ploughgate Creamery Willoughby** with Eden Vermont Ice Cider. This tasty cheese is washed with mead during ripening conferring on it an aromatic complexity and a pleasant hint of sweetness.  
*Notes: A mildly pungent washed rind cheese with a silky savory creamy interior slightly salted, it is the perfect match for rich dessert wines with strong fruity flavors and hints of caramel, and honey.*

### 5. Semi-Hard Cheese

Firm-looking but creamy mouthfeel, with balanced taste and medium-deep flavors are the main characteristic of semi-hard cheeses. Some have a natural rind (i.e., tommes, moist alpine cheeses and aged sheep cheese) and others don’t (young cheddars, colby and goudas).

**Pairing cues:** Great with any kind of wine. Lovely with honey. Slightly bitter beers with mild to medium hopping are also great matches for these cheeses.



Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Thistle Hill Tarentaise** with late season Vermont honey  
*Notes: A firm-textured alpine style cheese, with delicate caramel and nutty flavors, and complex finish pairs perfectly with nutty and complex, darker colored honeys .*



- **Dancing Cow Menuet** with Shelburne Vineyard Cayuga  
*Notes: A tomme style cheese with creamy texture, lingering finish, and nutty flavors with grassy undertones, pairs well with a slightly off dry white with pleasant fruit and a touch of residual sugar.*
- **Woodcock Farm Magic Mountain** with Lincoln Peak Cove Road Red  
*Notes: An aged sheep milk cheese with a firm texture and deep flavor, including hay, caramel and nutty notes, pairs well with a medium bodied firm red wine.*
- **Spring Brook Farm Tarentaise** with First Tracks Rose  
*Notes: A semi-hard alpine cheese style, with a smooth texture, complex aromatics and a balanced flavor pairs well with a light, fruity, soft red wine.*

## 6. Hard Cheeses

Firmer, drier, saltier and sharper than semi-hard cheeses. Aged and clothbound cheddars are strong players in this category, along with ripened alpine cheeses. Pairing cues: Deep, rich red wines and strong alcohol, hoppy beers are perfect partners for these cheeses.

Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Crawford Family Farm Vermont Ayr** with Otter Creek Copper Ale  
*Notes: A firm textured alpine style cheese with distinctive sweetness, smooth and creamy mouthfeel characteristics, and pleasant fruity notes pairs well with a malty ale.*
- **Grafton Village Cheese Grand Reserve Cheddar** with Harpoon IPA  
*Notes: A strong cheddar cheese; crusty bread and a bitter/ hoppy beer constitute the traditional Ploughman's Lunch*
- **Shelburne Farm 2 year old Cheddar** with a McIntosh apple  
*Notes: A pleasantly sharp farmhouse-cheddar with complex flavor and lingering finish pairs well with a slightly tart, juicy apple.*



- **Cabot Clothbound Cheddar** and **Grafton Village Cheese Clothbound Cheddar** with Long Trail Ale.  
*Notes: A well-matured clothbound cheddar with hard texture, savory earthy flavors with a hint of sweetness, pairs well with a toasted and malty beer.*

## 8. Blue Cheeses

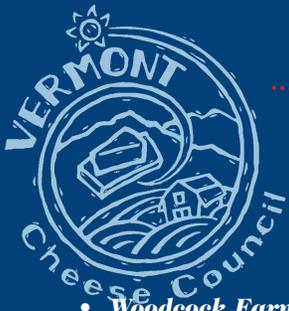
Saltier than other varieties, blues are mainly cow's milk cheeses with a marbled pattern of *Penicillium roqueforti*, responsible for the characteristics pungent complex flavor.

**Pairing cues:** Spice and salty blues call for rich desert and late harvest wines. Full-bodied smoky and fruity beers are also great matches for blue veined cheeses.

Examples of Perfect Pairs:

- **Jasper Hill Farm Bayley Hazen Blue** with Rock Art Belvidere.  
Also pairs well with Shelburne Vineyards Rhapsody wine.  
*Notes: An unpasteurized cow's milk blue cheese, with buttery smooth texture, and a harmonious orchestra of complex flavors, pairs well with a wild range of beverages. Our favorite choices are, high alcohol and strongly hopped beers and sweet and syrupy dessert wines.*





- **Woodcock Farm True Blue** with light and dark Vermont honey  
*Notes: A creamy, complex yet well balanced raw milk blue cheese, pairs well with any kind of honey.*
- **Green Mountain Blue Cheese**  
**GorDawnZola** with Snow Farm Late Harvest Vignoles  
*Notes: A spicy blue cheese with crumbly texture and sharp finish pairs well with a slightly sweet white wine with excellent fruit.*

### Cheesemaker's Choice

Our panel of experts could not taste and pair the infinite number of combinations between 150 varieties of Vermont cheese and the wonderful beers and wines being produced in the state. Our cheesemakers have ample opportunity to pair their cheeses in public and in private. Here are some of their recommendations, offered alphabetically:

#### Cabot Creamery

- **Vintage Choice** with Boyden Valley Winery Leon Millot



- **Private Stock** with Boyden Seyval Blanc
- **Habanero Cheddar** and their **50% Reduced Fat Jalapeno Cheddar** both pair well with Harpoon UFO Hefeweizen

#### Fat Toad Farm

- **Ginger Cilantro Sesame Chevre** with Rock Art Magnumus et Tomahawkus
- Sundried Tomato Basil Chevre with Rock Art Pumpkin Stout

#### Grafton Village Cheese Company

- **Maple Smoked Cheddar** pairs well with a Vermont brown ale, porter or other full flavored beer such as Wolaver's Organic Brown Ale

#### Jericho Hill Farm

- **Smoke Jack** with an Imperial Russian Stout
- **Jack** or **Aged Colby** with a Harpoon IPA

#### Mt. Mansfield Creamery

- **Inspiration** cheese and Rock Art Holiday Lagers

#### Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery

- **Fresh Crottin** with Magic Hat Circus Boy
- **Bijou** and **Coupole** with Magic Hat Participation

#### Willow Hill Farm

- **Butternut Alpine Tomme** with Swtichback Roasted Red Beer

### VCC Officers 2009

Laini Fondiller  
*President, Lady Lazy Farm*  
Eric Johnson  
*Vice President, Spring Brook Farm*  
Andy Kehler  
*Treasurer, Jasper Hill Farm*  
Linda Miller  
*Secretary, Jericho Hill Farm*

## Vermont Cheese Council Member Cheesemakers

Blue Ledge Farm  
Blythedale Farm  
Bonnieview Farm  
Cabot Creamery  
Champlain Valley Creamery  
Cobb Hill Cheese  
Consider Bardwell Farm  
Crawford Family Farm  
Crowley Cheese Inc.  
Dancing Cow Farm  
Doe's Leap Goat Farm  
Fat Toad Farm  
Franklin Foods  
Grafton Village Cheese Co.  
Green Mountain Blue Cheese  
Hildene Farm Signature Cheese  
Hope Farm Sheep Cheese  
Jasper Hill Farm  
Jericho Hill Farm  
Lazy Lady Farm  
Maplebrook Farm  
Mount Mansfield Creamery  
Neighborly Farms  
Orb Weaver Farm  
Peaked Mountain Farm  
Ploughgate Creamery  
Plymouth Artisan Cheese  
Sage Farm Goat Dairy  
Scholten Family Farm  
(Kaas by Cass)  
Shelburne Farms  
Spring Brook Farm  
Taylor Farm  
Thistle Hill Farm  
Twig Farm  
Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery  
Vermont Shepherd  
vonTrapp Farmstead Cheese  
West River Creamery  
Willow Hill Farm  
Woodcock Farm



## Vermont Cheese Retail Members and Other Resources

**Brattleboro Food Coop**  
2 Main Street  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802-257-0236

**The Cheese House**  
5187 VT Rt 7A  
Arlington, VT 05256  
802-375-9033

**The Cheese Shop/Wasiks**  
61 Central Street  
Wellesley, MA 02482  
781-237-0916

**Cheese Traders and  
Wine Sellers**  
1186 Williston Road  
South Burlington, VT 05403  
802-863-0143

**City Market**  
82 South Winooski  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802-861-9700

**Dakin Farm-  
What Vermont Tastes Like**  
5797 Route 7  
Ferrisburgh, VT 05456  
800-993-2546

**Peter Dixon,  
Dairy Foods Consulting**  
131 West Parish Road  
Westminster West, VT 05346  
802-387-4041

**Equinox Resort and Spa**  
3567 Main Street, Route 7A  
Manchester Village, VT  
05254  
802-362-7832

**Hanover and Lebanon  
Co-op Food Stores**  
PO Box 633  
Hanover, NH 03755  
603-643-2667

**Harvest Market**  
1031 Mountain Road  
Stowe, Vermont 05672  
802-253-3800

**Healthy Living  
Natural Foods Market**  
222 Dorset Street  
South Burlington, VT 05495  
802-863-2569

**Hunger Mountain Co-op**  
623 Stone Cutters Way  
Montpelier, VT 05602-3635  
802-223-8000

**Middlebury Natural Foods  
Coop**  
1 Washington Street  
Middlebury, VT 05753  
802-388-7276

**Mountain Cheese and Wine**  
1799 Mountain Road  
Stowe, VT 05672  
802-253-8606

**Mountain Greens Market  
and Deli**  
25 Mountain View Street  
Bristol, VT 05443  
802-453-8538

**Red Hen Bakery and Cafe**  
961B US Route 2  
Middlesex, VT 05602  
802-223-5200

**South Royalton Food Coop**  
105 Chelsea Street  
South Royalton, VT 05068  
802-763-2400

**Stratton Mountain  
Provisions**  
Village Square Building #10  
Stratton Mountain, VT.  
05155  
802-297-9843

**Sugar Bush Farm**  
591 Sugar Bush Farm Road  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
800-281-1757

**Sweet Clover Market**  
21 Essex Way # 418  
Essex Junction, VT 05452  
802-872-8288

**Upper Valley Food Coop**  
193 North Main Street  
White River Junction, VT  
05001  
802-295-5804

**Vermont Cheesemongers**  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802-540-0530  
www.vtcheeseclub.com

**Vermont Farm Tours**  
185 North Winooski Ave  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802-922-7346  
www.vermontfarmtours.com

**The Wine & Cheese Depot**  
46 Depot Street  
Ludlow, VT 05149  
802-228-4128

**Woodstock Farmers Market**  
468 Woodstock Road  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
802-457-3658

### **Distributors:**

**Black River Produce**  
North Springfield, VT 05150  
802-228-5481

**Newport Specialty Foods**  
Middletown, RI 02842  
800-220-9334

**Provisions International Ltd.**  
White River Junction 05001  
800-281-1933  
www.provisionsintl.com

## **Cheesemaking with Peter Dixon**

*at Consider Bardwell Farm, West Pawlet*

### **December 16-17, 2009**

Cheesemaking and Affinage: Techniques, microbes and facilities. Exploring the craft of cheese making and ripening. On day one participants will make a tomme cheese. On day two they will follow the steps for ripening this cheese and many others. The focus will be on ripening cultures, bio-reactions, affinage techniques, quality control, and how to design and construct facilities for the many types of cheese.

### **January 4-5, 2010**

Beginners class about cheese making and starting an artisan cheese business. Topics include starting up a creamery; properties of sheep, cow and goat milk and their use in cheese making; making lactic curd cheeses (Chaource and Fromage Blanc) and Tomme; cheese brining; cheese ripening; and financial and marketing information.

*Instructor Peter Dixon is a dairy foods consultant and cheesemaker from Westminster, Vermont. Since 1997, he has worked in agricultural development projects in Macedonia, Albania, and Armenia and has traveled in the US and Canada to teach workshops and consult for artisan cheesemakers. To register for these workshops, contact Peter Dixon at 802-387-4041 or e-mail [dixonpeter@mac.com](mailto:dixonpeter@mac.com), [www.considerbardwellfarm.com](http://www.considerbardwellfarm.com)*



# Cheese Champions

*An Interview with Lee Smith,  
Publisher & Editorial Director, Cheese Connoisseur*

**Q: How long have you been publishing *Cheese Connoisseur* and what was the inspiration behind the creation of the publication?**

The upcoming winter issue will be the fourth issue and the end of the first full year of publication. *Cheese Connoisseur* is published quarterly and the next winter issue will be on newsstands the second week of December. Our business-to-business and consumer subscribers will see it arrive in their mailboxes the first week in December. ([www.CheeseConnoisseur.com](http://www.CheeseConnoisseur.com))

*Cheese Connoisseur* is really the evolution of an idea. Many years ago – too long ago to admit – I started working as a supermarket clerk. As I worked my way up the chain of command, I found myself a deli and specialty cheese buyer/supervisor, and I fell in love with specialty cheese. At that time, specialty cheese was a niche business and mostly confined to the large cities on the east coast that had a strong European influence. In 1995, when I approached Phoenix Media Network with the idea of developing a trade magazine for the retail deli industry, Deli Business, specialty cheese was going to be a regular department. I have to admit that in the beginning it was more a labor of love – when I had extra pages I would publish more articles about obscure cheeses and cheesemakers. American cheesemakers were just starting to make themselves known on a national level and it was a personal goal to see American cheese sales grow and get the cheesemakers the recognition



*Lee Smith*

they deserved.

Last year, the dream of devoting a magazine to cheese coupled with a public not only interested in cheese and fine food, but also with a desire to support American businesses, local farming efforts and sustainable practices allowed us to publish a trade/consumer lifestyle magazine around cheese.

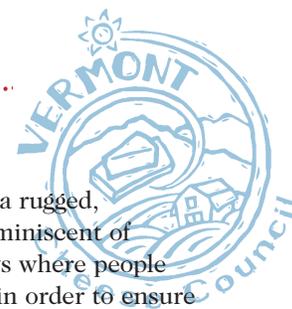
**Q: You feature cheeses from all over the world — how do you make your selections?**

We look for exceptional cheeses from extraordinary cheesemakers who have a story to tell. We also have some other qualifications. For instance, we want to choose products that are available nationally, but we wouldn't hesitate to feature a cheese that requires a bit of a treasure hunt to find. After all, we want to find the extraordinary and our readers what

to be in the know – so a little hunting adds to the mystique. We also like to feature cheeses that may be well known among connoisseurs, but the nuances of seasonality, for example, may not be understood. We want to entice, enlighten and awe our readers.

**Q: What constitutes a noteworthy or memorable cheese in your opinion?**

First, it must be a good piece of cheese. Sounds simple but in reality cheeses that are unusual or pretty and seem to be noteworthy are often times, upon tasting, found to be lacking in quality. So, the first thing I look at is the rind, and then I move on to the aroma and general appearance of the cheese. Rupert from Consider Bardwell Farm in Vermont is a cheese that has an amazing presentation with a beautiful



rind that makes the artist in me want to touch – to fondle – it. The aroma is breathtaking with overtones of butter, toast and roasted nuts. This is a cheese that also follows through with a paste (the inside of the cheese) that is delicious, not bitter and in complete balance, and its texture is both pleasing and technically correct. In other words, a beautiful cheese that is technically very good. I'm not the only one with that opinion. Rupert won third place in the American Cheese Society (ACS) Competition this year for Best in Show. Since there were over 1300 cheeses entered, the win is a profound testament to its quality.

But, just being a technically good cheese is often not enough to make it either noteworthy or memorable. Consumers are generally not that interested in the opinions of scientists or purists. Consumers want more. They want something that tastes wonderful and satisfies all the senses. We all want to be part of something special. Therefore, the story is very important. Cabot's Clothbound Cheddar is an example of a world-class cheese that won Best of Show at the ACS Competition and Judging in 2006. The partnership between a premier cheesemaker that revived its clothbound cheese with the help of Jasper Hill and its aging caves brought to the world a Cheddar reminiscent of the classic Cheddars of Somerset, England - with an American twist. Not as high in acid and not as dry and crumbly as the English Cheddars, the duo created Cheddar with a distinct Vermont profile – truly noteworthy and memorable. Jasper Hill with its expertise in aging and its amazing “real” cheese caves was able to bring out the character and nuances of flavor Cabot might not have been able to accomplish on its own.

So, in summation a noteworthy and memorable cheese is a cheese that is technically correct but unique and has a story to tell the world.

**Q: What are your thoughts about the quality and breadth of cheeses currently being made in Vermont?**

Vermont is unique and remarkable – and not just for its cheeses! The cover story in the fall issue of *Cheese Connoisseur*, “Good Neighbors Make Good Cheeses,” is the story of the Vermont cheese making community. Jan Fialkow, the managing editor of *Cheese Connoisseur*, and I spent close to a week visiting cheesemakers, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, farms and dairies to research the story. We wanted to learn more about Vermont cheeses but we also wanted to experience the character of Vermont.

I have to thank Allison Hooper of Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery (VBCC) for helping us make the story a success. She and her partner Bob Reese are typical of the teamwork and cooperation seen in Vermont. Not only did we have the opportunity to visit their plant, but Allison also made the arrangements for us to visit other cheesemakers. VBCC is another unique story. When Allison was a college student in France, she worked on an organic farm, learning to make cheese while earning her room and board. Today, many of VBCC's world class cheeses are based on French classics – with a Vermont touch. Their cheeses are now exported to France, completing the circle.

Vermont has its own amazing and unique

culture. There is a rugged, independence reminiscent of early pioneer days where people worked together in order to ensure survival. Yet underneath it all is a subculture of fine china, poetry, master craftsmen, classic food and a love of the environment. The results are excellent cheeses with unique, distinctly American characteristics that are respectful of their European heritage. Obviously, a lot has to do with Vermont's cheesemakers, but the environment has a lot to do with it, too. Clean air and water, the proper and humane treatment of animals and a respect for the land all play an important part in producing good milk and good milk is the keystone for good cheese.

The breadth of cheeses is, well, breathtaking. From the French-style goat cheeses of Vermont Butter & Cheese to the cheddars, mountain-style cheeses, blues and more, they are all uniquely Vermont and a United States treasure.

**VERMONT CHEESES**

THE STATE IS HOME TO THE SOME OF THE BEST ARTISAN CHEESEMAKERS IN THE COUNTRY. HERE'S A SMALL SAMPLING OF THE MANY VARIETIES THAT MAKE VERMONT PROUD.

- 1. BLUE LEDGE FARM, Salisbury:** Lake's Edge is a mold-ripened goat's milk cheese and creamy; it was awarded a second place ribbon in 2006 by the American Cheese Society and named one of 100 Great Cheeses by Wine Spectator magazine in 2008. [www.blueledgefarm.com](http://www.blueledgefarm.com)
- 2. BLYTHEDALE FARM, Corinth:** Jersey Blue is made in the Salton style from whole, unpasteurized milk and Roquefort terfat content assures melt-in-your-mouth quality. The American Cheese Society has judged it best in the blue-veined class. [www.vtcheese.com/members/blythedale/blythedale.htm](http://www.vtcheese.com/members/blythedale/blythedale.htm)
- 3. TAYLOR FARM, Londonderry:** Vermont Farmstead Couais is made from fresh, Holstein and Jersey milk cows that graze in lush pastures of red clover and timothy. Sealed in red wax, it slices beautifully and pairs with fruits, nuts and breads. [www.taylorfarmvermont.com](http://www.taylorfarmvermont.com)
- 4. THISTLE HILL FARM, North Pomfret:** Tarentaise is a unique American farmstead cheese made from raw organic milk in the area's soil, geography, climate and flora give Tarentaise its characteristic smooth, subtle nut flavor and complex finish. [www.thistlehillfarm.com](http://www.thistlehillfarm.com)
- 5. WOODCOCK FARM CHEESE, Weston:** Weston Wheel is a natural-rind, four to five months to produce. It's aged five to six months to produce a distinctive bite with a nutty, strong, lingering flavor like toffee. It won first prize for farmstead sheep milk cheese at the 2003 American Cheese Society competition. [www.vtcheese.com/members/woodcock/woodcock.htm](http://www.vtcheese.com/members/woodcock/woodcock.htm)

CHEESE CONNOISSEUR Fall '08



## Vermont Butter & Cheese Takes a New Name and a New Look

In celebration of their 25th anniversary and in recognition of their achieved status of one of the leading creameries in US artisanal cheeses (as evidenced with their recent award of “Outstanding Product Line” at the 54th Summer Fancy Food Show in 2008) Vermont Butter & Cheese Company is introducing a new name and new packaging.

“Our new name is **Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery**. This name emphasizes our position as a small creamery dedicated to making the best crème fraiche, cultured butter, and fresh and aged goat cheeses on the market. It also reflects our commitment to buy local, high quality cream from the farmers of St. Albans Cooperative and our group of 20 local goat dairies” said Allison Hooper, co-founder of Vermont Butter & Cheese Company.

New packaging to reflect the new name is in stores now showcasing the same bright colors—pink, purple, blue, green and red, with a touch of freshness and modern look, while keeping the design clean and simple — “fresh new look but the same high quality cheese inside.” For further information, pictures, logos, contact: Allison Wolf, Vermont Butter & Cheese Creamery, 802.479.9371 or awolf@vtbutterandcheese.com



# Small Bites

## Plymouth Cheese Reopens

In July, cheesemaker Jesse Werner resumed cheesemaking operations at the historic Plymouth Cheese Factory on the grounds of the Coolidge Homestead in Plymouth Notch. They are open seven days a week, year-round, and the public is welcome to visit and see this American heritage cheese being made four days out of the week. The on-site museum features some of the original equipment used to make Plymouth cheese when it first went into production in 1890. Plymouth cheese is a traditional granular curd cheese. It is made from a single, local source of raw cow’s milk, and is said to be Julia Childs’ favorite cheese. It is still made in the style of the earliest cheese making of the region. Cheese can be purchased in their retail store, as well as at the wholesale level. For information, call 802 672-3650.



## Crowley Cheese Back in Business

After a brief hiatus, Award-winning Crowley Cheese is back in business hand-making its uniquely American-style cheese from the same recipe, in the same manner as it has since 1824. With a distinctively smooth, creamy texture, Crowley Cheese is often compared to a cheddar “without the bite” but, truthfully, it defies description as it pre-dates the FDA classification system. It’s not cheddar, not Colby, it’s Crowley. Crowley Cheese is one of a very small number of genuine American cheeses. Few cheeses originated in the United States; most came to this country with the various

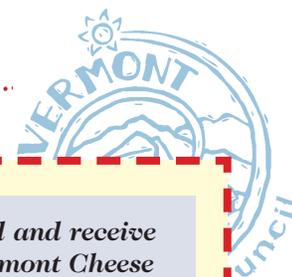
immigrant groups who settled here. Crowley Cheese began in the Crowleys’ kitchen in 1824. The Crowley Cheese Factory, built by Winifred Crowley in 1882, is the oldest cheese factory in America. The company was recently featured on the Discovery Channel’s Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe. You can catch the 10 minutes segment on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0UfS1bqscM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0UfS1bqscM)) 58,000 viewers already have!



## Vermont Cheesemakers’ Festival

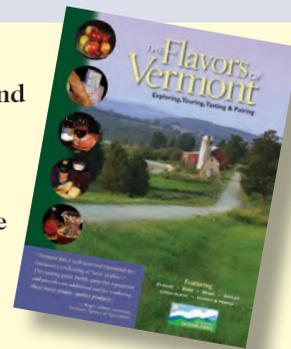
The first Annual Vermont Cheesemakers’ Festival, held at Shelburne Farms in August, drew a sold-out crowd. So successful was the day that plans are already underway to repeat the event next year. Check the web site: <http://www.vtcheesefest.com/> for updated information about ticket availability. Some fun facts from this year’s event:

- 35 cheesemakers vendors
- 19 beer and wine makers
- 20 Specialty food makers
- 1 bus from New York
- 1,178 tickets sold
- 158 seminars tickets sold
- 60 volunteers who worked for cheese
- 61 press badges
- 65 press mentions reaching out over 13,000,000 readers (including “O” the Oprah magazine, NY Times, USA Today, Food & Wine, Food Channel
- 6 radio shows
- 4 TV shows: Fox 44, WCAX, WPIX morning news
- \$5,000 raised for scholarship toward VT cheesemakers



Sign up now to become a friend of the council and receive a 10% discount for three months with the Vermont Cheese Club. Find out more about how to receive these unique and interesting cheeses every month at [www.vtcheeseclub.com](http://www.vtcheeseclub.com)

Become a Friend of the Vermont Cheese Council before January 1, 2010, and we'll send you a free copy of the pairing guide *Flavors of Vermont*. Let us help you plan a visit to Vermont next year with stops along the way to taste and pair our remarkable cheese, wine and beer.



## Become a Friend of VCC

*The Vermont Cheese Council is dedicated to the production and advancement of Vermont cheese. Thank you for joining us as a new member. We greatly appreciate your support!*

### Members in the (Big Time) News

This fall finds several members enjoying some high profile media coverage. The fall issue of *Cheese Connoisseur* has as it's cover story: "Good Neighbors Make Good Cheeses: The Vermont Cheesemaking Community." Several cheesemakers are prominently featured. Among them: **Blue Ledge Farm, Blythedale Farm, Taylor Farm, Thistle Hill Farm and Woodecock Farm.**

And the *Martha Stewart Living* Thanksgiving issue, due out in November, includes the prominent article "Made in Vermont." That article begins as follows: "The Green Mountain State is famous for its abundance of dairy farms, which have provided fresh, clean-tasting milk to New England for generations. Now, thanks to a new breed of farmers with sophisticated palates and mad-scientist zeal, some of these dairies are also producing delicious handcrafted cheese." Cheesemakers mentioned: **Willow Hill Farm, Consider Bardwell Farm, Thistle Hill Farm, Blue Ledge Farm, Jasper Hill Farm, Cabot, Ploughgate Creamery and Dancing Cow.**

Also, it looks like there will be a show on this as well. Check out the website <http://www.marthastewart.com/article/dairy-farms>

**Individual/Friend Members:** Cheese Lovers who support our efforts:

\$50.

**Associate Members:** Trade members: Non-cheesemaking members who distribute, sell & market cheese;

\$100. Individual/Small business membership

**Corporate Sponsors:** Members who would like to do more to help us achieve our goals:

\$250. "Velveeta Defeatats" member

\$500. "Got Your Goats" member

\$1,000. "Knights of the Round Gouda" member

\$2,500. "High Order of the Sharp Cheddar" member

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Website \_\_\_\_\_

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Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

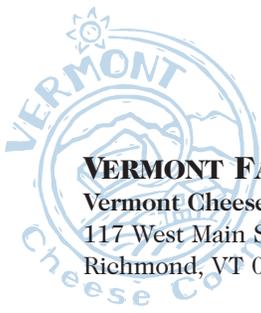
The Vermont Cheese Council.

Mail to: c/o Calley Hastings, The Vermont Cheese Council

787 Kibbee Road, Brookfield, VT 05036

For more information please contact us at 866-261-8595,

or by e-mail at [info@vtcheese.com](mailto:info@vtcheese.com)



**VERMONT FARM BUREAU**

Vermont Cheese Council  
117 West Main Street  
Richmond, VT 05477

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
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05641

### Holiday Shopping for Cheese?

In response to this question received on our web site, “Does anyone know where you can order variety packs of cheese from several cheesemakers via mail order?”, Jack Dean at the Cellars of Jasper Hill offered the following sites:

- [http://www.murrayscheese.com/wholesale\\_main.asp](http://www.murrayscheese.com/wholesale_main.asp)
- <http://store.saxelbycheese.com/>
- <http://www.zingermans.com/Category.aspx?category=cheeses>
- <http://cowgirlcreamery.com/Buycheese.asp>
- <http://www.dibruno.com/StoreFront.bok>
- <http://farmsteadinc.com/shop.html>
- <http://www.formaggiokitchen.com/>

Also, here’s something cool to check out: a searchable (and extensive) directory of cheese retailers who handle farmstead, artisan, specialty cheeses, etc.: [www.culturecheesemag.com/cheese\\_stores](http://www.culturecheesemag.com/cheese_stores), or check our Retailers List on page 10.

You can tweet with Jack at: [twitter.com/jackmonger](http://twitter.com/jackmonger)

### *The Vermont Cheese Council*

*Newsletter* is published for food professionals. With written permission, reprinting is encouraged.

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Brookfield, VT 05036  
866-261-8595  
**[www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com)**



### Coming Up...

#### **35th Winter Fancy Food Show**

January 17-19, 2010  
Moscone Center, San Francisco  
[www.specialtyfood.com](http://www.specialtyfood.com)