

Vermont Cheese Council

Spring 2006 • Vol. 6, Issue 1



At left: Beautiful Shelburne Farms' cows and cheddar. Above: Vermont Butter & Cheese Company's Bonne Bouche — back by popular demand! (See page 7)

Vermont Cheese Council Members – Growing Up & Out

The Vermont Cheese Council is a trade organization whose goal is to advance the production and image of premier cheeses from Vermont. The Council operates to educate the general public on the high quality and diversity of Vermont cheeses. Started in 1998, the Council today counts 37 cheesemakers among its members. We also offer Associate Membership to non-cheesemakers who support our work through distribution, education and retail.

2006 has been a boom year for the Council. We've added three new cheesemaking members (see New Members). Two of our venerable "older" members, Vermont Butter & Cheese Company and Willow Hill Farm are undergoing significant expansion to meet the ever increasing market demand for their products. And one of our younger upstarts, Jasper Hill Cheese,

is expanding both physically and programmatically to meet their skyrocketing market demand while providing a host of services to help other existing and would-be Vermont cheesemakers thrive. (See page 3)

Next August, 2007, Vermont will play host to the Annual American Cheese Society Meeting and cheese competition. As we prepare to welcome cheesemakers from around the country to our little state, we are puffed up with pride at all that has been accomplished here in just a handful of years. If you are new to Vermont cheeses, do yourself a favor: Tour and Taste this summer and fall season. What you will find is some of the hardest working landscape in the country, a collection of quirky, brilliant, passionate cheesemakers and some of the very best cheeses you can taste anywhere in the world.

Win A Ticket to ACS 2007!



President's Message

Milk Into Cheese? The Dairy Farmer's Dilemma

At Taylor Farm we started making cheese in 1998 and have experienced steady growth since then, even picking up some awards for our Gouda cheese along the way. But as a "traditional dairy farmer" we continue to wrestle with some interesting issues. As more and more of our milk goes into cheese, the farm runs the risk of losing its fluid milk contract. Shipping milk gives us flexibility. Holidays, sick days, not in the mood days, we can just ship milk it gives our employees a flexibility that we all enjoy. I also have some tough issues with our dairy facility which greatly affects cow comfort and efficiency. For these reasons we are contemplating building a new free stall, increasing cow numbers, maxing out cheese production at about 70,000 lbs/year and continuing to ship the balance of the milk.

Income for dairy farmers is better with the cheese. Taylor Farm would probably be even better off financially by buying milk for our cheese production but that goes against the grain of what I want to accomplish. We want to make farmstead cheese from the milk of our own animals. That's what makes it uniquely ours. The dairy is always the struggling part of this equation but it is my love and commitment to Agriculture in Vermont that got me into this so I'm here to stay!

Quality of life for someone trying to be both a dairy farmer and a cheesemaker is always a tough question. I struggle to keep up, I never get enough sleep, and I'm always distracted and have a tough time completing projects before some new emergency arises. On the other hand, I love what I do every day. My family is always around me and an integral part of what I do. My 11 year old daughter is very involved



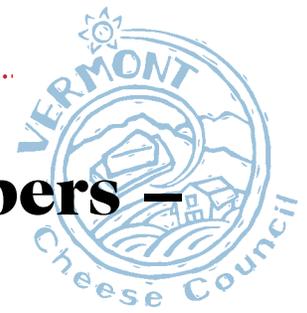
VCC President Jon Wright, Taylor Farm, holds his new natural rind Gouda, available this July.

with the farm and helps me on a daily basis. I have learned to schedule fun, social time with my family and friends which is what this is all about. In the winter, I ski every week with two of my daughters and have developed a really great bond with them around that. We have a monthly music night/pot luck supper which started with about five people and now draws 20-25 regularly. I'm involved with the Vermont Dairy Task Force, Vermont Farms, Vermont Cheese Council and local activities which gets me out of the farm and helps to balance my life. All in all, quality of life is a subjective thing. As I look around, there are not too many people I would trade places with, maybe none.

As other dairy farmers look to cheese as their financial safety net, I would say proceed with caution. There has to be a passion for this lifestyle, for the land, animals, people, and for making quality cheese. If that's not there, look elsewhere. But if you have the passion and commitment to turn your milk into the rich bounty that is artisanal cheese, then join us. We welcome you.

Give Us a Jingle; We'll Give You a Ticket to Cheese Nirvana

The Vermont Cheese Council is in the market for a catchy, tag line to use on our web site, promotions, and brochures. Try your hand at crafting a one-liner that speaks volumes about Vermont cheese. The winner will be given an entry ticket for the American Cheese Society Annual Meeting and Cheese Competition to be held in Burlington, Vermont in summer 2007. Send your ideas to: info@vtcheese.com.



Vermont Cheese Council Members – Growing Up & Out

Vermont Butter & Cheese Company *Careful growth in the European model*

Launched in 1984, Vermont Butter & Cheese Company has been crafting artisanal dairy products in the European style for over two decades through a vital link with local farms. Based in the town of Websterville, the company supports a network of more than 20 family farms, providing milk that meets the highest standards of purity. While Vermont Butter & Cheese Company has earned worldwide recognition, the company is proudest of its contribution to the health of local agriculture. After all, as VB&C President Allison Hooper learned while working as a cheese-making apprentice on a family farm in France in the late '70s, quality

originates at the source – with the people who work the land and the pride they take in the yield.

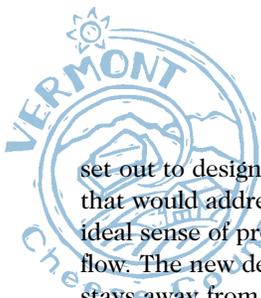
Everything Vermont Butter & Cheese Company does, it does well, - with caution, care and pride. Their new \$1.2 Million, 3,500 square foot production and aging facility exemplifies their approach to making cheese – do it slowly and do it right. Under the supervision of their French-born Operations Manager, Adeline Folley, this new facility, which was three years in the making, enjoyed a Grand Opening on March 16th to the oohs and aahs of the assembled guests. The new facility allows Vermont Butter & Cheese the capacity to produce 15,000 cheeses each week including two new varieties. Read more about these in New Cheeses and more about the new VB&C facility in the fall issue.

Willow Hill Farm *Growth Driven by Demand*

Willow Smart and her husband, David Phinney, are building on their successful nine-year old cheese label, Willow Hill Farm, both figuratively and literally. After years of carting thousands of pounds of cheeses back and forth from the cheese room to the aging cave and then back again over a half mile to the barn for shipping, Willow declared she had had enough. Together she and her husband David not only conceived of a new processing, aging and shipping facility, they undertook the design and construction themselves. Inspired by small cheese plants they once saw in Sardinia, and informed by the years they have spent milking animals and making cheese, the two



Vermont Butter & Cheese Company's Allison Hooper and Operations Manager, Adeline Folley. At right, Willow Smart of Willow Hill Farm.



set out to design a plant that would address their ideal sense of process flow. The new design stays away from dumping stations and stainless pumps. Rather, it is built on several levels and will use gravity flow to move the milk from the milking parlor into the cheese room. David, a person with a multitude of construction-related talents, and cheesemaker Willow have collaborated on this one of a kind facility. The 26'x 30' cheese room is the centerpiece of the new plant which also includes five walk in coolers, a warming room for the ever-increasingly popular Willow Hill Sheep's Milk Yogurt, office space and limited retail. Also included is a new 14x24 drive through Loading Dock as part of the much more convenient shipping and receiving area, and an area for viewing cheesemaking. Willow says they will continue to use their aging cave for their raw milk cheeses and views the entire project as necessary growth driven by demand. While cheesemaking should begin in the new plant in May; the public area for viewing and buying will not be open until fall. Keep abreast of their progress by visiting their website, <http://www.sheepcheese.com/index.htm>.

Jasper Hill Farm Poised for Growth as "The Cellars of Jasper Hill"

Jasper Hill Farm's Kehler brothers, Mateo and Andy, are gratified, but not surprised, to see production and sales of their branded cheeses right on projection. When, in 2003, they constructed their 3,000 square foot cheese processing and aging



Constant Bliss – a Jasper Hill original and award winning cheese. Below, a new member of Jasper Hill's Ayrshire herd.

facility atop their 220-acre spread, with thoughts of a cheese-only dairy farm, some folks were shaking their heads. Now, less than three years later, the Jasper Hill label has garnered a reputation, a list of awards, and a market demand that keeps escalating with no end in sight. Mateo attributes much of their success to his brother's scrupulous management of the herd of 35 Ayrshire cows and the high quality milk they produce. Jasper Hill was recognized this year at the Vermont Farm Show's Dairy Banquet as having the highest quality milk in the state. And all this wholesome milk went into the production of nearly 40,000 pounds of cheese. Next year, they are shooting for 60,000. These two place a high premium on quality control and continue to test their milk supply far beyond that which is mandated by state or federal law. And, it shows.

But making delicious, award-winning, hard-to-come-by cheeses is not the only thing the brothers Kehler are working on these days. They envision Jasper Hill becoming a large, multi-faceted service center

for other cheesemakers or would-be cheesemakers throughout the state. Plans are to break ground later this spring on an 8,000 square foot, climate-controlled aging cave and production facility which will ripen not only Jasper Hills' cheeses but those of others as well. This vision was sparked by Cabot Creamery's launch into a collaborative project with Jasper Hill that netted winning results. Cabot handed over 250 wheels of single breed, small batch cheddar to be cave-aged at Jasper Hill Farm's cellars. The resulting cheese won gold at 2004 World

Cheese Awards in London, England and was featured in the Williams-Sonoma 2005 Holiday catalog until it sold out. Cabot's Director of Marketing Jed Davis called the



experiment a win/win/win – for Cabot, Jasper Hill and consumers who bought out all there was to offer. Based on this initial success, Jasper Hill approached other established labels to see if there might be a need

for aging, ripening or co-branding other Vermont cheeses. So far, Crowley Cheese, Shelburne Farms and Bonnieview Farm have all come on board to avail themselves of what Jasper Hill has to offer. Ideally, Jasper Hill would age, market and distribute cheeses made by other area dairy farmers who have the milk and the ambition to enter cheesemaking as a value-added to their dairy operation. The Kehler brothers are committed to keeping the landscape working and to produce and promote the best small batch artisan cheese that money can buy. This new facility, expected to open in Fall 2006, will help them continue to realize this goal.

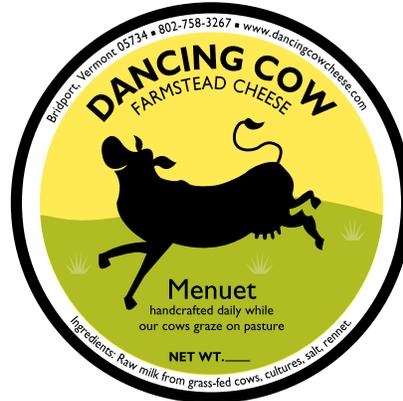
NEW MEMBERS



Dancing Cow Farmstead Cheese

Pennsylvania natives; Steve and Karen Getz are the new breed of Vermont dairy farmers, now cheesemakers. They headed to the Green Mountains in 2002 in search of a new way of life and ended up on a farm at the end of a lane in Bridport. On their web-site (www.dancing-cowcheese.com) they describe the farm as “243 acres of lush pasture and hay fields, with views of the Green Mountains to the east and the Adirondacks to the west. This,” they say, “is home to a herd of blissful bovines. These wonderful cows of all sizes, stripes and colors eat the grass, share their milk, and live their lives peacefully. They are the true source and soul of any cheese we make.”

Making cheese wasn't the Getz's initial intent but when they discovered that the cost of producing milk was equal to or greater than the cost of selling that milk, they did their homework, hooked up with a knowledgeable local, and turned to cheese. They are milking their herd of 22 cows to make a seasonal, grass-fed, raw milk, organic cheese—10,000 pounds this year if all goes well. They milk the cows



and move the milk, never cooled or stored, directly into the cheese room where Karen Getz and cheese-making partner, Jeanne Finnerty will be making the cheese—they call Menuet—seven days a week using a scrupulously clean 400-liter cheese vat imported from Holland. Their goal is to produce cheese, “that captures the best flavors of the pasture,” including the sweet clover, dandelion, bluegrass, trefoil and other grasses available May to November. Distribution of cheese, once aged 60-90 days, will be mostly within Vermont. With a pristine new facility, a happy herd of once-a-day milkers, pesticide-free fields, cheese-making partners and a nuclear family committed to the lifestyle, Dancing Cow is off to a flying start.

Crawford Family Farm: A First Person Account

It all began one summer, at the end of a lovely meal at Chester's in Provincetown. Intrigued by a dessert that featured local cheeses, I ordered it and was stunned by the creamy delicacies. After that, I began to search out local cheeses at stores, and guided by Henry Tewksbury's *Cheeses of Vermont*, made a goal of sampling all of the cheeses he wrote about. At the time, I was working in Boston, so I began to try to learn all that I could about the different tastes and textures and how they were achieved. One of my favorite classes was Sunday afternoons at Formaggio Kitchen in Cambridge. Once a month, cheesemonger Robert Aguilera selected a dozen cheeses, either from a region or from a type of milk, and offered them one at a time paired with a wine. He had been to many of the farms where the cheeses were made, and lead me to the idea of “terroir” or the ways in which a cheese (and a wine) reflect the flavors of the earth and the grasses. These classes also gave me confidence as a customer at their huge counter of cheese—where I could ask for some of the cheese from the class, or for something else that was like them. I think it was while savoring a morsel of Abbey de Bellocq, I was hit with the inspiration that someday I, too, wanted to make a cheese like this one. My other favorite was the Cheese Tuesdays at L'Espalier. Normally the restaurant would have been out of my price range, but on Tuesdays, they served a prix fixe sampling menu, with a fourth course of a cheese plate



Dancing Cow Farmstead Cheese



Dancing Cow's Ayrshires



Cheesemaker Maria Trumpler from Cræwford Family Farm

with 10 or so cheeses. In their New England cheesemaker's series, they invited a cheesemaker to choose the cheeses as well as bring some of their own, fresh from the cave. At these dinners, I met Willow Smart of Willow Hill Farm and Janine Putnam of Thistle Hill Farm, and I sensed a kinship with them, which furthered my determination to seriously pursue this new path.

In the fall of 2004, I took a leave from my job in Boston to seriously explore whether becoming an artisanal cheesemaker was realistic. The previous spring I had learned the basics of cheesemaking from

Ricki Carroll and Jim Wallace at New England Cheesemaking, and was regularly making cheese in my kitchen. In October, I saw my first cheese house and cave at the open house at Vermont Shepherd, and knew that I wanted a cave of my own. But after visiting a few more cheesemakers, I hit a low point, realizing that learning to care for sheep on my own was probably more than I could handle while also mastering cheesemaking and marketing. Meanwhile, I had found a source of raw cow's milk at a neighboring farm, and was making a creamy and delicious tomme style cheese from the milk of their Ayrshire cows. As I got to know the dairy farmers better, they shared their interest in exploring the possibility of making cheese themselves. Over the next few months, we visited a few more cheesemakers, hashed out a business plan, and Cræwford Family Farm came together.

I had to pinch myself the first time I made cheese in our stainless steel vat in our sparkling new cheese room with a view of the Green mountains. Now we have a cave full of hundreds of pounds of



Vermont Ayr gently aging, and at our first Vermont Cheese Council meeting, I found myself sitting next to Willow Smart. I told her of the spark I had gotten from seeing her at L'Espalier, and she was delighted, since she was uncertain what came from such presentations. She suggested that I share this story in the newsletter to illustrate the potential effects of efforts made by retailers and restaurants to educate and support the cheese passions of urban residents.

Coast to Coast

Vermont Cheeses Make It at San Francisco's Cow Girl Creamery

In 1998, following successful careers as Bay Area chefs, Sue Conley and Peggy Smith launched Tomales Bay Foods in Point Reyes Station, California. Their plan was to carry the region's finest natural foods and other products, from prepared dishes, fresh, organic fruits and vegetables, wines and cheeses. The two also began to make cheese and, from that, Cowgirl Creamery was

born. In 2003 they opened Cowgirl Creamery Cheese Shop at the Ferry Building, along San Francisco's Embarcadero. Among their most popular offerings are the products of some VCC members. Says Cheese buyer Lenny Rice, "**Jasper Hill** is my most wanted; **Shelburne Farms** is my steady horse, **Blythedale's** Camembert are my "hot cakes" and **Vermont Butter & Cheese's** cultured butter is in some of the best restaurants in this part of the country."

Sonoma Valley Serves Vermont Cheese

The Forth Annual "Opportunities and Challenges Conference" hosted in March by The Epicurean Connection in Sonoma featured VIAC's Jeffrey Roberts as a guests speaker. In addition the event, which drew 150 attendees over three days, served cheese from **Vermont Shepherd, Cabot Creamery, Jasper Hill Farm** and **Shelburne Farms**.

The dates for next year's event are March 6-8, 2007. Learn more at www.sheanadavis.com.

Introducing: New Cheeses

Champlain Valley Creamery has announced two new cheeses. Organic Fresh Mozzarella came out in August in time for tomato season at the Middlebury Farmers Market. CVC has continued to produce it for several restaurants throughout the winter, with hopes to expand production this summer. The new Champlain Triple is a soft-ripened, bloomy rind triple crème that is aged 21 days. Each piece is approximately four ounces. Although it is in very limited production and retail right now (available at the Middlebury Coop, Fat Hen Market, City Market in Burlington), CVC hopes to scale up for the summer season.



Champlain Triple

Vermont Butter & Cheese Company has announced two new cheeses and the return of a previously popular one. This line of aged cheeses are all made in the traditional French style. The delicate rinds allow them to be enjoyed as fresh as two weeks or more piquant at one month of age. Bonne-Bouche, French for “tasty little bite” is a hand ladled ash-ripened goat cheese. It is ripened for two weeks before being packaged in its own “micro-cave” wooden crate. The flavor is mild with a creamy paste. Coupole looks like



From top to bottom: Vermont Butter & Cheese Company's Bonne-Bouche, Bijou, and Coupole.

a snow covered dome. A mild goat flavor, the paste is dense. Bijou is made in the style of a French crottin. It is wonderful cut in half and broiled on a baguette with salad.

Cabot Creamery has taken its award-winning expertise to the mild segment of the cheddar market with the introduction of their new Cabot Mild Reserve Cheddar, unveiled at the 31st Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco this winter. The new Cabot Mild Reserve Cheddar has an abundantly rich, buttery taste and creamy texture. As is tradition in Vermont, this is a white cheddar that is noteworthy as well for its attractive, black packaging. This item will be sold online at www.shopcabot.com and is available nationally wherever Cabot is sold.



Know Your Cheese: *In all shapes and sizes*

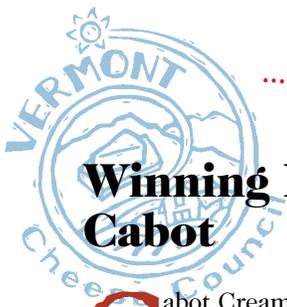
Cheese comes in many forms, ranging from soft to hard. To know which category your favorite cheese falls into, consult the following:

Soft: Brie, Camembert, Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, Feta, Mascarpone, Neufchatel, Ricotta

Semisoft: Asiago, Baby Swiss, Blue, Brick, Gorgonzola, Havarti, Limburger, Monterey Jack, Mozzarella, Muenster

Firm: Edam, Gouda, Provolone

Hard: Cheddar, Colby, Colby Jack, Gruyere, Parmesan, Romano, Swiss



Winning News for Cabot

Cabot Creamery Cooperative's naturally-aged Sharp Cheddar reinforced its status as "World's Best Cheddar" while overall Cabot captured two gold medals and a total of five trophies at The 26th Biennial World Championship Cheese Contest, held in March in Madison, Wisconsin. "It is indeed an honor to have the world's best dairy judges select our cheese as the "World's Best Cheddar" for a second time in less than a decade." remarked Cabot President and CEO Rich Stammer. Cabot's results in the Mild, Medium, Sharp and Extra Sharp Cheddar categories included two 1st place, one 2nd place and one 3rd place awards. Overall, Cabot captured five of the twelve total cheddar trophies as well as grabbing 2nd place for Cabot Salted Butter and a tie for 4th place Cabot Unsalted Butter.

Two VCC members have been named finalists for the 2006 National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) Product Awards Competition. Cabot Vintage Choice Cheddar was selected as a finalist in the category of "Outstanding Classic" and Cabot Clothbound Cheddar was selected as a finalist in the "Outstanding Cheese or Dairy Product" category. Vermont Butter & Cheese Company's Creme Fraiche has also been nominated in the "Outstanding Product" category. Winners will be announced at the International Summer Fancy Food Show in NYC on July 9th, 2006.



Also in the Winner's Column

VCC Member Franklin Foods took 2nd place in the "Reduced Fat Cheese" category while Vermont Butter & Cheese Company of Websterville took a 3rd place ribbon for its Goat's Milk Feta at the World Championship Cheese Contest.

Shelburne Farms' New Head Cheesemaker

Jaime Yturriandobeitia has navigated a winding but interesting path to her new job as Head Cheesemaker at Shelburne Farms. Following an upbringing on a beef cattle ranch in Oregon and a college education in Idaho, Jaime came east with the intention of getting a PhD in biochemistry at the University of Vermont. Realizing that she is not "a lab person," she headed off to travel Central America where she met a friend of Shelburne Farms' then Cheesemaker Jamie Miller, spent a season in the cheese department and fell in love with cheesemaking. "Coming from an agricultural background, I think it is important that people understand where food comes from and how much work goes into that production," she says. "Here, I've found a way to use my chemistry in a setting where there is a product I'm happy with making. It's a pleasure working at Shelburne Farms. I really enjoy the process of making cheese – within 24 hours of milking our cows; the raw milk has been transformed into cheese that is ready to age for up to three years."

Making great cheese is driven by a mastery of both the science and art of cheesemaking. "Our current focus is to fortify our efforts with more scientific inquiry and discipline," says Scott Buckingham, Director of Farm Products. "Jaime brings a great mix



Cheesemaker Jaime Yturriandobeitia

of quality control, data analysis, and experimental design skills, all of which she is able to apply to a craft she is passionate about," says Buckingham.

Fit For a King

Blythedale Farm in Corinth was equally pleased and surprised to learn that their camembert was served at a high-profile White House dinner for Britain's Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla, this past November. The Vermont camembert was joined on the menu with other quintessentially American foods such as buffalo tenderloin, roasted corn and wild rice. The cheese was prefaced with the word "Vermont" possibly to ensure that the mild, creamy French-style cheese was clearly understood to be made in the United States. Blythedale's Vermont camembert and brie are available at specialty and natural foods markets in Vermont as well as in some supermarket specialty cheese cases. For more information, call 439-6575 or e-mail blythedalefarm@valley.net.



Technical Tid-Bits

Lazy Lady Farm cheesemaker Laini Fondiller, offers novice and veteran cheesemakers these technical tid-bits adapted from Chapter 3 of Paul Kindstedt's *American Farmstead Cheese* book. For more information about purchasing the book, contact the publisher Chelsea Green Publishing Company, (703) 443.9418, www.chelseagreen.com.

Rennet-coagulated Cooked Cheeses

- Immediately after cutting, the curd particles are very fragile
- Therefore, the curd is generally left undisturbed for at least 3-5 minutes and up to 10-15 minutes. This time period is called "healing".
- The length of healing will largely depend on the moisture content of the final cheese.

Low Moisture Cheeses

- Stirring begins within 3-5 minutes.
- Stirring starts out slowly, it is continuous and vigorous enough to prevent clumping
- Smaller curd particles have more surface area available, therefore the expulsion is greater and hence lose more moisture.
- Stirring keeps curd particles from matting which again allows for whey expulsion.
- Stirring creates localized pressure on the curd which results in whey expulsion.
- Partial draining of the whey can be done during the cooking to facilitate syneresis
- Time-temp profile: If temperature increases too quickly a dense skin may form that can impede

syneresis resulting in abnormally high moisture content for the final cheese

- In summary, smaller curd size, continuous stirring, higher temperature, longer cooking time, and lower curd PH will result in a low moisture cheese.
- Heating time and temp is wide ranged and depends on the type of cheese that you are making

High Moisture Cheeses

- The curd is left to heal for 10-15 minutes.
- Stirring is very gentle
- Curd size will be larger than the low moisture cheese.
- Intermittent stirring will allow some clumping to occur and will favor greater moisture retention

and greater variation in moisture content among particles.

- Heating should be gradual in the beginning and more rapidly as the final temperature approaches.
- The longer the curd remains at an elevated temperature the greater the risk of too much whey expulsion.
- In summary, larger curd size, less stirring, lower cooking temp and time and higher PH will create a higher moisture cheese.
- Average heating time and temp: 2-6 degree increase from setting temp. Time between cutting, draining or dipping is less than 1 hour with minimal stirring.

Coming in the fall issue of the VCC newsletter: "Washing during cooking and holding."

Raw Milk Cheese:

Separating fact from misinformation

Janet Fletcher, author of *The Cheese Course* and a staff food writer for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, cites the following inaccuracies which she believes have contributed to Americans' confusion about raw milk cheeses:

They following statements are **not accurate**:

1. Pasteurized milk is sterile.
2. Raw milk has more nutrient value than pasteurized milk.
3. Pregnant women should always avoid all raw-milk cheese.
4. Raw-milk cheese is better than cheese made from pasteurized milk.
5. Raw-milk cheeses aged more than 60 days are risk-free.
6. Mandatory pasteurization would make cheese safe for all.

Want the RIGHT information? Read Janet's complete article "The Myths About Raw Milk Cheese" in *Specialty Foods Magazine*, on-line at <http://www.specialtyfood.com/do/news/ViewNewsArticle?id=1841>



Molds and Artisan Cheeses

If one had only experienced cheese that came in individually wrapped orange slices, then mold would seem to be something to avoid at all costs. But without mold, cheese would not exist. Cheese is created through the mixing of milk with non-harmful types of bacteria, mold or yeast. Most people who enjoy blue cheese may not realize that what makes it “blue” is the introduction of bacteria or mold spores directly into the cheese. For other types of cheeses, bacteria or molds spores can be intentionally added to the outside of the cheese in a wash or a spray to achieve a certain effect as the cheese ripens, such as is the case with

Blythedale’s Camembert or **Jasper Hill’s** Constant Bliss. Sometimes cheese is intentionally left out in the air to attract bacteria and molds that naturally circulate in the atmosphere affecting the cheese’s appearance and taste, such as is the case with **Vermont Shepherd** or **Orb Weaver’s** Cave Aged cheese. All cheese continues to ripen and “grow” until their outer rind has been breached. This process of ripening will often include the development of harmless exterior molds. Personal taste usually dictates what molds are acceptable or even desirable. Some people prefer to cut off even the most intentional molds. Others savor the fuzzy white

rinds as part of the full cheese experience. Artisanal, hand-made cheeses will frequently sport a mold on the outside of the rind and these are a natural part of the cheese’s individual character. If your taste is less daring or if the mold looks too strange to you, you can always take the most cautious tact and cut away a half inch of cheese on all sides of the visible mold. But, take a chance and your taste buds may tell you that looks can be deceiving indeed.

Adapted from the 2005 Provisions International Ltd. Catalog’

The Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese at UVM

Course Offerings, Spring 2006

Essential Principles and Practices of Cheesemaking

May 22-24

This is the second in a series of courses aimed at providing technical education to cheesemakers and others interested in cheese and its manufacturing. Participants in the Essential Principles and Practices of Cheesemaking will learn the fundamentals of cheese-making and quality control practices through lectures and practical exercises. The three day course is divided into two parts. The first part introduces participants to the different families of cheese, and the basic principles of cheese manufacturing and aging. The second part includes practical hands on exercises to demonstrate the making of two different varieties of cheese (a fresh acid-coagulated cheese and a bloomy rind cheese), as well as the basics of quality control and assurance. Wrapping up the course, the instructors will discuss practical approaches for setting up an outside laboratory and routine testing program. Instructors: Montse Almena Ph.D., Paul Kindstedt, Ph.D., Marc Druart, Master Cheesemaker. Fee: \$715. by May 8th, after \$735: includes coffee/breakfast, lunch and a binder of materials.

Hygiene and Food Safety in Cheesemaking

May 25-26

During the two day Hygiene and Food Safety in Cheesemaking, course, participants will explore biological hazards capable of causing food borne illnesses if present in cheese. Not only will these hazards be identified, but their source and control during the process of cheese production will be explored. Topics to address the control of these hazards will include good manufacturing practices, cleaning and sanitizing issues and temperature (i.e. heat treatment). Physical and chemical hazards in cheese will also be addressed with emphasis on the identification and eradication of potential sources of physical and chemical hazards. The course will conclude with a discussion of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system and how to apply it to the production of a safer product. Instructor: Todd Pritchard Ph.D. Fee: \$445. by May 11th - after \$465: includes coffee/breakfast, lunch and a binder of materials.

Vermont Cheesemakers may qualify for reduced course fee. For more information or to register contact: Jody Farnham jfarnham@uvm.edu, 802-656-8300

Vermont Dairy Task Force Created

In the spring of 2005, Vermont Governor James Douglas and Secretary of Agriculture Steve Kerr announced the formation of Vermont's Dairy Task Force. The task force was called together to address the changing trends in the dairy industry in Vermont.

The Dairy Task Force was established to examine ways to stabilize dairy farmer net income, balance supply and demand for milk, and raise public awareness of the relevance and social importance of dairy farming in Vermont. "Agriculture Means Business" for the state of Vermont and the dairy industry ties the land and farmers to Vermont dairy processors that provide thousands of jobs for the state. The members of the Vermont Dairy Task Force are from all aspects of the state's dairy industry, including current Vermont Cheese Council President Jon Wright from Taylor Farm in Londonderry. Members represent multiple facets of the dairy industry including representatives from dairy cooperatives, agriculture related businesses, dairy processing, organizations representing farmers in Vermont and dairy farmers themselves. The input of these dairy farmer members of the task force is important in providing direction and sage advice on how goals and strategies will affect dairy farmers, the backbone of Vermont's dairy industry.

Goals of the Task Force, announced in January 2006, are:

- Reduce costs, increase returns and increase profitability of dairy farms as measured by return on assets to 8%
- Increase the dairy herd in



Sarah Isham-VEDA, Bob Parsons-Farm Viability Program, Harvey Smith-State Rep, Dave Lane-Dep. Com. Ag, Diane Bothfeld- Ag Development Coordinator, Jed Davis-Cabot, Steve Kerr-Sec. of Ag, Jon Wright-Taylor Farm.

- Vermont to 150,000 animals
- Enhance the dairy industry by attracting strategically important new processing to the state while developing new opportunities for existing processing including assisting with their innovation and growth
- Enhance the image and attitude of Vermont's dairy industry and dairy products

The ongoing work of the Task Force will be directed by their four committees: Business Management, Economic Development, Government/Community Relations and Information & Education. For more information contact Diane Bothfeld, VT Agency of Agriculture at 802-828-3835.

Tales from the World Wide Web

The web site www.artisanalcheese.com, offers cheese lovers an education about artisanal cheese including how to buy, cook with, and serve some of the world's best cheeses. Founded by Chef Terrance Brennan, whose New York City restaurants Picholine and Artisanal Fromagerie & Bistro revolutionized cheese appreciation in the United States, Artisanal Premium Cheese makes the world's finest cheeses available nationwide as never before. Recently, an artisanal collection of five cheeses from **Jasper Hill Farm** was offered. Setting a new record, the collection sold more in the first six hours than the previous collection of (California cow's milk cheeses) sold in two weeks. Check it out.



Coming Events: Big on Cheese

- **The 5th Annual Strolling of the Heifers**, June 1-4 in Brattleboro, Vermont includes a Dairy fest and Marketplace on the Brattleboro Common on Saturday, June 3rd. Samples of many of Vermont's finest cheeses will be available at the fun filled, family event.



Strolling of the Heifers

Vermont Farmstead Cheese Study Available

A study of 23 Vermont farmstead cheesemakers was conducted from January to March 2006. A copy of the report can be requested by contacting Ethan Parke, Farm Viability Program Coordinator, VT Housing & Conservation Board, 149 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-0795.

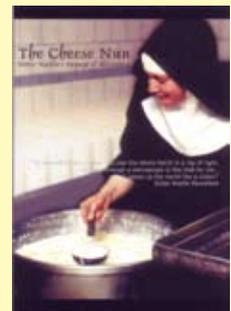
- **The Stowe Wine Event**, will be held on June 23-25 at The Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe. This three-day event draws visitors from across the country and will feature VCC participants including: **Cabot Creamery, Champlain Organic Creamery, Frog City Cheese, Grafton Village Cheese, Green Mountain Blue Cheese, Neighborly Farm, Shelburne Farms, Taylor Farm and Willow Hill Farm.**
- One of Vermont's "Top 10 Fall Events," is the **Plymouth Cheese & Harvest Festival** at the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth Notch from 10- 4, on September 9th. This is the 10th year of the festival which draws 500 or more people annually. Cheese will be

front and center this year as the newly reopened Plymouth Cheese Factory, home to **Frog City Cheese**, offers samples of their products as well as other cheeses for taste and sale. Last year featured cheeses from **Taylor Farm, Grafton Village Cheese, Shelburne Farms, Cabot Creamery and Crowley Cheese** – and this year will showcase even more Vermont cheesemakers. Other planned activities include but are not limited to wagon rides, sheep shearing, and historic farm demonstrations, fiddle music and demonstrations of fiber arts.

- Two weeks later, on September 30, it's the **Fall Cheese Festival** at **Taylor Farm**, in Londonderry. Check www.taylorfarmvermont.com for details.

The "Cheese Nun" Documentary Shown at Taylor Farm

On March 11th and 12th, **Taylor Farm** and Artisan Made-Northeast hosted a group of cheesemakers, retailers and cheese enthusiasts for a showing of the award winning film, "The Cheese Nun." Great company, a groaning board of cheese samples and an inspiring piece of documentary film making lifted the spirits on a grey, wintry day. The film chronicles Sister Noella Marcellino's sabbatical to France on a Fulbright to further her research on *Geotrichum candidum* (a fungus that grows on certain cheeses during early ripening and lends flavor and character). Her research acts as the spring board for her revelatory collaboration with fellow researchers in France and poignant interactions with traditional French cheesemakers from the major regions. Told with wit and intelligence by a master documentarian, Sister Noella's story mixes cutting edge science, the craft and art of traditional cheesemaking and great humanity and affirms the message of preserving traditional cheesemaking methods and the biodiversity of microorganisms. For more information about the film, contact discovery@artisanmade-ne.com.



Shelburne Farms: First in Vermont to Earn Certified Humane Certification

Shelburne Farms' award-winning Farmhouse Cheddar has received "Certified Humane Farm Animal Care" certification from the Humane Farm Animal Care organization in Herndon, VA. Shelburne Farms is the first farm in Vermont and the third cheesemaker in the country to receive the certification.

Shelburne Farms is a 1,400-acre

working farm, National Historic Landmark and nonprofit national environmental education center dedicated to rural land use practices that are environmentally, economically and culturally sustainable. The mission of Shelburne Farms is to cultivate a conservation ethic by demonstrating the stewardship of natural and agricultural resources. The "Certified Humane Raised and Handled" label which will soon be applied to the thousands of pounds of cheddar cheese that is shipped throughout the United States and Canada, assures consumers that a meat, poultry, egg or dairy product has been produced according to HFAC's precise standards for humane



farm animal treatment. Animals must receive a nutritious diet without antibiotics or hormones and must be raised with shelter, resting areas and space sufficient to support natural behavior.

Congratulations to Shelburne Farms and its herd of happy and well-tended Brown Swiss cows (shown above).

Update from the Vermont Cheese Council Website

Since its launch in 1999, the web site www.vtcheese.com has been the collective face of Vermont's artisan cheesemaking community to the world. The site features a list of our members and their products as well as virtual tours to many of their farms and places of business. Typical, monthly traffic at the site is between 13,000 to 21,000 visitors, which represent 400 to 700 people, per day.

The most popular parts of the site are the Vermont Cheese Trail, our Recipes and our Cow Cheese, Goat Cheese and Sheep Cheese pages, which list cheese varieties and links to the Vermont cheese companies that make those varieties.

Recently, a "member-only" chat room has been added. Here cheesemakers from across the state can ask and answer those burning questions that only cheesemakers pose.

Also busy is the "contact us" feature of the site. In the past few months, we have experienced a wide range of questions and comments.

Here are just a few:

- I always bought Vermont Butter & Cheese's Quark in Aptos, California they can't find it anymore. Is there another store where I can buy it near Watsonville, CA 95076 ? (Answer: The closest to you may be Gene's Fine Foods in Saratoga.)
- Is the Plymouth Cheese Company back in business? (Answer: Yes, indeed. Frog City Cheese is now in residence at the old Plymouth Cheese Factory at the Coolidge Homestead in Plymouth Notch.)
- Are there any pet friendly places on the cheese trail? (Answer: That depends on what you mean by pet-friendly. Obviously, we love animals – cows, goats, sheep etc., but we don't let any of them into our cheese rooms.)
- I would like to know how to order your cheese wholesale. I will be opening a store in providence R.I. (Answer: Each cheesemaker represents a separate business. Take a look at the cheese map included in this issue and contact the cheesemakers directly.)



American Gothic, Vermont-style, John and Janine Putnam of Thistle Hill.

And Over That "Old" Medium — Television

John Putnam of Thistle Hill Farm had a highly unusual eight-minute long televised interview about his award-winning Tarantaise cheese. The interview was recorded at the ABC studios in Boston on March 9th. It aired in March and can still be seen in its entirety as a Video on Demand on the ABC website at the following link: <http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=1737711>



SMALL BITES

In a recent syndicated column, diva Martha Stewart wrote: “We’ve traditionally viewed European cheeses as superior, but American varieties now compete with those made abroad”. Two of the best she mentions: **Vermont Shepherd** aged sheep’s-milk cheese; and **Vermont Butter & Cheese Company’s** Vermont Bonne-Bouche ash-ripened goat’s-milk cheese.



Vermont Brewer’s Association held a legislative reception at the Capital Plaza in Montpelier, on February 1. Pairing their cheeses with selected beers were **Grafton Village Cheese, Cabot Creamery, Champlain Creamery, Willow Hill, Neighborly Farms, Taylor Farms** and **Lazy Lady Farms**. Needless to say, a good time was had by all.



Carleton Yoder from **Champlain Valley Creamery** and Gail Holmes from **Cobb Hill Cheese** were quoted about milk quality, sources and sanitation in a new book by Tim Smith called “*Making Artisan Cheese: 50 Fine Cheeses That You Can Make In Your Own Kitchen.*”



A delegation of senior managers and chefs from Wegman’s Food Markets, including Cathy Gaffney, Director of the Specialty Cheese Shops, visited **Grafton Village Cheese** recently to see and taste their Vermont “terroir”. Over a two day period the group of twenty settled into the Old Tavern Inn of Grafton—an historic bed and breakfast, followed by “hands-on” cheesemaking

— which impressed the group so much so that a few volunteered to stay right through the aging process — which could last six years! The Chef at the Old Tavern Inn of Grafton prepared a most amazing dinner, featuring Grafton cheddar (including their reserve of 8-year aged cheddar) as well as other VT cheeses and butters, in several dishes.



On February 12 **Lazy Lady Farms’** Laini Fondiller went to Maine to teach a class for the Maine Cheese Guild. She was impressed with their enthusiasm and interest in establishing open communications with cheesemakers in VT. There are 70 members—both cheesemakers and cheese lovers—in their guild.



Taylor Farm has put in a new stainless steel brine tank which, behind the scenes, greatly improves their operations. They also finished off basement storage which will allow them to age 50,000 more pounds of cheese. Their addition of a 20’x40’ retail space has also created a popular stop-over spot for visitors traversing the Vermont Cheese Trail. Taylor Farms carries numerous cheese related items, books, cutting

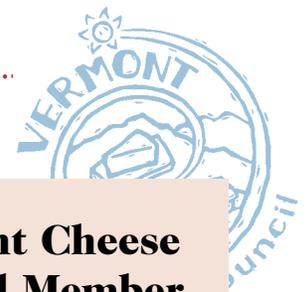
boards, home baked breads and desserts, herbs, condiments, syrup, honey and more. They offer more than 6,500 visitors a year a great selection of cheeses from throughout New England including VCC members **Thistle Hill, Grafton, Woodcock, Consider Bardwell** and others.



In the February 19 edition of *The Burlington Free Press’* Living section ran the article “Say, Cheese!” by Sally Pollack. It included a great front-page photo to accompany the article which chronicles Sally’s experience at the cheese-and-beer tasting, Vermont Pub and Brewery in Burlington, is where the Vermont-made artisan and farmstead cheeses were served including Constant Bliss from **Jasper Hill**, Gore Dawn Zola from **Green Mountain Blue Cheese**, two- year Farmhouse Cheddar from **Shelburne Farms**, Vermont Chevre from **Vermont Butter & Cheese Company**, Tarentaise from **Thistle Hill Farm**, Buck Hill Sunrise from **Lazy Lady Farm** and Stone House six-year aged from **Grafton Village Cheese**. Greg Noonan, the pub’s brew master, selected the beers to match the seven cheeses. Montse Almena of Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese, selected the cheeses!



Young Leah Wright, 11, tends the retail store at Taylor Farm.



Carleton Yoder from **Champlain Valley Creamery** gave a talk entitled “Cheese Making in Vermont” to the Elder Enrichment Education Center in S. Burlington in November. There he discussed the basics of cheese-making and featured a tasting with two cheeses from his label: Old Fashion Organic Cream Cheese and Organic Fresh Mozzarella, as well as others including **Shelburne Farms**

2-year Cheddar, **Lazy Lady** “La Roche” and **Green Mountain Blue Cheese**.

Three Shepherds of the Mad River Valley was featured in the December issue of *Cooking Light* and February 2006 *Lehigh Valley Style*. Both articles featured the Mad River Valley and highlighted **Three Shepherd’s** cheese and their Schoolhouse Market where many additional Vermont cheeses can be purchased. Check it out at http://www.rootswork.org/three_shepherds.htm.

Vermont Cheese Council Member Cheesemakers

- Bingham’s Farm
- Blue Ledge Farm
- Blythedale Farm
- Bonnieview Farm
- Cabot Creamery
- Champlain Valley Creamery
- Cobb Hill Cheese
- Consider Bardwell Farm
- Crawford Family Farm
- Creek Road Cheese Co.
- Crowley Cheese Inc.
- Dancing Cow Farm
- Doe’s Leap Goat Farm
- Franklin Foods
- Frog City Cheese
- Grafton Village Cheese Co
- Green Mountain Blue Cheese
- Hope Farm Sheep Cheese
- Jasper Hill Farm
- La Fromagerie du Royaume
- Lake’s End Cheeses
- Lazy Lady Farm
- Maryella Farm
- Neighborly Farms
- Orb Weaver Farm
- Peaked Mountain Farm
- Shelburne Farms
- Taylor Farm
- Thistle Hill Farm
- Three Owls Sheep Dairy
- Three Shepherds of the Mad River Valley
- Twig Farm
- Vermont Butter & Cheese Company
- Vermont Shepherd
- West River Creamery
- Willow Hill Farm
- Woodcock Farm
- Woodstock Water Buffalo Company

Vermont Hospitality Council

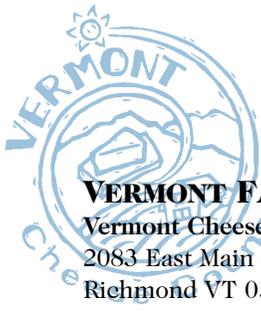
The Vermont Hospitality Council (VHC - the former Vermont Lodging & Restaurant Association that is now the tourism arm of the Vermont Chamber), held its inaugural “Taste of Vermont” and Legislative Reception at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier on March 29th. About 250 people attended.

Governor Jim Douglas spoke at the event about Vermont’s unique brand of hospitality. He talked about importance of giving guests to the Green Mountain state a true Vermont experience and cited Vermont cheese and maple products as two of our most special offerings.

VCC members on hand to showcase their cheeses as part of the tasting were: Wendy Brewer, Grafton Village Cheese, who organized the spread, Jon Wright, Taylor Farm, Willow Smart and David Phinney, Willow Hill Farm, Scott Buckingham, Shelburne Farms and Peggy Galloup, Consider Bardwell Farm. Also offered were cheeses from VCC members Jasper Hill, Franklin Foods, and Frog City Cheese.



From left to right: Scott Buckingham, Shelburne Farms; Wendy Brewer, Grafton Village Cheese; David Phinney, Willow Hill; Jed Davis, Cabot Creamery; Willow Smart, Willow Hill; Jon Wright, Taylor Farm.



VERMONT FARM BUREAU
Vermont Cheese Council
2083 East Main Street
Richmond VT 05477

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

**Vermont Institute for Artisan
Cheese at the University of
Vermont, Spring courses:**
Burlington, Vermont

**May 22 -24: Essential Principles
and Practices of Cheesemaking,**

**May 25- 26: Hygiene and Food
Safety in Cheesemaking,**
For more information contact:
Jody Farnham, jfarnham@uvm.
edu, 802-656-8300

5th Annual Strolling of the Heifers
June 1-4
Brattleboro, Vermont
www.strollingoftheheifers.com
For more information, contact
Exec. Director, Orly Munzing,
orly@svceable.net

June 23 – 25
**Stowe Wine Event at the Trapp
Family Lodge in Stowe**

July 20 – 22
**23rd Annual American Cheese
Society Conference and
Competition**
Portland, Oregon

Offering a unique opportunity
to learn about more than 700
American artisan and specialty
cheeses.
www.cheesesociety.org

July 21 - 22
Vermont Brewers Festival
Waterfront Park, Burlington, VT
[www.vermontbrewers.com/festival.
html](http://www.vermontbrewers.com/festival.html)

September 9
Cheese and Harvest Festival
*President Calvin Coolidge State
Historic Site, Plymouth Notch, VT*
For information: 802-672-3650;
frogcity@vermontel.net

September 30
Fall Cheese Festival
Taylor Farm, Londonderry
www.taylorfarmvermont.com

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Contact:

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