
CHEESE PARINGS

Volume 6, Issue 3

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE CHEESE GUILD

July 2008

MAINE



CHEESE GUILD

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MAINE CHEESEMAKERS TAKE 7 AWARDS AT ACS!

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Letter from the President's Desk

Let them eat cheese!

Farmers' market season is upon us, and boy is it great to be back at market. There's something about the exchange between creator and consumer. There's an accountability, and a sense of ownership there that you don't get anywhere else.

As gas prices increase and the cost of everything from plastic tubs to cheese cultures creeps upwards it becomes clear that change is in the air. Folks are feeling the pinch at the gas pump as well as the grocery store and it brings things into perspective.

Where does this tightening of the wallet leave artisan cheese? In a very good position. The weakening dollar and increasing transportation costs makes domestic cheese more competitive with imports. There are still millions of American consumers who haven't tasted artisanal domestic cheese and who think European factory cheeses are the real deal. If this economy causes them to taste our stuff, there's no going back.

Let them eat cheese!

Everyone appreciates good food and while some folks may not revel in a natural mold rind or swoon with delight from the scent of Epoisse that does not mean they don't deserve it. We recently had a Children's Day at the Lakes Region Farmers' Market and we put on a cheese tasting for kids where they could taste Fresh Cheddar Curd and Cloth Bandaged 6-Month Cheddar and vote for their favorite. To our surprise the six-month cheddar won hands down. These young folks have more advanced palates than we give them credit for, and I think that may be the case with many people we wouldn't suspect of loving artisan cheese. We've all spoken with folks who say they love sharp cheese -- "the sharper the better!" Often what they really mean rather than sharp is that they love a flavorful cheese. Small-scale cheese certainly has flavor and farmers' markets are a great place to introduce people to our unique cheeses.

Let them eat cheese!

So get out there to your local farmers' market and sell or buy but most especially share the love of cheese with your neighbors and eat the best food available while doing so.

See you at the market!

Jennifer Betancourt

CHICAGO, IL -- Cheesemakers of the Maine Cheese Guild won 7 ribbons including two blue ribbons for first place in their categories at the 2008 American Cheese Society Competition. Six different participating Guild cheesemakers won at least one award. The judging took place at the annual ACS Conference, held in Chicago, IL this year, and included 1149 cheeses entered from 187 North American cheese producers making this one of the largest U.S. cheese competition in history.

The winners from Maine competed in a broad range of categories and styles using cow's, goat's, and sheep's milk, several of them organic. Because the competition provides useful feedback to cheesemakers from the judging in addition to the chance to win a nationally recognized award for their efforts.

The ribbons were awarded on July 25th in the Merle Reskin Theatre in front of hundreds of conference participants including many of the competing cheesemakers.

2008 American Cheese Society Competition Award Winners from the Maine Cheese Guild are:

FIRST PLACE --*Soft Ripened Cheeses / Made From Goat's Milk* -- *Liberty Fields Farm, Saco Bay Dusk

FIRST PLACE --*American Originals / Monterey Jack Cow's Milk Cheese* -- *Pineland Farms Creamery, Monterey Jack

SECOND PLACE --*Feta Made From Sheeps Milk* -- *Appleton Creamery, Sophia Feta

SECOND PLACE --*Fresh Goat Cheese / Hand*

Shaped -- *Sunset Acres, Logs

SECOND PLACE --*Cultured Milk Products / Creme Fraiche Made From Cow's Milk* -- *Silvery Moon Creamery, Creme Fraiche

SECOND PLACE --*Aged Goat's Milk Cheeses* -- *Appleton Creamery, Chevre in Grape Leaf

THIRD PLACE --*Farmstead Cheeses / Fresh Goat Rindless* -- *Painted Pepper Farm, Dairy Delights Chevre Farmstead Plain

According to the ACS web site, in order to qualify for the competition, cheesemakers and their products must meet the following basic criteria:

* Entering companies must hold current membership and be "in good standing" with the ACS. * Cheeses entered into the competition must have been available for sale to the general public at least 12 months prior to the competition. * Cheeses entered into the competition must be characteristic of the accepted guidelines for the category in which the cheeses are entered.

Entries are judged by teams of technical and aesthetic judges, with each team scoring the individual entry based on a cumulative point system. In order to be eligible for a First, Second, or Third place ribbon, scores must meet a minimum number of points for each level. If no entries meet the minimum score for a placement level, such as first or second place, then an award is not given for that level.

Point total ties were recognized for second and third place, but first place ribbons were given only to a single cheese in each category.

Minutes of Meeting on April 7, 2008

Attendees: Lore Lipkvich - Garden Lore, Beth Calder - UMaine, John and Mary Belding - Little Falls Farm, Laura Cramer - Maine Food and Lifestyle, Darrell Detour and Jennifer Betancourt - Silvery Moon Creamery, Jordan Godino and Lisa Reilich - Painted Pepper Farm, Anne Bossi and Bob Bowen Sunset Acres, Don Hoenig - State Vet, Gary Anderson- from UMO, Cathe Morrill - State of Maine Cheese, Caitlin Hunter - Appleton Creamery

Jennifer reported on the need to file a tax return. It was voted and decided to go to H & R Block to get it done.

As of this date there were 9 openings left for the April 12 and 13 workshop. Contact Mark Whitney for more info. Mark needs project expenses. Mary will email Mark.

Jennifer thanked Cathe for representing the guild at Ag Days at the Legislature.

Discussion on whether the guild should accept the definitions put forth by ACS for the following: (got these directly from ACS website)

Specialty Cheese

Specialty cheese is defined as a cheese of limited production, with particular attention paid to natural flavor and texture profiles. Specialty cheeses may be made from all types of milk (cow, sheep, goat) and may include flavorings, such as herbs, spices, fruits and nuts.

Artisan or Artisanal Cheese

The word "artisan" or "artisanal" implies that a cheese is produced primarily by hand, in small batches, with particular attention paid to the tradition of the cheesemaker's art, and thus using as little mechanization as possible in the production of the cheese. Artisan, or artisanal, cheeses may be made from all types of milk and may include various flavorings.

Farmstead Cheese

In order for a cheese to be classified as "farmstead," as defined by the American Cheese Society, the cheese must be made with milk from the farmer's own herd, or flock, on the farm where the animals are raised. Milk used in the production of farmstead cheeses may not be obtained from any outside source. Farmstead cheeses may be made from all types of milk and may include various flavorings.

Voted and passed to accept.

These definitions are not enforceable, but will be used primarily as an educational tool by the Guild.

ACS deadline for scholarship for conference is April 30. Discussed sending someone to represent the guild at the

ACS conference. Jennifer to ask VP, Eric Rector if he's be willing. Guild to pay for this representative.

Discussed shipping cheese together for the ACS competition to defray the cost to individual members.

Beth Calder announced that the HACCP workshop at UMO was postponed due to low enrollment. Will shoot for Oct for a one-day workshop.

Discussion for fundraiser - possibilities of calendar, post card and greeting card

Discussed how to handle requests to use the guild logo. Concern expressed over restaurants that state they use Maine cheese on websites and menus, but do not actually purchase Maine cheese on a regular basis. Voted to charge \$500 to restaurants wishing to utilize the MCG logo on their menu. This would ensure that they have a substantial commitment to Maine Cheese.

Laura Cramer from Maine Food and Lifestyle magazine spoke about the opportunities for advertising in the publication, not only for individual cheesemakers but for the Guild as a collective (next issue comes out in May)

Caitlin shared plans to overhaul the website. The new site will allow folks to easily email the entire Guild which should greatly improve communication among members. Currently storage space is maxed out with the site, so Eric has been unable to upload items. Caitlin and Eric will continue working on this. Anyone with edits should continue to forward them to Eric.

Cathe passed our sheet with events coming up. Contact Cathe if interested in any. {Since the meeting, Caitlin emailed this list out to members}

Jennifer has some t-shirts and will send them to Cathe to sell.

Don Hoenig spoke on TB and Brucellosis testing and how the cost to producers might be underwritten. Will be sending out a letter regarding this possible reimbursement to individual producers.

Don announced the hiring another vet to assist at the state level. Don discussed putting together a workshop on potential pathogens targeted to folks producing and selling raw milk. Guild members suggested the information from the workshop be posted on-line for folks who do not attend the workshop. This workshop would include a talk on toxoplasmosis. CDC may be there. Don announced that CPI (consumer product inspectors) will be out training with the dairy inspectors to pick up samples and may be doing farm inspections in the future.

Gary Anderson reported that 7 farms are doing farm lab work as part of the grant he received and the program is

going well.

Respectfully submitted,

Lore Lipkovich

***Janet's Agriculture Tour to France
Maine Cheese Guild***

February 22 – March 3, 2009

Day 1 – Sunday 22nd Feb - Depart from Logan Airport to catch our overnight flight to Paris. Relax with In flight meal service and entertainment.

Day 2 – Monday 23rd Feb Arrive Paris, and transfer to hotel in Paris city center “the City of Lights” is truly one of the world’s great cities. Although it has a population of over 10 million, the historic core of the city is largely untouched by modern development. Its broad boulevards and wide open spaces create stunning vistas punctuated by world famous landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe.

This afternoon there will be a guided panoramic sightseeing tour of the city including the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs Elysees, Place de la Concorde and Notre Dame Cathedral. Welcome dinner tonight. O/N **PARIS (D)**

Day 3 – Tuesday 24th Feb Early departure from hotel this morning to visit Rungis Market in the south of Paris, the largest wholesale market in France. It has a surface area of 320 hectares and employs 15,000 to facilitate the flow of millions of tons of produce, meat, cheese, poultry and even flowers. Rungis is a distribution point of food only for France but for many European countries. France produces more than 250 different cheeses – the selection is endless. There will be a guided tour of the market followed by breakfast with a chance to sample some the local produce being sold.

Afterwards continue heading south passing through the rural regions of Isle de France and Champagne en route to Burgundy with a visit featuring a number of well known cheese makes including Brie and Coloumiers. Lunch included at a Ferme Auberge.

This afternoon continue south visiting en route a dairy farm producing a number of specialty cheeses of this region – St Florentin and Soumaintrain

Arrive later to this afternoon in Dijon. Famed for its spicy mustard produced here, Dijon is the ancient capital of Burgundy. The region, of course, is renowned for its fabulous wine and cheese. Dijon is the perfect place to enjoy these delicacies along with its many fine buildings and old world charm.

O/N **DIJON (BLD)**

Day 4 – Wednesday 25th Feb Depart Dijon this morning and continue south traveling through the famous Cote D’Or (Gold Coast) wine producing region on Burgundy. En route make a stop at a vineyard for a tour of the winery and wine-tasting. A lunch stop will be made in the town of Beaune, an important wine producing centre. The town still retains its defensive city walls as well as many other attractive medieval features. This afternoon continue south through Charolles region of Burgundy where there will be a visit to a goat farm which produces goat cheeses such as Le Charolais and L’Alexou. O/N Clermont Ferrand (BD)

Day 5 – Thursday 26th Feb Today there will be a full day program visiting a number of cheese producers in the Auvergne region. Lunch included today.

Visit Laiterie de la Montagne in St Nectaire which produces a number of cheeses typical to this area including St Nectaire, Cantal and Fourme d’Ambert. Visit Gaec de Joli Bois, a farm with Montbeliarde Cattle (known as the cheese maker breed in France) also producing St Nectaire Cheese. O/N Clermont Ferrand (BL)

Day 6 – Friday 27th Feb Depart the Auvergne today and head north towards the Loire Valley. The Loire is France’s longest river stretching east to west for over 600 miles. The mild climate and fertile alluvial soil make this a region well suited for growing fruit, vines and vegetables. In addition the region is home to a unique concentration of chateaux, some

of the most extravagant and stunning examples of Renaissance and Baroque architecture to be found in all of Europe. Today we visit La Fromagerie Jacquin, which makes a large range of cheese from both cow and goat’s milk.

This afternoon there will be a visit to the Chateau of Chenonceaux. With its elegant arches spanning the river Cher, Chenonceaux is for many the most visually appealing of all chateaux along the Loire valley.

O/N **AMBOISE (BD)**

Day 7 – Saturday 28th Feb Depart the Loire Valley this morning and continue journey north to Normandy, a region of patchwork fields, lush rolling pastures, dairy cattle and apple orchards. Visit Graindorge cheese factory in Livarot maker of some of the best known cheese brands of this region including *Camembert, Livarot and Pont L’Eveque*. Lunch included today. Arrive in Caen mid-afternoon with the rest of the day free for independent sightseeing and shopping. O/N **CAEN (BLD)**

Day 8 – Sunday 1st March This morning there will be an opportunity to visit St Pierre Farmer’s Market in Caen with over 400 stalls to browse. Afterwards depart for an excursion to Mont Saint Michel, the great monastery island-fortress that seems to rise out of the sea from the vast Bay of Mont St Michel. This is one of the most famous sights of all France. We tour the little town and visit the medieval Abbey, built atop the rocky hillside.

O/N **CAEN (BD)**

Day 9 – Monday 2nd March Depart Caen for a visit a farm growing apples for the production of cider and calvados including

Classifieds

Apprenticeships Available

Wanted

Seeking dependable source of goat milk for 08 season (May to October). Must be from licensed herd, delivered to my farm, in milk bags. Can be fresh or frozen. Will pay .50/lb delivered. Willing to sign a contract. Contact Caitlin at info@appletoncreamery.com.

Guild Members in the News

Membership Form



Send form & payment to:
Mark Whitney, Treasurer
Manager of Cheese Operations
32 Farm View Drive
New Gloucester ME 04260

Maine Cheese Guild membership is paid annually in October. Current members must pay their annual dues of \$25.00 by the end of October in order to keep their membership active and to continue to receive *Cheese Parings*. New members joining in a month other than October will be credited appropriately.

New members – please provide a brief description of your level of involvement in the Maine cheesemaking community (e.g., are you a licensed cheesemaker, milk producer, retailer, connoisseur, etc.)

Name:

Farm/Business Name:

Street Address:

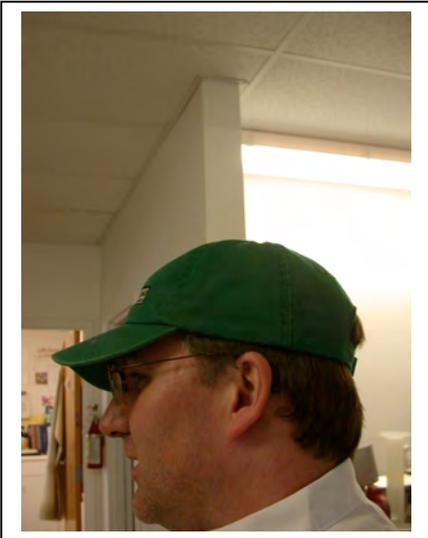
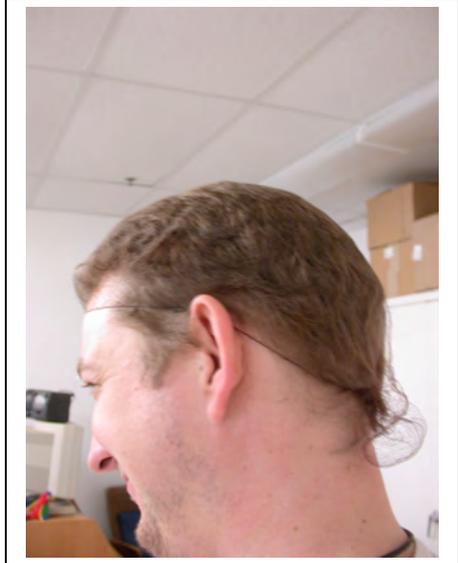
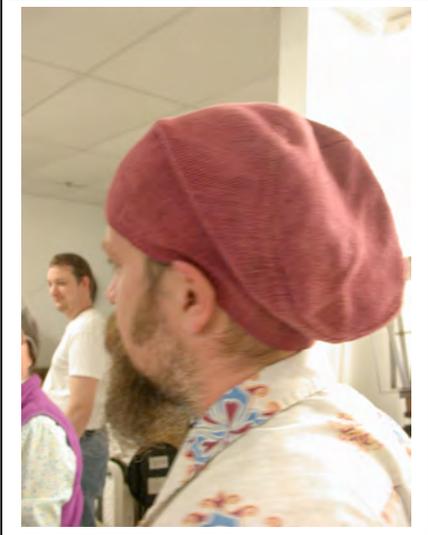
Town/State/Zip:

Phone:

E-mail:

Your involvement in the Maine cheesemaking community:

The next MCG meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 18, at Silvery Moon Creamery in Westbrook, 10 - 2.



2008 Meeting Dates

All times 10 am- 2 pm unless otherwise noted

- **January 15** - at Agricultural Trade Show in Augusta, 9:30AM
- **February 18**- State of Maine Cheese Co., Rockport
- **April 7** - Sunset Acres, Brooksville
- **May 12** - Monroe Cheese Studio, Monroe
- **June 23 -- 12:30pm to 4pm** - Longfellows Creamery, Avon
- **August 18** - Silvery Moon Creamery, Westbrook
- **October 6** - Olde Oak Farm, Orono
- **November 10** - Annual Meeting at State of Maine Cheese Co., Rockport
- **December 15** - Christmas Party, location TBA

Please direct newsletter inquiries and information/submissions for future newsletters to Caitlin Hunter at editor@mainecheeseguild.org.

The submission deadline for the October issue is Sept. 15. Please check the website for last minute news and directions for meetings.

MAINE



**CHEESE
GUILD**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED