

CHEESE MARKET NEWS®

The Weekly Newspaper Of The Nation's Cheese And Dairy/Deli Business



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Kosher cheeses growing in demand as new trends emerge

By Stephanie Awe

MADISON, Wis. — Kosher cheese is one of many food trends with potential to increase in 2017, with about 12.35 million kosher consumers in the United States, according to Lubicom Marketing Consulting.

Large, national brands are increasingly seeking kosher certification for their cheese products, says Rabbi Avrohom Gordimer, rabbinic coordinator at OU Kosher, New York, and chairman of the OU Kosher dairy committee. In addition, he notes that more artisanal cheeses are becoming kosher — having “skyrocketed” in about the last year after slower growth in the past decade.

OU Kosher certifies more than 70 percent of kosher products, including items from Kraft, General Mills and Nestle, and has a presence in 80 countries and about 8,000 plants, according to the company.

Lake Country Dairy, located in Turtle Lake, Wisconsin, and one of the cheesemaking facilities for Schuman Cheese, Fairfield, New Jersey, is one company offering OU Kosher products.

“We recognized the quality and food safety component that came from the kosher process and additional supervision process that it brings to our facilities,” says Jesse Norton, quality assurance director, Lake Country Dairy. “It fit well with our commitment to our customers and the consumer public to make safe, quality foods.”

Lake Country Dairy specializes mostly in hard Italian cheeses, although it is diversifying into other specialty cheeses such as Cheddar and Alpine-style, Norton says. It produces kosher products including Parmesan, made from both copper kettle and stainless steel vats, Romano, Asiago, Fontal and Mascarpone.

TheCheeseGuy.com, an online cheese store and cheese

producer based in Yonkers, New York, carries only kosher cheeses, such as Cheddar and Gouda, most of which are OU-certified, says owner Brent Delman.

Nasonville Dairy, Marshfield, Wisconsin, also offers kosher cheeses certified by several kosher organizations, including United Mehadrin Kosher, Star-K and others, says Ken Heiman, general manager at the company. Nasonville offers about 20 kosher varieties, including Feta, Cheddar and Asiago.

• Kosher cheese considerations

Lake Country Dairy started offering kosher cheeses about 10 years ago, Norton says, noting that, in addition to providing kosher for the religious purposes of some consumers, it allowed the company access to larger markets and provided quality and food safety components.

In producing cheeses compliant with kosher requirements, Lake Country Dairy changed sanitation procedures and worked closely with suppliers, Norton says. As a result, the company became more aware of the ingredients in the facility and — with consumers becoming more aware of the food they

eat in recent years — is in a position to answer consumer questions without having to conduct additional investigations, he adds.

Delman, who began offering kosher cheeses about eight years ago when starting TheCheeseGuy.com, wanted to tap into the kosher niche.

“I felt like there was a lack of high-end artisanal kosher cheese on the market,” he says.

Delman, who started eating kosher as an adult, says it was once he became kosher that he realized there was a need for high-end artisanal kosher cheese. Prior to starting TheCheeseGuy.com, he had been in the specialty food business for about 10 years, selling non-kosher foods.

“There was nothing that I could bring home to eat in my own home or share with friends and family who also are kosher,” he says.

While there are benefits, producing kosher cheese is a “serious investment” a company has to make, Gordimer says, noting that rabbinical supervision is required throughout the production process. However, as more companies offer kosher products, others are realizing

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USDA seeks comments on organic checkoff proposal

WASHINGTON — USDA this week announced it is seeking public comments on a proposal for a nationwide, industry-funded research and promotion order for organic producers.

The proposed Organic Research, Promotion and Information Order would cover certified organic products, including dairy, meat, produce, grains and other agricultural commodities and prepared foods. It also would include non-food items. Organic imports — both those certified under the USDA organic regulations and those entering the United States under organic equivalency arrangements — would be covered as well.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) first submitted the proposal to USDA in May 2015 and submitted a revised application a year later to reflect alternatives presented from organic certificate holders.

“We applaud USDA moving forward on this proposal that was authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill with strong bipartisan support,” says Laura Batcha, CEO and executive director, OTA. “OTA led the drive for this checkoff because the organic industry is at a critical point. This organic checkoff will provide research and key tools to encourage more farmers to go organic and help all organic farmers be more successful.”

Like all of USDA’s research and promotion programs, the proposed program would establish a framework to pool resources to develop new organic markets, strengthen existing markets and conduct research and promotion activities.

Under the proposed order, certified producers and handlers with gross organic sales greater than \$250,000 for the prior marketing year would pay one-tenth of 1 percent of net organic sales. Importers of organic products declaring a transaction value greater than \$250,000 for the prior marketing year also would pay one-tenth of 1 percent of the declared transaction value of organic products imported into the

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Trump picks Georgia Gov. Perdue for U.S. ag secretary

WASHINGTON — President-elect Trump this week made his long-awaited pick for U.S. Agriculture Secretary, Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue.

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) says Perdue is well-qualified to run USDA as a result of his eight years of executive experience as Georgia’s governor and his career as a state legislator and small businessman.

Perdue’s educational training as a veterinarian also gives him unique insights into the important issues facing America’s livestock producers in the areas of animal health, food safety and the environment, NMPF says.

“America’s dairy farmers are looking forward to working with Secretary of Agriculture-designate Sonny Perdue, whose role as the chief advocate for farmers and rural America is absolutely

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German-based Hochland acquires Franklin Foods

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. — Cream cheese maker Franklin Foods has been acquired by Hochland SE, a privately-held cheese company based in Bavaria, Germany.

Jon Gutknecht, partner, president and CEO of Franklin Foods, will continue to lead Franklin and maintain an interest in the new venture. Franklin Foods, which operates plants in Vermont

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WCMA UPDATE



Perspective: WCMA

Kirsten Henning serves as the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association events manager and runs the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, set for March 7-9 in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She is a guest columnist for this week's *Cheese Market News*®.

Beyond the trophy: The long-term impact of a cheese contest win

As the lotto saying goes, you can't win if you don't play.

Maybe that's why, year after year, the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest (USCCC) breaks records for entries. For a chance at the big win, hundreds of cheesemakers, from the artisan newcomers to the most seasoned of masters, are eager to compete.

A victory at our contest — really, any industry contest — comes with more than a trophy for the mantle.

There's a healthy dose of respect from your peers, media attention, a morale boost for the team at your plant, and perhaps the biggest prize of all: increased consumer demand.

You need look no further than your neighborhood grocery store for proof of that fact. In 2016, Emmi Roth USA's Grand Cru Surchoix, the World Championship Cheese Contest winner, flew off the shelves. Emmi Roth USA President and Managing Director Tim

Omer reports the company will sell eight times the amount of Grand Cru Surchoix this fiscal year, compared to last, as a direct result of the championship title.

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to talk with Richard Guggisberg, president of Ohio's Guggisberg Cheese, a company that took top honors at the 2015 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest for its Swiss wheel, with an impressive score of 98.496 out of 100.

Our chat gave me great insight on the impact of a big contest win and, with Richard's permission, I have the chance to share it with you.

KH: Richard, did you know you had a winner, when you entered the contest?

RG: Certainly, no, but in the back of my mind, there was that hope. We knew we had a special piece of cheese.

KH: So, what was your reaction, when the big announcement came?

RG: I was completely overwhelmed. It's quite an achievement, something that you get to share with the people close to you. Our win was a team effort — Team Guggisberg Sugar Creek — and so, there was a lot of back patting happening around here.

KH: A few pats on the back were

in order.

RG: You know, you work for years and years and years on products, striving for quality, for perfection. When that effort is recognized, it means something. It's a validation of time and talent — and not just for the cheesemaker, but for everyone in the plant. Even our farmers consider it a point of pride, that their milk is made into our cheese.

KH: That's wonderful. What about reaction outside of the plant?

RG: We got a lot of attention and publicity from the win, inquiries from packagers. We use the USCCC emblem on our labels, emails and in a lot of advertising. We have the trophy on display in our retail store for the customers to see. The win has helped our business grow.

KH: And Guggisberg Cheese is growing!

RG: Yes, we're already making 30 million pounds of product each year. And, now, we are completing a full factory revamp that will help us triple in production without impacting the quality of our product. My father, Alfred, who started the business back in 1950, he was a Swiss immigrant. I wish he was alive to see all of this, because I know he'd

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GUEST COLUMNIST



CMN Exclusive!



Perspective: Dairy Markets

Dave Kurzawski, a senior broker with FCStone, Chicago, contributes this column exclusively for *Cheese Market News*®.

America's love affair with fat is just getting warmed up

The Federal Reserve building in Chicago has a great little cafeteria on the fifth floor. The employees work hard to make generally tasty food in line with the trends of today while the U.S. Fed subsidizes the whole deal. You can get a Black Forest ham and Swiss cheese sandwich and a bag of chips for the cost of a tall Starbucks coffee — in downtown Chicago. Finally something I can understand and support when it comes to The Fed.

While waiting in line for breakfast earlier this week, I noticed the three

guys in front of me and the lady behind me all ordered some variety of egg white, veggie omelets. No yolk, no cheese and no taste. Not my style, but that's not the point. The dairy industry has spent much time talking about the resurgence of consumer demand for fats over the past few years. But if my experience in the cafeteria breakfast line is any indication, there are still quite a few people who still reject fat.

We get it. Dairy market outlook discussions continually raise a myriad of questions around rising consumer

demand for fat. Is it a fad? How do we meet this new demand? How much of an impact does this love of butter and cheese have on our markets? Who came up with putting butter in coffee and can I buy him/her a drink?

We've come a long way from the *Time* article published in June 2014 titled "Eat Butter." The Credit Suisse Research Institute put out a report in 2015 that was bullish on demand for fat. In that report, they estimated that global demand for fats will rise 43 percent by 2030, fueled by increased shifts toward dairy, eggs and red meat. And just last week, *Bloomberg* published an article on cheese consumption growth in the United States stating, "The jump in total domestic cheese consumption over the past two years was the biggest since 2000, with Americans eating the most on average since the government began tracking the data in 1975."

These are truly uncharted waters for dairy fat, resulting in paradigm shifts for dairy market prices. But we're only beginning to scratch the surface.

Some doctors have employed a low-carb, high-fat diet to help combat a variety of neurological diseases including epilepsy, headaches, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, sleep disorders, autism and multiple sclerosis. And a growing number of doctors in the U.S. are beginning to adopt centuries' old high-fat diets to promote weight-loss

and combat the run-away diabetes problem.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 29 million Americans — 9.3 percent of the population — have diabetes. Another 25-30 percent or 85 million people have not yet graduated to diabetes, but instead have what is referred to as pre-diabetes — higher blood-sugar than normal but not yet diabetes. This is no small trend — this is an epidemic.

Admittedly, this group of doctors is rather small relative to the mainstream medical community, which favors pharmaceutical remedies. But their results are astounding. Several studies and clinical trials done at Duke University (to name one) show that Type 2 diabetes can essentially be reversed (blood sugars normalized and medicines reduced) by following a higher fat diet. And cheese is on the list.

I'm not advocating any sort of diet here, but could you imagine if that news became more widely discussed by the medical community? We'd see a surge in demand for cream, butter, cheese, etc. that would make the last two years of fat love pale in comparison. McDonald's use of butter has been estimated at 25 million pounds per year, which is welcomed demand but still less than if all the people who have pre-diabetes in this country were put on high-fat diets. Do you think the dairy industry

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NEWS/BUSINESS



Retailworks design firm selected for Mars Cheese, Cheese Counter/Dairy Heritage projects

MILWAUKEE — Retailworks Inc., a Milwaukee-based interior design and branding firm, this week announced it has been chosen to design the retail

interiors for two high-profile, cheese-centric projects — Mars Cheese Castle in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and the Cheese Counter/Dairy Heritage Center in Plymouth, Wisconsin.

Mars Cheese Castle has been a popular and iconic cheese-themed destination for tourists since 1947. The third generation of family owners have selected Retailworks to create a memorable shopping/brand experience throughout the “castle.” The design will pay tribute to the family history, incorporate several interactive and photo-op stations and integrate medieval decorative components.

The restaurant, along with the grocery, beer, cheese, gift and wine departments, will all increase in size, expanding their already wide range of Wisconsin offerings and popular signature items. The wine department will feature a long “feast” table with throne-style chairs and a large custom-made iron and antler light fixture that can be raised and lowered by a pulley system. This room will be available for private parties and wine tastings with food catered by Mars’ new executive chef. Estimated completion is June 2017.

The Cheese Counter/Dairy Heritage Center will pay homage to the

history of cheesemaking in Sheboygan County. The 3-story historic building will offer a multi-use experience. Visitors will discover hands-on, interactive activities and displays, including a “kid’s cheese cave” area.

Guests also will be able to purchase cheese products from area cheesemakers, and a lunch counter serving a variety of grilled cheese favorites is planned for the space.

The project is spearheaded by the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corp. Foundation (SCEDCF) and the Plymouth Redevelopment Authority (RDA). Estimated completion is summer 2017. CMN

Vintage Cheese buys Tumalo Farms

TRAVER, Calif. — Vintage Cheese Co., Traver, California, recently acquired Tumalo Farms of Bend, Oregon, and will begin selling Tumalo Farms’ goat milk cheeses to their combined customer base.

Both companies have been working together for the last seven months to transition the Tumalo Farms operation from central Oregon to central California where Vintage Cheese Co. has its production facility. Vintage Cheese spent the last seven months implementing Tumalo Farms’ recipes under the guidance of Flavio DeCastilhos, founder of Tumalo Farms, and began production of the cheeses this month.

With the sale, there will be no change in business, and distributors will continue to be able to order award-winning Tumalo Farms cheese, Vintage Cheese notes. Tumalo Farms’ reputable decade-old brand, recipes and customer base all have been obtained by Vintage Cheese.

“It is very bittersweet to say goodbye to the company that my team and I have built over the years,” DeCastilhos says. “However, I am extremely confident in Vintage Cheese to take on Tumalo Farms and continue to represent the brand in its highest regard. Knowing that distributors and wholesalers will get the same great artisan cheeses without any disruption is very important to me.”

DeCastilhos will remain with Vintage Cheese Co. for the next two years in an advisory capacity to help with customer transition and production training.

Ryan Davis, owner of Vintage Cheese, says the acquisition allows the company to add a proven line of artisanal, award-winning goat cheeses and national recognition to its existing lines of Jersey cow and sheep milk cheeses. Vintage Cheese’s larger production facility and access to a larger source of goat’s milk allows for increased production of Tumalo Farms’ line of products while still maintaining the open vat, handmade operation that made both companies successful, Davis adds, noting that Vintage Cheese’s extensive HACCP program combined with easier access to independent audit certification and convenient shipping location will provide easier and faster access to a larger market distribution network at lower shipping costs.

“We are thrilled to take on Tumalo Farms and continue the success of its predecessor, continuing to make the same great cheese that has made Tumalo Farms what it is today,” Davis says. “We’re ready to fill these big shoes using the best available ingredients and most talented cheesemakers, resulting in unforgettable cheeses. We believe the combined set of products gives us an excellent opportunity in the artisanal cheese market.” CMN



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GUEST COLUMNIST



Perspective: Industry Issues

Steven L. Blue is the president & CEO of Miller Ingenuity, a global supplier of mission-critical solutions in the transportation industry, and author of the new book, *American Manufacturing 2.0: What Went Wrong and How to Make It Right*. He is a guest columnist for this week's *Cheese Market News*®.

Why smart manufacturing is a dumb idea

Someone asked me recently my thoughts on “smart manufacturing,” the so-called IT revolution in the factory. They couldn't believe that I didn't see smart manufacturing as the salvation of American manufacturing.

Don't misunderstand me. Smart manufacturing has a place in reviving American manufacturing. I have a smart factory. We employ the latest in pick to light systems, automated CNC machines and seamless integration from order inquiry to accounts receivable. But that isn't where I started my revolution. And you shouldn't either.

The problem with many CEOs today is they have turned away from the astonishing potential of the workforce and turned toward automation instead. Big mistake. But I hear it all the time.

What is the sense in spending millions on automating your factory if your workforce couldn't care less? What is the sense in buying expensive machine

tools if your workforce can't wait to get to the bowling alley, yet drag themselves to work?

I'll tell you why. Because too many CEOs view their employees as expendable assets. They should view them as renewable resources. And renew them.

Don't bother with smart manufacturing if you have a dumb workforce. And if your workforce is dumb, it's your fault, not theirs. Don't bother with an IT revolution. Your revolution has to start with a “smart workforce.” You have to make a new compact with your employees. You need to ignite the human spirit in your workforce. Imagine this. What would happen if every day your employees came to work excited to do better today than they did yesterday? Imagine how your company would soar if your employees were absolutely dedicated to supporting the mission and each other in attaining it? Imagine what it would be like if your employees

were like Cirque de Soleil performers?

This is the place where I get blank stares from many CEOs. They don't like the “soft stuff.” “Give me the hard stuff,” they say. “Tell me how to build a smart factory, not a smart workforce,” is what I often hear.

It has to be the other way around. Start by building a smart workforce. A workforce that is engaged, enlightened and empowered. A workforce that trusts in its leadership. A workforce that believes in its leadership. Tell order to be sure — especially if the leadership is a bunch of boneheads that care more about depreciation than employee engagement.

Here are four key ways to start:

- At the top. Build leadership credibility. The only way to have leadership credibility is if your leaders demonstrate key values of respect and integrity.

- Leaders need to treat their employees with respect. But many don't. In a recent Harvard Business School study of 20,000 employees, half of them did not feel respected by their leaders. And the participants rated respect as more important than anything else, including compensation. Imagine how the company performance would skyrocket if you solved this one problem alone.

- Leaders have to demonstrate integrity. In study after study, integrity

is a key attribute in leaders that people admire and want to follow. So integrity is a key part of building credibility. But leaders also need integrity in everything they say. You can't be like many leaders and “tell half the truth, hoping the other half doesn't show up.” You have to be bone honest all the time. You have to tell them what they need to know. If the company is headed for trouble, tell them. If the company needs to pivot into new markets or products, tell them. And tell them why. Tell them everything. You would be amazed at how smart your workforce can be if you give them half a chance. I always say “trust in truth.”

- This is not just for the top. Your entire workforce has to embrace the values of respect and integrity. But you cannot expect “people below to do what the top will not.” You may have leaders that lost credibility long ago. They can't get it back. You have to replace them.

Smart manufacturing starts at the top, not the bottom. Smart manufacturing starts with creating a new compact with the workforce. Smart manufacturing starts with people, not machines. CMN

The views expressed by CMN's guest columnists are their own opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of Cheese Market News®.

NEWS/BUSINESS



WOW scholarship deadline is March 29

APPLETON, Wis. — WOW Logistics is accepting applications for its \$1,000 dairy science scholarship.

To be eligible, students must be attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison and seeking a degree with a dairy emphasis.

Created in 2010, the WOW Logistics Dairy Science Scholarship is awarded annually as a means to encourage and promote careers within the dairy manufacturing industry, according to the company.

Applications must be completed and returned to WOW Logistics by March 29, 2017. The winning applicant will be announced April 1 and invited to accept the award at the Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference April 12

in Madison, Wisconsin.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; enrolled in a program with a dairy emphasis such as dairy science, food science or biological systems engineering, preferably with a dairy manufacturing emphasis; a sophomore, junior or senior level (if a senior, must attend school in fall); and in good academic standing.

For more information, contact Amanda Showers, manager of marketing communications, WOW Logistics, by calling 920-687-5456 or emailing amandash@wowlogistics.com.

Applications can be found at http://wowlogistics.com/scholarships/dairy_science.aspx. CMN

Prices mostly improve at latest GDT auction

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — The Global Dairy Trade (GDT) price index increased 0.6 percent, and average prices were mostly higher Tuesday following the latest auction on GDT, Fonterra's internet-based sales platform.

The average price achieved across all contracts and contract periods increased for anhydrous milkfat, up 3.7 percent from earlier this month to US\$5,528 per metric ton FAS (\$2.5075 per pound); butter, up 1.6 percent to US\$4,382 per metric ton FAS (\$1.9877 per pound); Cheddar, up 1.3 percent to US\$3,940 per metric ton FAS (\$1.7872 per pound); and

rennet casein, up 4.9 percent to US\$6,470 per metric ton FAS (\$2.9348 per pound).

Meanwhile, prices decreased for buttermilk powder, down 10.1 percent to US\$2,783 per metric ton FAS (\$1.2624 per pound); lactose, down 1.7 percent to US\$813 per metric ton FAS (\$0.3688 per pound); skim milk powder, down 1.6 percent to US\$2,612 per metric ton FAS (\$1.1848 per pound); and whole milk powder, down 0.1 percent to US\$3,283 per metric ton FAS (\$1.4892 per pound).

The next trading event will be held Feb. 7. For more information, visit www.globaldairytrade.info. CMN

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NEWS/BUSINESS



Wisconsin Aging and Grading Cheese Inc. finds market niche with high-age Cheddars

By Rena Archwamety

KAUKAUNA, Wis. — Aged Cheddar isn't hard to find at supermarkets and from wholesalers, but quality Cheddar aged more than five years, 10 years or even longer is more rare. Wisconsin Aging and Grading Cheese Inc. (WAG Cheese), Kaukauna, Wisconsin, has spent 17 years helping customers procure Cheddars up to ages almost as old as the company itself.

"We are continuously breaking down loads to find which vats will be most ageable to 'taste like more.'"

Kate Neumeier Clarke
WISCONSIN AGING
AND GRADING CHEESE INC.

"We specialize in aging Cheddar cheese — that's our niche in the industry," says Kate Neumeier Clarke, executive vice president and COO, WAG Cheese. "We want to break the glass ceiling and let people know we

have more inventory of high-quality aged Wisconsin Cheddar out there than people may be aware of."

While many companies and retailers offer up to 2-year aged Cheddar, Neumeier Clarke says, WAG Cheese can offer customers blocks, pallets and full truckloads of Cheddar aged all the way out to 13 years, as well as a limited supply of older Cheddar aged up to 16 years — both yellow and white.

"Our passion is to 'age cheese on purpose.' We grade through our millions and millions of pounds to get the best of the best 3-, 5-, 7-year-old and older Cheddars that are out there," she says, adding that careful monitoring of the product is a crucial part of aging Cheddar. "Not every single vat will make a great 10-year-old Cheddar. We are continuously breaking down loads to find which vats will be most ageable to 'taste like more.'"

While Cheddar often is considered a commodity cheese, Neumeier Clarke notes that highly-aged Cheddars have turned into more of a specialty cheese. Consumers are starting to gravitate toward more aged profiles in Cheddar, particularly as a table cheese, on party platters and as an ingredient.

WAG Cheese offers a number of

services, including grading and aging programs, spot sales, flavor profiling, and warehousing and financing programs. It is a family-owned business, founded in 2000 by Neumeier Clarke's father, Ken Neumeier, president and CEO of the company, who has more than 45 years working experience in the Wisconsin dairy industry. And while WAG Cheese has only a dozen employees, it services all sizes of custom-

ers, from small mom and pop shops to large, national companies and exporters.

"I think passion and pride in how we service our customers and treat them how we would like to be treated — being honest and loyal — have set us apart these 17 years," Neumeier Clarke says. "We love cheese and we love this industry. Like they say — when you love what you do, you don't work a day in your life." CMN

Yancey's brings the heat to Fancy Food Show

CORFU, N.Y. — Yancey's Fancy is aiming to reach out to consumers who love heat with its reformulated Ghost Pepper Cheddar at the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco next week.

Wayne Henry, president and CEO, says an earlier version of the cheese was good but not quite hot enough; this new version will keep consumers on their toes.

Also featured at the show will be Hatch Chile Cheddar. Hailing from the town of Hatch, New Mexico, these chile peppers bring with them a spicy, crisp and smoky taste. Paired with Cheddar, Henry says Hatch Chile Cheddar has been a fan favorite right out the door. Suggested uses include shredding the cheese over a queso dip or in enchiladas.

Yancey's Fancy also is introducing new flavors to its Cheddar cheese curds lineup. New this year is Tapenade Curds, a Mediterranean flavor with a punch of garlic and olives.

Other award-winning flavors and the company's Chastinet, which has won awards at both the New York State Fair and the American Cheese Society's competition, will be featured as well.

On the foodservice side of the business, Yancey's Fancy is offering smaller 2.5-pound loaves in five different flavors: Steakhouse Onion, Smoked Gouda with Bacon, Horseradish, Jalapeno Cayenne and Buffalo Wing.

For more information, visit www.yanceysfancy.com. CMN

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GUEST COLUMNISTS



WCMA

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be so proud.

KH: You have a lot to be proud of, too.

RG: Certainly, this is a high point in my career. But, we'll be entering the contest again. We think we have another nice Swiss cheese on our hands.

There are no guarantees, when a cheese is competing against thousands of others, to be named the U.S.

Champion. But, as Richard said to me, there's always hope.

For any of you considering entering, remember, you can't win if you don't play. **CMN**

The views expressed by CMN's guest columnists are their own opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of Cheese Market News®.

For more information on this year's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, please see the related article on page 9 of this issue.

KURZAWSKI

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at large is thinking seriously about this shift today? Probably not. We're still wondering why butter prices are above \$2.20 in January.

While industry talk is currently focused on 50-cent dry whey as other dairy markets take a little breather here after the surge in holiday demand, it's sometimes worth taking a look at the broader landscape for answers to market questions. The current global trend in milk production is down and is not changing (yet). The global trend

in U.S. dairy demand is up — and it seems that fat has the most potential room for growth in 2017. This is good news for America's dairy farm families, but it presents a host of new challenges (and possible opportunities) for end-users.

The warm embrace of fat is not over — it's just beginning — and it will continue to underpin our dairy markets this year. Plan accordingly. And go ahead — eat the yolk. **CMN**

The views expressed by CMN's guest columnists are their own opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of Cheese Market News®.



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

AWARD WINNING — Richard Guggisberg and members of Team Guggisberg pose with their U.S. Championship Cheese Contest trophy.

NEWS/BUSINESS



EU-Ecuador FTA includes GI protections

BRUSSELS, Belgium — A free trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and Ecuador came into effect Jan. 1, following an announcement in November that Ecuador had joined the EU's trade agreement with Colombia and Peru, which had been in effect since 2013.

The EU says this agreement will eliminate tariffs for all industrial and fisheries products, increase market ac-

cess for agricultural products, improve access to public procurement and services and further reduce technical barriers to trade. The EU also gains protection of about 100 geographical indications on the Ecuadorian market, including several cheeses. Among these are Feta, Comté, Roquefort, Gorgonzola, Grana Padano, Parmigiano Reggiano and Taleggio. **CMN**

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EVENTS



Deadline approaching for entry into U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, March 7-9

MADISON, Wis. — U.S. Championship Cheese Contest (USCCC) organizers are sending out final calls for contest entries as the Feb. 1 deadline approaches. The contest, hosted by the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA), is set for March 7-9 in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

"We've had a strong early response to the contest, with entries pouring in from across the country. And, we've noticed a spike in first-time competitors entering their products for judging," says Kirsten Henning, events manager, WCMA. "With more cheeses — and new cheeses — in the mix, the 2017 USCCC promises the most robust competition in event history."

The USCCC has long been the nation's largest technical cheese, butter and yogurt competition. In 2015, Guggisberg Cheese of Millersburg, Ohio, came away with the top honor at the contest, beating out a record 1,892 entries.

This year, the contest features new categories for flavored butter, snack cheese and for cheeses made of milk from animals other than cows, sheep or goats.

"Our contest considers consumer trends and adds judging categories to ensure every cheesemaker has the opportunity for product evaluation by the nation's most highly-respected judges," Henning says.

The USCCC judging team, made up of cheese graders, cheese buyers, dairy

science professors and researchers hailing from 18 states, provides feedback on each product's flavor, body and texture, salt, color, finish and packaging.

To enter the contest, visit www.uschampioncheese.org by Feb. 1. The contest's MyEntries system is a secure worksite, which offers permanent storage of each year's entries and instant product scores and scoresheets.

The entry fee for online submissions is \$60 per product, which is \$10 less than the paper entry fee.

For more information, contact Henning at 608-828-4550 or via email at khenning@wischeesemakers.org. CMN

Annual Oregon cheese fest is March 17-19

CENTRAL POINT, Ore. — The 13th annual Oregon Cheese Festival will be March 17-19.

The festival, sponsored by the Oregon Cheese Guild, will kick off March 17 in Medford, Oregon, with the Meet the Cheesemakers and Winemakers Dinner, a meal that introduces guests to participating guild cheesemakers. The dinner is held for the benefit of the non-profit guild, and each course will spotlight a cheese made by one of the festival's artisans, paired with a local wine, beer or cider, organizers say.

For tickets to the dinner, visit oregoncheesemakersdinner.bpt.me.

The festival will be open to the public March 18-19 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at

Rogue Creamery in Central Point, Oregon.

At the festival, visitors can sample cow, goat and sheep cheese from Oregon creameries, including Pholia Farm, Oregon State University, Tillamook County Creamery and more.

A \$15 entry fee includes tastings and demonstrations; tickets purchased at the door will be \$20. Entry tickets can be purchased in advance at oregoncheeseguild.org/event/13th-annual-oregon-cheese-festival.

In addition, a \$10 wine, beer and spirit tasting fee is available and includes a commemorative glass with the Oregon Cheese Guild logo. For more information, visit www.oregoncheeseguild.org or contact Rogue Creamery at 866-396-4704. CMN

Early registration deadline approaches for USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum

WASHINGTON — USDA is reminding those interested in attending this year's Agricultural Outlook Forum (AOF), "A New Horizon: The Future of Agriculture," early registration is available through Friday, Jan. 27, 2017. The two-day meeting will be Feb. 23-24, 2017, in Arlington, Virginia.

AOF, now in its 93rd year, is USDA's largest annual meeting, attracting more than 1,800 attendees, according to organizers. Along with the plenary panel discussion, attendees can choose from 30 sessions with more than 80 speakers and a host of agriculture-related exhibits.

For more information, visit www.usda.gov/oc/forum. To register, visit www.infinityconferences.com/Registration/USDA_AgOutlook_Forum2017/reginfo.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery. CMN

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EVENTS



Peyton Manning confirmed as keynote speaker for ProFood Tech

RESTON, Va. — Five-time National Football League (NFL) MVP Peyton Manning will give the keynote speech at the inaugural ProFood Tech Conference program, led by the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), PACK EXPO and Anuga.

ProFood Tech will take place April 4-6, 2017, in Chicago, and the keynote will be April 4 from 8 to 9:15 a.m. Manning's address is titled, "Winning Strategies with Peyton Manning."

"NFL great Peyton Manning will share real-world leadership tips and how you can become a winner too by learning to adapt to changing circumstances," says Neil Moran, senior vice president, IDFA. "Manning combines

his trademark humor and real-life stories to challenge audiences to reach higher than they ever thought possible."

As one of the most decorated NFL quarterbacks of all time, Manning most recently led the Denver Broncos to victory over the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50. Prior to that, he led the Indianapolis Colts to victory in Super Bowl 41, according to organizers.

In addition to the keynote, ProFood Tech's conference program offers a variety of educational experiences covering ideas and strategies on regulations and food safety, consumer trends that are changing the food and beverage landscape, and industry best

practices in business and leadership development.

As the only event in North America focused exclusively on all food and beverage sectors, ProFoodTech will attract high-level buyers from every food and beverage sector with an expansive show floor and enhanced conference program, organizers say.

Full three-day passes to the ProFood Tech Conference Program, which also includes access to the show floor, are \$595 through Feb. 15, 2017. A one-day conference pass may be purchased for \$285 through Feb. 15, but prices for both will increase after that date.

To register for the show and conference, visit www.profoodtech.com. CMN

Former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to speak at Dairy Forum 2017

WASHINGTON — The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) has announced that former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack will speak at Dairy Forum 2017 Jan. 31 in Orlando.

Vilsack, who has ended his eight years of service as head of USDA and is moving to a career in dairy, will share his perspective on the major issues facing dairy and agriculture, including trade agreements, immigration reform and the 2018 Farm Bill.

Vilsack is the new president and CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), where he will lead strategies and provide oversight of USDEC's global promotion and research activities. (*See "USDEC announces former USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to become new president, CEO," on page 20 in this issue of Cheese Market News*). CMN

Artisan program offers at-the-vat learning at WCIC

MADISON, Wis. — Back by popular demand, the Artisan Cheesemakers Master Workshop joins the 2017 Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference (WCIC) in April.

This two-day program features a seminar and real, at-the-vat experience, tailored to the interests of artisans. Staff from the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research (CDR) and Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA) host the workshop, which is set for April 12-13 in Madison, Wisconsin.

Judy Keller, events director, WCMA, notes that a complete lineup of educational offerings and exhibit hall features is now available at www.cheeseconference.org.

The focus of the 2017 Artisan Cheesemakers Master Workshop is the impact of different milks on cheese outcomes. The workshop begins with a restricted-capacity seminar April 12, concentrating on cheese ripening, physical and chemical characteristics of goat, sheep and cow milks, product safety and more.

On April 13, artisans travel to the Center for Dairy Research in Madison, Wisconsin, to make cheeses from cow, goat and sheep milk in side-by-side vats, and to participate in a comparative sensory evaluation of cheeses with CDR staff.

Registration for the workshop is limited to 35 participants. The cost for the program, which includes full access to the WCIC exhibit hall and lunches, is \$195. Cheesemakers will be given priority registration preference.

To register, visit www.cheeseconference.org. For more information, call 608-828-4550 or email jkeller@wischeesemakers.org. CMN

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Retail WATCH

NEWS & MARKETING IDEAS TO HELP SELL MORE CHEESE

Kindred Creamery brand unites animal welfare, artisan cheese

American cheeses utilize milk from 'Cows First' program

By Kate Sander

FITCHBURG, Wis. — Capitalizing on each of their strengths, Emmi Roth USA, Fitchburg, Wisconsin, and Meister Cheese, Muscoda, Wisconsin, teamed up to launch the Kindred Creamery line this past summer.

The new retail brand features classic specialty American cheese varieties utilizing milk from dairy farms committed to Meister Cheese's "Cows First" animal welfare program. The program focuses on animal care, requiring the cows to have unfettered access to the outdoors and prohibiting tail docking and animal byproducts in feed. The program also requires dairies to be rBST-free and use antibiotics only when a cow is sick.

Conventional wisdom in the cheese industry is that consumers like a story behind their cheese, and Kindred Creamery provides that in spades.

"The brand is relevant. It supports the things that are important to people: sustaining family farms, small businesses and animal welfare."

Tim Omer
EMMI ROTH USA

"The brand is relevant," says Tim Omer, president and managing director of Emmi Roth USA, which is responsible for marketing the line. "It supports the things that are important to people: sustaining family farms, small businesses and animal welfare."

Kindred Creamery is a story of family and years of partnership between dairy farmers and a cheesemaker.

The cheese for the line is made at Meister Cheese, a cheese company

steeped in 100 years of cheesemaking history. Brother and sister Scott Meister, president, Meister Cheese, and Vicki Thingvold, chief of flavor development, are co-owners of the company following in the footsteps of their father, Stanley, and grandfather Joseph.

"It's a really good story; it's a story that needs to be told. It's a story about family values that people can engage with."

Tim Omer
EMMI ROTH USA

"We are proud to partner with dairy farmers who combine the best traditions of iconic farming with the best methods of modern technology," Meister says. "Our dairy farmers treat their cows like family, while adopting modern technology and knowledge of animal nutrition and science."

Kindred Creamery also is a story of friendship, the result of longtime industry rapport. Omer and Meister have known each other for years, and as they visited one day, Omer began to realize that while the Cows First program, first introduced eight years ago, was being successfully utilized for cheese in foodservice, it wasn't making its way to retail yet.

"It's a really good story; it's a story that needs to be told," Omer says. "It's a story about family values that people can engage with."

At the same time, Meister says that he was looking for the right opportunity to introduce Cows First cheese to retail.

It all began to come together. Emmi Roth USA, known for its marketing prowess, wasn't handling American-style cheeses, which is Meister



Photo courtesy of Kindred Creamery

SPECIALTY AMERICAN CHEESES — Kindred Creamery, a partnership between Meister Cheese and Emmi Roth USA, produces a number of varieties of American-style cheeses with milk from dairy farms committed to Meister Cheese's "Cows First" animal welfare program.

Cheese's specialty. The synergies and complementary strengths of the two companies seemed to suggest a natural partnership.

Omer says one of the things that has always impressed him about Meister Cheese is its partnerships with dairy farm families, in many cases generations of whom have now shipped to Meister Cheese.

Kindred Creamery represents all of these generations, both dairy farmers and cheesemakers, coming together to make and market high quality cheese.

In fact, when Emmi Roth and Meister Cheese started to work on a name for the brand, "generations" was one

of the first things that came to mind. They were sent back to the drawing board when they found "generations" was trademarked in a variety of forms. Sometimes, though, going back to the drawing board is a good thing; as they brainstormed, "kindred" was floated as an idea. It was universally liked by all.

"Kindred is a really good name ... it defines what we have and really describes the family nature of the business," Omer says. "The name generates a lot of emotion for people."

Kindred Creamery cheeses are made exclusively from segregated milk from dairy farmers who participate

Turn to *KINDRED* page 13 ⇨

Emmi Roth launches new organics line, adds new product to U.S. Kaltbach cheese line

MONROE, Wis. — Emmi Roth USA will introduce its new Roth Organics Line, as well as its new Kaltbach Le Crèmeux, at the Winter Fancy Food Show.

The Organic Line consists of four new cheeses, featuring award-winning Roth favorites now made using fresh, certified organic milk from local dairy farms, according to the company.

The organic line features Roth's flagship Grand Cru Original now available in organic, as well as Organic Van Gogh Gouda, Organic Havarti and Organic Sharp Cheddar. Each variety also is gluten free, non-GMO, rBST-free and vegetarian friendly, the company says.

Roth's Organic Grand Cru Original is available in 10-pound wheels and 8-ounce retail cuts, and it is an award-winning Alpine-style cheese made from a combina-

tion of organic milk and Swiss traditions.

Roth's Organic Van Gogh Gouda is available in 10-pound wheels and 8-ounce retail cuts, and it features Roth's signature Van Gogh Gouda — a Dutch cheese with a straw-yellow body and mellow, mild sweetness.

Roth's Organic Havarti is available in 9-pound loaves and 8-ounce retail cuts, and it is a versatile cheese with a mild and buttery flavor, which does well with cooking and melting, according to the company.

Roth's Organic Sharp Cheddar is available in 1-pound blocks and 8-ounce retail cuts, and it is crafted from organic milk and aged for a minimum of six months to develop a rich and tangy flavor.

"There is a strong demand for organic products that has grown significantly

over the past few years," says Tim Omer, president and managing director, Emmi Roth USA. "We are fortunate to live in a part of the world where fresh, organic milk is available in our backyard. The farmers we work with follow certified organic dairy farming standards."

In addition, Emmi Roth will introduce at the Winter Fancy Food Show its expanded Kaltbach line, with the addition of a new imported cheese from Switzerland — Emmi Kaltbach Le Crèmeux.

The cheese will join Kaltbach Le Gruyère AOP, Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP and Kaltbach Alpine Extra as available Swiss imports through Emmi USA.

Made in 9-pound wheels, Kaltbach Le Crèmeux is a washed-rind cheese that is sweet and unassuming at first, but develops and becomes reminiscent of a

soft cooked egg yolk in a bowl or ramen, the company says. It is a semi-firm cheese that is crafted with pasteurized milk and microbial rennet and aged a minimum of 120 days in the Kaltbach caves in the Alpine Valley near Lucerne, Switzerland.

Swiss cheesemakers and affineurs handpick a select number of wheels to continue their refinement in the Kaltbach caves, which are a 22-million-year-old natural sandstone labyrinth with a small river that runs through it, inspiring the name, the company says.

"The demand for artisan cheese continues to grow in the United States," Omer says. "We remain the No. 1 importer of Gruyère in the country and are proud to continue to introduce new products to the United States from our parent company in Switzerland." CMN

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Jim Demeter, Steve Buholzer, Adam Buholzer, Dave Buholzer & Ron Buholzer (from left)

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2016 American Cheese Society Cheese Contest

- 1st Place: Odyssey Reduced Fat Feta
- 1st Place: Odyssey Tomato & Basil Feta
- 1st Place: Brick
- 1st Place: Odyssey Greek Yogurt French Onion Dip
- 2nd Place: Odyssey Feta
- 2nd Place: Odyssey Peppercorn Feta
- 2nd Place: Muenster



2016 World Championship Cheese Contest

- 1st Place: Havarti, Flavored (Dill)
- 3rd Place: Flavored, High Protein Yogurt, Cow's Milk (Odyssey Peach)
- 4th Place: Feta, Flavored (Peppercorn)



2015 United States Championship Cheese Contest

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- 1st Place & 2nd Place: Flavored Feta Mediterranean Herb (1st), Tomato & Basil (2nd)



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Emmi Roth offers new Sriracha Gouda

MONROE, Wis. — Emmi Roth has launched its Sriracha Gouda, which merges the mellow and mild flavor of Roth's Dutch-style Gouda with spicy, tangy-sweet and savory Sriracha spices.

Sriracha Gouda is made from cultured pasteurized milk from local Wisconsin dairy farms and cured for a minimum of 30 days. Before the curing process, Sriracha Gouda wheels are speckled with red pepper flakes and hand painted.

"The bold flavor trend has been alive and well for the past few years and it's not going away anytime soon," says Marc Druart, head cheesemaker and director of research and development, Emmi Roth USA. "We were able to infuse our signature Van Gogh Gouda with a sriracha spice mix that's bold enough to make an impact, but the heat mellows quickly and doesn't overpower the creamy, buttery young Gouda flavors."

The cheese pairs well with apple and berry ciders; Rose and Sauvignon Blanc; and Pale Ales and IPAs; and it serves well as a topping for chili or tomato soup, on tacos or on deviled eggs, the company says.

For more information, visit www.rothcheese.com. CMN

Sartori introduces Chipotle variety to BellaVitano lineup

PLYMOUTH, Wis. — Sartori Co. has added a new south-of-the-border inspired variety to its BellaVitano line — Chipotle BellaVitano.

Hand-rubbed with a blend of seasonings, the cheese balances savory smokiness with the sweet and creamy BellaVitano base.

The cheese already has won awards domestically and internationally, including second place in its class at the World Championship Cheese Contest last spring. It's now ready for its public debut, company officials say.

For more information, email smerckx@sartoricheese.com or visit www.sartoricheese.com. CMN

KINDRED

Continued from page 11

in the Cows First program. To maintain their certification, participating dairy farmers are annually certified by Validus, a third-party auditor. For their efforts, Cows First participants are paid a premium for their milk.

“The foundation of the Cows First Program and Meister Cheese being a third generation company just seemed like the right fit for us,” say dairy farmers Jeremy and Michelle Winkers, who participate in Cows First. “Our grandfather envisioned having a grassroots family farm with profitability, and that’s exactly what the Cows First Program has allowed us to achieve.”

“Doing the right thing for animals and family farms is also doing the right thing for the quality of the cheese we make.”

Scott Meister
MEISTER CHEESE

It’s really a win-win, according to Meister and Omer.

“Doing the right thing for animals and family farms is also doing the right thing for the quality of the cheese we make,” Meister says.

The way the milk is produced is a key differentiator that resonates with many consumers, Omer adds.

For consumers willing to pay a bit more to support family farmers, Kindred Creamery’s story resonates, Omer says. Wisconsin probably is never going to be the most efficient place to produce milk, and not everyone wants to pay a premium for their cheese. However, Kindred Creamery is an affordable specialty brand for those who want to support traditional family farming.

Meister Cheese’s cheesemaking capability — Omer calls it “artisan-with-scale aptitude” — allows Kindred Creamery to produce cheese in a number of varieties including Sharp Cheddar, Medium Cheddar, Mild Cheddar, Colby Jack, Pepper Jack, Monterey Jack and Natural Smoked Gouda.

Thingvold’s creative capacity to develop on-trend flavors also means the brand carries a number of specialty varieties such as Sweet Fire Mango Jack, Spicy Sriracha Jack, Ginseng & Garlic Jack, Ghost Pepper Colby Jack, Hickory Smoked Cheddar and Forage Mushroom & Scallion Jack.

A half year into Kindred Creamery’s launch, Omer says he is pleased with Kindred Creamery’s retail placements, both in the deli and the dairy case. The brand can be found in the Midwest

and on the East Coast, and Kindred Creamery continues to look for more opportunities to further its reach, including in the West.

Along the way, Kindred Creamery has been listening to customer feedback and has been tweaking its packaging a bit, adding, for example, more information about the brand’s popular story on packages. Currently cuts of the cheese are wrapped in parchment; Kindred Creamery also is test marketing clear packaging, Omer says.

Omer says today’s consumers value transparency in how the foods they eat are made, and Kindred Creamery offers that transparency from the farm to the retail shelf. To better reach these consumers, Kindred Creamery also is developing a social media campaign that it expects to launch in the second quarter. New flavors are always in development as well. **CMN**



Photo courtesy of Kindred Creamery

ON TREND FLAVORS — Kindred Creamery cheeses are available in a number of flavors including Forage Mushroom & Scallion Jack.



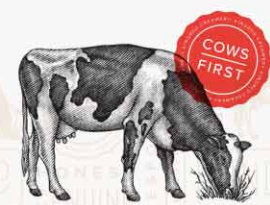
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Lactalis American's Président cheese unveils new sizes, varieties at Fancy Food Show

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Président cheese, a brand of Lactalis American Group, will be showcasing new flavors and sizes of popular cheese varieties at next week's Fancy Food Show in San Francisco.

Responding to the popularity of its Triple Crème Brie, Président now will offer the cheese in a new 8-ounce round, in addition to its 4-, 8- and 16-ounce wedge offerings. The new round will be available in March with a suggested retail price of \$7.99 per unit.

Also available in March are three new flavors in Président's Rondelé gourmet spreadables line — Thai Sweet Chili, Pineapple & Ginger and Sea Salt & Cracked Pepper. Karine Blake, marketing director for Président cheese, notes that while Sea Salt & Cracked Pepper was

available on a limited basis in 2016, all three varieties will be available nationwide this spring.

She notes Président also is rolling out organic Rondelé, with Garlic & Herbs and Garden Vegetables varieties now available in 6.5-ounce sizes with a suggested retail price of \$5.99.

"Organic has more growth among millennials than any other generation," Blake adds.

Président also is adding new flavors to its line of 8-ounce Brie Tortes, and will be offering Garlic & Herbs and Cheddar & Horseradish varieties at retail for the Easter holiday. The 8-ounce tortes come with a suggested retail price of \$8.49 per unit.

Coming in May 2017, Président cheese also is offering new varieties and

cheese sizes in its Spanish Manchego and French Madrigal hard cheese lines. Président will offer a new Manchego wedge in a random weight 6- to 8-ounce size, as well as a new random weight 6- to 8-ounce wedge of Madrigal. Blake notes the varieties combine the luxury of hard imported cheeses with a convenient format to expand consumers' horizons.

In addition to cheese, the company also will be showcasing new Président butter, available in salted and unsalted varieties.

The butters are made from cultured creams in Brittany, France, a region known for its oceanic climate and rich grass, Blake says, noting that Président butter is churned approximately 5 times longer than U.S. butters, enhancing the

full butter flavor and creamy texture. She adds that the convenient 3.5-ounce stick format is the perfect combination of European-style butter and American convenience.

The company promises further new flavors and varieties in 2018, Blake adds.

For more information, visit www.présidentcheese.com or stop by their booth at the Fancy Food Show. **CMN**

Union Star offers new Red Willow

BERLIN, Wis. — Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Jon Metzger of Union Star Cheese has introduced a new cheese, Red Willow, made at his family's Willow Creek Creamery in Berlin, Wisconsin.

The soft washed-rind cheese comes in 10-12-ounce wheels and is aged a minimum of 20 days. It's hand-washed with a mixture of cultures and Scottish Ale from Fox River Brewing Co., Appleton, Wisconsin.

"I would say the closest way to describe it is like a traditional Muenster from France," Metzger tells Cheese Market News. "It's a traditional soft washed-rind cheese, but not too pungent. It has typical washed-rind flavors — meaty, savory, brothy flavors."

Metzger adds that the creamery spent two years doing trial studies of the cheese and began selling it late last year. He says the response so far has been positive.

"People like it because it's not as strong as Limburger, but it definitely has some of the similar flavors," he says.

For more information, call Metzger at 920-836-2804 or visit www.unionstarcheese.com. **CMN**

Laura Chenel's adds Garlic & Chive log

SONOMA, Calif. — Laura Chenel's will introduce its Garlic & Chive Fresh Chevre log at the Winter Food Fancy Show in San Francisco.

This new, 8-ounce goat cheese log is made with fresh goat cheese mixed with garlic and shallots, then coated with chives. The shallots add a hint of sweetness to the tangy, fresh goat cheese flavor, while the chives' herbaceous taste balances the natural spiciness of the garlic, according to the company.

The Garlic & Chives log will enhance any cheese platter, while its smooth and creamy texture make it ideal for melting on pasta or in a quesadilla, or used as an ingredient to "spice up" any dish, the company adds.

As with all of Laura Chenel's cheeses, the award-winning 8-ounce log collection is made using only fresh goat milk from nearby farms in the western region of the United States. Collaborating with a network of independent goat farmers allows Laura Chenel's to oversee the main ingredient in its products while supporting its farmers.

The company will be at the Winter Fancy Food Show from Jan. 22-24. **CMN**

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Old Europe Cheese is proud to announce the addition of **three Silver medals** to our vast collection of awards from the prestigious **World Championship Cheese Contest** held in Spain.

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Schuman Cheese to showcase its new and flagship cheeses at Winter Fancy Food Show

FAIRFIELD, N.J. — Schuman Cheese will introduce a new cheese line and a new cheese flavor, as well as feature its flagship cheeses, at the Fancy Food Show Jan. 22-24 in San Francisco.

Schuman Cheese's new cheese line is a result of a recent partnership with Hijos de Salvador Rodriguez, SA (Quesos El Pastor), a family-owned cheese company in Spain. Schuman Cheese plans to import the cheese line to the United States and is actively selling to select retailers,

according to Allison Schuman, national sales manager, Schuman Cheese.

The line will include Manchego, a Protected Designation of Origin cheese that is made from sheep's milk, and will be available in ages of 3 months, 6 months and 12 months, according to Schuman.

The line also will include Iberico, a cheese made from a combination of sheep's, cow's and goat's milk, which also is available in ages of 3, 6 or 12 months, Schuman says.

In addition, the line will have specialty goat cheese logs, including a variety in an original flavor in addition to a pineapple variety with pineapple pieces rolled along the outside of the log, Schuman adds.

Schuman Cheese also will trial a new Cello Whisps Asiago Pepper Jack flavor at the Fancy Food Show, with plans to launch in April.

The flavor is made using the company's proprietary Cello-make process, Schuman says. While not an intuitive combination, mixing Pepper Jack with Asiago elevated the flavor, creating a nutty cheese with a creamy note and providing a base in which to add the spice that comes with Pepper Jack, she adds.

For more information, visit schumancheese.com. **CMN**

Landana debuts extra-aged organic Gouda

BODEGRAVEN, Netherlands — Vandersterre Holland B.V. recently announced that its brand Landana will debut a new, extra-aged Gouda in its organic range during the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco Jan. 22-24.

Landana Organic Aged is USDA certified organic, made from the milk of free range cows and prepared using traditional Dutch cheesemaking methods. After aging for at least six months on wooden shelves, the cheese achieves a full and piquant flavor. Despite its extra-long aging period, the texture is creamy and melts easily on the tongue. No artificial flavors, colors or preservatives are added, and because it is made with vegetarian rennet, vegetarians also can enjoy this

cheese, the company says.

Prior to its public debut, Landana Organic Aged was awarded second place at the International Cheese Awards in England in the Best Organic Cheese - Specialty category.

"We are very proud to see our newest Landana cheese awarded by an international panel of cheese experts," says Ies Verloop, commercial director, Vandersterre Holland. "This award is a confirmation of the excellent quality of Landana Organic Aged."

Landana also offers Landana Organic Mild, which was introduced last year as the first USDA-certified organic Gouda from Holland.

For more information, visit www.landana-cheese.com. **CMN**

Ellsworth debuts hot buffalo curd flavor

ELLSWORTH, Wis. — Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery recently has added Hot Buffalo Cheddar curds to its growing collection of flavored cheese curds.

In its latest variety, Ellsworth's signature white Cheddar curds are mixed with a touch of buffalo spice for a hot and spicy snack that resembles a classic buffalo

wing appetizer, company officials say.

Ellsworth Hot Buffalo Cheddar Cheese Curds are rBST-free, gluten-free, naturally high in calcium and protein and contain no added sugars, carbs or trans fats.

For more information, email to nyb@ellsworthcreamery.net or visit www.ellsworthcheese.com. **CMN**

Murray's offers exclusive Annelies cheese

NEW YORK — Murray's has teamed up in an exclusive partnership with Walter Rass, of Challerhocker cheese fame, to introduce Annelies cheese.

Rass crafts wheels of raw cow's milk he calls Tufertschwiler and until now has only sold them in his village. However, with the partnership, Rass also is sending these mild-flavored wheels to Murray's at 3 months of age. The wheels are then aged

for an additional 9 months in Murray's alpine cave, where they develop sweet flavors of roasted hazelnuts and alpine grasses with undertones of butterscotch and cocoa, according to Murray's.

The name Annelies is a tribute to Rass' wife. The cheese pairs well with a Grüner Veltliner or a Pinot Noir, the company says.

For more information, visit www.murrayscheese.com/annelies. **CMN**



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WMMB Summer of Curds campaign earns Best of Show award at 2016 Alchemy Awards

MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) was awarded the Best of Show award for the EatCurds.com “Summer of Curds” social media campaign at the 2016 Alchemy Awards, hosted by the Madison Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

The Alchemy Awards honor exceptional campaigns and tactics developed and executed by public relations organizations in the greater Madison area, and the Best of Show award is the organization’s highest honor, according to WMMB.

WMMB’s Summer of Curds social media campaign was designed in partnership with the Madison-based agency Stephan & Brady to capitalize on the love that many people have for Wisconsin cheese — specifically, cheese

curds — resulting in positive consumer engagement for Wisconsin cheese, as well as increased website traffic and awareness of EatCurds.com, WMMB says.

The 94-day campaign included daily giveaways of Wisconsin cheese curds throughout the summer. The campaign launched with an influencer mailing in which more than 30 individuals — including cheese and food bloggers, Instagram influencers, online media outlets such as BuzzFeed, and celebrities with a direct connection to Wisconsin — received Summer of Curds boxes containing fresh Wisconsin cheese curds. Entries into the contest were primarily driven via Wisconsin cheese social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, WMMB says.

As a result of these efforts, the Summer of Curds social media campaign

received more than 51 million total consumer impressions including mentions from high-profile media outlets including BuzzFeed, Heritage Radio and the New York Times, had nearly 200,000 contest entries and saw a 500-percent increase in traffic to EatCurds.com.

According to the Madison Chapter of PRSA, the Summer of Curds campaign also won an Award of Excellence within the Social Media Campaign category, making it eligible for the Best of Show award.

Other dairy-related projects receiving recognition within their categories include:

- “The Holidays Are Short, Eat Desert First” won an Award of Excellence within the Multimedia Tactic category. The project is credited to WMMB and Stephan & Brady.

- *Grate. Pair. Share.*, an online magazine featuring Wisconsin cheese, won an Award of Merit within the Other Digital Publications category. The project is credited to WMMB and Stephan & Brady.

- “Cheese Lover’s Day ‘Cheese Wishes’” won an Award of Excellence within the Social Media Tactic category. The project also is credited to WMMB and Stephan & Brady.

- “National Cheese Curd Day” won an Award of Excellence within the Integrated Campaign category. The project is credited to Culver’s and Hiebing, an advertising agency in Madison, Wisconsin. CMN

IDDBA releases report on connecting across the store

MADISON, Wis. — The International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA) and Nielsen Fresh announce the release of original research that provide retailers with ideas and strategies for boosting entertainment-occasion sales by examining the connections fresh department products have with the rest of the store.

“Total Store Connectivity: Entertaining Across the Store,” an IDDBA-commissioned report prepared by Nielsen Fresh, identifies how product connections can generate larger baskets and boost sales through new and innovative merchandising and marketing concepts.

“Entertaining is a big driver of consumer purchasing, whether it’s a holiday gathering, Super Bowl party or small get-together with a few friends or family members,” says Alan Hiebert, senior education coordinator, IDDBA. “When selecting the menu, fresh products from dairy, deli, bakery and prepared foods often are easy, convenient accompaniments for get-togethers and often end up in the shopping basket together. But what else is purchased depends on the type of entertaining occasion. This research explores the natural correlations these products have with other store items, thereby creating new ideas for cross-merchandising and cross-promotion.”

The report finds that premium entertaining categories share many similar connections in produce, with sales of many of these products peaking on Saturday and Sunday.

The report recommends sampling deli specialty meat and cheese, and artisan bread or deli crackers together in the produce department in the evening to encourage shoppers to put more in their basket when shopping for dinner/cocktail parties.

Everyday casual entertaining categories share common connections with predominantly center store categories, the report notes. It recommends enhancing center store shelf displays with coupons offering discounts in fresh product areas, such as a \$1 off coupon for Brie to partner with rosemary-flavored crackers.

The report is available only to IDDBA members and can be accessed by members online at www.iddba.org. CMN

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Norseland enters strategic alliance with Parmareggio, maker of Parmissimo brand

DARIEN, Conn. — Norseland Inc., the exclusive importer of Jarlsberg cheese, recently entered into a strategic partnership with Parmareggio, maker of the Italian Parmissimo brand of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and a cooperative of manufacturers and dairies.

The new alliance will accelerate sales growth of Parmissimo and strengthen both companies' brand

Vermont Creamery announces retail launch of St. Albans

WEBSTERVILLE, Vt. — Vermont Creamery has announced the retail launch of St. Albans, its newest aged cheese.

Available now at Whole Foods, Wegman's and a host of specialty food retailers and grocery stores, St. Albans is made with cow's milk and is verified by the Non-GMO Project, a third-party verification for non-GMO food and products, according to Vermont Creamery.

"St. Albans represents Vermont Creamery's progress over the last 32 years; what began with a desire to bring a cheese to the shelves of American grocery stores grew into our company's efforts to gain our first non-GMO verification," says Allison Hooper, co-founder. "With the release of this cheese, Vermont Creamery is modeling the transition of Vermont dairy farms to non-GMO feed."

Taking its name from the town of St. Albans, Vermont, the cheese recalls Vermont Creamery's longstanding partnership with St. Albans Cooperative — a group of more than 300 dairy farmers and the longtime producers of the creamery's cow's milk. In partnership with Vermont Creamery, St. Albans Cooperative selected Paul-Lin Dairy in Bakersfield, Vermont, as the producer of the non-GMO milk for the cheese.

"We are delighted to partner with Vermont Creamery on this project," says Leon Berthiaume, CEO, St. Albans Cooperative. "Both the cooperative and Vermont Creamery's reputations for providing high-quality dairy products are well known, and St. Albans becoming available to consumers nationally will enhance both of these great brands."

St. Albans begins with fresh, pasteurized milk, sourced from Paul-Lin Dairy. At optimal maturity, the cheese disks are placed in ceramic crocks and wrapped in a breathable perforated film. The interior of the cheese becomes soft and spreadable, while the flavor becomes more robust.

Providing protection during the journey from Vermont, the ceramic crock also serves as a baking vessel, allowing the cheese to be warmed in the oven before serving.

For more information, visit www.vermontcreamery.com. **CMN**

positions in the U.S. market, the companies say.

"This partnership compliments our premium brand portfolio," says John J. Sullivan, president and CEO, Norseland Inc. "Parmissimo represents a company with strong values, deeply rooted in tradition and quality."

Ivano Chezzi, president, Parmareggio, adds that the company is proud to work alongside Norseland as both companies believe in the values of cooperation to enhance their brands in the U.S. market.

"Norseland has a dominant position in America in the specialty cheese market," he adds.

For more information, visit www.parmissimo.it or www.norseland.com. **CMN**

Zingerman's cheese comes to East Coast

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Zingerman's Creamery recently announced a new partnership with specialty food distributor World's Best Cheeses to bring Zingerman's small-batch artisan cheeses made in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to the East Coast.

"We're honored to be represented on the East Coast by World's Best Cheeses," says Ari Weinzweig, co-founder, Zingerman's. "Their distribution network will allow us to get our cheeses to specialty shops, restaurants, caterers and cafes without having to have them incur shipping costs from the Midwest."

Since 2001, Zingerman's Creamery has specialized in soft-ripened cheeses, employing a combination of Old World techniques and creative innovation to draw out full, complex flavor.

The collaboration with World's Best

Cheeses, a family-owned business which currently has offices in New York, Massachusetts and California, is a natural and welcomed fit for both companies, Weinzweig says.

"We have always admired and respected Zingerman's business and philosophy, and these delicious cheeses have been on our radar for some time," says Stephen Gellert, vice president of business development, World's Best Cheeses. "We are very excited to finally be working together."

World's Best Cheeses currently is distributing Zingerman's Detroit Street Brick, Chestnut Little Napoleon, Manchester, Liptauer and Aged Chelsea cheeses.

For more information, visit www.zingermanscreamery.com. **CMN**

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Midwest Dairy Council contributes to Super Bowl host committee's '52 Weeks of Giving'

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Midwest Dairy Council has announced it will give \$250,000 to provide Fuel Up to Play 60 Super School Breakfast grants, which aim to support schools serving breakfast outside the cafeteria. The grants will be provided to 52 communities across Minnesota over the 52 weeks leading up to Super Bowl LII, which will be held in Minneapolis in 2018.

Through funding from dairy farm families, the contribution will match other support to the Legacy Fund of the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee (MNSBHC), with grants of up to \$10,000 per school. The effort begins the day after Super Bowl LI in Houston, Texas, starting a 52-week countdown to Feb. 4, 2018, according to Midwest Dairy Council.

The support from dairy farm families

is part of the MNSBHC's focus on "Fun, Fuel and Fundamentals," with a goal to leave a legacy of healthier children in years to come, Midwest Dairy says.

Grants from Midwest Dairy Council will provide Fuel Up to Play 60-branded equipment for schools to use in delivering enhanced Super School Breakfast programs. Midwest Dairy Council staff members also will provide outreach and coordination with the 52 schools, which are selected by the MNSBHC and will be announced beginning in February.

"We are excited to be working with the Super Bowl committee to include Super School Breakfast in their 52 weeks of giving," says Kathy Skiba, a North Branch, Minnesota, dairy farmer who serves of the Midwest Dairy board and is representing the state's dairy farm

families at MNSBHC events. "Our dairy farm families and the Dairy Council have a 100-year legacy of supporting healthy children, and this is one more way we can make a contribution."

A serving of milk is offered with every school breakfast, and the meals often include cheese or yogurt as well, Midwest Dairy says.

Midwest Dairy's work with school breakfast has shown that when breakfast is served in the classroom, as a grab-and-go meal or after first period, more students participate, Midwest Dairy adds.

The funding supporting the MNSBHC supplements existing school breakfast efforts that are part of Fuel Up to Play 60, a program of dairy farm families and the National Football League that began six years ago. The program in-

volves students and the community in eating better and getting 60 minutes of activity each day. Fuel Up to Play 60 is carried out through student leadership in more than 73,000 schools nationwide, according to Midwest Dairy. CMN

MilkPEP launches second year of 'My Morning Protein'

WASHINGTON — America's milk brands have launched the second year of My Morning Protein, an effort focused on promoting milk as a protein solution for families.

The program includes national advertising, point-of-sale and promotional materials, ready-to-use social content, engaging influencers, key partners including *Food Network Magazine* and more.

These efforts deliver a message that promotes milk's high-quality protein — a significant consumer purchase driver — and highlights how milk is a simple, wholesome way to add high-quality protein and essential nutrients to families' morning meals, according to the Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP).

Retailers have an opportunity to cross-merchandise in-store, leveraging MilkPEP point-of-sale materials and more to showcase that it is simple to come together in the morning as a family and get high-quality protein with milk to start the day strong, MilkPEP adds.

For more information, visit milklife.com/mymorningprotein. CMN

Kroger announces milestone 350th Murray's store

NEW YORK — The Kroger Co. has announced that Murray's Cheese, founded in 1940, has opened its 350th store location in Bloomington, Indiana, through its special partnership with the Kroger family of stores.

"This is an exciting milestone for Murray's and the specialty cheese industry," says Rob Kaufelt, owner and president, Murray's. "In 2008, we pioneered a store-within-a-store concept at a handful of Kroger stores. Between 2008 and 2012, we opened 38 stores and in 2016 we opened nearly 100. This partnership has exceeded our wildest expectations."

Murray's Cheese shops in Kroger stores replicate the same experience customers enjoy at its flagship store in New York. Each carries hundreds of cheeses, charcuterie, olives, crackers and specialty food items from around the world. Murray's is deeply involved with product selection, staff training and development, merchandising and promotions. Its staff has trained thousands of cheesemongers and certified cheese professionals throughout its relationship with Kroger, according to Kroger. CMN

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NEWS/BUSINESS



U.S., EU issue report on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership progress to date

WASHINGTON — Outgoing U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman and European Union (EU) Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström this week published a joint assessment of the progress made in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations since they started in July 2013.

The joint report outlines progress made in all areas of the talks, including improved market access, streamlining regulations and other common ground reached. The report also identifies areas where significant work remains to resolve differences, including improving access to public procurement markets, providing investment protection and reconciling approaches to trademarks and geographical indications.

The report notes some examples of progress made so far in negotiations include:

- The exchange of offers to eliminate duties on 97 percent of tariff lines, a large majority of which would be phased out immediately upon entry into force of the agreement or quickly phased out;
- The identification of steps to reduce unnecessarily burdensome requirements and delays at borders;
- Agreement that TTIP must include strong obligations to protect the environment and fundamental labor rights and should encourage cooperation to support strong labor and environmental standards in trade partners;
- The negotiation of a dedicated chapter in TTIP focused on small- and medium-sized enterprises, which, among other things, would help these businesses better navigate the transatlantic market-

place through the provision of enhanced online information and new mechanisms for U.S.-EU cooperation; and

- Agreement on the importance of transparency and due process in trade remedy procedures and competition policy.

In key regulatory areas of the TTIP negotiations, the goal has been to reduce differences that make transatlantic commerce more burdensome while preserving or enhancing strong protections, the report says. To this end, U.S. and EU negotiators have:

- Found common ground on a number of good regulatory practices;
- Made progress in developing approaches for facilitating forward-looking

regulatory cooperation in areas of common interest;

- Identified possible mechanisms for reducing unnecessary burdens in transatlantic trade arising from redundant product testing and certification requirements;
- Negotiated provisions that would facilitate trade subject to sanitary and phytosanitary import checks; and
- Explored in detail ways to enable stakeholders to participate more fully in the development of products standards across the Atlantic and how to take into account those standards.

The report adds that significant work still is needed to resolve differences in several important areas of the negotiations, including: how to treat the most

sensitive tariff lines on both sides; how to expand and lock in market access in key services sectors; how to reconcile difference on sanitary and phytosanitary measures; how to improve access to each other's government procurement markets; how to provide strong investor protection while preserving the right of governments to regulate, including with respect to dispute resolution mechanisms; and how to reconcile differences in approaches to trademarks, generic names and geographical indications.

"On these and other challenging issues, our work over the past three years brought greater clarity to our differences and enabled us to explore avenues for reconciling them," the joint report says. **CMN**



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State Fair Dairy Promotion Board scholarships available

WEST ALLIS, Wis. — The Wisconsin State Fair Dairy Promotion Board is offering \$1,000 scholarships to third- and fourth-year college students pursuing dairy-related or food science degrees at one of Wisconsin's four-year universities. The scholarships are for use during the 2017-18 school year.

Additional \$1,000 scholarships will be offered to high school seniors planning to pursue a dairy-related or food science degree at one of Wisconsin's four-year universities or students studying in a two-year, technical school program related to dairy or food science.

Applicants will be evaluated on involvement and leadership in dairy-related activities, scholastic achievement and career objectives. Finalists will be interviewed in mid-April, with the recipients to be recognized at the 2017 Wisconsin State Fair.

The application deadline is Friday, March 24, and the application is available at wistatefair.com/competitions/dairy-promo-board. **CMN**



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USDEC announces former USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to become new president, CEO



ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) has announced that former U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will join the organization as president and CEO, effective Feb. 1, 2017.

USDEC is a non-profit, independent organization that seeks to enhance the global demand for U.S. dairy products and ingredients, according to USDEC.

“Growing the global dairy market for U.S. dairy products is essential to the future of the dairy industry and America’s dairy farmers. I’ve spent my career in public service as a tireless advocate for farmers and American agriculture and can think of no better way to continue this service than by leading the U.S. Dairy Export Council,” Vilsack says. “I look forward to partnering with the dynamic team at USDEC as well as agriculture, food industry and key stakeholders at home and abroad to advance the council’s mission and strengthen trust in American dairy.”

As president and CEO, Vilsack looks to secure access for overseas exports, increase their demand and facilitate sales, and he will provide strategic leadership and oversight of USDEC’s global promotional and research activities, regulatory affairs and trade policy initiatives. This includes working with industry leaders to develop a long-term vision for building sales and consumer trust in U.S. dairy.

Together with the USDEC board, Vilsack will create strategies to successfully achieve the shared vision. He also will serve as the organization’s primary spokesperson and ambassador to a host of global and domestic stakeholders, USDEC says.

“The global dairy market is more competitive today than ever. Ambitious

trade agreements, reasonable labeling and product standards, and other issues are vital to the growth of America’s dairy industry,” says Thomas Gallagher, CEO, Dairy Management Inc., the umbrella organization that represents the interests of U.S. dairy and founded USDEC in 1995. “Secretary Vilsack’s impressive record of leadership and his proven ability to manage complex issues, combined with his breadth and depth of industry knowledge, made him the preeminent choice to take the help of USDEC.”

USDEC routinely partners with other dairy industry groups, such as the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, the International Dairy Foods Association and the National Milk Producers Federation to address the needs of its members, including producers, processors and cooperatives, ingredient suppliers and export traders. An important component of Vilsack’s role will be working with and through these organizations to achieve results on behalf of the value chain, USDEC says.

“Secretary Vilsack arrives at USDEC at a pivotal time, as we continue to face both challenges and opportunities to expanding U.S. dairy exports,” says Jim Mulhern, president and CEO, National Milk Producers Federation. “Secretary Vilsack’s familiarity with our trading partners provides him with a strong background to advance the programs of USDEC and its members in the future.”

Vilsack succeeds Tom Suber, who served as president of USDEC since its founding in 1995 and retired at the end of 2016. Under Suber’s leadership, global U.S. dairy exports rose from the equivalent of roughly 5 percent of U.S. milk production to a high of 15.5 percent.

USDEC has more than 100 dairy industry, dairy exporter and affiliated entity members. Its work is supported by staff across the United States and internationally in Mexico, South America, Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

“We thank Tom Suber for his tremendous contributions to the growth of U.S. dairy exports and elevating U.S. dairy’s position globally,” says Gallagher. “He leaves an impressive legacy at USDEC.”

Upon his retirement, Suber has formed Suber Global LLC, a consulting firm focused primarily on strategic planning, program evaluation and trade consultation in the dairy and food sector. CMN

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NEWS/BUSINESS

CABINET

Continued from page 1

crucial in the new Trump administration, especially when milk prices have been in a prolonged slump," says Jim Mulhern, president and CEO, NMPF.

Michael Dykes, president and CEO of the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), says that as a fellow veterinarian, he is confident Perdue will bring the necessary knowledge and insight to keep U.S. agriculture, food production and nutrition programs strong and vibrant.

"IDFA and our dairy foods com-

pany members look forward to working closely with Sonny Perdue in his new role," Dykes says.

He notes that while leading USDA, Perdue will oversee many areas of extreme importance to the dairy sector, including the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the school breakfast and lunch programs, and the national disclosure standard for foods made with genetically-modified ingredients.

"IDFA looks forward to meeting with the secretary and continuing our conversations with USDA on these and other topics," Dykes says.

National Farmers Union (NFU)

President Roger Johnson says that given the challenging state of the farm economy, more than ever family farmers and ranchers need a champion in Washington.

"I am hopeful we will find that champion in Sonny Perdue," Johnson says.

"USDA is more than agriculture's

agency; it is America's agency," he adds. "We look forward to working with Mr. Perdue and the new administration to create and defend a strong farm safety net and provide meaningful farm policy solutions for producers, particularly dairy farmers and cotton growers, in the next farm bill." CMN

FRANKLIN

Continued from page 1

and Arizona, will continue to operate independently as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hochland SE.

"We are thrilled to announce the acquisition," Gutknecht says. "Hochland and Franklin share a common vision around providing superior customer service, creating best-in-class products and ensuring a company culture that strives to make a difference for our customers and brands."

Gutknecht adds that as a company with a successful 100-year heritage, Franklin Foods is proud to join Ho-

chland as Hochland marks its 90th anniversary this year. He notes that Franklin's strong manufacturing and sales platform in the U.S. cream cheese market complements Hochland's international growth strategy.

Peter Stahl, CEO, Hochland SE, agrees.

"We are very excited about this acquisition," Stahl says. "Franklin's strong market position, nationwide distribution and two modern production plants offer Hochland the ideal platform for the successful implementation of our own brands and products in the U.S."

The terms of the transaction were not disclosed. CMN

CHECKOFF

Continued from page 1

United States.

The program would provide exemptions for producers and handlers with gross organic sales of \$250,000 or less and importers with \$250,000 or less in transaction value of imported organic products during the prior marketing year, as well as for organic products produced domestically and exported from the United States. However, the proposed order would provide otherwise exempt producers, handlers and importers the option of being voluntarily assessed and participating in the program.

A 17-member board would be appointed by the secretary of agriculture to administer the program and would be responsible for developing, financing and coordinating activities to sup-

port research to benefit the organic industry, to raise consumer awareness of certified organic products in the marketplace and to improve access to information and data across the organic sector.

A proposed rule with information about the proposed program was published in the Jan. 18 Federal Register. A 60-day comment period ends March 20.

Should USDA proceed with promulgating a program based on public comments, a referendum would be held to determine whether a majority of eligible domestic producers, handlers and importers support a program prior to it going into effect.

Comments can be posted on www.regulations.gov or mailed to: Promotion and Economics Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1406, Stop 0244, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-0244. CMN

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NEWS/BUSINESS

KOSHER

Continued from page 1

it is doable, he says.

Gordimer notes another consideration of kosher products — forgery — has led to changes in OU's labeling.

"Unfortunately, there's occasional label fraud," Gordimer says.

To help prevent forgery, OU has created a metallic hologram that is affixed to kosher-certified cheeses when they are cut and labeled, all under full-time OU rabbinic supervision, he says. These holograms provide added security against fraud, as each package of product is certified only when bearing the OU hologram.

The holograms, which the supervising rabbi brings as the cheese is being packaged, cannot easily be duplicated, are tamper-proof and contain special codes — similar to the shiny hologram strip on a credit card. The rabbi monitors and tallies hologram use each time cheese is labeled and takes the unused holograms with them upon labeling completion, Gordimer explains.

For industrial kosher cheeses, the rabbi brings slightly larger, coded security stickers that are traceable by the OU office, Gordimer says. These security stickers are tamper-proof and are placed on the product following the same protocol used for holograms.

For retail customers, the package typically states that the product is

only OU certified when bearing the hologram, and next to the statement is the hologram. The statement does not appear on industrial cheeses because these cheeses always will be opened and processed in the presence of a supervising rabbi, who comes with documentation that identifies the cheese's kosher status when bearing the specific security stickers, Gordimer adds.

• Kosher cheese trends

Gordimer says he has seen more interesting kosher foods — such as some artisanal cheeses — available on the general market over the past year. As a result, OU has noticed a larger consumer interest in kosher.

In addition, kosher cheese trends reflect some larger trends happening in

the food industry, such as an increasing interest in bold cheese flavors as well as cheeses made by local, small companies, Gordimer says. While mass production of kosher cheeses also is growing, the largest noticeable growth is in small, family-operated artisanal cheeses, including both foreign and domestic varieties, he adds.

Heiman says he also has noticed kosher cheeses opening up to new flavors. However, he adds that he has not seen the incorporation of hotter flavors into kosher cheeses as seen in other cheese types.

The kosher label also appeals to vegetarians and others who look to eat foods free of animal byproducts, according to Gordimer.

Incorporating non-animal rennet for aged cheeses is especially interesting, according to Delman, as it has not been available for as long as traditional animal rennet. Whereas European hard cheeses typically are made from traditional aging methods containing animal rennet, kosher aged artisanal cheeses with non-animal rennet are, in many cases, being done for the first time, he says.

In addition to kosher aged cheeses, kosher cheese powders, goat cheese and organic cheese also are growing in demand, Gordimer says. In some cases, there are not enough of these cheeses on the kosher market to meet demand, he adds.

At Lake Country Dairy, the company has noticed an increasing interest in organic and non-GMO kosher cheese.

"We've seen a movement on people wanting organic and non-GMO versions of kosher products," Norton says, adding that, while the company does not currently produce kosher organic and non-GMO products, it may work individually with customers in the future to produce such cheeses that fit customers' needs.

Lake Country Dairy has seen a push from export markets to offer kosher products as well — even in regions where kosher demand may not be expected — showing kosher can act as a mark of quality in addition to its religious upholding, Norton says.

Overall, Norton has seen a growing number of requests for kosher cheese at Lake Country Dairy, leading the company to produce more kosher cheese now than in the past, he says.

Heiman says that offering kosher cheeses has caught more customer traffic for Nasonville. In the coming year, he says he expects kosher cheeses to undergo a 1-percent sales increase.

Gordimer says he also thinks kosher cheese sales will increase in the coming year, adding that, as time goes on, companies are realizing they can gain a large market share by adding kosher to their certification portfolios.

Delman adds that certain retailers, such as Whole Foods, are trying to capture the kosher market segment, as it is a segment with room for growth and carries a positive connotation.

"It's the beginning stage in the kosher movement," Delman says. CMN

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NEWS/BUSINESS



USTR schedules hearing on EU ban on U.S. beef products; Roquefort duties could increase

WASHINGTON — The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) last week announced that, acting on the request of the U.S. beef industry, it has scheduled a public hearing and is seeking public comments in connection with the European Union's (EU) ban on most U.S. beef products.

Among other things, USTR is considering imposing higher duties on imports of Roquefort cheese from France as part of its actions against the EU.

The EU bans the import of beef and beef products produced from animals to which any of six hormones have been administered for growth promotion purposes, USTR says. The effect of the EU ban is to prohibit the import of all but specially-produced U.S. beef and beef products.

• Background

A World Trade Organization (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) in a

February 1998 case found that the ban was inconsistent with the EU's obligations under the WTO agreement, USTR notes. In July 1999, a WTO arbitrator determined that the EU import ban on U.S. beef and beef products had nullified or impaired U.S. benefits under the WTO agreement in the amount of \$116.8 million each year.

In July 1999, DSB authorized the United States to suspend the application to the EU, and its member countries, of WTO tariff concessions and related obligations covering trade in an amount of \$116.8 million per year, USTR says. Pursuant to that authorization, USTR announced a list of EU products that would be subject to a 100-percent rate of duty effective with respect to products entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after July 29, 1999. That product list included Roquefort cheese.

In 2009, the United States and the European Commission announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the EU beef case. That MOU provided for the EU to make phased increases in market access by adopting a tariff-rate quota (TRQ) for beef produced without growth-promoting hormones in return for the United States making phased reductions in the additional duties the United States had imposed consistent with WTO authorization.

USTR terminated all additional duties on EU products, effective May 2011.

However, USTR says that while in 2009 the U.S. negotiated an agreement to allow a modest degree of market access for specially-produced beef that meets the EU's standards, that agreement has not worked as intended. The European Commission had argued that this issue should be resolved through the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). However, given that European officials decided after their trade minister's meeting in September not to complete TTIP in 2016, now is the time to take action, USTR says.

• Next steps

In order to assist in a possible rein-

statement of higher duties on Roquefort cheese and other products in the EU-beef case, USTR says it will conduct a review of the effectiveness of such an action and other actions that could be taken, including actions against other products.

The hearing is currently scheduled to take place Feb. 15, 2017.

The deadline to submit written comments and requests to appear at the public hearing is Jan. 30, 2017. Feb. 22, 2017, is the deadline for submitting post-hearing rebuttal comments.

All comments and requests to appear at the hearing must be submitted electronically at www.regulations.gov.

For procedural questions concerning written comments or participating in the public hearing, contact Gwendolyn Diggs at 202-395-3150. For questions on the EU-beef matter, contact Roger Wentzel, deputy assistant USTR for agricultural affairs at 202-395-6127 or David Weiner, deputy assistant USTR for Europe at 202-395-3320. For all other questions, contact William Busis, associate General counsel and chair of the Section 301 Committee at 202-395-3150 or Katherine Linton, assistant general counsel, at 202-395-3150. CMN

Total conventional dairy ads fall 21 percent

WASHINGTON — The total number of conventional dairy advertisements declined 21 percent last week from the prior week, and conventional cheese ads decreased 39 percent, says USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in its latest weekly National Dairy Retail Report released Jan. 13.

AMS says national conventional varieties of 8-ounce natural cheese blocks last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$2.16, up from \$2.13 one week earlier but down from \$2.35 one year earlier.

Natural varieties of 1-pound cheese blocks last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$3.40, up from \$3.38 one week earlier but down from \$3.53 one year earlier, AMS says, while

2-pound cheese blocks had a weighted average advertised price of \$6.87, up from \$6.25 one week earlier and \$5.35 one year ago.

AMS says natural varieties of 8-ounce cheese shreds last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$2.12, down from \$2.15 one week earlier and \$2.51 one year earlier, while 1-pound cheese shreds had a weighted average advertised price of \$3.54, down from \$3.97 one week earlier but up from \$3.13 one year earlier.

Meanwhile, national conventional butter in 1-pound packs last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$3.55, up from \$3.35 one week earlier but down from \$3.57 one year ago, AMS says. CMN

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NEWS/BUSINESS



Alouette Cheese USA to relaunch reformulated classic spreadable line, add new flavor

NEW HOLLAND, Pa. — Next month, Alouette Cheese USA will be launching an improved, upscale version of its classic spreadable line.

The reformulated line of Grade A, rBST-free product will include a new flavor and new graphics. Jeff Magnuson, associate brand manager, Alouette Cheese USA, says the company is leveraging the knowledge of Savencia, its French parent company, and implementing unique European technology in its Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, facility to deliver new and improved product.

The updates were sparked by the needs of millennials, and the company's desire to expand its base to a younger demographic.

"Over the last couple of years we have

seen consumer trends shifting towards more wholesome, well-made and authentic products," Magnuson says. "The spreadable cheese category in the deli section has been growing steadily over the last three years, and it was time to further distance ourselves from our competitors by bringing something truly unique to the marketplace. Our spreadable cheeses not only offer great flavor but are also incredibly versatile, expanding their overall value."

Alouette has added unique toppings to each flavor along with a flocet design on the cheese.

A Grilled Tomato flavor will join the company's lineup in addition to existing flavors including Garlic & Herbs, Reduced Fat Garlic & Herbs, Spinach & Artichoke,

Smoky Jalapeno, Flame-Roasted Red Peppers and Toasted Everything. Additionally, the company offers limited-edition flavors: Pumpkin Spice, available September-November, and Cranberry Apple Spice, available October-December.

The line will be packaged in an updated sleeve that Magnuson says will clearly communicate what consumers can expect when they purchase the updated spreadable products. Product sizes will remain unchanged at 6.5 ounces per container for grocery retailers and a 12-ounce size for club stores. The average price is \$5.49 at grocery retail.

The products are sold in grocery stores nationally, including Kroger, Publix, Harris Teeter, Meijer, Wakefern,

Ahold, Albertsons/Safeway, BJ's, Target and Wal-Mart, among many others.

The new line will be launched Feb. 13, 2017, and consumers will find them on store shelves at the beginning of March.

For more information, visit www.alouettecheese.com. **CMN**

Cheese Importers Association seeks candidates for summer internship

WASHINGTON — The Cheese Importers Association of America Qualified Importer Program (CIAA QIP) has announced 15 internship opportunities to college students for the summer of 2017.

Internships will take place over the course of 10 weeks, between the months of May to August at various locations throughout the United States. Accepted program participants will receive a \$600 weekly stipend over the duration of the internship, according to CIAA.

The preferred candidate is a sophomore or junior majoring in food marketing or supply chain management, and other related fields. Students at other stages in their academic career also are encouraged to apply and will be reviewed and accepted to the program on a case-by-case basis, CIAA says.

Internships are awarded based on academic achievement, interest in cheese and dairy trade, creativity, integrity and initiative.

"Our Cheese Importer member firms offer valuable knowledge and experience to students who are evaluating their future careers," says Ken Olsson, president, CIAA. "This is the fifth year we are offering internships to students studying food marketing and supply chain management. Several of our past interns have resulted in full-time hires with premier cheese importer companies."

To learn more about the internship program and to apply, visit theciaa.org/activities/intern-program.html.

Interested candidates are expected to submit a resume, application form, transcripts, a statement of intent outlining their interests in the internship and two letters of recommendation. Application forms can be downloaded at theciaa.org/forms/activities/intern_app.pdf.

Completed applications should be submitted to CIAA by emailing intern@theciaa.org, faxing to 202-547-6348 or mailing to 204 E. Street NE, Washington, DC 20002. All applications and supporting material must be received by the Feb. 1 deadline. Any applications and/or materials received after that date will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Funding for the internship program is derived from the assessment importers pay on dairy products imported into the United States.

For questions, contact Sheila Crowley at intern@theciaa.org or at 202-547-0899. **CMN**

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