

# CHEESE MARKET NEWS®

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



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## Companies, experts spotlight key labeling claims at retail

By Alyssa Mitchell

**MADISON, Wis.** — As today's savvy consumers continue to press for information on the quality and background of the food they buy and eat, it can be challenging for food companies to keep up with demand for various product claims and standards in a crowded marketplace.

Edward Zimmerman, founder of The Food Connector, a sales and marketing company serving the wholesale food industry, notes there are many ways a company defines itself, and the label is only one. However, for certain segments of the market, it's important to be aware of what consumers are looking for — not only for

direct sales, but for product buyers looking to meet these consumer demands.

Joan Behr, senior director of communications and brand management, Foremost Farms USA, says consumers want to know — and have a right to know — what's in their food and where it comes from. She notes research from the Center for Food Integrity shows that transparency is the key to earning trust.

"The results show that consumers want transparency in very specific areas, including impact of food on health, food safety, animal well-being and the environment," she says.

### • No hormones, no GMOs

For the past decade, many U.S. dairy manufacturers have moved toward phasing out the use of recombinant bovine somatotropin (rbST), which is used to increase milk yield in lactating cows.

While FDA, the World Health Organization and National Institutes of Health independently have stated that dairy products and meat from rbST-treated cows are safe for human consumption, the method has been banned in several countries. In the United States, public opinion has led an increasing

number of manufacturers and retailers to market only milk that is rbST-free.

Foremost Farms USA, Baraboo, Wisconsin, recently announced that effective June 1, all of the raw milk purchased, sold or processed by the cooperative is coming from dairy farms pledging that their cows are not being treated with rbST.

To be considered rbST-free, Foremost Farms' members were required to stop using rbST on their cows by April 1, Behr says. Members were notified of the decision in August 2016 to allow time for the animals in their herds to transition to rbST-free status.

"Our decision to move to an rbST-free milk supply was driven in part by our infant formula customers who are sourcing rbST-free whey supplies for their ingredients," she says.

Behr notes that regionally, other milk handlers and processors are moving to or already have moved to rbST-free milk requirements.

"These moves limit our ability to buy, sell and trade milk and milk solids," she says. "Also, our ingredient customers all have alternative options for sourcing rbST-free whey ingredient supplies. Our decision to purchase

only rbST-free milk strengthens our standing with those customers who have choices about where they purchase their ingredients because rbST-free ingredient supplies are abundant around the world. These markets are very important to Foremost Farms because they provide our members with stable market access and contribute to overall profitability."

In addition to rbST, consumers in the past several years have become increasingly concerned about the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in the foods they purchase and consume.

Jeanne Carpenter, specialty cheese buyer, Metcalfe's Market, Madison, Wisconsin, says that while the non-GMO cheeses Metcalfe's offers currently are limited, consumers more and more are requesting these cheeses.

According to The NPD Group, a leading global information company, more than half of consumers had little to no awareness of GMOs in 2013. That percentage now has shrunk to a little more than a third.

As awareness grows, more consumers recognize that GMOs have benefits in producing better

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## 2017 KEY PLAYERS

Our Exclusive Annual Profile of Who's Who in the Cheese Business



By the staff of Cheese Market News

Sometimes concerns like trade wars, milk volumes and regulatory changes crowd the front page. But despite uncertainty and constant pressures, the U.S. cheese industry continues to press on toward success — innovating and growing demand for its products. Altogether, U.S. cheese companies once again set a new production record in 2016, producing a whopping 12.16 billion pounds of cheese.

Producing this record were a variety of companies making cheese at 544 plants, according to USDA. *Cheese Market News'* "Key Players" gives its readers an inside look at some of those companies. "Key Players" is not a ranking of the nation's largest cheese companies, but instead celebrates the successes of cheese companies both large and small. All four dozen of the companies profiled this year are making important and distinct contributions to the growth of the dairy industry as a whole, whether that means crafting an award-winning cheese, developing new products and packaging to meet the snack cravings of consumers, or growing production capacity for specialized products. We also provide production and sales data whenever possible because we know these are important to a full understanding of a company and its role in the industry.

While each profile within "Key Players" provides insight into a specific company, "Key Players" in its entirety also is a snapshot of the current industry. In the following pages, you will learn about the latest in industry acquisitions, brand new plants and plant expansions, sustainability efforts and food safety certifications. New products, marketing programs, investments in employees and their communities, and contest awards also are highlighted.

To find out more about the profiled companies' latest achievements and where these companies are headed, please read on.

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## Construction begins in Petaluma for Point Reyes

**POINT REYES, Calif.** — Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co., a family-owned, artisan cheese producer based in Point Reyes, California, this week began construction on a production and distribution facility in Petaluma, California.

The new location in Sonoma County is 22 miles east of the company's headquarters in Point Reyes and will house a second creamery and aging warehouse as well as the company's distribution center. This is Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese's first expansion away from the Marin County dairy farm the Giacomini family has owned since 1959.

"We are quickly reaching production capacity on the farm and want the ability to respond to increasing demand for our products in the marketplace," says Lynn Giacomini Stray, co-owner and COO. "My sisters and I thought long and hard about if and how

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## Nelson-Jameson moves branch in Texas to Amarillo

**MARSHFIELD, Wis.** — Nelson-Jameson this week announced that its Texas branch will be moving from Dumas to Amarillo, in a move that will allow the company to better serve its existing customer base and position Nelson-Jameson for more growth in the South Central region.

This new location is strategically designed to

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# MARKET INDICATORS



## Chicago Mercantile Exchange

Cash prices for the week ended June 2, 2017

	Monday May 29	Tuesday May 30	Wednesday May 31	Thursday June 1	Friday June 2
<b>Cheese Barrels</b>					
Price		\$1.5400	\$1.5450	\$1.5325	\$1.4900
Change	Markets Closed	+6	+1/2	-1 1/4	-4 1/4
<b>Cheese 40-lb. Blocks</b>					
Price		\$1.7300	\$1.7450	\$1.7375	\$1.7000
Change		-1/4	+1 1/2	-3/4	-3 3/4

Weekly average (May 29-June 2): Barrels: \$1.5269(+.0439); 40-lb. Blocks: \$1.7281(+.0456).  
Weekly ave. one year ago (May 30-June 3, 2016): Barrels: \$1.4250; 40-lb. Blocks: \$1.3919.

	Monday May 29	Tuesday May 30	Wednesday May 31	Thursday June 1	Friday June 2
<b>Grade A NDM</b>					
Price	Markets Closed	\$0.9350	\$0.9550	\$0.9500	\$0.9475
Change		+3/4	+2	-1/2	-1/4

Weekly average (May 29-June 2): Grade A: \$0.9469(+.0189).

	Monday May 29	Tuesday May 30	Wednesday May 31	Thursday June 1	Friday June 2
<b>Grade AA Butter</b>					
Price	Markets Closed	\$2.3600	\$2.4100	\$2.4100	\$2.4850
Change		NC	+5	NC	+7 1/2

Weekly average (May 29-June 2): Grade AA: \$2.4163(+.0473).

Class II Cream (Major Northeast Cities): \$2.7954(+.1840)-\$2.9376(-.1011).

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## California Minimum Prices

Released June 1, 2017

	Butterfat	SNF	Equivalent
<b>Class 4a</b>	\$ 2.4236/lb.	\$ 0.6835/lb.	\$ 14.43/cwt.
<b>Class 4b</b>	\$ 2.4236/lb.	\$ 0.7776/lb.	\$ 15.25/cwt.

## Weekly Cold Storage Holdings

May 29, 2017

	On hand Monday	Week Change	Change since May 1 Pounds	Percent	Last Year Pounds	Change
<b>Butter</b>	32,973	+630	+3,481	+12	29,350	+3,623
<b>Cheese</b>	99,857	+3,117	-286	-0	98,356	+1,501

(These data, which include government stocks and are reported in thousands of pounds, are based on reports from a limited sample of cold storage centers across the country. This chart is designed to help the dairy industry see the trends in cold storage between the release of the National Agricultural Statistics Service's monthly cold storage reports.)

## CLASS III PRICE

(Dollars per hundredweight, 3.5% butterfat test)

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2011	13.48	17.00	19.40	16.87	16.52	19.11	21.39	21.67	19.07	18.03	19.07	18.77
2012	17.05	16.06	15.72	15.72	15.23	15.63	16.68	17.73	19.00	21.02	20.83	18.66
2013	18.14	17.25	16.93	17.59	18.52	18.02	17.38	17.91	18.14	18.22	18.83	18.95
2014	21.15	23.35	23.33	24.31	22.57	21.36	21.60	22.25	24.60	23.82	21.94	17.82
2015	16.18	15.46	15.56	15.81	16.19	16.72	16.33	16.27	15.82	15.46	15.30	14.44
2016	13.72	13.80	13.74	13.63	12.76	13.22	15.24	16.91	16.39	14.82	16.76	17.40
2017	16.77	16.88	15.81	15.22	15.57							

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## CHEESE FUTURES\* for the week ending June 1, 2017

(Listings for each day by month, settling price and open interest)

	Fri., May 26	Mon., May 29	Tues., May 30	Wed., May 31	Thurs., June 1
MAY17	1.542 4,430		1.542 4,429	1.542 4,429	1.539 5,086
JUN17	1.637 3,689		1.647 3,679	1.657 3,644	1.650 3,649
JUL17	1.706 3,141		1.708 3,119	1.729 3,127	1.712 3,129
AUG17	1.750 3,014		1.750 2,993	1.764 2,988	1.748 3,023
SEP17	1.760 2,702		1.755 2,677	1.770 2,678	1.757 2,683
OCT17	1.751 2,248		1.751 2,229	1.759 2,230	1.757 2,235
NOV17	1.740 2,446		1.734 2,425	1.744 2,427	1.741 2,432
DEC17	1.725 2,414	Markets Closed	1.724 2,386	1.729 2,386	1.729 2,393
JAN18	1.718 694		1.712 693	1.710 702	1.710 706
FEB18	1.707 639		1.707 639	1.707 646	1.700 656
MAR18	1.710 557		1.705 557	1.705 570	1.705 584
APR18	1.704 470		1.704 470	1.704 471	1.700 490
MAY18	1.702 384		1.702 384	1.705 384	1.705 393
JUN18	1.713 323		1.713 323	1.713 323	1.713 323
JUL18	1.735 32		1.735 32	1.735 49	1.735 49
AUG18	1.735 27		1.735 27	1.735 27	1.735 27
Total Contracts Traded/ Open Interest	427/27,261		393/27,123	301/27,142	416/27,919

Daily market prices are available by visiting CME's online statistics sites at <http://www.cmegroup.com>.  
\*Total Contracts Traded/Open Interest reflect additional months not included in this chart.

## DRY WHEY FUTURES\* for the week ended June 1, 2017

(Listings for each day by month, settling price and open interest)

	Fri., May 26	Mon., May 29	Tues., May 30	Wed., May 31	Thurs., June 1
MAY17	51.075 878		51.075 878	51.075 878	50.940 885
JUN17	48.925 967		48.925 967	48.925 967	49.000 961
JUL17	47.000 771		47.000 773	47.000 773	46.675 780
AUG17	45.350 675		45.350 682	45.350 682	44.500 688
SEP17	44.700 649		44.700 656	44.350 655	43.600 657
OCT17	43.125 484		43.125 491	43.000 491	42.250 489
NOV17	42.000 446		42.000 453	42.100 461	41.900 462
DEC17	41.075 451	Markets Closed	41.075 458	41.250 469	41.250 474
JAN18	39.975 133		39.975 133	41.200 135	41.475 144
FEB18	39.400 130		39.400 130	40.825 132	41.100 139
MAR18	39.000 126		39.000 126	40.250 126	40.750 130
APR18	38.000 67		38.000 67	41.050 69	41.050 76
MAY18	37.000 64		37.000 64	37.000 64	38.900 68
JUN18	37.000 66		37.000 66	37.000 66	38.250 70
JUL18	36.025 9		36.025 9	36.025 9	36.950 9
Total Contracts Traded/ Open Interest	70/5,950		47/5,987	45/6,011	136/6,066

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\*Total Contracts Traded/Open Interest reflect additional months not included in this chart.

## Dry Products\*

June 2, 2017

### NONFAT DRY MILK

**Central & East:** low/medium heat \$.8700(+1 1/2)-\$.9800(+3);  
mostly \$.8900(+2)-\$.9300(+2).  
high heat \$.9900(+1 1/2)-\$1.1000.

**West:** low/medium heat \$.8700(+2 1/2)-\$1.0000(+4);  
mostly \$.9200(+2)-\$.9700(+3).  
high heat \$.9700(+3)-\$1.0900(+1/2).

**Calif. manufacturing plants:** extra grade/grade A weighted ave. \$.08956(+.0226)  
based on 8,171,285 lbs.

**WHOLE MILK POWDER (National):** \$1.2800-\$1.4500.

### EDIBLE LACTOSE

**(FOB) Central and West:** \$.3450-\$5.700; mostly \$.3700-\$4.500.

### WHEY POWDER

**Central:** nonhygroscopic \$.3550(+1/2)-\$.5950;  
mostly \$.4300(-2)-\$.5175(-1/4).

**West:** nonhygroscopic \$.4000-\$5.375;  
mostly \$.4200-\$4.800(-2).

**(FOB) Northeast:** extra grade/grade A \$.3850(-1/2)-\$.5300(-1).

**ANIMAL FEED WHEY (Central):** Whey spray milk replacer \$.3375-\$4.400.

**WHEY PROTEIN CONCENTRATE (34 percent):** \$.7500-\$1.2350;  
mostly \$.8200-\$9950.

### DRY BUTTERMILK

**(FOB) Central & East:** \$.8250(+2 1/2)-\$.8800.

**(FOB) West:** \$.8100(+1)-\$.9100; mostly \$.8500(+4)-\$.9000(+3).

**CASEIN:** Rennet \$2.7500-\$3.0500; Acid \$.3400-\$3.7000.

\*Source: USDA's Dairy Market News

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# MARKET INDICATORS



## CME FUTURES for the week ended June 1, 2017

### Class III Milk\*

	Fri., May 26	Mon., May 29	Tues., May 30	Wed., May 31	Thurs., June 1	
MAY17	15.61 4,737	Markets Closed	15.62 4,645	15.61 4,642	15.57 5,612	
JUN17	16.51 5,140		16.56 5,100	16.70 5,050	16.66 4,911	
JUL17	17.04 4,184		17.08 4,225	17.26 4,259	17.12 4,309	
AUG17	17.40 3,596		17.39 3,642	17.52 3,689	17.35 3,747	
SEP17	17.44 3,334		17.39 3,340	17.55 3,344	17.42 3,410	
OCT17	17.24 2,711		17.24 2,714	17.38 2,722	17.30 2,805	
NOV17	17.08 2,413		17.02 2,419	17.15 2,429	17.11 2,464	
DEC17	16.86 2,341		16.84 2,345	16.88 2,364	16.95 2,427	
JAN18	16.71 748		16.62 749	16.63 751	16.63 761	
FEB18	16.65 686		16.57 687	16.57 687	16.57 717	
MAR18	16.61 635		16.59 635	16.63 638	16.59 636	
APR18	16.50 507		16.50 507	16.50 507	16.45 508	
MAY18	16.52 453		16.52 453	16.52 460	16.47 480	
JUN18	16.60 365		16.60 365	16.55 374	16.54 403	
JUL18	16.63 95		16.66 95	16.66 95	16.72 114	
Total Contracts Traded/				1,158/32,358	995/32,448	3,283/33,741
Open Interest	2,251/32,382					

### Class IV Milk\*

	Fri., May 26	Mon., May 29	Tues., May 30	Wed., May 31	Thurs., June 1	
MAY17	14.55 526	Markets Closed	14.55 526	14.59 526	14.49 589	
JUN17	15.93 510		15.93 510	16.02 510	16.02 508	
JUL17	16.43 424		16.43 424	16.70 424	16.70 424	
AUG17	16.68 432		16.60 427	16.88 427	17.00 427	
SEP17	16.88 425		16.80 421	17.10 423	17.10 423	
OCT17	16.97 436		16.85 436	17.23 438	17.23 441	
NOV17	16.88 340		16.88 340	17.25 352	17.25 355	
DEC17	16.94 353		16.90 353	17.10 385	17.10 373	
JAN18	16.55 114		16.50 114	16.50 114	16.50 121	
FEB18	16.55 132		16.55 132	16.55 132	16.55 132	
MAR18	16.65 176		16.65 176	16.65 176	16.65 176	
Total Contracts Traded/				24/4,141	111/4,189	30/4,251
Open Interest	10/4,150					

### Cash-Settled NDM\*

	Fri., May 26	Mon., May 29	Tues., May 30	Wed., May 31	Thurs., June 1	
MAY17	87.450 883	Markets Closed	87.425 883	87.425 892	87.040 1,050	
JUN17	92.525 1,050		92.425 1,064	94.375 1,095	94.000 1,096	
JUL17	95.425 1,015		96.150 1,012	98.300 994	98.200 991	
AUG17	97.150 987		98.000 981	99.950 982	99.725 981	
SEP17	99.250 808		99.575 807	101.400 810	101.425 811	
OCT17	100.325 501		100.600 501	102.300 503	102.375 502	
NOV17	101.275 499		101.275 499	103.500 503	103.350 511	
DEC17	102.500 613		103.200 611	105.000 622	104.425 627	
JAN18	103.100 231		103.025 233	105.500 233	105.500 235	
Total Contracts Traded/				65/6,848	184/6,891	185/7,061
Open Interest	93/6,844					

### Cash-Settled Butter\*

	Fri., May 26	Mon., May 29	Tues., May 30	Wed., May 31	Thurs., June 1	
MAY17	218.800 807	Markets Closed	218.800 807	218.800 807	216.440 876	
JUN17	239.000 864		239.000 864	240.500 862	240.425 852	
JUL17	244.750 874		244.000 884	246.250 887	246.500 885	
AUG17	245.500 833		245.000 838	247.550 839	247.975 844	
SEP17	246.500 1,120		244.000 1,127	248.175 1,142	247.800 1,152	
OCT17	246.500 707		246.500 707	249.025 710	248.250 722	
NOV17	244.725 462		244.725 462	246.725 465	247.400 467	
DEC17	240.075 382		240.075 382	240.150 382	240.150 382	
JAN18	229.000 50		229.000 50	229.000 53	229.000 53	
FEB18	227.475 27		227.475 27	227.475 30	227.475 30	
Total Contracts Traded/				33/6,208	106/6,249	143/6,335
Open Interest	140/6,186					

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\*Total Contracts Traded/Open Interest reflect additional months not included in this chart.

## Class & Component Prices

	May 2017	April 2017
<b>Class III:</b>		
Price	\$ 15.57/cwt.	\$ 15.22/cwt.
Skim Price	\$ 7.38/cwt.	\$ 7.23/cwt.
<b>Class IV:</b>		
Price	\$ 14.49/cwt.	\$ 14.01/cwt.
Skim Price	\$ 6.26/cwt.	\$ 5.98/cwt.
<b>Class II:</b>		
Price	\$ 14.84/cwt.	\$ 14.81/cwt.
Butterfat Price	\$ 2.4204/lb.	\$ 2.3618/lb.
<b>Component Prices:</b>		
Butterfat Price	\$ 2.4134/lb.	\$ 2.3548/lb.
Nonfat Solids Price	\$ 0.6956/lb.	\$ 0.6641/lb.
Protein Price	\$ 1.7723/lb.	\$ 1.6955/lb.
Other Solids Price	\$ 0.3196/lb.	\$ 0.3350/lb.
Somatic Cell Adjustment Rate	\$ 0.00077/1,000 scc	\$ 0.00075/1,000 scc
<b>Product Price Averages:</b>		
Butter	\$ 2.1644/lb.	\$ 2.1160/lb.
Nonfat Dry Milk	\$ 0.8704/lb.	\$ 0.8386/lb.
Cheese	\$ 1.5390/lb.	\$ 1.4960/lb.
Dry Whey	\$ 0.5094/lb.	\$ 0.5243/lb.

## National Dairy Products Sales Report

For the week ended:	5/27/17	5/20/17	5/13/17	5/6/17
<b>Cheese 40-lb. Blocks:</b>				
Average price <sup>1</sup>	\$1.6122	*\$1.5752	*\$1.5378	\$1.5253
Sales volume <sup>2</sup>	12,269,611	*12,441,224	*11,649,494	12,749,420
<b>Cheese 500-lb. Barrels:</b>				
Average price <sup>1</sup>	\$1.6006	\$1.5576	\$1.5377	\$1.5307
Adj. price to 38% moisture	\$1.5278	\$1.4876	\$1.4675	\$1.4573
Sales volume <sup>2</sup>	11,846,233	13,085,102	12,612,881	11,237,229
Moisture content	35.05	35.08	35.03	34.88
<b>Butter:</b>				
Average price <sup>1</sup>	\$2.2971	\$2.1881	\$2.1181	*\$2.1052
Sales volume <sup>2</sup>	3,274,263	4,526,820	*4,855,903	5,357,411
<b>Nonfat Dry Milk:</b>				
Average price <sup>1</sup>	\$0.8871	\$0.8707	\$0.8603	\$0.8639
Sales volume <sup>2</sup>	16,533,930	*17,407,631	17,631,598	16,271,969
<b>Dry Whey:</b>				
Average price <sup>1</sup>	\$0.4947	*\$0.5173	\$0.5078	\$0.5171
Sales volume <sup>2</sup>	6,239,194	*6,816,801	6,246,106	6,172,887

<sup>1</sup>Revised. <sup>2</sup>Prices weighted by volumes reported. <sup>3</sup>Sales as reported by participating manufacturers. Reported in pounds. *More information is available by calling AMS at 202-720-4392.*

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## WCMA UPDATE



## Perspective: WCMA

**John Umhoefer** is executive director of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association. He contributes this column monthly for *Cheese Market News*®.

## Raw milk cheese ain't raw milk

The June issue of the journal *Emerging Infectious Disease* made news with a report commingling data on disease outbreaks caused by beverage raw milk and raw milk cheese. Was that pairing fair?

The report by researchers at EpiX Analytics strongly implicates unpasteurized dairy products versus pasteurized beverage milk and cheese. "In conclusion," the report notes, "outbreaks linked to the consumption of cow's milk and cheese were estimated to cause on average 761 illnesses and 22 hospitalizations per year in the

United States. Unpasteurized products are consumed by a small percentage of the US dairy consumers but cause 95 percent of illnesses."

A consumer reading this summary is forced to lump raw milk cheese and beverage raw milk into a single "dangerous" category.

The study goes on to state: "Unpasteurized milk, consumed by only 3.2 percent of the population, and cheese, consumed by only 1.6 percent of the population, caused 96 percent of illnesses caused by contaminated dairy products." Put another (damning) way,

the researchers note that unpasteurized dairy products cause 840 times more illnesses and 45 times more hospitalizations than pasteurized dairy products.

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association is clearly on record against the sale and consumption of raw (unpasteurized) milk as a beverage. Raw milk simply has no food safety steps or hurdles to stop natural pathogenic organisms from moving through the milking process, into the bottle and to the consumer.

And while FDA firmly joins WCMA in opposition to beverage raw milk, both our association and government food safety leaders know raw milk cheeses can be produced safely.

The report in this month's *Emerging Infectious Disease* doesn't separate data on beverage raw milk outbreaks and raw milk cheese outbreaks. But luckily, other government studies from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have.

The CDC reported in a 2012 study that cheese made from raw milk was involved in 27 outbreaks of foodborne illness from 1993 to 2006. Among 121 dairy outbreaks, "65 involved cheese and 56 involved fluid milk. Of the 65 outbreaks involving cheese, 27 (42 percent) involved cheese made from non-pasteurized milk. Of the 56 outbreaks involving fluid milk, an even higher percentage (82 percent) involved non-

pasteurized milk," according to a paper in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 18, No. 3.

A later CDC study tracked six more years of data on beverage raw milk outbreaks. "During 2007-2012, a total of 81 outbreaks associated with non-pasteurized milk were reported from 26 states. These outbreaks resulted in 979 illnesses and 73 hospitalizations," researchers wrote in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 21, No. 1.

Adding the two reports' totals of beverage raw milk outbreaks yields 127 raw milk incidents, the amount reported prominently on [Foodsafety.gov](http://Foodsafety.gov), a U.S. Department of Health & Human Services website: "From 1993 through 2012, 127 outbreaks reported to CDC were linked to raw milk. These outbreaks sickened 1,909 people, and caused 144 people to be hospitalized. Most of the 127 outbreaks were caused by *Campylobacter*, Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*, or *Salmonella*."

Raw milk cheese has been responsible for illness outbreaks, but beverage raw milk incidents are far more common.

In 1990, researchers at the University of Wisconsin pointed out the hurdles that cheesemaking presents to pathogens — even for cheese made from unpasteurized milk.

"A multiplicity of practices other  
*Turn to UMHOEFER, page 8* ⇨

## GUEST COLUMNIST



## CMN Exclusive!



## Perspective: Dairy Marketing

**Lynne Devereux** is a consultant for the California Milk Advisory Board and a guest columnist for this week's *Cheese Market News*®.

with vitamins, minerals and proteins, it's a leading choice for hard-working brains between meetings. Thankfully, research also reveals that ice cream is forever and all the better if it's made from all-natural milk and satisfies a guilt-free sweet tooth.

Boomers are running a close second in the snacking race, preferring real butter on their popcorn and vegetables and a variety of roasted nuts while youthful choices run to chilies and chia seeds. But across all ages, Mintel research shows that healthy, energizing, light snacks are popular early in the day and indulgent snacks like ice cream or chocolate are savored at the day's end. Families are opening a fridge stocked with drinkable yogurts, kefir, healthy wraps and plenty of portable fresh fruits to tuck into a lunchbox. Ice pops made with fruit juice and frozen yogurt give kids the calcium and vitamin C they need any time of day. Proteins are delivered in cheese, dried meats, eggs, plant-based proteins and a resurgence of tinned tuna and sardines.

As the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association's (IDDBA) annual trade show returns to Anaheim, California, June 4-6, California turns into a snacking mecca, and this show promises to satisfy like a five-course meal. Since the renaissance in artisan cheesemaking that swept the United States two decades ago, the California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) has fanned the flames of processor in-

novation in natural dairy snacks, gaining ground with drinkable yogurts and kefirs, and spreading snacking joy with pioneering Hispanic cheeses like Oaxaca, the original string-cheese, architectural-inspired ice cream sandwiches, classic Italian gelato, and authentic Labne and lassi. Cottage cheese makes a comeback as the latest breakfast snack of choice, packing a double-punch of protein and calcium, and California offers award-winning styles from around the State.

CMAB is known for inspiring buyers as they stroll the California Street of Dairy. Through their marketing dollars, dairy farmers always seem to be doing their homework, staying ahead of food trends and emerging research, such as the newest numbers out of national on the benefits of full-fat dairy.

Thirty California dairy processors will be in the CMAB booth with an inspiring variety of new ideas for snackers of all ages. Whole milk yogurt in single-serve cups takes advantage of the trend for fully nutritious dairy in packable sizes. Classics like Monterey Jack and Cheddar in lunch-friendly flavors are on-trend, and pizza cheeses from the freshest Burrata to Mozzarella shreds abound. I never tire of sampling the array of California's Hispanic cheeses, my go-to for a quintessential breakfast burrito or healthy grain bowl with Panela, Queso Fresco or Cotija.

CMAB Cheese Expert Josiah Baird  
*Turn to DEVEREUX, page 7* ⇨

## Snacking, California-style, at IDDBA

Back in my day a handful of Oreos or a bag of Cheetos was the perfect snack to hold us until dinner. Now the snack IS dinner. And lunch. And breakfast. But the likes of Oreos and Cheetos aren't top of mind for the new snacking citizenry. Fuel is the operative word and nutrition the ignition. Snacks must deliver on a few important promises: healthiness, convenience and variety. Healthysnacking isn't a new trend but has exploded recently, with research showing that 46 percent of adults ages 25-34 snack three or more times a day. For 69 percent of that group, breakfast is prime snacking time.

Millennials unleashed from the breakfast and dinner table are leading the snack charge. Time and budgets figure heavily into choices of single-serving, nutrition-packed snacks, and this savvy group scans labels for ingredients that spell "processed" or "fake." Good luck finding salty, oil-drenched potato chips in the snack aisle. According to recent Mintel research, baked, roasted and toasted are approved techniques for crisp chips made from grains, legumes, vegetables, super seeds, seaweed and sweet potatoes. Cheese still reigns in the refrigerator realm; naturally packed



## NEWS/BUSINESS

### Shuttered dairy plant in Bangor, Maine, to reopen under Pineland Farms Dairy Co. Inc.

By Stephanie Awe

**BANGOR, Maine** — Pineland Farms Dairy Co. Inc. has acquired the former Grants Dairy plant on Milk Street in Bangor, Maine, where it will consolidate its cheese business.

The recently acquired plant, originally owned by Grants Dairy, was closed by Dean Foods in 2013.

Pineland Farms Dairy Co. Inc. bought the facility with an equity infusion from the Libra Foundation, which is a private charitable foundation in Portland, Maine, and an owner of Pineland Farms Dairy Co. Inc. The plant was purchased for \$620,000, and the company closed its purchase in February, says Jere Michelson, president, Libra Foundation.

The 75,000-square-foot plant will merge Pineland Farms' cheese packaging and cheese production operations, which previously were done at separate facilities in Mars Hill and New Gloucester in Maine. The facility also will process milk blends.

The Mars Hill facility, which also houses Pineland Farms Potato Co., has been purchased by Bob Evans, while the New Gloucester facility will be given an alternate use under Pineland Farms Inc., a nonprofit supported by the Libra Foundation, Michelson says.

The former Grants Dairy plant is expected to create about 50 jobs and provide a number of dairy farmers with an additional outlet for milk, according to Michelson.

"A ripple effect will be felt throughout the region," Michelson says, noting that the Libra Foundation works to create an "economic engine" in Maine.

The plant currently is undergoing about \$5 million in renovations, and Pineland Farms Dairy Co. Inc. is expected to transition its cheese operations to the plant by October this year.

Because the plant has room to expand, Pineland Farms Dairy Co. Inc. may look to produce other dairy products at the plant in the future, Michelson says. **CMN**

### USTR seeks input on NAFTA modernization

**WASHINGTON** — The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) recently requested public comments on negotiating objectives regarding the modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The notice is the second step in the process to negotiate updates to the 23-year-old trade agreement. Comments are due June 12.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) says it plans to submit comments before the deadline and is soliciting feedback from member companies.

"USTR is asking for detailed information in a number of areas important to our industry, including remaining tariffs, non-tariff barriers, rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, intellectual property rights and more," says Beth Hughes, IDFA director of international affairs. "A modernized NAFTA must protect existing market access and push forward where the agreement failed. We need to hear members' top priorities to make that happen."

IDFA, the National Milk Producers Federation and the U.S. Dairy Export Council repeatedly have urged administration officials and legislators to focus on maintaining what has worked well, such as trade with Mexico, the top market for U.S. dairy exports. The dairy groups also have continued to call for improving market access to Canada and tackling that country's expanding list of protectionist policies and other barriers to U.S. dairy exports. (See "USTR announces renegotiation plans for NAFTA" in the May 19, 2017, issue of Cheese Market News.)

After the public comment period closes, USTR plans to hold a NAFTA public hearing June 27 and publish an official document with its NAFTA negotiating objectives July 17. Those wishing to testify at the June 27 hearing must submit written notification and a summary of their testimony by June 12.

Both written comments and notifications of intent to testify may be submitted online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Formal negotiations could begin as early as Aug. 16, USTR says. **CMN**

### Wisconsin says 'cheese'



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

**MADISON, Wis.** — Wisconsin cheesemakers joined Gov. Scott Walker, center, on Thursday as he signed into law a designation proclaiming cheese as Wisconsin's official state dairy product.

The designation was proposed by a group of fourth grade students at Mineral Point Elementary in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. It was signed into law by Gov. Walker at a special signing event at Mineral Point Elementary on Thursday. The Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board also participated in the historic signing event and provided fresh Wisconsin cheese curds for the students to enjoy.

Wisconsin cheese is now the state dairy product. Wisconsin cheese joins a list of prominent state symbols including the dairy cow, designated the state's domestic animal in 1971, and milk, Wisconsin's official state beverage since 1987.

"We are so pleased to give Wisconsin cheese the recognition it deserves by declaring it the official state dairy product," Walker says. "Today we celebrate the efforts of Wisconsin's hard-working dairy farmers and cheesemakers who make us all proud to live in America's Dairyland."

Pictured, left to right, around Walker are Shirley Knox, Maple Leaf Cheese; Ron Buholzer, Klondike Cheese; Tim Omer, Emmi Roth USA; Steve Stettler, Decatur Dairy; Dave Buholzer, Klondike Cheese; Paul Witke, Zimmerman Cheese; Chris Sandretti, Saputo Cheese; John Umhoefer, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association; state Sen. Howard Marklein; state Rep. Todd Novak; Bruce Workman, Edelweiss Creamery; Linda Lee, Prairie Farms; Tony Hook, Hook's Cheese Co.; and Jeff Wideman, Maple Leaf Cheese. **CMN**

### Dynamic Packaging to represent Dynamic Conveyor's products to food, pharma sectors

**MUSKEGON, Mich.** — Dynamic Conveyor Corp. has announced that Dynamic Packaging Solutions LLC has joined Dynamic Conveyor's team of conveyor sales agencies.

Dynamic Conveyor manufactures conveyor systems for the food processing and packaging industries, which includes cheese, according to Dynamic Conveyor.

Dynamic Packaging Solutions will work with the food and pharmaceutical industries in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the New York metropolitan area for their conveying needs. In addition to conveyor systems, Dynamic Packaging Solutions offers a variety of equipment to meet the needs of the food and pharmaceutical processing industries. **CMN**




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## GUEST COLUMNIST

CMN Exclusive!



## Perspective: Dairy Marketing

**Chad T. Vincent** is CEO of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) and has been involved with brand building for 30 years. Prior to joining WMMB in December, Vincent was lead marketer for Sartori Co. and was instrumental in building its brand and retail business. He is a guest columnist for this week's *Cheese Market News*®.

Food trends among consumers are often as fickle as fashion trends. One day acai is the new "it" food and the next, it's the food world's acid-wash jeans. We've seen trends on low-carb, low-fat, sugar-free and raw food come and go. Chasing food trends can be a fool's errand as many of these trends are irrational and short-lived. Yesterday's cronut is today's poke bowl. However, there are some consumer trends that appear to have real staying power and in which cheese is almost uniquely positioned to succeed.

**Less Processed Food:** There's been a sizable shift in consumers' preferences for less processed food. Retail sales reflect this shift away from processed foods to fresh. According to data from IRI, the fresh perimeter of the store is growing twice as fast as the total food and beverage category as consumers seek out real, whole foods. This pref-

erence for less processed food is also driving menu reformulations for many restaurants, including Panera and McDonald's. This trend marks a great fit for cheese since consumers rightly view cheese as real, whole food. This marks a great opportunity for cheesemakers to highlight the nature of their product.

**Transparency:** The demand for transparency continues with today's consumers demanding to know where and how their food is made, and CPG companies are launching transparency initiatives to answer these questions. For example, Chicken Of The Sea recently launched an online tool that allows consumers to trace the source, processing location and fishing method of the canned tuna they are buying. The transparency trend presents a great opportunity for those in the cheese

Turn to VINCENT, page 7 ⇨

## Cheese perfectly positioned for today's consumer demands

### NEWS/BUSINESS

## Distributor and converter Jim's Cheese adds new products, refreshes image as it grows

By Rena Archwamety

**WATERLOO, Wis.** — Jim's Cheese, a Wisconsin cheese distributor for more than 55 years, started out with four wholesale customers and now services more than 2,000 customers, distributing in its own trucks throughout the Midwest and nationwide through LTL and UPS.

Known for its wax-coated novelty cheese cutouts in the shape of cows, footballs or the state of Wisconsin, Jim's Cheese also converts and distributes a wide range of cheese types, from 3-ounce wedges to 40-pound blocks and all sizes and cuts in between. Its



Waterloo, Wisconsin, facility includes a cut-and-wrap operation, cheese waxing, gift box assembly, cold storage and corporate offices. In addition to shapes and commodity varieties, Jim's Cheese

works with a number of specialty, farmstead and artisan cheesemakers as well. Its Lake Forest Artisan line includes award-winning products from more than 20 Wisconsin cheesemakers.

"We try to work with who we feel are the best cheesemakers," says Chip Kubly, manager, Jim's Cheese. "We look at quality more than price when deciding who we purchase from."

Jim's Cheese recently has added a number of new specialty flavors and artisan varieties to its offerings. Among these are a very hot Scorpion Pepper Cheddar, a Sublime Lime Southwestern-flavored Cheddar and a Door County Cherry Cheddar, as well as new Colby

Salami loaves. The company also has added Evalon and Fondy Jack from LaClare Family Creamery, Gouda with Serrano Peppers from Saxon Creamery, Pleasant Ridge Reserve from Uplands Cheese, 6-ounce random wedges of Cupola from Red Barn Family Farms, and exact-weight pie cuts of various Marieke Gouda flavors. The company will be rolling out some additional new items in coming months.

"There's been a trend in unique and different cheeses," says Holly Koller, sales manager, Jim's Cheese, pointing to goat's milk cheese as one example. "Grumpy Goat from Nordic Creamery, which we have had for years, is a steady seller."

Jim's cheese has brought in some new farmstead family cheese vendors, which it tries to feature in monthly specials to promote their cheeses.

"We've also seen an upswing in 'the hotter the cheese, the better,'" Koller says. "Buffalo Wing is a best seller for us, and smoked Pepper Jack is on an upswing as well."

Koller says Jim's Cheese always is changing and updating its website, which is a great tool for bringing in new customers in addition to many word-of-mouth referrals. In May, the company launched a redesigned website that is mobile-friendly and has an entirely new look. It features the new Jim's Cheese logo, which started appearing on new packaging and labels earlier this year. The company also maintains an active blog and an active presence on Facebook and other social media.

Kubly says the new labels and website redesign are meant to reflect the reputation of quality products and service at Jim's Cheese.

"We wanted to freshen it up, just make it look a little more upscale, to match the quality of our cheese," he says. CMN

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# GUEST COLUMNISTS



CMN Exclusive!

## VINCENT

Continued from page 6

category as the cheesemaking process is not difficult for consumers to understand and cheese manufacturers have great stories to tell in this area. By educating and engaging consumers in the process by which milk is turned into the cheese they love, there is an opportunity to provide the farm-to-table transparency that consumers are seeking.

**Health:** The consumer focus on health is not new, but what is new is the way they are thinking about health. As more and more people recognize that lifestyle factors, including what they eat, are important in taking care of their health, they are no longer looking for foods that just help them avoid “bad” ingredients but are looking for foods that can help them actively achieve their health goals. We see this trend reflected in the fact that healthy snacks outpace indulgent snacks at retail and in the fact that year over year sales of fresh fruits and vegetables grew faster than the total food and beverage category last year. Again, cheese has a great story here as cheese not only avoids many ingredients that consumers are shunning, but offers

many health benefits including protein, calcium, zinc, and vitamins A and B12.

**Clean Labels:** You’ve all certainly heard of the clean label trend as today’s shoppers are increasingly looking at food labels and shunning those with ingredients they do not recognize or cannot pronounce. According to Innova Market Insights, nearly three-fourths of consumers believe it is important for food labels to contain mostly recognizable ingredients. Additionally, 91 percent believe that food options with recognizable ingredients are healthier. Cheese is a great fit for this trend as cheese has a remarkably clean label that can and should be promoted to consumers. A typical cheese label ingredient list includes just four things: milk, cultures, salt and enzymes.

**Local:** And finally, the local trend is still strong, though it’s important to understand what that really means to consumers. To cheese consumers, “local” doesn’t necessarily equate solely to proximity or “made near me,” though many consumers do choose locally grown foods as a way to support their local economies and to reduce food miles. Consumers also view local as a proxy for other attributes that they care about and “local” often means they know the story of the cheese, where it comes from, how

it is made and the personalities behind the brand. They choose “local” foods because they are perceived as being sustainable, high quality, authentic and fresh. Communicating these elements to consumers can align cheese with the attributes that matter to shoppers.

Though it is the nature of trends to come and go, the elements discussed above appear to have staying power, with deep roots in consumers’ minds.

## DEVEREUX

Continued from page 4

will showcase a menu for the Real California Kitchen with three days of original recipes. Don’t miss dozens of on-trend snack ideas such as Tapatio Sour Cream Summer Rolls, Farmstead Toma and Avocado Toast, Chocolate Milk Chia Pudding, Chipotle Cheddar crisps and Ciliegine-kiwi-and-grape skewers with honey lime drizzle.

IDDBA’s line-up of speakers includes former California former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and we’re curious if he’s switched to snacking on crispy crickets for body-building protein. For me, make it a tall glass of cold whole milk.

To titillate retailers, IDDBA plans

Cheese is in a very strong position today and long term based on these core elements. Now is the time to tell our stories of how cheese fits in with what matters to consumers. The timing has never been better. CMN

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

an interactive breakfast bakery and a cheese pub where attendees will experience cheese pairings and tapas, both concepts ripe for rollout in retail stores. Every year IDDBA’s Show and Sell offers outstanding educational opportunities and some of the best merchandising ideas in the country.

Snack time is now. Whether it gets us to the next meal, satisfies a craving, or delivers a boost of energy, if it’s healthy and easy to find, a snack is within reach. From the state with blissful bovines and a passion to please, California welcomes IDDBA back to Anaheim. CMN

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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## Consumer, health, food safety groups bring lawsuit against FDA, HHS over GRAS rule

WASHINGTON — Consumer, health and food safety groups have filed a lawsuit over an FDA rule that the groups allege undermines the integrity of the U.S. food safety system.

Center for Food Safety (CFS), Breast Cancer Prevention Partners, Center for

Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), Environmental Defense Fund and Environmental Working Group, represented by legal counsel from CFS and the environmental law firm Earthjustice, have filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New

York against FDA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) “for illegally delegating” the authority of ensuring the safety of Americans’ food to “self-interested food and chemical manufacturers.”

The groups also allege that while Congress mandates an open and public process, FDA allows manufacturers to make decisions about food additives without disclosure to either FDA or the public.

FDA in August 2016 issued a final rule detailing the criteria for concluding that the use of a substance in human or animal food is “generally recognized as safe” (GRAS). Unlike food additives, GRAS substances are not subject to FDA pre-market approval, but they must meet the same safety standards as approved food additives.

The rule addresses the types of specific evidence that can be used to demonstrate safety as well as the role of publications in evaluating whether the scientific evidence of safety is “generally available and accepted,” FDA says. The rule went into effect Oct. 17, 2016.

GRAS criteria require that the safe use of ingredients in human and animal food be widely recognized by the appropriate qualified experts, FDA says. The final rule also formalizes the voluntary GRAS notification procedure, which originally was established under an interim policy and pilot program for human food in 1997 and animal food in 2010. (See “FDA issues final rule on GRAS food ingredients; consumer groups voice opposition” in the Sept. 2, 2016, issue of Cheese Market News.)

However, the groups bringing the lawsuit say that while federal law requires FDA to ensure that substances used in food are safe, taking into account

consumers’ entire diet and all exposure to the chemical and similar chemicals, any substance designated as GRAS by FDA or by a food or chemical company can bypass the rigorous pre-market review and approval process applied to food additives.

**“FDA has a duty to ensure the products we buy and feed our families are safe.”**

Cristina Stella  
CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY

“The GRAS exemption was initially created to cover ingredients that are widely known to be safe, such as vegetable oil, but has been applied in recent practice to novel chemicals and is now a loophole that has swallowed the law,” the groups allege.

CFS also filed suit in 2014 to challenge FDA’s use of an interim rule that initially put this practice into place. That successful challenge forced FDA to stop using the interim rule and instead finalize the GRAS rule. This new lawsuit challenges the final rule that formalizes this practice.

“FDA has a duty to ensure the products we buy and feed our families are safe,” says Cristina Stella, staff attorney for the CFS and co-counsel in the case. “The secretive GRAS system makes it impossible for FDA to carry out its core responsibility to the public.”

Plaintiffs are requesting that the court enter an order:

- Declaring that the defendants have violated the U.S. Constitution, the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FDCA), and the Administrative Procedure Act by promulgating the GRAS rule;
- Declaring that the GRAS rule is unlawful insofar as it does not require FDA to independently review GRAS determinations and their basis, does not require the public to receive notice of GRAS determinations and their basis, does not require manufacturers to maintain a record of GRAS determinations and their basis and does not set forth criteria for GRAS status that are consistent with the FDCA;
- Vacating the GRAS rule with directions to FDA to correct the legal deficiencies found by the court;
- Retaining jurisdiction in this action to ensure compliance with its decree;
- Awarding plaintiffs attorney fees and all other reasonable expenses incurred in pursuit of this action; and
- Granting other such injunctive and/or declaratory relief as the court deems necessary, just and proper. CMN

## GUEST COLUMNIST



## UMHOEFER

Continued from page 4

than pasteurization or heat-treatment contribute significantly to the microbiological safety of cheese. Some, such as milk quality management, lactic culture management, pH control, salt addition, and controlled curing conditions are established technologies. Others represent potential opportunities, such as natural inhibitory substances in milk, and antibacterial substances, e.g. nisin and lysozyme,” researchers wrote in the *Journal of Food Protection*, Vol. 53, No. 5.

Raw beverage milk, on the other hand, lacks these hurdles. A USDA study of pathogens in bulk tank milk published in the *Journal of Dairy Science* (Vol. 87, Issue 9) found 2.6 percent of 861 bulk tanks in 21 states carried *Salmonella*. In addition, *Listeria monocytogenes* was found in 6.5 percent of samples.

Last summer, FDA reported on a sweeping program to collect and test foreign and domestic cheeses made from unpasteurized milk. Rather than looking at illnesses, this study directly tested cheese for pathogens. The agency collected 1,606 samples of raw milk cheese — 473 samples were domesti-

cally produced and 1,133 samples were international raw milk cheeses.

Common pathogens *Salmonella* and *E. coli* 0157 were absent in all of the domestic samples, and just 0.26 percent of international cheeses held *Salmonella*. *Listeria monocytogenes* was found in five international cheeses and four semi-soft U.S. cheeses and one hard cheese — only 1 percent of the domestic cheese samples.

*Listeria*, FDA concluded in its “Summary Report: Raw Milk Cheese Aged 60 Days,” remains a concern in semi-soft cheese and “the agency will be actively working with industry to address strategies to significantly minimize or prevent contamination.”

All raw-milk dairy products must be made with utmost care, and dairy processors large and small must readily adopt safety advances that protect consumers against pathogens. But the processing, handling, and contamination-potential of raw milk cheese and beverage raw milk are not the same, and should not be conjoined in a study of dairy food safety. CMN

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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## U.S. House members introduce bill to double funding for two export promotion programs

WASHINGTON — U.S. Reps. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., and Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, recently introduced the Cultivating Revitalization by Expanding American Agricultural Trade and Exports (CREAATE) Act. The bill is designed to reassert the importance of USDA's Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development Program (FMDP) to America's agricultural producers and economy as a whole, and provide the U.S. agricultural community with the tools needed to retain its edge in an increasingly competitive global economy, the bill sponsors say.

The CREAATE Act would double funding for MAP and FMDP, incrementally phasing in increases over five years. This increase, while a fractional portion of the USDA and the federal budget, would provide an enormous return on investment for America's agricultural community and the U.S. economy as a whole, the lawmakers say.

Doubling public funding for MAP and FMDP, coupled with increasing private contributions from 10 percent to 50 percent, would result in average annual gains in GDP of \$4.5 billion to \$6

billion under a less than full employment scenario, they say.

"Throughout their history, these successful public/private partnerships have cultivated hundreds of billions of dollars in exports and created millions of American jobs, both in the agriculture sector and in support industries," Newhouse and Pingree say. "Without these programs, it is very likely that the United States would not be the net agricultural exporter that we are today."

However, statutory funding for MAP and FMDP has been static since the 2002 Farm Bill, they add.

"Practically, those funds have been eroded in recent years by inflation, administrative costs and sequestration," Newhouse and Pingree say. "The programs have only been sustained through support and resolve from the private sector partners."

Meanwhile, America's competitors have ramped up their own export promotion, they add, noting for example, the European Union spends more for the promotion of wine (\$255.36 million for 2017) than the U.S. spends for the promotion of all commodities through MAP and FMDP. CMN

## The McCully Group LLC marks five years in business, launches updated website

NEW BUFFALO, Mich. — The McCully Group LLC, a Michigan-based provider of management consulting services for dairy and food companies, has launched a new website as the company marks five years in business.

After 15 years working in Dairy Procurement at Kraft Foods, Mike McCully left in early 2012 to start The McCully Group LLC. Over the past five years, the company has worked with many of the top dairy and food companies in North America as well as global food companies, private equity firms and major consulting firms. Projects have included feasibility studies for new plants and product lines, due diligence on investments and acquisitions, market research and business development strategies, among others.

McCully notes he also has worked with numerous companies to develop commodity risk management policies and procedures as well as purchasing strategies. The company offers outsourced risk management services and works on organizational design for purchasing and supply chain de-

partments.

In addition, McCully has conducted Dairy 101 training seminars and writes a monthly dairy market outlook report — The McCully Report.

A member of the American Dairy Products Institute Center of Excellence, McCully has worked on dairy industrywide initiatives including improving price discovery for Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) nonfat dry milk, proposing a new CME dry whey spot market, and defining the economic benefit to the dairy industry by moving to DIAAS (Digestible Indispensable Amino Acid Score) for protein quality measurement.

The new website — [www.themccullygroup.com](http://www.themccullygroup.com) — has an updated look featuring fresh graphics and content. Visitors can access The McCully Report and get a comprehensive look at the company's services.

Visitors also can access Dairy 101 training modules including "Dairy Economics 101," "Developing a Purchasing Strategy," "Milk Pricing 101" and "Setting Up a Commodity Risk Management Program." CMN

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## NEW PRODUCTS

## FOR DAIRY MANUFACTURERS

**Delta T Systems Inc. offers seven chiller models with variable speed compressors**

**RICHFIELD, Wis.** — Delta T Systems Inc. has announced a breakthrough in the design and efficiency of its U.S.-made industrial process chillers.

The Delta T Systems chillers with variable speed compressors operate effectively between 10 percent and 100 percent of their rated capacity, meaning a 10-ton chiller can operate efficiently as both a 1-ton and a 10-ton chiller, along with ranges in between, according to Delta T Systems. The company offers seven chiller models with a variable speed compressor: 1-, 2-, 3-, 5-, 7.5-, 10- and 15-ton.

This new design applies variable

“green” compressor technology from the HVAC industry to produce up to 50-percent energy savings over traditional hot gas bypass regulation. These energy cost savings can pay for the chiller investment in less than three years, the company says, adding that these cost savings can help users lower production costs and offer more competitive prices.

The chiller control allows for cloud-based remote management with operational data sets, including suction and discharge temperatures and pressures, water temperatures and pressures, tank level and other sensor inputs. These data sets are

logged, and alarms can be transmitted in real time to allow complete viewing and operational control via PLC, PC, tablet or phone. In addition, the chillers offer other standard communication protocols, including Modbus and Ethernet.

Each unit has controls that can regulate temperature to within 0.5 degrees Fahrenheit, the company says. Other important features include electronic expansion valve technology with high accuracy metering to deliver precise refrigerant flow and variable speed condenser fans. The chiller also offers oversized stainless steel brazed plate

evaporators that help reduce energy demand as well as microchannel aluminum condenser coils that eliminate galvanic corrosion, the company says.

Delta T Systems’ adaptive controls help ensure that the chiller system will continue to operate in the event of a problem, and it will not shut down completely. The process can continue to operate without any downtime or lost production until the root cause of a problem is identified and dealt with, according to the company.

For more information, call 262-628-0331 or visit [www.deltatsys.com](http://www.deltatsys.com). CMN

**WeighPack announces cheese weighing solution**

**LAS VEGAS** — WeighPack Systems Inc.’s PrimoCombi 0.5L multi-head weigher is a compact, complete weighing solution designed for high-performance applications and tight accuracy requirements.

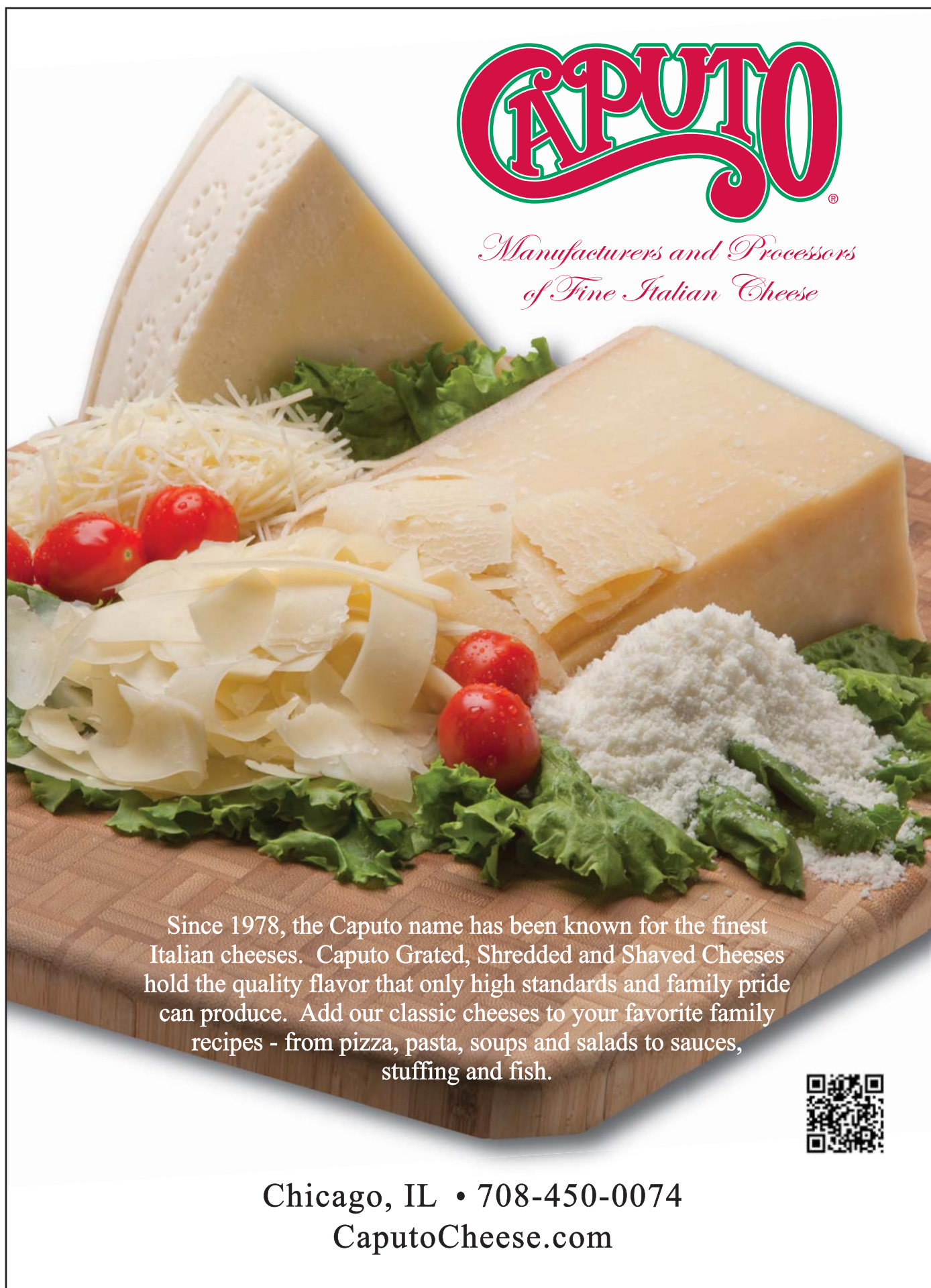
With an array of unique features, the PrimoCombi aims to challenge current views of weighing automation and provide a glimpse into the future of cheese packaging innovation, according to WeighPack.

The PrimoCombi’s structural design, suitable for the food and dairy industries, consists of 304 stainless steel construction. Open frame assembly leaves no small crevices for bacteria to hide, making the PrimoCombi ideal for applications with stringent sanitization standards. Available in 10 and 14 weigh-bucket combinations, the PrimoCombi utilizes an advanced CAN bus wiring system, housing all electrical components remotely and eliminating risk of damage during cleaning, WeighPack says.

In addition, a tool-less adjustable hopper makes loading product easy and convenient, the company says. Vibratory pan feed mechanisms and stagger dump settings also help ensure that product freely flows through the machine. By using a combination of three to five weigh-buckets, the PrimoCombi maintains accuracy to one one-hundredth of a gram and eliminates excess product giveaway. For certain production requirements, the PrimoCombi also is capable of sorting and mixing, according to WeighPack.

The PrimoCombi comes standard with a Windows 360 operating system that can be interfaced with any ERP/MRP software. This feature allows for a complete operational overview, remote control of machine functionality and total reporting transparency, WeighPack says.


For more information, visit [www.weighpack.com](http://www.weighpack.com). CMN



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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## Garon Foods Inc.'s fresh products add unique flavor, flair to cheese and dairy products

**HERRIN, ILL.** — The Griesbachs began as a small dairy operation in Wisconsin producing cheese, milk, cream, ice cream and butter and later expanded into experimenting with adding different fruits and vegetables like strawberries, apples, pickles, tomatoes and finally peppers into cheese.

When Gary and Sharon Griesbach first began producing, processing and selling fresh peppers for use in cheese on their small dairy farm in the late 1970s, their first jalapeno peppers were produced in their garden, with an office in the corner of their living room.

Now, nearly 40 years later, Garon Foods Inc. is an international company based in Herrin, Illinois. It produces a wide variety of fresh products for use in cheese and other dairy products.

Garon Foods offers various food and food products to industrial, institutional and foodservice companies. Garon's Mechanically Infused Process is used to process hundreds of fresh-like herbaceous plants specifically designed for dairy and other industries for products such as cheese, ice cream, cottage cheese, cream cheese, yogurt, whey, milk drinks and more.

By using herbaceous plants processed with Garon's Mechanically Infused Process, the company is able to stimulate the natural flavor of each fruit and vegetable to migrate through products, creating a full-bodied flavor-filled profile, says Gary Griesbach.

"Garon works with dairy manufacturers and other industries to develop the taste profiles people crave, meeting customers' requests," Griesbach says. "Garon performs R&D and does taste testings to determine the delightful, delectable and desired palate-pleasing profile for various demographic delineations."

While the company makes many products, its flagship continues to be peppers, Griesbach notes. The company previously was known as Griesbach's Freedom Farm Pepper Business before it was incorporated as Garon Foods Inc. — a combination of Gary and Sharon's names — in 1994.

The company developed an innovative way to process peppers that took decades to perfect and from which the Garon Mechanically Infused Process was borne. The process includes seven fundamental steps Gary and Sharon identified to resolve fundamental objectives, which include:

- Enabling peppers to be added to natural cheese without the natural cheese crumbling after aging;
- Processing peppers and making them commercially sterile, thereby enabling the peppers to be added to natural cheese after pasteurization;
- Processing peppers using only natural ingredients;
- Processing peppers and allowing them to be presented in a colorful particulate visible identity;
- Processing peppers so that particulate identity is uniform;
- Processing peppers so that the

pepper flavor would migrate throughout the cheese; and

- Processing peppers safely in an environmentally-friendly manner with superior quality.

Griesbach says this enables consumers to taste the cheese, then the pepper, followed by the heat of the pepper.

The goal is to entice consumers to enjoy another piece and to create a market for cheese by reaching people who are not eating conventional cheese, Griesbach says.

In addition, Garon Foods aims to create a superior product that will continually grow and create value for the U.S. agriculture community in local rural areas and across the country.

"Sharon and I have brought to Garon

Foods the virtuous values and productive principles we developed as a Midwestern farm family and integrated those values and principles into the company," Griesbach says, noting those values and principles include the initiative to excel to excellence, the persistent commitment to integrity and the innovation to gain the intelligence needed to efficiently and progressively produce the best quality, safest food products possible.

Today, the company has dubbed this the "Garonway."

As the company has grown, it has honed its focus on incorporating new food products into cheese. In particular, the company is fulfilling the fermented ingredient niche that is currently growing

with items including olives, artichokes, cayenne, chipotle, pepper blends and anything else that can be fermented.

The company also offers a line of fruits and spices that can be added to oils to be used for cheese rubs.

"Garon focuses primarily on one long-term goal: Satisfying customers over the long haul by continual improvement, striving to surpass the status quo of acceptable quality and expected service," Griesbach says. "Garon ardently seeks new ideas, the development of new products, better handling procedures and innovative processing techniques to make the customer's job easier because Garon prosperity is a direct result of a job well done for the Garon customer." CMN



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## Multi-Conveyor LLC receives safety award



Photo courtesy of Multi-Conveyor LLC

WINNECONNE, Wis. — For the fourth time in five years, Multi-Conveyor LLC was presented with the award for Outstanding Manufacturing Safety Performance from Acuity Insurance, a property and casualty insurer, headquartered in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The award recognizes the company's minimal employee loss-time accidents, its work environment and a concern for the well-being of its employees, among other factors. The plaque was presented by Gwendolyn Arps (third from left), senior loss control representative, Acuity, to Joe Miller (second from left), COO, and Janice Wuestneck (left), safety coordinator, Multi-Conveyor. Also accompanying the award presentation was Tom Paroubek, owner, Paroubek Insurance Agency of DePere, Wisconsin. CMN

## ADPI develops new standard for IDWM

ELMHURST, Ill. — The American Dairy Products Institute (ADPI) recently released a new official ADPI standard for instant dry whole milk (IDWM). As the world's "go-to" authority on dairy ingredients, ADPI is committed to the development of dairy ingredient standards and specifications.

"An important part of the mission of ADPI is the development of industry standards for dairy ingredients that serve to build customer and consumer confidence and trust in U.S.-produced products," says David Thomas, CEO, ADPI. "We are pleased to add instant dry whole milk to the portfolio of products that are covered by an ADPI standard."

ADPI urges the industry to use ADPI product standards as a guide in the manufacturing, marketing and purchasing of dairy products for use as functional and nutritional ingredients.

All ADPI product standards are available for industry use. They can be downloaded by selecting the "Product Standards" button located on the ADPI website at [www.adpi.org](http://www.adpi.org).

"We hope that these industry standards set by ADPI will provide the industry and our customers with a better understanding of the function and makeup of the many nutritious dry dairy ingredients produced in the U.S., and become globally recognized terms of reference for these products," Thomas says.

The new IDWM standard also will be included in the ADPI Dairy Ingredient Standards publication. This publication is divided into three sections, which include a milk section, whey section and a process section.

To purchase the ADPI Dairy Ingredient Standards publication, visit [www.adpi.org](http://www.adpi.org), call 630-530-8700 ext. 224 or email [dmeyer@adpi.org](mailto:dmeyer@adpi.org). CMN

## Conventional dairy ads increase 43 percent

WASHINGTON — The total number of conventional dairy advertisement last week increased 43 percent from the prior week, says USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in its latest weekly National Dairy Retail Report released May 26.

AMS says national conventional varieties of 8-ounce natural cheese blocks last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$2.07, down from \$2.26 one week earlier and \$2.24 one year earlier.

Natural varieties of 1-pound cheese blocks last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$3.85, up from \$3.47 one week earlier but down from \$4.97 one year earlier, AMS says, while 2-pound

cheese blocks had a weighted average advertised price of \$7.16, up from \$5.82 one week earlier and \$6.82 one year ago.

AMS says natural varieties of 8-ounce cheese shreds last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$2.19, up from \$2.18 one week earlier and unchanged from a year earlier, while 1-pound cheese shreds had a weighted average advertised price of \$4.47, up from \$4.41 one week earlier and \$4.16 one year earlier.

Meanwhile, national conventional butter in 1-pound packs last week had a weighted average advertised price of \$3.57, up from \$3.21 one week earlier and \$3.13 one year earlier, AMS says. CMN

## City of Lynden, Washington, Darigold collaborate on water reclamation project

LYNDEN, Wash. — A project made possible by Darigold Inc. and a grant from the Washington state legislature soon will be under construction. When complete, the project will provide the opportunity for the City of Lynden, Washington, to draw as much as 20 percent more drinking water from the Nooksack River.

The project will pipe condensed water left over from Darigold's Lynden facility's powdered milk production process to a point across from Lynden's domestic water intake on the Nooksack River. This will allow the city to send this water to its new \$35 million water treatment plant and produce water for domestic use.

"We are glad to partner with the City of Lynden on this project," says Scott Burleson, senior vice president of operations, Darigold. "Darigold is

pleased that we've been able to find a way to reuse excess condensate water from our dairy farm milk supply and plant process. It's a win-win partnership."

The project has been under discussion for nearly two decades but become possible recently after the city received a \$2 million state grant. The project will break ground this summer and is expected to be complete some time in 2018.

"The importance of this project to the City of Lynden can't be overstated," says Lynden Mayor Scott Korthuis. "Darigold and the city have worked very hard for a very long time to bring this project to fruition. Darigold has been a great partner and a great corporate citizen in our community. We look forward to many more decades of that successful partnership." CMN

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# NEWS/BUSINESS



## CLAIMS

Continued from page 1

and more resilient crops; however, for many of those aware, the benefits don't outweigh their worry, making GMOs the fastest-growing food additive concern, according to NPD Group research.

"With increasing awareness and concern, consumers would benefit hearing from food manufacturers the reasons why they use GMOs and how their use benefits their customers," says Darren Seifer, NPD Group food and beverage industry analyst. "They want to know about what happened to the product before it reached the shelf in areas such as country of origin, corporate responsibility, allergens and other health information. Consumers today want to be informed and appreciate it when food companies make the effort to educate them."

However, Carpenter says explaining the science behind use of GMOs isn't enough.

"Consumers are demanding non-GMO cheese despite the science," she says. "I tell my Wisconsin suppliers, consumers don't care about the science. This is what they want. States like Vermont and California are leading the charge, and I'll have to source more product from those who are on top of this demand unless Wisconsin cheesemakers begin to get on board. At some point, you have to listen to the people buying the cheese."

She adds that with this in mind, she encourages every Wisconsin cheesemaker to begin the process toward becoming non-GMO certified.

Mateo Kehler, owner and cheesemaker at Jasper Hill Farm, Greensboro, Vermont, says the company began to transition to non-GMO cheese nearly two years ago. He notes the process is complicated and complex, but for Jasper Hill, it's more than a marketing tactic but rather a long-term commitment to conservation.

While Jasper Hill Farm's position on GE technology is "agnostic," Kehler says he believes biotech companies have lost control of the narrative and consumers are increasingly looking for "real," natural food and are suspicious of genetic engineering.

"Non-GMO is the first claim we've ever put on our labels, so it's new territory for us," he says. "I believe it's a long-term trend that will continue to grow in the industry over the next 6 to 12 months."

### • Sustainable practices, animal care

Meanwhile, consumers also continue to inquire about sustainable production practices and animal well-being at the farm level.

"Our customers are highly educated and are starting to ask questions like, 'What do the cows eat?' and 'Show me the cheeses made from animals that are treated well,'" Carpenter says. "They are researching brands and want to feel good about the cheese they are buying."

According to a recent report from market research firm Packaged Facts, more than half of U.S. consumers (58 percent) are more concerned about food animal welfare than they were just a few years ago.

Rising interest in animal welfare issues is due in part to consumers' increased concern about the safety of their food and the growing belief that if an animal is raised in healthy circumstances, then its meat and dairy products will be healthier, as well as better-tasting and more nutritious, the report says.

Interestingly, the report also notes that although the common assumption that organic standards currently include animal welfare provisions is a misconception, organic foods such as grass-fed beef succeed precisely because of the consumer assumption that organic certification in meat, poultry and dairy foods is inherently linked to animal welfare.

Meister Cheese, Muscoda, Wisconsin, has a "Cows First" animal welfare program that requires the cows to have unfettered access to the outdoors and prohibits 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.

Dairy farms committed to Meister Cheese's Cows First program are used to source milk for the Kindred Creamery retail brand, a partnership between Meister Cheese and Emmi Roth USA, Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

The way the milk is produced is a key differentiator that resonates with many consumers, notes Tim Omer, president and managing director of Emmi Roth USA.

Meanwhile, animal welfare organizations supported by consumers have been a driving force for change, though the decision to improve animal welfare

is ultimately left to the individual company, whose response is often grounded in the desire to be competitive in a changing marketplace and proactively responsive to emerging trends, Packaged Facts says.

Several years ago, the U.S. Healthful Food Council (USHFC) launched a Reasonable Epicurean and Agricultural Leadership (REAL) program, a voluntary, holistic and consensus-based nutrition rating program designed to increase access to healthful, affordable food and beverage options when dining away from home.

Through its "Eat REAL" campaign, USHFC promotes certified restaurants and other foodservice providers that utilize nutrition and sustainability best practices.

REAL is a flexible, points-based certification based on an establishment's numerous factors such as the use of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, minimally-processed foods and the reduced use of unhealthful additives.

Caesare Assad, COO, Eat REAL, says the program was founded as a response to founder Lawrence Williams' own challenges in finding nutritious food.

"Eat REAL provides an actionable tool and incentives to improve the health of consumers by partnering with restaurants and foodservice operators to implement nutrition and sustainability best practices," Assad says.

Now, the program has partnered with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) to require that by 2021, all REAL Certified restaurants and foodservice providers source a significant portion of their animal products from farms that are audited by one of the animal welfare certifications recognized by ASPCA's "Shop With Your Heart" initiative.

Assad says the initiative is a

response to consumer demand and shifting values.

"REAL Certified is offering a solution in a space where transparency is in increasing demand," he says. "The mark offers conscious consumers and foodservice operators a tool to effectively communicate their values with one another."

He adds that while it is a crowded space, "we are convinced that by aligning with collaborators like ASPCA and finding collective ways to expand our visibility together, Eat REAL will continue to generate traction and awareness."

### • Standing out

While navigating product claims and consumer demands can be challenging, Zimmerman says it provides an opportunity for dairy companies to differentiate their products in the marketplace.

"Each of these claims appeals to some subset of consumers. I think they will continue to be vocal and demand the things that are important to them," he says. "Frankly, I think it's good because the less commoditized we are, the more profit for everyone."

"It can be a bit chaotic," he adds, "but chaos creates opportunity, especially for smaller companies."

Behr says that as a supplier to the food industry, Foremost Farms must continue working with its customers on clearly communicating safety, nutritional benefits, animal care and environmental practices using easy-to-understand messaging and a variety of communication tools, including websites, social media, promotional campaigns and videos.

"Our communication must convey that our values and concerns match the values and concerns of the consumers who are looking for healthy, safe, affordable food," Behr says. CMN

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## House bill seeks to increase funding for USDA organic research program to grow organic ag

WASHINGTON — U.S. Reps. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., and Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., recently introduced the Organic Agriculture Research Act to support the continued growth of the nation's organic agriculture industry.

The legislation increases funding for USDA's flagship organic research program, the Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), from \$20 million to \$50 million annually. The program funds applied research projects across the country that help organic farmers improve their operations and meet growing consumer demand for organic food, lawmakers say.

"Over the last 10 years, sales of organic food in the United States have doubled, which has benefited rural economies and raised the income of many farmers," Pingree says. "There's still a lot of room for growth — it's just a question of getting farmers what they need to keep up with consumer demand."

Pingree says OREI funding has been critical in solving problems and developing ways for farmers to increase productivity, prevent loss and streamline their operations, but insufficient funding has led to many unmet research needs and missed opportunities. The Organic Agriculture Research Act would

increase funding to reflect the industry's growth in the market and maintain its momentum, she says.

The bill's sponsors note U.S. organic product sales currently exceed \$43 billion per year, up from less than \$19 billion in 2007 and \$3.5 billion in 1997. Almost 13 percent of the produce sold in the United States is now organic.

Organic farms are 35 percent more profitable than the average farm, lawmakers say. Premiums paid to organic farmers can range from 29 to 32 percent above non-organic prices. The difference in on-farm net income in many cases is what makes staying on the farm possible.

However, production can't keep up with demand, and research gaps are a reason why, they say.

This bill is supported by organizations including the Organic Trade Association (OTA) and National Farmers Union, among others.

"Robust funding for agriculture research is critical for the advancement of organic, and we applaud Congresswoman Pingree, Congressman Newhouse and Congressman Panetta for their efforts to secure additional resources for USDA's flagship research program for organic agriculture," says Laura Batcha, executive director and CEO, OTA.

Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative says it also strongly supports the bill.

"In working with 2,000 farmers across the country, from Maine to Washington, we can testify to the unique production challenge farmers face, be it the type of crops and livestock they raise or variability seen across regions," Organic Valley says. "The dedicated resources in the bill can help farmers tackle those challenges and become more efficient, boosting on-farm productivity and creating economic progress and stability — that is good for organic farmers, good for rural communities and good for our nation." CMN

## EPA launches new WOTUS website

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has launched a new website with information on the agency's review of the definition of Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) as set out in the 2015 Clean Water Rule.

The new website, [www.epa.gov/wotus-rule](http://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule), replaces the website developed for the 2015 rulemaking process. In the spirit of transparency, EPA says the new website will provide the public with relevant information explaining its actions, along with those at the Department of the Army and the Army Corps of Engineers, to review the WOTUS rule, including how the agencies are working with local, state and tribal partners to examine their role in the regulation of water under the Clean Water Act.

"EPA is restoring states' important role in the regulation of water by reviewing WOTUS," says Scott Pruitt, EPA administrator. "The president has directed us to review this regulation to address the concerns from farmers and local communities that it creates unnecessary burdens and inhibits economic growth. This website aims to provide the public with information about our actions to meet the president's directive."

All pages, information and documentation from the Clean Water Rule site will remain available in the EPA archived site at [archive.epa.gov](http://archive.epa.gov). CMN



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## PEOPLE



### WSCI elects new officers and board directors

**DELAVAN, Wis.** — The Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute (WSCI) has named new officers and elected a new member to its board of directors.

Elected to a one-year term as president is Chris Roelli of Roelli Cheese, and elected vice president for a one-year term is Beth Crave of Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese.

Shirley Knox of Maple Leaf Cheese was elected as a new member of the board and will serve as secretary treasurer. Board members Mary Lindemann, Pine River Prepack and Jeremy Huston, Chr. Hansen, were both re-elected to second terms.

Rounding out WSCI's board of direc-

tors are Greg Alberts, Kelley Supply; Jeanne Carpenter, Wisconsin Cheese Originals; Robert Ehrenberg, Taylor Cheese; and Katie Currier, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

The Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute works to promote and support the development of a robust and profitable specialty cheese industry in the state. It consists of more than 100 specialty cheesemaker, processor/marketer and supplier members. The membership meets five times a year to network, gain industry knowledge and training from guest speakers, and learn from each other through touring member facilities. **CMN**

### Nelson-Jameson and chairman of the board, John Nelson, receive local honor

**MARSHFIELD, Wis.** — The Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MACCI) has selected John Nelson, and his company Nelson-Jameson Inc., as this year's recipient of the Friend of Agriculture award. Nelson was presented with the award today during the Mayor's Breakfast at the annual Dairyfest event in Marshfield, Wisconsin.

The annual award honors individuals and/or businesses that have a commitment to agriculture, are innovative in the industry and have made a positive economic impact in the Marshfield community. The MACCI Agri-Business Committee recognizes Nelson's philanthropic support and community involvement, along with Nelson-Jameson's commitment to providing safe, quality food from farm to table for the past 70 years.

The company's primary focus is to be an innovative partner to dairy farmers, milk haulers, cooperative fieldmen, and to the cheese, dairy and food processing plants not only in Wisconsin but across the United States, according to Nelson-Jameson. Company product lines include safety and personnel, production and ma-

terial handling, sanitation and janitorial, processing and flow control, laboratory and quality assurance/quality control, and bulk packaging and ingredients.

"We have always been an agricultural-related business," Nelson says regarding the award. "We are happy and proud to be named the 2017 MACCI Friend of Agriculture."

Nelson, son of company founder Earl Nelson, has been a driving force in the growth and expansion of Nelson-Jameson and has seen the company through six additions to the Marshfield facility, as well as the addition of branches in California, Idaho, Texas, Pennsylvania and Illinois.

In addition to growing the Nelson-Jameson brand, Nelson is an advocate of the United Way, a former MACCI Ambassador and Transportation Committee member. He has served on the Marshfield City Plan Commission, the Economic Development Board and was on the Industrial Park Authority. Nelson also has been on the local board of Ministry St. Joseph's Hospital and both the local and regional boards of Associated Bank. **CMN**

### Comings and goings ... comings and goings

**Rachel Millard** has been named communications director for the **House Agriculture Committee**, Washington, D.C., ahead of the 2018 Farm Bill. Millard most recently handled public affairs and corporate communications strategy at the Glover Park Group. Prior to that, she spent nearly six years working for Sen. John Thune in his leadership and personal offices, where she served as communications director, on-the-record spokesperson and senior advisor to Thune. In addition, **Mollie Wilken** will continue serving as press secretary and **Stephanie Addison** will retain her role as deputy press secretary for the committee.

**Tony Eberhard**, the former deputy chief of staff and legislative director for Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., has joined the **International Dairy Foods Association's (IDFA)** legislative team as vice president of legislative affairs. In this position, Eberhard will work closely with IDFA members on policy development and legislative strategy while advocating for dairy foods companies and the dairy industry before Congress and the administration. Most recently, Eberhard guided Hoeven's legislative agenda, overseeing efforts on the Agriculture Act of 2014 as well as biotechnology labeling issues, immigration reform and White House budget negotiations. Prior to that, he was a senior principal responsible for legislative affairs at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and had worked for two senators and two representatives in the House with an emphasis on agriculture.

The **NPD Group**, a global provider of information and advisory services, has named **Karyn Schoenbart** CEO,

effective immediately. She succeeds **Tod Johnson**, who will continue full time as executive chairman. In her new role, Schoenbart will continue to oversee global operations and execution of the business while working with Johnson on strategy. Johnson will intensify his focus on long-term planning, research and special initiatives.

The **Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB)** has named **Rich Mende** as its new director of channel programs. Mende joins WMMB with nearly 20 years of experience in retail sales management. Most recently, his experience included sales management roles at Dietz & Watson in Philadelphia, InnovAsian Cuisine in Tukwila, Washington, and Willow Brook Foods in Springfield, Missouri. As the director of channel programs, Mende will manage the development of WMMB's consumer and retail cheese and dairy promotional programs and coordinate their implementation. Mende also will provide leadership and supervision to WMMB's team of regional marketing managers.

**W.M. Sprinkman Corp.**, a third-generation family business providing sanitary, stainless steel processing solutions for the food and beverage, dairy and craft brewing industries based in Waukesha, Wisconsin, has announced **Brian Armstrong** as the national accounts manager. Armstrong will be responsible for sales leadership, concentrating his efforts in serving multi-location customers across the United States and Canada in the dairy, food and beverage segments. Armstrong joins the team after tenures at Burkert Fluid Control Systems and GEA Tuchenhausen North America, both providers of valves and fluid processing technology. **CMN**

## NEWS/BUSINESS



### N-J

*Continued from page 1*

improve operations, as well as customer service, as it will be located closer to major LTL carriers and small parcel shipping hubs.

"With this facility in place and operational we will continue our growth within the South Central region and provide more capacity to other areas," says Carl Hamann, vice president of branch and warehouse operations at Nelson-Jameson. "This will be a wonderful facility and provide us with many years of growth potential."

The facility, which will open June 12, is located on a lot of more than 4 acres

in a well-developed business park and is approximately 25,000 square feet in size with three finished docks and two more dock openings that will allow for future growth as the need arises.

Office space consists of approximately 1,800 square feet and includes offices, cubical space, a conference room and break room. Warehouse space will include a high cube space storage system with 750,000 cubic feet of storage area and the capacity to hold 224 pallets of refrigerated product.

Nelson-Jameson Inc. is headquartered in Marshfield, Wisconsin, with other locations in Turlock, California; Twin Falls, Idaho; York, Pennsylvania; Amarillo, Texas; and a sales branch in Chicago. **CMN**



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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## Cabot Creamery honors volunteers across the country for work in local communities

**CABOT, Vt.** — Cabot Creamery Cooperative is honoring 60 individuals for their volunteer work with an all-expense paid Alaskan Cruise. Cabot says its 1,100 farm families who own Cabot often volunteer in their own communities, and the cooperative wants to show its gratitude to those organizations and individuals who do the same in their communities.

“There is a lot going on in the world right now. Yet with all the change we see around us, one constant is a volunteer’s ability to improve the lives of others in their local community,” says Roberta

MacDonald, senior vice president of marketing for Cabot. “Most people don’t volunteer to be recognized, and while the cruise is meant to honor their service, it also serves as a laboratory for like-minded people to network and share ideas to inspire others to give their time.”

The cruise, setting sail from Seattle June 2, marks the sixth Cabot Community Celebrity cruise that has honored more than 250 volunteers since the program began in 2009.

For more information, visit [www.cabotcheese.coop](http://www.cabotcheese.coop). CMN

## Minnesota passes new law on milk trucks

**BUFFALO, Minn.** — Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton last week signed a measure allowing smaller, single-unit milk trucks a 10-percent increase in their weight capacity, assuming they follow bridge limits and recommended tire load weights.

The Minnesota Milk Producers Association says this change was critical for the continuation of milk transport from farms to processing plants. Rules limit the weight between front and back tires of short milk trucks, making trucks that otherwise are legal on a per-axle basis out of compliance.

“Working to fix issues like this one is exactly what Minnesota Milk does

best on behalf of all dairy producers,” says Lucas Sjostrom, Minnesota Milk’s executive director. “We’re thankful to Rep. Draskowski and Sen. Goggin for championing this measure and helping to keep Minnesota’s milk trucks running safely but efficiently.”

Minnesota Milk says another one of its priorities, increasing processing capacity, also will be helped by two new \$1 million grants available to plants which are expanding. Additionally, Minnesota Milk worked to pass a \$4 million bond for the City of Litchfield to upgrade its backup power to fully accommodate First District Association’s dairy processing plant. CMN



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## Fonterra increases farmgate milk price

**AUCKLAND, New Zealand** — Fonterra Cooperative Group has increased its 2016/17 forecast farmgate milk price by 15 cents to NZ\$6.15 per kilogram milk solids (kgMS). Fonterra also has confirmed its forecast earnings per share of 45 to 55 cents for the 2017 financial year as it continues to target a full-year dividend of 40 cents per share.

Additionally, the cooperative is forecasting an improved farmgate milk price of NZ\$6.50 per kgMS for the 2018 season. The forecast earnings range for the 2018 financial year will be announced around the beginning of August.

**“The increase in the forecast milk price ... will be welcome news for our farmers following two challenging seasons.”**

John Wilson  
FONTERRA COOPERATIVE GROUP

“The increase in the forecast milk price for the current season and the improved forecast for 2017/18 will be welcome news for our farmers following two challenging seasons on the farm,” says Fonterra Chairman John Wilson. “Stronger production in March and April has partly offset lower peak milk production.”

Fonterra’s revenue of NZ\$13.9 billion for the first nine months of 2016/17 is up 8 percent compared to the same period last year as a result of higher milk prices.

“Our volume to value strategy continues to drive our performance in the ingredients and consumer and foodservice businesses,” says Fonterra CEO Theo Spierings. “Margins in most of our businesses are similar to last year, and we have moved an additional 350 million liquid milk equivalent into higher value products in the year to date. Consumer and foodservice volumes in greater China in particular have grown by 40 percent in the period.” CMN



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# NEWS/BUSINESS



## SPA, FMI launch strategic partnership for food

**NEW YORK** — The Specialty Food Association (SFA) and Food Marketing Institute (FMI) recently announced the launch of a strategic partnership focused on the \$127 billion specialty food category.

This relationship will bring together SFA and FMI members to strengthen business development, engage in food safety training and increase understanding of the growing specialty food industry.

“Specialty foods outpace their non-specialty counterparts in nearly every category, presenting a unique opportunity for a wide variety of retailers and foodservice operators to increase sales,” says Phil Kafarakis, president, SFA.

FMI President and CEO Leslie G. Sarasin also says, “Consumer trends point to continued specialty and organic growth, so it’s imperative that the food retail industry meet this consumer need while making the necessary investment to secure the food supply by building trusting relationships with specialty

product trading partners.”

SFA’s Summer Fancy Food Show, June 25-27 in New York, will serve as the stage for the launch of this SFA-FMI relationship. FMI members are invited to participate in a customized buyers program with SFA manufacturers that brings pre-matched buyers and sellers together for one-on-one meetings just prior to the Fancy Food Show, creating tailored sales opportunities.

Another aspect of the relationship is awareness building for FMI’s Safe Quality Foods (SQF) Institute Certification programs for manufacturers and the FMI SafeMark for retailers. Food safety experts from FMI will lead educational opportunities at the Summer Fancy Food Show, sharing trends in food safety and outlining how new technology affects food safety, brand protection and consumer confidence.

For more information on the SFA Fancy Food Show, visit [fancyfoodshows.com](http://fancyfoodshows.com). **CMN**



Photo courtesy of Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese

**BREAKING GROUND IN PETALUMA** — Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. this week broke ground on a new production and distribution facility in Petaluma, California. The new location is 22 miles east of the company’s headquarters in Point Reyes, California, and is the company’s first expansion away from the Marin County dairy farm the family has owned since 1959. Pictured, left to right, are Kuba Hemmerling, plant manager/head cheesemaker; Jill Giacomini Basch, co-owner/chief marketing officer; Bob Giacomini, founder; Lynn Giacomini Stray, co-owner/COO; and Diana Giacomini Hagan, co-owner/CFO.

## PETALUMA

*Continued from page 1*

we would grow our company.”

The new Petaluma creamery will be a production and aging facility for the company’s pasteurized cheeses including Fresh Mozzarella, Toma, Bay Blue and Gouda. Original Blue, the brand’s flagship, raw milk cheese, will continue to be made on the farm in Point Reyes. Packaging and distribution of the full product line will move to the Petaluma location.

“My grandfather, Tobias Giacomini, came from Italy to this country over 100 years ago and raised seven children on his chicken farm, not far from our new location,” says Bob Giacomini, company founder. “Expanding our company to Petaluma brings our family story full circle, back to where it all started.”

Diana Giacomini Hagan, co-owner and CFO, says the move to Petaluma allows the company to increase both the volume and variety of cheeses it produces, be more accessible to its network of distributor partners and attract employees to a more convenient, suburban location along the Highway 101 corridor.

The new Petaluma property was purchased last July and is located at 454 Payran Street, formerly Morris Beverage Distributing. Construction is estimated to take six months and was designed by vRA Architects of Petaluma and E.A. Bonelli & Associates of Oakland. Harris Construction of Fresno is managing the project.

Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese says it hopes to be making cheese and distributing its complete product line from the new location by the end of the year. **CMN**

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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## Wisconsin ag department announces recipients of Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants

**MADISON, Wis.** — Hill Valley Dairy and Sheep Dairy Association are two out of eight food projects that are the latest recipients of Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants administered and funded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Designed to help farmers and food processors reach new local markets, the grants aim to provide consumers access to more Wisconsin-grown food products.

"I'm pleased DATCP was able to provide support for these innovative local food projects," says Kietra Olson, manager, Wisconsin Foods Program, which houses the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant program. "The grants are intended to support the diverse sectors of Wisconsin agriculture, and outcomes generated by the grant recipients will provide benefits to local communities and serve as models for others in the local food industry."

Hill Valley Dairy, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, received a grant for \$17,200. The project is a collaboration between three businesses owned and operated by cheesemakers as well as a dairy farm, and it will design, assemble and operate a new, affordable and modular cheese aging facility. The Southeastern Wisconsin facility will fill a need of cheese businesses in the area, says Ron Henningfeld, cheesemaker, Hill Valley Dairy.

"What brought this group together is the lack of and availability of cheese aging facilities for aging local specialty cheeses in Southeastern Wisconsin," Henningfeld says. "A primary outcome of this project is to overcome that hurdle and provide a model for other small cheeses businesses to do the same."

Henningfeld adds that the grant will help the project get started sooner and move on a quicker timeline, as it will be applied at a critical time of the project — during planning, designing and startup.

"Having our project reviewed and then selected in this competitive grant process is very encouraging," Henningfeld says. "We are excited to bring the project to fruition for the sake of our group, Wisconsin cheese and other small Wisconsin cheese businesses who encounter this same barrier."

Meanwhile, the Sheep Dairy Association of Wisconsin (SDAW) received \$38,000. The association's project aims to grow Wisconsin's sheep dairy industry by creating customer awareness and demand for Wisconsin sheep milk products, creating a stronger retail and wholesale market for sheep milk products and increasing desire to use sheep milk by cheesemakers.

To help with these efforts, SDAW

looks to add members and help sheep milk producers make connections with those who will sell their products. As such, SDAW plans to grow its online presence by the end of the year — focusing both on its website and its social media presence. It also aims to design a logo, conduct a comprehensive literature review and develop public relations materials by this time, according to Laurel Kieffer, interim administrative consultant of SDAW and owner/operator at Dream Valley Farm LLC, Strum, Wisconsin. The grant funds will help develop some of these materials and support the staff time to produce them,

Kieffer adds.

"Receiving this grant is an affirmation of the need for collaboration to move the sheep dairy industry forward, but mostly an affirmation that the sheep dairy industry in Wisconsin is a viable industry," Kieffer says.

DATCP received 33 funding requests of about \$1.1 million. Applications were reviewed by internal and external review committees. Applicants were chosen by reviewers' scores and comments, Olson says, noting that impact on the Wisconsin food system always is considered. Ultimately, eight projects totaling \$200,000 were selected to receive

grants.

Other grant recipients include Bayfield Regional Food Producers Cooperative, Branches Winery, Brix Cider, Lonesome Stone Milling, Shiitake Growers Association and Tosa Farmers' Market.

The program has been funded since 2008. Since its inception, the program has funded 52 projects, totaling \$1.4 million. Previous grant recipients have generated more than \$9 million in new local food sales, created and retained 208 jobs and benefitted more than 2,600 producers and 2,700 markets, according to DATCP. **CMN**

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# NEWS/BUSINESS

## Market administrator approves temporary dumping of surplus milk in Northeast order

**BOSTON**—Northeast Market Administrator Erik F. Rasmussen recently approved a request to allow temporary dumping of surplus milk in the Northeast federal order for the period of June 1-Aug. 31, 2017.

Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) in late May requested a temporary authorization allowing pool handlers to dispose of surplus milk at a farm or non-plant location, with said milk retaining the status of pooled producer milk. Pool handlers Agri-Mark Inc., Upstate Niagara Cooperative and Cayuga Marketing LLC submitted comments in support of DFA's request.

The period covered by this action

— June 1-Aug. 31, 2017 — follows a previously submitted request that was approved for the period of March 1-May 31, 2017.

Rasmussen says that, as noted in DFA's request, market supply and demand conditions in the Northeast have not improved since the previous request was made. Milk production within the region continues at strong levels, and conversations with handlers and industry participants indicate that finding available processing capacity during the next few months will become increasingly challenging as the normal spring flush of milk production occurs and schools in the

region close for the summer, he adds.

In their request, DFA says no new processing capacity has come online or is expected to be operational during this period. In addition, DFA notes that recent trade action by the government of Canada has resulted in some Northeastern milk products no longer being able to be sold into Canadian markets, thereby pushing additional milk supplies back on the market.

Rasmussen says he is granting the request to temporarily reauthorize the pooling of milk disposed or "dumped" at farm or other non-plant locations for the requested period provided the

following conditions are met:

- Handlers and/or their producers that utilize this temporary policy must have been pooled on the Northeast order for all of their commercially marketed production for the months of May-October 2016;

- The milk must be picked up at the farm, measured and sampled for payment. The tanker test will be a weighted average of the producer tests; and

- Notification should be given to the market administrator's office by the next business day, or as soon as practicable, when the milk is dumped. At pool time, a separate list must be submitted of all producers whose milk was dumped, along with the component tests of the applicable milk (if available) and the physical location and address of where the milk was dumped.

Any such requested dumps will be subject to audit verification by the market administrator as a condition to be included as pooled producer milk during the respective pool period.

For more information, visit [www.fmmone.com](http://www.fmmone.com). **CMN**



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## Nominations open for 2018 Innovative Dairy Farmer Award

**WASHINGTON** — Nominations are now being accepted for the 20th annual Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year Award, which is co-sponsored by the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and *Dairy Herd Management* magazine. The winner will be honored at Dairy Forum 2018, which will be Jan. 21-24 in California.

Nominations must be submitted by Aug. 25, 2017, and there is no fee to enter.

The call asks for nominations of active U.S. dairy farmers that are improving on-farm efficiency through progressive management practices, production technologies and/or marketing approaches. Nominees will be judged on current methods as well as their positioning to meet future economic and business challenges, according to IDFA.

The award recipient will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Dairy Forum to attend a special presentation ceremony held during the program. (Winner will be responsible for all tax liabilities.) The person nominating the winner will receive complimentary registration to Dairy Forum, IDFA says.

In addition, the winning operation will be highlighted in the January 2018 issue of *Dairy Herd Management*.

For more information or to access a nomination form, visit [www.idfa.org](http://www.idfa.org). **CMN**

For more information please visit [www.scottsofwisconsin.com](http://www.scottsofwisconsin.com)



# 2017 KEY PLAYERS

Our Exclusive Annual Profile of Who's Who in the Cheese Business

## KEY PLAYERS

Continued from page 1



### Agri-Mark Inc.

Andover, Massachusetts

**Key executives:** Ed Townley, CEO; Richard Stammer, exec. sr. VP; Richard Johnson, sr. VP, sales; Roberta MacDonald, sr. VP, marketing; Tom Herbick, sr. VP, manufacturing; Robert Wellington, sr. VP, economics, communications & legislative affairs; Robert Stoddart, sr. VP, member services; Peter Gutierrez, international sales dir.

**Dairy plants:** Chateaugay, N.Y. (Cheddar, Muenster); Cabot, Vt. (Cheddar, flavored Cheddars, cultured products, cut & wrap); Middlebury, Vt. (Cheddar, whey protein); West Springfield, Mass. (butter, powder, condensed blends)

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** 150 million lbs.

**Estimated annual cheese marketed:** 150 million lbs.

**2016 sales:** \$935 million

**Projected 2017 sales:** \$940 million

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 40%

**Products exported:** 3%

**Websites:** www.agrimark.coop, www.cabotcheese.coop, www.mccadam.coop

**A look inside:** Agri-Mark Inc. this past year continued to focus on getting its Cheddar and other award-winning dairy products into consumers' mouths.

"We continue to find thousands of events along the East Coast and throughout the country where we sample our cheese," says Nate Formalarie, brand communications manager, Cabot Creamery Cooperative. "Those events are anything from road races to beer and wine festivals, to home shows and beyond.

Agri-Mark dairy cooperative, with 1,200 members, is one of the largest suppliers of fresh milk in New England. Member farms are located in all six New England states and New York state.

The cooperative produces award-winning Cabot and McCadam products such as New York and Vermont Cheddar, European-style cheeses, cottage cheese, sour cream, butter and yogurt, notes Doug DiMento, director of corporate communications, Agri-Mark. Agri-Mark also markets milk to dairy product dealers throughout the eastern United States.

Several expansions completed over the past year have helped to expand capacity for members' milk, DiMento notes.

The cooperative in 2016 began a multiyear project to expand its cheese manufacturing facility in Chateaugay, New York. The project includes rebuilding the current 110,641-square-foot manufacturing facility, re-engineering

the layout of the facility and purchasing new machinery and other equipment.

A large part of the project was completed in 2016, including cheese vat replacement, DiMento says, but the cooperative has put the remainder of the project on hold until 2019 or 2020 in order to focus on a \$22 million production expansion at its plant in West Springfield, Massachusetts. That plant produces butter, milk powder and condensed blends and will add additional capacity for members' milk, he says.

Agri-Mark and its Cabot and McCadam brand products garnered much industry recognition this past year.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Cabot Vermont 50-percent Reduced Fat Jalapeno Cheddar

received best of class honors, and Cabot Sharp Sliced Cheddar, Vermont Sharp snack cheese, Vermont Mild Cheddar, Vermont Style Cottage Cheese and Vermont Greek Yogurt 10-percent all received a bronze in their respective classes.

At the 2016 American Cheese Society competition, Cabot Old School Cheddar and McCadam Muenster each received a gold medal in their respective classes. Cabot Jalapeno Light Cheddar, McCadam Pepper Jack and Cabot Creme Fraiche all received bronze medals at the competition.

At last year's World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest, Cabot Lowfat Sour Cream received a gold medal, Agri-Mark DPI-Dairy Pro-

tein Solids received a silver and Cabot Plain Greek Yogurt received a bronze.

McCadam brand cheese also took home gold medals at last summer's New York State Fair Dairy Products Competition for its Cheddar, Aged Cheddar and Jalapeno Muenster.

Beyond sampling these award-winning products, Formalarie notes Agri-Mark continues to focus on volunteerism.

"Our farmers are often the first to volunteer in their communities, and we work to mirror those values," he says, noting the cooperative launched its Department of Gratitude, which includes multiple programs such as Reward Volunteers. The program is an

Turn to KEY PLAYERS, page 22 ⇨



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online platform for volunteers to log the time they spend volunteering for a chance to win prizes for themselves and cash for their nonprofit organization.

Formalarie says looking ahead to the rest of the year, Agri-Mark plans to roll out a revamped Cabot Cracker Cut package, made possible by a new packaging line at its Cabot cut and wrap facility.

While the greatest distribution of the product likely will be on the East Coast, it will come on line in stores throughout the year, he says.

Agri-Mark CEO Ed Townley says goals for 2017 and beyond include continuing to grow branded sales as well as

growing the cooperative's internal milk handling capacity.

"New high quality cheese offerings and more convenient consumer packaging are also being added to our product line to help increase sales and profitability," Townley says.



**Agropur Cooperative**  
Longueuil, Québec

*Key executives:* René Moreau, pres.; Robert Coallier, CEO; Roger Massicotte, VP; Jeannie Van Dyk, VP; Jocelyn Lauz-

iere, sr. VP & CFO; Simon Olivier, sr. VP, strategy & innovation; Lorraine Bedard, sr. VP, legal affairs, member relations & corporate secretary; Dominique Benoit, sr. VP, institutional affairs & communications; Pierre Corriveau, sr. VP, human capital; Serge Fortier, sr. VP, information technology; Nicholas Marie, sr. VP, strategic sourcing & development; Serge Paquette, pres., Canada operations; Benoit Zolnai, sr. VP, operational excellence & quality; Doug Simon, pres., U.S. operations

*Dairy plants:* Canada — Amqui, Québec; Beauceville, Québec; Bedford, Nova Scotia; Burnaby, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; Granby, Québec; Lachute, Québec; Lethbridge, Alberta; Miramichi, New Brunswick; Notre-

Dame-du-Bon Conseil, Québec; Oka, Québec; Ottawa, Ontario; Plessisville, Québec; Québec City, Québec; St. Damase, Québec; St. Hyacinthe, Québec; St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; St. Laurent, Québec; Sussex, New Brunswick; Toronto; Truro, Nova Scotia (2); Victoria, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Woodstock, Ontario; Ultima Foods joint venture — Delta, British Columbia; Granby, Québec; USA — Grand Rapids, Mich. (Farmland Dairies plant); Hull, Iowa (Green Meadows Foods); Jerome, Idaho (Davisco Foods International); La Crosse, Wis. (Main Street Ingredients); Le Sueur, Minn. (Davisco Foods International); Lake Norden, S.D. (Davisco Foods International); Little Chute, Wis. (Trega Foods); Luxemburg, Wis. (Trega Foods); Maplewood, Minn. (Schroeder Milk); Nicollet, Minn. (Davisco Foods International); Weyauwega, Wis. (Trega Foods)

*Estimated 2016 milk processed:* 5.94 billion liters (3.5 billion liters in U.S., 2.4 billion liters in Canada)

*Estimated 2016 sales:* C\$5.95 billion (C\$ 2.7 billion in U.S., C\$3.3 billion in Canada)

*Website:* [www.agropur.com/en/](http://www.agropur.com/en/)

*A look inside:* Agropur Cooperative has devoted the past year to integrating its many significant mergers and acquisitions of recent years, including the 2014 acquisition of Minnesota-based ingredients company Davisco Foods and its most recent acquisition of Canadian ice cream company Scotsburn Cooperative Services Ltd.'s assets at the end of 2016.

Agropur says these transactions have helped make it one of the top five players in North America's dairy processing industry. In 2016, for the first time in its history, Agropur appeared on Rabobank's list of the 20 largest dairy companies in the world. The cooperative has spent about C\$1.6 billion on mergers and acquisitions between 2012 and 2016, and its North American sales in this time have increased 63 percent from C\$3.7 billion in 2012 to nearly C\$6 billion in 2016. U.S. operations recorded sales of C\$2.7 billion in 2016, a 3-percent increase from the previous year.

In late June 2016, Agropur officially opened its new head office complex in Longueuil, Québec. The C\$100 million, nearly 90,000-square-meter complex eventually will employ 800 people in its collaborative office facility, which achieved LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver certification earlier this year.

At the beginning of 2016, Agropur announced a cost-cutting target of C\$100 million over three years, and after only one year, the cooperative says it already achieved C\$41 million in savings and is well on track to reaching its goal.

In June 2016, Agropur launched operations at a US\$58-million expansion to its Weyauwega, Wisconsin, plant, which began in October 2014.

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By the end of 2016, Agropur increased the plant's capacity by 128 percent. The project will enable the cooperative to cut costs and remain the No. 1 Feta producer in the United States, Agropur says.

Agropur reports that its OKA specialty cheese brand has been on a strong uptrend since 2013, which continued in 2016 with healthy growth both inside and outside Québec where it is manufactured. In the last couple of years, Agropur has spent C\$45 million on a marketing campaign in Canada and on modernization of equipment at its OKA plant.

The cooperative now plans to introduce its OKA line along with other Canadian cheeses, such as Chèvre des Alpes, Champfleury and its aged Cheddars, to the U.S. market over the next year.

Also in the United States, Agropur reports that significant resources are being allocated to marketing its biPro brand's flavored protein powders and protein drinks, which continue gaining popularity with elite athletes and consumers. BiPro also entered the Canadian market in January. Additionally, in 2016 Agropur made a strong push to increase its alpha-lactalbumin production and develop the market for the high-end whey product, which was developed by its U.S. operations.

In April, Agropur USA became the first recipient of the Breakthrough Award for Dairy Ingredient Innovation for its development of glycomacropptide, or GMP — a casein-derived protein fraction that becomes part of the soluble serum proteins during cheesemaking. The award honors achievements by a dairy processing member of the American Dairy Products Institute.

Agropur won several awards this past year for its U.S.- and Canadian-made cheeses. At the 2016 American Cheese Society contest, Agropur's Chèvre Noir won a first-place award. At the 2016 Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest, Agropur won first-place awards for its Mild Cheddar and its low-moisture part-skim Mozzarella.

At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Agropur was awarded first runner-up overall and first in its class for its Cheddar aged 1-2 years. Also at this contest, Agropur received first-place awards for its Sharp Cheddar, Cheddar aged 2 years or longer, Colby Jack, low-moisture part-skim Mozzarella, Mild Provolone and Smoked Provolone; second for its whole-milk low-moisture Mozzarella, Feta, Feta with Peppercorn, Smoked low-moisture whole-milk Mozzarella and Sharp Cheddar feather-cut shred; and third for its Cheddar aged 1-2 years, Colby Jack, low-moisture whole-milk Mozzarella, low-moisture part-skim Mozzarella, Feta, reduced-fat Feta and reduced-sodium Provolone.



**Associated Milk Producers Inc.**  
New Ulm, Minnesota

*Key executives:* Donn DeVelder, co-pres. & CEO; Sheryl Meshke, co-pres. & CEO; John Radi, CFO; Mike Wolkow, VP, operations; Marshall Reece, VP, sales & marketing

*Cheese plants:* Sanborn, Iowa (Cheddar, condensed whey); Paynesville, Minn. (Cheddar barrels, WPC); Rochester, Minn. (Cheddar, Colby, Colby Jack, Monterey Jack, ice cream mix, WPC, lactose, condensed whey); Hoven, S.D. (Parmesan, Romano, Asiago); Blair, Wis. (Cheddar, whey); Jim Falls, Wis. (Cheddar, Colby Jack, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, whey); Portage, Wis. (cheese packaging & processing)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 645 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 645 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$1.6 billion

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 60%

*Market segments for cheese:* 10% retail; 35% foodservice; 55% ingredients

*Website:* www.ampi.com

*A look inside:* Construction wrapped up in December 2016 on a new 12,500-square-foot cooler at Associated Milk Producers Inc.'s (AMPI) consumer-packaged cheese plant in Portage, Wisconsin. This improvement is one of several projects completed following a December 2014 fire that destroyed the dry goods and ingredient warehouse area of the plant. In addition to the new cooler, the rebuilt area includes larger

freight elevators, an expanded sprinkler system, energy efficient LED lights and an improved ammonia system.

"Following the fire, we were able to rethink the plant's floor plan and make

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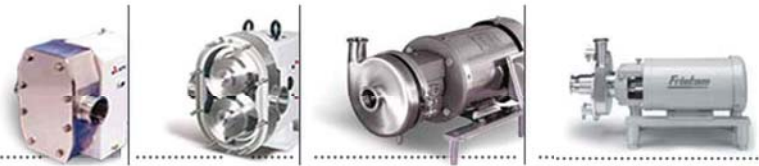
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improvements in key areas," says Sheryl Meshke, co-president and CEO, AMPI. "The result will better enable AMPI to respond to growing orders from food-service customers."

As a private label supplier, AMPI does not run its own marketing programs, but it works closely with its customers to produce cheese to their specifications and support their brands.

Throughout the last year, AMPI members and employees gathered to revisit the cooperative's vision, mission and values.

"The result is a new message that

defines what drives us at AMPI: We make the dairy products that make the brand," Meshke says. "What we're made of is as important as what we make. Our core values — commitment to quality, responsibility to others and determination to succeed — guide us in all we do."

With this as its cornerstone, Meshke says AMPI will be embarking on several projects in the years ahead to respond to customers' growing orders and increased milk production on member farms.

At the 2016 National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) contest, AMPI entries were named champions in both the Cheddar and Italian cheese divisions. In addition to being named best of class in

the Cheddar division, Medium Cheddar made at AMPI's Blair, Wisconsin, plant also won the Chairman's Award as the best overall entry at the NMPF contest. Also at this contest, AMPI cheeses won first-place awards in the Pasteurized Process American Plain, Pasteurized Process American Flavored and Hard Italian categories.

At the World Dairy Expo Championship Product Contest in August, AMPI's Mild Cheddar from its Sanborn, Iowa, plant topped its category for the third consecutive year. Other medals AMPI won at this contest include: first and third for Mild Cheddar; first, second and third for unflavored pasteurized process cheese; first for flavored pasteurized process blend; first for Colby/Monterey

Jack; first for 34-percent whey protein concentrate; second for 80-percent whey protein concentrate; and third for dried sweet whey.

At the 2016 Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest, AMPI won first place for its pasteurized process American cheese spread.

At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, AMPI won best of class for its Mild Cheddar and American pasteurized process cheese slices, second for its Sharp Cheddar and colored American pasteurized process cheese loaf, and third for its Monterey Jack with Jalapeño Peppers and White American pasteurized process easy melt cheese loaf.

"Earning these awards speaks volumes about the consistent quality of AMPI cheese," says Mike Wolkow, vice president of operations, AMPI. "We are proud to say that we never make cheese especially for a contest. These entries are truly representative of all the dairy products made in every AMPI plant, every day."

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**Baker Cheese Factory Inc.**  
St. Cloud, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Dick Baker, chairman of the board; Brian Baker, pres.; Jeff Baker, exec. VP; Kevin Baker, CFO; Eric Baker, dir., sales & marketing

*Cheese plant:* St. Cloud, Wis. (String cheese)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 50-55 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 50-55 million lbs.

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 90% retail; 10% foodservice

*Percentage of products exported:* 5%

*Website:* www.bakercheese.com

*A look inside:* Baker Cheese Factory Inc. is in the process of adding refrigeration space as well as expanding its finished goods warehouse, dry goods warehouse, employee services and locker rooms, and operational office space. The project entails adding about 25,000 square feet to the factory, remodeling some of its existing space and updating current equipment, says Brian Baker, president, Baker Cheese Factory.

The additions also allow the company to remodel some of its existing warehouse space to include reverse osmosis and process equipment, Baker says.

The project is expected to increase whey processing capabilities and accommodate the company's growing number of employees. Baker Cheese has added about 20 employees in the last year and is looking to add another 25 to 30 employees in the coming year, Baker says.

The company expects the project to be complete this summer, with additional plans to add more space in future months

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for manufacturing and packaging, Baker says.

“Really, our goal for this next year is to be able to increase these capacities for String cheese production and whey processing while maintaining high quality,” Baker says.

The company's newest cheese variety, Jalapeno String Cheese, has been on the market for about a year. While some of the company's Jalapeno String Cheese is sold under the Baker brand — which has limited distribution in Wisconsin — much of the cheese is sold through private label customers. However, as the company grows in capacity, both the Baker brand and its private label products are expected to expand later this year.

Baker says the main focus this year is to continue to expand its national and international private label sales.

As 2017 develops, the company also looks to expand its offerings, with new flavors in the research and development stage, Baker adds.

The fourth-generation family-owned company celebrated 100 years of business in 2016. As part of its celebration, the company conducted several promotional activities with retailers of the Baker brand and internally as a company.

Some activities included a mini museum last September at a local community park that examined the company's history. The company also took part in “community give backs,” Baker says, which entailed drawing employees' names twice a month throughout the year, and those employees could designate a \$100 donation to the charity of their choice.

“That was really a lot of fun,” Baker says. “(There were) a lot of different smaller and larger charitable needs in our community that we were able to give back to.”

Baker Cheese's String received recognition at award shows this year. At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Baker Cheese placed second in its class for its Jalapeno Peppers String cheese.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo contest, Baker Cheese swept the top three spots in the String Cheese class with its Low Moisture Part Skim Mozzarella String Cheese.

**Key executives:** Frederic Nalis, pres. & CEO; Francis Perrin, chief marketing officer; Heather Rewiski, chief customer (sales) officer; Xavier Houssin, CFO; Richard Saucedo, VP, human resources; Jan-Philippe Gourdon, VP, manufacturing; Pelin Tomay, VP, supply chain

**Cheese plants:** Brookings, S.D. (Mini Babybel); Leitchfield, Ky. (Mini Babybel, The Laughing Cow); Little Chute, Wis. (Kaukauna, Owl's Nest, Merckts, Price's)

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** 110 million lbs.

**Estimated annual cheese marketed:** 110 million lbs.

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 100%

**Website:** www.belbrandsusa.com

**A look inside:** In December 2016, the Bel Group completed its acquisition of the MOM Group, which sells its Materne and Mont Bland brands in France and PomPotes and GoGosqueeZ brands in both France and the United States. Bel says the deal enables the two companies to create a major global player in the healthy snacks segment, founded on strong and innovative brands as well as complementary product ranges and territories.

In March, Bel Group inaugurated a plant in Vietnam to produce The Laughing Cow cheese for the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Philippine, Singaporean and Thai markets. The

plant, which began production in June 2016, is designed with room to double its current production capacity of more than 3 million single-serving portions of The Laughing Cow each week and meet increased demand in the years ahead.

Domestically, Bel Brands reports that it gained the most market share in the United States in the past two years in its snacking cheese segment, with 2.2 points of share gained ahead of two of its major competitors. Additionally, net sales growth — 17.3 percent in the last two years — has outpaced the cheese market. In 2016 alone, Bel USA reports growth of 5.5 points above the average U.S. cheese

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— WORLD —  
CHAMPIONSHIP

**2014**

SILVER MEDAL

STRING CHEESE

— U.S. —  
CHAMPIONSHIP

**2015**

GOLD MEDAL

STRING CHEESE

— WORLD —  
CHAMPIONSHIP

**2016**

GOLD MEDAL

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— U.S. —  
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**2017**

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market.

The company in September 2016 introduced new Mercks Beer Cheese Spread made with craft beer from Capital Brewery in Middleton, Wisconsin, and Stevens Point Brewery in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. The new spread line is available in four Cheddar varieties: Mercks Beer Cheese Spread with Capital Supper Club, Mercks Beer Cheese Spread with Point Onyx Black Ale, Mercks Beer Cheese Spread with Capital Mutiny IPA and Mercks Beer Cheese Spread with Point Amber Classic.

"The Mercks Beer Cheese Spread launch combines two consumer food trends: the growing beer cheese category and the growing popularity of craft beer," the company notes.

In addition to the new cheese spreads, Bel Brands centered its marketing efforts this past year on its The Laughing Cow Cheese Dippers, a portable individually-portioned snack with cheese and crunchy breadsticks that was first launched last spring. For the 2017 back-to-school season, the company says it will have new marketing campaigns centered on the launch of two new flavors of Cheese Dippers: Garlic and Herb, and White Cheddar.



**BelGioioso Cheese Inc.**  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Errico Auricchio, pres.; Gaetano Auricchio, executive VP

*Cheese plants:* Byron, Wis. (Provolone); Chase, Wis. (Parmesan, Romano, Asiago, Auribella, Kasseri, Toscanello, Pepato, Peperoncino, vegetarian Parmesan, Fontina); Freedom, Wis. (Burrata, Fresh Mozzarella, Fresh Mozzarella curd); Glenmore, Wis. (Provolone, Mascarpone, Fresh Mozzarella, Ricotta con Latte); Langes Corners, Wis. (CreamyGorg, Crumbly Gorgonzola, Italic, Crescenza-Stracchino); Ledgewiew, Wis. (converting, packaging, shipping, corporate office); Pulaski, Wis. (American Grana, Artigiano); Sherwood, Wis. (veal feed, lactose); Schenectady, N.Y. (marinated braids, smoked Fresh Mozzarella, Scamorza, Ricotta)

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 90%  
*Market segments for cheese:* 50% retail; 50% foodservice

*Website:* www.belgioioso.com

*A look inside:* BelGioioso Cheese Inc. continues to focus on providing consumers with high quality cheese in convenient formats. The company has introduced a number of new products in the past couple of years.

While BelGioioso only utilizes a minimal amount of anti-caking agents in products when needed, in response to some consumers' and chefs' concerns about the category, the company introduced a new natural line of shredded and grated cheeses in both foodservice and retail sizes. The selection of 4-ounce shredded, grated and shaved cheeses are packed in unique, lightweight, re-sealable cups and contain just cheese and no anti-caking agents or preservatives.

BelGioioso also is introducing 3/4-ounce Parmesan sticks for snack-

ing later this year, positioning it as a high-protein "power snack." In addition, the company is rolling out 1.5-ounce packages of Provolone and salami, two rolls to a package, for snacking.

To reach consumers looking for high-end artisan cheeses, in 2016 BelGioioso introduced its custom-created Artigiano cheese. Artigiano is made in small batches and cured using proprietary, artisan methods to achieve its delicate crystalline texture and nutty and sweet flavor. Available in a Classico variety as well as Vino Rosso and Aged Balsamic & Cipolline Onion flavors, the cheese is available in whole 11-pound wheels for cut-and-wrap programs or pre-cut 4-ounce exact-weight wedges.

The cheese is being marketed under the "La Bottega di BelGioioso" brand, a line of small pieces of hand-selected cheeses that ensure consistent quality, flavor, texture, aroma and authenticity. Other cheeses in the line include Crescenza-Stracchino, American Grana, Provolone Extra, Peperoncino and cow and sheep's milk blended Gorgonzola. Recently announced additions to the La Bottega line are CreamyGorg, Pepato and Italic.

Meanwhile, BelGioioso, which primarily sells its cheese in retail deli and for foodservice, is taking its Casaro brand to the dairy case. This will expand the company's presence by offering familiar cheeses in convenient formats, Auricchio says.

BelGioioso Cheese currently operates eight locations in Wisconsin with a ninth cheesemaking operation in New York. This spring, the company completed an expansion of its Ledgewiew, Wisconsin, facility, expanding its shipping and distribution areas, as well as an addition to the finished storage area at its Freedom, Wisconsin, facility.

BelGioioso broke ground in January on a new plant in Denmark, Wis-

consin, down the road from its office headquarters. The new greenfield plant will be known as "New Denmark" and is expected to be fully operational next year.

This year, two BelGioioso cheesemakers, Steve Beirhals and Josh Krause, graduated from the elite Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker Program, bringing the total number of Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers on staff to six.

The company markets the fact it boasts so many Master Cheesemakers and is very proud of it, BelGioioso President Errico Auricchio says. The rigorous program, a joint partnership between the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, promotes advanced education for experienced cheesemakers and is good for morale, Auricchio says.

"The biggest benefit is more internal than external," Auricchio says noting that graduating from the program is a great achievement for cheesemakers. "Happy cheesemakers make excellent cheese."

BelGioioso has won a number of awards at cheese contests this past year.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, the company received first and second in the Parmesan class for its Parmesan and American Grana as well as first place in the Flavored Soft Cheeses Open class for its Burrata with Black Truffles. In addition, BelGioioso won second for its Ricotta con Latte Whole Milk, Asiago and Fresh Mozzarella Snacking Cheese, and third for its Zesty Marinated Hand Braided Fresh Mozzarella and Crumbly Gorgonzola with Sheep's Milk.

At last summer's American Cheese Society competition, the company received first for its BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella 16-ounce Log, two second-place awards for its Burrata, and third for its Mascarpone and Fontina.

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# 2017 KEY PLAYERS

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**Cacique Inc.**  
Monrovia, California

**Key executives:** Gil de Cárdenas, CEO; Tim Snyder, COO; Tirso Iglesias, sr. VP, sales & marketing; Bob Cashen, VP, sales; Chris Hannigan, VP, marketing; Francisco Hanon, category mgr.; Charles Redmond, category mgr.; Enrique Botello, sr. category mgr.; David Hunt, central division sales dir.; Miguel Moreno, regional business development mgr., Mountain Region; Felipe Gomez, regional business development mgr., mass market West and Northern California Region; Kevin McCracken, regional business development mgr., mass market East; Branden Wilson, regional business development mgr., mass market Midwest Region; Mike Schmidt, business development mgr., East and Kroger

**Cheese plant:** City of Industry, Calif. (Queso Fresco, Panela, Cotija, Asadero, Enchilado, Manchego, Oaxaca, Queso Blanco Fresco, Queso Quesadilla, Queso Quesadilla Jalapeño, Mozzarella, Crema Mexicana, Crema Mexicana Agria, Crema Salvadorena, drinkable yogurt)

**Website:** [www.caciqueinc.com](http://www.caciqueinc.com)

**A look inside:** Cacique Inc. is a manufacturer of Mexican-style cheeses, creams and chorizos. Family owned and operated, Cacique is heading into its 45th anniversary. The focus on authenticity and providing consumers with high quality products continues to be its mission and is reinforced by four pillars: family, authenticity, integrity and quality. The pillars appear on each package of Cacique products and are the company's commitment to maintaining the leadership position within the category.

In October, Cacique moved its corporate headquarters to the city of Monrovia, California. The new space will provide the Cacique team a home for many years to come and has state-of-the-art amenities for its employees.

"Our new headquarters provides an environment of collaboration and creativity that allows all facets of our company to interact as we continue to navigate the evolving marketplace," says Tirso Iglesias, senior vice president of sales and marketing, Cacique Inc.

In February, the company launched its redesigned corporate website adding multiple features and enhancing the virtual experience for consumers. The new site is compatible with mobile devices, incorporates video recipes, a real-time store locator and many more areas for Mexican food enthusiasts to explore. It also now links to the company's multiple micro-sites such as the CaciqueDilla

Club, Dia de Los Muertos and others, further streamlining the experience.

"Our consumers across the country are hungry for content and how to utilize authentic Mexican-style products," Iglesias says. "We felt it was our duty as the category leader to provide a social media solution where consumers can visit and be part of the Cacique family, and experience the many ways our products can be used and interact with our brand. It's the hub of our social media experience and the community that we continue to build on year after year."

Iglesias notes that continual consumer engagement and innovation are important to the growth of the brand and category.

"We feel as consumers continue to

evolve, we need to be making the journey with them and continuing to develop ways for Cacique products to integrate into all meal occasions," he says. "The execution has to be on point and relevant to make that impact, and it all starts with the connection we continue to strengthen with them."

Cacique continues to partner with celebrity chef Aaron Sanchez and is excited by his selection as a judge on "Master Chef" this year.

"Aaron's new adventure will expand our reach in engaging consumers; we are thrilled for him!" Iglesias says.

"Aaron will also be working on some recipes that will include innovative products being introduced later this year," Iglesias adds.

**Cedar Grove**  
**CHEESE**

*clock shadow*  
**CREAMERY**



**Cedar Grove Cheese Inc.**  
Plain, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** Robert Wills, pres.; Deborah Byrne, general mgr.

**Cheese plants:** Plain, Wis. (cow's milk cheeses: Squeaks Cheddar curds, Colby, Marble Colby, Monterey Jack, Butterkase, Farmers; sheep's milk cheeses: Banquo, Donatello, Fleance,

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# 2017 KEY PLAYERS

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Feta, Ovella; buffalo's milk cheeses: Fresh Mozzarella, Gouda, Cheddar; mixed milk cheeses: Weird Sisters, Faarko, Montague); Clock Shadow Creamery, Milwaukee (cow's milk cheeses: Bon Bree, Cheddar, Cheese-E-Que, Double Cream Colby, LaBelle, Mozzarella, Quark, Ricotta, Squeaks Cheddar Curds; goat's milk cheeses: Squeaks Cheddar Curds, Chevre; mixed milk cheese: Capriko)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 4 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 4 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$12 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$12 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 90%

*Market segments for cheese:* 35% retail; 10% foodservice; 55% ingredients

*Website:* www.cedargrovecheese.com, www.clockshadowcreamery.com

*A look inside:* Cedar Grove Cheese and Clock Shadow Creamery in Milwaukee, both owned by Robert Wills, president, have expanded distribution in the Chicago and Minneapolis retail and foodservice markets in the past year. Visitors from Chicago wanted

the companies' products closer to home, Wills notes. Meanwhile, Cedar Grove Cheese historically has had a presence in the Minneapolis market, so the companies have built on that reputation by offering products from both factories through a focused distributor, Wills says.

"The addition of these two regional markets has helped us make more efficient use of the Clock Shadow plant," Wills says. "We concluded that, while our primary motivation is local ... that market alone is not big enough to support us at an efficient scale."

Cedar Grove Cheese also has successfully completed its third-party audit and achieved halal certification.

"From a technical perspective, it was pretty easy for us to do," Wills says, noting that the company already produced cheese with ingredients that met halal standards. Now, halal-certified customers can use Cedar Grove Cheese's cheese and whey as ingredients, he says.

Clock Shadow Creamery has started offering several new products at its store, including cheese curd wontons and grilled cheese sandwiches. These products work to incorporate more "unusual" cheeses so consumers learn what can be done and be more creative with cheeses, Wills says.

In addition, Clock Shadow Creamery has expanded its Quark offerings with new flavors, including Brandy Old-Fashioned and Quark with South Africa (S.A.) Braai chutney. The S.A. Braai is made by a local company, and the Brandy Old-Fashioned initially was developed for a local fundraising event.

Wills himself received recognition from the American Cheese Society (ACS) for his work on its Best Practices Guide for Cheesemakers released in 2016, and he continued chairing the ACS Regulatory & Academic Committee focusing on safe cheesemaking. He also serves as secretary for the Wisconsin Association for Food Protection and is a member of Wisconsin's FaSafe Steering Committee, a group dedicated to food and beverage quality, safety and compliance.

Clock Shadow Creamery has committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for visitors and employees of all backgrounds in the coming year, Wills says. To help with this goal, the company has joined the nationwide Sanctuary Restaurants movement.

"It is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for visitors and employees of all backgrounds," Wills says. "We view our connection with the local community as more than just (a)

supplier to consumers."

Cedar Grove Cheese and Clock Shadow Creamery also are working on several new cooperative processing ventures with other cheesemakers, providing them with access to processing space under a shared use agreement and doing custom processing to enhance partners' capacity.

"We believe that these ventures make more efficient use of facilities, reduce the need for duplicative investments and enable smaller processors to economically share food safety protocols and marketing efforts," Wills says, adding that another benefit is the opportunity to brainstorm with other cheesemakers.

Both companies have brought in awards this year as well. Cedar Grove Cheese's Donatello and Sheep Milk Feta placed third in their classes at the 2016 ACS contest. Donatello also placed second in its class at the 2016 Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest, in addition to its Montague placing second in its class. Clock Shadow Creamery placed first in its class for its Chevre at that contest.

At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Cedar Grove placed third in its class for its Donatello.

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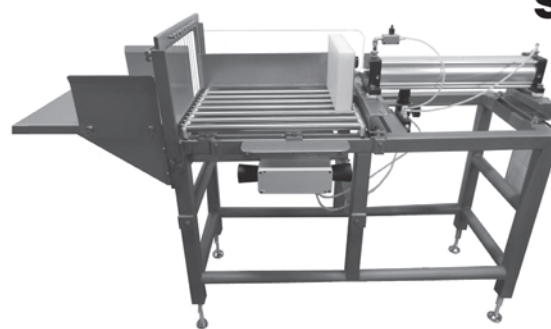
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Sheep's Milk Feta  
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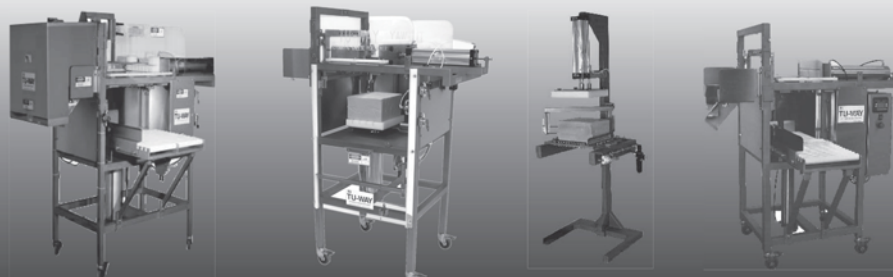
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### Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese LLC Waterloo, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** George Crave, pres.; Debbie Crave, VP

**Cheese plant:** Waterloo, Wis. (Farmer's Rope Part-Skim Mozzarella, White, Yellow & Jalapeno cheese curds, Fresh Mozzarella, Marinated Fresh Mozzarella, Mascarpone, Oaxaca)

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 90%  
**Market segments for cheese:** 40% retail; 30% foodservice; 30% ingredients  
**Website:** www.cravecheese.com

**A look inside:** Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese LLC is a family-owned cheese and dairy business, emphasizing its connection to the "four C's" — crops to cows, cheese to consumer, says George Crave, president, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese.

"The product is being made on the farm with the farm's products," Crave says of being a farmstead company. It grows and utilizes its own crops to feed its cows, which provide milk for the company's cheese.

Along with the cheese plant, which was constructed in 2001, are about 1,900 cows and 2,500 acres of farmed land, Crave says. In addition to George Crave and his three brothers, other relatives, such as nieces and nephews, are involved with taking care of the company's cows and cheesemaking. Staff also are an integral part of the business, with about 35 employees at the cheese factory and 25 on the farm.

As part of its marketing efforts, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese offers tours to buyers and customers coming to Wisconsin. This allows them an opportunity to see where the company's products come from, Crave says, noting that there is misinformation about contemporary farming practices today and that the tours aim to help assure customers that crops and cows are in good condition today and for the future.

The company not only offers farmstead cheeses but also uses renewable energy. Crave Brothers uses green power, practices water conservation and recycling, and is a carbon-negative company.

Looking ahead, the company aims to grow its business and continue telling its family and farmstead story. Being a small, family-controlled business, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese aims for 10-percent growth this year, Crave says.

The company continues to put its main focus on its core products, which include its Fresh Mozzarella varieties that are available from coast to coast. The Mozzarella comes in retail and foodservice containers of perline (pearl size), ciliegine (cherry size), bocconcini (ball size), ovoline (egg size), medallions, 8-ounce balls, 1-pound balls and 1-pound logs. The company also offers a marinated ciliegine, which uses a Mediterranean blend of different herbs, spices and peppers in oil marinade, and this variety is available in 8-ounce retail containers as well as 3-pound foodservice cups.

Crave Brothers' Fresh Mozzarella continues to be critically acclaimed, winning first, second and third in its class at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest this year. At the 2016 American Cheese Society (ACS) contest, the company's Fresh Mozzarella also placed third in classes for Fresh Mozzarella over 8 ounces and under 8 ounces, and its Marinated Fresh Mozzarella also placed third in its class. In addition, the company's Fresh Mozzarella placed first in its class at the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest. The company plans to incorporate mention of the awards into its marketing this year to demonstrate its product quality, Crave says.

Also winning awards this year was the company's Jalapeno Cheddar Cheese Curds, which won first in its class at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest and at the ACS contest. The jalapeno variety has been available for about three years now, Crave says.

In addition, its Yellow Cheddar Cheese Curds placed first in its class at the 2016 ACS contest. Its White Cheddar Cheese Curds placed third in the class at the contest as well.



Dairy Farmers of America

### Dairy Farmers of America Kansas City, Kansas

**Key executive:** Rick Smith, pres. & CEO

**Dairy plants:** Adrian, Mich. (condensed milk, cream, NDM); Beaver, Utah (condensed milk, cream, long-horn Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack); Cabool, Mo. (adult nutritional beverages, dairy-based coffee beverages, energy protein beverages, Sport Shake); Cass City, Mich. (cream, condensed whole & skim milk); Cedarburg, Wis. (fluid milk, orange juice); Fallon, Nev. (WMP, SMP); Dalbo, Minn. (hard Italian cheese); Fargo, N.D. (butter, cottage cheese, cream, dips, fluid milk, ice cream, sour cream, yogurt, juice); Farmington, Minn. (cottage cheese, dips, smoothies, sour cream); Fort Morgan, Colo. (condensed milk, cream, NDM); Pollock, S.D. (hard Italian cheese); Frederick, Md. (milk, fruit drinks, juice); Goshen, Ind. (condensed milk, cream, NDM); Allerton, Iowa (nutrition & functional milk protein ingredients); Houston, Texas (artisanal Hispanic cheeses & creams); Hughson, Calif. (butter, condensed milk, cream, NDM); Mechanicsburg, Pa. (dairy-based coffee beverages); Middlebury Center, Pa. (condensed milk, cream, cream powder, malted milk powder, NDM, SMP, WMP); Minneapolis, Minn. (fluid milk, other beverages); New Britain, Conn. (cream, ice cream mixes, milk, fruit drinks, fruit juices, water); New Wilmington, Pa. (dry whey, Italian-style cheese); Portales,

N.M. (condensed skim, cream, milk permeate powder, MPC, NDM, SMP); Portland, Maine (butter, buttermilk, cottage cheese, cream, flavored milk, fluid milk, fruit juice, sour cream, tea); Reading, Pa. (cream, condensed milk, malted milk powder, NDM, SMP, WMP); Rochester, Minn. (2) (fluid milk, ice cream, light ice cream, sherbets, yogurt-based drinks); Bruce, Wis. (cheese, dairy powders); Chili, Wis. (hard Italian cheese); Schulenburg, Texas (dairy dips, salsa); Garden City, Kan. (WMP, SMP, NDM, cream); Springfield, Mo. (dairy-based coffee beverages); El Dorado Springs, Mo. (specialty dairy powders); Turlock, Calif. (Italian-style cheese, liquid whey); Ventura, Calif. (dairy-based coffee beverages); West Middlesex, Pa. (industrial shredded cheese, process cheese); Winnsboro, Texas (anhydrous milkfat, butter, buttermilk powder, NDM, sweet cream); Hummelstown, Pa. (dairy concentrates); Winthrop, Minn. (anhydrous milkfat, butterfat blends, sweetened condensed milk); Zumbrota, Minn. (American-style cheese, hard Italian, cream, fluid whey, dairy powders); Batavia, N.Y.; Pavilion, N.Y. (cream, skim)

**Cheese and ingredient-related joint ventures:** Southwest Cheese, Clovis, N.M. — JV cheese operation with Glanbia plc & the cooperative members of the Greater Southwest Agency (DFA, Select Milk Producers) (40- & 640-lb. block Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Muenster, Asadero, Queso Quesadilla, Colby Jack); Craigs Station Creamery, Linwood, N.Y. — JV with Craigs Station Ventures; Pavilion, N.Y. — JV with Arla Foods (Cheddar)

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** 274 million lbs.

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*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 389.9 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$13.5 billion

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$16.4 billion

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 6%

*Market segments for cheese:* 36.49% retail; 33.44% foodservice; 30.07% ingredients

*Percentage products exported:* 7.7% of commercial business total sales

*Website:* [www.dfamilk.com](http://www.dfamilk.com)

*A look inside:* Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) in May moved into its new headquarters in Kansas City, Kansas. All of the cooperative's employees

moved from space DFA has leased in Missouri since its formation in 1998 to a new building in the expanded Village West area in Kansas City, Kansas.

The three-story, 100,000-square-foot building was constructed with sustainability in mind and designed to LEED standards, DFA says.

DFA earlier this year announced it is in advanced discussions along with Glanbia plc, Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA) and Foremost Farms USA to create a stand-alone joint venture to build and operate a new cheese and whey production facility in the state of Michigan. Upon completion, the plant is projected to process 8 million pounds of milk per day. It is proposed that 50 percent of the joint

venture will be owned by Glanbia and the 50-percent balance will be owned by DFA, MMPA and Foremost Farms.

As part of the proposed joint venture, DFA, MMPA and Foremost Farms would supply all milk required by the plant, while Glanbia would have full responsibility for all commercial, technical and operational aspects of the business. If the project proceeds as planned, commissioning of the new facility is expected to take place in the second half of 2019.

This past year, DFA has invested in improvements at its New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, and Turlock, California, plants, and continues to look for ways to modernize its facilities, says Doug Glade, executive vice president of

commercial operations, DFA. Progress also continues on the construction of a new dairy ingredients plant in Garden City, Kansas.

DFA also is involved in the construction of a new 30,000-square-foot WNY Cheese Enterprise LLC facility in Pavilion, New York.

The \$49.7 million production facility is part of a collaboration between Craigs Station Ventures, Denmark-based Arla Foods and DFA. The facility will create 30 new jobs and is projected annually to produce approximately 15 million pounds of cheese, primarily Cheddar, which then will be transported and packaged for retail sale.

The new WNY Cheese plant will be adjacent to Craigs Station Creamery, a milk plant that opened in 2014 as a collaboration between DFA and Craig's Station Ventures — a partnership of eight Livingston and Wyoming county dairy farms in New York. DFA will manage operations of the new plant, holding a controlling 70-percent stake in the venture. Arla will have a 20-percent stake in the facility and will market cheese produced there. The Craigs Station farmers will hold the remaining 10 percent stake in the enterprise. Construction of the new facility is underway and is expected to be complete by the end of 2017 or early 2018, Glade says.

DFA officials reported 2016 net income of \$131.8 million, compared to \$94.1 million of net income for 2015. The increase was attributable to higher sales volumes, overall operating efficiencies and lower commodity input costs. The record earnings also were buoyed by the acquisition of the remaining 50-percent equity interest in DairiConcepts, a manufacturer of cheese, dairy ingredients and dairy flavor systems with eight facilities across the United States.

DFA's net sales totaled \$13.5 billion for 2016, compared to \$13.8 billion in 2015. This decrease is primarily a result of lower milk prices, the co-op says.

In 2016, DFA directed the marketing of 62.6 billion pounds of milk for both members and others through the cooperative's consolidated businesses, which represents approximately 29 percent of total U.S. milk production.

DFA's Consumer Retail and Fluid Milk and Ice Cream divisions also had continued growth and success in 2016. Kemps introduced a new line of frozen yogurt, Yo2, with a generational target: millennials. Borden Cheese also launched a new campaign, "Love. Always an ingredient," with an updated website and graphics that highlight the goodness that comes in every package, Glade notes.

DFA also is working on new messaging for its Hispanic cheese brand, La Vaquita, Glade says. Product marketing will focus on La Vaquita cheese's ability to bring authentic flavor to everything from dishes prepared in home kitchens to chef-crafted culinary creations.

"A lot of our work in 2016 and 2017 is repositioning many of our brands,"

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# 2017 KEY PLAYERS

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Glade says. "We haven't been telling the farmer-owned story as well as we could or as well as we should."

Glade notes innovation is a key focus as well.

Last fall, the cooperative announced sponsorship of the 2017 Sprint Accelerator, an innovative program that helps accelerate and grow startup businesses. DFA's program will focus on startups in the AgTech area, specifically startups with applications related to any portion of the dairy value chain.

DFA this spring announced a strategic partnership with Vanguard Renewables, a Massachusetts-based renewable energy developer, to help bring anaerobic digestion technology to more farms across the country.

Also this spring at Wal-Mart's Sustainability Milestone Summit in April, DFA joined the retailer and other organizations in announcing its participation in a new platform, Project Gigaton, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from DFA's operations and supply chains one gigaton by 2030.

Meanwhile, DFA's products continued to gain recognition on the contest circuit this past year.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, DFA received best of class honors for its whole milk Mozzarella and a second-place award for its Mild Provolone.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest, DFA's Mozzarella earned first- and second-place awards; its Provolone earned a first-place award; and its salted whipped butter earned a second-place award. Meanwhile, the co-op's milk protein concentrate whey-based sports beverage and milk powders swept their respective classes at the contest.

In the year ahead, Glade says DFA will continue to invest heavily in learning more about consumers', as well as customers', wants and needs, and how those wants and needs may differ based on where and how they live.

The cooperative also will continue to look at the global landscape to expand opportunities for its products in markets where DFA can best meet the needs of customers and consumers, including Mexico, Southeast Asia and the Middle East and North African region, Glade says.

**Key executives:** Daniel R. Culligan, pres.; Allan Kosharek, VP, production; Judd Batterman, VP, administration; Brett Thompson, VP, sales & marketing

**Cheeseplant:** Blue Mounds, Wis. (extended shelf life cheese foods, spreads & sauces, smoked cheeses)

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 100%

**Market segments for cheese:** 50% retail; 50% foodservice

**Percentage of products exported:** 5%  
**Website:** www.dairyfoodusa.com

**A look inside:** Dairyfood USA Inc. continues to allocate significant financial and time resources to maintain its reputation as a leading supplier of high quality extended shelf-life cheeses to a number of different market segments.

"In conjunction with food safety, product development and process improvement is paramount," says Daniel Culligan, president, Dairyfood USA.

To that end, an automated high velocity, blast chill/cooler was installed in 2016, he notes.

"The process results in rapid temperature reduction for improved product consistency and texture, thereby enhancing functionality," Culligan says.

In addition, yet another high-shear fully-automated large volume cooker was added to its current significant stable of existing cooking capabilities.

"The shearing action produces a considerable breakdown of the proteins in the cheese, augmenting the consistency of our many sauces and spreads,"

Culligan says.

Two additional high-speed packaging lines are slated for installation later this year to accommodate Dairyfood USA's expansive and growing product line.

Last summer, Dairyfood USA introduced Queso de Casa White Dipping Cheese, a new brand of Mexican-style queso dips, in Original and Jalapeno varieties. The dips are available nationwide in 8-ounce retail sizes, as well as 16-, 24- and 32-ounce sizes for club stores.

"This is rapidly becoming one of our most popular items," says Brett Thompson, vice president of sales and marketing. "It is undoubtedly one of the highest quality queso dips available on

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Blue Mounds, Wisconsin

**Ownership:** Biomerx GmbH, Linz, Austria, & DRC Investments LLC, Middleton, Wis.



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the market today.”

The product line soon will include a mild yellow Cheddar flavor.

“While the white dipping cheese flavors have been very well-received, certain parts of the country and markets expect their Queso Dip to be yellow,” Thompson says.

The new flavor will appeal to those consumers (of all ages) with a very clean, mild Cheddar cheese flavor, he adds.

In addition to the White Dipping Cheese, the company continues to develop both private label and branded label dips and spreads for some of the country's largest retailers.

Popularity of smoked cheeses continues to grow significantly in the United States, and sales of Dairyfood USA's smoked cheeses have followed suit as the company has realized several opportunities, especially in foodservice and the quick service restaurant (QSR) trade, Culligan says.

As smoked cheese continues to trend

upward, Dairyfood USA is poised to accommodate the additional growth, he notes. Recent smokehouse additions (all smoke houses are fully automated, i.e., time, temperature and humidity controlled) have prepared the company to handle the increased capacity. One of the larger areas of growth in this category is the company's ability to smoke natural cheese. While the company's traditional extended shelf-life Smoked Gouda business remains robust, demand for smoked natural cheese has dramatically increased in the past 12 months.

Culligan notes that over the past four years, Dairyfood USA has seen a 63-percent increase in smoked cheese sales.

“A naturally smoked cheese is one of the easiest ways to give a sandwich, burger or pasta dish a unique twist or flavor,” Thompson says. “As restaurants continue to seek cleaner ingredient decks, we expect to see more inquiries and flavor profiles develop.”

The company already has developed rbST-free and organic formulas.

Dairyfood USA's Naturally Smoked Gouda Spread earned a second-place award in its class at this spring's U.S.

Championship Cheese Contest.

Meanwhile, Dairyfood USA's exports continue to grow as well. Areas such as the Pacific Rim, Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean have been especially active, where products such as its Glacier Ridge Farm spreads, Sonoma Jacks wedges and the new Queso de Casa line have been widely accepted, Culligan says.

The company also is preparing to expand into more foodservice and retail sectors with new products geared toward snacking trends.

“Today, 50 percent of all eating occasions are snacking occasions,” Thompson says.

Due to the fact that 60-90 percent of snacking occasions take place at home, Dairyfood USA is targeting considerable resources in that direction, he adds. A new line of 1-ounce Glacier Ridge Farm spreads has been developed for numerous markets, with new flavors including Basil & Olive Oil, Parmesan Herb and Smoked Cheddar.

Lastly, specialized equipment has been procured for a proprietary process that will be unveiled later this year, enabling Dairyfood USA to substantially broaden its product offerings in a dynamic market, Thompson says.

Food safety continues to be at the forefront for the company, Culligan says, noting Dairyfood USA again ranked in the 98th percentile for its SQF Level 3 certification.

line of UP products); Seattle (HTST fluid milk); Spokane, Wash. (HTST fluid milk, flavored drinks); Bozeman, Mont. (HTST fluid milk, flavored drinks)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 198 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 198 million lbs.

*Fiscal 2016 sales:* \$2.1 billion (April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016)

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 15.4%

*Market segments for cheese:* 1% retail; 14% foodservice; 85% ingredients

*Percentage of products exported:* 16%

*Website:* www.darigold.com

*A look inside:* Darigold Inc. says its dairy farmers are benefiting from a \$97 million expansion at the company's Sunnyside, Washington, plant, completed last spring. The project increased capacity by 70 percent at the plant, which produces skim milk powders and nonfat dry milk in a “high-care” environment for nutritional applications.

Co-op farmers are benefiting from reduced hauling costs, and Darigold's carbon footprint also is reduced since there are about 45 fewer truck hauls per day, the company says.

Last summer, members of Farmer's Cooperative Creamery (FCC) voted to accept an agreement in which FCC members have the opportunity to apply for membership in Northwest Dairy Association (NDA), Darigold's parent company. Thirty-five FCC members joined Darigold last summer.

Darigold moved into new corporate headquarters in May. The new location is just a few miles from the previous headquarters and is located at 5601 6th Avenue, Seattle. Darigold says as the lease was expiring at its previous location, management took the opportunity to look for an upgrade.

Meanwhile, Darigold in December sold its Salt Lake City plant to WW Operating Co., a subsidiary of WhiteWave Foods. WhiteWave Foods this spring combined its activities in North America with Danone to now operate as a strategic business unit named “DanoneWave.”

Last May, Grant Kadavy joined the Darigold team as chief commercial officer. He is responsible for commercial strategy and direction of consumer products, the ingredients division and the supply chain team.

Marketing programs at Darigold this past year included launching a retail snack cheese product in the club store channel, along with expanding both geographies and chains for regular retail grocery items. The company also continues to grow business in the foodservice channel.

On the consumer side of the business, Darigold's focus is to continue to build upon and grow its high quality branded products portfolio, notes Dermot Carey, executive vice president of ingredients, Darigold.

The U.S. Department of Energy recognized Darigold's 13.4-percent cumulative

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**Darigold Inc.**  
Seattle

*Ownership:* Northwest Dairy Association, Seattle

*Key executives:* Stan Ryan, pres. & CEO; Leroy Plagerman, chairman; Allan Huttema, vice chairman; Amy Humphreys, treasurer, sr. VP & CFO; Grant Kadavy, chief commercial officer; John Kenley, VP, legal; Dermot Carey, exec. VP, ingredients & global; Scott Burleson, sr. VP, operations; Steve Matzen, sr. VP, Northwest Dairy Association; Phil Conrod, sr. VP, information technology; Marie-Claude Milot, VP, human resources

*Dairy plants:* Sunnyside, Wash. (bulk Cheddar, dry salt Gouda, Monterey Jack, retail Cheddar, WPC-34, dried whey, NDM, SMP); Boise, Idaho (HTST fluid milk & blended products, UP fluid products, cultured products); Caldwell, Idaho (NDM, MPC, SMP, bulk & consumer packaged butter, cream); Chehalis, Wash. (NDM, SMP, WPC-34, sweet cream buttermilk powder, milk powder blends, WMP, cream); Issaquah, Wash. (consumer packaged & bulk butter, cultured dairy products); Jerome, Idaho (condensed skim milk, NDM, UF milk, MPC, SMP, cream); Lynden, Wash. (NDM, SMP, cream); Portland, Ore. (full

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improvement in energy intensity from a 2009 baseline, in partnership with the department's "Better Buildings, Better Plans Challenge."

Several of Darigold's products also were recognized at last summer's Idaho Milk Processors Association's Dairy Product Contest.

Carey says Darigold is optimistic about continued growth opportunities for U.S. dairy products and is committed to serving its export customers and navigating market volatility.

"The five-year outlook for dairy is promising, with an expected increase in worldwide demand for protein and nutritious products," he says. "Darigold, with our advantageous geographic location and a temperate climate for member farms that ensures a quality year-round supply of milk, is well-positioned to meet market needs."



**Emmi Roth USA Inc.**  
Fitchburg, Wisconsin

*Parent company:* Emmi Group, Switzerland

*Key executives:* Tim Omer, pres. & managing dir.; Marc Druart, sr. dir., R&D; Tony Salathe, sr. VP, sales & marketing; Jodie Wische, VP, specialty sales; Linda Duwve, VP, retail sales; Kerry Olson, VP, foodservice sales; Robert Frie, dir., operations

*Cheese plants:* Monroe, Wis. (Roth Grand Cru, Havarti, Gouda); Platteville, Wis. (Roth Grand Cru, Gouda, Fontina, Butterkäse, Natural Melt)

*Joint venture:* Kindred Creamery, a joint venture with Meister Cheese — Muscoda, Wis. (Kindred Creamery brand Cheddar, Pepper Jack, flavored Jacks)

*Website:* [www.rothcheese.com](http://www.rothcheese.com)

*A look inside:* Emmi Roth USA Inc. launched several new products this past year and utilized its win in the 2016 World Champion Cheese Contest very heavily in its marketing programs.

Emmi Roth's Roth Grand Cru Surchoix, a washed-rind, Alpine-style cheese aged a minimum of nine months, was named the Grand Champion at the 2016 World Championship Cheese Contest, the first time a U.S. cheese has won the world contest since 1988.

Following the win, Roth Grand Cru Surchoix was a large focus in marketing programs this past year, says Tim Omer, president and managing director, Emmi Roth USA. "Our sales of Grand Cru Surchoix increased 20 percent from 2015 to 2016," Omer says. "We've also increased production by 280 percent, which we will see the sales impact of in 2017."

In 2017, Emmi Roth USA is focusing on family-friendly cheeses like Havarti and Gouda. The company is expanding distribution and focusing its marketing efforts in those areas, Omer says.

Emmi Roth USA recently launched a Roth Organics cheese line. The collection of four new cheeses features Roth's flagship Grand Cru as well as Organic Van Gogh Gouda, Organic Havarti and Organic Sharp Cheddar.

Omer says demand for organic products has grown significantly over the past few years.

Emmi Roth this year also is expanding its Kaltbach line with a new imported cheese from Switzerland. Emmi Kaltbach Le Crèmeux joins

Kaltbach Le Gruyère AOP, Kaltbach Emmentaler AOP and Kaltbach Alpine Extra as available Swiss imports through Emmi Roth USA.

Crafted into 9-pound wheels, Emmi Kaltbach Le Crèmeux is a washed-rind cheese that is semi-firm and crafted with pasteurized milk and microbial rennet and aged a minimum of 120 days in the Kaltbach caves near Lucerne, Switzerland. The entire Kaltbach line is available to retailers nationwide.

Meanwhile, last summer, Emmi Roth USA in partnership with Meister Cheese launched a new Kindred Creamery retail brand.

Capitalizing on each of their strengths, Meister Cheese and Emmi

Roth USA launched the brand of classic specialty American cheese varieties using milk from dairy farms committed to Meister Cheese's "Cows First" animal welfare program.

Cows First 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.

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

The cheese for the line is made at Meister's plant in Muscoda,

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Wisconsin. Meister Cheese's cheese-making 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.

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.

Omer notes that with the launch of both Roth Organics and Kindred

Creamery, Emmi Roth USA is focusing on the clean-label products for which consumers are looking.

Following its big World Champion win in 2016, Emmi Roth USA continued to receive additional industry recognition this past year. Roth Grand Cru Surchoix earned a silver medal in the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest. Roth Three Cheese Chile Pepper Gouda earned a gold medal and Roth Sriracha Gouda earned a bronze medal at the contest.

Grand Cru Surchoix also won a silver medal at last summer's American Cheese Society competition as did the company's Pavino, Smoked Fontina and Grand Queso Reserve, while Roasted Garlic Raclette received a gold medal

and GranQueso received a bronze at the competition.

At last summer's Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest, Emmi Roth received a gold medal for Roth Private Reserve. In addition, cheesemaker Marc Druart was named 2017 Master Cheese Maker at the state fair's Blue Ribbon Cheese & Butter Auction last August.

Emmi Roth also took home two gold medals at the 2016 World Cheese Awards last November.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Emmi Roth received gold medals for its whole milk Havarti and Roth Grand Cru Reserve, silver medals for its Roth Buttermilk Blue and Roth's Private Reserve and a bronze medal for Roth Grand Cru Original.



**Finlandia Cheese Inc.**  
Parsippany, New Jersey

*Parent company:* Valio Ltd., Helsinki, Finland

*Key executives:* Emma Aer, CEO; Monique Chiarito, CFO; Joe DeMarco, VP, sales; Thomas Friend, dir., supply chain; Marcie Foster, dir., marketing & brand development; Melissa Shore, dir., product development

*Cheese plants:* Contracts with U.S. producers and imports from parent company

*Website:* www.finlandiacheese.com

*A look inside:* Swiss cheese produced for Finlandia Cheese Inc. by Guggisberg Cheese, Millersburg, Ohio, was the winner of the Swiss-style class at this year's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

"Here at Finlandia, we take great pride in our all-natural recipe and in the high quality ingredients that we use to make our delicious Finlandia Swiss cheese," says Emma Aer, CEO, Finlandia. "It is an honor to have been recognized by the United States Championship Cheese Contest, alongside our valued partner, Guggisberg Cheese, for a premium product that we are truly proud of."

The company will be noting the win on future packaging, Aer says, and is promoting it in press releases and on select in-store materials.

Finlandia does not produce cheese in the United States itself but contracts with partners to produce cheese to Finlandia specifications. The company also imports products from its parent company in Finland.

"We have a small R&D team here (in the United States) that focuses on consumer needs and work with the larger group in Finland," Aer says, noting that Finlandia is able to leverage the capabilities of a large R&D group and more than 4,000 employees in Finland.

While best known for traditional Swiss cheese in the United States, Finlandia's full line of premium cheeses is available in 12 varieties and can be found throughout the United States.

This fall, Finlandia is introducing cheese sticks that bring flavorful table cheese favorites to a convenient snacking format. The new sticks, made with rbST-free milk, come in Gouda, Gouda & Parmesan Blend and Cheddar & Gruyere Blend.

New imported cheeses also have joined the company's lineup in 7-ounce packaged chunks. These imports include Gouda, Gruyere, Swiss and Keisarinna.

Additionally, the company will be introducing two new flavors to its

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Finlandia Creamy Gourmet Cheese line — Zesty Pepper and Smooth Horseradish. The new flavors join the line's existing Classic, Black Garlic, Creamy Dill, Sweet Lemon and Vanilla Bean flavors.

Finlandia also is expanding upon its butter line that it first launched in the United States in 2014.

The line extensions include Finlandia Spreadable Butter with Canola Oil, a product with 55 percent less sodium than other similar products because it is made with patented ValSa, a unique salt derived from naturally occurring minerals found in milk. The product also is available in a reduced-fat version. The products are available in 8- and 15-ounce tubs.

Also coming this fall will be Finlandia Butter Sticks in two 4-ounce stick and four 4-ounce stick easy open/close boxes.

In the coming year, Finlandia plans to continue pursuing growth and excellence, Aer says.

In 2016, Finlandia created an omni-channel consumer-centric marketing campaign with consistent messaging across all consumer touch points which include digital media, public relations, couponing, trade promotion, point of sale, social media, a chef/influencer program, sampling and other events. In 2017, Finlandia will continue to execute this omni-channel strategy supporting the existing products as well as the innovative new launches, she adds.



**First District Association**  
Litchfield, Minnesota

*Key executives:* Clint Fall, pres. & CEO; Allen Rothstein, controller; Doug Anderson, plant mgr.; Glenn Kaping, dir., sales & business development; Dawn Raymond, quality assurance mgr.; Chuck Nelson, traffic mgr.; Dean Grabow, human resources mgr.

*Cheese plant:* Litchfield, Minn. (current & aged Cheddar barrels, WPC, lactose)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 190 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 190 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$553 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$625 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 85%

*Market segments for cheese:* 5% foodservice; 95% ingredients

*Percentage of products exported:* About 5-8%

*Website:* [www.firstdistrict.com](http://www.firstdistrict.com)

*A look inside:* First District Association represents more than 900 dairy farms that produced more than 2.5 billion pounds of milk in 2016.

First District Association produces unique products that may be utilized as ingredients for various products such as cheese sauces and spreads, snack food seasonings and multiple other products, says Clint Fall, president and CEO, First District Association. He notes that the cooperative prides itself on maintaining consistent quality and strict process control. The cooperative also prides itself on its ability to create value-added barrels, he says.

In cheese manufacturing, Fall says First District Association stands apart for its utilization of traditional processing methods in which products must meet consistent and high quality standards, with cheeses graded on a regular basis. In addition, the plant

has held its SQF Level 3 certification since 2010.

The cooperative recently worked on a reduced-salt Cheddar barrel with one of its customers. It also has introduced 500-pound barrels of non-traditional Swiss and Gouda cheeses in the past year.

In its whey and lactose products, First District Association strives toward continually meeting customers' strict purity, color and microanalysis requirements, Fall adds.

In 2017, First District Association plans to expand processing capacity by an estimated 10 percent. By working to find ways to add additional equipment and streamline certain processes, the cooperative aims to add another 500,000

pounds of capacity per day by the end of the year. The cooperative also seeks to add new boilers along with a new protein dryer and warehouse space, Fall says.

The 10-percent benchmark aims to help the cooperative increase modernization and prepare for future growth, allowing for expanded ability to process a higher milk volume. Future expansion phases are being studied, Fall says, noting that the cooperative plans to incrementally grow as quickly as possible.

At the 2016 National Milk Producers Federation Championship Cheese Contest, First District Association placed second in its class for its Jalapeno Pepper Jack and its Rosemary & Garlic

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Cheddar; as well as third in its class for its Monterey Jack.

At the 2016 Minnesota State Fair, First District Association was awarded first, second, third, fourth and fifth places for its Cheddar barrels.

The cooperative's Cheddar barrels also impressed at the 2016 North Central Cheese Industry Association contest, placing first, second and third, as well as at the 2017 Spring Butter and Cheese Contest by Upper Midwest Dairy Industry Association, where the association placed first, second, third and fourth.



**Foremost Farms USA**  
Baraboo, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Michael Doyle, pres. & CEO; Jim Hamm, VP, strategy & business development; Dirk Tachick, sr. VP, supply chain operations; Jeff Kent, VP, cheese; Ralph Briggs, sr. VP, milk, milk solids & risk; John Haake, VP, innovation & product technology; Declan Roche, VP, dairy ingredients; Jim McConeghy, interim CFO; John Robinson, VP & general counsel

*Dairy plants:* Appleton, Wis. (Mozzarella, LMPS Mozzarella, reduced-fat Mozzarella, direct shred, Provolone, Muenster, condensed WPC, dry permeate); Chilton, Wis. (Mozzarella, LMPS Mozzarella, Provolone, Smoked Provolone, String cheese, condensed WPC,

condensed permeate); Clayton, Wis. (Mozzarella, LMPS Mozzarella, Provolone, condensed WPC, condensed permeate); Constantine, Mich. — strategic alliance with Michigan Milk Producers Association (bulk fluid milk); Lancaster, Wis. (milled Cheddar, milled marbled Cheddar, condensed WPC, condensed WPC, condensed permeate, condensed whey); Marshfield, Wis. (milled colored Cheddar, milled white Cheddar, Colby, Farmers cheese, lowfat Cheddar, lowfat Colby, Monterey Jack, condensed whey); Milan, Wis. (Mozzarella, LMPS Mozzarella, reduced-fat Mozzarella, Provolone, condensed WPC, condensed permeate); Plover, Wis. (whole whey powder, edible lactose, reduced-minerals whey, reduced-minerals WPC, WPC, organic whole whey powder); Preston, Minn. (WPC); Reedsburg, Wis. (butter, condensed skim milk, condensed buttermilk, sweet cream); Richland Center, Wis. (Mozzarella, LMPS Mozzarella, whole whey powder, condensed whey permeate, condensed WPC, condensed permeate); Rothschild, Wis. (dry permeate, pharmaceutical lactose, edible lactose); Sparta, Wis. (NDM, condensed skim milk, WPC, cultured milk powder)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 558 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 558 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$1.5 billion

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 60%

*Market segments for cheese:* 33% retail; 33% foodservice; 33% ingredients

*Website:* www.foremostfarms.com

*A look inside:* Foremost Farms USA, along with Glanbia plc, Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) and Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA), earlier this year announced plans to create a standalone joint venture to build and operate a new cheese and whey

production facility in Michigan. Upon completion, the plant is projected to process 8 million pounds of milk per day.

The proposal is for 50 percent of the joint venture to be owned by Foremost Farms, DFA and MMPA, and the other 50 percent to be owned by Glanbia. Foremost Farms, DFA and MMPA would supply all milk required by the plant, while Glanbia will have full responsibility for all commercial, technical and operational aspects of the business. The companies are in advanced discussions, and if the project proceeds as planned, the new facility is expected to be commissioned in the second half of 2019.

In 2016, Foremost Farms introduced an artisan-quality, extended-length, red-rind Muenster to meet the needs of its customers who commercially slice cheese.

Foremost Farms also introduced cheese in a 1.5 inches in diameter by 24 inches long format designed for slicing into medallions. This specialty product is available in Mozzarella and Provolone varieties.

Several of Foremost Farms' cheeses won awards in contests over the past year. At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, the company won first- and second-place awards in the Aged Provolone class and third for its shredded low-moisture, whole-milk Mozzarella.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo contest, Foremost Farms' reduced-fat Provolone and whey products earned first-place awards. Its whey, salted butter and smoked Provolone also earned second-place awards at the contest.

Foremost Farms' Mozzarella, smoked Provolone and reduced-fat Provolone all earned first place in their categories at the 2016 National Milk Producers Federation contest.

At the 2016 Wisconsin State Fair Cheese and Butter Contest, Foremost Farms won first-place awards for its salted butter and reduced-fat Provolone entries.

The company's whole-milk and part-skim Mozzarella entries both earned gold medals in the 2016 Los Angeles International Dairy Competition.

In addition to awards for its cheeses, Foremost Farms in 2016 earned an Honorable Mention, along with Schreiber Foods, in the fifth annual U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards in Chicago for Richland Center Renewable Energy, a water treatment facility owned by the two companies that generates renewable energy from wastewater coming from their dairy plants.



**Gilman Cheese Corp.**  
Gilman, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Tom Hand, CEO & owner; Char Hand, CPA & office mgr.; Sam Olson, plant mgr.

*Cheese plant:* Gilman, Wis. (shelf-stable processed cheese, organic processed cheese, natural & processed smoked cheese)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 14 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 14 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$34 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$35 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 90% retail; 5% foodservice; 5% ingredients

*Percentage of products exported:* 5%

*Website:* www.gilmancheese.com

*A look inside:* Last summer, Gilman Cheese Corp. — which specializes in premium quality, shelf-stable processed cheese for the gift pack, retail and airline industries as well as both natural and processed smoked cheese — completed its fifth addition since 2010.

This latest addition included 5,000 more square feet to create room for two more packaging lines, a large conference room, a visitor waiting room and more bathrooms. Additionally, the company added another cooker which has allowed it to double its cooking capacity to more than 100,000 pounds per day. Late last summer, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker toured the latest addition.

Since 2010, the company has more than doubled its plant size to 49,000 square feet. The additions also have allowed the company to expand its workforce to 120 employees from 50 in 2010.

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Part of the reason for the multiple expansions is that CEO Tom Hand and his wife Char, who is a CPA and the company's office manager, chose to take the projects on a bit piecemeal as finances allowed; as the company grew, they reinvested in the business and did not borrow money to further expand.

The company utilizes two batch cookers that allow it to process up to 1,200 pounds of cheese every few minutes. These relatively small, rapidly produced batches allow the company to be flexible in meeting the varied needs of its customers, Tom Hand says. On a typical day, Gilman Cheese can process cheese in 15-20 different flavors. Bacon Jalapeño (also known as Cherky), Horseradish and Chipotle Onion flavors are three of the more recent flavor introductions that have been popular, Hand says. The company runs eight packaging lines and operates 14 smoke houses.

One of the fastest-growing areas of the company is its organic line of processed cheese. Several years ago, Hand observed that consumers of organic products needed cheese that melted like conventional American cheese on their burgers. Processed cheese has several technical advantages over natural cheese, including a longer shelf life, resistance to separating when cooked, and a uniform look and physical behavior, Hand notes.

"There tends to be bland offerings on the organic side. There's processed cheese, but not flavors. But when consumers ask for it, you create it," Hand says.

Hand enjoys challenges. If a customer is looking for something unique and difficult in the process cheese business, Hand wants to give it a try. The company is focused on producing unique products and convenient package sizes.

"The nature of our business model is that we do a lot of custom projects," Hand says.

In the first contest it ever entered, Gilman Cheese, with product made for Old Croc Cheese/Trugman-Nash, swept the top three spots in the Flavored Pasteurized Process Cheeses class at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. Horseradish Pasteurized Process Cheddar made with Old Croc placed first in the class. Bacon & Jalapeño Pasteurized Process Cheddar made with Old Croc placed second, and Roasted Garlic & Herb Pasteurized Process Cheddar made with Old Croc placed third.

Smoked cheese is another fast-growing segment of Gilman Cheese's business. Also introduced this past year were 6-pound smoked Gouda logs for slicing and 8-ounce smoked Gouda rounds for retail.

In addition, the company offers reduced-fat and fat-free cheeses as

well as kosher and rbST-free products. Retail package sizes range from 0.75-ounce to 1-pound with shapes including triangles, squares, bars, rounds and sticks. Five-pound loaves and 40-pound blocks also are available.

In the coming year, Hand says he hopes to expand the Gilman brand into organic items such as 5-pound loaves and 6-ounce wedges, as well as introduce non-GMO flavored cheese wedges. Additionally, the company plans to expand its shelf stable offerings and its processed smoked Gouda line.

Gilman Cheese also is set apart by its approach to employees, Hand says.

"We take good care of our staff; it's an important part of who we are," he says.

Acknowledging that work is just a part of employees' lives, Hand says he focuses on creating a positive environment that allows employees time with their families and the community. The company runs four 10-hour shifts Monday through Thursday, and a half-day shift on Fridays from Memorial Day to Thanksgiving, ahead of the holiday rush. The plant is closed on nights and weekends.

When people are hired, Gilman Cheese has a system in place to help new employees feel comfortable. Each employee is assigned a personal trainer who has received extensive training in leadership skills to be their partner for the first two to four weeks at the company, providing them someone to answer questions and to be their friend on the job.

Gilman Cheese also invests in employees by offering leadership and communication classes in conjunction with Chippewa Valley Technical College. The leadership classes are held on Fridays at the plant and participation is required.



### Glanbia Nutritionals

Twin Falls, Idaho

*Parent Company:* Glanbia plc, Kilkenny, Ireland

*Key executives:* Wilf Costello, chief commercial officer, cheese; Steve Lovejoy, COO; Alex Von Den Steinen, chief product & innovation officer, global ingredients; George Chappell, VP, cheese & whey operations; Nimah Kelly, sr. VP, strategy, cheese & strategic customers; Barney Krueger, sr. VP, technical services; Daragh Maccabee, sr. VP, procurement & dairy economics

*Cheese plants:* Blackfoot, Idaho (40-lb. block Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Parmesan, organic cheeses); Gooding, Idaho (barrel cheese); Twin Falls, Idaho (40-lb. block Cheddar, Colby, Colby Jack, Pepper Jack, Monterey Jack, reduced-fat Cheddar, reduced-fat Monterey Jack, Muenster, Asadero, Queso Quesadilla, organic Cheddar)

*Cheese and ingredient-related joint venture:* Southwest Cheese Co., Clovis, N.M. — JV cheese operation with the cooperative members of the Greater Southwest Agency (DFA, Select Milk Producers) (40- & 640-lb. block Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Muenster, Asadero, Queso Quesadilla, Colby Jack)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 929 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 928 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$1.5 billion

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$1.6 billion  
*Market segments for cheese:* 40% retail; 40% foodservice; 20% ingredients  
*Percentage of products exported:* 5-10%

*Website:* [www.glanbianutritionals.com/en](http://www.glanbianutritionals.com/en)

*A look inside:* In 2016, Glanbia aligned its cheese, ingredients, premix and customized solutions operations under one business unit, Glanbia Nutritionals, which replaced the previous name, Glanbia Foods Inc. This year, the company will continue to integrate the new organization and go to its customers with a single-facing entity presenting its entire portfolio in a way that encourages them to "just add Glanbia."

The company noted in its annual results that Glanbia Nutritionals delivered good performance in a volatile dairy market environment in 2016, reporting a nearly 5-percent improvement in earnings, 3.2-percent volume growth and 2.8-percent pricing declines. The volume increase was driven by continued growth in Nutritional Solutions, while price declines resulted primarily from weak dairy markets.

Following an announced \$140 million expansion of its joint venture Southwest Cheese Plant in Clovis, New Mexico, Glanbia moved forward on the expansion's groundbreaking this past year. It also recently announced a joint venture partnership agreement for a new cheese and whey facility in Michigan with Foremost Farms, Dairy Farmers of America and Michigan Milk Producers Association. The plant, once operational, is expected to process 8 million pounds of milk per day. If the project proceeds as planned, commissioning of the new facility is expected to take place in the second half of 2019.

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Glanbia Nutritionals in 2016 leveraged its expertise from farm to fork by taking major talking points around cheese and showing its customers its position. The 2016 "Navigating Natural" platform helped educate customers and consumers, Glanbia says. Through Navigating Natural, the company is able to have a dialogue with its customers, explaining some of the less-understood issues in this sector while respecting customers' right for choice.

In 2017, in partnership with its Irish sister company, Glanbia Ingredients Ireland, Glanbia Nutritionals introduced the "Truly Grass Fed" brand to give its customers access to quality grass-fed dairy products. Glanbia says this sourcing opportunity is even more important to its U.S. customers given the fact that the U.S. regulatory system has yet to define grass-fed dairy.

The Truly Grass Fed brand carries a promise with the Truly Grass Fed seal, which signifies that cows are grazed on grasslands for up to 300 days a year, cows receive 95 percent of their nutritional feed from grass, and the products are rbST-free and Non-GMO Project verified.

The company reports that its U.S. cheese innovation center continues to deliver new and exciting opportunities to its customers. Havarti, Gruyere, Hatch Pepper and Organic Parmesan are among the direct additions to its product offerings that have come from recent work in the cheese innovation center. The company will further leverage its cheese innovation center expertise and work with its customers to deliver Freeze Dried Cheese and Herbed Cheeses in 2017.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo contest, Southwest Cheese won second-place awards for its Colby and Habanero Jack.

Glanbia won first-place awards at the 2016 Idaho Milk Processors Association contest for its Mild Cheddar, Aged Cheddar 12-24 months, Colby Jack and Havarti.

At the 2017 U.S. Cheese Championship Contest, Glanbia Nutritionals received best of class for its Gouda/Green Olives & Pimento, second place for its Colby Jack and third-place awards for its Havarti/Garlic and Reduced Fat Cheddar. At the same contest, Southwest Cheese won best of class for its Southwest Asiago, Pepper Jack (mild), Pepper Jack (medium), Ghost Pepper Jack and Habanero Cheddar, second-place awards for its Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack (medium) and Habanero Cheddar, and third place for its Pepper Jack (medium) and Habanero Cheddar.



**Gossner Foods Inc.**  
Logan, Utah

**Key executives:** Dolores Wheeler, pres. & CEO; Greg Rowley, exec. VP; Drew Miller, CFO; Dave Larsen, VP, cheese operations; Clyde Johnson, production mgr., cheese operations; Kelly Luthi, VP, aseptic operations; Jim Jesson, production mgr., UHT plant; Jason Simper, sales mgr., Gossner Foods;

Jason Crafts, dir., quality assurance; Brian Wilson/Clemente Russo, co-mgrs., Idaho Cheese Division

**Cheese plants:** Logan, Utah (Swiss, Baby Swiss, naturally smoked cheese, full service retail & foodservice packaging operation); Heyburn, Idaho (Swiss, Baby Swiss, Muenster)

**Aseptic milk plant:** Logan, Utah (shelf-stable milk products)

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** 59 million lbs.

**Estimated annual cheese marketed:** 71 million lbs.

**Estimated 2016 sales:** \$305 million

**Projected 2017 sales:** \$320 million

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 70%

**Market segments for cheese:** 40% retail; 50% foodservice; 10% ingredients

**Percentage of products exported:** 5%

**Website:** www.gossner.com

**A look inside:** As Gossner Foods celebrates its 50th year in business, it continues to expand and innovate. In October 2016, Gossner completed a major remodel of its cheese plant in Logan, Utah, which had been ongoing since July 2015. The company combined and expanded three coolers and three warehouses at the site into one cooler and one warehouse, raising the height and increasing capacity by 1,500 pallet spaces.

"We 'raised the roof' at Gossner," says Dave Larsen, vice president of cheese operations, who adds that the upgrade also included new equipment installations. "In June 2016, we installed a new cheese vat that increased our Swiss production. As part of that project, we installed a new milk separator. And in order to handle the additional whey, we installed a new whey clarifier and whey separator."

In its packaging department, Gossner also installed some additional automation last fall, as well as an additional slice line and shred equipment earlier this

year. Gossner will be expanding further its Logan, Utah, packaging operations, starting more construction this spring that is slated to finish in the fall.

"It's to keep up with customer demand and also give us the ability to have future capacity, taking care of current and future growth," Larsen says of the expansion and upgrades.

Gossner Foods also is working on upgrades at its aseptic milk plant in Logan, Utah. This spring it started to incorporate new automatic palletizing systems on its single-serve lines, and it also recently installed a new line for Tetra Pak Evero packaging — the first piece of equipment of its kind in North America, and the seventh or eighth in the world, says Kelly Luthi, vice president, aseptic operations.

"It's kind of a combination of the flex packaging like we've always had with an injection-molded plastic top," Luthi says of the Evero packaging, which offers a 6-month shelf life and is environmentally-friendly. "It's really a package that's quite different from anything they've ever have. We feel there's potential with that."

As a private label-focused company, Gossner Foods does not do a lot of out-right marketing, but Jason Simper, sales manager, says the company has put a lot of recent focus on its slice business. Over the next year, Gossner Foods plans to further expand its sliced cheese capacity as well as introduce cubes.

"Demand is up — more people are calling for slices in a variety of sizes," Simper says. "In foodservice, chefs want exact amounts. There's a lot more focus on different package sizes, slice sizes and case sizes. It's what the customer wants."

Last summer, Gossner Foods received first-place awards for its Reduced Fat Swiss and its Swiss cheeses at the 2016 Idaho Milk Processors Association Dairy Product Contest.

In February, Gossner Foods received the honor of "Dairy Supplier of the Year" from its customer Schreiber Foods.

"To be recognized by a leading company like Schreiber, we are very proud of that and think it's a great compliment," says Greg Rowley, executive vice president, Gossner Foods. "That goes back to the people we have that care deeply about providing our customers with a quality product and quality package."

In November 2016, the team at Gossner Foods mourned the loss of longtime board member Allen George Wheeler, husband of Gossner President and CEO Dolores Wheeler. In addition to helping with the company, he and Dolores ran a farm in Lewiston, Utah, and Dolores says Allen always had the interests of farmers at heart and looked at what could be done for them. He regularly traveled with Dolores on business.

"He was on the board of directors and instrumental in the company — so important to help keep it running in the early years," Rowley says. "He was just a great supporter of the company."

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**Grande Cheese Co.**  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** Todd Koss, CEO; Ryan Cropper, COO; Greg Siegenthaler, VP, milk marketing & supply chain management; Paul Graham, group VP, custom ingredients group; Dave Herrmann, VP, information technology; Jeffrey Kondo, VP, cheese technology & corporate quality assurance; Michael Magers, VP, marketing; Dirk Disper, VP, sales; Larry Turner, VP, manufacturing; Maureen Toshner, VP, human resources

**Cheese plants:** Brownsville, Wis. (Mozzarella, Fior di Latte); Rolling Meadows, Fond du Lac, Wis. (dicing & shredding, cut & wrap, aging); Lomira, Wis. (distribution); Friendship, Wis. (value-added custom ingredients); Juda, Wis. (Mozzarella, Ricotta); Rubicon, Wis. (Cheddar, Parmesan, Provolone, Romano); Wyocena, Wis. (Mozzarella, Provolone)

**Market segments for cheese:** Largely foodservice

**Website:** www.grande.com

**A look inside:** Former Grande Cheese Co. President and CEO Wayne Matzke retired from the company in February 2017, and Todd Koss, most recently Grande's chief financial officer, has taken the helm as the company's new CEO. Koss, who has been with Grande for 16 years, says he plans to continue the company's pattern of growth.

"We're really continuing to expand our product line in cheese and custom ingredients," Koss says. "On the cheese side, we have a mixture of new products coming online as well as line extensions, and it's the same on the custom ingredients side."

To help grow its product lines, Grande this year launched a significant expansion of its cheese facility in Juda, Wisconsin, with completion planned for 2018. The company also spent much of the past year completing and moving into a new warehouse and distribution center in Lomira, Wisconsin, as well as its new home office and research center in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Additionally, this past year Grande has focused on pinpointing trends and new recipes to better meet its customers' needs.

"We have a number of programs in place to continue the effectiveness of our sales force, providing better culinary capabilities and to better integrate our products into recipes that can help with our customer base," Koss says. "Another high point of emphasis this past year was focusing on developing better business intelligence capability — better data for analytics and management. We

launched that last year, and it continues as a multiyear effort."

Grande this past year launched some additions to its Asiago line, introducing a quarter-wheel cut product and a pre-shredded Asiago blend for pizza. On the ingredient side, the company launched a new variant in its Primo lineup, a yogurt-flavored functional ingredient. The company continues to work on new products and line extensions that it will introduce over the coming year.

"We continue to see convenience as a trend within the industry. A lot of those in the foodservice area would like to see more convenient pre-sliced, pre-shredded products," Koss says. "There also is increased emphasis on 'all-natural.' That's right in our wheelhouse, because all our products are all-natural."

In 2016, Grande published the second edition of its Social Responsibility report. The report, first published in 2013, summarizes the company's accomplishments and future goals and priorities in its four pillars of social responsibility: business sustainability, associates, environment and community. The 2016 report coincided with Grande's 75th anniversary, and the report notes that while the company has grown and expanded over the decades, its commitment to social responsibility has not changed.

Among the areas highlighted in this year's report were capital reinvestments and food safety and quality; associate health and wellness strategies and diversity and inclusion; water and energy conservation; and community support and involvement.

Grande reported on a number of charities it supports and sponsors, including the YMCA/Boys & Girls Club, which it has supported through the "Corporate Challenge" since its inception. In 2016, Grande claimed the championship title for the Corporate Challenge, a competi-

tive community event that raises money for "Family Strengthening Events" at the YMCA/Boys & Girls Club.

"These things always are going on

— continuing community involvement, continuous corporate development and continuous improvement," Koss says.

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**Great Lakes Cheese Co. Inc.**  
Hiram, Ohio

*Key executives:* Dan Zagzebski, pres. & CEO; Heidi Eller, chairman of

the board; Hans Epprecht, founder; John Epprecht, VP, co-manufacturing; Kurt Epprecht, VP, procurement; El Khattary, VP, sales & marketing; Craig Filkouski, VP, operations; Suresh Babu, VP, supply chain; Mary Jo Toumert, VP, human resources; Mark Anderson, VP, brand building & accounting; Russ Mullins, VP, finance

*Cheese plants:* Adams, N.Y. (aged Cheddar, whey); Cuba, N.Y. (Mozzarella, Provolone, String cheese, shreds & foodservice, whey); Hiram, Ohio (primary distribution hub — chunks, slices, shreds, deli cuts); Manchester, Tenn. (packaging & distribution — retail & foodservice); Fillmore, Utah (packaging & distribution — retail & foodservice); La Crosse, Wis. (process

American-style — retail & foodservice); Plymouth, Wis. (cut & wrap, distribution); Seymour, Wis. (Blue); Wausau, Wis. (deli trays, chunks, vacuum slices, cups, packaging & distribution)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 187 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 1.6 billion lbs.

*Estimated sales:* \$3 billion

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 65% retail; 30% foodservice; 5% ingredients

*Website:* [www.greatlakescheese.com](http://www.greatlakescheese.com)

*A look inside:* Great Lakes Cheese Co. Inc. manufactures and distributes

processed, natural and imported cheeses to retailers and foodservice operations nationally.

The company is under the leadership of CEO Dan Zagzebski who took the helm of the company in May 2015. Zagzebski has been with the company since 2003. Prior to joining Great Lakes Cheese, he co-owned Lemke Cheese and Packaging Co., which was acquired by Great Lakes Cheese in 2003.

In February 2017, Great Lakes Cheese said goodbye to 40-year company veteran Bill Andrews, who was vice president of sales.

Under Andrews' leadership, the company went from one small, local cheese plant to having a national footprint, with nine facilities spanning five states.

In June 2016, Great Lakes Cheese welcomed Andrews' successor, El Khattary. Khattary is the former vice president of sales at Saputo Dairy Foods USA. Prior to his role at Saputo, Khattary served as the director of dairy at Sara Lee Foods.

"Bill has taken this business to the size that it is today with over 40 years of experience and industry knowledge. He has helped me transition very smoothly and has provided counsel as I have worked to get acclimated in my new role," Khattary says. "I very much appreciate all of his support and wish him good luck in his retirement."

The company continues to invest in its facilities and employees. Jim McGrath recently was promoted to plant manager of the company's Wausau, Wisconsin, facility, replacing an 11-year Great Lakes Cheese veteran.

Even with a new CEO and new vice president of sales, Great Lakes Cheese maintains the family values that began with founder Hans Epprecht, a Swiss immigrant who founded the company in 1958.

"At Great Lakes Cheese we're a family business," Zagzebski says. "The Epprechts are committed to continue our growth with the next generation. We look at the business from generation to generation, not on a quarter to quarter basis."

Khattary says he is looking forward to modernizing Great Lakes Cheese's selling system and "creating the best customer engagement model in the industry."

The company is looking forward to helping grow the cheese category for its customers via execution of category management and bringing to market innovative products and solutions that meet consumer and customer needs, he adds.

"Clearly, we are on the cusp of major changes in how consumers shop and dine," he says.

Great Lakes Cheese continues to innovate with flavors including Hatch Pepper Cheddar, Chipotle Cheddar, Habanero/Jalapeno Monterey Jack and Cracked Black Pepper Cheddar.

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Other premier company offerings include Gouda and Havarti. Great Lakes has expanded its Swiss cheese offerings and has grown its portfolio to include Swiss varieties such as Lacey Swiss, Baby Swiss and Ursario, an aged Swiss. The company also has grown its crumble portfolio to include reduced-fat Blue, reduced-fat Feta and Gorgonzola, and goat cheese.

In 2017, Great Lakes Cheese will focus on expanding its flavor offerings to include a line of Hispanic cheeses such as Oaxaca, Quesadilla, Asadero and Chihuahua.

The company also will work to launch innovative snacking options to accompany its existing snack offerings, which include cubes, sticks and airline packs.

"Shifting consumer graphics are having a profound effect on the food industry. The snacking trend continues to grow and snack cheese has moved from a niche item to a mainstream product," says Lisa Schechterman, director of marketing. "Great Lakes Cheese is committed to delivering cheese snacks to the market that focus on portability and convenience."

"It's extremely important that as a leader in the industry we take the responsibility to make sure that we continue to innovate for all customers in their own unique way, and be as nimble as we possibly can," Zagzebski says. "Our growth comes from our customers. We make sure that we're meeting their expectations through quality product, great efficiencies and also making sure that we maintain that innovation that they now expect."

Great Lakes Cheese continues to win many awards; the company says its Aged Cheddar, Mozzarella and Provolone cheeses have now won more than 150 awards in the last 25 years.

"We can attribute our awards to our commitment to quality," says John Epprecht, vice president of co-manufacturing. "We have always been a company that has based its reputation on our quality and you can't just say that; you need to perform it day in and day out."

At this year's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Great Lakes Cheese took home a total of seven awards, including best in class for natural sliced cheese packaging appearance. In addition, the company won second place awards in the Part-Skim Mozzarella and the Smoked Provolone classes. The company's medium Cheddar and its Gorgonzola both placed third in their respective classes at the contest as did the company's mild and aged Provolones.

At last year's New York State Fair, the company received gold medals for its Whole Milk Mozzarella, Smoked Provolone and Aged Cheddar as well as a number of silver medals and awards of excellence.



#### Guggisberg Cheese Inc. Millersburg, Ohio

*Key executives:* Richard Guggisberg, pres.; Diane Mellor, VP; Ray Kohl, pres., sales

*Cheese plants:* Doughty Valley plant, Millersburg, Ohio (Original Baby Swiss wheels & deli-slicing loaves, Amish Butter cheese wheels & deli slicing loaves, Lacerne cheese wheels, Farmers cheese deli slicing loaves); Sugar Creek plant, Sugar Creek, Ohio (200-lb. block premium Swiss, 200-lb. block Baby Swiss, Baby Swiss deli slicing loaves, Swiss Lace deli slicing loaves, 200-lb. Traditional Swiss wheels, cut & wrap, evaporated whey concentrate)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 32 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 33 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$85 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$90 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 90%

*Market segments for cheese:* 80% retail; 15% foodservice; 5% ingredients

*Website:* www.babyswiss.com

*A look inside:* Guggisberg Cheese Inc. continues work on its multiyear expansion at its Sugar Creek, Ohio, facility, which the company hopes will be fully operational by the end of 2017.

The 100,000-square-foot expansion will include new brine and packaging areas as well as space for cheese production. The company expects the expansion to help accommodate increased demand for its products while achieving higher levels of product consistency and efficiency.

In addition, the company sold the Deutsch Käse Haus, Middlebury, Indiana, plant to the Michigan Milk Producers Association last fall.

Guggisberg Cheese has continued its typical marketing program, consisting of signage, promotional materials, store sampling and sampling at various local events, as well as placement in radio, newsprint and magazine publications. The company has focused its advertising on its recent World Championship Cheese Contest and Ohio Grand Champion Cheesemaker wins, according to the company.

Guggisberg topped the Swiss category at the 2016 World Championship Cheese Contest, receiving a score of 99.55 on its Swiss block entry produced at its Sugar Creek, Ohio, facility.

In addition, the Ohio Grand Champion Cheesemaker award was given to Guggisberg Cheese at the Ohio Swiss Festival's cheese competition in September 2016. This was the sixth year in a row for Guggisberg, setting a new record for consecutive wins.

At this year's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Guggisberg received a first-place award for its 200-pound Aged Emmental Block; a second-place award for its Baby Swiss Wheel; and a third-place award for its 200-pound Swiss Block.

Further raking in the awards, Guggisberg Deutsch Käse Haus placed third in the Colby, Monterey Jack class for its Traditional Colby Longhorn at the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest.



#### Hilmar Cheese Co. Inc. Hilmar, California

*Key executives:* David Ahlem, pres. & CEO; Kevin Vogt, CFO; Kyle Jensen, VP & general mgr., cheese sales & distribution; Tony Pallios, VP & general mgr., Hilmar Ingredients; Ron Weltmer, VP, operations & engineering; Jeremy Travis, VP, quality & technical services; Frank Fierro, VP, human resources

*Dairy plants:* Hilmar, Calif. (40-lb.

& 640-lb. block Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Colby, Colby Jack, WPC, WPI, WPH, lactose); Dalhart, Texas (40-lb. & 640-lb. block Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Colby, Colby Jack; WPC, WPI); Turlock, Calif. (milk powder)

*Website:* www.hilmarcheese.com

*A look inside:* Hilmar Cheese Co. in 2016 started construction of a whey permeate facility adjacent to its Dalhart, Texas, plant.

The new facility, completed this spring, processes permeate, a cheese processing co-product, and is a mile from Hilmar's existing cheese manufacturing facility, which also has added new cheese processing capabilities.

Hilmar Cheese Co. and its Hilmar Ingredients division serve customers in more than 50 countries. Production facilities in California and Texas convert milk received from local, independent dairy farms into a variety of nutritious cheeses, whey ingredients and milk powders.

Hilmar Cheese Co. continues to focus on creating sustainable value, increasing productivity and developing people, notes David Ahlem, president and CEO.

Sustainability is a key driver behind Hilmar's operations. The company is

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heavily involved in a Stewardship and Sustainability Framework for U.S. Dairy in partnership with other stakeholders and the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

The framework, first released in 2013, is comprised of indicators and metrics aiming to help dairy farms and companies measure, report and communicate their progress on issues related to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

At Hilmar Cheese, the company recovers almost 100 percent of the water in incoming milk, Ahlem notes. Over the last six years, Hilmar Cheese has implemented new technology to reclaim water and use it more efficiently for facility washing and for irrigation at local farms.

In its 2016 sustainability report, Hilmar Cheese notes that while the total amount of natural gas and electricity used per thousand pounds of product increased slightly over 2015, the company continues to evaluate other renewable energy opportunities for improving efficiency where possible as well as potentially applicable renewable

energy options such as co-generation.

The company also is establishing a centralized database to report on resource recovery in 2017, the report says.

Hilmar Cheese notes that 100 percent of direct-ship dairies participate in the company's Leadership in Environmental and Dairy Stewardship (LEADS) program, which the company continues to review and update.

Ahlem says company sustainability also comes from hiring and retaining the best employees. In 2016, Hilmar Cheese undertook a survey of its employees to better understand what working at the company means to them and where Hilmar can make positive impacts on the work environment.

Hilmar Cheese in 2016 reimbursed its employees more than \$109,000 in higher education fees with plans to continue this program in 2017. The company also added 45 positions with plans to hire additional staff to accommodate the Dalhart plant expansion.

Meanwhile, Hilmar Cheese continues to invest in consumer outreach and education. At its visitor center in Hilmar, California, attendees can learn how cheese is made and explore interactive, hands-on exhibits about cows, dairies and cheesemaking. More

than 15,000 students participated in Hilmar's educational program in 2016.

"We are focused on increasing the number of guests and improving messages about beneficial use of technology in agriculture," Ahlem says.



**Jasper Hill Farm**  
Greensboro, Vermont

*Key executives:* Andy & Mateo Kehler, founders

*Cheese plant:* Jasper Hill Farm, Greensboro, Vt. (Bayley Hazen Blue, Winnimere, Hartwell, Moses Sleeper); Jasper Hill at the Food Venture Center (Alpha Tolman, Harbison, Willoughby)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 460,000 lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 1.46 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$13.2 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$15 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 80% retail; 20% foodservice

*Percentage of products exported:* 5%

*Website:* www.jasperhillfarm.com

*A look inside:* In January, Jasper Hill Farm introduced Hartwell, a 4-ounce mold-ripened button made from pasteurized cow's milk. Hartwell is washed in the Lees — or the spent yeast cells from the fermentation of apple cider — resulting from the production of Eden Ice Cider, made by Eden Specialty Ciders in Newport, Vermont. The cheese is ripened in the one of the company's

cellars that is intended for the maturation of bloomy- or mold-ripened cheeses, says Mateo Kehler, head cheesemaker, Jasper Hill Farm.

Hartwell, having a "mushroomy," savory flavor with a hint of fruit, is available exclusively at Whole Foods Markets nationwide and is made with non-GMO milk, Kehler adds. The cheese is based on the company's Moses Sleeper recipe. Moses Sleeper placed first in the Brie and Camembert class and was among the top 20 overall cheeses at this year's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

The company also is working on a hard cheese that is coated in dry hay, which is in production and is expected to be available in the New York and Northeast retail markets later this summer, with broader availability in early 2018. The hay is a product of Jasper Hill's hay-drying facility, which is an important piece of infrastructure built to support the company's raw milk cheese production, Kehler says. The hay-drying facility is located between the company's two farms — Jasper Hill Farm and Andersonville Farm — that are about eight miles apart. The company autoclaves the hay before applying it to the rind of the cheese to sterilize and caramelize the sugars in the grass. The cheese, Calderwood, is named after Jasper Hill's late cropping manager, Randi Calderwood.

In 2016, the company transitioned both of its farms to non-GMO feed and forages, and it received verification from the non-GMO Project for most of the products in its line.

"We will be focusing on marketing non-GMO as well as educating our customers about the value for flavor proposition associated with raw milk cheese," Kehler says. "It is well documented that there is a linear

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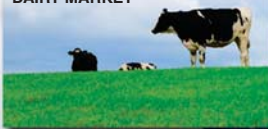
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correlation between microbial diversity and complexity of flavor ... We believe that consumers want interesting cheese and are willing to pay for it."

The company also has brought in several awards in the last year. In addition to Moses Sleeper's win at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Jasper Hill's Harbison placed first in its class, as did its Willoughby. In addition, the company placed second in its class for Greensward — a cheese made in partnership with Murray's Cheese — and third in its class for Oma, a washed-rind, tomme-style cheese made from unpasteurized, organic milk. Oma is produced by von Trapp Farmstead, Waitsfield, Vermont, and matured at the Cellars at Jasper Hill.

Jasper Hill's Harbison also placed within the top 66 at the 2016 World Cheese Awards, winning a "Super Gold" award in addition to an award for "Best American Cheese."

At the 2016 American Cheese Society contest, Jasper Hill and Murray's Cheese's Greensward tied for third place Best of Show and placed first in its class. Jasper Hill also tied for first in its class for its Harbison and Moses Sleeper. Cabot Clothbound Cheddar made by Cabot Creamery for Jasper Hill placed third in its class, and Jasper Hill's Winnimere won first in its class.



**Klondike Cheese Co.**  
Monroe, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** Ron Buholzer, pres.; Steve Buholzer, VP; Dave Buholzer, secretary/treasurer; Adam Buholzer, VP, production; Luke Buholzer, VP, sales; Matt Eardley, VP, engineering; Teena Buholzer, dir., marketing

**Dairy plant:** Monroe, Wis. (Brick, traditional & flavored Feta, Greek yogurt, Havarti, Muenster, yogurt-based dips, reduced-fat sour cream, spreads)

**Estimated annual production:** 34 million lbs. cheese; 8 million lbs. Greek yogurt

**Estimated 2016 sales:** \$80 million cheese; \$8.5 million Greek yogurt

**Market segments for cheese:** 20% retail; 75% foodservice; 5% ingredients

**Website:** www.klondikecheese.com

**A look inside:** At the end of 2016, Klondike Cheese Co. started breaking ground on an addition for cheese production as its current space is running at capacity, says Luke Buholzer, vice president of sales, Klondike. The addition will allow the company to expand its Muenster, Brick and Havarti production and is expected to be up and running by the second quarter of 2018.

In addition, Klondike Cheese

started supplying its Odyssey Greek yogurt products to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the past year.

"We kind of got our foot in the door with the athletic program, with the health and performance benefits that Greek yogurt provides," Buholzer says, adding that the yogurts later started to catch on within other university departments.

The company's Odyssey Greek yogurt appears in Badger Market convenience stores on the university's campus, and it also is provided to the university's athletic department. There also is distribution of the Odyssey Greek yogurt and Feta in the commissary department at the university, according to the company.

UW-Madison also asked the company to add two popular Greek yogurt flavors to its existing line, Buholzer says. The company's new varieties, under its Odyssey brand, include Pomegranate Acai- and Mango-flavored Greek yogurts.

The Odyssey Greek yogurt line is mainly in the Midwest as a retail item, although the company continually is working to grow distribution of the products, according to the company.

Klondike Cheese also is introducing its new Odyssey Sweet Heat Crumbled Feta Cheese, with distribution expanding as the company's channels grow.

In addition, the company plans to launch an Odyssey, 4-ounce crumbled

Feta in traditional and flavored varieties, as well as redesign its Greek-style Reduced Fat Sour Cream packaging. Both projects are expected to be complete by summer this year.

The sour cream's packaging redesign aims to more closely resemble the company's Greek yogurt line, giving it a fresh, clean look, Buholzer says.

The company has won many awards in the past year as well. At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Klondike won first-place awards for its Odyssey Feta, Odyssey Mediterranean Feta, Brick, Odyssey Fat Free Feta in Brine and Odyssey Greek Yogurt Vanilla; seconds for its Dill Havarti, Brick, Odyssey Greek Yogurt

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

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#### 2017 United States Championship Cheese Contest

- 1st Place: Feta (Odyssey Feta)
- 1st Place: Flavored Feta (Odyssey Mediterranean)
- 1st Place: Brick, Muenster (Brick)
- 1st Place: Lowfat Cheeses
- (Odyssey Fat Free Feta in Brine)
- 1st Place: High Protein - Cow's Milk Yogurt, Flavored (Odyssey Greek Yogurt Vanilla)

#### 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

#### 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)



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10-percent and Odyssey Greek Yogurt Pomegranate Acai; and thirds for its Odyssey Peppercorn Feta, Brick and Odyssey Greek Yogurt Raspberry.

At the 2016 American Cheese Society contest, Klondike Cheese received first-place awards for its Odyssey Reduced Fat Feta, Odyssey Tomato & Basil Feta, Odyssey Greek Yogurt French Onion Dip and Brick; seconds for its Odyssey Feta, Odyssey Peppercorn Feta and Muenster; and thirds for its Odyssey Mediterranean Feta, Odyssey Blueberry Greek Yogurt and Odyssey Greek Yogurt.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo contest, Klondike placed second in its class for its Odyssey Greek Yogurt.

Klondike Cheese placed first in several classes at the Wisconsin State Fair, with winning cheeses including Brick, Feta in Brine, Mediterranean Feta, Dill Havarti and Havarti.

## Kraft Heinz

**Kraft Heinz Co.**  
Pittsburgh and Chicago

**Key executives:** Bernardo Hees, CEO; Howard Friedman, head of U.S. refrigerated

**Cheese plants:** Tulare, Calif.; Champaign, Ill.; Albany, Minn.; New Ulm, Minn.; Springfield, Mo.; Campbell, N.Y.; Lowville, N.Y.; Walton, N.Y.; Beaver Dam, Wis.; Wausau, Wis.; Ingleside, Ontario; Mount Royal, Québec

**Cheese brands:** Athenos Feta, Cracker Barrel Cheese, Kraft Natural Cheese, Kraft Singles, Philadelphia, Velveeta

**2016 sales:** \$26.487 billion (total company net sales)

**Website:** www.kraftheinzcompany.com

**A look inside:** The Kraft Heinz Co., in its first full year as a combined company after the 2015 merger of Kraft Foods Group and Heinz, reported 2016 annual net sales of \$26.49 billion and gross profit of \$9.59 billion. Net income totaled \$3.64 billion.

The company expects its multiyear integration program to deliver \$1.7 billion in cumulative, pre-tax savings by the end of 2017, up from previous estimates.

Kraft Heinz continues to look for a buyer for its cheese factory in Campbell, New York, and says it plans to continue to operate the facility, which employs 370 people, through the second quarter of 2017.

In February, Kraft Heinz issued a bid to acquire Netherlands-based food and consumer goods giant Unilever, but the company withdrew its proposal after it became clear that Unilever would not accept it.

The company notes that its U.S. volume/mix gains have been boosted by innovation across its macaroni and cheese portfolio. Among its newest products in this area is Cracker Barrel Oven Baked Macaroni & Cheese, introduced in March 2017. The homemade-style product is available in several flavor varieties, including Sharp Cheddar, Sharp White Cheddar and Cheddar Havarti.

Kraft Heinz also has introduced new products in its Velveeta and Philadelphia cheese lines this past year. Last summer, the company debuted new Velveeta Mini Blocks, 4-ounce individually-wrapped blocks of Velveeta to make it easy to incorporate Velveeta into everyday meals and side dishes while unused blocks stay wrapped and sealed until ready to use.

Velveeta Mini Blocks come in cartons of five and retail for \$5.79 per carton.

To help introduce Mini Blocks, Velveeta enlisted the help of “Mini Chef” Addison Osta Smith from the TV show Master Chef Junior, who served three signature Velveeta Mini Block dishes to diners in a Manhattan restaurant: Cheesy Bacon Risotto, Cheesy Pulled Pork Taquitos and Cheesy Potato Waffles.

“It is common knowledge that Velveeta makes an amazing dip and mac & cheese, but what a lot of people don’t realize is that it’s also the cheesy answer to hundreds of dinner solutions,” says Jamee Pearlstein, brand manager, Velveeta. “Addison is the perfect mini chef to help us launch these pre-portioned mini blocks, because they help chefs of all ages make a great-tasting meal.”

Earlier this year, Kraft Heinz introduced two new Velveeta products in the frozen snacks aisle: Velveeta Stuffed Grilled Cheese and Velveeta Cheesy Bites.

The company notes that with up to 80 percent of Velveeta consumers buying frozen snacks and meals, they now have a convenient frozen option with Velveeta Stuffed Grilled Cheese, which is microwavable in one minute. Also, the company says entertaining enthusiasts who serve Velveeta dips can enjoy the ease of dips-in-a-bite with Velveeta Cheesy Bites, which come in both Original and Salsa con Queso flavors.

Velveeta Stuffed Grilled Cheese comes in boxes of two or six sandwiches, while the two flavors of Velveeta Cheesy Bites come in 6- or 18-ounce boxes.

Kraft Heinz also has introduced innovative new items this past year in its Philadelphia Cream Cheese line. In 2016, Philadelphia Cream Cheese rolled

out two new flavors: Olive and Peach. Philadelphia Olive Cream Cheese Spread features real Spanish olives and red pepper, and the brand suggests spreading it on a pita and sprinkling with Feta for a savory snack. Philadelphia Peach Cream Cheese Spread features real peaches and pairs well with banana and cinnamon for a sweet snack.

Accompanying the new flavor rollout, Philadelphia launched a #Philly-Flavors contest where it encouraged fans to share a photo of their most creative snack ideas featuring the spreads using the hashtags #Philly-Flavors and #contest on Twitter and Instagram. After fan voting, three winners received an all-expense paid trip to New York City to compete in a snacking showdown judged by celebrity Philadelphia spokespersons Haylie Duff and Brandi Milloy, who selected the grand prize winner and recipient of a \$5,000 check.

In March, Philadelphia Cream Cheese released two new products, Cheesecake Cups and Bagel Chips & Cream Cheese Dips.

Philadelphia Cheesecake Cups are a sweet treat in a pre-portioned cup without artificial flavors or dyes. Found in the ready-to-eat desserts aisle, flavors include Cheesecake with Strawberries, Cheesecake with Milk Chocolate Sauce, Cheesecake with Cherries and Cheesecake with Salted Caramel Sauce.

Philadelphia Bagel Chips & Cream Cheese Dips are sold in portable snack cups for convenient snacking and available in four sweet and savory flavors, including Strawberry Cream Cheese Dip & Multigrain Bagel Chips, Garden Vegetable Cream Cheese Dip & Multigrain Bagel Chips, Chive and Onion Cream Cheese Dip & Multigrain Bagel Chips, and Brown Sugar & Cinnamon Cream Cheese Dip & Multigrain Bagel Chips.

Kraft Heinz’s Cracker Barrel Cheddar won second- and third-place awards at the 2016 American Cheese Society contest.

Kraft Macaroni & Cheese partnered with Dean Foods’ DairyPure brand milk for a “Pure Love” co-branded ad campaign in April and May 2017. The campaign included in-store POS materials, special product labels and tags, IRCs and digital marketing and social media content support.

In March, Kraft Heinz announced an expanded commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) through sustainability targets that protect the planet and benefit people and society at large.

The new CSR goals support the company’s vision, “To Be the Best Food Company, Growing a Better World,” and initially focus on three areas in which Kraft Heinz believes it can make the greatest impact: global hunger and malnutrition, supply chain sustainability and the environment.

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**LACLARE  
FAMILY CREAMERY™**

**LaClare Family Creamery**  
Malone, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** Clara Hedrich, owner; Larry Hedrich, general mgr.; Greg Hedrich, plant mgr.; Katie (Hedrich) Fuhrmann, cheesemaker & marketing mgr.; Jessica (Hedrich) Mayer, retail & café mgr.; Anna (Hedrich) Zastrow, farm operations mgr.

**Dairy plant:** Malone (Pipe), Wis. (Evalon, Martone, Go-Co, Chandoka, Cave Aged Chandoka, Chevre, Raw Goat Cheddar, Goat Cheddar, Fondy Jack, Fondy Jack with Tomato Basil, Fondy Pepper Jack, Goat Mozzarella, Goat Feta, goat curds, goat milk yogurt in blueberry, strawberry, vanilla and original, fluid goat milk in whole half gallons and quarts, lowfat quarts)

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 80%

**Market segments for cheese:** 60% retail; 35% foodservice; 5% ingredients

**Website:** [www.laclarefarms.com](http://www.laclarefarms.com)

**A look inside:** With their farm, shop, cafe and creamery in Malone, Wisconsin, Larry Hedrich, general manager, LaClare Family Creamery, and his family have worked to keep pace with the nation's growing demand for goat's milk cheese.

LaClare Family Creamery uses milk from its own goats, another local farm and from the Quality Dairy Goat Producers Cooperative of Wisconsin. In the past two years, the Hedrich family has increased the number of farms that ship to the plant by 25 percent and the number of animals they are getting milk from by 70 percent, helping LaClare Family Creamery secure an adequate and growing supply of goat's milk.

"It used to be the exception to see goat cheese in the supermarket. Now I see many, many retail outlets carrying at least some goat cheese — not only Chevre, but also some hard goat cheese such as Cheddar or Jacks. I think the public has begun to appreciate the quality of the goat cheese being made now," says Larry Hedrich. "The flavor of goat milk products today is substantially better, from most plants, than it was years ago.

"Our cheese sales have escalated across the board. That's what we're looking for," he adds. "We don't want to have all our eggs in one basket. We like having an array of different cheeses. A lot of people are looking for a Pepper Jack-type cheese and do not realize it's available in our goat milk. You can do any kind of cheese — it's up to the imagination of the cheesemaker and getting it out to the public."

After adding to the barn and doubling the number of milking goats on its own farm last year, LaClare Family Creamery is in another construction phase. This year, the company is adding additional milk silos, bottling equipment and another cheese vat.

This growth allowed LaClare Family Creamery to launch goat's milk yogurt this past summer. The yogurt is available in 5.3-ounce single-serve containers in plain, vanilla, blueberry and strawberry flavors. It also is available in 24-ounce containers in the plain and vanilla flavors, all of which are available throughout Wisconsin and in the greater Chicago and Minneapolis areas. Currently, the company is working to make the products available

nationwide, Hedrich says.

With the growth, the company also will begin bottling its fresh goat milk in house, part of the company's intent since it began years ago. Hedrich says he expects bottling operations to begin in summer. Currently, the company outsources milk bottling to another company until it is ready to bottle in-house.

"We're continuing to move forward with the plans that were part of the original plan," Hedrich says.

With more goat's milk available, LaClare Family Creamery has successfully made its Martone mixed-milk cheese available nationwide. The cow and goat milk surface-ripened cheese was first produced in limited availability

in 2014. It is now always available in both consumer packs with six to a case and packaged in an Amish wooden crate, as well as in chef six packs without the wooden packaging.

Attributing its success in part to its committed farms, the company says it now can produce bottled milk, yogurt or cheese in volumes to suit an individual buyer on its online portal all the way to large grocery chains. In January 2017, LaClare Family Creamery added goat Mozzarella and goat Feta to its lineup. The Mozzarella has become a hit for shredding on goat cheese pizza, while the Feta has been popular on fresh salads and crumbled on pizza.

The company also is expanding its

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cave-aged Chandoka-aging program onsite. Chandoka is made from part cow's milk and part goat's milk and has a mild, fruity taste with "rich cheddary" notes, the company says.

To manage the new aging addition at LaClare, Hedrich announced that the family-operated farm has been able to hire renowned affineur David Rogers.

Hedrich regards Rogers as "part of the family." Rogers began working with the Hedrichs more than five years ago through Standard Market in Westmont, Illinois.

LaClare Family Creamery placed first, second and third in its class at the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest for its Goat Milk Yogurt — Vanilla, Goat Milk Yogurt — Original and Goat Milk Yogurt — Blueberry, respectively. It also received second in its class for its Goat Milk Feta and third in its class for Grevalon, a wash-rind aged goat milk cheese.

Hedrich adds that a big part of what LaClare Family Creamery does at its cheese making facility and farm is offer visitors an opportunity to learn about the company through tours and sampling its cheeses. The company offers a cafe and retail outlet that is open seven days a week.



**Land O'Lakes Inc.**  
Arden Hills, Minnesota

*Key executives:* Christopher Policinski, pres. & CEO; Beth Ford, group exec. VP & COO; Matt Carstens, sr. VP & chief human resources officer; Peter Janzen,

sr. VP, general counsel & chief accounting officer; Jerry Kaminski, exec. VP & COO, international; Bill Pieper, sr. VP & CFO; Tim Scott, sr. VP & chief marketing officer; Mike Vande Logt, exec. VP & COO, WinField United; Barry Wolfish, sr. VP, mergers, acquisitions & ventures

*Cheeseplants:* Locations throughout the United States.

*2016 net sales:* \$13.2 billion

*2016 dairy foods net sales:* \$3.8 billion

*Website:* www.landolakesinc.com

*A look inside:* Land O'Lakes Inc. announced in late March that it acquired Vermont Creamery, which produces award-winning fresh and aged goat cheeses, cultured butter and fresh dairy at its creamery in Websterville, Vermont. Vermont Creamery's leadership team and employees will remain with the business, and founders and former co-owners Bob Reese and Allison Hooper will serve as trusted advisors and brand ambassadors for the business.

"Vermont Creamery's heritage mirrors our own here at Land O'Lakes — a company founded by people who care about bringing the highest quality products from farm to fork," says Beth Ford, group executive vice president and chief operating officer, Land O'Lakes. "We are excited about the culture of product innovation they have built in addition to the category itself and the opportunities for even more expansion."

Coming off a record year in 2015, Land O'Lakes announced in February that it also achieved record performance in 2016, with growth in each of its core businesses despite challenging market conditions.

The company continues to grow its Dairy Foods segment, which in 2016 achieved record branded butter volume, record foodservice volume and

strong earnings performance despite the impact of low commodity markets and record milk production in the East.

"We are pleased with another record year, particularly under current market conditions, and appreciate the dedication of our workforce and the support of our farmer owners," says Chris Policinski, president and CEO, Land O'Lakes. "Our strategy is based on deeply understanding what our consumers, customers and farmers need to be successful and developing innovative, value-added products — and increasingly services — to meet those needs."

This past year, Land O'Lakes worked to complete upgrades to its cream processing facility in Hillsboro, Wisconsin, which it acquired in early 2016.

In November 2016, Land O'Lakes hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction on an expansion of its headquarters in Arden Hills, Minnesota. The new building will bring together headquarters employees, who currently work in separate locations, to a combined campus in Arden Hills. The new 155,000-square-foot facility will include on-site childcare and a fitness facility and is slated for completion in early 2018.

"As Land O'Lakes continues its journey of growth, we're investing in the workspace to support innovation and a high-performance, team environment," Policinski says. "We believe this investment will enable the next chapter of growth for our organization in one of the greatest growth industries of our time, food and agriculture."

In fall 2016, Land O'Lakes introduced new Pumpkin Pie Spice Butter Spread — a limited batch blend of the fall favor of pumpkin pie spice and creamy butter. It was available at select retailers, including Kroger, Harris Tee-

ter, Safeway and others.

Several Land O'Lakes products won accolades in contests over the past year. The cooperative won first place in the Aged Cheddar category at the Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest held in June 2016, and it won first place in the Sharp Cheddar and Extra Sharp Cheddar categories at the 2016 National Milk Producers Federation Championship Cheese Contest in November.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest in August, Land O'Lakes received first- and third-place awards in the Sharp Cheddar category, second in Aged Cheddar, first in Sour Cream Based Dips-Onion and second in Open Sour Cream Based Dips.

At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Land O'Lakes won second in the Medium Cheddar, Aged Cheddar 1-2 year, Aged Cheddar 2 years or longer and Pasteurized Process Cheese Slices categories, and third in Aged Cheddar 2 years or longer category.

Land O'Lakes anticipates continued success and growth over the coming year across its dairy food categories, including its branded butter and cheese. Its current advertising campaign will remain as it continues to strengthen its brand with consumers.

Last summer, Land O'Lakes announced the formal organization of a new business unit, SUSTAIN, which will focus on aligning environmental sustainability efforts across the full Land O'Lakes Inc. enterprise. SUSTAIN will focus on helping to ensure sustainable crop production, enhancing sustainability within the Dairy Foods and Feed businesses, and partnering with other entities, including government, to improve efficiency and collaboration on conservation and sustainability programs.

Land O'Lakes also last summer announced its partnership with Techstars to sponsor the Startup Next Food & Tech pre-accelerator program. The pre-accelerator program provides hands-on mentorship and education from Land O'Lakes and leaders across the Twin Cities' startup community.

Land O'Lakes has worked to give back to the community through food donations over the past year as well. In fall 2016, it launched "Delete the Feed," a new program that invited people to join in the mission to end food insecurity. From Sept. 6-Oct. 7, 2016, people on social media were asked to delete a food picture, and, in return, Land O'Lakes donated more than 300,000 meals through Feeding America.

The Land O'Lakes Foodservice team also invited its customers to help combat childhood hunger with a partnership with No Kid Hungry, where independent restaurant operators could opt in to donate rewards points from Land O'Lakes' Performance Extras loyalty program from September through December

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2016. Land O'Lakes increased the value of those points to \$1 per qualifying case of Land O'Lakes Foodservice products, donating up to \$100,000 for healthy meals for children.



**Leprino Foods Co.**  
Denver

*Key executives:* James Leprino, chairman; Mike Durkin, pres.; Lance FitzSimmons, sr. VP & CFO; Kevin Burke, sr. VP, global business development; Tom Hegarty, sr. VP, production operations; Terry Anderson, sr. VP, technical services; Mike Reidy, sr. VP, corporate affairs; Jason Eckert, sr. VP, global quality, R&D; Barbara Kallay, sr. VP, human resources

*Cheese plants:* Lemoore, Calif. (2) (Mozzarella, WPC-34, WPC-80 [regular & instantized], lactose); Tracy, Calif. (Mozzarella, WPC-34, lactose); Fort Morgan, Colo. (Mozzarella, String, WPC-80, lactose); Greeley, Colo. (Mozzarella, WPC-80, WPI, lactose, NDM); Allendale, Mich. (Mozzarella, sweet whey); Remus, Mich. (String cheese); Roswell, N.M. (Mozzarella, WPC-34, lactose); Waverly, N.Y. (Mozzarella, sweet whey); Llangefni, Wales (JV with Glanbia plc — Mozzarella, condensed whey); Magheralin, Northern Ireland (JV with Glanbia plc — Mozzarella, WPC, permeate)

*Website:* www.leprinofoods.com

*A look inside:* Leprino Foods in 2016 began construction of the third and final phase of its cheese and dairy ingredient plant in Greeley, Colorado. An ongoing project since 2008, the plant will be complete toward the end of 2017 with an additional 120,000 square feet and 150 new employees as part of this third phase, according to Mike Reidy, senior vice president, corporate affairs, Leprino Foods.

"It includes additional cheese and whey manufacturing capability," Reidy says of the third construction phase. "In the first phase of the plant, we were focused on processing 1.5 million pounds of milk a day into nonfat dry milk. The second phase focus was turning 3.3 million pounds of milk into cheese and whey. This third phase will be adding another 3.3 million pounds of capacity to process milk into cheese and whey, doubling the amount of cheese and whey capacity."

While the Greeley plant is by far the biggest project this year, Reidy adds that Leprino always has ongoing

projects to help maintain and improve the company's other eight plants in the United States.

As the company works on building capacity, it also has launched new marketing initiatives domestically with its frozen shredded and block cheese products, particularly its premium block cheese. Reidy says these products typically are oriented toward the U.S. pizzeria market.

"It's unique ingredients, and in particular, unique flavor profiles," he says of the premium cheeses. "The domestic pizzeria market remains very strong. Americans continue to have a great fondness for pizza, and we continue to focus on our core values of quality, service, competitive price and ethics,

making sure we can meet all our customers' needs. I think our over-arching core values really drive how we work with our customer base to offer what our customers need, and we want to be incredibly responsive in meeting their needs."

Leprino also has continued to expand efforts to drive export sales of its cheese and nutrition products, which now are sold in more than 40 countries, Reidy says.

"U.S. dairy in general continues to have a very heavy focus on the export market," he says. "We see ourselves as significant players in exporting cheese and nutritional products from the U.S."

In addition to focusing on global trade, Leprino continues to put a strong focus on its global responsibility

programs. In 2016, Leprino released its second global responsibility report, "True to Our Core," a biennial overview of the company's performance toward achieving its economic, social and environmental objectives. The report highlights progress the company has made in the areas of product responsibility, supply chain responsibility, environmental responsibility and its people and communities. The company also in 2016 created a new Leprino Foods Company Foundation, designed to support and engage in projects within the communities where its employees live and work.

The company continues to receive a variety of outstanding supplier of the year awards from its customers.

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Additionally, Leprino last year received the Colorado Environmental Leadership Program 2015-2016 Silver Partner Award, and it was named one of "America's Safest Companies" with an award from *EHS Today* magazine.

"In both the cases of safety recognition and environmental recognition, there is a continuing and intensifying awareness of the opportunities for continuous improvement in both areas, and a recognition that it is critically important that we not only achieve compliance with our core values but also maintain compliance," Reidy says.



### Masters Gallery Foods Inc. Plymouth, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Jeff Gentine, pres., CEO & co-owner; Jeff Giffin, exec. chairman; Jodi Schoerner, CFO; Scott Brown, VP, information technology; Tammy Flora, VP, human resources; Mark

Grasse, VP, manufacturing operations; Jim Jirschele, VP, foodservice; Dennis Kasuboski, VP, industrial sales; Dan Mac Phee, VP, sales; Andy Pfister, VP, procurement/risk management; Sandy Toney, VP, corporate quality & product development; Bob Wilson, VP, business development; Tom Cain, dir., industrial sales/inventory planning; Brad Wackett, dir., ingredient sales; Vance Watson, dir., business development; Jacob Sonntag, food safety & compliance systems dir.; Libby Rentmeester, dir., product development; Tim Lenz, dir., technical services; Alissa Lodahl, retail sales dir.

*Cheese plants:* Plymouth, Wis. (offering complete programs for: retail gusset or pillow pack shreds, natural slices, chunks, snack sticks; foodservice 5-lb.

to 15-lb. shreds, cubes, dice, custom blends, restricted melt application; industrial bulk 20-lb. to 640-lb. American styles, hard & soft Italian styles, aging programs, raw material ingredients for food ingredient applications)

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 500 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* Nearly \$1 billion

*Projected 2017 sales:* Nearly \$1 billion

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 30% retail; 10% foodservice; 40% ingredients

*Percentage of products exported:* 2%

*Website:* www.mastersgalleryfoods.com

*A look inside:* This year ushered in a senior management change at Masters Gallery Foods. As of Jan. 1, the company completed the planned transition of Jeff Giffin to executive chairman and Jeff Gentine to president and CEO. Giffin will remain active in the business on a part-time basis, continuing to provide leadership and guidance to Gentine and the executive team at Masters Gallery. Gentine, the son of company founder Leonard "Butch" Gentine Jr., has been with the company for 20 years and has spent the last 10 years involved in all management aspects of the business.

"The 10 years since Jeff Giffin assumed the presidency of Masters have been the most successful in the history of the company. I can't thank him enough for his leadership and contributions to our success. He certainly set the bar very high," Gentine says, adding that Giffin's success included two major plant expansions with the employee count increasing from 150 to more than 600 associates.

Continuing its growth trend, in December Masters Gallery announced plans to build a new packaging and distribution facility in Oostburg, Wisconsin. The \$35 million facility, which is located near the company's headquarters and original plant in Plymouth, Wisconsin, is expected to open in spring 2018 and will allow sustained growth of the company's private brand retail and foodservice cheese offerings.

"We explored building out of state, but after a thorough analysis we determined that expanding in our backyard made the most sense. Maintaining our company culture is paramount, and the workforce in Wisconsin, particularly in Sheboygan County, is second to none, especially when it comes to the dairy business. We talked to different communities, and Oostburg had the best combination of what we were looking for: a desirable location with enough space for expansion," Gentine says.

"Over three expansions our Plymouth site has become a mature location with good product flow, but it's time for a green field site to allow us the linear length we need for the latest production technology and automation," Gentine adds.

The new site includes a 40-acre parcel of land, where Masters Gallery will initially build 150,000 square feet with two more phases that could encompass 350,000-360,000 square feet in total, giving

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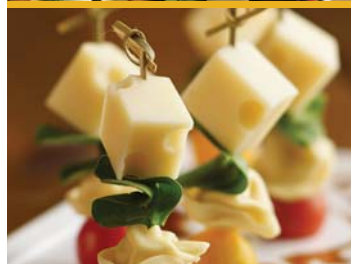
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the company the capacity to more than double its existing production. Capabilities at the new facility will mirror that of its Plymouth site. Phase 1 will encompass new production lines for foodservice and retail shreds, slices and chunk.

Even with the new plant, Masters Gallery will continue to invest in capital improvement projects for its Plymouth facility, including another robotic palletizing system for three more lines to help relieve congestion and improve efficiency.

"Down the road, we plan to add new snack capacity through increased automation, some of which will be our own design," Gentine says.

Masters Gallery continues to see strong growth in its aged Cheddar, hard Italian, pepper and flavored cheeses, Gentine says. One key to the company's success, he says, is its willingness to develop new blends and products to help customers stay on-trend with their private-label programs.

"Specifically, we've had some success lately with our shaved Parmesan/Romano/Asiago blend in stand-up gusseted pouches," he says, adding that Masters Gallery had a strong showing with other blends as well at the recent 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

The company's Gourmet Cheddar Blend won best of class at the contest, while its Cheddar, Gruyere & Asiago Blend won second in the Open Class Shredded Cheese Blends category. Its aged Cheddar entry featuring Land O'Lakes Kiel also won second in the Cheddar, Aged Two Years or Longer class. At the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest, Masters Gallery also won first for its Aged Cheddar, second for its Sharp Cheddar and third place for its Cheddar.

"We tend to let our vendors shine in these contests and not overshadow what they're doing," Gentine says of entering contests. "But since we specialize in aged Cheddar, we like to enter that category in conjunction with our vendors and have done well. It allows us to showcase our aging and grading methods for long-hold Cheddar, something we're quite adept at."

While much of Masters Gallery's growth can be tied to escalating cheese consumption in the United States, the company has been exporting products as well. Starting off with bulk cheese shipments to Mexico, South America and the Middle East, the company more recently began exporting retail packaged goods to China.

"It's still relatively small volume — cheese is not yet a mainstay in their diet," Gentine notes of China's market for cheese. "They're eating some Western-style foods, typically pizza and burgers, but it's evolving beyond that. The next generation of kids are becoming more and more exposed to Western foods. When they come of age they will drive rapid growth. The slow boat to China is more than just a song, but we have to remain patient."



**Meister Cheese Co. LLC**  
Muscodia, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Scott Meister, pres.; Vicki Thingvold, chief flavor development officer

*Dairy plants:* Meister Cheese Co. LLC, Muscodia, Wis. (Cheddar, Colby, Colby Jack, Fontina, Gouda, Havarti, flavored Monterey Jack & Monterey Jack in 40-lb. blocks; on-site cut & wrap; private label programs); Muscodia Protein Products LLP, Muscodia, Wis. (lactose, WPC-34, WPC-80)

*Joint venture:* Kindred Creamery, a joint venture with Emmi Roth USA — Fitchburg, Wis. (Kindred Creamery brand Cheddar, Pepper Jack, flavored Jacks)

*Market segments for cheese:* 40% retail; 40% foodservice; 20% ingredients  
*Website:* www.meistercheese.com


*A look inside:* Following a major expansion in 2014 to its cheese and whey processing facilities, Meister Cheese

this past year continued to upgrade equipment and internal processes at its plants in Muscodia, Wisconsin, for increased cheese production, says Scott Meister, president, Meister Cheese.

The company also has developed new items to offer as 40-pound blocks, including Havarti and Parmesan, he notes.

Meister Cheese Co. produces and packages cheese under its own Kase Meister brand as well as private label brands, and its specialty cheese can be found in supermarket deli departments and club stores across the country. The company also can produce certified cheese to kosher, organic, pasture-raised or rbST-free specification,

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Meister says.

Meister Cheese's Medium Cheddar placed first in its class at this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest. The cheese also was selected as one of the top 20 finalists in a final judging round. The company's Monterey Jack also received best of class honors and its Smoked Colored Cheddar received a second-place award at the contest.

Meanwhile, last summer, Meister Cheese in partnership with Emmi Roth USA launched a new Kindred Creamery retail brand.

Capitalizing on each of their strengths, Meister Cheese and Emmi Roth USA launched the brand of classic specialty American cheese varieties using milk from dairy farms committed to Meister Cheese's "Cows First" animal welfare program.

Cows First 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.

The way the milk is produced is a key differentiator that resonates with many consumers, notes Tim Omer, president and managing director of Emmi Roth USA.

The synergies and complementary strengths of the two companies seemed to suggest a natural partnership. The cheese for the line is made at Meister's plant in Muscoda, Wisconsin. 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.

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.



### Nasonville Dairy Marshfield, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Ken Heiman, Kim Heiman, Kelvin Heiman

*Dairy plants:* Marshfield, Wis. & Abbotsford, Wis. (Feta, Asiago, Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Queso Blanco, Blue); Marshfield, Wis. (milk bottling)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 43.5 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 43.5 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$110 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$125 million

*Market segments for cheese:* 5% retail; 80% foodservice; 15% ingredients

*Website:* www.nasonvillestore.com

*A look inside:* This past November, Nasonville Dairy began making cheese at its new Feta plant.

The space reconfiguration and outfitting of new equipment at Nasonville Dairy's main plant just outside of Marshfield, Wisconsin, has allowed the company to increase its annual Feta production by about 10 percent to 22 million pounds. Further production increases will be possible in the future.

"Feta is where we see a lot of growth occurring," says Ken Heiman, who manages the family-owned business along with his brothers Kelvin and Kim.

However, the biggest advantage of the new plant isn't increased production but rather high quality, more consistent product, Ken Heiman says.

The new 12,000-square-foot plant was outfitted by TecNal, a French company that supplied the major equipment components. The plant features more robotics than ever before, removing human variables and also helping to reduce injuries from repetitive movements. Plant personnel have been reassigned to different positions as needed, maximizing the company's capabilities.

The new equipment also is allowing the company more versatility in its Feta production. Every customer wants something a little different and distinctive to them, and Nasonville Dairy now is able to adjust its product accordingly, Heiman says.

"With this new plant, we expand our abilities to make more consistent product and more unique products for more people," he says.

While Feta is Nasonville Dairy's most-produced cheese, the company also takes pride in creating many other cheeses, producing more than 40 varieties. The company's Queso Blanco placed second in its class while its Aged Butterkase took a third in another class at the World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest this past year.

Ken Heiman also recently received the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association's (WCMA) highest honor: the WCMA Life Member Award, which recognizes people who have played a significant role in the success of the association through leadership, support and service.

A Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker with certifications in four cheeses —

Feta, Asiago, Cheddar and Monterey Jack — Heiman loves cheese and says "cheese covers a multitude of sins." He and his team love to experiment and try new things. Much of the experimenting occurs at the company's much smaller plant in Abbotsford, Wisconsin, known as Nasonville North.

Being large enough to provide significant quantities of numerous cheeses but small enough to be nimble and work directly with customers allows Nasonville Dairy to provide a level of service that not every company can.

Having a strong team in place also is important to the company's success. In addition to the three brothers, Heiman says, one-brother-in-law, six sons, three nieces and 10 nephews are involved in the business. Besides Heiman, the company also boasts two other Master Cheesemakers: Tom Torkelson, who is certified in Brick and Muenster, and Brian Jackson, who is certified in six cheeses — Monterey Jack, Cheddar, Brick, Colby, Muenster and Gouda.

In addition to the cheese plants, the company also operates its own dairy farm and small milk bottling operation as well as operates Weber's Farm Store, all in the Marshfield area.

As the multifaceted business has grown, Heiman says new product development has been critical. The team has found great success with a number of flavored varieties. One particularly popular cheese is the company's trademarked Blue Marble, which features Blue marbling in Monterey Jack and Cheddar varieties. American consumers also continue to look for hotter and hotter flavors, and Nasonville Dairy is happy to oblige. Flavored Cheddars and Jacks the company produces include the more tame Pepper Jack and Jalapeño Pepper Cheddar to the insanely hot Carolina Reaper Cheddar that only few dare to try.

Making so many cheeses is complex and requires a strong focus on food safety. Heiman says Nasonville Dairy takes its responsibility to food safety very seriously and is SQF Level 3 certified.

## Norseland INC

**Norseland Inc.**  
Darien, Connecticut

*Ownership:* TINE SA, Oslo, Norway

*Key executives:* John Sullivan, pres. & CEO; Linda Karaffa, VP; Carter Califri, general mgr., sales

*Cheese plants:* Norseland primarily imports and markets specialty cheese and owns a U.S. facility to produce Jarlsberg brand cheese.

*Market segments for cheese:* 70% retail; 30% foodservice

*Website:* www.jarlsbergusa.com, www.norseland.com

*A look inside:* Norseland in January entered a partnership with Parmareggio, the maker of the Italian Parmissimo

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brand of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and a cooperative of manufacturers and dairies in Italy. Norseland, the exclusive importer of Jarlsberg cheese and a leading marketer of specialty food products in the United States, will help accelerate sales growth of Parmissimo in the U.S. market.

Norseland had a number of new product introductions and promotions this year, particularly under its flagship Jarlsberg cheese line, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2016.

As part of a yearlong celebration of Jarlsberg's 60th anniversary, the company sent six people on a trip to Norway. The trip was shared on social media as part of a social media campaign for fans.

Norseland also has done numerous point-of-sale promotions during the year for Jarlsberg, and in October 2016, Jarlsberg Cheese received the Good Housekeeping Nutritionist Approved Emblem, a prominent health-conscious, lifestyle-aware seal in the food and beverage industry.

This past year, Norseland introduced new Jarlsberg Cheese Snacks in an individually-wrapped 3/4-ounce stick format, created to satisfy customer demand for more convenient, wholesome snacking options. Jarlsberg Cheese Snacks come in 6-ounce size packages of individually-wrapped cheese sticks.

Statistics show that snacking is a booming, \$87 billion business, and on the rise, with snacks accounting for 51 percent of all food sales, the company notes.

"Jarlsberg Cheese Snacks bring the outstanding, delicious flavor of the most incredible cheese in the world to a totally portable snacking size, in the convenience of individually-wrapped cheese sticks," says Debbie Seife, general manager of marketing, Jarlsberg Cheese. "This is the first time Jarlsberg Cheese will be available in a cheese stick format, which are the go-to snacking option for all ages."

Meanwhile, new Jarlsberg Cheese Fondue is a creamy fondue made with Jarlsberg Cheese and Kirsch Brandy. It comes in an all-in-one package, ready to heat and serve with a microwave- and oven-safe ceramic dish.

Also new are Jarlsberg Cheese Crisps, savory, crunchy baked crackers with freshly-shredded Jarlsberg Cheese baked on top. The crisps are ideal for dipping, snacking, as part of a cheese board or as a companion to a bowl of hot soup, the company says. Jarlsberg Cheese Crisps are available in four flavors: Chipotle, Rosemary & Olive Oil, Garlic & Herb and Mediterranean Sea Salt.

In addition to these new formats, Jarlsberg Cheese also is now available as a Folio cheese sheet, a new product introduced last year by Lotito Foods. Folios offer creative ways to use cheese as a topper, shell or wrap in numerous recipes.

Norseland has introduced new products under other brands this past year as well. Snøfrisk, a white, unripened spreadable goat's and cow's milk cream cheese, now is available in two new flavors: Snøfrisk with Horseradish and Snøfrisk with Red Onions and Thyme.

Norseland also has introduced Caramore, part of the Tine Brunost collection, a naturally-sweet brown cheese with smooth undertones of caramel created from a blend of cow's and goat's milk.

Additionally, Norseland has introduced Cheese Fusions, a bite-sized cheese snack available in three flavors: Sour Cream & Onion, Big Bold Buffalo and Smoked Chipotle.

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Old Europe Cheese

**Old Europe Cheese Inc.**  
Benton Harbor, Michigan

**Ownership:** Reny Picot, ILAS, Madrid, Spain

**Key executives:** Francois Capt, general mgr.; Michael Balane, national sales mgr.; Scott Ness, plant mgr.

**Cheese plant:** Benton Harbor, Mich. (Brie, Baked Brie, layered flavored Brie, Camembert, Camembert Traditionnel, Gouda, natural smoked Gouda, Baked Gouda, Edam loaf, Edam balls, Fontina, Baked Fontina, Mantoro)

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** More than 6.5 million lbs.

**Estimated 2016 sales:** More than \$26 million

**Estimated 2017 sales:** More than \$26 million

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 100%

**Market segments for cheese:** 45% retail; 45% foodservice; 10% ingredients

**Percentage of products exported:**

5%

**Website:** [www.oldeuropecheese.com](http://www.oldeuropecheese.com)

**A look inside:** Old Europe Cheese Inc., offering cheeses such as Triple and Double-Crème Brie, Camembert and Gouda, has expanded its bakery facility to handle growth and develop new products under the baked cheese line, according to Francois Capt, general manager, Old Europe Cheese.

The bakery addition, completed in January this year, was 1,680 square feet, giving the facility a total size of 4,500 square feet, Capt says. The bakery was originally built about five years ago, he adds.

The addition includes an employee

lunchroom, a new production room and a cooling room for baked products, including some new offerings.

"This was very important because it allowed us to make more product and make it faster," Capt says of the cooling room.

A new offering is a line of baked semi-soft cheeses, pairing the company's Reny Picot Gouda and Fontina cheeses with brioche dough, which is being featured at Old Europe's booth this year at the International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Show. The new baked semi-soft cheeses are available in 8- and 16-ounce sizes, according to the company. The company is actively seeking distributors for placement in retail and club stores.

"Baked Fontina and baked Gouda seemed like the right choice after Brie," Capt says, adding that the cheeses are aged two months before being cured and baked into the dough.

Earlier this year, the company also launched its Reny Picot Heart-Shaped Baked Brie for Valentine's Day. The Brie, expected to be available in future years as well for Valentine's and Mother's Days, was available in Plain flavor in a 6/8-ounce size.

The company also continues to expand its award-winning baked Brie line, adding new flavors such as Triple Berry and Four Berries & Almond. The company also plans to add new seasonal flavors of layered Brie this year and has invested in additional packaging equipment sourced from Europe.

Old Europe Cheese also continues to be re-certified for Safe Quality Food each year and now is embarking on full implementation of food safety standard operating procedures as related to the Food Safety Modernization Act, according to the company.

"With recent food safety issues in the dairy industry, offering our customers the highest quality, safest food source is what drives the partners at Old Europe Cheese each and every day," Capt says.

Old Europe Cheese received various awards in the past year. At the U.S. Cheese Championship Contest, the company placed second in its class for its 3-kilogram Double Crème Brie.

At the American Cheese Society contest, the company tied for second in its class with its 3-kilogram Brie with Black and Green Peppercorns and its 8-ounce Slicing Brie with Herbs.

At the 2016 World Cheese Awards, the company also received silver in its class for its Camembert Traditionnel, its Natural Smoked Gouda and its 3-kilogram Double Crème Brie with Peppercorns.

In the coming year, Old Europe will continue improvements at its plant and look for new creations that are consumer-friendly and fit make processes already in place, Capt says.

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Camembert Traditionnel



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Mantoro



Fontina

**Baked Gouda**



Plain Baked Gouda

**Baked Fontina**



Plain Baked Fontina

**Baked Brie**



Cherry and Almond Baked Brie



Old Europe Cheese

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# 2017 KEY PLAYERS

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### Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative

La Farge, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** George Siemon, CEO; Louise Hemstead, COO; Bob Kirchoff, chief business officer; David Poremba, CFO; Frank Dravis, chief information officer; Mike Bedessem, VP, business development; Eric Newman, VP, sales; Lewis Goldstein, VP, brand marketing; Jerry McGeorge, VP, cooperative affairs; Travis Forgues, VP, farmer affairs; Theresa Marquez, mission exec.; Jim Wedeberg, dir., international cooperative development; Melissa Hughes, general counsel

**Dairy plants:** Organic Valley partnered with 29 production and processing facilities located throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, California, Idaho, Ohio, Pennsylvania and South Dakota in 2016. Organic Valley operates its own cheese cut and wrap facility in La Farge, Wisconsin, where it converts items, and it is currently constructing a conversion and labeling facility near its Cashton, Wisconsin, office and distribution center. In addition, Organic Valley imports organic Cheddar from Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative (OMSCO) organic dairy cooperative in England. The cheese is sent to La Farge for cutting and wrapping and marketed by Organic Valley under the Kingdom brand. CROPP also has purchased McMinnville Creamery, McMinnville, Oregon, for the production of butter and powder products.

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** 16.9 million lbs. hard dairy (cheese); 2.9 million lbs. cream cheese; 3.9 million lbs. cottage cheese

**Estimated annual cheese marketed:** 14.8 million lbs. hard dairy (cheese); 2.7 million lbs. cream cheese; 3.7 million lbs. cottage cheese

**Estimated 2016 sales:** \$1 billion  
**Projected 2017 sales:** \$1.13 billion  
**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 10.1%

**Market segments for cheese:** 69% retail; 2% foodservice; 29% ingredients  
**Percentage of products exported:** 1%

**Website:** www.organicvalley.coop  
**A look inside:** Organic Valley broke ground on a new conversion and labeling facility in Cashton, Wisconsin, which opened in May and is home to the production of ghee as well as cutting and wrapping deli block cheeses and the conversion of shreds and stick cheese. In addition, CROPP has pur-

chased the McMinnville Creamery in McMinnville, Oregon, for the production of butter and powder products.

At Organic Valley's recent annual meeting, more than 450 farmers from across the nation met in Wisconsin. In the past year, the cooperative has grown to 2,013 farmer-owners and posted record sales topping \$1.1 billion, among other accomplishments, according to the cooperative.

However, the cooperative faced challenges as well. In 2016, Organic Valley farmers accepted reduction in the price paid for their milk due to a nationwide oversupply, the cooperative says.

"Now, more than ever, it's time to cooperate," says George Siemon, CEO, Organic Valley. "Our strength has always been in our unity and belief in the collective good. In a world of divisiveness, cooperation continues to be the key to success."

Organic Valley recently was selected as the Company of the Year by the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America. The award recognizes Organic Valley's commitment to halal compliance and distribution of halal-certified products in the United States and abroad.

Organic Valley also has introduced several new products, all of which can be found in natural food stores and mainstream grocers nationwide, according to Andrew Westrich, brand manager.

In May 2016, the company launched UP Grassmilk, whole and reduced-fat half gallons of 100-percent grass-fed milk. The milk is ultra-pasteurized for longer shelf life, Westrich says.

Also in May 2016, the company began offering 1- and 2-pound formats of its mild and sharp Cheddars.

Last July, the company introduced 1-pound Cultured Pasture Butter.

"This 100-percent organic and pasture-raised butter contains 84-percent butterfat and is only made during the peak of pasture season from May to September, when lush organic grasses provide the highest levels of Omega 3 and CLA," Westrich says.

In September, the company released Sharp Cheddar Shreds. The product is packaged in a resealable, stand-up pouch.

Also in September, the company launched Grassmilk Yogurt Cups, 6-ounce yogurt cups available in plain, vanilla, strawberry and blueberry flavors.

Marketing for the company's cheese has centered on shopper marketing, sampling and digital programs, Westrich adds.

"Organic Valley is always looking at ways to meet consumer needs through new and existing product development, including the launch of several new cheese items in 2017," he says.

At the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley placed first in its class for its Organic Plain Grassmilk Yogurt and

third in its class for its Organic Salted Butter.

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley's Organic Salted Butter made from cow's milk as well as its Organic Pasteurized Colby won first place in their classes at the 2016 American Cheese Society (ACS) contest. Other highlights include second place in its class for Organic Valley's Organic Chocolate Balance milk protein shake, and third place in its class for its Organic Cream Cheese, at the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest; and third place for CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley's European-style cultured butter at the 2016 Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest.

In the coming year, Organic Valley aims to continue supporting organic family farms and grow organic agriculture by increasing sales in all channels.

"Organic Valley is the largest producer of 100-percent grass-fed organic dairy in the United States, and we are excited to continue to expand and grow this line of products, including cheese, to meet increasing consumer demand for 100-percent grass-fed dairy and to support organic family farms," Westrich says.



### Pine River Pre-Pack Inc.

Newton, Wisconsin

**Key executives:** Phil Lindemann, pres. & CEO; Ian Behm, general mgr.; Scott Caliebe, CFO; Mary Lindemann, secretary & dir., marketing

**Cheese plant:** Newton, Wis. (cold pack cheese food)

**Percentage of sales from cheese:** 80%

**Market segments for cheese:** 87% retail; 12% foodservice; 1% ingredients

**Website:** www.pineriver.com

**A look inside:** In the spring of 2016, Pine River Pre-Pack Inc. launched a no preservative, gourmet line of cold pack cheese spreads at the Northwest Foodservice Show in Seattle. As demand for clean label continues, sales of these spreads are climbing in the Pine River brand and are expected to grow this year in the private label sector as well, the company says.

Mary Lindemann, marketing director, notes that expanded distribution

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to the West Coast and an increased presence at food shows nationwide are contributing to growth.

In addition to its emphasis on clean label products, Pine River continues to focus on food safety in 2017. Last year, the company received SQF Level 3 certification ensuring that all Pine River products are held to rigorous safety and quality standards.

"Having achieved the stringent requirements needed for SQF Level 3, we are confident our facility will be ready for its upcoming FSMA implementation," says Ian Behm, general manager.

Pine River cheese spreads once again were recognized for their quality and excellence this past year. The company swept the Cold Pack Cheese, Cheese Food class at the Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter competition, winning first, second and third place for Swiss & Almond, Aged Asiago and Horseradish, respectively.

Pine River earned top awards in the Cold Pack Cheese Food and Cheese Spread class at the World Dairy Expo

Championship Dairy Product Contest, taking first place for Swiss & Almond and second for Chunky Bleu.

The company also took home top awards in the Cold Pack Cheese and Spread class at the American Cheese Society competition, winning first and second place for Horseradish and Hot Habanero Cold Pack Cheese Spreads, respectively.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, the gold medal winner in the cold pack class was a collaboration of Widmer's Cheese Cellars, Theresa, Wisconsin, and Pine River's art of blending specialty cheese to craft a gourmet spread, Lindemann says.

Pine River's Chunky Bleu and Smokey Bacon cold pack cheese varieties earned second- and third-place awards, respectively, at the contest.

"Another initiative for 2017 is to increase our social media presence," Lindemann says. "Our focus will be helping consumers 'think outside the (cracker) box' when it comes to enjoying our award-winning spreads. We will be providing recipes that use Pine River cheese spread anywhere you may typically use natural cuts of cheese."



### Prairie Farms Dairy Inc.

Carlinville, Illinois

**Key executives:** Ed Mullins, CEO; Chris Hoeger, pres., Cheese Division

**Cheese plants:** Luana, Iowa (Swiss, Maasdam, Gouda, cream cheese, Neufchatel, whey powder); Mindoro, Wis. (Blue, Gorgonzola); Spring Valley/Rochester, Minn. — part of Rochester Cheese, a wholly-owned subsidiary (cold ground blend cheese, pasteurized process cheese, enzyme-modified cheese, cheese analogs; warehouse); Faribault, Minn. — part of Caves of Faribault, a wholly-owned subsidiary (Blue, Gorgonzola; aging of Cheddar & Gouda); Shullsburg, Wis. — joint venture with Emmi-Roth called White Hill Cheese Co. LLC (No-Salt-Added Swiss, Baby Swiss, other varieties); Carbondale, Ill. (cottage cheese, sour cream); Quincy, Ill. (cottage cheese); Fort Wayne, Ind. (cottage cheese, sour cream, fluid milk, ice cream mix); Jefferson City, Mo. (cottage cheese, sour cream, fluid milk, juice, ice cream, ice cream mix); Wichita, Kan. (cottage cheese, yogurt, fluid milk, ice cream mix); Kansas City, Mo. (cottage cheese, sour cream, yogurt, ice cream); Chandler, Okla. (cottage cheese, sour cream, yogurt, fluid milk, juice)

**Estimated annual cheese produced:** 80 million lbs. (Swiss Valley 2016)

**Estimated annual cheese marketed:** 82.9 million lbs. (Swiss Valley 2016)

**Estimated 2016 sales:** \$322 million (Swiss Valley); \$2.9 billion (Prairie Farms fiscal 2015-16)

**Website:** www.prairiefarms.com

**A look inside:** Prairie Farms Dairy and Swiss Valley Farms, two farmer-owned cooperatives, completed their merger March 31, 2017. The combined companies operate under the name Prairie Farms Dairy Inc., and the Prairie Farms Dairy and Swiss Valley Farms brand names are retained. The merged company is led by Prairie Farms CEO Ed Mullins, while former Swiss Valley CEO Chris Hoeger now is president of the newly-formed Prairie Farms Cheese Division.

"We had a great business relationship with Swiss Valley for many years," Mullins says. "Consumption of fluid milk, our core product, has been declining for years, while cheese consumption has increased nearly 150 percent since 1975. The complementary nature of Swiss Valley's product line will help counter this major shift. At the same time, Swiss Valley is looking to grow their export business, and with the merger, they will gain access to many Prairie Farms products, such as extended shelf life milk and cream."

Before the merger, Swiss Valley had completed a major expansion at its largest cheesemaking facility in Luana, Iowa. The \$20.6 million expansion cen-

tered on the improvement of cheese manufacturing equipment, including the replacement of current press vats with a moulding system solution, installation of additional system automation, press tunnels and new buffer tanks. It also includes a 49,000-square-foot expansion, which allows room for new equipment and additional warehousing space.

"The first block of cheese from the new equipment rolled off the line on Nov. 23, 2016, and we are already realizing the efficiencies and new product opportunities this expansion afforded us," Hoeger says.

Meanwhile, Prairie Farms in February announced an \$8.7 million investment in its Fort Wayne, Indiana, facility that will allow the company to manufacture new specialty products and expand its distribution footprint in the United States and Central America. Construction on the 22,500-square-foot expansion began in April and is expected to be complete by late 2018. It will include a new processing system, storage vessels, packaging lines, equipment to accommodate existing production, a cooler and a dry storage warehouse. Currently the facility manufactures cottage cheese, sour cream, fluid milk and ice cream mix.

Swiss Valley this past year rolled out a special edition St. Mary's Smoked Grass-fed Gouda, distributed in Midwest Hy-Vee stores. This smoked version of a classic favorite uses milk from Wisconsin grass-fed cows and is aged in the Caves of Faribault for more than three years to develop a rich, buttery sharpness with a distinct caramel note. Natural hickory smoking gives it its flavor. The company says this cheese is ideal for melting over an entrée or enjoying simply by itself.

In 2016, Swiss Valley invested in its brands and unveiled completely new packaging designs for both the Swiss Valley Farms and Caves of Faribault. In 2017, the company plans to launch new retail and foodservice sizes of Swiss Valley Farms branded items in the new packaging. Chunks and stack packs slices launched in early 2017.

Swiss Valley Farms received the 2016 Tom Camerlò Exporter of the Year Award, which was presented to the company in October during the U.S. Dairy Export Council's annual board of directors meeting. The award is presented annually to a U.S. dairy supplier that exemplifies leadership in advancing U.S. dairy exports, demonstrates commitment to export market development and makes exports an integral part of its overall growth strategy.

Both Swiss Valley and Prairie Farms received accolades for their products pre-merger. Prairie Farms in October earned first place in the Regular Cottage Cheese category at the World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest, where it also took first- and second-place awards in the Lowfat/Nonfat

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Cottage Cheese category. To celebrate these awards, Prairie Farms launched the "Best of the Best" cottage cheese campaign in January and February 2017.

Swiss Valley was also recognized at the World Dairy Expo contest with second place for its Neufchatel and third-place awards for its Blue cheese and Swiss.

At the 2016 American Cheese Society contest, Swiss Valley received a first-place award as well as third-place overall Best of Show for its Jeff's Select Gouda. Jeff's Select Gouda also won a blue ribbon at the 2016 Illinois State Fair, as did the company's Baby Swiss.

Swiss Valley received first-place awards at the 2016 National Milk Producers Federation Championship Cheese Contest for its cream cheese, cream cheese spread and Baby Swiss.

"We continue to strive to be the preferred supplier of Swiss and Blue cheese and be known for our quality among the industry," Hoeger says of the company's future goals. "By merging with Prairie Farms, we will be able to leverage the strengths of both companies and offer a broader range of products."

# Saputo

### Saputo Inc.

Saint-Léonard, Québec

**Key executives:** Emanuele (Lino) Saputo, chairman of the board; Lino A. Saputo Jr., CEO & vice chairman of the board; Louis-Philippe Carrière, CFO; Kai Bockmann, pres. & COO, Saputo Inc. & Dairy Division (International); Gaétane Wagner, chief human resources officer; Terry Brockman, pres. & COO, Cheese Division (USA); Paul Corney, pres. & COO, Dairy Foods Division (USA); Carl Colizza, pres. & COO, Dairy Division (Canada)

**Dairy plants:** Cheese Division (USA): South Gate, Calif.; Tulare, Calif. (3); Newman, Calif.; Big Stone City, S.D.; Almena, Wis.; Green Bay, Wis.; Fond du Lac, Wis.; Lancaster, Wis.; Lena, Wis.; Reedsburg, Wis.; Waupun, Wis.; Black Creek, Wis. (Mozzarella, Provolone, String, Parmesan, Romano, Asiago, Fontinella, Gorgonzola, Cheddar, Edam, Colby, Colby Jack, Fontina, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Muenster, Lorraine, Fresh Frozen Mozzarella, snack sticks, goat cheese, WPC-80 instant and non-instant, WPC-34, dry sweet whey, acid whey, deproteinized whey powder, lactose, supervised kosher, shredding, cutting & packaging)

Dairy Foods Division (USA): Gustine, Calif.; Sulphur Springs, Texas; White Bear Lake, Minn.; Decatur, Ala.; Murray, Ky.; Newington, Conn.; Frederick, Md.; Fraser, N.Y. (ice cream mix, specialty beverages, half & half, whipping cream,

dairy creamer, aerosol whipped topping); Tulare, Calif.; Friendship, N.Y. (cottage cheese, sour cream, butter-milk, dry curd, Farmers cheese)

Dairy Division (Canada): Abbotsford, British Columbia; Burnaby, British Columbia; Courtenay, British Columbia; Calgary, Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta; Red Deer, Alberta; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Brandon, Manitoba; Georgetown, Ontario; Orangeville, Ontario; Ottawa, Ontario; Tavistock, Ontario; Trenton, Ontario; Mont-Laurier, Québec; Plessisville, Québec; Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec; Saint-Léonard, Québec; Saint-Raymond de Portneuf, Québec; Saint John, New Brunswick; Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Mount Pearl, Nova Scotia (wide variety of cheeses including Mozzarella & Cheddar, specialty cheeses such as Ricotta, Provolone, Parmesan, Feta & Havarti, fine cheeses such as Brie & Camembert, other firm cheeses including Brick, Colby, Farmer, Muenster & Monterey Jack, goat cheese as well as fresh curd & processed cheeses. Saputo also produces, markets and distributes fluid milk, cream, yogurt, sour cream & cottage cheese. In addition, Saputo sells cheese products under private labels and produces butter, powdered milk & evaporated milk, ice cream mixes & a number of dairy ingredients derived from its cheese production, including whey powder, lactose & whey protein concentrates)

Dairy Division (Argentina): Rafaela, Santa Fe; Tío Pujio, Córdoba (wide variety of soft, semi-soft, hard & grated cheeses, as well as butter, cream, milk powder & dairy ingredients)

Dairy Division (Australia): Allansford, Victoria; Mil-Lel, South Australia (variety of cheeses, including Cheddar & Parmesan, as well as butter & butter blends, fluid milk, cream & dairy ingredients)

**Total company sales (for fiscal year ended March 31, 2016):** C\$10.99 billion

**Total U.S. sales (for fiscal year ended March 31, 2016):** C\$5.79 billion

**Market segments (for fiscal year ended March 31, 2016):** 49% retail; 40% foodservice; 11% industrial

**Website:** www.saputo.com

**A look inside:** Saputo, one of the top 10 dairy processors in the world, is the largest cheese manufacturer in Canada and ranks among the top three cheese producers in the United States.

The company's consolidated revenues totaled C\$10.992 billion for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016, an increase of approximately C\$334 million or 3.1 percent, compared to C\$10.658 billion in fiscal 2015. The increase is due mainly to higher sales volumes, as well as the inclusion of revenues from the Woolwich Dairy acquisition in North America and the acquisition of the everyday cheese business ("EDC Business") of Lion Dairy & Drinks Pty. Ltd. in Australia the previous fiscal year.

In its annual report released last spring, the company said it intended to continue benefitting from the Woolwich Dairy and EDC Business acquisitions

for future development. Additionally, the company will continue to improve its efficiencies.

The company says it is continually analyzing its overall activities as it pursues additional efficiencies while strengthening its market presence.

Last summer, Saputo closed plants in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and Princeville, Québec. The production from these facilities has been integrated into other Saputo facilities. In addition, a plant in Ottawa, Ontario, will be closed effective in December 2017. In all, approximately 230 employees are impacted by these closures.

To ensure the company's operations are consistent across Canada, it found it necessary to align its go-to-market strategy and apply some changes. Consequently, effective April 1, 2017, all merchandising duties of the Atlantic region were transferred to retailers. As such, all merchandising positions within Saputo were eliminated.

In March 2017, following a takeover bid and subsequent to a compulsory acquisition process, Saputo acquired full ownership of Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory Company Holdings Ltd. in Australia.

Saputo Cheese USA is modernizing its Blue cheese manufacturing process

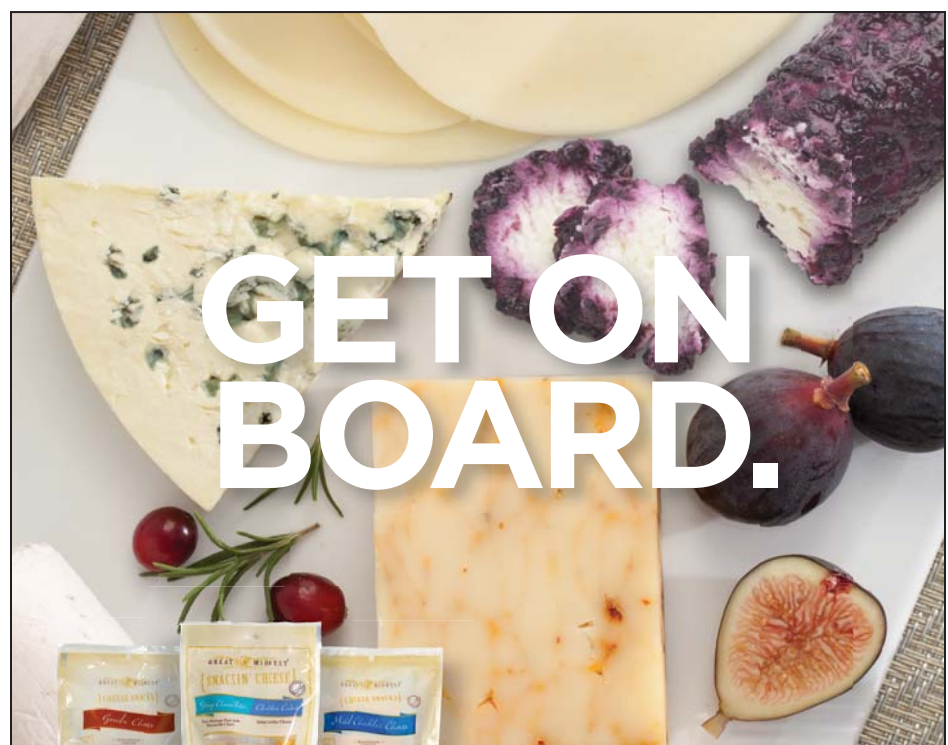
in Almena, Wisconsin. The company is developing a state-of-the-art facility to enhance its blue cheese production capabilities for the future.

In the midst of these changes and projects, Saputo is experiencing some leadership changes. Emanuele (Lino) Saputo, the company's founding chairman, will retire Aug. 1, 2017. He has been with the company since its inception in 1954 and was chairman of the board and CEO until 2004. Effective Aug. 1, Lino A. Saputo Jr., the company's CEO and vice chairman, will be appointed to the position of chairman of the board and will also retain his responsibilities as CEO.

As previously announced, Dino Dello Sbarba, the company's president and COO, retired April 1, 2017, after 26 years with Saputo. Kai Bockmann succeeded Dello Sbarba in this role in addition to his duties as president and COO of the company's Dairy Division (International). Dello Sbarba currently is acting as a senior advisor to the company.

Louis-Philippe Carrière, the company's chief financial officer and secretary, also will retire Aug. 1, 2017, after 30 years with the company. At that time, Maxime Therrien will be appointed chief financial officer and secretary. Therrien currently is the company's

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executive vice president of finance and administration. Starting Aug. 1, Carrière will act as a senior advisor to the company. The board of directors of the company is proposing Carrière as a new nominee for election to the board at the next meeting of shareholders.

The company continues to develop new products and marketing programs.

In 2016, Frigo Cheese Heads launched several new products available nationally: Frigo Cheese Heads String Cheese (pack of 3) in Regular & Light String Cheese as well as Colby Jack & Mild Cheddar cheese flavors. New Frigo Cheese Heads Cheese and Meat Combo Packs (pack of 8) are available in String Cheese and Pepperoni, Cheddar and Beef, and Colby Jack and Turkey.

In January 2017, Frigo Cheese Heads launched several new line extensions available nationally: Frigo Cheese Heads Fresh Gouda and Spicy Beef Sticks (pack of 8), Frigo Cheese Heads Fresh Gouda Wisconsin Snacking Cheese (pack of 10) and Frigo Cheese Heads Three Pepper Colby Jack Wisconsin Snacking Cheese (pack of 10).

In the specialty category, the company now offers Black Creek Cheddar and Merlot Cold Pack Cheese Spread, Black Creek Cheddar Gruyere Square, Stella Organic Parmesan Cheese Wedge & Shredded Cup (6-ounce wedges and 4-ounce cups), Stella Shredded Parmesan Square Round Cup (20-ounce), Great Midwest Habanero Jack, Great Midwest String Cheese/Mild Cheddar Cube Mix Bag, Organic Creamery Spicy Fiesta Shred Blend & Organic Creamery Smoky Mexican Shred Blend, Organic Creamery Goat Crumbles Cup, Organic

Creamery Shredded Fresh Asiago Cup and Organic Creamery Mild Cheddar Portions.

For foodservice, the company has introduced Great Midwest Habanero Jack in 2/5-pound loaves and Great Midwest Horseradish Cheddar Cheese in an 8/1.5-pound pre-sliced format.

During the 2016 holiday season, Saputo's Stella brand launched a consumer promotion and sweepstakes to support sales of Stella cheese products. Consumers were encouraged to visit [stellacheese.com](http://stellacheese.com) for a chance to win a trip to Napa Valley, California, wine country. As a tie-in with this promotion, Stella launched an influencer marketing campaign to highlight Stella cheese for entertaining during the holidays. This resulted in more than 120,000 sweepstakes entries and more than 2,000 influencer stories.

Also during the holiday period, the company's Treasure Cave brand leveraged a partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities. Through November and December, Treasure Cave shared exclusive new holiday recipes via Facebook, encouraging fans to share their favorite Holiday recipes that use Treasure Cave cheeses. For every like, share or comment, Treasure Cave showed its appreciation by donating \$1 to the Ronald McDonald House Charities up to \$10,000.

Meanwhile, during the back-to-school period, Frigo Cheese Heads ran its "Build A Bright Future" promotion.

Saputo has won awards for its cheeses both nationally and internationally.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Stella Aged Asiago, Salemville Gorgonzola and Salemville Gorgonzola placed first in their respective classes. Team Henning's on behalf of Saputo Specialty Cheese made a second

place Blueberry Cobbler Cheddar, and Liederkrantz Cheese made by Team Chalet on behalf of Saputo Specialty Cheese placed third in its class.

At the 2016 World Dairy Expo, the company took home thirds for its Double Smoked Cheddar, Cheddar Parmesan Cheese and Sharp Cheddar Spread. Additionally, it placed first for its deproteinized whey powder, second for its whey protein concentrate 34 percent and third place for its whey protein concentrate 34 percent.

At the American Cheese Society (ACS) competition, the company's Black Creek Double Smoked Cheddar took home a first-place award, and its Stella Asiago placed second. A number of cheeses the company produces in Canada also placed in the ACS competition.

At the Wisconsin State Fair, Great Midwest Blueberry Cobbler Cheddar and Salemville Reserve Blue cheese placed first in their respective classes.

Saputo's King's Choice Blue Stilton cheese won a gold medal at the World Cheese Awards, and its Joan of Arc Brie with Pepper won a silver medal.

Saputo also received a number of awards at the International Cheese Awards (ICA) and the British Empire Cheese Competition this past year.



**Sargento Foods Inc.**  
Plymouth, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Louie Gentine, CEO; Jeremy Behler, exec. VP & CFO; Chad Hamilton, exec. VP, legal & consumer affairs; Kristi Jankowski, exec. VP, new product innovation; Karri Neils, exec. VP, human resources

*Cheese plants:* Plymouth, Wis. (cut & wrap; shredded, sliced & snack cheese); Kiel, Wis. (cut & wrap; shredded, sliced & snack cheese; battered & breaded cheese); Hilbert, Wis. (cheese sauces, dips & snacks)

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$1.4 billion  
*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Website:* [www.sargento.com](http://www.sargento.com)

*A look inside:* This past year, Sargento Foods Inc. completed construction on an expansion to its production facility in Kiel, Wisconsin. Construction began in 2015 and was completed in late 2016.

The Kiel plant opened in 1993 on a 40-acre site. It was expanded by 40,000 square feet in 2000 and 60,000 square feet in 2007. The latest expansion added an additional 80,000 square feet of space for production, storage and employee facilities, including a health and wellness center and an increased locker area to accommodate employees. The plant now totals 335,000 square feet.

Sargento also recently completed construction on an expansion to its technical center in Elkhart Lake, Wis-

consin. The Elkhart Lake site was one of Sargento's first facilities, purchased from Elkhart Lake Canning Co. in 1956. Sargento's engineering, research and development and culinary departments now are at this location.

The site now has capacity for 140 employees and includes additional office space, parking, product development laboratories and a relocated lobby area.

In October 2015, Sargento announced its plan for a major expansion of 60,000 square feet adjacent to its Hilbert, Wisconsin, facility. Construction began in late 2015 and recently was completed.

As Sargento continues to expand, the company added new varieties to several of its cheese lines this past year.

With the launch of its Balanced Breaks in April 2015, Sargento added to its range of cheese snacks and expanded its snack options beyond cheese for the first time. The snack combines cheese, roasted nuts and dried fruits.

Building off the success of Balanced Breaks, Sargento Foods introduced new Sweet Balanced Breaks this year. Varieties include Cheddar, raisins, sea-salted roasted almonds and Greek yogurt flavored drops; Monterey Jack, dried cranberries, banana chips and dark chocolate chunks; Cheddar, raspberry flavored dried cranberries, graham crackers and milk chocolate chunks; Monterey Jack, dried cranberries and dark chocolate-covered peanuts; Colby Jack, sea-salted peanuts and blueberry juice-infused dried cranberries; and Gouda, honey-roasted peanuts and dried cranberries. Sweet Balanced Breaks are available in packages of three 1.5-ounce snacks for a suggested retail price of \$3.69.

Sargento last year also launched its Chipotle BBQ Cheddar Snack Bites in 6-ounce bags and its Snack Bites, sticks of cheese with less than 20 calories per stick.

Snack Bites are available in Garlic and Herb Jack, Wisconsin Sharp Cheddar, Colby-Pepper Jack and Chipotle BBQ Cheddar. The new product is available in a resealable bag for a suggested retail price of \$3.69 in dairy aisles nationwide.

Sargento also recently launched new varieties of its Sargento Sliced Natural Cheese including Garden & Herb Jack and Tomato & Basil Jack.

Sargento this past year was included in *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's* Top Workplaces, Southeast Wisconsin, for the seventh consecutive year.

In addition, late Sargento Foods founder Leonard Gentine Sr. was inducted into the National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association (NFRA) Hall of Fame. NFRA established the Hall of Fame in 2010 to honor individuals for the contributions they have made and the leadership they have provided to the refrigerated food industry.

Marketing and merchandising innovations established by Sargento under

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Gentine's leadership include the peg-bar displays system that shows packaged cheese at eye-level and press-to-close packaging on re-sealable packages. Today Sargento Foods Inc. is the largest selling retail brand of natural sliced cheese and the second largest in natural shredded cheese in the United States. Sargento Foods still is family-owned and operated and employs nearly 1,800 in several Wisconsin locations including the headquarters in Plymouth, NFRA notes.

Although Gentine passed away in 1996, his legacy and importance to the refrigerated food industry live on, NFRA says. Gentine's sons continue to work for Sargento; Louis P. Gentine is chairman of the board of Sargento Foods Inc. and Lawrence J. Gentine and Lee M. Gentine serve on the board of directors. Grandson Louie Gentine is CEO.

Sargento Foods also announced the retirement of former Executive Vice President and CFO George Hoff at the end of 2016. Jeremy Behler was promoted to succeed Hoff as executive vice president and CFO. Prior to joining Sargento in 2014, Behler handled global business development for mergers and acquisitions at Procter & Gamble. He now leads the finance, accounting and IT departments at Sargento Foods.



**Sartori Co.**  
Plymouth, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Jim Sartori, CEO; Jeff Schwager, pres.; Blair Wilson, VP, marketing

*Cheese plants:* Sartori West Main Plant, Plymouth, Wis. (Parmesan, Asiago, Fontina, Romano, MontAmoré); Sartori Whey, Plymouth, Wis. (converting facility — Parmesan, Asiago, Fontina, Romano, MontAmoré, SarVecchio Parmesan, BellaVitano); Sartori Antigo Plant, Antigo, Wis. (SarVecchio Parmesan, BellaVitano, Fontina, Romano, Asiago, Parmesan)

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* More than 95%

*Website:* [www.sartoricheese.com](http://www.sartoricheese.com)

*A look inside:* Sartori Co. in 2016 began restoration of its original cheese manufacturing plant in Plymouth, Wisconsin. Updates, which include securing accreditation through the National Register of Historic Places, are expected to be complete this year.

Sartori also has made multi-million dollar expansions and renovations at its

plants in Antigo and Plymouth in recent years. The updates have equipped the company's Master Cheesemakers with the resources necessary for continuous innovation, while also improving efficiency and safety levels for all team members.

Sartori continued to shine at cheese competitions this past year. Master Cheesemaker Mike Matucheski made the Grand Champion cheese of this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest — a Black Pepper BellaVitano. Sartori Co. has won the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest once before with its SarVecchio Parmesan in 2009.

Also at the U.S. Championship contest, Sartori received best in class honors for its Tre Donnes that, in ad-

dition to Black Pepper BellaVitano, earned a spot in the top 20 in a final judging round.

Sartori Limited Edition Pastorale Blend, Reserve Extra-Aged Asiago and Citrus Ginger BellaVitano earned second-place awards, and the company's Classic Asiago, Reserve Herbs de Provence BellaVitano and Reserve Rum Runner BellaVitano earned third-place awards at the contest.

Sartori released the newest addition to its Reserve line of cheeses — Chipotle BellaVitano — last summer. The smoky, Southwest-inspired flavor profile is balanced by the complexities of Sartori's BellaVitano cheese. The new flavor is available nationally.

Sartori Chipotle BellaVitano earned

a gold medal at last summer's World Dairy Expo (WDE) Championship Dairy Product Contest. It received a silver medal at the American Cheese Society (ACS) competition last summer.

Other Sartori cheeses also received awards at these and other competitions this past year. At WDE, Sartori's Limited Edition Extra-Aged Goat cheese and Limited Edition Pastorale Blend earned silver medals, and its Classic Asiago received a bronze. At ACS, Pastorale Blend received a gold medal and Classic MontAmoré and Classic Asiago each received a bronze.

Sartori also received gold medals at the World Cheese Awards and Global Cheese Awards in 2016. In addition, the

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For more information please visit [www.sartoricheese.com](http://www.sartoricheese.com)

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company received an award for Best Non-EU Cheese and Best USA cheese at the Global Cheese Awards.

At last summer's Wisconsin State Fair Cheese & Butter Contest, Sartori's Reserve BellaVitano Gold and Limited Edition Pastorale blend each received gold medals.

Blair Wilson, vice president of marketing, says the company has positioned itself as a "thought leader" within the specialty cheese category by emphasizing educational programs.

Sartori has launched a digital "Cut & Wrap" program, which helps

cheesemongers and enthusiasts learn more about proper handling and storing techniques for cheese. The online video guide illustrates the importance of correct wrapping and storing, and the program culminates with an opportunity for participants to test their knowledge and become a Certified Cut & Wrap Cheese Professional.

Sartori also continues to engage with fans on social media networks such as through a promotion last December to have one fan get their face carved in a 20-pound wheel of Sartori's Merlot BellaVitano. Fans were able to enter by following Sartori on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and "liking" any Sartori post containing the hashtag #givecheese through Dec. 12.

As in years past, Sartori is giving back to its community. The company has partnerships with both the Milwaukee Admirals hockey organization and the Milwaukee Brewers Radio Network to support the Midwest Athletes Against Childhood Cancer Fund.

In addition, the 2016 NFL season was Sartori Co.'s sixth year partnering with Green Bay Packers kicker Mason Crosby and Packers Radio Network to support the Wisconsin Make-A-Wish Foundation. For each field goal made, between \$1,000-\$1,500 was donated to the foundation, which grants wishes to children fighting battles against life-threatening diseases.

"Looking to the future, Sartori will continue to be a thought leader not only

through innovations and new products but also by emphasizing education and the adoption of best practices within the category," Wilson says.

"Ultimately, our vision is to have great cheese on every plate," adds Jim Sartori, CEO. "Until we reach that point, we'll keep pushing ourselves."



#### Savencia Cheese USA LLC New Holland, Pennsylvania

*Ownership:* Savencia Fromage & Dairy, France

*Key executives:* Dominique Huth, pres. & CEO; Laurent Garel, CFO; Ronan Loec, chief information officer; Emma Hofer-Louis, VP, sales; David Isenberg, VP, industrial sales; Mikhail Chapnick, VP, marketing

*Cheese plants:* New Holland, Pa. (spreadable cheese); City of Industry, Calif. (cream cheese); Lena, Ill. (soft ripened cheese production)

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Websites:* www.savencia-fromage-dairy.com/en/, Alouettecheese.com, Chavrie.com, Iledefrancecheese.com

*A look inside:* Savencia Cheese USA LLC, previously known as Alouette Cheese USA, changed its name May 1 to align with its parent company, Savencia Fromage & Dairy, based in France.

The company has made a number of other changes in the past couple of years to streamline operations.

Savencia Cheese USA has added imported French specialty cheeses to its existing line of domestic spreads, Bries, crumbles and goat's milk cheeses, while also updating its domestic product lines, according to Emma Hofer-Louis, vice president of sales, Savencia Cheese USA.

Savencia Cheese USA now is able to provide global category management in the specialty cheese category. The addition to its lineup follows divestitures and structural changes for parent company Savencia, formerly known as Bongrain. At the end of 2014, Savencia sold its U.S. import subsidiary Schratte Foods. While Schratte Foods continues to operate as a separately-owned import company, excluded from the sale were all brands owned by Savencia. Now all Savencia specialty cheese products are imported and marketed in the United States by Savencia Cheese USA.

The company's broader portfolio allows it to do a number of things for its customers. Hofer-Louis notes that the company's medium size and national distribution — while at the same time being backed by a very large international parent company

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— give Savencia Cheese USA the opportunity to customize how it serves each of its customers, whether it's a small specialty chain or a larger national retailer.

Among the imported cheeses Savencia Cheese USA is focusing on marketing is Saint André, a soft-ripened, triple-crème cheese. The company also is expanding its marketing of Suprême. With a bloomy, velvety white rind, this cow's milk cheese is enriched with Crème Fraîche for a memorable, creamy finish, Hofer-Louis says.

Additionally, the company offers Saint Agur, a creamy, double-crème Blue cheese. Saint Agur, the No. 1 selling Blue in France and the United Kingdom, has been available in the United States for some time, but now Savencia Cheese USA is giving it extra marketing attention. Previously, the cheese was mostly available in higher-end retailers, with additional distribution in food-service, largely because it was only available in wheels. This past year, though, Savencia Cheese USA has begun making the product available in 5-ounce wedges. Not every customer can handle, or is interested in handling, a wheel of Blue cheese; the wedges open many more opportunities, Hofer-Louis says.

In addition to these imported cheeses, the company offers many other imports including the Ile de France line, an iconic brand that includes the leading imported Brie in the United States as well as a true Normandy Camembert and Chèvre.

Meanwhile, earlier this year Savencia Cheese USA implemented unique European technology in its Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, facility so it could launch an improved, upscale version of its domestically-produced classic, Grade A, rbST-free spreadable Alouette cheese line. Savencia Cheese USA has added unique toppings to each flavor along with a floret design on the cheese. A Grilled Tomato flavor has joined 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 is packaged in an updated sleeve that the company says clearly communicates what consumers can expect when they purchase the spreadable products.

This year the company also has introduced new Alouette Cheese

Dips. The cheese dips feature the brand's signature soft cheese along with vegetables and savory herbs. Flavors include Onion Medley, Cucumber Ranch and Mediterranean Vegetable.

Innovation in marketing also is at the forefront of the company's plans. Alouette Cheese is focused on providing a variety of different marketing plans and product applications.

In October, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Ile de France brand, the company, in conjunction with the French Cheese Board, sponsored a pop-up store in New York. The event included "Ambassador of Cheese" Roland Barthélemy offering media and social media influencers an immersive French cheese experience, as well as product pairings for consumers to sample and, of course, product for consumers to buy.

In February, the company participated in Cheese Day Paris and Cheese Week in New York. As part of the event, chefs highlighted cheeses from France and from around the world. In addition, the French Cheese Board hosted three days of tastings to showcase a variety of French cheeses including those from Savencia.

The company says events like these allow it to present cheese in a different way, and similar events are planned for the future.

Savencia Cheese USA also has been an award winner this past year. At the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Alouette Original Creme de Brie placed first in the Pasteurized Process Cheese Spread class and the company's Creme Fraiche placed third in the Open Class Soft Cheeses class.



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**Saxon Creamery**  
Cleveland, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Kenn Buelow, partner

*Cheese plant:* Cleveland, Wis. (European-inspired artisan cheeses; 10 types of aged cheeses, such as Goudas, Asiagos, aged Cheddar & Alpine Styles)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 275,000 lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 160,000 lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$900,000

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$1.1 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 90% retail; 10% foodservice

*Percentage of products exported:* 5%

*Website:* www.saxoncreamery.com

*A look inside:* Saxon Creamery has made its mark with awards this past year. The company's Aged Butterkase was selected as the Cheese and Butter Grand Champion at the 2016 World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest. In addition, Saxon received first place awards for its Smoked Gouda and its Feta Loaf-2(Brine G).

At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Saxon Creamery was one of the top 20 finalists with its Old English Style Cheddar aged 5 months and its Smoked Gouda aged 7 months. As such, it received first in its class for

each of these cheeses. It also placed first in its class for its Gouda w/ Serrano Peppers aged 9 months; second in its class for its Smoked Gouda aged 8 months and its Alpine Style 22 months; and third in its class for its Whole Milk Asiago (Fresh Style) aged 4 months, its Alpine Style 12 months and its Gouda Cold Pack Cheese Spread.

At the American Cheese Society contest, Saxon Creamery placed first in its class for Saxony Alpine Style — 30 month and its Asiago Fresca; second for its Snowfields with Red Chillies and Mushrooms; and tied for third in its class for Saxony Alpine Style and Snowfields Butterkase Style — 12 month.

However, this has not only been a big year for the company because of its awards. This year marks the 10th year Saxon Creamery has been in business making hand-crafted artisan cheeses.

Looking forward, the company says it hopes to grow its sales outside of the Midwest by 20 percent. The company also wants to gain product recognition with foodservice and hospitality accounts, increasing this business by 20 percent as well, according to the company.

In the past year, the company has introduced various new gourmet cold pack cheese spreads, including Big Ed's Gouda Spread, Pastures Cheddar Spread and Asiago Fresca Cheese Spread, all of which can be found in the Midwest at stores such as Festival Foods, Sendik's and Waseda Farms, as well as at some Piggly Wiggly stores, at Pastoral Artisan Cheese-Chicago and at the company's online store at www.saxoncreamery.com. In addition, the company has added Big Ed's Smokehaus Gouda, available in the Midwest at Mars Cheese Castle.

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When it comes to marketing, Saxon Creamery develops personal marketing plans with each of its customers to fit the needs of their markets.

The company also works to market its award-winning cheeses using a variety of methods, including placing add-on stickers on the labels of its cheese wedges; sending press releases to media outlets and to customers to thank them for purchasing the company's products; sharing on social media outlets, distributing emails and updating its website and newsletters.

In addition, the company utilizes the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board to help promote its products.



**Schreiber Foods Inc.**  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Mike Haddad, pres. & CEO; Larry Ferguson, chairman of

the board; Rob Byrne, VP, industry & regulatory affairs

*Dairy plants:* Tempe, Ariz.; Fullerton, Calif.; Carthage, Mo. (2); Monett, Mo.; Mt. Vernon, Mo.; Shippensburg, Pa.; Stephenville, Texas; Logan, Utah; Smithfield, Utah; Green Bay, Wis.; Richland Center, Wis. (2); West Bend, Wis.; Austria; Brazil; Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Germany (2); India (2); Mexico; Portugal; Slovakia; Spain (3)

*Estimated annual sales:* \$5 billion  
*Website:* www.schreiberfoods.com

*A look inside:* Schreiber Foods is a global, employee-owned business headquartered in Green Bay, Wisconsin. With annual sales of more than \$5 billion, it is one of the largest dairy companies in the world.

Schreiber sells its products, including cream cheese, natural cheese, process cheese and yogurt, to leading retailers, restaurants, distributors and food manufacturers around the globe.

Schreiber has more than 7,000 employees, with manufacturing and distribution facilities in the United States, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, India, Mexico, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain.

In spring 2016, Schreiber officially opened a new facility in Mexico. The plant was built with sustainability in

mind, incorporating wastewater treatment, solar panels and the potential to harness wind energy.

Also last spring, the Greater Green Bay Chamber recognized Schreiber at its Leadership Green Bay Legacy of Leadership event with the John M. and Meredith B. Rose Community Leadership Award. This award recognizes companies whose community leadership exceeds the expected.

Additionally, Schreiber Foods, along with Foremost Farms USA, last spring earned Honorable Mention in the fifth annual U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards in Chicago for their joint water treatment facility in Richland Center, Wisconsin, which generates renewable energy from wastewater coming from the two companies' dairy plants.

In July, Schreiber Dynamix, a dairy processor in India that is 51-percent owned by Schreiber Foods, launched its second aseptic food processing and packaging manufacturing facility in Fazilka, India. The state-of-the-art plant was inaugurated by India's Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal. The new facility will help further consolidate the company's position in the fast-growing aseptic beverages and cheese market. With its existing plant in Baramati, India,

running at full capacity, Schreiber says this new integrated facility will increase production capabilities and give the company a geographical advantage to cater to consumers in north India, who account for 50 percent of the country's aseptic beverage consumption.



**SCHUMAN CHEESE**  
SINCE 1945

**Schuman Cheese Inc.**  
Fairfield, New Jersey

*Key executives:* Neal Schuman, CEO; Ellen Schum, COO; Larry Schaefer, CFO; Christophe Megevand, exec. VP, cheese manufacturing; Ilana Fischer, VP, innovation & strategy

*Cheese plants:* Schuman Cheese, Fairfield, N.J. (cut & wrap wedges, shredded & gated cups & PET jars, cheese boards); Schuman Cheese Midwest: Elgin, Ill. (cut & wrap, shredded & grated bags, party trays, slices); Lake Country Dairy, Turtle Lake, Wis. (Parmesan, Romano, Asiago, Mascarpone, specialty cheese); Imperia Foods, Green

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# 2017 KEY PLAYERS

Our Exclusive Annual Profile of Who's Who in the Cheese Business

## KEY PLAYERS

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Bay, Wis. (Blue, Gorgonzola); Imperia Foods, Montfort, Wis. (Blue, Gorgonzola); Imperia Foods, Fall Creek, Wis. (cut & wrap, shredded & grated bags, party trays, slices)

Percentage of sales from cheese: 100%

Market segments for cheese: Targeted channels are retail & club, food-service, ingredients

Website: [www.SchumanCheese.com](http://www.SchumanCheese.com)

A look inside: Italian cheese company Arthur Schuman Inc., which marked 70 years of business last year, celebrated the anniversary by unveiling a new name: Schuman Cheese.

Arthur Schuman started the business, which was incorporated in 1946, with a passion for bringing the best cheese to the American market. The new moniker honors that heritage while celebrating the innovative culture that drives the company's contemporary business strategy, says Allison Schuman, national account manager and one of the founder's great-grandchildren.

"We didn't want to lose the heritage and the name, but we wanted a name that said we are the preeminent hard Italian cheese company," Allison Schuman says.

"Seventy years of operations brings growth, and it brings change," adds Neal Schuman, Allison's father and company CEO. "First and foremost, our new brand honors our proud history and the dedicated employees who have helped make my grandfather's dream a reality.

"At the same time, it underscores our innovative and forward-thinking spirit and helps ensure we are poised to keep building on that momentum," he adds.

Schuman Cheese continues to grow, most recently expanding its footprint with the addition of a 54,000-square-foot production facility in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. The new facility, known as Imperia-Fall Creek, was part of a selective asset purchase agreement with Greenwood Packaging.

The purchase, which closed in February, positions Schuman Cheese to expand its production and cold storage capabilities for customers, as well as its own growing portfolio of consumer and foodservice products. Greenwood, previously a co-manufacturing partner for Schuman Cheese, operated three production lines. In addition to integrating these lines into its operations, Schuman Cheese assumed responsibility for Greenwood's customer roster.

The company also continues to innovate with new product additions.

After a successful 2015 launch of Cello Whisps — 100 percent pure cheese baked into crispy, airy snacks — Schuman Cheese continued building the momentum by introducing two new flavors to the product line. Following on the heels of success with its original Parmesan Whisps, Cheddar Whisps earned rave reviews. Most recently,

Asiago & Pepper Jack Whisps became the line's third flavor.

In addition to their flavor and texture, Whisps' success can be attributed to a growing snacking market and consumers' increased interest in pure foods — two trends the Schuman team recognized and transformed into an opportunity to grow cheese sales, says Ellen Schum, chief operating officer.

"We have a very loyal set of consumers who are true fans of the product and are key advocates for us," Schum says. "Leveraging this passion, we implemented several social media campaigns that encouraged our fans to share their love of Whisps and talk about the taste experience and product benefits with their friends and families. This resulted

in several fan-created videos and posts that garnered amazing word-of-mouth exposure for Cello Whisps."

Cello Parmesan Whisps received a gold medal at the World Cheese Awards this past year.

Schuman Cheese also implemented a refresh for its flagship brand, Cello, this past year with the goal of bringing a new, modern look to the brand and helping set it apart from other brands in the cheese case. The refresh kicked off with a new package design that emphasizes the key elements consumers look for when shopping for cheese, such as flavor profiles and aging statements.

The company recently launched a new website that highlights its heritage in the industry and passion for bringing

amazing experiences to fellow cheese lovers.

The company also is growing its Yellow Door Creamery brand with a line inspired by the complex cheeses from the Alps.

"This is a passion project for our head cheesemaker, who grew up enjoying this style of cheese during his upbringing in the French Alps," Schum says. "Our alpine-inspired collection has outstanding flavors that are a personal best for our award-winning cheesemaker."

In addition, the company's specialty import cheese team continues to source high quality cheeses from around the world. The company recently added Organic Irish Cheddar and a line of

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Spanish sheep and goat's milk cheeses to its portfolio.

On the contest circuit, Schuman Cheese enjoyed a number of successes both nationally and internationally.

At this spring's U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, Schuman Cheese's Montforte Bleu Wheel and Yellow Door Creamery Harissa Hand Rubbed Fontina both placed first in their classes and also were selected as two of the top 20 finalists. Additionally, the company's Cello Shredded Parmesan placed first in Open Class Shredded Cheese and Cello Copper Kettle Parmesan placed third in its class.

In addition to a gold for its Whisps at the World Cheese Awards, Schuman Cheese received a silver for its Asiago and three additional bronze awards.

At the International Cheese Awards, Schuman Cheese received top awards for its Cello Artisan Parmesan, Gorgonzola and Yellow Door Creamery Harissa Hand Rubbed Fontina and a third-place award for Cello Whisps.

Continuing its award-winning streak, Yellow Door Creamery Harissa Hand Rubbed Fontina also won first place in its class at the American Cheese Society competition, as did the company's Cello Thick & Smooth Mascarpone.

Schuman Cheese continues to actively advocate the importance of

quality and authenticity in the cheese industry. The company has introduced a "trust mark," an on-package seal intended to verify product quality and manufacturing integrity. The True Cheese trust mark is appearing on Schuman cheeses and snacks sold in supermarkets and mass retail channels.

The True Cheese label means the verified product is made only with milk, cultures, salt, enzymes, is aged as required, and that any use of an anti-caking ingredient is at or below industry accepted levels and properly labeled. Schuman Cheese has a product testing agreement with Covance Food Solutions to independently test True Cheese labeled products.

Schuman Cheese also continues to

invest in giving to others.

Together with its industry partners and employees, this past summer Schuman Cheese raised \$230,000 in support of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

The company also participates in holiday giving programs and various local school and civic causes, including supporting community food banks through food drives, monetary donations and employee volunteer events and supporting the Susan G. Komen North Jersey chapter and the Junior Achievement student mentoring program.



Crafted in Wisconsin

**Shullsburg Creamery**  
Shullsburg, Wisconsin

*Ownership:* Mid-West Dairymen's Co., Rockford, Ill.

*Key executives:* Scott Stocker, CEO; Dennis Tonak, pres.; Andrew Luke, exec. VP

*Cheese plant:* Shullsburg, Wis. (Colby block, Colby longhorn, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Cheddar, Cheddar curd, Colby Jack block & longhorn, specialty natural-flavored cheeses, custom creations for specific customers); Packaging operation, Shullsburg, Wis. (cutting & wrapping all cheese styles, fresh Cheddar curd packaging, private label)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 3 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* 13 million lbs.

*Estimated 2016 sales:* \$40 million

*Projected 2017 sales:* \$42 million

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 99%

*Market segments for cheese:* 70% retail; 29% foodservice; 1% ingredients

*Percentage of products exported:* 1.25%

*Website:* [www.shullsburgcreamery.com](http://www.shullsburgcreamery.com)

*A look inside:* Since Shullsburg Creamery opened an 8,700-square-foot cheese factory in the Shullsburg Historic District in August 2015, the company has added an experimental vat for the production of high quality flavored natural cheeses and innovative cheese styles. The factory, currently producing about 60,000 pounds of cheese each week, has a 75-foot observation deck with guide books that explain cheesemaking and is environmentally friendly with no odors or pollutants entering the waste stream, says Scott Stocker, CEO, Shullsburg Creamery.

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In 2006, the Stocker family partnered with Mid-West Dairymen's Co. to maintain the Shullsburg brand and to maintain and grow its market position. Shullsburg's brand promise is to provide high quality Wisconsin cheese, made with high quality milk, to the marketplace, Stocker says. The 120 dairy farms committed to supplying the brand's cheeses with rbST-free and clean milk help secure product quality, he adds.

This summer, Shullsburg Creamery is introducing its new retail packaged, ready-to-serve party trays. The newest arrival, available now in the market, is the "Hot Damn" party tray, which contains presliced Ghost Pepper, Habanero, Carolina Reaper and Extra Hot Jalapeno Pepper cheeses.

A new cheese variety in development, a dill pickle-flavored Monterey Jack called "Jack and Dill," is expected to be released mid-summer, Stocker says.

The company also continues to purchase more than 50 types of natural and processed cheese, mostly from factories producing Wisconsin cheese. The cheeses are aged at the creamery's warehouse, then graded and marketed throughout the Midwest. By purchasing these cheeses, the Shullsburg brand can carry a broad range of cheeses in response to consumer demand while maintaining high quality, Stocker says.

In the past year, Shullsburg Creamery also started television advertising in select retail markets.

"It's been kind of a fun project," Stocker says. The commercials do not focus on a single product but aim to highlight Shullsburg brands overall, including Shullsburg Wisconsin Cheese, Shullsburg Creamery, Shullsburg Classics, Shullsburg Lite, Wisconsin Fresh Cut and Italia Brand Cheese.

Shullsburg also is near completion of a 5-year redesign on its packaging, labels and logos.

Shullsburg was awarded Grand Champion for its Colby at the 2016 Illinois State Fair.



**Tillamook County Creamery Association**  
Tillamook, Oregon

**Key executives:** Patrick Criteser, pres., CEO; Mike Bever, VP, operations; David Booth, VP, sales; Sheri Cole, VP, R&D & quality; Steve Patience, VP, ingredients; Tara Parry, VP, human resources; Linda Pearce, CFO; Joe Prewett, VP, branded categories; John Russell, VP, marketing; Mark Wusten-

berg, VP, producer relations; Shannon Lourenzo, chairman of the board; Casey Allen, vice chairman of the board

**Cheese plant:** Tillamook County Creamery Association, Tillamook, Ore. (Cheddar varieties include: Medium, Sharp, Special Reserve Extra Sharp, Medium White, Sharp White, Vintage Extra Sharp White, 3-year Vintage Extra Sharp White, Smoked, reduced fat & kosher. Other products: ice cream, whey, packaging); Columbia River Processing Inc., Boardman, Ore. (Medium & Sharp Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby, Colby Jack, Pepper Jack, Hot Habanero Jack); Columbia River Technologies LLC, Boardman, Ore., joint venture with R.D. Offutt Co. (WPC-80, lactose)

**Website:** www.tillamook.com

**A look inside:** Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA) is rebuilding its Visitors Center in Tillamook, Oregon, to help meet the growing needs of the more than 1 million guests who visit the Tillamook Cheese Factory each year. The 38,500-square-foot project commenced this spring, with an estimated completion in summer 2018.

"This new facility will provide us with an opportunity to bring to life TCCA's story in a much more compelling way, from our vital history as a farmer-owned co-op, to our modern day commitment to Dairy Done Right," says Patrick Criteser, president and CEO, TCCA. "This project represents a significant investment in our local presence here in Tillamook County and one that we anticipate will attract even more visitors to our area."

Given the extensive nature of the rebuild project, the existing Visitors Center at the Tillamook Cheese Factory was closed, and during the remodel, TCCA is operating a temporary Visitors Center on an adjacent section of its property.

TCCA also has refreshed its line of shredded cheese, replacing its finely shredded cheese with a new Farmstyle Cut Shredded Cheese, a bigger, thicker cut than the average shred that allows for more flavor per shred as well as smoother melting. The new offerings contain no cellulose and are made to deliver melt, stretch, texture and flavor for specific culinary uses, according to TCCA.

This refresh includes a packaging redesign with a matte finish as well as the addition of a Sharp White Cheddar variety, which was created in response to increased consumer demand for white Cheddars, TCCA says.

Now available in 10 varieties, the Farmstyle Cut Shreds come in 8-ounce packages, with select varieties available in 16-ounce and 32-ounce packaging.

TCCA has made changes in some of its ice cream and yogurt products as well. It launched two new premium special batch ice cream flavors, Monster Cookie and Oregon Strawberry Lemonade, in its family-sized containers. In addition, Tillamook launched two new flavors, Frosted Carrot Cake and Cardamom Almond Butter, in its smaller sized, super premium ice cream line.

TCCA also has updated its traditional lowfat yogurt line in response to consumer requests for an option with lower sugar content. The new Good & Creamy yogurt contains 25 percent less sugar and more protein compared to the previous recipe. The Good & Creamy line also received a packaging redesign and two new flavors, including Hood River Pear and Maple Vanilla, which add on to the line's 14 existing flavors. Good & Creamy yogurts are available for a suggested retail price

of \$0.79 for each 6-ounce single-serve cup and can be found in major retailers throughout the West.

Additionally, the cooperative launched a new line of Farmstyle Whole Milk Greek Yogurt in six new flavors, including Northwest Blackberry, Strawberry Black Currant, Mexican Vanilla, Raspberry Fig, Clover Honey and Meyer Lemon Pear. The line includes buttermilk cultures for a creamier, less tart taste, according to TCCA. It is available for a suggested retail price of \$1.39 for each 5.3-ounce single-serve container and can be found at major retailers throughout the West.

Along with several new products, TCCA has earned several awards this year. At the 2017 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, TCCA placed third in the Monterey Jack class. In addition, it placed third in its class for its Farmstyle Cheddar Jack Shreds.

At the 2016 American Cheese Society contest, TCCA received second-place awards for its White Sharp Cheddar and its Hot Habanero Jack. It also took thirds for its Vintage White Extra Sharp 4 Year Reserve Cheddar and its Salted Sweet Cream Butter.

In addition, TCCA also earned several awards at the 2016 International Cheese Awards, including a gold medal for Best USA Mild Cheddar.

At the 2016 National Milk Producers Federation Championship Cheese Contest, TCCA placed first in its class for its Monterey Jack.

At the 2016 Oregon Dairy Industries Dairy Products Contest, TCCA brought home firsts for its Oregon Strawberry ice cream, Vanilla Bean ice cream, Chocolate ice cream, Medium Cheddar, Sharp Cheddar and Oregon Strawberry lowfat yogurt.

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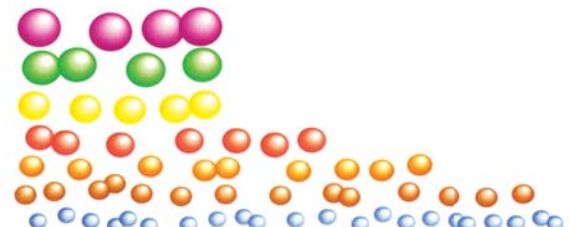
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**Winona Foods Inc.**  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

*Key executives:* Terry Steinmann, pres.; David Meyer, exec. VP; Carl Buchinger, CFO; Bob Starkey, VP, business development; Jay Wistenberg, general mgr.

*Cheese plants:* Green Bay, Wis. (shelf stable process cheese; process cheese sauces in cups, pouches & squeeze bottles; process cheese & cream cheese spreads portion control to bulk; natural cheese bulk, slices, shreds, cuts, cubes; cold pack; Winona Pure Oil line); Howard, Wis. (cheese conversion, national distribution); Kaukauna, Wis. (shredding, cubing processed & natural cheeses)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* 220 million lbs.

*Market segments for cheese:* 10% retail; 55% foodservice; 35% ingredients

*Percentage of products exported:* 5%

*Website:* [www.winonafoods.com](http://www.winonafoods.com)

*A look inside:* Winona Foods this spring embarked on a major expansion project, building a new redistribution and cheese converting facility in Howard, Wisconsin. With direct rail access, this new facility will provide additional avenues for distribution

and drive continued growth of Winona's foodservice, chain account and specialty cheese offerings nationwide, says Dave Meyer, vice president, Winona Foods.

"We are excited to open this new facility," Meyer says. "Winona Foods is extremely proud of our growth over the past 22 years, and we expect this new plant will complement our suppliers and customers."

The company invested about \$30 million to build the new 187,000-square-foot facility on a 22-acre site, with land available for additional growth, and expects it to be complete by the end of 2017. It will include advanced distribution systems, expanded efficient cooler distribution, additional offices and manufacturing.

The construction and operations of the new facility will implement many eco-friendly systems and green-concentrated options, Meyers adds, and the company anticipates it will create 120 jobs.

"Redistribution plays a really good part in our business and separates us from the rest of the industry," says Bob Starkey, vice president business development, Winona Foods. "We're a solution-driven company. We're able to offer complete redistribution programs not only in foodservice, but for others."

Starkey notes that there are about 2,000 active items offered at Winona Foods at a time.

"That facility will give us the ability to increase our capacity and amount of items and allow our company to continue to grow," he says.

This past year, Winona continued to grow its portion-controlled foods business, which includes cheese and sauces in grab-and-go packaging. This convenient packaging has grown not only in traditional retail channels but also in club stores and foodservice, Starkey says.

"In developing products, you want to hit as many pieces of business as you can," Starkey says. "We're creating, building, developing new items and want to make sure they lay over foodservice, retail and club stores."

Last fall, Winona Foods was awarded Vendor of the Year for Sales and Service Excellence by US Foods for the second year in a row, and the third such award in the last four years. Winona was chosen for this award based on a variety of metrics, including sales growth, gross margin improvement, merchandising support, customer support, product quality, divisional sales support, exclusive brands and logistics.

As Winona looks to grow its capacity and distribution, it also is making investments in a quality and innovative workforce. In addition to the staff it will add at its new facility, Winona's Kaukauna, Wisconsin, facility has

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been approved for extended run and now has three full shifts covering 24 hours a day. The company also is adding a third shift at its Green Bay cheese plant and has brought on new talent to help in social media.

"We're continually looking not only to redefine our current staff, but gathering new talent as well for production and sales," Starkey says. "We'll continue to invest in infrastructure and make investments in employees. We're really trying to improve, with everything we're going to take on with new labeling laws and ingredient statements. Our goal is to keep redefining the way we structure ourselves in quality assurance and marketing."

Since the company does a lot of private label business, Starkey says the company does not always have a lot of name recognition even among those in the industry. However, Winona is looking to change that through marketing and attending industry trade shows, as well as providing innovative products.

"Winona is one of the best kept secrets in the industry," Starkey says. "We're trying to find ways to differentiate ourselves from the competition. What can we do different? We're not going to actively market Cheddar shreds and sliced cheese. We want to create unique Winona Food-specific products we can call our own."



**Yancey's Fancy Inc.**  
Corfu, New York

*Key executives:* Wayne Henry, pres. & CEO; Brian Bailey, VP, operations; Rob Johnson, VP, sales

*Cheese plant:* 857 Main Road, Corfu, N.Y. (Cheddar, Bergentost, Chastinet, Gouda, Cheddar curds); 8818 Brickhouse Corners, Corfu, N.Y. (process Cheddars, Cheddar shreds, sliced Cheddars, artisan samplers; packaging operations & warehouse/distribution)

*Estimated annual cheese produced:* More than 10 million lbs.

*Estimated annual cheese marketed:* More than 10 million lbs.

*Percentage of sales from cheese:* 100%

*Market segments for cheese:* 85% retail; 15% foodservice

*Website:* www.yanceysfancy.com

*A look inside:* Having moved its process cheese manufacturing to its new 112,000-square-foot facility — located just three-quarters of a mile from its original facility — last year, Yancey's Fancy Inc. now is working to expand its lines of natural cheese and increase production at the company's original facility.

"We're very tight on manufacturing capacity for natural cheese," says Brian Bailey, vice president of operations, Yancey's Fancy, noting that the expansion of the original facility will allow the company to create space to increase natural cheese production to meet consumer demand. Bailey adds that the facility's new capacity is expected to be more than 2.5 times its current capacity.

Construction is expected to begin in June this year and be complete by late 2017 or early 2018.

The expansion will add new equipment in an effort to increase output, although the company plans to keep its many artisan processes — such as cheddaring — done by hand to preserve authenticity, Bailey says.

The company also has released new cheeses in the past year. Available to the market starting late last year are Hatch Chile Cheddar, made from Hatch chile peppers from New Mexico, and Bacon Ranch Cheddar, a mixture of smooth and creamy ranch with a bacon crunch.

Recently hitting the shelves is the company's new Ghost Pepper Cheddar, offering a revamped flavor profile and making it one of the hottest cheeses the company makes. The products are available at retailers nationally. The new cheeses are available in 10-pound wheels, 7.6-ounce wedges and, soon, 8-ounce stick formats.

The company aims to release three to

five new products each year, Bailey says, adding that there are some additional products in the pipeline that he hopes will be available shortly after mid-year.

In early 2016, Yancey's Fancy signed a multiyear renewal to continue as the Presenting Sponsor of the Finger Lakes Wine Festival at Watkins Glen International, which was voted the Best Wine Festival in the United States in 2016 by *USA Today's* Readers' Choice Poll, the company says.

In 2015, Yancey's Fancy, which has been a sponsor of the Buffalo Sabres hockey team and the Buffalo Bills, became the first company to simultaneously partner with every sports team property under the Pegula Sports and Entertainment umbrella. The 5-year contract includes sponsorships of the Buffalo Bills football team, Buffalo Sabres and Rochester Americans hockey teams, and Buffalo Bandits lacrosse team.

Yancey's Fancy was named Grand Champion of the 2016 New York State Fair Dairy Products Competition, scoring 99 out of 100 possible points for its Chastinet.

The company also placed first in its class for its Chastinet at the 2016 American Cheese Society contest. CMN

*Sources for plant and sales information: company reports, prior media coverage, press releases, other publicly-available information and interviews. NOTE: For the sake of clarity and consistency, Cheese Market News has elected not to put registered or trademark symbols after any of the product names referred to in these profiles and assumes no liability connected to this decision. Cheese Market News provides "Key Players" as a service to its readers. The publisher and editors do not assume liability for errors or omissions. Cheese Market News does not endorse the products of any advertiser.*

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## NEWS/BUSINESS



### Murray's offers Cheesemojis sticker packs

**NEW YORK** — Murray's Cheese recently introduced Cheesemojis sticker packs that can be downloaded on Apple or Android devices and used in messaging apps or via the keyboard.

Murray's offers a free pack of Cheesemojis to express some common everyday feelings. It also offers

premium Cheesemojis via in-app purchase that include "extra hilarious" stickers, "unbelievable" puns and other fun-themed content.

Murray's Cheesemojis app can be downloaded via the App Store or Google Play.

For more information about Murray's, visit [www.murrayscheese.com](http://www.murrayscheese.com). CMN

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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## Golden State Warriors' Klay Thompson partners with chocolate milk marketing campaign

WASHINGTON — Professional basketball star Klay Thompson has officially joined Built With Chocolate Milk in a new marketing campaign set to spotlight his distinct approach to training, performance and muscle recovery.

Known for his clutch basketball performances and long-range jump shots, Thompson began to incorporate lowfat chocolate milk into his nutrition program when his dad, a former professional basketball player, gave him chocolate milk after his youth games. Thompson's affinity for chocolate milk as his go-to recovery beverage grew when he later learned about its "three point play" that many other recovery drinks can't make: nutrients to refuel muscles; natural protein to rebuild muscles; and backed by science.

"With 82 basketball games a season, grueling practices and gym workouts, plus a hectic travel schedule, I need to take care of my body and take my recovery routine seriously," Thompson says. "Thanks to my dad, chocolate milk has been my go-to recovery drink since I was a kid, so joining the Built With Chocolate Milk campaign is a given."

As one of the stars on the Golden State Warriors and touted as one of the most dynamic professional basketball players, Thompson is the face of the new Built With Chocolate Milk TV, print and digital campaign, which debuted Feb. 15. Later this season, Thompson also will star in a Built With Chocolate Milk digital content series produced by CBS Sports that is set to play off of his widely-known superstition of triangles. Fans will have the opportunity to share

their own superstitions for their chance to win signed gear.

Thompson joins a lineup of elite athletes who make chocolate milk their post-workout drink of choice, such as Ironman Triathlon Champion Miranda Carfrae, U.S. gold medal swimmers Tyler Clary and Jessica Hardy, and professional hockey player Zack Parise.

"When you look at the caliber of professional athletes who are drinking chocolate milk after exercise, it's no surprise that more people are trusting

it as their go-to recovery beverage," says Miranda Abney, marketing director, Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP), the group behind the Built With Chocolate Milk campaign. "Sales for chocolate milk have steadily increased as the demand for simple and effective recovery tools are at an all-time high, and we're excited to continue to inspire and inform everyday athletes through our new partnership with Klay."

For more information, visit [www.BuiltWithChocolateMilk.com](http://www.BuiltWithChocolateMilk.com). CMN

## Unilever plans to exit spreads business

LONDON — Unilever recently announced organizational changes to help accelerate shareholder value, including a decision to exit its spreads business that includes brands such as Country Crock, Promise and I Can't Believe It's Not Butter.

Unilever's board recently undertook a comprehensive review of the company's model of long-term shareholder value creation, and this review highlighted the opportunity to go "faster and further," says Paul Polman, CEO, Unilever.

"The faster pace of change that we are seeing in our markets and competitive set requires us to continue to set the bar higher," Polman says, adding that this was the main driver for the implementation of the "Connected 4 Growth" program Unilever announced last year to drive growth and profitability through growing the core business through innovation, expanding fast-growing segments and building in new channels.

"The progress already made with Connected 4 Growth allows us to now accelerate the program," Polman says. "This will be further enabled by the next

step, which is the establishment of an integrated foods and refreshment unit, a leaner and more focused business that will continue to benefit from our global scale and footprint."

In addition to this new integrated food and refreshments unit, which will be located in the Netherlands, Unilever says it will accelerate the active management of its portfolio through "bolt-on acquisitions and disposals."

In 2015, Unilever set up a separate baking, cooking and spreads unit to allow greater focus on the issues facing the business. While the unit has responded well to this focus, Unilever says the underlying category remains challenged in developed markets, so it has made a decision to launch a process to either sell or demerge spreads.

The company says it maintains its full-year outlook of underlying sales growth of 3-5 percent. Reflecting on its confidence in the outcome of its accelerated plans, it intends to raise its dividend by 12 percent for the coming year. CMN

## IRI: Dairy Pure, Sargento Balanced Breaks among most successful 2016 new products

CHICAGO — With more than \$1.16 billion in sales, Dairy Pure was named the most successful consumer packaged goods (CPG) launch of last year in IRI's 2016 New Product Pacesetters report.

Also in the list of Top 10 Food and Beverage Brands were DairyPure Creamers with \$54.9 million in 2016 sales coming in at No. 8, and Sargento Balanced Breaks with \$54.2 million in sales coming in at No. 9.

"Consumers want fresh, unprocessed, simple foods that are made with ingredients that they can understand, because nutrition has become a first line of defense for living well," IRI notes, adding that antibiotic-free foods (ABF) increasingly are becoming more popular, especially in dairy products, meat and poultry.

"DairyPure, the top-selling beverage launch of the year, is an example of an ABF solution that is hitting the mark," IRI says. "Consumed by 42 percent of U.S. households, DairyPure is the result of a consolidation of a number of regional brands. To ensure consistency and purity, regional dairies are required to meet stringent sourcing, processing and testing processes, which are consistent with DairyPure's Five-Point Purity Promise."

DairyPure, owned by Dean Foods, also came in No. 1 on IRI's list of Top 10 Convenience Store Brands in 2016 at \$385.9 million in convenience store channel sales.

To download the full report, visit [www.iriworldwide.com/en-US/Insights/Publications/New-Product-Pacesetters-2016](http://www.iriworldwide.com/en-US/Insights/Publications/New-Product-Pacesetters-2016). CMN

## 'Wisconsin Foodie' episode features Crave Brothers

WATERLOO, Wis. — Television viewers got an insider's look at Crave Brothers Farm and Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, Waterloo, Wisconsin, on a recent segment of the Emmy Award-winning PBS television series, "Wisconsin Foodie," a program dedicated to discovering stories behind food and helping to promote a local, sustainable economy.

In the segment, George Crave gives program host, Kyle Cherek, a tour of the farm and farmstead cheese facility. The focus of the segment is big dairy, done right.

The televised tour encompasses fields, barns and the cheesemaking facility where Crave Brothers' fresh Mozzarella is made with milk from the family's dairy cows. Viewers also get a close-up look at the company's biodigester that turns waste into energy to power the dairy farm, cheesemaking plant and about 300 homes in the community.

To view the segment, visit <http://video.wpt.org/video/2365978917/>. CMN



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## NEWS/BUSINESS



## UDI, USDEC highlight dairy proteins during joint Dairy for Global Nutrition conference

**BOISE, Idaho** — United Dairymen of Idaho (UDI), in partnership with the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC), co-hosted the Dairy for Global Nutrition International Conference, titled “Dairy Nutrition: An Engine for Economic Growth,” May 10-11 in Boise, Idaho.

This was UDI's first co-hosted event with USDEC that focused on global nutrition, according to Karianne Fallow, CEO, UDI.

The conference, designed to inform the aid community, featured international researchers, policymakers and development leaders, who presented the latest evidence on the impact of dairy nutrients on the prevention and management of stunting, moderate malnutrition as well as field research on treatment of severe malnutrition and how dairy-containing supplements can help save lives, improve an individual's educational achievement and future earning potential and help drive economic growth and promote peace, according to organizers.

The event aimed to get attendees thinking about the benefits of dairy proteins in the first 1,000 days of life and beyond for use in programs conducted

in compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, as well as World Health Assembly Resolutions and World Health Organization recommendations, according to organizers.

Fallow adds that the forum worked to share evidence and build trust in the nutritious value of dairy products, which may help grow demand for the products.

Christie Vilsack, education advisor and former senior advisor for international education at the U.S. Agency for International Development, was a keynote speaker at the event, where she noted the value of school feeding in preventing malnutrition and stunting.

“Kids can't learn if they can't eat,” she says, adding the event helped her learn more about the role of dairy proteins in preventing malnutrition and stunting and, in turn, helping kids in developing countries become prosperous adults who can contribute to the economy.

“I hope to see (the conference) continue,” Vilsack says.

The event also hosted a dairy farm tour to educate guests — many of whom



Photo by Greg Kreller at United Dairymen of Idaho

**DAIRY FARM TOUR** — Nampa, Idaho, dairy farmer Mike Siegersma, center, leads a tour of his Sunridge Dairy May 10 as part of the Dairy for Global Nutrition International Conference.

had never visited a dairy, Fallow says. With about 100 attendees present at the conference, she says the event was a success.

“We created a great deal of momentum with our first conference

and plan to do follow-up work to capitalize on that energy,” Fallow says. While there are no detailed plans at this time, it is likely another similar forum will be held in the future, she adds. **CMN**

## Land O'Lakes reports first quarter results

**ARDEN HILLS, Minn.** — Land O'Lakes Inc. recently reported quarterly net sales of \$3.7 billion and net earnings of \$110 million in the first quarter ending March 31, 2017, compared with 2016 first-quarter net sales of \$3.6 billion and net earnings of \$104 million.

“Overall first quarter performance for 2017 continues the trend of year-over-year growth for our organization despite increased complexity and headwinds across the marketplace,” says Chris Policinski, president and CEO, Land O'Lakes Inc. “Our growing focus spans from farm-to-fork view of the marketplace as we continue to invest in value-added innovation in all four of our business units: Land O'Lakes Dairy Foods, Purina Feed, WinField United Crop Inputs and Land O'Lakes SUSTAIN.”

During the first quarter, Land O'Lakes announced the acquisition of Vermont Creamery to accelerate growth in its Dairy Foods business. The company also announced last month its increasing commitment to shape the future of environmental sustainability across the agricultural value chain. The announcement was made in partnership with other suppliers of Wal-Mart.

Land O'Lakes says its first-quarter earnings benefited from strong performance in Dairy Foods, Animal Feed and Crop Inputs segments. Earnings in Dairy Foods, which includes the company's Land O'Lakes brand, were driven by strong volumes in foodservice and improved margins in retail-branded products. **CMN**

## Rabobank launches venture capital fund

**NEW YORK** — Rabobank recently announced it is launching the Rabo Food & Agri Innovation Fund, part of Rabo Private Equity. The fund plans to invest in high-potential, early-stage food and ag companies in Western Europe and the United States.

Rabobank says one of the objectives it envisions is the promotion of innovation in the food and ag space.

“The fund focuses on companies that are in support of Rabobank's Banking for Food strategy,” says Lizette Sint, global head of Rabo Private Equity. “This strategy focuses on contributing to food security in the context of a rapidly-growing world population, changing demographics and consumption pat-

terns, and an increasingly complex food system.”

The investment fund will be complementary to other activities Rabobank supports in the food and ag innovation space and will support early-stage companies who, with investor support, can become tomorrow's “winners in the space,” Sint adds.

The fund will identify and target companies that contribute to Rabobank's Banking for Food Principles: increasing the availability of food; improving access to food; promoting balanced, healthy nutrition; and increasing stability in the food and ag supply chains.

For more information, visit [www.rfai.com](http://www.rfai.com). **CMN**

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# NEWS/BUSINESS



## World Milk Day kicks off June Dairy Month; regional organizations plan celebrations

MADISON, Wis. — June Dairy Month marks a time to celebrate dairy farmers and raise awareness of dairy products.

The month's festivities kicked off with World Milk Day June 1. World Milk Day first was initiated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, according to the Midwest Dairy Association. It marks the importance of milk as part of a healthy and balanced diet, the dairy industry's global contributions to economic development and agriculture, and its commitment to sustainability and protecting the environment, the association says.

In honor of World Milk Day, Dairy Management Inc. and its 18 state and regional checkoff offices took part in a nationwide milk toast this year.

The toast was comprised of short video segments filmed by each check-off partner, where staff and/or farmers raised their milk glass. The toast moved from the East Coast to the West Coast throughout the day, with each checkoff partner posting its video segment to social media or local area websites, according to Kristi Spence, senior vice president, Dairy Council of Utah/Nevada.

The initiative aimed to get everyone in the checkoff involved and bring light to the new "Undeniably Dairy" campaign, a multiyear campaign spearheaded by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, Spence says.

She adds the Undeniably Dairy campaign is an opportunity to reintroduce

people to dairy products and introduce them to dairy facts, and it is unprecedented in that its goal is to bring the entire dairy community together. (See "Dairy industry looks to engage consumers in new campaign" in the May 19, 2017, issue of Cheese Market News.)

The toast also aimed to gain global recognition and encourage everyone to raise a glass in honor of World Milk Day. To get involved, people could post a picture of themselves raising a glass on social media, using the hashtag #WorldMilkDay.

### • Local awareness, education

While World Milk Day aimed to raise awareness both nationally and internationally, a sampling of initiatives aim to bring dairy awareness to classrooms

and local communities throughout June Dairy Month.

In addition to participating in the toast, the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (WMMB) helped fourth graders across the state celebrate Wisconsin's dairy farming tradition with "Curds in the Classroom," delivering Henning's Wisconsin cheese curds to 1,000 fourth grade classrooms June 1.

"Wisconsin fourth graders have spent the year learning about the history of the state and the impact Wisconsin dairy farm families have on the economy on a both local and national level," says Laura Wilford, director, WMMB's Wisconsin Dairy Council. "Curds in the Classroom" is a fun way to celebrate the end of the school year and the start of a month honoring those families who make it possible for all of us to call America's Dairyland home."

WMMB also invites Wisconsinites to attend dairy farm breakfasts throughout the state to celebrate the month.

Some Wisconsin residents never have had a chance to visit a dairy farm, says Suzanne Fanning, vice president of national product communications, WMMB, adding that the breakfasts aim to educate Wisconsin residents while also serving as entertainment and a way to celebrate dairy farmers. More than 70 breakfasts will take place this month, with the majority of them happening on dairy farms.

WMMB staff will be present at several farm breakfasts, where they will have interactive booths set up to provide families with facts about the Wisconsin dairy industry and give them an idea of what day-to-day operations on the farm look like, Fanning says. The booths also will have giveaways and photo opportunities with June, a life-size dairy cow mascot, she says. To learn more, visit [dairydaysofsummer.com](http://dairydaysofsummer.com).

In addition, the Midwest Dairy Association, representing Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma, encourages people to get to know a Midwest dairy farm family by attending a June Dairy Month event in their state or by meeting a Midwest dairy farm family online; take the Dairy 3 For Me pledge to consume three servings of dairy daily; and include dairy as part of meals and snacks.

Meanwhile, the California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) focuses June Dairy Month activities in California by partnering with the governor's office to declare the month "Real California Milk Month" in celebration of dairy families and their economic contribution to the state, says Jennifer Giamboni, director of communications, CMAB.

CMAB and the California Milk Processor Board also are partnering to support an information initiative around the availability of free summer meal programs for students throughout the state so they have access to healthy food during the break between the school year, Giamboni says. The information initiative is spearheaded by the Dairy Council of California in support of USDA's Summer Meals program. CMN

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