

Congratulations 2016 Scholarship Winners

We wish to recognize and congratulate the recipients of this year's Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Scholarships. The goal of this program is to provide scholarships to members of our cooperative's families who wish to continue their post high school education in Agriculture at a two year technical school or a four year university. Wishing you all much success in your future careers!



Sydney Bursch



Madeline Lindahl



Justin Nelson



Quincy Scherber

(Not pictured: Sawyer Tietz)

**Barron County - June 4th
Hungry Hollow Showgrounds**

**Buffalo County - June 4th
TBA**

**Pepin County - June 18th
Poeschel Hidden Valley**

**Pierce County - June 18th
Lee Allen & Mary Jo Huppert Farm**

**Buffalo County - June 25th
Heike Farms, Mondovi**



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/EllsworthCheese



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May 2016

Guinness World Record - Largest Cheese Display



There's a new Guinness World Record for the "Largest Display of Cheese Varieties" and Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery took part!

More than 500 cheeses from different countries were on display at a dairy expo in China. Our Cooperative had 60 artisan cheese varieties, plus 5 flavors of our cheese curds, as part of the display.

In all, 24 Wisconsin cheese producers/distributors provided 417 cheese varieties.

We not only had the privilege of participating in the fun, but also acted as the central shipping point for all of the participating Wisconsin Cheese companies. All of the cheese products were shipped to us for storage until the final shipment day. Special thanks to our own Gina Klecker, who took on the big task of tracking all of the incoming product, repacking it for export and making sure all of the paperwork needed was completed.

Because this event was covered by both national and provincial media, it was a unique opportunity to introduce Chinese consumers to Wisconsin cheese. China is becoming a nation of consumers, and they are interested in purchasing high-quality Western foods, including dairy products.

A video news feature from China Xinhua News was posted to our Facebook page and the post was showered with likes and comments from fans. Visit Facebook.com/EllsworthCheese to view this interesting clip of the expo.

News Bites...

Federal Survey Results Announced...

41 farms were chosen for our Federal Farm Survey. Overall Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery received a score of 91, with four farms receiving scores of 98 and above.

Please join us in congratulating Jeremy and Carrie Bartos and Tim and Marne Peterson on their scores of 100, and Keith Frye and Ronald Kannel on their scores of 98. We couldn't be more pleased with the results.

And our entire organization expresses sincere gratitude to each member of every patron farm family. Your cooperation and preparation did not go unnoticed.

Ellsworth Creamery Named "Best of..."

The Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery was honored to be voted 'Best Tourism Destination/Attraction' in the area. The award program is through the Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce, however, it was the votes of community members who determined the winner. A commemorative poster was presented during an award banquet in February and is on display in the Ellsworth Retail Store. Our retail stores have become daytrip "destinations" attracting thousands of tourists annually, drawing 75% of their traffic from outside of the area, mainly the Twin Cities.

Take-n-Bake Pizzas at our Retail Stores ...

We've been testing new Take-n-Bake pizza options at our retail stores. Along with our usual varieties, specially designed flavor combinations, featuring our specialty cheeses and crumbles, are being offered for a limited time. Buffalo Chicken Pizza and Pizza Dippers are two recent best sellers! Watch our Facebook page for new pizzas to be announced as they become available. Let us know which are your favorites!

Milk Quality Award Winners

At Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, it all starts at the farm. We look to our producers and require they meet strict quality standards. We recognize and reward their efforts by naming our top three farm Milk Quality Award Winners. It's a tight race each year, and we're happy to announce our 2015 winners:

FIRST PLACE: LNB Farms, Bloomer, WI. *Pictured: Brian Boese*

SECOND PLACE: Jon & Wendy Meyer, Lake City, MN.

THIRD PLACE: Maple Leaf Acres, Inc., Elk Mound, WI. *Pictured: Loren Hanson*

Congratulations and thank you to these winners, and the dedication of all our family farms, for producing milk of the highest quality!



Going Small to Go Big

By Paul Bauer, CEO, Manager
paulb@ellsworthcreamery.net

Instead of our usual discussion of the markets, which we have very little impact upon, this quarter I want to share our strategy for making our portion of the dairy dollar bigger... We are thinking small to go big. By small we mean smaller packages and smaller curds.

Typically in cheese making you want the cheese to be one big chunk. However, in the curd-making process the goal is individual pieces. This process yields a fair amount of small bits of cheese that do not knit together well; small bits of cheese that most would consider a byproduct.

However, we see profits here. We're currently promoting these leftover bits as Cheese Curd Crumbles and received a USDA grant to assist us in our marketing efforts. One of the main selling attributes of crumbles is that they don't melt well. This allows for unique foodservice applications as an ingredient in other products. Our sales team has been showing Crumbles to interested parties and are getting some traction. However, the full value of this effort will begin to be seen in the next few months, with the real results becoming apparent a few years out when the product is more established in the marketplace.

High-end users find these small curds desirable, which is interesting considering that in the past we placed so much emphasis on making curds large. Generally these users are chefs looking to make Poutine, a fried potatoes and gravy dish topped with melted white curds. They've inspired us to maintain an open mind about our products and creatively consider all options in the market.

Another go small application is the individual size 2 oz. package of cheese curds. We launched this smaller package last year and are now gaining ground. We are currently co-branding this product with another company, supplying the individual packages for the school/government bidding market. Next, we will go after the convenience store market under our own brand. If the consumer responds as we think they will, this will lead convenience store buyers to the larger 5 oz. and 16 oz. packages, expanding sales in this arena. It takes a lot of 2 oz. packages to equate to a large volume of cheese. However, once we gain some traction this strategy could yield higher volume sales in other outlets.

The most recent go small movement is in packaged cheese. We are growing this business at about 15% per year. Last year we packaged 1.9 million units of cheese cuts and this number is expected to grow. We have just about tapped out our resources in packaging; higher speed equipment is needed to do more. To improve outputs and lower costs we are moving to a horizontal high speed packaging machine in the fall of 2016. We plan to have this installed prior to the Christmas rush in October. This is yet another avenue to improve margins and meet the growing demand of our key customers.

We are continuously looking ahead for ways to yield better margins and expand volume on profitable items. For today, going small has the best margins and largest growth potential for the Creamery.

Creamery Staff Compete During Grilled Cheese Battle

April was National Grilled Cheese Month and each year we look forward to witnessing the creative genius of our country's finest chefs and weekend kitchen warriors during the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board's Grilled Cheese Recipe Showdown!

The results of the Showdown go down in recipe book history! Consider last year's winner, The Sports Bar: Sriracha barbeque chicken smothered in Wisconsin gorgonzola fondue with celery and carrots. Now tie that sandwich together with Wisconsin mozzarella between two perfectly crunchy slices of pan-fried bread. Seriously tasty.

Seeing imaginative award winning grilled cheese entries like this inspired us to join in the fun with our own Grilled Cheese Battle! We gathered the most creative minds and cheesy talent here at Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery and formed 4 teams.

The challenge... Craft an irresistible grilled cheese creation and battle it out, with our fans and customers casting ballots for the sandwich they would most like to sample.

We battled it out over 3 weeks and while it was a close race, there could only be one winner, and that was the Bloody Mary Grilled Cheese, an original recipe developed by our talented marketing team.

They stuffed their sandwich full of the most popular Bloody Mary garnishes (including bacon, banana peppers, pickles, celery and green onion), cheese curd crumbles, and a blend of cheddar, hot pepper and horseradish cheeses. Before grilling, the sandwich was dredged in a special beer batter and fried to perfection, then served with an easy to make Bloody Mary Dipping Sauce!

The Bloody Mary Grilled Cheese was served up to customers at the Ellsworth and Comstock retail stores where customers also received a copy of the recipe. It was a win-win-win!

We want to be sure you have the winning recipe, too. Visit Ellsworth-Cheese.com and click on "What's New" (under About). There you'll find the winning recipe as well as recipes for the other three entries. They were all delicious and we hope you'll try them all!



Join us in Ellsworth for the Cheese Curd Festival

Lovers of cheese curds have had the date marked in their calendars for months; Ellsworth's 15th Annual Cheese Curd Festival will be held in the village's East End Park June 24-25, 2016.

While the wide variety of activities and entertainment over the course of the 2 day event draws huge crowds, as the 'Cheese Curd Capital' it's the curds that take center stage. This year's event will be no exception.

Professional food vendors will be serving up cheese curds and lots of them! Menu items featuring these delectable white squeaky morsels will abound. Get your fill of both fresh and hand-battered deep fried curds and gourmet dipping sauces at the Chamber's Cheese Curd Central booth! And don't miss trying the new Cinnamon Sugar Fried Cheese Curds (think mini-donut). They're addictive and exclusive to the Ellsworth Cheese Curd Festival!

So come and satisfy your cheese curd cravings! Details about the event can be found online at EllsworthChamber.com, with the latest news and announcements being posted on their Facebook page (fb.com/EllsworthChamber).