



Official Cheese Curds of the MN State Fair

One of the largest events in the area, and one that some of you are surely planning to attend, is the Great Minnesota Get-Together, the State Fair! We're excited to once again be the main supplier of cheese curds for the event.

The MN State Fair expects nothing but the best and we gladly stepped in, providing over 60 tons of curds to the 12-day festival. When you're at the fair, please thank your vendors who are proudly serving up real Ellsworth Cheese Curds:

Original Deep Fried Cheese Curds

The Mouth Trap

Big Cheese

Duke's Poutine

And when you're enjoying your corn on the cob from **The Corn Roast**, it's going to taste even better now that you know it's Ellsworth Creamery Butter slathered on it!

Did You Know?

This year's Great Minnesota Get-Together runs August 25—September 5, 2016. During the event attendees enjoy some pretty fine fair-food, including deep fried cheese curds. This year, amaze your friends with these Minnesota State Fair cheese curd facts...

- Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery has been supplying cheese curds to the Minnesota State Fair for 30 years. Talk about withstanding the test of time! But then again, a quality product never goes out of style.
- 60 tons of our all natural cheddar cheese curds head to the fair each year. Picture this... that would fill 120,000 of our 1-lb bags! How long would that many cheese curds last at your house?
- Vendors pick up their cheese curd orders daily during the nearly 2-week long event and serve them up to customers that day. Talk about fresh!
- Each year there's a fear among fair-goers that the cheese curds will run out. But, there's no need to worry. The fair's cheese curd vendors have a long track-record for accurately predicting their cheese curd needs. However, should the unexpected happen, we're on standby and are ready to supply more, if needed.
- Regardless of whether your family heads to the Minnesota State Fair or not, there's a part of you at the event each year. Thanks to your hard work and dedication to quality, approximately 1.7 million fair attendees get to enjoy the most prized and delicious of all fair foods!

Follow us on Facebook!



/EllsworthCheese



232 North Wallace Street
Ellsworth, WI 54011
(715) 273-4311

www.ellsworthcheese.com



August 2016

Governor Walker Takes His Cabinet on the Road to Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery



Governor Walker and his cabinet paid a visit to Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery last month as part of his 'Cabinet on the Road' initiative. The goal of the initiative is to get cabinet members to outlying areas of the state to meet with citizens, businesses and local government representatives. Through these visits cabinet members better understand the challenges being faced outside of the capital, and collaborate with those affected to address them.

The visit was almost canceled. A heavy storm went through the northern part of the state earlier in the day causing heavy flooding and damage; the Governor's attention was needed there. In the end, things timed out that he could make his visit to Ellsworth and still have time to survey storm damage before sundown.

The Governor and his security staff arrived to the creamery first. Customers, who were enjoying ice cream outside the retail store, were surprised when the convoy of black vehicles drove up, and suited security personnel stepped out. The governor didn't miss a beat, and headed right over to greet them and inquire about their ice cream cones. He then had a

photo taken in front of the Cheese Curd Capital of Wisconsin mural to commemorate his visit.

Governor Walker was taken on a private tour of the facility and cheese curd making process as Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and his cabinet members began to arrive from their visits throughout the area. They were also taken on tours in shifts, later meeting in the board room for an official cabinet meeting and recap of the day.

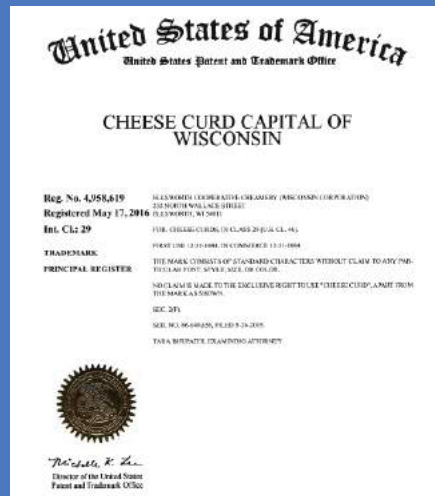
They were clearly impressed by the facility and manufacturing process, but it was the smorgasbord of food set out for them that really got them excited — The intense meeting schedule of the day had really worked up their appetites! Our cheese curds and cheeses were on center stage and left them wanting more. Our retail store, anticipating this might be the case, extended their hours to accommodate, allowing the group to make their cheese curd purchases before leaving for the next leg of their journey.



A cabinet member meeting was held in the Creamery Board Room, allowing cabinet members to recap their visits from the day.

News Bites...

While we've been known as the "Cheese Curd Capital of Wisconsin" since Governor Anthony S. Earl proclaimed it in 1984, we never had the phrase officially registered... until now! We received word from the United States Patent and Trademark Office this past June that we are now and forever more the "Cheese Curd Capital of Wisconsin"!



We joined our friends at Silver Springs in Eau Claire last month to help them celebrate National Mustard Day. Deep fried cheese curds have been missing from the event until this year when our fry crew made their cheese curd dreams come true! Attendees had the option of trying the curds with a variety of Silver Springs' dipping sauces, including various mustards and even steak sauce!



ellsworth cooperative creamery

Upcoming Changes

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

As they say, change is constant. There are several key issues on the horizon that we want to make our members aware of:

New Class of Drug Testing: Based on research and pressure from administrative bodies, the FDA will be testing for a new class of drugs beyond the beta-lactams. The first drug class to undergo testing will be the tetracyclines, with testing to begin around the first of the year. We knew this was coming and even though there hasn't been any issues with drug residue in milk, the FDA is being pressured by regulatory agencies and consumers to add another drug class to ensure the purity of milk as it goes to the consumer.

FARM Program's Environmental Stewardship Module: We're in the process of receiving more details about Farm Smart, an environmental stewardship module for farmers to measure improvements they make in the area of sustainability. According to a National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) announcement released last month, dairy companies are increasingly asked for information about their environmental practices.

The FARM Environmental Stewardship program will allow for the collection and dissemination of information on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). The assessment will also help dairy producers identify potential efficiency gains and cost savings, offering them the ability to track progress in a secure, confidential platform.

From what we can gather thus far, this will mainly involve data collection on your farm on the raw materials used in producing your product. Just like the FARM program that preceded it, this program is voluntary. We are getting pressure from key suppliers to implement beginning programs to monitor this and we knew it was a matter of time. More infor-

mation on the program will be coming down to the farmer soon.

Expanded Store Hours to Increase Sales: Our retail stores are doing very well. We have struck a balance between our merchandise mix and the amount of merchandise and customers that can be accommodated within our square footage. Short of expanding square footage in our stores, one way we can increase sales capacity is to expand hours of operation.

We've been rolling out expanded store hours. To kick off the summer rush, our retail store hours changed to 9am – 5:30pm, with the exception of Friday evenings when we are open until 6pm. Looking ahead, our plan is to extend store hours to 6pm 7 days a week beginning with the busy holiday season and to continue indefinitely. Our goal is to establish those hours with our customer base to continue the rate of sales growth we've been experiencing. We will be evaluating sales numbers and customer traffic to determine if additional hours are needed and practical from a sales revenue and staffing standpoint.

Value Added Product Update: Our value added product sales remain strong. We're currently experiencing a 40% annual increase in cheese curds and a 15-20% increase in cut cheese sales.

In looking at future projections it's critical that we remain proactive in reviewing resources as this growth is unsustainable with our current equipment and plant layout. Since it can take several months to a year for new equipment to be made, ordered and installed, forward thinking is key. The board is currently assessing the need for faster and more efficient packaging equipment to meet this need and we hope to begin implementing improvements in the near future to maintain growing sales projections.

Magnificent Milestones

We celebrated two employee milestones this month at Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery.

Joe Hines, Senior Specialist, celebrated 50 years with Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. Yes, you read that right... Joe started with the Creamery back in 1967 at the age of 18. At the time, he was hired as a general laborer earning \$2 an hour.

Since first joining the Creamery, Joe has worked his way through the ranks, eventually earning his cheesemaker's license and becoming cheese supervisor, a role he held for 20 years before transitioning into his current position.

"It's been a pleasure working with the CEOs over the years, the office staff and all the employees, and the farm-

ers," says Joe. "They are my bread and butter and without them I wouldn't be where I am today."

Joe's brother, Dean Hines, field representative, celebrated 41 years of service. Dean began his career with us in the whey department and then the cheese department. He went on to get his butter making license and after 21 years moved into his current position.

"The best part about the work is the people you work with day in and day out," comments Dean. "The farmers are the greatest people. They're who I work for and I thank them because without them I wouldn't have a job."

Please join us in congratulating Joe and Dean for their years of hard work and dedication to our organization.



Little Joe, his grandfather, J.S. and father Lester Hines.



Paul Bauer, CEO, formally congratulating Joe.



Paul Bauer, CEO, formally congratulating Dean.



Dean and Joe with father (and former milk hauler, patron member), Lester Hines.

2oz. Curd Display Hits the Marketplace

In the May 2016 newsletter, Creamery CEO and Manager, Paul Bauer, introduced you to the newest kid on the block... Our All Natural Cheddar Cheese Curds packaged in a convenient 2oz. single serving size. However, the cute little bag isn't the only thing that makes this product great; retailers love the built-in feature of the outer-packaging, too.

Imagine all those tiny bags of curds laying loose in your grocer's dairy section. What a mess! The shipping box for this product was designed to hold two branded display boxes. This makes this product quick to re-stock and keeps the small packages organized and easy for customers to grab and go.

Watch for these displays to begin appearing in grocery and convenience stores in the coming months. Our sales staff is reporting high levels of interest. The product appeals to health-conscious consumers who desire a convenient and easy to eat snack. There's also appeal among sports moms and day cares, who are willing to pay a premium price for pre-portioned, individually packaged snack foods.



dairy proud for over 100 years.

dairy proud for over 100 years.

ellsworth cooperative creamery