

Save the Date: Women of the Farm Event

2nd Annual 'Women of the Farm' Luncheon
 Saturday, January 16, 2016
 11am-2:30pm
 Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery

Back by popular demand! The objective of this event is two-fold. First, we want to recognize the important role our farm women play in our creamery and the dairy industry. Second, we want to offer an opportunity for socializing among the women of our cooperative. Watch for your invitation in next month's milk check.



Women of the Farm 2015 received rave reviews!

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November 2015

Update: The Move to Value-Added

Our cooperative's goal of shifting from a commodity-based to a value-added provider took another leap this year with the introduction of a new product.

Cheese curd crumbles had previously been considered a by-product of the cheese curd manufacturing process, but no more! With new equipment in the processing plant we're now shaking out the "crumbs" and packaging them for food service applications.

This is a first for our industry and research has indicated there's a big market for the product. The USDA agrees and has awarded our cooperative a Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG), which will offer matching funds for promotion of the product.

Cheese curds are a popular item in restaurants throughout the Midwest and are gaining popularity across the country. The restaurant industry is a competitive one and restaurant owners and executive chefs are looking to take advantage of the love of the curd to create craveability among their customers.

Because the product is new, educating chefs about the product, and speaking their language, is key to building a true market for Crumbles. To ensure we're working the right angles and hitting on the correct hot buttons for that industry, we've been working with Jim Kyndberg, Executive Chef at the Minneapolis Radisson Blu, to create unique and creative recipes. Jim's task: to utilize our Cheese Curd Crumbles in a way that appeals to a wide range of tastes, incorporates current and upcoming restaurant trends, can be easily

customized for exclusivity, and are realistic to prepare in most restaurant kitchens.

Dishes such as Tomato Bisque with Crispy Curd Crumbles, Gourmet Grilled Cheese Ala' Ellsworth, Chicken Cordon New, and Midwestern Poutine are just a few of the creative ideas he's developing for us.

And since the restaurant market is so visual, we'll be creating each recipe in video format, featuring Chef Jim showcasing our products and offering tips and techniques for using them in the commercial kitchen. The videos will be used as a product awareness, sales and educational tool, and with modifications can also be targeted to general consumers.



Chef Jim Kyndberg at a recent recipe filming. All Natural Cheese Curd Crumbles. "Chicken Cordon New" featuring our Crumbles.

We had the opportunity to test some of Chef Jim's recipes this summer when the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board brought a group of executive chefs for a tour of our facility. Walt Disney World, Universal Parks

& Resorts, Ritz Carlton, Atlanta Marriot Resorts, Square 1 Burger & Bar and East Lake Country Clubs were just a few of the organizations in attendance. Chef Jim prepared several of the new recipes, which were served to the group. The feedback was extremely enthusiastic and our sales team converted much of that interest to actual sales! Needless to say, we're extremely excited about the future of this product!

The Cheese Curds Crumbles are available in a 5 lb. package for foodservice applications, as well as a 2 oz. single serving size (think soup and salad bars and deli applications!). The packaging offers a variety of applications across the food service marketplace.

Introducing Jason Tremain

If you've visited our retail store in Ellsworth over the last few months chances are you saw a new face among the staff. Jason Tremain officially began his duties as Senior Retail Store Manager in September, filling the position previously held by Beth Ingli.

Jason comes to us with several years of retail experience, including nearly 10 years with Restaurant Depot, a wholesale cash and carry foodservice supplier. As the Assistant Senior Branch Manager, overseeing all perishable, refrigerated and frozen foods, he was very familiar with our product line, which was part of the Restaurant Depot inventory.



"When I was a student at UW-Stout taking business and retail classes, I dreamed of one day running my own retail store that would be an icon in the community. I feel that with Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, that dream has come true," shared Jason.

Please join us in welcoming Jason to the ECC family and be sure to introduce yourself the next time you visit us in Ellsworth.

Tail Docking: A Lesson for our Industry

By Paul Bauer, CEO, Manager
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At the recent NMPF Annual Meeting, the largest retailers in the U.S., which included Chobani, Walmart, Starbucks and Kroger, were asked, "What do you have against tail docking?" None of them had an answer.

The reality as I see it: Tail docking is being banned due to an effort brought forward by consumers and the European Union (EU). This should be a wake-up call and a lesson to dairy farmers that all farming practices are on the cusp of being monitored, controlled and/or banned if we aren't proactive in providing a reasonable explanation that consumers

can understand and support. Common farming practices such as dehorning, castration, GMOs, and more, are all under the microscope and being scrutinized and questioned by consumers.

I also believe that scrutiny of U.S. farming practices by consumers, specifically GMOs, is being further bolstered by the EU, due to the fact that the technology wasn't invented and developed there, plain and simple. It's a trade barrier.

Geographical references on cheese names, such as Feta, Parmesan, Asiago and Gorgonzola may be a thing of the past for American cheese producers. The EU has a policy and diplomatic procedures in place to restrict the use of these well-known names by American producers for these consumer favorites. Our leaders in the dairy industry and government are only now getting up to speed on how to band together to protect the use of these names by American producers.

A recent example of this teamwork is the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement where the EU and New Zealand wanted to open up the dairy industry. The dairy industry fought back, winning small concessions to open up the Canadian dairy market without giving up access of any significance to the U.S. dairy market. This win is an example of the political aware-

ness and diplomacy that is necessary in our industry to secure our prosperity in the future.

We need to support our leaders, we need to be proactive, and we need to pull together all across agriculture to fight the world forces that are dictating how we will farm in the future in this country. As American farmers, political activism in some form will need to be part of your job description to protect our industry in the future.

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Big Wins at the NMPF National Cheese Competition

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) held its 2015 Annual Meeting October 26-28 at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, FL. Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery was represented by board members Dan Rosen, Scot Meyer, Jerry Croes and Terry Thompson and CEO, Paul Bauer.

The theme of this year's meeting was "Legacy of Leadership." At the meeting, attendees gained valuable insight into how national dairy policy and promotion organizations are partnering for progress and creating a world of opportunities for dairy farm families. As our CEO, Paul Bauer, shares in his message to the left, this is going to be particularly important for our industry into the future.

Aside from the networking with other dairy professionals and industry news, one of the highlights of the annual meeting was the Championship Cheese Competition, held each year to coincide with the annual event.

We're thrilled to report that Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery brought home several awards, with our cheese curds

sweeping the 'Snack Cheese' category!

Our Blaser's Red Rind Muenster, made in our Comstock plant, took first place in the 'Natural Cheese' category, beating out a peer consumer creamery.

Our Blaser's Hot Pepper Jack, also crafted in our Comstock plant, took top honors with a first place win, shutting out the competition yet again in the 'Unique Flavored' category.

And it was a clean sweep in the 'Natural Cheese Snack' category with Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Cheese Curds tanking 1st (Natural), 2nd (Taco), and 3rd (Cajun) place, shutting out all the competition for the second year in a row.

The Board extends heartfelt congratulations to all who take part in making our products worthy of such recognition. From our cheese making staff, to you, our patron farmers; it's your hard work and an ongoing dedication to quality that makes our products award winning and our brand one we can be proud of.



HOT: Habanero Ghost Pepper Jack

To refer to sales of the newest cheese to our artisan cheese line-up as "hot" would be an understatement! Not only is our Blaser's Habanero Ghost Pepper Jack super spicy to the taste, this cheese has been blowing away sales records and earning praise from everyone from trade-show attendees to customers.



According to a recent report in *Nation's Restaurant News*, one of the country's top foodservice publications, fiery foods are on trend for 2016. "From the obvious chili oil to the now-ubiquitous Sriracha to the creatively inspired spicy maple syrup, American palates are embracing and relishing the heat," says Andrew Freeman of hospitality consulting firm, Andrew Freeman & Co.

If current sales are any indication, Freeman is on target with his prediction. Inquiries about this cheese are pouring in and our foodservice customers have big plans for how they will use this peppery cheese, including adding a spicy bite to their charcuterie platters and making their burgers and other sandwich selections hot, hot, hot!