



**Mika Miller**

Mika chose Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery for her internship because her parents are patrons. She was interested in learning about sustainability programs as well as working with the producers.

Her internship with our Field Staff has exposed her to a wide variety of projects. She has been gathering email addresses for an email communication project, sending patrons their production records for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, and conducting on-farm evaluations for the Environmental Stewardship Program.

"I have had the pleasure to meet a majority of our producers and experience the diversity of the dairy industry. It was also fun to participate in this year's Cheese Curd unFestival," says Mika. As her internship comes to an end, she'll be completing her senior year at UW- River Falls majoring in Animal Science. "I am excited for my future success in the agricultural industry utilizing skills the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery has helped me create."



**Reegan Spriggle**

Reegan is no stranger to Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. He started working in our Ellsworth retail store at the age of 16. As our Sales & Marketing intern, Reegan has been working on a wide variety of sales and marketing tasks, including overseeing the Covid-19 Donation Program and designing the 2020 Christmas Box program.

However, what he finds most exciting is the opportunity to sit in on important sales calls. "Learning how to interact with customers has been the most rewarding thing that I have learned," says Reegan.

After working in the retail store for 5 years, Reegan thought he knew the company pretty well. Now into his internship, he's seeing the company in a new way. "My perception of the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery has changed. I got a different look into the impact our company makes -- our cheese curds and cheeses are everywhere!"

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**August 2020**

## Menomonie Expands ECC Production Capacity



Construction is set to begin any day on the new Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery production facility in Menomonie, WI. Above is an architectural drawing of the new plant, which is scheduled for completion in Fall of 2021. The facility will allow for increased production capabilities to meet increased demand for Ellsworth's specialty cheeses.

A soybean field near the north exit of Highway B in Menomonie is about to look a whole lot different! Construction will begin any day on the new Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery plant in Menomonie, WI.

"As patrons are reading this newsletter, we could be moving dirt," jokes Paul Bauer, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery CEO/Manager.

The production facility, which will manufacture specialty cheese, was designed to roll out in phases. Phase 1 includes production capabilities to process 600,000 pounds of milk per day. The projected timeline to begin operations is Fall of 2021.

Once production is underway, a new retail store will open to customers. In addition to the wide variety of

cheeses and local specialty foods you might expect, the store will include a viewing window to much of the cheese making process. A grill, deep-fryer, and pizza oven will allow us to offer food and dining that showcases our products and creative foodservice uses.

Phase 2 of the facility will allow for increased production capacity of 1 million pounds of milk each day. This phase will roll out based on need and sales volume.

In the future, the facility will offer small and large distribution of our products.

Watch our Facebook page and this newsletter — We'll be sure to bring you updates on how this project progresses!

## ATTENTION: CHEESE PRICE INCREASE

We will be implementing a price increase on cheese effective August 20, 2020. The price increase is necessary to adjust for increases in production costs and to leverage our competitive advantage in the marketplace for the benefit of all patrons. Remember, for best quantity pricing on cheese curds for events or other large quantity needs, there is the option of bulk pricing.





## Join us for the unFAIR!

Saturday, August 29, 2020  
11am-6pm

Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Ellsworth, WI

You might call the cancelation of the Great Minnesota Get-together and numerous county fairs across the region a bit “unFAIR”. We get it — we’re missing the fun and our favorite fair foods, too!

We’re helping to fill that foodie void, with a very “unUSUAL” event! Join us in Ellsworth for a full day of cheese curds and cheesy good food — Our own curd wagon and popular food trucks you will know from the Cheese Curd Festival will be serving up their popular cheese-inspired dishes.

**INSIDER TIP:** Don’t miss the state-fair inspired Funnel Cake Cheese Curds being served up at our own curd wagon — A MUST TRY ITEM!

- Consuming Fire: Artisan wood-fired pizzas featuring fresh ingredients and hand-tossed crust.
- Holy Donuts: Fresh and deep-fried dough, sprinkled with love.
- Smokey Treats: Award-winning fusion BBQ featuring local ingredients.
- Ellsworth Cheese Curd Wagon: Deep fried curds, dipping sauces, and Funnel Cake Curds!

*For everyone’s safety, social distancing and other Covid-19 precautions will be observed.*

ellsworth cooperative creamery

## The Roller Coaster Ride

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



What more must we endure in 2020? First milk prices hit a top price, and now we are racing to the bottom. As I watch the trends and follow the news, I’m seeing a lot that could impact you this year.

Here’s what I’m watching and what I see coming...

- The new Southwest/ Glanbia / DFA Michigan plant will open soon. With processing capacity of 5 million pounds, this will take the surplus milk out of eastern and southern Wisconsin.
- USDA remains a wild card as they cannot get any program to work when needed. They feel like a group that will throw you a life jacket once you are on dry land.
- COVID-19 is still playing heavy in the market. Food service is still not on track and it is unclear if it will come back. For example, deli sales are gone as they are no longer slicing cheese in delis. And parts of the nation are still not open. For example, not many people in New York are eating out. Quick-serve is currently our only moving product.

So, how is our cooperative fairing?

- We are being whipped around with retail orders. Heavy, then slow. Private labels are going well but the roll outs are tough. It’s a lot of orders, no orders, then out of stock ordering, which becomes an emergency.
- Deli sales have decreased a lot.
- Orders for exact cut cheese is increasing.
- Thanks to an increase demand for quick-service, processed cheese is steady.
- Curds for the fairs are gone this year. However, with an increase in quick-

service, curds for breeding are doing good.

- Milk production is very strong—volume is almost too strong to handle.
- Prices are all over and will come down. Look to the European export price as a benchmark for pricing long term as the EU is the largest exporter of cheese.
- The block and barrel split is still large. An international company is still legally making shortages to cause the split.
- Government oversight is nowhere to be seen as most think dairy is too complicated. And there is no consensus on what should be done, so they do nothing.
- The Menomonie plant is slowly moving ahead. We have state permits and we are waiting for final paperwork from third party vendors to move dirt.
- The board held its annual strategic planning meeting with many topics of discussion. Ellsworth’s place in the dairy world was discussed and how we need to look at the world as outside vendors, such as the bank, look at us. We also covered Human Resources issues and how we compare in the labor market. We looked at possible cost effective changes that should be considered. Finally, we looked at the Ellsworth brand and how to protect it against specific challenges.
- We will also be raising and line pricing cheese in the retail stores. This means your price will go up, too. Remember, our job is to create wealth for members. Patron sales represent only 2-3% of total retail sales. While we’re often asked about offering patron discounts, the reason we do not is because in the past patrons would buy and sell outside of normal distribution which created a food tracking risk and takes money directly out of members’ pockets.

## Meet the Interns...



### Patrick Harrington

Patrick is our Purchasing Department intern. Patrick was raised in the Ellsworth community and was familiar with our organization and standing in the community. This made him especially interested our company and how Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery works.

Patrick is currently working in the Light Packaging Department and honing his management and inventory skills. However, one of his first internship projects was overseeing the opening and operations of the Curd Wagon in Ellsworth. “Managing the curd stand and being completely in charge of the successes and failures has been rewarding because it’s something I can call my own,” says Patrick.

While Patrick has learned a lot through his time with us, his biggest lesson is seeing first-hand what it takes to keep an operation this large successful. “Everyone’s top priority is the patrons and it is cool to see how that aspect plays out.”

### NOTICE: FEDERAL SURVEY!

Minnesota patron farmers, please be aware that Federal Surveys could take place anytime between now and October 15, 2020. Be sure you’re prepared! We suggest reviewing the results from your last inspection, particularly the areas where you failed to pass. Ensure that all of these areas have been corrected. It’s a simple common sense tip, yet one that is often ignored and upsets inspectors.



### Elijah Newton

Elijah came on board as an intern in production working with our production supervisory staff. The opportunity to work into a full-time job after successfully completing his internship, and the support Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery receives throughout the community, enticed him to accept our internship opportunity.

He’s worked on many projects over the course of his internship including developing a training program for our employees. He also helped to write standard operating procedures for our new production area and helps to make decisions for daily production runs.

“The experience and the management skills I have developed working with employees has been very rewarding,” says Elijah. “Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery is a company that really cares about its patrons. All business decisions are made taking into consideration the community and the farms.”

## Cheese Curd unFestival

A global pandemic was no match for the Cheese Curd Festival! A Covid-19 modified version, which included a drive-thru cheese curd event, took place at Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery last month.

Creamery staff manned the fryers and fried up over 1,700 lbs of curds, just enough to serve orders to 1,500 cars! Natural, Pizza, and the festival's exclusive Cinnamon Sugar varieties were available to order via carhop service.

We were glad this year’s event could go on in some capacity. As the major sponsor of the annual event, we gain a lot of marketing exposure. It also supports the work of our local chamber of commerce and 20 local non-profits.

If you missed attending, check out our upcoming unFAIR on Saturday, August 29!



## ECC Featured in Dairy Foods Magazine

Photographer Vito Palmisano visited Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery last month to shoot photos for an upcoming article that will appear in Dairy Foods magazine. Posing for this photo, left to right, is Lisa (Controller), Scot (Board President), John (Director of Operations), and Paul (CEO), with sales intern, Reagan Spriggle, looking on.

dairy proud for over 100 years.

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