



Harmony Valley Farm

Cheese Plate Newsletter

June 10-12, 2010

Volume 3, Issue 3

CHEESE SELECTIONS OF THE WEEK

Otter Creek Spring Cheddar: We thought it only fitting to introduce Otter Creek's line of seasonal cheddars with their spring cheddar. This cheese was made last spring with milk from animals grazing on spring pastures and alfalfa. Note the flavor of this cheese and compare it to the other Otter Creek Seasonal cheddars as we go through the year. (Heat -Treated)

Cedar Grove Mozzarella: This is a classic—typical on pizza, but also a nice, softer cheese with great melting ability. Use it on hot sandwiches, in calzones, top off grilled veggies, or eat it with fresh fruit for a snack. (Pasteurized)

PastureLand's Sogn: This is one of the Pastureland "Alpine Sisters." A single batch of cheese became three different Alpine-Style cheeses when they were aged using three different methods/washes. This cheese is a washed rind cheese that is more of a hard cheese since it has been aged. You'll want to enjoy this cheese at room temperature to really be able to appreciate all of its nuances and robust flavors.
(Raw-Milk cheese aged over 60 days)

YOU ARE INVITED!!

Castle Rock has invited you to attend an Open House at their farm on Saturday, June 19th from 11:00 am-4:00 pm. Visit the kind people at Castle Rock Organic Dairy in Osseo, WI and see their farm and farmstead creamery for yourself. They will have games for the children, you can see farm animals up close and personal, have a chance to "Taste the Curd" while you watch cheese being made, take a wagon ride and enjoy an organic lunch (12:30-2 pm—donations welcome). They will also have a guest speaker at 2 pm, Georgia Janisch presenting "Healthy Food." If you are coming from the Twin cities, consider making a full weekend excursion with Castle Rock's open house on Saturday and our Strawberry Day event on Sunday! It'll be a great way for you, your children and your family as a whole to "Know your farmer—know your food source."

<http://castlerockfarms.net/>

PastureLand Co-op

The Sogn cheese in your cheese bag today is one of three cheeses known as the "Alpine Sisters." The idea for the Alpine Sisters came when they decided they wanted to make a new cheese, but didn't really have the budget to do a lot of test batches and experimentation. PastureLand Cooperative is a very unique economic model. They don't have their own butter or cheese creamery, which can make it challenging to do a lot of recipe testing. As a way to try out three new cheeses in a way that would actually be feasible to produce, they decided to make one batch of cheese and age it out in three different ways. They were going for a cheese that would be similar to Beaufort, a hard, sharp cheese from the French Alps, but with their own twist on it. They also wanted to create cheeses that reflected the terroir and personality of the rolling hills of Southeastern Minnesota where the farms are located. Thus, the Sisters came together into their own being as they were aged out. Each cheese has her own personality, each different but with a subtle tie to the others. Each cheese was named for a real place near one of the farms—one now a ghost town and one so small it no longer has its own post office. This week's cheese was named for the beautiful Sogn Valley in Minnesota's Goodhue County, part of the Driftless Region we also reside in.

PastureLand Cooperative was founded in 1998 by a unique group of farmers who shared a similar commitment to grass-based farming, using a whole farm approach. "Our job is to manage solar energy. We harvest it in the form of grass, using animals. The healthier the system is, the healthier our product is going to be." This is what Dan French, PastureLand founding member and board chair stated. We invited PastureLand to participate in our cheese share program because their products meet the criteria we are looking for: grass-based milk production, certified organic, identifiable milk sources, and tasty cheeses.

The cooperative is comprised of four main families in Minnesota. All four farms are certified organic and Food Alliance certified. The milk they produce is not just any milk. They feed their animals by rotationally grazing them on nutrient rich pastures. They only produce cheese and butter with milk produced during the spring and summer months when the animals are grazing the pastures, which truly makes it a superior and unique product. During the winter months, many of the cows are not even milked until they calve again in the spring. This means a more manageable lifestyle for the farming family, and this is a more natural cycle for the animals. As you experience their cheeses, you may notice that they all have a characteristic creamy yellow color. What you are experiencing is the effect of nutrient transfer from the grass to the milk and thus the cheese—specifically beta-carotene that gives the cheese a different color. If you compare cheese made from milk from the same herd of cows but produced at different times of the year, the difference in color and flavors can be dramatic. This is what makes their milk and cheese so special.

We hope you enjoy Sogn, another interesting PastureLand cheese selection! Watch your cheese bag for another one of the sisters, Thoten....coming to a cheese plate near you in July.

Vegetable Medley Pizza

1 pizza crust (*premade or see pizza crust recipe below*)

½ c pizza sauce or pesto (*There are many types of pesto so you can choose your favorite*)

½ c scallions or potato onions

2 - 3 cloves chopped fresh garlic

½ c diced garlic scape

1 c kohlrabi, matchstick

1½ c grated Cedar Grove Mozzarella

(*You can add mushrooms, asparagus, broccoli, etc or any other vegetables you like*)

-Spread sauce on crust.

-Add veggies and top with cheese and fresh garlic.

-Bake at 400°F for 12 - 16 minutes until cheese is golden brown

Quick Pizza Crust recipe

2 c flour

1 tsp Salt

2 tsp Baking powder

2/3 c to 1 c water

-Mix all ingredients together and knead out on floured board for two minutes until workable.

-Put dough on pizza stone and bake at 425°F for 8 -10 minutes.

-Remove crust from oven. Add sauce and toppings.

-Place back in oven until cheese is golden brown.

Beer Cheese Soup with Spring Cheddar and Sogn

Serves 4-6

½ c butter

1/3 c diced kohlrabi or celery

1/3 c diced carrot

¼ c diced scallions

¼ c diced garlic scape

1/3 c flour

3 1/3c chicken stock

1 1/3 TBSP grated Sogn cheese

4oz. Grated Otter Creek Spring Cheddar

2/3 bottle beer (11oz) or 4oz of milk and 4oz of broth (to substitute for the beer)

-Melt butter in medium sized sauce pan over medium heat and sauté vegetables until tender but not brown.

-Sprinkle in flour and continue stirring for a few minutes.

-Slowly add chicken broth. Bring to a low simmer and stir for five minutes.

-Blend in cheeses and beer. Stir until cheese is fully melted.

-Simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally to prevent scalding, for 30 minutes.

-Season with salt and pepper to taste.

**This is the third of four
Cuatro Queso cheese deliveries.
If you love the cheese share so far and
want to commit
to the rest of the season,
let us know by June 14
and we'll set you up!**

**To continue with the Full Cheese share,
the cost will be \$405,
Once a Month for \$224.
Thanks & enjoy your cheese!**

Strawberry Sogn Salad

Serves 4-6

1 head of red Boston lettuce

1 c sliced strawberry

1 c chopped bok choy

1 c chopped Yukina Savoy

1 c chopped spinach

2 sliced radish

¼ c diced scallions or potato onions

1½ c shredded Sogn cheese

Strawberry Vinaigrette

½ c olive oil

1 TBSP balsamic vinegar

½ c strawberries

1 TBSP minced onion

Mix all ingredients together in a blender & blend until smooth. Refrigerate before serving.

Mix salad ingredients together and toss in dressing before serving.