2009 Farm Walk Education Series

Estrella Family Creamery, Monday June 22, 2009

Presented by
Tilth Producers of Washington and the WSU Small Farms Team
FARMER-TO-FARMER: PASSING ON THE WISDOM - 2009 Farm Walk Education Series
Tilth Producers of Washington and WSU Small Farms Team proudly present the 2009 Schedule

Monday April 13 – Terry’s Berries, Tacoma, Recordkeeping in a Diversified Vegetable & Fruit Operation, 12:30pm-4pm, www.terrysberries.com

Monday April 27 – Lopez Island Farm, Lopez Island, Pastured Pigs and Soil Fertility, 10am-1pm, www.lopezislandfarm.com

Monday, May 18 – Monteillet Fromagerie, Dayton; French Cheesemaking in the Walla Walla Valley, 12:30pm-3:30pm (followed by optional wine & cheese tasting), www.monteilletcheese.com

Monday June 8 – Crown S Ranch, Winthrop; Organic Animal Husbandry, 12:30pm-4pm, www.crown-s-ranch.com

Monday June 22 – Estrella Family Creamery, Montesano; Artisan Cheese Production, 12:30pm-4pm http://estrellafamilycreamery.com

Monday July 13 – Let Us Farm, Oakville, Organic Mixed Vegetable Production and Farmer Transition, 12:30pm-4pm

Thursday July 30 – WSU Field Day and Organic Farm, Pullman; Current University Research and Teaching in Organic Farming – Eastern Washington, 9:30am-1pm, www.css.wsu.edu/organicfarm

Monday August 3 – WSU Field Day and Organic Farm, Puyallup; Current University Research in Organic Farming – Western Washington, 1pm-4pm; www.puyallup.wsu.edu/soilmgmt

Monday August 17 – Alvarez Farms, Mabton; Large Scale Diversified Vegetable Row Crops, 12:30pm-4pm http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/wsu_pdfs/AlvarezCaseStudy.pdf

Monday September 28th – Blue Dog Farm, Carnation; Berry Production, Static Composting, and Raising Children while Farming, 12:30pm-4pm, www.bluedogfarm.com

Farm Walk Logistics - Complete details at www.tilthproducers.org
More information also at http://smallfarms.wsu.edu
FARMER-TO-FARMER: PASSING ON THE WISDOM
2009 Farm Walk Education Series

Sponsored by the WSU Small Farms Team (smallfarms.wsu.edu)
and Tilth Producers of Washington (www.tilthproducers.org)

Estrella Family Creamery
659 Wynoochee Valley Road, Montesano, WA
360.249.6541, estrellafamilycreamery.com

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Farm Walk Evaluation Form...
Please fill out and leave at the site
THANK YOU!!!
At 4:00 AM when I head out to the cheese room, I get to enjoy a sight that seems new every morning. That big old dairy barn that was all rust and decay not long ago has come to life. Milk machines running and light streaming out in every direction. The cows waiting patiently for their turn and the goats tapping their hooves on the sliding window that lets them in. Pa might be carrying buckets across the yard and one could be pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with hay out to start feeding. I often pause to watch the family all working together, and think “this is just like in my dream.”

The dream has evolved over the years. Twenty something years ago, when we first left the city it was simply a healthy lifestyle- preferably on a little plot of fertile land. We were just newlyweds when I said I wanted a cow! But goats, baby goats, and naturally soft goat cheeses came first. I could never return to the store bought stuff. Then came our babies and as they grew I continued making cheese in the kitchen, faithfully keeping my cheese diary so I could keep learning the craft, dreaming of world class cheeses, and the possibility of our kids growing up working with Pa by their sides.
Finally in 2001 we left home and business for an abandoned dairy on 164 acres. They laughed at our young family and said it couldn't be done, and I'll admit I had my fears! My faith was put to the test during the blood, sweat and tears of the early years. But we started with three cheeses and now have a list of 18, and at last the farm even feels like home.

Sometime last year I noticed that there was a lot of food on our table and some empty chairs, so we adopted 3 more kids from Liberia. Together the kids are learning that hard work won't kill them, and that the pursuit of excellence in our craft and careful nurturing of the creatures placed in our care yield a tremendous reward. Over and over at our farmers markets and in our emails they say thank you, thank you!! And they tell us stories of some of the finest moments of their lives that were enriched by our cheese. We are so blessed.

We hope you enjoy the fruit of our labors as well, and thank you.

Kelli, for the Estrellas

Our Farm store is open Saturdays 10-4 year round, we're also in Seattle year-round now at the University District Farmers Market- Sat. 9-2, (winter 10-2) and Ballard Farmers Market- Sun. 10-3, (winter 11-3).

Our Cheeses

We now make over eighteen different types of cheese, with seasonal variations. All Estrella Family Creamery cheeses are made with raw milk from animals grazed in our organically maintained pastures.

**Black Creek Buttery** Our cheddar recipe, big wheels either natural rind or cloth wrapped. Real old world style cheddar with faint lines discernable between the curd millings.

**Dominos** Named after one of our leading Normande X cows and big personality in the herd, little 4" natural rind wheels weighing about a pound each. “Reminiscent of the ocean” reviews have said.

**Guapier** Cow’s milk, made in the tradition of a French “Morbier”, with a decorative charcoal line separating the evening and morning curd. Named after an extra special animal on the farm with a name that means “handsome”– Guapo.

**Grisdale** Goat A natural rind semi-soft goat cheese, hand pressed into a shape resembling a giant mushroom cap. Refined and complex taste with a sweet hazelnut finish.

**Killeen** Semi-soft, open textured tomme “delictage”, made with a layer of the white goat curd through the middle, in contrast with the naturally golden cow curd, made seasonally when the cows are grazing on the first of the spring grass.

**Sublime** Bloomy rind semi-soft goat or blended cow and goat cheeses in a 1” tall disc. “Subby” is a LaMancha doe in our herd that once broke her neck and resembled a submarine while healing...

**Partly Sunny** The name for our new blue, with its white bloomy rind on the outside and streaks of blue, was inspired by the weatherman’s description of our WA weather.

**Wynoochee River Blue** Cow’s milk, blue veined, with a rustic natural rind and soft paste. Hand assembled with the curd of two separate millings. Pairs well with apples or pears, as a desert with honey, or with a big Syrah. Approx. 5 lb wheels.

**Caldwell Creek Chevrette** The name inspired by the creek that runs through our farm. A “chevrette” in parts of France describe a blended cow/goat cheese and so is ours. With a washed rind, soft paste and bright orange/gold skin.

**Old Apple Tree Pomme** Cow’s milk wheels 8” wide, 3” tall, and about 5 lbs. each. Washed in cider and apple brandy and now aged on Spruce boards in our new cave Beulah.

**Valentina** Also named after an EFC cow, with a heart-shaped marking on her face. Washed rind Gruyere style, raw cow’s milk wheels, approx. 10 lbs each, aged 6 months or more in the new cave.

**Vineyard Tomme** Made seasonally in time for Christmas. Our cow’s milk tommes buried in bins of fermenting grape skins/seeds & pulp from local winemakers. Intense aroma. Raw cow’s milk, 60 days.

**Red Darla** Darla is the daughter of Domino, and here our “Dominoes” have been moved into the new cave and red wine washed to produce a Trappist style/ smear rind one lb. wheel with a soft paste. Rich mouthfeel and long complex finish describe this new EFC cheese.

**Reposee** Attractive cow’s milk lactic style cheese with a layer of rosemary, bay leaves, and juniper berries embedded in it’s bloomy rind. Soft around the edges and fragrant. The name means to repose or rest. We make it on Sunday so we can do so.

**Weebles** Patterned after a Balkan Provolone- Kashkaval. Our hand stretched “pears” are lightly smoked with alder wood and aged 120 days. First place winner ’07 American Cheese Society competition.

**Bea Truffled** Our “Valentina” cheese with locally foraged black truffles blended with the curds, named after a daughter of Valentina– Bea. Raw milks, aged 4-6 months or more.
THE HANDBOOK OF REGULATIONS FOR DIRECT FARM MARKETING

"THE GREEN BOOK"

FIFTH EDITION
UPDATED 2006

A PUBLICATION OF
THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SMALL FARM & DIRECT MARKETING PROGRAM
Milk and Dairy Products

Farms selling cow, goat, sheep or other lactating mammalian milk directly to consumers from the farm, at farmers markets, on the Internet, through retail grocery stores or any other means must obtain a Milk Producer License and a Milk Processing Plant License from the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

The WSDA Food Safety Program provides one-on-one technical assistance for dairy farms and milk processing plant to help you produce safe dairy products. Milk is a potentially hazardous food product because of its ability to support pathogen growth. It is important to reduce the risk of unintentionally contaminating your milk product. The WSDA Food Safety Program helps you reduce risk by advising you about your farm and milk processing plant design, construction materials, equipment, heating and cooling procedures, water source, and food science techniques for preventing cross-contamination from the farm to your milk processing plant.

Farms licensed by WSDA as a Milk Producer and a Milk Processing Plant can process pasteurized milk from neighboring farm raw milk supplies. Contact the WSDA Food Safety Program for food safety requirements when hauling milk from a neighboring farm to your milk processing facility.

Fluid Milk Sales

Pasteurized Milk (retail & wholesale)
Pasteurized fluid milk processed by a licensed WSDA milk processing plant can be sold direct to consumers and through all food distribution channels in Washington State and out of state.

Retail Raw Milk
Raw fluid milk produced by a licensed WSDA milk producer and bottled at that farm’s licensed milk processing plant can be sold direct to consumers from the farm, at farmers markets, on the Intranet, or through grocery stores within Washington State.

Raw milk sold in Washington State must bear the following labeling as required by state law (RCW 69.04 and 16-101-990 WAC.)

1) Identification of the product, including the word “Raw” in clear lettering;
2) Name and place of business of the producer or packager;
3) The quantity, weight, and grade of the milk;
4) The words “WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and may contain harmful bacteria. Pregnant women, children, the elderly and persons with lowered resistance to disease have the highest risk of harm from use of this product”.
When selling raw milk, a sign must be posted near the product that states: “Warning: Raw milk or foods prepared from raw milk may be contaminated with dangerous bacteria capable of causing severe illness. Contact your local health agency for advice or to report a suspected illness.” (246-215-051 WAC)

Wholesale Raw Milk
Raw fluid milk produced by a licensed WSDA Milk Producer can be sold for further processing to a licensed WSDA milk processing plant, food processor or animal feed processor.

Contact the WSDA Food Safety Program to talk about the licensing requirements before submitting your license application.

Animal Health Requirements
It is illegal to sell or deliver milk or milk products produced from diseased mammalian animals. All milking mammals must meet the animal health requirements established by the state veterinarian in chapter 16.36 RCW. Mammalian animals showing chronic mastitis are not allowed to be part of the milking herd.

Raw milk intended to be consumed in the raw state must come from a herd that has tested negative within the previous 12 months for brucellosis, tuberculosis and other diseases designated by the state veterinarian. Animals must be tested yearly thereafter to assure their health. Additions to the herd must test negative for the diseases within the previous thirty days before introducing them into the herd.

Cheese, butter & Other dairy products
Dairy farms wishing to process cheese products, butter, and/or other dairy products must obtain a Milk Producer License and a Milk Processing Plant License from WSDA.

Cheese can be processed from pasteurized milk or raw milk. If processing cheese from raw milk, the cheese must be aged at not less than 35°F for at least 60 days.

Other value-added dairy products (e.g. chocolate milk, buttermilk, egg nog, yogurt) can only be processed from pasteurized milk.

Licensing & Fees
- Milk Producer License: Free
- Milk Processing Plant License: $55.00
• Contact the WSDA Food Safety Program for one-on-one technical assistance for your dairy farm or milk processing plant.

• The Food Safety Program can help you with
  ➢ The application process for your license
  ➢ Design layout for your milking parlor, milk house and milk processing plant
  ➢ Approval of equipment you are seeking to purchase
  ➢ Evaluation of your water source and cross-connections
  ➢ Food science handling and processing techniques to help produce a safe, quality product for your customers.

• Application packets are available through the web site listed below.

  **Contact:** Washington State Department of Agriculture
  Food Safety Program
  (360) 902-1876
Pesticide Disclaimer

Documents included in this packet may contain information regarding pesticides used in states other than Washington. It is the responsibility of the reader to determine whether those active ingredients or pesticide products are registered for use in Washington State.

Readers are reminded that all pesticide products, including products certified for use in organic production systems, must be registered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Division in order to be legal.
Dairy farmers can add value to their milk by processing and marketing their own products, such as cheeses, yogurt, butter, ice cream, and farm-bottled milk. Many consumers are willing to pay a premium for locally produced, high-quality, farmstead dairy products; organic certification may further enhance the market potential.

Developing a product line, production facilities, and a niche marketing strategy will take time, money, and commitment. It is unlikely that the enterprise will be profitable in the first three to five years. Additional skills beyond producing milk will be required. Here are some basic questions dairy producers need to ask themselves before they get into processing and marketing:

- Do I have the resources to do this?
- Do I really want to do this?
- Do I have the experience, people skills, and information to do this?
- How much profit potential is there with this enterprise?
- How will I market the product and what is the customer base available?
- Do I have the financial resources needed to support this enterprise during the start-up period?

**Regulations**

Dairy food processors—including small farms adding value to their own dairy commodities—are subject to a dizzying array of state and local regulations and inspections. Aspiring processors should check carefully with regulatory authorities for specific requirements during the planning stages of the enterprise, and once again as the equipment is ready to be installed. Some states may have training requirements for persons intending to process dairy food products.

State and local regulatory agencies have primary responsibility for enforcement of sanitation requirements on dairy farms and at dairy processing plants. Producers must contact their Department of Agriculture (Department of Health in Arkansas) for specific regulations and requirements before proceeding with any other steps. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture has a directory at <http://www.nasda-hq.org/nasda/nasda/member_information/gen_main.htm>. A more general listing of all state and local regulatory agencies by state is available at the FDA’s **Directory of State Officials 2001** at <http://www.fda.gov/ora/fed_state/directorytable.htm>.
Law professor Neil Hamilton's 235-page *Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing* is a good source of information about laws on marketing products directly to consumers and to retail and wholesale buyers. It was written to address producers’ questions about the legal aspects of direct farm marketing. The book provides many contacts and resources across the U.S., including state and federal inspectors, organizations, and others. The cost of the book is $20.00. To order, contact Drake University Agricultural Law Center, Des Moines, IA 50311, (515) 271–2947.

**Organic Milk**

At the time of this writing, the National Organic Program (NOP) is scheduled to begin implementation of the Final Rule for national organic standards in September 2002. As of this date, any producers seeking initial certification will have to comply with the requirements of the Final Rule. Producers who are already certified (by an agent that has received USDA accreditation) will have to achieve compliance with the NOP standard at their next annual inspection. For additional information on organic certification, request ATTRA's *Organic Certification & The National Organic Program* or visit NOP's website and review the Final Rule’s standards for organic dairy production at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/nop2000/nop2/finalrulepages/finalrulemap.htm>.

Demand for organic milk and milk products continues to grow nationwide. The *Organic & Natural News* article "Return to the Golden Age of Dairy" (1) states:

> According to SPINS/ACNielsen, the organic dairy industry has experienced tremendous growth in almost every category it tracks. Organic milk gallons have taken the gold medal with a 148.8-percent increase in the 12 months ending July 2000 compared to the previous year. Other categories have made incredible leaps as well. Sales of organic cottage cheese and ricotta have risen 53.58 percent with packaged organic cheese, organic butter and organic sour creams trailing closely behind; all posted increases in the 30-percent range.

The growing demand for organic dairy products is driven primarily by consumers' belief in the higher quality and safety of these products, and their awareness of the positive environmental, animal welfare, and ethical impacts of organic agricultural practices. Many are concerned about the use of antibiotics and of rBST (recombinant bovine somatotropin), a genetically engineered Bovine Growth Hormone that is injected into an estimated 30 percent of lactating cows in conventional dairies. These are some of the reasons why consumers choose organic dairy products despite higher prices (2).

Organic milk comes from cows that are not given any hormones, antibiotics, or pesticides. They have access to open pastures and are fed 100-percent organic feeds—grown in fields that are chemical-free for at least 3 years. Organic milk must be handled separately from conventional milk and never intermixed. Organic milk and milk products must be processed, either on-farm or off-farm, in a certified organic plant.

Other ATTRA publications that will help you to plan for value-added production and direct marketing:

- *Adding Value to Farm Products: An Overview*
- *Keys to Success in Value-Added Agriculture*
- *Direct Marketing*
- *Alternative Meat Marketing*
- *Evaluating a Rural Enterprise.*
Sources of Further Information

The state Department of Agriculture is the best source of help and information. The producer will need to comply with state law first; everything else is secondary.

An excellent source of information is the Hometown Creamery Revival Project. This project is funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program of the USDA and managed by Ms. Vicki Dunaway. The Hometown Creamery Revival promotes on-farm processing as a means of making dairying a sustainable way of life for small farms.

Currently the project produces a quarterly newsletter, *CreamLine*, and maintains a list of equipment suppliers, events, and links to relevant websites at <http://metalab.unc.edu/creamery/>. A free sample issue of *CreamLine* is available on request. The subscription cost is $22.00 per year or $40.00 for two years. For more information, visit the project’s website or contact:

Vicki Dunaway  
Hometown Creamery Revival Project  
P.O. Box 186  
Willis, VA 24380  
(540) 789-7877 (before 9 p.m. Eastern)  
E-mail: ladybug@swva.net

The first major publication of the Hometown Creamery Revival, *The Small Dairy Resource Book*, is a 56-page annotated bibliography of books, periodicals, videos and other materials on farmstead dairy processing. These resources cover such topics as on–farm cheese, ice cream, butter, and other dairy processing; business and marketing; food safety and feeds; and grazing. This publication is available online at <http://www.sare.org/handbook/dairy>. To order a printed copy, visit <http://www.sare.org/san/htdocs/pubs/> or send $8.00 plus $3.95 for shipping and handling (check or money order) to:

Sustainable Agriculture Publications  
Hills Building, Room 10  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, VT 05405-0082  
(802) 656-0484 (to order with Visa or Master Card)

Artisan Cheesemakers Listserv is the original email list for discussing the production, marketing, and history of handcrafted and artisan cheeses, as well as other dairy products. For additional information visit <http://members.xoom.com/cheesemaker/Cheemakers-L.htm>, or to subscribe <Artisan_Cheesemakers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>.

In March 2000, the Dairy Creamery Listserv was started. This mailing list was created for small, grass-based, traditional dairy farms and for small-scale processors who are pasteurizing and bottling milk, or making value-added products such as cheese, yogurt, cream, or ice cream, and who are selling either on-farm or within their regions. To subscribe to dairycreamery, send email to <dairycreamery-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>.
The April 2001 issue of *Ag Innovative News*, from the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute in Minnesota, did a special series focusing on producer-owned dairy processing. The series of articles included "Bottle at your own risk," "Pasturing for profit," "The milk-fed economy," and "Bittersweet end." These articles focus on feasibility studies showing that the prospects are dim for newcomers to enter the current well-established milk processing and distribution system. However, the studies do show niche marketing opportunities in the natural foods market. These articles are available on-line at <http://www.auri.org/news/ainapr01/contents.htm>.

Many electronic resources are available to those with Internet access (see **Further Resources: Websites** below). Several book suppliers are also listed in the **Further Resources** section.

**References:**


**Enclosures:**


Further Resources

Websites:

Organic Dairy Information
http://www.nysvga.org/webpages5/cdcramer/profiles/arnold.htm
Profile of an organic dairy farmer in New York.

http://www.iowafarmer.com/010324/niche_dairy.htm
Article on an organic dairy-processing farm in Iowa.

http://www.organicandnaturalnews.com/articles/0a1Feat2.html
Article about the marketing potential of organic milk.

Article about the marketing potential of organic milk.

Article about a Horizon Organic Dairy farm in Maryland

Cheese Information

http://www.cheesesociety.org
The American Cheese Society website listing conferences, articles, and their latest newsletter.

http://www.cheesereporter.com
The Cheese Reporter Magazine website has an excellent searchable supplier directory, a large book and video selection, and lots of links to other websites.

http://www.efr.hw.ac.uk/SDA/cheese2.html
Excellent site on the basics of making cheese.

http://www.erols.com/auraltech/index2.html
Website with useful links on cheesemaking and on different cheeses.

Books and Supplies:

New England Cheesemaking Supply Company
P.O. Box 85
Ashfield, MA 01330
(413) 628–3808; Fax: (413) 628–4061
http://www.cheesemaking.com
Has information on cheesemaking, an on-line catalog for supplies and books, and many links.
Kitchen Arts and Letters, Inc.
1425 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10128
(212) 876–5550
http://www.kitchenartsandletters.com

Has a large selection of books on cheeses and cheesemaking.

*Organic Dairy Farming*
Kickapoo Organic Resource Network
Community Conservation, Inc.
50542 ONE Client Lane
Gays Mills, WI 54631
(608) 735-4717

*Cost is $8.00 postpaid.*