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Monona goat farmer makes own cheese on farm

Products can be sampled at *local food fest Nov. 2*

Pat Lund of rural Monona says the milk her family's goats produce when they are on pasture is great for cheesemaking. She should know, since they make cheese right there on the farm.

The Lunds started processing their own goat milk into cheese under the Yellow River Dairy label in 2009, but their interest in goats goes back much further.

Pat says it was nearly 25 years ago when she and her husband, Don, first started milking goats. They had a few goats around as pets, and Pat says she always enjoyed them. When she was deciding what to pursue in order to work at home while raising their then-young children, she knew she didn't want cows or pigs on their 80 acres.

Then they met a few dairy goat producers at the county fair. "I grew up on a cow dairy farm, but I never realized people milked goats commercially," recalls Pat.

The Lunds soon bought a herd and starting milking. They shipped their milk to Mt Sterling Co-op Creamery, a member-owned and operated cooperative in Crawford County, Wisconsin. They have been coop members ever since. The Lunds milk their goats 120 seasonally, from February to November, rotationally grazing them as much as possible.

Their son, Tim is the cheesemaker, handling most of the cheesemaking operations during the summer months. During the school year, when milk production slows down, he is a music teacher at St. Pat's Parochial School in Waukon.

Goat cheese is often referred to as chevre, and many people think that there is only one kind. The fact is that goat milk can be made into many different types of cheese, just like cow's milk.

They make their milk into cheese logs, a semi-soft cheese they have dubbed "cracker-cut logs" since a slice off of them nicely tops a cracker. These logs are available in plain, smoked, peppercorn, dill, lemon-pepper and lavender flavors. They also make plain, dill and red pepper cheese curds. The traditional goat cheese of soft chevre is made in a variety of flavors from plain to blueberry mint. In addition to the cheese, they also make a goat cheese dip, available in several flavors.

In one day, they can make up to 500 pounds of milk into cheese. Goat milk is about the same as cows' milk, in that about one pound of cheese can be made per ten pounds of milk. The milk is first pasteurized, and then cooled to cheesemaking temperature. The culture is added, and after the necessary set time the rennet is added. Once the cheese and whey separate, the process splits depending on what type of cheese is going to

be made. Pat says the process on cheesemaking days usually last about eight hours, while the packaging takes place the next day.

Part of why Pat enjoys selling farmers' market is the direct feedback from consumers. "They will tell you what they like and don't like."

Farmers' markets are now done for the year, but the Lunds continue to sell their cheese well into the fall at stores in Iowa and Minnesota.

You'll have a unique opportunity to sample Yellow River Dairy's products at the *Feast! Festival & Tradeshow* in Rochester, MN on Sunday, Nov. 2.

The *Feast! Festival* is your prime stop to satisfy your curiosity about local foods. Visitors will be able to taste and purchase a variety of foods that are locally made throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. Meet the farmers and artisans and hear the stories behind their foods. Admission to the festival is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. There is an additional charge for beer and wine tasting.

Following the *Festival*, the *Tradeshow* on Nov. 3 will offer an exclusive experience for exhibitors to network with buyers.

For more information about the *Feast! Festival & Tradeshow*, please visit www.local-feast.org. To keep in touch with the latest updates, like *Feast! Local Food Network* on Facebook, follow @Local_Feast on Twitter and use #localFEAST to make sure your voice is heard.

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