

Wisconsin Cheese Companies Get Innovative

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Two Wisconsin cheese companies were recognized earlier this week by the Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC) for their leadership and dedication to growing Wisconsin's dairy industry.

The fourth annual DBIC Innovation Zone Awards were presented to Hidden Springs Creamery, of Westby, Wis., and Roth Käse USA, of Monroe, Wis., to highlight the accomplishments of both companies in product and market innovation. The award ceremony took place at the Wisconsin Specialty Cheese Institute meeting in Monroe.

Hidden Springs Creamery cheesemaker and owner Brenda Jensen, who just three years ago left the corporate world to pursue her dream of operating a sheep creamery, was recognized for her leadership in the creation of new Wisconsin artisan sheep's milk cheeses. She and her husband, Dean, farm the old-fashioned way with horses at their farmstead near Westby. Since 2006, Brenda has won numerous awards for her fresh sheep's milk cheese, Driftless, as well as for her Ocooch Mountain, a cave-aged sheep's milk cheese. Jensen plans to craft a new line of mixed-milk cheeses in 2009.

Roth Käse USA was honored for its continuing excellence in not only crafting and marketing its own award-winning cheeses, but for acting as a marketing partner with other Wisconsin companies to increase market share for Wisconsin cheese. Since its start in 1991, Roth Käse has won more than 100 awards for its unique line of cheeses. The company has established a world-class visitor center at its headquarters in Monroe that has become a destination for chefs, buyers and food writers from around the world wishing to learn more about Wisconsin cheese.

"In choosing these companies, the DBIC team sought to recognize innovation in two categories: product and marketing. As one of Wisconsin's newest dairy artisans, Brenda Jensen continues to craft innovative artisan cheeses, winning awards in every competition she enters, while the team at Roth Käse USA not only crafts its own lineup of impressive, award-winning cheeses, but chooses to partner with other Wisconsin cheese companies in helping to market their products to consumers around the world. Congratulations to all," said Jeanne Carpenter, DBIC's communications director.

The DBIC is a not-for-profit group that offers technical assistance to dairy producers and processors in developing value-added dairy products, business planning and market development. For more information about the DBIC, visit www.dbicusa.org.

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