

Shropshires Perform Double Duty

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cow's milk," he said. "Lambs gain a pound per day, so that milk's got a lot of nutritional value."

The dairy has a permit and is inspected by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA).

The cheese is produced in a garden-shed-turned "cheese house," according to Cook.

"We've been making cheese on the farm for six years," said Cook, a full-time technologist in the semiconductor industry.

The milk is chilled overnight before it is pasteurized in a two-gallon pasteurizer. Culture (a bacteria) is added and the mixture is left to sit while the acidity increases. "We propagate our own culture from cultures she (Menhennett) brought back from Greece," he said.

"All cheese is made from the bacterial fermentation of milk — it's what happens to the constituents of the milk during fermentation that determines its taste... also the aging and treatment of the product. Every little thing you do has an effect on the taste."

Next Cook adds rennet, which coagulates the mix into curds. Lee drains the curds and lets them sit for 24 hours.

Cook makes three types of cheese: a drain curd cheese, a press cheese, and a Greek-style handform cheese.

These cheese they make are "typical of farm cheese made in Eastern Europe," he said. "We make about a half-dozen different varieties in different quantities."

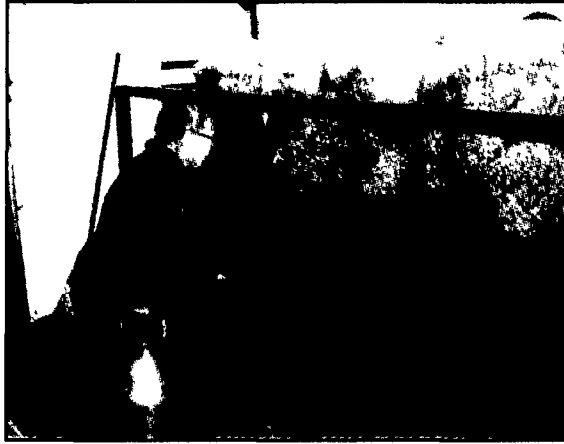
These varieties include cheese curds with herbs, a kind of spreadable cheese, smoked cheese, feta-style cheese, and a small amount of blue-veined cheese.

The cheeses are aged for three months to a year, depending on the cheese.

Sheep, Wool Festival

Menhennett has been selling cheese since the early '90s; however she has been attending the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival since the late 1970s.

Menhennett recommends the festival if anyone "likes to eat lamb, likes nice wool sweaters, rugs, hand-woven items, likes to look at different kind of sheep, likes to watch border collies work



Above and at right, Menhennett milks two groups, usually around 12 total, of sheep twice a day.



— if they have any curiosity about sheep, that's where to go," she said.

She originally began going to the event to exhibit her Clun Forest sheep, but the last few years selling the farm's cheese has replaced taking any sheep to the festival.

"It's an easy market. We sell everything in two days," she said. "When we first started selling it, people would come by the booth and say, 'Oh, sheep's milk —

yuck.' Now they line up."

"We've got people pestering us as we set up," he said. "There are loyal folks that keep coming back. We sell everything we can produce."

"Last year we sold the entire year's production inside of six hours," said Cook.

Menhennett gains new fans from the samples of cheese that they give out during the festival.

Seventy pounds of dry ice keep the cheese cool during the event. "The health department comes around checking for temperature and our hand-washing facilities," she said.

For this year's festival, "we made all the cheese we could,"

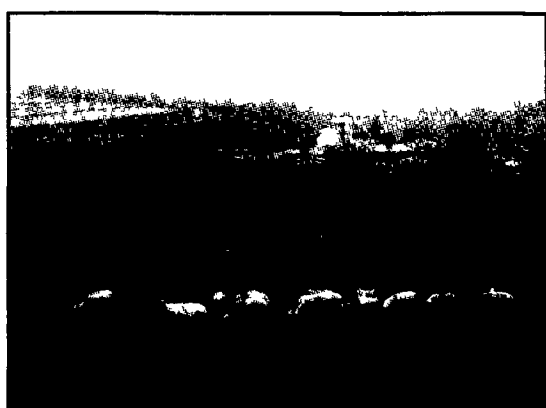
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Cook holds a tray of Greek-style handform cheese. Newly-cut curds are draining in molds on the tray in front.



Curds are spooned into a box to drain.



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