

Shepherd Becomes The Dairyman

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are added to the milk in a temperature-controlled "traditional Dutch vat." Each batch that is made requires constant attention. Wajswol said that his hand is in the vat "feeling the curd" for about three hours out of the five-hour process.

When he determines that the curd consistency is just right, the cheese is placed in special plastic molds and whey is squeezed from it in a wooden cheese press similar to that used for centuries in Europe. This is also time-consuming, with the cheese wheels needing to be turned every 20 minutes through the four-hour process.

Once in the cave, the cheese wheels need close monitoring and must be turned and wiped daily.

Every step along the way requires sharp attention to the quality of the work in progress, Wajswol noted.

"This cheese needs company when its being made," he said. "There's no 'automatic.' Automatic doesn't make great cheese."

Another challenging aspect of sheep dairying is care of the ewes themselves.

Wajswol allows the sheep to graze as much as possible and doesn't administer wormers or other medications while the ewes are milking from April to November.

But East Friesian sheep have their share of troubles, according to Wajswol. These include lambing difficulties and a tendency toward ailments such as pneumonia.

Wajswol uses estrus synchronization and artificial insemination to have the ewes lamb in April. Lambing season is hectic because of the number of ewes that need assistance.

"We don't sleep in April," he said.

The flock is milked in a portable parlor that Wajswol built himself, based on a Swiss design.

Average milk production for East Friesians is 5 to 6 pounds per day.

Sheep milk is extraordinarily rich in solids — up to 10 percent protein and 7 percent butterfat, according to Wajswol. It is naturally homogenized and yields about one pound of cheese for seven pounds of milk, compared to the ratio of about 1:10 for cows milk.

Wajswol's wife Debra and children Chelsea, 13, and Ethan, 11, help with the milking and other jobs on the dairy, including the important job of taste-testing cheeses.

Wajswol said that a big investment is needed to make good quality cheese. His new large-scale operation, which will include a cave built into a hillside, a retail store, and accommodations



Cheese wheels ripen in Wajswol's cave.

for tourists to watch sheep-milking and cheesemaking, will cost about \$2 million.

"You gotta love it and put a whole lot into it to get it right," he said.

Chesapeake's Health Takes Turn For Worse

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Government's failure to stem the enormous flow of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution into the Chesapeake Bay is the most important factor in the decline in the bay's health this year, according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's (CBF) sixth annual "State of the Bay Report."

The report finds that on a scale of 0 to 100 (100 reflecting the pristine Bay Captain John Smith described in the 1600s), the Bay's health rates a 27, down one pint from 2002's rating.

Today's report comes less than one month before the 20th anniversary of the Chesapeake cleanup program, an event that will be marked on Dec. 9 by the region's top elected and appointed officials.

"It is a tragedy that instead of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Chesapeake Bay Program this year with progress toward a restored Bay, we must report that the Bay has taken a turn for the worse," CBF President William C. Baker said. "Three and a half years after making the commit-

ment to a restored Bay by 2010, the states and federal government have yet to implement any decisive actions that will, in fact, begin to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, the prime cause of the bay's illness."

The "State of the Bay Report" which CBF issues for the first time in 1998, is a comprehensive measure of the bay's health. For the report, CBF analyzes 13 indicators: oysters, shad, underwater grasses, wetlands, forested buffers, toxics, water clarity, dissolved oxygen, crabs, striped bass

(rockfish), resource lands, phosphorus, and nitrogen. CBF scientists compiled and examined the best available historical and up-to-date information for each indicator and assigned it an index number.

This year's decline was the result of increased nitrogen and phosphorus pollution and the related increases in "dead zones" (areas of the Bay and its tributaries where oxygen levels are too low to sustain life), as well as decreases in water clarity.

Chesapeake scientists have described precisely the series of actions that will be necessary to improve water quality consistent with the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act. Yet, these actions have not been implement-

ed by the region's governments. The Clean Water Act requires that all permits for sewage treatment plants, industries, large animal operations, and municipal stormwater be sufficiently stringent to protect water quality.

"The states and EPA simply are not enforcing the law," Baker said. "There are thousands of permits issued in the watershed, and I can count on one hand the number that have both nitrogen and phosphorus restrictions."

Other factors contributing to the decline were state budget problems that have slowed land preservation efforts and the continued dangerously low levels of the blue crab population.

Improvements were seen this year in forest buffer restoration as a result of federal/state/private partnerships and shad population increases that have been observed in all the major tributaries.

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