

WORLD DAIRY DIGEST

FDA gives green light on using ultrafiltered milk in cheese

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) declared ultrafiltered cows' milk can be used to make all types of natural cheeses. The dairy industry has been seeking approval for this natural dairy ingredient in cheesemaking for nearly 20 years.

"FDA's announcement is an important win for Wisconsin and other great cheesemaking states," says John Umhoefer, executive director of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, a trade association representing dairy manufacturers for more than 125 years.

Umhoefer notes FDA's decision will allow cheesemakers to use this natural, concentrated

form of milk in cheesemaking with flexible labelling restrictions, and the decision will open the door for Wisconsin and other states to produce and market more fresh, ultrafiltered milk to cheesemakers across the nation.

The dairy industry has been working with FDA for nearly two decades to allow the use of ultrafiltered milk in cheeses with a federal standard of identity, such as cheddar, mozzarella, Colby and brick.

Ultrafiltered milk is fresh milk run through a filter to reduce the amount of water and lactose, and concentrate the natural proteins in the milk. www.dairyherd.com.



Australian dairy farmers underpaid for milk fat

Australian dairy farmers say they're being underpaid for fat, despite a global hike in butter prices.

Global butter prices have surged from \$4,000 a tonne 12 months ago to almost \$6,000 a tonne today, while skim milk powder has been bogged down at \$2,000 to \$2,500 since late 2014.

Yet, Australian dairy processors continue to pay farmers two to 2.5 times more for protein than fat, leading some farmers to question whether local dairy manufacturers are cross-subsidizing protein production.

Jersey Australia president Chris McKenzie says he was concerned fat was being used to subsidize protein production, which obviously disadvantaged Jersey producers. "We've ended up with farmgate pricing that's not giving us the true value of the products the world demands."

McKenzie says milk prices needed to be fattened up, even if it meant disadvantaging 10,000-litre cow herds.

While Jersey and some mixed breed herds can produce milk at five per cent fat or more, many Holstein herds are pumping out milk at a little more than three per cent fat.

"If it (the fat-to-protein pricing ratio) was rebalanced, we would see more mixed breed herds as we became more aware of on-farm costs," McKenzie says.

One industry analyst, who has spent decades working for Australia's largest dairy processor, says it was clear fat prices needed to rise.

"The argument for greater payments for fat is clearly there, and you will see industry adjust," the analyst says. "Obviously it would put pressure on higher input, larger dairy herds." www.weeklytimesnow.com.au.

Norway to build energy-efficient dairy plant

Norway is building a new \$101-million energy-efficient dairy that will be based on renewable energy. The dairy will be the Nordic region's most energy-efficient plant. TINE dairy will be located in Flesland. To make it a renewable facility, TINE is installing 6,000 square metres of solar cells on its roof for electricity production. It is also building its own filling station for biofuels for trucks, and charging station for electric cars. TINE is also undertaking a gradual transition to electrically-powered distribution vehicles.

Even the building process will be environmentally-friendly. A heat pump that recovers heat from the cold storage and produces steam for use in production is just one example. The dairy will be the first in the country using this technology. Surplus heat from production will be recycled and used for underfloor heating, melting snow, hot water and heating. In addition, energy-efficient LED lighting and other equipment will help reduce energy consumption. www.dairyreporter.com.

Dean Foods closes another milk processing plant

Dean Foods, the largest dairy company in the United States, is closing another one of its milk processing plants, PET Dairy, in Richmond, Virginia, because sales are so bad, according to *Dairy Reporter*.

PET Dairy has been in operation for more than 80 years, and has dairy plants in several states producing a slew of dairy products. This is the first closure of a PET dairy plant. It follows others, including the closure of a Wisconsin plant in 2015, an Indiana plant the same year, and Louisiana-based Brown's dairy in 2016.

The consumption of dairy has been facing a steady decline for decades. Today, Americans consume 37 per cent less dairy than they did in 1970, and in the past year alone, consumption of low-fat milk plummeted by 13 per cent. Data show plant-based alternatives are on the rise. Within the past year, almond milk sales in the U.S. have risen by 4.2 per cent, reaching just shy of being a \$1 billion industry. www.onegreenplanet.org.