

**Vermont Cheese Council**  
**Marketing Feasibility of a Risk Management Program**  
**Study**  
**February 9, 2009**



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## **Overview**

The Vermont Cheese Council, (VCC), has been considering implementing a “Risk Management Program,” (RMP). The mission of the RMP would be to inspire and assure unparalleled consumer confidence in the quality, safety and enjoyment of Vermont’s celebrated specialty and artisanal cheese producers.

The mission would be achieved by establishing a credible risk-reduction program, including:

- Identification of best practices relative to the safety of specialty and artisanal cheese production
- Establishment of a next generation, state-endorsed “seal of quality” for VT cheese makers
- Providing introductory training and ongoing technical assistance to assure product safety and confidence
- Facilitating access to cost-effective testing and other critical technical resources

Assumed benefits of the RMP would include:

1. *Brand Enhancement:* Enhanced local and national consumer confidence/perception relative to the quality of Vermont cheeses and other VT specialty foods
2. *Risk Management:* Assure that the health and vitality of Vermont’s specialty cheese makers is not unnecessarily compromised by an avoidable public health/safety incident
3. *Competitive Advantage:* Create important competitive marketplace advantages, leading to increased market share and revenue
4. *Sector Expansion:* Provide access to risk management body of knowledge and technical education, thus facilitating expansion of current and future producers by enhancing producer confidence and knowledge.

This feasibility study was undertaken by Rosalie J. Wilson Business Development Services as an independent third party study to ascertain whether there is market demand for an RMP from the wholesale and retail audience, what risks may be at stake for Vermont cheese makers if they do not undertake such a program, and if undertaking an RMP may present opportunities for additional return on investment for Vermont cheese makers.

Specifically, the study sought to identify which of the following scenarios would be the most likely outcome,

- 1) Yes, VCC should proceed as this presents an opportunity to not only maintain existing market share and wholesale buyer confidence but also to capitalize on the added value consumer level marketing of the RMP could bring.
- 2) Yes, VCC should proceed in order to preserve existing market share and wholesale buyer confidence.

Or

- 3) No. From the wholesale and retail perspective there is no reason for VCC to proceed and no perceived additional benefit to the producers.

This study was not intended to study the operational mechanics, logistical, or financial feasibility of implementing an RMP, only to see whether it is warranted in the trade industry, and if so, are there opportunities to position it in such a way that it generates additional financial benefit to Vermont cheese makers.

## **Executive Summary**

The study produced three critical findings:

1. There exists an inherent assumption in the national artisan cheese industry that Vermont artisan cheese makers, by their very nature of being small, being in direct connection with retailers and distributors, and being in Vermont, have high quality standards and are following good practices, therefore need for a “formalized” program or bureaucratic approach is considered unnecessary. To the degree that this is a genuine compliment to the Vermont artisan cheese industry, it also represents a real threat to the Vermont brand and to individual cheese makers should a situation ever arise to challenge this assumption.
2. That good practices are valued, and that documentation of good practices could become the RMP.
3. Through documenting one's adherence to principles and good practices for the entire product lifecycle, from animal health, husbandry, and milk production through cheese production, all the way to shipping, handling, and distribution, in a manner in which third parties can understand, Vermont cheese makers can fulfill an industry assurance to suppliers and retailers that they are receiving product at the cusp of its ark of brilliance and in perfect condition, while also creating traceability that would satisfy food safety and risk management needs.

The study also found several related findings:

1. Adopting a “documentation program” could expedite new vendor application processes with larger retail establishments, potentially even becoming acceptable as an alternative to a chain’s own pro forma documentation.
2. A “documentation program” that included a marketing campaign that fostered networking opportunities between Vermont cheese makers and industry decision makers in key cities, and used point of sales materials to introduce consumers to the farms and families who produce the cheese, and depicted the values adhered to in making the cheese, would resonate with consumers and decision makers, increasing sales and market share for VCC cheeses.
3. That it is not only producers but also shippers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers who need to be trained in proper handling, storing, packaging, and shipping of artisan cheese. If Vermont cheese makers wish to protect product and brand integrity they will need to take it upon themselves to train shippers, handlers, wholesalers, and retailers—all individuals and entities coming into contact with their products, about good practices and principles.
4. That within the industry and the general public there is confusion regarding what constitutes artisan scale versus commercial scale cheese production. At what size, scale, and volume would a Vermont producer be considered too large to fit the definition of artisan cheese? This is considered a significant finding because value was placed on creating formalized oversight for larger scale operations but not for smaller scale operations.

The recommendation stemming from this study is that VCC develop a “Documentation Program.” If VCC were to create a Vermont template for documentation that was branded, providing a unified look, feel and approach to each cheese maker’s documentation it would become easily recognizable within the industry while allowing each individual producer the autonomy to document their own particular procedures and principles. The branding elements could then be incorporated into a marketing campaign focused on bringing the resonating points to the consumer level.

## **Study Methodology**

The study was conducted through telephone and e-mail interviews to a contact list provided by the Vermont Cheese Council. Sixteen (16) distributors and twenty (20) retailers, varying in size from independent artisan cheese stores to national supermarket chains, were contacted across the United States. Of the thirty-six (36) organizations contacted, twenty-two (22) responded.

The study aimed to determine the following

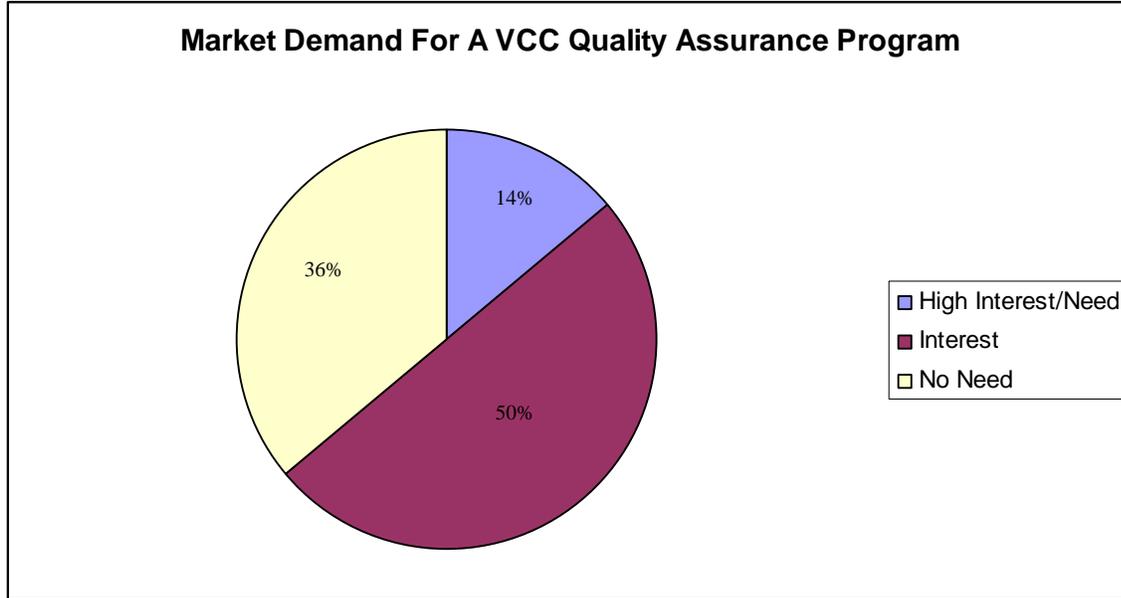
- 1) Do wholesale and retail buyers feel there is a need for or interest in an RMP?

If so

- a. Do they have quality assurance standards in place as a requirement with their vendors, and if so, and what are they?
  - b. And, what are the areas of concern?
- 2) Do they feel that an RMP, based on what they see as areas of concern, could provide added value or a marketing advantage to Vermont cheese makers? For example, would having a "symbol of approval" type of certification or branding element strengthen perceived value to retailers and consumers?
    - a. Could this enable the cheeses to command a higher price?
    - b. Would it help purchasers at the point of sale in selecting these products over others, thus increasing sales volume?
    - c. Would retailers and distributors be more likely to select and promote these cheeses, thus expanding market sector and new markets?
    - d. What suggestions might there be in promoting and marketing this program?
  - 3) If a need or value is not felt for an RMP, are there other suggestions for how VCC might expand markets or increase sales for Vermont cheese makers?

## **Findings**

### **Market Demand**



#### ***High Interest/Need***

Of the twenty-two (22) respondents, the three (3) largest entities indicated a high interest or need for some form of documentation demonstrating that good practices are being employed. These included Wegmans Food Markets, a regional supermarket chain who has an RMP requirement as an existing element of the vendor application process, Whole Foods Market, a national supermarket chain who is in the process of creating a set of quality assurance standards for humane treatment of animals for its vendors, and 3D Cheese, a national distributor who values and relies highly upon a quality assurance program Neal's Yard Dairy initiated.

#### ***Interest***

Eleven (11) of the twenty-two (22) respondents indicated an interest in an RMP but felt that existing sales would not be jeopardized without one. These respondents noted that the quality of products coming from Vermont regularly exceeded expectations, and that in general the retailers and distributors had forged direct relationships with the producers which provided a level of confidence that would supersede the value they place on an RMP. That being said, if Vermont cheese makers felt a need to or desire to proactively initiate a program, these respondents saw it as an overture of respect to the industry that would result in mutual respect and appreciation from retailers and consumers.

### **No Need**

Eight (8) of the twenty-two (22) respondents indicated that they prize the high quality and care producers in Vermont dedicate to their products. These attributes are evident in the cheese and are cultivated through direct communication between the retailer and the producer. These respondents saw no additional value or need for an RMP. Furthermore, there was concern that if the program were formalized it could hurt the small producers; add to the cost of the cheese which would squeeze margins for producers and retailers, or increase cost to the consumer; and could impede the creativity and individuality of the producers and the products, two attributes which are intrinsic elements to the Vermont brand.

## **Key Themes**

- 1. Formalized, bureaucratic oversight is not necessary.**
  - 2. An RMP should only be undertaken if it is being driven by the artisan cheese makers.**
  - 3. Quality and risk concern should be on taste and brilliance. If you focus on good milk, good cheese making practices, and good distribution to produce a stellar product, food safety will be addressed naturally in the process.**
  - 4. Documentation of adherence to principles and good practices would be a tool that could satisfy RMP needs and is valued by the industry.**
  - 5. Good practices or principles do not need to be any more onerous than what is already part of the cheese maker's existing production practices and they should extend the entire length of the distribution chain.**
- 
- 1. Formalized, bureaucratic oversight is not necessary.**

All twenty-two (22) respondents expressed a belief that a higher level of quality control exists in small scale production.

The common theme was that any time producers undertake to make their quality better or provide additional value it is appreciated, however, a formalized, bureaucratic approach to oversight is not necessary for Vermont artisan producers. Existing market share will not be at risk if such a project is not undertaken.

**2. An RMP should only be undertaken if it is being driven by the artisan cheese makers.**

Five (5) respondents emphasized that the program would *only be meaningful if it was truly a voluntary effort driven by the artisan cheese makers for the benefit of the artisan cheese makers.*

**3. Quality and risk management concern should be on taste and brilliance. If you focus on good milk, good cheese making practices, and good distribution to produce a stellar product, food safety will be addressed naturally in the process.**

There was resounding emphasis that the primary quality concern artisan cheese makers should have is making great tasting cheese. Once they make great cheese the key issue is getting it to the retailer and in the hands of the consumer, while it is at the height of its flavor profile, and in perfect physical condition.

If a project were to be undertaken, 11 respondents, 50%, stated that the key issue with quality or risk management is *ensuring artisan cheese arrives in perfect form at its peak point of brilliance to the retailer.*

A weakness that if addressed would facilitate Vermont cheese makers in preserving product quality for taste and simultaneously protect against food safety risks would be to focus on what happens to the product once it is out of their hands.

To illustrate this point, Steve, from Steve's Cheese in Oregon states, "Small cheese makers do an amazing job, up until the last step. For 50% of US cheese makers, shipping and distribution is what they do the poorest. Producers should spend time on this final step, so that products arrive at the proper temperature, stabilized and in perfect condition."<sup>1</sup>

Randolph Hodgson, founder of the venerable Neal's Yard Dairy substantiates this point on the Neal's Yard Dairy website,

"Our main aim is to keep in close contact with cheese makers on one hand and customers on the other and above all to be in very close contact with all the cheese passing through our hands. We visit some cheese makers very often; I select our cheddars by visiting the West Country every eight weeks and tasting through young cheese to select the batches that will be matured on for us. Apart from trying to find the best cheese available this is also when the cheese maker can get a sense of how their cheeses are being received by customers. ...The mature cheese is sent out to our own shops or in our own vans through London or by trucks all over the world. *But our job doesn't stop there as a carefully selected and*

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<sup>1</sup> Telephone conversation with Steve, owner, Steve's Cheese, 12/18/2008.

*perfectly ripened cheese can suffer in transit, at its destination so we do our best to keep in contact with customers to ensure all is well."*<sup>2</sup>

**4. Documentation of adherence to principles and good practices would be a tool that could satisfy RMP needs and is valued by the industry.**

Through documenting one's adherence to principles from milk production to cheese production to shipping, handling, and distribution, in a manner in which third parties can understand, Vermont cheese makers can fulfill an industry assurance to suppliers and retailers that they are receiving product at its peak of brilliance and in perfect condition, while also creating traceability that would satisfy food safety risk needs. Attesting to this fact, Debra Dickerson of 3D Cheese noted that since Neal's Yard Dairy has begun providing documentation as an assurance to the taste, condition, and timing of cheese deliveries, they "never get stopped by FDA anymore."<sup>3</sup>

Documentation as a tool would demonstrate that one is following good practices. Documentation would substantiate the industry assumption which is readily attributed to Vermont cheese makers thus facilitating one's ability to avert an otherwise precarious situation should anything ever arise to challenge such an assumption.

**5. Good practices or principles do not need to be any more onerous than what is already part of the cheese maker's existing production practices and they should extend the entire length of the distribution chain.**

The practices to be documented do not need to be more onerous than what cheese makers are already doing. As Cathy Gaffney from Wegmans Food Markets pointed out, "the concern is not that we need HACCP level of certification but something to show that the farmers are following good practices, a guarantee that the cheeses are being produced in a consistent fashion."<sup>4</sup>

And good practices should not end with production, but should be followed through, and documented, up through to delivery of the finished product to the retailer. This includes good practices in distribution, shipping, handling, and storage.

It is the responsibility of the cheese maker to maintain oversight of their products from production through the distribution chain until their final destination with the consumer.

Richard Sutton of St. James Cheese Company expressed this point as follows: "Often time cheese is exposed to damaging influences downriver that get passed on to the

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nealsyarddairy.co.uk/about.html>

<sup>3</sup> Telephone conversation with Debra Dickerson, 3D Cheese, 11/14/2008.

<sup>4</sup> Telephone conversation with Cathy Gaffney, Wegmans Food Markets, 12/15/2008

consumer, that then get blamed on the cheese maker.”<sup>5</sup> It is this “downstream” area where proactive quality concern measures could be addressed to Vermont cheese makers’ benefit.

Good practices to document include

#### Production Standards

1. How the animals are kept, how the land is farmed
2. Quality testing of the milk
3. When and how the cheese is made
4. How the cheese is stored

#### Product Development, Selection & Recipe Refinement

5. Grading of the cheese
6. A tasting log during maturation of the cheese until it is deemed perfect and suitable for shipping
7. Selecting the cheese
8. Consistency of production techniques
9. Records of each batch to help refine recipes, record successes and provide insight as to why a particular batch might not have transformed into the desired final product

#### Packaging, Shipping, Receiving

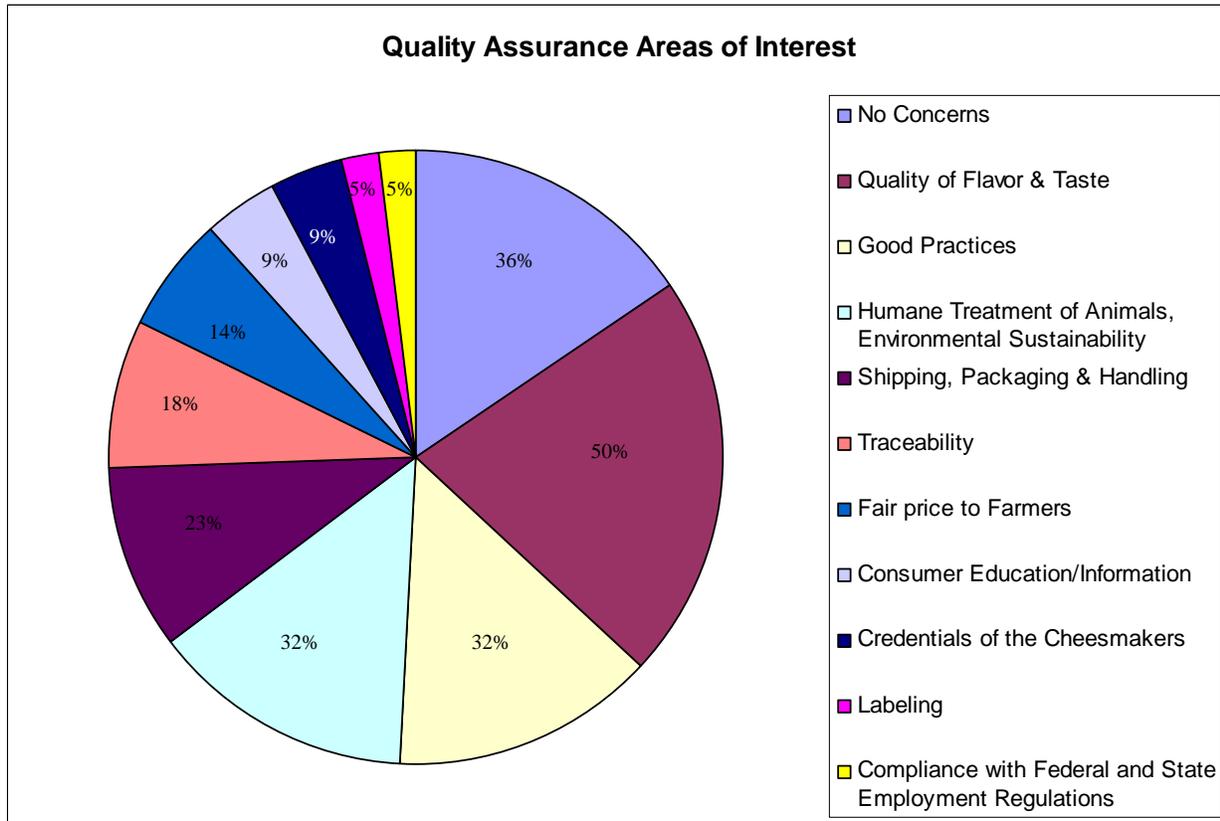
10. How the cheese is packaged for shipping
11. When and how the cheese is shipped
12. When and how it was received

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<sup>5</sup> Telephone conversation with Richard Sutton, St. James Cheese Company, 12/16/2008.

## Key Areas of Interest

If an RMP were to be implemented, specific points of interest were mentioned as follows.



### **Quality of Flavor & Taste**

50%, eleven (11) respondents noted that if VCC were to address anything, the most important quality to artisan cheese is taste. Ensuring the cheese reaches the retailer and consumer in its prime, in perfect condition, at the very beginning of its two to three week window of peak taste, flavor, texture and brilliance is the biggest quality concern.

### **Humane Treatment of Animals, Environmental Sustainability**

32%, seven (7) respondents felt that the ability to certify that Vermont cheeses are produced in a manner that practices humane treatment of animals and environmental stewardship would resonate with their consumers.

### **Good Practices**

32%, seven (7) respondents felt that the ability to demonstrate that the products are being produced in a consistent fashion and that the producers are following good practices would resonate with retailers, distributors, and consumers.

### ***Shipping, Packaging, and Handling***

23%, five (5) respondents felt specific issues with shipping, packaging, and downstream handling of the cheese were the highest priority concerns Vermont cheese makers could address to preserve the integrity and quality of their products.

Ensuring the cheese arrives in packaging that provides stability, breathability, protection, and insulation for the cheese.

Ensuring the cheese is shipped on Monday-Tuesday so it has all week to reach its destination without interruption.

Shipping cheese using 2 day UPS ground, which was noted as the most reliable and economical form of shipping.

Ability to demonstrate the cheese has been properly handled and stored for the duration of its lifespan, from producer through distributor/shipper to retailer and on to consumer.

### ***Traceability***

Although respondents to this study felt their consumers were of a psychographic that was more concerned about the taste of artisan cheese rather than food safety issues, a recent poll conducted by Consumer Reports Research Center did indicate that over 80 percent of consumers "want the government to be able to... quickly and accurately trace food from production to sale."<sup>6</sup>

18%, four (4) respondents felt that the ability to trace artisan cheese back through its lifecycle from raw ingredients to finished, delivered product would satisfy general food safety interests of American consumers while serving as a sales and marketing tool for cheese makers to demonstrate to distributors and retailers that their product is being delivered at its peak of brilliance, in perfect condition.

### ***Fair Price to Farmers***

14%, three (3) respondents felt the ability to certify fair price to farmers would resonate with the consumer.

### ***Consumer Education/Information***

9%, two (2) respondents felt that the effort should include consumer education.

There is a need to better educate the consumer about the:

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<sup>6</sup> <http://pressroom.consumerreports.org/pressroom/2008/11/consumer-reports-poll-two-thirds-of-americans-want-the-fda-to-inspect-domestic-and-foreign-food-supply.html>

1. taste and flavor complexity of artisan cheeses
2. ability to distinguish between artisan made and commercial products
3. natural quality controls built in to small scale production

### ***Credentials of the Cheese Makers***

9%, two (2) respondents felt that the ability to certify knowledge, experience, training, and credentials of Vermont cheese makers would lend credibility to Vermont cheese makers and alleviate quality concerns because training demonstrates professionalism. "A quality assurance program is less important than the long term professional cheese making that comes from a test, backed by years of training," Sean Hockert, Seacrest Foods International, Inc.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Labeling***

In addition to demonstrating good practices, humane treatment to animals and environmental sustainability, 5%, one (1) respondent said that more explicit ingredient listings would increase consumer confidence and product sales. For example, listing whether rennet is plant or animal derived would help vegetarians in product selection.

### ***Compliance with federal employment practices***

5%, one (1) respondent noted that as part of their vendor quality assurance program vendors must certify they are in compliance with state and federal employment regulations.

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<sup>7</sup> Telephone conversation with Sean Hockert, Seacrest Foods International, Inc., 12/16/2008.

## Concerns A VCC RMP Should Address

Two areas of concern were raised as potential issues the VCC should address. If addressed these would help clarify risk and avoid jeopardizing public and industry trust in Vermont artisan cheese makers.

### **1. *What Constitutes Vermont Farmstead and Artisanal Scale and Size?***

RMP concerns are often associated with larger, commercial enterprises where more formalized oversight is necessary. To better convey the high quality associated with artisan cheese and the good practices already being adhered to, a clear definition of what constitutes a Vermont artisan scale cheese versus a commercial scale cheese should be adopted and this definition should be communicated within the industry and to the consumer.

What does VCC consider as the size and scale of a farmstead or artisanal cheese operation versus a commercial operation? What would Vermont consider the cut-off point?

Respondents noted that they inherently trust small scale producers, but they do see formalized oversight as valuable for larger, commercial operations.

In fact six (6) respondents, 27%, felt a formal quality assurance program could hurt Vermont's small producers because

- a. it could facilitate market entry for larger, commercial producers, taking market share away from the truly artisanal cheese makers

and

- b. because the cost to participate could be more expensive than the potential for financial gain, thus negatively impacting the cheese maker's bottom line.

### **2. *How could Vermont cheese makers better maintain integrity of their cheese from the animal through the distribution chain?***

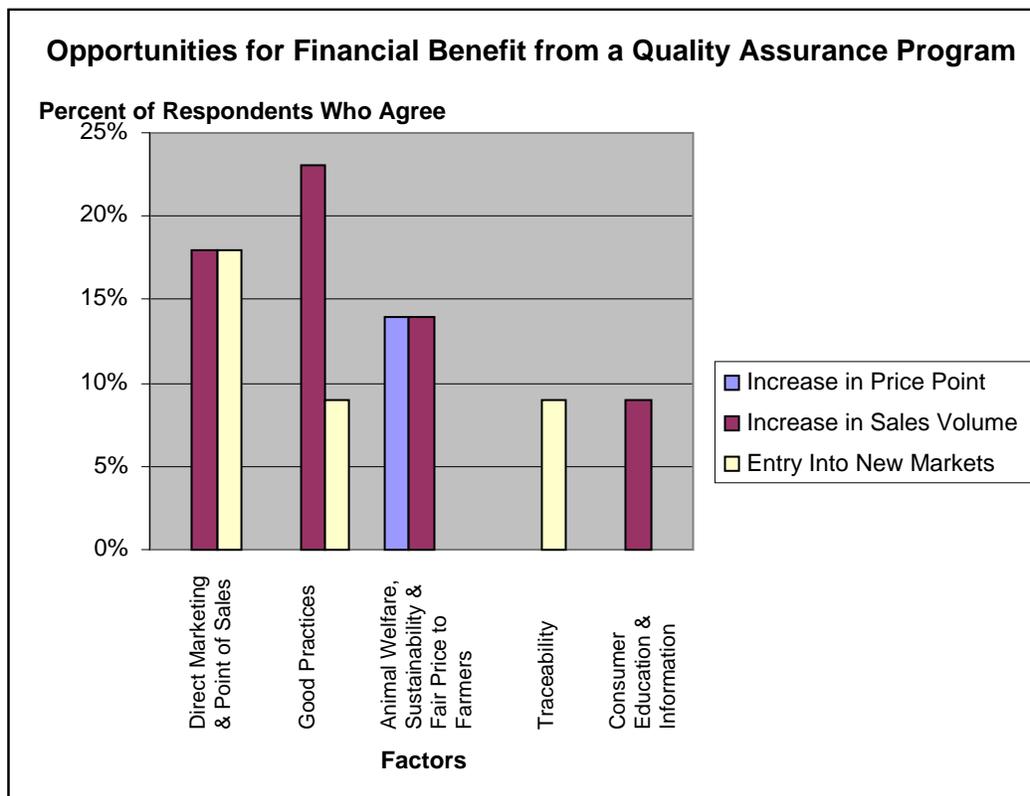
A majority of the risk concerns cited by the industry were with respect to handling of the cheese once it is out of the producer's hands. Maintaining the integrity of Vermont cheeses throughout the distribution chain will be paramount to Vermont's success. The cheese must reach the consumer in perfect condition. It must taste breath-taking, be physically intact, and have travelled at a temperature below 50°F. If any of these elements are in question, quality concerns will arise.

# Potential Benefits of a VCC RMP

## ***Could cheese makers derive added value or marketing benefit from an RMP?***

The premise of this study was to determine first, if the Vermont artisan cheese market share would be at stake if an RMP were not implemented, and secondly, if market share was not at risk, whether there might be financial benefits from implementing an RMP. The three scenarios deemed to demonstrate financial benefit were:

1. Would it enable the product to command a higher price point?
2. Would it increase sales volume?
3. Would it provide entry into new markets?



### ***1. Would it enable the product to command a higher price point?***

Three (3) respondents, 14%, felt that if the program articulated a message regarding animal welfare, sustainability “from the ground up,” and fair price to farmers, this message would resonate with consumers and could command a higher price point for the products.

Whole Foods, noted that the store itself would pay producers an additional premium if they met the Whole Foods Animal Compassion standards.

## **2. *Would it increase sales volume?***

Five (5) respondents, 23%, felt articulating good practices would resonate with the consumer and increase sales volume.

Three (3) respondents, 14%, indicated that they felt consumers could not support an increase in price point but would buy more product if the program articulated animal welfare and sustainability. The reason an increase in price point was not considered feasible from these respondents was that Vermont cheeses already command premiums at the high end of the spectrum. They feel their consumers are willing to pay this premium for Vermont products but that this is the extent of their price elasticity, especially with the current economy.

Two (2) respondents, 9%, felt that consumer education would increase sales volume.

Two (2) respondents, 9%, mentioned that Point of Sales material providing consumers with an opportunity to develop a connection with the cheese makers, such as pictures and stories of the cheese makers and the farms on easel backs and brochures, would increase sales volume.

## **3. *Would it provide entry into new markets?***

Five (5) respondents mentioned that creating networking opportunities for retailers and purchasing decision makers with VT cheese makers and VT products would be the most effective mechanism for developing consumer confidence, and market share for Vermont cheese makers.

From this study, it was ascertained that cheese buyers' quality assurance confidence comes foremost from developing a direct relationship with a producer. As Jeff from Great Ciao commented, "Wisconsin has a set of standards for Wisconsin cheeses but I do not buy them because of this certification. I buy them because they taste good, I like them, and I feel they are of high quality. A particular certification would not convince me of any of these things."<sup>8</sup>

To highlight this sentiment, twelve (12) of the respondents, (54%), pointed out that they buy their cheeses from producers with whom they have had an opportunity to develop a direct relationship. It is this closer level of intimacy that has instilled them with confidence in the producer and the products they are purchasing, and they pass this confidence along to their consumers.

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<sup>8</sup> Telephone conversation with Jeff, Great Ciao, 12/16/2008.

Two (2) respondents, 9%, noted that traceability and good practices will be requirements for entry into their establishments. Wegmans Food Markets (Wegmans), a regional supermarket, has existing requirements for new vendors and Whole Foods Markets (Whole Foods), a national supermarket, anticipates having standards for dairy within the next five years.

If a Vermont RMP or documentation program is developed it would expedite the new vendor application process with these two chain stores, and conceivably could expedite the process with others. A Vermont program could potentially be authorized as an acceptable demonstration of compliance with Wegmans Quality Assurance Codes of Practice Certification requirements; and it could potentially form the basis of the Whole Foods standards program for dairy.

Both Cathy Strange from Whole Foods and Cathy Gaffney from Wegmans offered their support and assistance in designing the Vermont RMP or documentation program if the project is undertaken.

## **Recommendations**

Respondents offered several recommendations for how they felt VCC could make an RMP program meaningful.

### **1. Document Good Practices**

Begin documenting one's standard cheese making practices and principles.

### **2. Ensure quality and taste at point of sale**

Develop documentation that provides traceability and demonstration of good practices through the cheese's entire lifecycle from milk production through cheese production, shipping and handling to display and storage at the retailer.

### **3. Address shipping, packaging, and handling**

Create an Industry Training Program

Develop and implement a training program for producers, shippers and distributors, and retailers. Good practices with shipping, storing, handling and producing artisan cheese are not just a concern that falls on producers, it is an issue that needs to be addressed with everyone in the distribution chain.

Develop a brand identity for this program that can be marketed to consumers.

The benefits to this program would be

1. Consumers can shop with confidence at certified retailers.
2. Retailers can purchase with confidence from cheese makers and distributors.
3. Retailers and distributors can have confidence in the shipping services used.
4. Cheese makers can feel confident that everything was done properly to ensure a positive consumer experience with their cheese.

Market the program within the trade (or industry) and to consumers:

Externally

Membership window signage for participating retailers  
Marketing campaign- Point of Sale materials, website, certification stickers on product packaging, etc... see Program Point of Sales below.

Internally

Membership contact book and website to facilitate connecting certified retailers, distributors, shippers and cheese makers.  
Certification decals for distribution trucks

Certification for members marketing usage- on their websites and marketing materials, etc.

Components of the training program could include:

1. Educating producers on proper packaging for stability, and insulation.
2. Educating producers and shippers on good shipping practices such as shipping at the beginning of the week to reduce delays in transit.
3. Educating shippers on proper stacking and packing to eliminate damage in transit.
4. Educating producers, shippers, wholesalers and retailers on proper storage and handling.
5. Educating producers on the value of packaging as a brand element and incorporating branded packaging into their marketing strategies.

Additional suggestions to improve shipping

1. Use UPS ground.
2. Build a better box. For example Rock Hill Creamery, in Utah takes such pains to ensure good packaging that they build their own boxes.<sup>9</sup>
3. Add ice packs and insulation.
4. Strengthen brand identity through using attractive boxes and packaging, and branding them with the cheese maker's logo.
5. Refrain from using boxes that are in poor condition and/or reflect other brands or products, such as old banana boxes. These reflect poorly on the attention to quality and detail that went into production of the cheese itself.
6. For cheese makers who acknowledge that shipping is a weakness or a chore they don't relish, develop a solution, for example, build into their business plan the expense of using a distributor or hiring a part-time employee whose sole responsibility is to pack and ship cheese two days a week. Otherwise the lack of attention will show through and will create quality concerns, eventually damaging brand reputation and negatively affecting sales.

#### **4. Clear Definitions**

Devise explicit definitions of what constitutes a Vermont artisanal and farmstead cheese maker, with a specific focus on size and scale of the operation, and limit entry into the program to these operations.

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<sup>9</sup> Telephone conversation with Steve, owner, Steve's Cheese, December 18, 2008.

## **5. Networking**

If VCC organized mini-receptions in key cities where purchasing decision makers in the industry, retailers and consumers were able to meet with the producers and taste the products first hand, VCC would develop quality assurance confidence in Vermont products, increase sales volumes for existing product placements and secure entry to new markets.<sup>10</sup>

Charlotte Kamin of Bedford Cheese in New York City, and Bart Farrell of Clyde's Group in Washington DC both suggested hosting panel discussions or open forums, "travelling road shows" where all cheeses in the program are available for tasting and 3-4 producers attend in person to introduce their farms and cheese operations to buyers and consumers.

These events could be held in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York City, Boston, and Washington DC, and conducted on a regular basis, for example once per quarter, featuring different producers each time. The events would foster interaction between the cheese makers, the products, and buyers creating an efficient and effective mechanism for achieving the three aims of the program 1) instilling confidence in the quality of Vermont artisan cheeses 2) increasing sales of Vermont artisan cheeses, and 3) creating new opportunities and markets for Vermont artisan cheeses.

As mentioned under *Entry Into New Markets* the majority of respondents noted that developing a direct connection with the producer and the product was the primary factor in their decision making purchasing process. Their clients in turn are instilled with confidence from the knowledge that the retailers are personally selecting the offerings in their establishments.

These events could also contain an educational component to provide instruction for the general public on tasting and understanding artisan cheese.

Bart Farrell of Clyde's Group restaurants has extended an offer to help organize and host these receptions in the DC area, including holding them at a Clyde's Group restaurant and broadening the event to additional interested parties, such as Cow Girl Creamery. Charlotte Kamin suggested the possibility of using Bedford Cheese as a host location in NYC and may also be able to assist in organization.<sup>11 12</sup>

## **6. Program Point of Sales**

A sticker or on-package logo that conveyed a "certified humane/environmental sustainability" theme would register with consumers and logistically could work in

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<sup>10</sup> Telephone conversation with Bart Farrell, Clyde's Group, December 11, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Telephone conversation with Bart Farrell, Clyde's Group 12/11/2008.

<sup>12</sup> Telephone conversation with Charlotte Kamin, Bedford Cheese, 12/2/2008

establishments where the cheese is pre-cut and wrapped. This approach would assist novice consumers in selecting these products over others because consumers unfamiliar with cheese tend to make their selections hastily and associate “award stickers” with quality. Marketing the program directly on the packaging in an “award sticker” style format would help these consumers feel good about their purchasing decision.<sup>13</sup>

Sharing the story and pictures of the cheese makers’ family and the farms they work with on in-store signage, rotating it every so often to feature different cheese makers throughout the course of the year, would also capture the interest of consumers and create a personal connection with the cheeses in the program. In store signage suggested includes easel-back displays and brochures.

## **Other Programs/Models**

During the study several other models were examined. These included a “Certification of Origin” program used widely in Europe, the American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium, Neal’s Yard Dairy, Wegmans New Vendor Application, Whole Foods Quality Standards Program, and the Wisconsin Master Cheese maker® Program.

### ***“Certification of Origin”***

Several countries have created “certification of origin” programs to create market segments for their agricultural products based on the exclusivity of where and how they are made, and to protect their cultural heritage and identity. A list of these programs can be found in Appendix A.

Certification of Origin programs were felt to be somewhat overbearing for Vermont producers by the retailers and distributors, as the focus is primarily on producing standards for specific product styles, and as the need for protecting Vermont’s cultural cheese making heritage is not applicable.

More specifically, comments were made that retailers and consumers prefer the broadness in scope, creativity, and individuality of Vermont’s producers and would be disquieted rather than comforted if they had to conform to standards or styles.<sup>14</sup> Along these same lines came the sentiment that to demonstrate quality, it would be more effective to show the credentials and experience of Vermont cheese makers rather than to have standards in place for Vermont cheese products.<sup>15</sup>

Interestingly, in 1998 the state of Kentucky looked into the feasibility of adapting the French Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée program into a marketing program for Kentucky

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<sup>13</sup> Telephone conversation with Todd Druhot, Atlanta Foods International, 12/3/2008.

<sup>14</sup> Telephone conversation with Lenny Rice, Tomales Bay Foods, 12/16/2008.

<sup>15</sup> Telephone conversation with Sean Hockert, Seacrest Foods International, Inc., 12/16/2008.

agricultural products. Although the report does not reach a conclusion as to whether or not such a program would be feasible in Kentucky, it provides a good understanding of the AOC, including how it was created, why it was created, how it is organized, and the various factors necessary for such a program to be successful. The report can be read in its entirety at <http://www.rural.org/publications/aoc.pdf>.

### ***The American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium***<sup>17</sup>

The American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium, (ARMCP) is a collection of cheeses distinguished for quality and production methods established under the auspices of Slow Food USA. This program was suggested by Debra Dickerson, of 3D Cheese, as a potential model for the VCC program.

The ARMCP is composed of cheeses which meet the stringent requirements of its Mission and Protocol. They are all made with raw milk from humanely treated animals living on environmentally friendly farms. Each cheese is also evaluated for its overall quality to ensure that the cheese is delicious. The protocol and tasting standards were developed within the guidelines of Slow Food's policies, and the cheeses are periodically evaluated for eligibility in the Presidium.

The Presidium committee evaluates applications for each specific cheese that is proposed to be included within the Presidium. If it passes the production evaluation process it will then be tasted for final approval. Cheeses that are not accepted in the presidium will be constructively evaluated and the cheese maker given advice on how to bring the cheese up to protocol standards.

A copy of the mission and protocol are attached as Appendix B.

### ***Neal's Yard Dairy Traceability & Product Documentation***

Neal's Yard Dairy has begun providing documentation for every product entering the United States to help ensure and demonstrate that they are selecting and offering cheeses at the peak of their brilliance. The information collected for this documentation would also provide the data necessary to track any product through to its point of origin and thus meet the needs of traceability for food safety concerns. A copy of Neal's Yard Dairy's procedures and documentation was not available but should be accessible via contact with Debra Dickerson, 3D Cheese.

### ***Wegmans Food Markets Quality Assurance Codes of Practice Certification***

Wegmans Food Markets Quality Assurance Codes of Practice Certification, attached as Appendix C, provides Wegmans' example of good manufacturing practices and standards, from production through to shipping and receiving. Wegmans requires

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.rawmilkcheese.org/index\\_files/index\\_files/presidium.htm](http://www.rawmilkcheese.org/index_files/index_files/presidium.htm)

compliance with these standards from all their vendors. Cathy Gaffney has invited VCC to use the Wegmans Codes of Practice document as a model.

### ***Whole Foods Market Quality Standards***<sup>18</sup>

Whole Foods Market has been working on developing quality standards for its products for several years. Currently in place are meat and poultry standards, while dairy standards will be developed over the next three to five years. Attached as Appendix D is a description of the Whole Foods program. Although the program does not specifically address dairy at this time, the description does give the reader a good idea of the areas of concern Whole Foods is interested in addressing, which are primarily related to animal welfare and would readily translate to dairy animals.

### ***Wisconsin Master Cheese Maker® Program***<sup>19</sup>

The Wisconsin Master Cheese Maker® Certification Program is regarded as “The Nation's First and Only Advanced Training Certification for Cheese Makers.” According to their website,

The world of Wisconsin cheese is the result of 160 years of quality and craftsmanship – a cheesemaking tradition that is the heart and soul of America's Dairyland. Rooted in the traditions of European cheesemaking, Wisconsin began and continues to advance the country's highest cheesemaking standards. Wisconsin was the first state to grade its cheese for quality. It was the first to insist that a licensed cheese maker oversee every pound of cheese made in the state. Now Wisconsin has more licensed cheese makers than any other state. The latest chapter in this quest for excellence is the Wisconsin Master Cheese maker® certification program, established in 1994. It's the most ambitious and rigorous advanced training program in the country and the only Master program outside of Europe. The program is administered from the Center for Dairy Research located at the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, and is funded by the Wisconsin dairy farmers represented by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

The program includes a brand logo that certified cheese makers can apply to their product packaging. A copy of the program application and logo are attached as Appendix E.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/products/meat-quality-standards.php>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.wisdairy.com/AllAboutCheese/Cheesemaking/CheeseMasters.aspx>

## **Examples of Good Practice & Documentation**

During the course of this study, several cheese makers and distributors were cited as exemplary models of good practices. These organizations included Jasper Hill Farm, Rock Hill Creamery, Rivers Edge Chèvre, and Neal's Yard Dairy.

### ***Jasper Hill Farm, Vermont***

Jasper Hill was cited by numerous respondents as a model that VCC could use to develop its program, "just look at what Mateo is doing" claimed Steven Rosenberg of Liberty Heights Fresh in Utah.<sup>20</sup> Jasper Hill Farm has been at the forefront of the American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium and has embraced using and documenting good production standards, taking painstaking care in packaging and shipping, and leveraging packaging as unique elements of the Jasper Hill brand.

An example of Jasper Hill Farm's Constant Bliss custom boxes used as a display:



Photo courtesy  
<http://www.jasperhillfarm.com/ourprocess.html>

### ***Rock Hill Creamery, Utah***

Rock Hill Creamery was used as a "best practices example" for packaging and shipping. At Rock Hill Creamery they make their own boxes to ensure the packaging will provide breathability, stability, and protection for their cheeses. "You could even see the care with which they placed the cheese in the box," commented Steve from Steve's Cheese in Oregon.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Rivers Edge Chèvre, Oregon***

Rivers Edge Chèvre was praised for their self-imposed good shipping principles. They only ship product on Monday or Tuesday and they go so far as to state their shipping practices on their website, providing further reassurance and confidence in product

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<sup>20</sup> Telephone conversation with Steven Rosenberg, Liberty Heights Fresh, 12/16/2008.

<sup>21</sup> Telephone Conversation with Steve, Steve's Cheese, 12/18/2008.

quality to retailers and consumers, "Generally, we make our shipments on Monday or Tuesday. We ship in insulated boxes using ice packs and shredded paper."<sup>22</sup>

### ***Neal's Yard Dairy, UK***



Neal's Yard Dairy was mentioned by several respondents as a role model in the artisan cheese industry. The company's attention to production, refinement, tasting, handling, and delivering cheese at its point of perfection, and documenting the steps along the way were highly praised.

Photo courtesy  
<http://www.nealsyarddairy.co.uk/about.html>

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<sup>22</sup> <http://threeringfarm.com/purchasing%20information.htm>

## Appendix A - “Certification of Origin”

Several countries have created “certification of origin” programs to create market segments for their agricultural products based on the exclusivity of where and how they are made, and to protect their cultural heritage and identity. Countries with have such programs include:

State	Acronym	Definition
Austria	g.U.	geschützte Ursprungsbezeichnung
Belgium	AOP	Appellation d' Origine Protégée
Denmark	BOB	Beskyttet oprindelsesbetegnelse
Germany	g.U.	geschützte Ursprungsbezeichnung
Greece	ΠΟΠ	Προστατευομ ενη Ονομ ασια Προελευσης
Finland	SAINT	Suojattu alkuperänimitys
France	AOP	Appellation d' Origine Protégée
Ireland	PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
<b>Italy</b>	<b>DOP</b>	<b>Denomination of Protected Origin</b>
Lussemburgo	AOP	Appellation d' Origine Protégée
Holland	BOB	Beschermde Oorsprongsbenaming
Portugal	DOP	Denominação de Origem Protegida
Poland	?	Chroniona Nazwa Pochodzenia
United Kingdom	PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
Spain	DOP	Denominación de Origen Protegida
Sweden	SUB	Skyddad ursprungsbeteckning
Hungary	OEM	Oltalom alatt álló eredetmegjelölés

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<sup>23</sup> [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denominazione\\_di\\_Origine\\_Protetta](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denominazione_di_Origine_Protetta)

Vermont Cheese Council

Marketing Feasibility of a Risk Management Program

## Appendix B - The American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium

Presidium Mission & Protocol for Presidium Members

*July 2006*

### Mission

The human palate appreciates complexity. As artisan producers of raw milk cheese and as members of this Presidium, we are committed to making distinctive cheeses of complexity, high quality and safety, and with the depth of flavor that raw milk provides. We believe the following:

Cheeses attain the greatest complexity when they are produced through processes that stem from biological diversity;

Technology and scientific understanding can be used to guide and monitor rather than to control and dominate. By respecting the diversity in our soil, pastures and woodlands, our herds and flocks, and the raw milk from our animals, we can produce cheeses that are as nutritious, safe, and wholesome to consume as they are flavorful;

As makers of raw milk cheese, we assume responsibility for the safety of our product. We therefore endorse HACCP as a means to place such responsibility in our own hands. The specific processes, tests and frequency of testing will be determined by each producer and will evolve as our individual HACCP plans evolve. At a minimum, our HACCP plans will include the considerations and specific standards listed in *Appendix A* of this Protocol.

We are forming a Slow Food Presidium to preserve and advance the art of making raw milk cheese. *The Presidium is a wholly voluntary association.* As Presidium members, we work actively towards meeting the criteria listed in this Protocol. Each cheese maker who becomes part of the Presidium commits to achieving all of the criteria listed in this document within six years of joining.

### Protocol

LAND *We manage our land so that it remains productive for future generations. We adopt practices that:*

Maintain and increase soil fertility;

Maintain and improve groundwater quality;

Maintain and foster biodiversity.

*If we do not produce our own milk, we purchase milk only from dairies that manage their land as described above.*

ANIMALS *Healthy, well treated animals produce the highest quality milk. Our animals are fed, housed, managed, and treated ethically and humanely. We follow existing and developing humane treatment standards that pertain to the livestock we keep. At a minimum:*

We select livestock for their longevity, health, milk quality, and other attributes that contribute to their well being and to the flavor of their milk. We do not limit our selection to productivity alone;

We minimize confinement. While climate, weather, or land management concerns may dictate that animals be housed from time to time, confinement is an *exception* and not the norm;

We do not give our animals hormones for increased milk production or for growth. Antibiotics and other medication will only be used therapeutically, for individual animals as required;

We seek to eliminate GMOs from the diets of our animals by using organic feed when economically viable, and intentionally minimize use of grain mixes which may include genetically modified species;

We do not feed our livestock any animal products or by-products with the exception of milk or whey;

The HACCP plans we develop as part of this Presidium include monitoring for animal diseases that may affect humans.

*If we do not maintain our own animals, we will purchase milk only from farms that treat their livestock as described above.*

MILK *High quality milk is needed to produce high quality cheese. The milk we use meets all federal and state health and quality requirements and standards and in addition, conforms to the following criteria:*

All the milk we use is traceable to its source;

All milk is utilized within 40 hours of milking;

Milk is never pasteurized or thermolized;

Milk is taken from animals during the season when they graze or browse freely. When climate, weather, or land management concerns dictate the use of silage, haylage, or other feed it will be obtained whenever possible from our own land or from regional, sustainably managed farms. Milk produced out of season or from imported feed will be the *exception*, and not the norm.

Milk is tested in accordance with our individual HACCP plans.

CHEESE MAKING *We produce cheese by artisanal methods, using technology and equipment as helpful components of the cheesemaking process, but not as substitutes for human guidance and input. We ensure that all cheeses are safe for consumers by following production and testing parameters that meet or exceed existing government requirements. At a minimum:*

Our cheeses are produced without using shortcuts, techniques, or additives to increase yield or shelf life at the expense of quality;

We prefer using traditional coagulants, such as animal or vegetable based rennet. We will label our cheeses to specify, *without ambiguity*, which coagulants we use;

We develop and use regional, proprietary, or *terroir* place names. We discourage the use of classical European place names, except as descriptors;

We do not sell any cheese aged less than what is required by federal law;

We institute and comply with a HACCP plan, and we obtain and maintain licensing as required by local, state, and federal regulations.

CHEESE QUALITY *We consider cheesemaking an art and strive continuously to perfect our knowledge and skills. The cheeses to be promoted via this Presidium will have balanced flavors that express the complexity inherent in raw milk. Working with Slow Food USA, we will create a panel to:*

Select new cheese makers for admission to the Presidium, based on their fulfilling objective standards of balance and quality;

On an annual basis, review all cheeses represented by the Presidium with the aim of providing feedback to cheese makers;

If needed, remove cheese makers from the Presidium if they consistently fail to meet objective standards of balance and quality.

*The panel will not in any way rate or rank cheeses; its aim will be solely to provide feedback that is useful to cheese makers.*

### American Raw Milk Evaluation Entry Form

Thank you for your interest in the American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium. This evaluation will showcase premier American raw milk cheeses and promote the tradition of raw milk cheesemaking in this country. We also hope to provide constructive feedback which will give cheesemakers an objective standard to measure their cheeses against and a tool for excellence.

For this evaluation, space will be limited. Entries will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis, with preference given to previous Presidium members. Each cheesemaker may enter one cheese; however, if you have a second cheese that you wish to enter, please list it below and it will be evaluated if space permits. This year's evaluation will be hosted by the Artisanal Cheese Center in New York, NY.

The entry fee is \$15 per cheese for RMCA members, \$30 per cheese for non-members. **Send no money now.** Once you have sent in this form, you will be notified of how many cheeses we can evaluate and asked to send a two pound sample of your cheese and your fee to the provided address. Entries must be received by May 23, 2008.

Send completed forms to **Cerise Mayo, 423 16th Street #15, Brooklyn, NY 11215**. Please include an email address as all other correspondence will be via email. You may also fax your entry to 278.238.4955, or an entry form may be downloaded from [www.rawmilkcheese.org](http://www.rawmilkcheese.org) and emailed to [cerise.mayo@gmail.com](mailto:cerise.mayo@gmail.com).

*Use the Tab key or mouse click to move to a field.*

Are you a member of the Raw Milk Cheesemakers' Association? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes				
Farm / Company Name				
Cheesemaker Name				
Address 1				
Address 2				
City		State		Zip
Phone			Fax	
Email				
Web Site				

Cheese #1	Cheese #2
Cheese Name	Cheese Name
Age of Cheese	Age of Cheese
Type of Milk Used <i>(check one or more)</i> Cow <input type="checkbox"/> Goat <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep <input type="checkbox"/>	Type of Milk Used <i>(check one or more)</i> Cow <input type="checkbox"/> Goat <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep <input type="checkbox"/>
Cheese Type Soft <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Soft <input type="checkbox"/> Hard <input type="checkbox"/>	Cheese Type Soft <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Soft <input type="checkbox"/> Hard <input type="checkbox"/>
Rind Type Bloomy rind <input type="checkbox"/> Washed Rind <input type="checkbox"/> Natural rind <input type="checkbox"/> Other Blue(internal or external) <input type="checkbox"/>	Rind Type Bloomy rind <input type="checkbox"/> Washed Rind <input type="checkbox"/> Natural rind <input type="checkbox"/> Other Blue(internal or external) <input type="checkbox"/>
Further description	Further description

I hereby certify that all cheeses entered in this evaluation:

- a) Are not made from pasteurized or thermized milk;
- b) Are not made from the milk of animals fed production or growth hormones;
- c) Do not use European place names except as descriptors.

By submitting my cheeses for inclusion in the Presidium, I also acknowledge that I have read the Presidium protocol and agree to follow the guidelines laid out therein within the timeframes allowed.

Your Name	Date
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## **Appendix C - Wegmans Food Markets Supplier Codes of Practice**

Part 1: Supplier Codes of Practice

Part 2: Temperature monitoring during distribution, "cold chain management"

Part 1

# **Wegmans Food Markets Supplier Codes of Practice**

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## **Food Safety and Quality Expectations**

*Document:* wfm-ca-sqa 00-001

*Date:* November 21, 2002

*Version:* 2.0

*Author:* T. McLernon

*Approved By:* G. Kelleher

**T**he Wegmans Promise of "**Everyday You Get Our Best**" requires cooperation. This cooperation comes internally from employees who work hard to satisfy, and even anticipate our customers needs. We also rely on the cooperation of suppliers who share our commitment to food safety and food quality. We demand a lot from our vendors, and believe that by clearly communicating Wegmans expectations, our supplier - partners will be better able to help us consistently provide products that are safe and of the highest quality.

*Danny Wegman*

President  
Wegmans Food Markets

Wegmans Food Markets Codes of Practice

**All food and food product suppliers to Wegmans must be able to demonstrate systematic control of safety and quality.** The following are Wegmans Food Markets expectations. These requirements have been developed to help provide uniform standards against which suppliers will be measured. All Wegmans suppliers are expected to conform to these standards and are subject to periodic verification audits by Wegmans personnel or designated Wegmans representatives.

**Please note** - Suppliers and prospective suppliers are expected to reimburse Wegmans Supplier Quality Assurance for all travel related expenses associated with initial audits and any subsequent visits resulting from quality or food safety concerns.

Wegmans Quality Assurance requires that an authorized management representative from the supplier sign and date below, indicating that Wegmans Food Safety and Quality Codes of Practice have been communicated and agreed to by the appropriate personnel in the suppliers organization. Please sign and date a photocopy of this page and return it to Wegmans Supplier Quality Assurance Managers:

Wegmans Supplier Quality Assurance Managers  
Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.  
P.O. Box 30844  
1500 Brooks Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14603-0844

585 / 328 - 2550

Name and title of Authorized Supplier Representative (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Title)

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Company name and address

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*Sign, photocopy, and return this page\*\*\***

# 1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- 1.1 **Comply** with **all** local, state, regional, provincial, and federal **requirements** regarding the manufacture, storage, transportation, and distribution of food and food products. Follow the guidance of FDA/CFSAN food security preventative measures guidelines.
- 1.2 Develop **product specifications** in conjunction with Wegmans Quality Assurance. Mutually agreed upon specifications must be in place before products can be manufactured for Wegmans. Carefully developed specifications help to ensure product quality and consistency for our customers.
- 1.3 **Notify** Wegmans Quality Assurance or the Wegmans Buying office before any changes are made to ingredients, packaging materials, processes, equipment, or manufacturing locations. **Even subtle changes can have far reaching effects. Change is inevitable, but continued communication can minimize the likelihood of problems.**
- 1.4 Provide **adequate resources** to develop, manage, and implement food safety and quality systems.
- 1.5 Take the appropriate action to **prevent and correct any food safety or quality issues**. This includes conducting **thorough** and **timely** investigations of consumer complaints or concerns presented by Wegmans or Wegmans' customers. Wegmans must be notified in a timely manner of any recall involving any facility producing products for Wegmans.
- 1.6 Maintain **food safety and quality records** in order to demonstrate conformance with specified requirements.
- 1.7 **Conduct** food safety, quality, and housekeeping **audits** on a regular basis.
- 1.8 **Suppliers who manufacture and handle "High-Risk" products and materials need to pay special attention to Section Nine of this document.** A High-Risk food is defined as one which will support pathogen growth and toxin formation. High-Risk Areas are defined as those places that contain unpackaged High-Risk Foods, which will not receive any further processing such that hazards will not be eliminated.

# 2 BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- 2.1 Design and maintain food production, storage, and distribution facilities in accordance with current **Good Manufacturing Practices**.
- 2.2 Ensure that plant buildings and structures are suitable in size, construction, and design to facilitate sanitary operations.
- 2.3 Construct walls, floors, ceilings, drains, and all fixtures from approved and cleanable nonporous materials designed to prevent the build up of dust and debris and the contamination of food, food-contact areas, or food packaging materials.
- 2.4 Provide adequate lighting in hand-wash areas, dressing rooms, toilets, processing areas, and inspection areas. **All light fixtures, and glass of any kind, in material storage, staging, preparation, and processing areas must be a safety-type glass, or adequately protected with shatterproof coverings.**
- 2.5 Provide adequate ventilation to eliminate or control vapors and odors. Ventilation equipment and fans should be positioned so that they do not contaminate food, food-contact areas, and packaging materials.
- 2.6 Maintain grounds in conditions that protect against contamination of food: Lawns and landscaping must be maintained, and weeds, especially around building perimeters, should be eliminated to minimize potential pest harborages.
- 2.7 Design and maintain roads, drives and parking areas to prevent standing water and excessive dust.
- 2.8 Ensure that all doors and dock plates are properly sealed; **doors need to be closed when not in use.**

# 3 SANITARY OPERATIONS

- 3.1 Maintain the operation in good repair and in a **sanitary condition** to assure that food products are not damaged, contaminated, or adulterated.
- 3.2 Store and use all cleaning compounds, sanitizing agents, and chemicals in a safe manner. Cleaning chemical concentrations must be verified to ensure that the strength is proper for intended usage. Clean-in-Place equipment must be periodically checked to assure that it is operating as intended. Only approved chemicals can be used.
- 3.3 Implement and maintain an effective, **documented pest control program** for both building and grounds including monitoring, inspection, and pesticide application as needed. Pesticide application must be verified to ensure that the application is appropriate for the treated area.  
Use of rodenticides **inside** of the building is forbidden. The local regulatory authority must certify in house pesticide applicators. Documents should include but are not limited to, appropriate licenses, insurance certificates, maps of trap locations, and service records.
- 3.4 Develop a **Master Sanitation Schedule**. This document should identify who is doing the cleaning, what is being cleaned, the frequency of cleaning, and specific cleaning instructions. The master-cleaning schedule should include walls, floors, drains, ceilings, equipment (food and non-food contact surfaces), and utensils. A documented process for verification of completion should be included in the program. **Please note that the Master Sanitation Schedule is in addition to routine daily cleaning of processing areas and equipment.**

# 4 SANITARY FACILITIES AND CONTROLS

- 4.1 Verify the **potability** of water through laboratory testing. **Ice and ice making equipment** must also be tested. A minimum of once per year is recommended.
- 4.2 Provide **adequate plumbing**. Sewage and liquid waste must be properly conveyed away from the plant so that it does not become a source of contamination. Sewage piping must not be cross connected with or allow back flow into water piping systems for food or food manufacturing.

- 4.3 Locate floor drains and slope floors to prevent the accumulation of standing water.
- 4.4 Provide **adequate toilet facilities** - readily accessible, in good repair, and maintained in a sanitary condition. Facilities must also be able to accommodate the numbers of personnel who use them. Proper signage must be in place to remind employees to wash hands after using the toilet facilities. These facilities must not open directly into production areas.
- 4.5 Provide **adequate hand washing and hand sanitizing facilities**. These areas must be supplied with soap, hot water, and sanitary towel service or suitable drying devices. The fixtures must be designed to prevent the recontamination of clean hands. (For example, hands free towel dispensers and automatic water shut off.) Waste containers are required in these areas and must be designed and maintained to prevent potential contamination of food or packaging materials - lidded and made from cleanable nonporous materials.
- 4.6 Handle and dispose of waste in a timely fashion that minimizes the chance of waste becoming an attractant to pests. Clearly distinguish waste from edible materials. **Color-coding is strongly recommended.**

## 5 EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS

- 5.1 Use only equipment and utensils that are easily cleanable, properly maintained, constructed from non-porous materials, and suitable for intended use.
- 5.2 Install equipment in a manner that allows for proper cleaning of the equipment and adjacent areas.
- 5.3 Ensure that **food contact surfaces** are constructed from **non-toxic and corrosion resistant materials**. Food contact areas must also be protected from lubricants, fumes, and foreign objects that may result from the maintenance and operation of equipment.
- 5.4 **Calibrate** and regularly verify the accuracy of **instruments** used to measure, regulate, and document key product and process parameters (temperature, pH, acidity, water activity, fill weights, and others).
- 5.5 Suppliers need to have a written program for the proper **preventative maintenance** of all equipment and appropriate areas of the facility in accordance with an established schedule. Examples could include refrigeration units (thermometers) and air handling systems (air filters).

# 6 PROCESSES AND CONTROLS

- 6.1 Conduct all activities in accordance with **food sanitation** and **food safety principles**. All reasonable precautions shall be taken to ensure that food does not become contaminated from chemical, physical, or biological sources.
- 6.2 Develop a **supplier quality assurance program** including written product specifications, letters of continuing guarantee and certificates of analysis where appropriate for food ingredients and materials.
- 6.3 **Establish and maintain a documented raw material, packaging, and trailer inspection program upon receipt** to ensure that they meet specified requirements. Temperatures must be included in the program as appropriate for the inbound material or ingredient.
- 6.4 Do not store or stage refrigerated or frozen materials in non-refrigerated areas. Where applicable, receiving areas must have proper temperature and humidity controls. **Frozen raw materials must be maintained in a frozen state (at or below 0°F.), refrigerated materials (at or below 41°F.). Temperatures must be routinely verified and documented. Note - individual products may require special storage and handling temperatures. Any variance from the aforementioned requirements should be documented within the product or material specification.**
- 6.5 Establish and maintain documented procedures for uniquely identifying individual lots or batches of product. In the event of a recall or product withdrawal, **products and materials must be able to be traced from origin through the distribution process**. A documented recall policy that clearly identifies the process and persons responsible for managing the recall must be in place. The effectiveness of the system should be tested at least annually by conducting mock recalls.
- 6.6 Manage re-work and work in progress to protect against contamination or adulteration. **Re-work is only permitted where specified, at predetermined levels, and must be included in the traceability program. Special attention must be given to allergen concerns.**
- 6.7 Provide for adequate separation between **raw** and **cooked** areas. Design equipment and workflow to **prevent cross contamination**.
- 6.8 Protect ingredients, materials, and product from foreign object contamination. Screens, magnets, filters, and other methods where applicable, should be used in conjunction with metal detection. **Glass should not be permitted** in food storage,

handling, processing, or packaging areas. Implement a glass policy to manage accidental breakage of unavoidable glass (i.e. finished product packed in glass).

- 6.9 Implement a **pre-operative inspection procedure** to ensure that all preparation and processing areas are clean before beginning or resuming production activities. The inspection should include sensory as well as analytical testing methods such as bioluminescence, microbiological swabbing, or other appropriate methods.
- 6.10 Appropriate quality control operations shall be in place to ensure that food and food products are safe and of the highest quality. **Wegmans requires that a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach be utilized.** Critical process and product parameters must be identified, monitored, documented, verified, and validated. Additionally, required prerequisite and support programs must also be in place. One example of this would be an allergen program.
- 6.11 Implement measures to control or **prevent** the growth of **undesirable microorganisms**, particularly those of **public health significance**, throughout the manufacturing, handling, and distribution process.
- 6.12 Filling, assembling, packaging, and storing shall be done in a manner that prevents contamination of the food or food product.
- 6.13 Packaging materials must be safe and designed to adequately protect the food from contamination.
- 6.14 All products must be marked with a **legible open code date** that clearly identifies the product, the manufacturing location, and the sell by date. Additional coding information will be supplied as part of Wegmans specification process. Ingredients or packaging materials must be identified with legible coding similar to above.
- 6.15 Adequate policies and procedures to control non-conforming product and materials must be implemented. **Non-conforming product and materials must be identified, isolated, and properly disposed of by personnel with the authority and training to do so.**

# 7 STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

- 7.1 Store, distribute, and transport finished food products in a manner that will **protect** them **against physical, chemical, and microbiological contamination** as well as deterioration of the food and container.
- 7.2 Release finished products only after all specified requirements have been met. All ingredients, materials, or finished products should be dated to insure a first in first out (FIFO) rotation.
- 7.3 Maintain an 18-inch perimeter in material and finished product storage areas to allow for proper inspection and cleaning.
- 7.4 Ship product in **trucks, trailers, containers, or other appropriate transport vehicles** that have been **inspected** and verified to be clean and free of any potentially harmful contaminants or residue. Loads shall not be shipped with non-food products that could be characterized as potential physical, chemical or microbiological hazards.
- 7.5 Ensure that product is protected throughout the distribution process until received by Wegmans. **This includes storage, handling, transportation, and distribution activities that may not be under direct control of the supplier.**

# 8 PERSONNEL PRACTICES

- 8.1 All personnel working in direct contact with food, food-contact surfaces, and food packaging materials must conform to **hygienic practices** while on duty. This can be accomplished by, but is not limited to the following:
  - Provide adequate supplies of **clean** and suitable **outer garments**. There should only be pockets below the waist or on the inside of the garment.
  - Develop, implement, and enforce **personal cleanliness** and disease control policies. Employees with an illness, open lesion, sores, or infected wounds must be excluded from activities where they come in contact with food or food contact equipment or material. A pre-employment medical examination for all food handlers is strongly recommended.

- Require proper **hand washing** in an appropriately supplied hand wash facility before starting work, after each absence from the work area, and when hands may have become soiled.
- Supply and maintain approved disposable food handling **gloves** in a sanitary condition.
- Supply and require the use of **hair restraints** (hairnets, beard nets, etc).
- Develop, implement, and enforce policies and procedures to ensure **personal articles** are properly stored and not allowed in **restricted areas**.
- Enforce **restrictions** on **eating, drinking, gum chewing**, the use of **tobacco** and **cosmetic products (including painted and artificial nails)**, and the wearing of **jewelry**.
- Post highly visible signs (in various languages as needed) instructing and reminding employees to comply with **Good Manufacturing Practices**.
- Establish a **return to work policy** for employees resuming work in food handling positions after an illness or traveling abroad.
- Provide **training** on **Good Manufacturing Practices** and **safe food handling** techniques, in addition to specific job related training such as HACCP. Document all training activities and provided training on an ongoing basis.
- Establish a **visitor policy** consistent with the above which would apply to **anyone entering processing** such as contractors, management, suppliers, etc.

## 9 HIGH RISK PRODUCTS AND MANUFACTURING

9.1 Suppliers who provide **High-Risk** food products or manage high-risk areas within their operation are required to do the following:

- Provide for **complete separation** between **raw** and **cooked** product, materials, and personnel.
- Design the operation with respect to **logical process flow** and prevent cross contamination during material handling and processing.

- Install **barriers** including walls, filtered air under positive pressure, and isolated drainage systems.
- Establish **operational controls** where physical barriers are not practical.
- Establish and enforce **restricted access** policies. Only authorized employees should be allowed to enter into high-risk areas.
- Provide employees who work in these areas with distinctive **color-coded garments** that readily differentiate them from other employees.
- Assure that adequate supplies of **clean protective clothing, outer garments, gloves, aprons etc...** are provided and changed frequently.
- Require that footwear and outer garments be changed upon **entry to or exit from high-risk areas**.
- Implement a **captive footwear program**. Footwear should be made from material that can be easily cleaned.
- Install **footbaths** or **sanitizing sprays** at the entranceways to high-risk areas. Chemical concentrations must be routinely monitored to ensure that the disinfecting agent is present at an effective level.
- Implement **microbiological** testing, **bioluminescence**, and **sensory methods** to monitor and verify the **effectiveness** of **sanitation** programs, general cleaning, and in process sanitation. Where Listeria is considered a hazard likely to occur, a **Listeria swabbing program** is required. Testing results and corrective actions must be documented. Specific microbiological testing may also be required in accordance with the agreed upon finished product specification.

# 10 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION \*

## QA Consultants:

Contract Quality Assurance Consultants  
6563 S.R. 417  
Addison, NY 14801  
(607) 359 - 2558

## Microbiological and Laboratory Testing:

Silliker Laboratories  
900 Maple Road  
Homewood, IL 60430  
(708) 957 – 7878

Life Science Laboratories, Inc.  
5854 Butternut Drive  
East Syracuse, NY 13057  
Bus: (315) 445-1105

Certified Laboratories  
200 Express Street  
Plainview, NY 11803  
(800) 237-8522

## Training, Independent Audit and Inspection Services:

The American Institute of Baking  
1213 Baker's Way  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
(786) 537 - 4750

Silliker Laboratories  
900 Maple Road  
Homewood, IL 60430  
(708) 957 - 7878

NSF-Cook & Thurber  
3207 West Beltline Highway, Suite 201  
Middleton, WI 53562  
(877) 482-1173

Guelph Food Technology Centre (Training only)  
88 McGilvray Street  
Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1 CANADA  
(519) 821-1246

## Useful Web Addresses:

The Food and Drug Administration

<http://www.fda.gov>

FDA/CFSAN – Food Security Preventative Measures

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid.html>

United States Department of Agriculture

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

1999 FDA Food Code

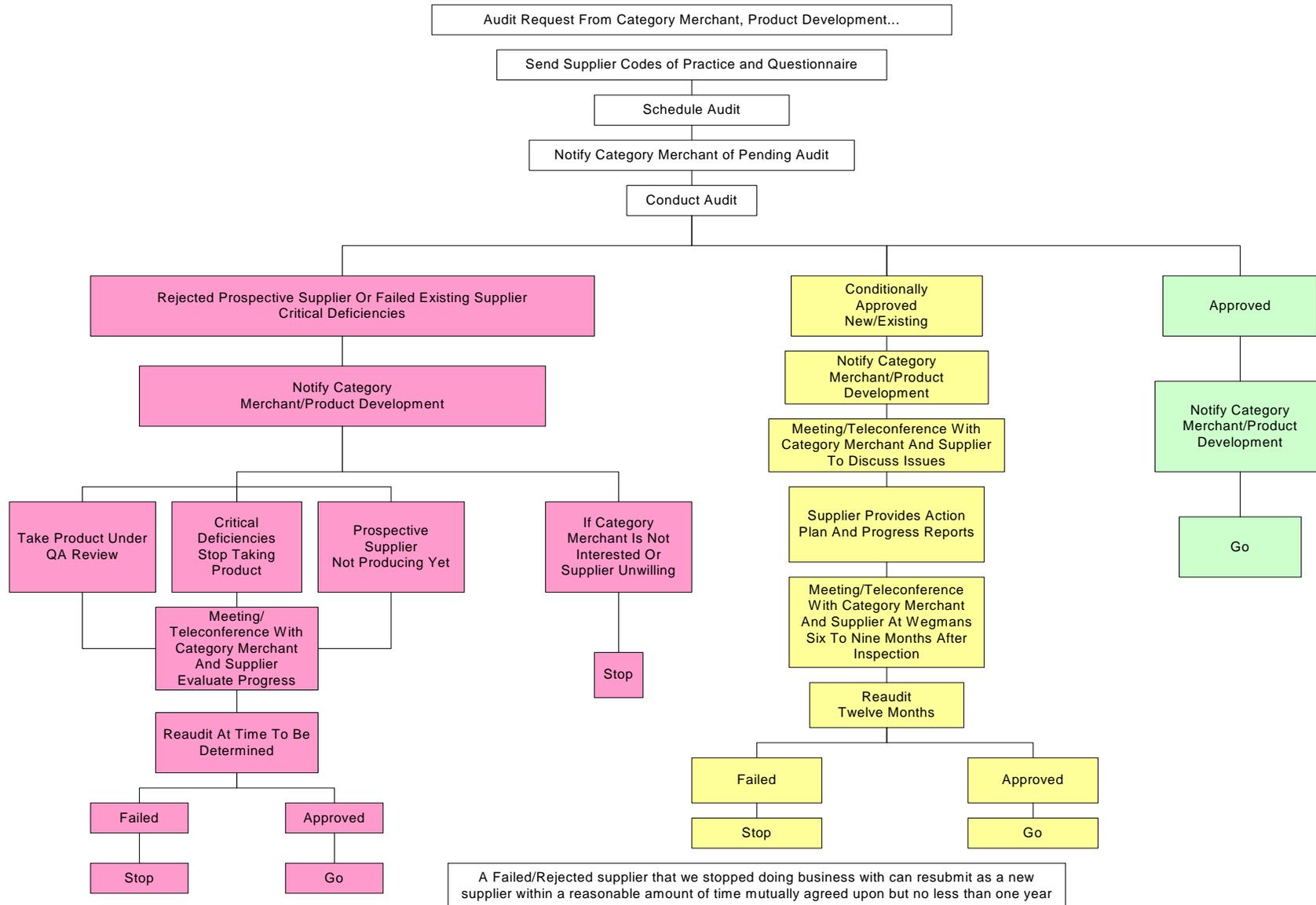
<http://vm.c.fda.gov/~dms/fc99-toc.html>

\*This list is not all-inclusive. Contacts are provided as a reference for those smaller suppliers who may need assistance in complying with Wegmans product safety and quality expectations. Use of any of the companies listed does not imply favored status from Wegmans. Third party independent audits are not accepted as replacements for a Wegmans audit. United States web sites are listed, as this is where the products will be sold.

This diagram provides an overview of the Supplier Quality Assurance program at Wegmans. Definitions of an Approved or Failed supplier are on the following page as an addendum to Wegmans Supplier Codes of Practice.

### Wegmans Brand Supplier Quality Assurance Process Flow

Visio/G:AV/Rev 8/23/02



Definitions of SQA Audit Statuses  
Items Which Constitute an Approved Plant

Compliance with Wegmans Supplier Codes of Practice

HACCP system with a regular documented review

Established and documented programs (GMP's, SOP's and SSOP's)

Management commitment and financial backing for programs

Strong quality assurance manager with responsibility and authority

Quality management systems that include but are not limited to self-assessment, independent audits and preventative action plans

Comprehensive documented employee training programs in place for new employees and including regularly scheduled refresher courses

Items Which Constitute a Failed Plant

Disregard for agreed upon policies, procedures and activities such as complying with Wegmans Supplier Codes of Practice (Page # 3 of Wegmans Supplier Codes of Practice)

**Change of production facilities or equipment without notice (Wegmans Supplier Codes of Practice, Section 1.3)**

HACCP system failure followed by a lack of prompt resolution (Section 1.5)

Lack of documented Good Manufacturing Practices program and responsibilities (Section 1.1)

Lack of established and maintained pest control program (Section 3.3)

**Critical Deficiencies Which Would Cause Wegmans to Stop Ordering or Selling Product**

**Employees working with exposed sores or illness in direct contact with product (Section 8.1)**

Evidence of roof leaks directly over product (Section 2.1)

Actual product contamination affecting food safety such as chemicals, rodents or other vermin, glass, metal, etc. (Sections 3.1 & 3.3)

Significant foreign object contamination such as fine plastic or metal pieces affecting the quality of the product (Section 6.8)

Non-potable water in use or no annual water testing in place for plants using private water systems (Section 4.1)

Decomposed rodents in pest control devices or evidence of an extensive rodent, insect or bird infestation (Section 3.3)

Failure to introduce, at Wegmans request, pathogen testing on “ready to eat” or “heat and eat” finished products (Section 9.1)

Ingredient or finished product storage coolers or freezers running above the required temperatures for food safety and quality (Section 6.4)

**Wegmans reserves the right to fail a plant for any other issues that they deem serious or critical.**

Rev.11-21-02

## Part 2



1500 Brooks Ave.  
Rochester, New York 14624

RE: **Yellow Sensitech TempTale Recorders**  
**(Model # T4800-02-003)**

Hello,

We all realize the key role that cold chain management plays in maintaining product quality while providing our customers the best possible products. We all share the responsibility for maintaining quality and food safety from your facility through the distribution channel.

At Wegmans, we believe in continuous improvement and an ongoing simplification of business processes. With this in mind, and to help us manage the cold chain process better, we have decided to partner with Sensitech TempTale recorders exclusively on each of our loads. TempTale digital recorders are highly accurate and provide the data and tools we need to meet our cold chain objectives.

Effective October 1, 2008 we have specified the use of **Sensitech's Yellow TempTale recorder model # T4800-02-003** as our temperature monitor of record on all cheese loads arriving at our distribution center, please utilize only the Sensitech Yellow TempTale digital recorder. This instrument should also be identified on the bill of lading by both **serial number and brand** in order for you to be reimbursed for the recorder. We will **not** provide reimbursement for recorders other than Sensitech TempTale. If you have multiple P.O's on a delivery you only need to use one Temp Tail.

If you have any additional questions about Wegmans request to use **Sensitech's Yellow TempTales, (Model #T4800-02-003)** please contact Madeline Woodruff in the Cheese Office. I can be reached at 1-800-WEGMANS ext 5653 or via email at [madeline.woodruff@wegmans.com](mailto:madeline.woodruff@wegmans.com)

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely

Cathy Gaffney  
Cheese Group Manager  
Joe Hansen  
Cheese Category Merchant  
Madeline Woodruff  
Assistant Buyer

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### **Purchasing TempTales**

We ask that you please call Sensitech at 800-843-8367 and ask for Supermarket Sales to order the TempTales for your facility.

#### **Please ask for:**

- Yellow Sensitech Temp-Tale
- Catalog # T4800-02-003
- Description TT4 2K SU/Other

This model has a range from a low of 32 degrees Fahrenheit to a high of 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

They will also provide the software for this Temp-Tale at no cost so if there are any issues, we can email the temperature reading to you and you will be able to see the information on your computer.

Below is a picture of the actual Temp Tale we are requiring.

### **Getting Paid for TempTale**

We will need the individual pulling the orders off of our website to click on the **Vendor Charges link** on the po and add **\$11.00** under temp recorder and click the **Update Record** button. This only adds this to the electronic po.

**You will also need to include the \$11.00 on the invoice you send to accounting. By doing this, you will be paid for the TempTale.**

### **Location of TempTale on Trailer**

We ask that you place the TempTale recorder on the very last pallet you load. It should go at eye level attached to an outside box. They should not be laid on a box or put inside the box. By locating the TempTale recorder at this position, it will be able to measure the ambient air inside the trailer.

### **Information on Temp Tale and Bill of Lading**

Please make sure you write the following items on the Temp Tale.

1. Destination (Wegmans)
2. Wegmans PO #
3. Your Companies Name
4. Please write the Temp Tale ID Number on your bill of lading

**Please refer to directions on the temp tale to make sure recorder is working properly upon leaving your facility.**



**TempTale<sup>4</sup>**  
SENSITECH

SHIPPER/CARRIER \_\_\_\_\_  
DESTINATION \_\_\_\_\_  
P.O. NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
86031594

Start

Sensitech Inc.  
www.sensitech.com  
T17002600 Rev.C

**SHIPPER INSTRUCTIONS**  
**Starting the TempTale<sup>4</sup>**

1. Fill in shipping information.  
*Llene la información de etiqueta.*
2. Press and release Start button.  
*Presione y libere el botón "Start".*
3. Check for Sunshine Icon ☀ on display. This indicates that the monitor is running. *Espere hasta que el sol aparezca en la pantalla. Este indica que el grabador está encendido.*
4. Place TempTale4 on shipment.  
*Coloque el TempTale4 al envío.*

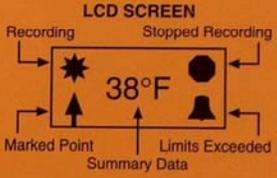
**RECEIVER INSTRUCTIONS**  
**Reading the TempTale<sup>4</sup>**

Before downloading, view the information by pressing the start button. Data appears in the following order:

1. Average trip temperature.
2. Highest temperature recorded.
3. Total time above high temperature limit.
4. Lowest temperature recorded.
5. Total time below low temperature limit.

An alarm bell 🚨 on the LCD screen means an acceptable temperature limit has been exceeded. The recording day span and acceptable temperature range is shown below:

**LCD SCREEN**



Recording      Stopped Recording

Marked Point      Limits Exceeded

Summary Data

38°F

Sensitech Inc. 800 Cummings Center, Suite 258X, Beverly, MA 01915 USA • (978) 927-7033 • (800) 843-8367

T17002420 Rev.E  
332-229290

MADE IN CHINA

# Appendix D- Whole Foods Market Quality Standards

## Farm Animal and Meat Quality Standards

All meat and poultry sold at Whole Foods Market must meet, at a minimum, the Whole Foods Market Benchmark level for Meat and Poultry Quality Standards.

### Benchmark Standards

All of our meat and poultry offerings are minimally processed with no artificial additives or preservatives (as required by the USDA for "natural" labeling). In addition, Whole Foods Market goes even further by monitoring how the animals are raised and what the animals are fed. Our standards ensure that the meat and poultry we sell are raised by farmers and ranchers who care about their animals and the environment in which they live.

Here's a brief summary of our standards by species:

#### Cattle/Buffalo

- No antibiotics — ever
- No supplemental growth hormones
- No animal byproducts in feed
- Range raised for at least 2/3 of the animal's life

#### Veal Calves

- No antibiotics — ever
- No supplemental growth hormones
- Group housing only, no tethering or individual crates
- No animal byproducts in feed other than cow's milk
- Unlimited access to grain

#### Pigs

- No antibiotics — ever
- No animal byproducts in feed
- No gestation crates
- Sows provided freedom of movement in farrowing (birthing) pens
- Bedding required to satisfy natural rooting instincts

#### Lamb

- No antibiotics — ever
- No supplemental growth hormones
- No animal byproducts in feed
- Pasture raised

## Poultry

- No antibiotics — ever
- No animal byproducts in feed
- No beak trimming for broiler chickens and game hens
- \* Appropriate beak trimming for turkeys allowed when necessary
- Appropriate litter provided for comfort and to satisfy natural foraging instincts

Note: Federal law does not allow the use of supplemental growth hormones in any poultry or pigs sold in the United States.

\* We allow the performance of physical alterations only when the overall physical and psychological welfare of the flock or herd would be benefited to prevent possible injury and only when conducted by a trained operator in an appropriate manner that minimizes any discomfort.

## Animal Compassionate Program

We have also been working on species-specific Animal Compassionate Standards which require environments and conditions that support the animal's physical, emotional, and behavioral needs to an even higher level. Although no producers have met these standards yet, many are exploring the opportunity.

Whole Foods Market created the non-profit Animal Compassion Foundation as a natural progression of our efforts to help producers evolve their practices for raising farm animals naturally and humanely. Though related, and similarly named, the Animal Compassionate Standards are not created or maintained by the Animal Compassion Foundation. The Foundation is a separate and independent non-profit educational organization created to provide producers and researchers with the opportunity to learn, share ideas, and collaborate on projects.

## Species Specific Standards in Detail for Both Programs

Detailed standards for both Whole Foods Market Meat and Poultry Quality Standards and Animal Compassionate Standards have been developed so far for the following species: Broiler Chickens, Cattle, Ducks, Pigs, Sheep. Animal Compassionate Standards for other meat species, laying hens and dairy animals are under development.

## Expanded Meat & Poultry Quality Standards in Development

We are currently restructuring meat and poultry quality standards.

Review of program documents and third party audits of the farm/ranch/location and slaughter/processing facility will result in one of five designations.

The first 3 levels will consist of varying degrees of welfare practices that are currently grouped in the natural category. The top 2 levels will identify standards developed to qualify animal compassionate husbandry.

- 1st level: Benchmark — reflects Whole Foods Market's current meat & poultry standards
- 2nd level: Traceability to Farm
- 3rd level: Pasture Based
- 4th level: Animal Compassionate
- 5th level: Animal Compassionate Gold Standard

The mission of the enhanced meat and poultry quality standards Whole Foods Market is currently developing is two-fold:

1. to provide a framework for continuous improvement of animal welfare on farms and ranches and
2. to provide our customers with a clear and transparent way to make informed buying decisions based solely on animal welfare considerations.

Whole Foods Market's vision for animal welfare encompasses the notion of the animal being reared in systems that are animal-centered. Standards and protocols are being designed to minimize animal suffering and encourage animal production systems that promote mental and physical health in an environment that provides animals with the ability to express their natural behaviors.

The standards and protocols will apply to all fresh meat and poultry sold within Whole Foods Market locations. It is intended that such meat will be designated as representing one of five unique levels, confirmed as such by qualified, independent auditors, and based on a set of specific production practices related to animal welfare developed by Whole Foods Market as buying criteria and for consumer information purposes.

Specific standards related to permissible and prohibited production and handling techniques from parent stock through slaughter are intended to be included for the following species:

- Pigs
- Beef Cattle
- Bison
- Broiler Chickens
- Ducks
- Goats
- Rabbits
- Sheep
- Turkey
- Veal
- Dairy
- Eggs

## Appendix E- Wisconsin Master's Mark

Following is a description of the Wisconsin certification program. At right is an example of the brand logo that certified producers can include on their packaging.



### *Requirements for Entry*

1. Participants must be active, licensed Wisconsin cheese makers with at least 10 years experience working at a plant which participates in the Quality Assurance Program.
2. They must have been making the cheese variety for which they seek certification for at least five years.

### *Curriculum*

Each cheese maker must complete four required courses and three elective courses. Each cheese maker must also complete a three-year apprenticeship for each cheese for which he or she seeks certification.

### *Required Courses*

- Cheese Technology
- Cheese Artisanhip
- Cheese Grading
- Quality Assurance

### *Elective Courses*

- Applied Dairy Chemistry
- Business and Marketing
- Process Cheese, Whey and Whey Utilization
- Water and Waste Management
- Milk Pasteurization and Process Control

### *Apprenticeship*

To demonstrate that they are a master in the art of making a particular cheese variety, the cheese maker apprentice is required to submit samples of cheese for evaluation which is conducted by a designated committee to ensure cheese quality and consistency. The apprenticeship assures that those receiving the Wisconsin Master Cheese maker certification embody the skill and passion for cheesemaking that is Wisconsin's greatest heritage.

### *Delicious Result*

Once a cheese maker achieves Master status for a cheese variety, they can designate on their labels that the cheese has been made by a Wisconsin Master Cheese maker. It's your assurance of the highest quality cheese you can buy.

## **Appendix F- Sources of Information**

### ***Internet Resources***

<http://www.nealsyarddairy.co.uk/about.html>

<http://pressroom.consumerreports.org/pressroom/2008/11/consumer-reports-poll-two-thirds-of-americans-want-the-fda-to-inspect-domestic-and-foreign-food-supply.html>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denominazione\\_di\\_Origine\\_Protetta](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denominazione_di_Origine_Protetta)

<http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/products/meat-quality-standards.php>

<http://www.wisdairy.com/AllAboutCheese/Cheesemaking/CheeseMasters.aspx>

<http://threeringfarm.com/purchasing%20information.htm>

<http://www.rural.org/publications/aoc.pdf>

[http://www.rawmilkcheese.org/index\\_files/index\\_files/presidium.htm](http://www.rawmilkcheese.org/index_files/index_files/presidium.htm)

### ***List of Persons Consulted***

Debra Dickerson

Co-Owner

3D Cheese

230 Madison St.

Oakland, CA 94507

(510) 663-6720

debradickerson@msn.com

Cathy Strange

Global Cheese Buyer, National Procurement & Distribution

Whole Foods Market, Inc.

550 Bowie Street

Austin, TX 78703-4644

(512) 477-4455

cathy.strange@wholefoods.com

Charlotte Kamin

Cheese Buyer

Bedford Cheese

218 Bedford Ave

Brooklyn, NY 11211

(888) 484-3243

Tom Camm

Owner

Artisan Made Northeast

20 Gate Post Lane

Southbury, CT 06488

(203) 264-2883

Emilio C. Mignucci  
V.P. Product Pioneering  
Di Bruno Bros.  
930 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19147  
(215) 665-9220 ext 292  
emignucci@dibruno.com

Todd Druhot  
Atlanta Foods International  
265 Spring Street NW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 954 7641

Bart Farrell  
Clyde's Restaurant Group  
3236 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 333-9180  
Cell (202) 669-3582

Cathy Gaffney, Group Manager-Specialty Cheese  
Wegmans Food Markets  
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Rochester, NY 14624  
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Cathy.Gaffney@Wegmans.com

Rick Cohen  
Metropolitan Meat  
1920 Stanford Ct  
Landover, MD 20785  
(800) 522-0060

Kurt  
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Formaggio Kitchen (Cambridge)  
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Cambridge, MA 02138  
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Steven Rosenberg  
Owner  
Liberty Heights Fresh  
P.O. Box 521494  
Salt Lake City, UT 84152-1494  
(801) 467-2434

Jeff  
Co-Owner  
Great Ciao  
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Minneapolis, MN 55411  
(612) 521-8725 x 201

Luan Schooler  
Foster and Dobbs  
2518 NE 15th Ave  
Portland, OR 97212  
(503) 284-1157

Richard Sutton  
Owner  
St James Cheese Company  
5004 Prytania Street  
New Orleans, LA 70115  
(504) 274-9676

Benoit Béal  
Saxelby's Cheesemongers  
120 Essex Street  
Booth 17  
New York, NY 10002  
(212) 228-8204

Sean Hockert  
Seacrest Foods International Inc  
87 Santilli Hwy.  
Everett, MA 02149  
(617) 394-0004

Sofia Solomon  
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1456 North Dayton Street  
Chicago, IL 60622  
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Lenny Rice  
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(707) 789-9433

Marty Stiglich  
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Leslie Mann  
Cheese Buyer  
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(503) 709-8857

Allen Freund  
Owner  
Squash Valley Produce  
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Stowe, VT 05672  
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Gina  
Owner  
Venissimo  
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Ste. B-138  
Del Mar, CA 92410  
(858) 847-9616

Hannah Goldberg  
Artisanal Cheese Center  
500 West 37<sup>th</sup> St.  
New York, NY 10018  
(212) 871-3152

Jeff Mertz  
C.E. Zuercher  
7415 N St. Louis  
Skokie, IL 60076  
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Michelle Graves  
Citarella  
600 Food Center Drive  
Bronx, NY 10474  
(718) 860-0344 x 4121

Dimitri  
Dairyland  
Bronx, NY 10474  
(718) 842-8700

Ken Skovron  
Darien Cheese  
25-10 Old King's Hwy, North  
Darien, CT 06820  
(203) 655-4344

Matt Jennings  
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Providence, RI 02906  
(401) 274-7177

Tracy Chesman  
I Gourmet  
508 Delaware Ave.  
West Pittston, PA 18643  
(570) 602-3800

Frank  
Murrays Cheese  
254 Bleecker St.  
New York, NY 10014  
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Debbie  
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(734) 663-3354