

## Selling cheese in Georgia... <sup>1</sup>

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And building a reputation all over the country?

One company established since 2000 in Georgia has adopted a unique style of dairy farming and selling cheese. The company's people are a community-conscious family who care about education and sustainable agriculture. Above all, they produce high-quality, grass-based milk and skillfully craft artisan "old world style" cheeses. They have won many awards as if their success needed a "certification". How can a dairy farm set itself apart from the others, build a strong reputation in the State of Georgia, and sell cheeses across the country?

### Adopting the "New Zealand farming style".

After 15 years of "conventional" dairy farming, this family farm adopted a New Zealand "farming style" with a rotational grazing method where the herds only graze a portion of pasture at a time. This allows the other portions to recover, maximizing the long-term biomass production and minimizing the development of parasites.

The irrigation system that runs on the field, sprays water during hot weather so the cows are kept cool. The animals spend very little time in a barn, ensuring more freedom of movement.



@thedairyfarm

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<sup>1</sup> Based on S. Trulock, B. Davidson, E. Diffly, and A. Mitchell's project developed for the AAEC3100 Food and Fiber Marketing Course, Fall Semester 2016.



### Partnering with other Georgia's agribusinesses.

The company has its hands on every step of the process. It milks the cows, processes the cheese, packages it, sells it, and ships it. They sell to 38 states; fresh markets, restaurants, wholesalers. They also have their own shop to sell cheeses to their "first hour" and local customers. And that could be just it, since they have built a great reputation with their own cheeses. They started to sell to their own community and grew from there.

But along the way of selling all over the country, the company didn't forget the "give and take" praised in the South. The shop sells different products "Grown or Made in Georgia" including beer for example. Where others would combine cheese and wine, these dairy farmers had the ingenious idea to advise pairing combinations of cheese and beer. They also discount their prices on certain occasions and they host parties on some holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas...) partnering with other GA agribusinesses as well.

### Targeting the "gourmet" customers.

The cheese produced by the dairy company is rather expensive compared to other cheeses sold in supermarkets and made by multinational companies for example. The dairy farmers wanted it that way. They target "gourmet" cheese customers first, i.e. the ones who care about the taste, the fat content, the originality, the overall high-quality service... and are willing to pay a higher price for these features.

By implementing a more "extensive" production system, they also appeal to a lot of "environmentally and animal welfare concerned" customers whose population is rising in the country, especially among the millennial generation.

### Coming next?

While nurturing their current clientele, both locally and country-wide, the dairy farmers are planning to go global. They would start within the NAFTA zone which favors trade between the U.S.A., Canada and Mexico since 1994. They would like to increase their revenue and expand their facilities.

### Lessons learned.

**This family dairy farm produces specialty-cheeses for a specific population of customers.**

They have a "different" production system than the majority of the big dairy farms, they have unique recipes from the "old world", high quality products, higher prices, and they partner with other agribusinesses.

**They keep their "first hour" customers in the loop and satisfied.**

Starting an agribusiness company in Georgia means developing community, loyalty, and consistency. For this firm, it is manifested by a special approach to production, to processing, and to marketing so as to maintain the loyalty of its customers.



## Sources

- The dairy farm's website.
- Interview between the AAEC students and the owners.



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