

FRYEBURG FAIR GETS SHARP WITH CHEDDAR



Fryeburg Fair's Sharp Cheddar Cheese - Limited Edition 2023 Available in the Agricultural Exhibition Center - \$8

Fryeburg Fair is pleased to announce that we've gone into the cheese production business! And you can buy seven-ounce blocks of Fryeburg Fair Sharp Cheddar Cheese made from 2022 milk at this year's Fair. You'll find our \$8 blocks for sale in the Agricultural Exhibition Center October 1-8.

In August of 2022, Fryeburg Fair was notified that Oakhurst Dairy, now Dairy Farms of America, made a business decision to discontinue picking up milk produced at Maine Fairs. After 40 years, this tradition didn't make sense anymore. The small loads and small quantities led them to this conclusion.

However, Fryeburg Fair, the largest Fair in Maine, was producing 40,000 pounds of milk over eight days. That amount translates to 5,000 gallons. Dave Richardson, the Superintendent of the Dairy Department said, "No one wanted to see this milk dumped. We knew we had to come up with a solution." Richardson got together with his Fryeburg Fair dairy comrades, George Weston-Livestock Superintendent, Sarah Littlefield-Executive Director of the Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council and Garrett Lambert - all private dairy farmers and Fryeburg Fair employees. Their commitment to conservation and farming

combined with their determined Yankee roots led them to Pineland Farms Dairy Company, an exhibitor at Fryeburg Fair.

"We already had a relationship with Pineland. We approached them to see if they'd take the milk so it wasn't wasted," Richardson said. "Jim Lesser, Pineland's Director of Sales & Marketing, said he would speak with his board of trustees. They came back to us, offered to take our milk, haul it to Bangor and process it into cheddar cheese!"

"It's been aging a year," adds Richardson with excitement. "We couldn't be happier with how this has turned out. The packaging has a beautiful Fryeburg Fair label. After paying dairy farmers for the milk, all proceeds from sales will go to agricultural education here at the Fair. It's a win-win for all of us. No waste. Our milk here is tested, always antibiotic free, and our milking parlor is State of Maine inspected for quality standards"

"In the end, this has financially supported our farmers, our exhibitor Pineland Farms, agriculture and agricultural education. Now it's on to the consumer who will arrive October 1st. We think we're going to have a run on it! We have 5,700 packages so enough to go around we hope!"

Richardson adds with enthusiasm, "In a sense last summer we were in a predicament. We were given lemons, and we made cheese out of it!"

Written by Rachel Andrews Damon



*The people behind Fryeburg Fair's Cheddar idea
Dave Richardson-Dairy Superintendent, George Weston-Livestock
Superintendent & Sarah Littlefield-Executive Director of the Maine Dairy
& Nutrition Council & Fryeburg Fair Livestock Office
(Missing from photo-Garrett Lambert) Photo by Rachel Andrews Damon*