

Growing Wisconsin Dairy Exports

Here are a couple of thoughts about how CDR can support exports.

Currently, here is what we try to do:

1. Participate in overseas export trips, like David Montgomery (cheese, recently) and Kimberly Burrington (ingredients, she is doing this for more than 15 years) has been doing (at request of USDEC and DATCP).
2. Participate in reverse trade missions, like CDR has done many times in the past.
3. Along with other groups, help educate U.S. cheese manufacturers regarding cheese export opportunities.
4. Help USDEC and DFW match cheese manufacturers with the right cheese export opportunities.
5. Develop customized make procedures for cheese varieties of interest for export (e.g., block Gouda).
6. Work with U.S. cheese manufacturers to get the desired cheese body, texture, flavor, and functionality for export opportunities.
7. Work with U.S. cheese manufacturers to determine and implement optimal ways to extend shelf life of cheese varieties for export.
8. Conduct research on new technologies to make cheese more efficiency (to allow our companies to compete internationally) or develop new processes to extend shelf-life
9. Serve as the technical resource for U.S. cheese makers and their export customers on various cheese issues.

What I think we need from groups like USDEC and DFW are:

1. A prioritized list of cheese varieties of interest for export.
2. Gold standard samples and/or solid information on desired attributes and typical end use of cheeses of interest for export.

Other Projects or Work required:

1. **Consumer preference study of key export markets.** Detailed consumer sensory data on how consumers in key export markets think of cheese in terms of its main attributes. We need better intel on what these consumer wants and expect in terms of cheeses. Our suggestion is for CDR to conduct a comprehensive study using selected individuals from key markets that live in Madison or are students here. This would help us to identify cultural differences in cheese preferences and understand their liking of US cheeses. Consumer groups could include: Mexico, China, South Korea, Japan and Middle East/North Africa. Doing the work here is cheaper, and also allows us to compare their preferences with local Wisconsin cheeses.

2. **Export Cheese Program at CDR.** We should replicate the successful approach of the CDR Specialty cheese program that was created in the early 1990s, which paved the way for the amazing growth in specialty cheese production here in the state. If CDR is provided with key varieties in these export target countries (e.g., Egypt, Latin America, etc). The CDR could develop a strategic plan for training/short courses and testing formulations to become an expert on manufacturing these varieties. It is a similar approach to how in the past we helped grow the specialty cheese area, where CDR focused on key countries (e.g., France) and brought in international experts to train CDR and our cheese makers on French cheeses.
3. **Export support staff at CDR.** To meet the increasing demands of growing exports, the CDR would need to recruit specific new staff whose primary role was supporting exports. Duties would include:
 - a. overseas trips to key countries to meet buyers,
 - b. participate in trade missions (giving technical input),
 - c. work directly with our cheesemakers on creating cheeses to meet these new markets,
 - d. developing short course or trainings for our cheesemakers on cheese varieties/types needed in key overseas markets.
 - e. Be the key liaison with partner groups like DATCP/DFW and WCMA.

Should Wisconsin consider creating a single **Wisconsin Dairy Export Organization** like the Irish Dairy Board? (now called Ornuia <https://www.ornua.com/>)

I still think we should consider a single brand and creating an organization like the Irish Dairy Board did with Kerrygold. They were focused on selling commodities, but we could focus on niche items like specialty cheese. It will be a challenge for 20-30 Wisconsin mid/small cheesemakers to all get familiar with the many requirements for exports, will they hire the staff to visit key markets, or just use brokers who will buy from anyone or any country?, and from the buyers perspective do they need to develop relationships with a large number of our cheese plants. Shipping small amounts of cheese for a single Wisconsin cheese plant to the Middle East does not make too much sense but if there was a single board/organization they would combine loads and do all the organization/requirements. CDR would be happy to help in any way it could with such an effort. Maybe something to include in the Baldwin amendment of the Farm Bill related to Dairy Business Innovation. Suggest this should be a partnership effort aimed at pooling resources between the Cheese companies, DFW, DATCP, CDR, WCMA and related organizations. Maybe cheese companies like Satori that already export might join, thus need less of their own resources to support exports. I know that DATCP has staff that do international development, but they work on all products not just dairy, WEDC also have international trade/business focused staff but again not focused on dairy exports alone. I see this as adding to the work of USDEC not replacing it. DFW could help with marketing but this new effort would be for international customers.