

DELI BUSINESS

MARKETING MERCHANDISING MANAGEMENT PROCUREMENT

JUNE/JULY 2009 \$14.95

5th Annual People's Award SALUTING INDUSTRY LEADERS

ALSO INSIDE

CROSS-MERCHANDISING
FOODS FROM ITALY
FOODSERVICE
DIPS & SPREADS
ETHNIC FOODS
INDIAN FOODS
SALADS & SIDES
CHEESE MERCHANDISING
GOAT CHEESE
WISCONSIN CHEESE

SPECIAL SECTION
DELI MEAT GUIDE 2009

Fresh For Summer

Goat cheese goes casual for warm weather dining

BY LISA FUTTERMAN

Putting fresh goat cheeses on your customer's summertime dinner table can be as straightforward as slathering butter on fresh corn on the cob. In warm weather, most shoppers crave easy ideas for no-cook meals and appetizing recipes for outdoor dining. Fresh goat cheeses can brighten both hot and cold meals as well as add simple elegance to summer grilling and entertaining.

In the past several years, American retailers have seen huge increases in fresh goat cheese sales, thanks in part to their availability in a growing range of restaurant menu items. "Chefs led the way in their interest in this multipurpose cheese that allows creativity," says Dominique Penicaud, general manager of Couturier North America, based in Warwick, RI.

Lindsay Gregory, marketing manager for Woolwich Dairy, based in Orangeville, ON, Canada, believes consumers are becoming educated through travel and realize they can recreate the dishes they encounter on their trips when they get home.

Showing customers how to bring these dishes to their own table can spike interest and change buying habits. Retailers should start to see sales bumps if they provide recipe cards for trendy items, such as goat cheese pizza or panini, and if they demo easy-to-make appetizers.

Arnaud Solandt, general manager for Montchevré, based in Rolling Hills Estates, CA, recommends opening packages and custom seasoning the cheeses for in-store tastings. "Cover goat logs with prepared tapenade and you create a simple summer appetizer and a perfect cross-promotion."

Consumer acceptance of fresh goat cheeses has brought dozens of varieties to market. Montchevré offers a wide range of products, including fresh logs, Chabis and Crottin, Feta and crumbles, to appeal to a wide range of consumers. "Consumers are always looking for direction," notes Solandt, "so we make a variety of cheeses with goat's milk. The crumbled goat is great for salads,



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA CHENEL-CHÉVRE

but goat Feta applies for salads as well.”

Coach Farm, based in Pine Plains, NY, introduced goat milk Ricotta this past year. “Its sweet, grassy flavor adds freshness and interest to lasagnas and other baked pastas,” relates Nancy Austin, director of marketing. “Our award-winning buttons are also refreshing for summer; their lemony taste goes great with the herb coating, especially the dill flavor.”

Allowing customers to taste these items, either in simple preparations or on their own, will remove much of the mystery around them, making them less intimidating to an increasing number of shoppers.

Meyenberg Goat Milk Products, based in Turlock, CA, has introduced goat butter and goat cream cheese, two newer goat milk products that are quite trendy and chic but that require some customer education to generate sales. “The chefs are going crazy but consumers need to be taught how to use these products in everyday recipes,” explains Tracy Darrimon, director of marketing.

For example, the tangy goat butter can be made into a compound butter — just add herbs and seasonings, freeze and then slice for a no-cook sauce to accompany grilled items for quick summer eating. “Because it



*Laura Chenel's
Chèvre*

*Meticulously Handcrafted
Pure Goat Milk Cheeses*

4310 Fremont Drive • Sonoma, CA 95476
Ph: (707) 996-4477 • Fax: (707) 996-1816

has a lower melting point than traditional cow's milk butter, it melts easier, plus it has a higher perceived value than regular butter,” says Darrimon.

Goat cream cheese works well in breakfast applications and easy summer appetizers and can be directly substituted for traditional cream cheese. It presents an especially effective opportunity for passive in-store sampling; customers will be surprised by the fresh yet familiar tangy taste and are quite likely to pick up a container.

Creative Merchandising Techniques

Merchandising creatively to promote a wide variety of uses can increase sales. Woolwich's Gregory suggests giving consumers quick little ideas — such as picking up some flatbreads to dip in or spread with fresh goat cheese.

Cross-merchandising out of the department can be quite effective. “We suggest merchandising the cheeses next to the salad vegetables in the produce department,” says Solandt. Other simple cross-promotions highlighting artisan breads, crackers or fresh summer berries or figs can also boost sales. “The retailer can ask the distributors for promotional pricing and they should chip right in,” he adds.

Jacquelyn Buchanan, director of culinary development for Laura Chenel's Chèvre,

Inc., based in Santa Rosa, CA, is another proponent of cross-merchandising. “Summer is the time of year when tomatoes are in their prime. A display of balsamic vinegar, extra virgin olive oil, [fresh goat] logs, fresh basil, tomatoes, and loaves of artisan bread would create a simple suggestion.”

Couturier's Penicaud suggests placing fresh goat cheese in the meat department to promote cooking with goat cheese in grilling season. “Goat cheese brings more flavor to bland chicken than most regular cheeses. Offer a recipe card suggesting a chicken breast stuffed with goat cheese and garlic cooked outside on the grill.” In the produce department, place goat cheeses next to popular grilling vegetables — zucchini, peppers, eggplant — to encourage a Mediterranean-themed meal.

Don't forget to emphasize the visual appeal of goat cheese. Its vibrant white color and round shape can be a great foil for the summer vegetable color spectrum. “Its distinct individual slices stay round because it doesn't melt like standard cheeses,” notes Penicaud. Provide recipe cards with colorful photographs of pizzas and salads and bring them to life by sampling rounds of warmed goat cheese.

For the ultimate riot of color, Cécile Delannes, ambassadrice of The French Cheese Club, based in College Park, MD,

suggests packaging fresh goat cheese rounds decorated “the French way” with edible flowers. Even though fresh flowers are quite perishable, their whimsical summery feel creates an original and impactful appeal.

Affordable luxury is an exotic angle for merchandising fresh goat cheese during tough economic times. Delannes suggests inviting customers on a “food adventure” in these days when consumers are limiting travel and watching their pennies. “It is easy,” she says, “to create a Provençal environment with a Provençal tablecloth and a bottle of

states Penicaud. “People who regularly eat specialty cheeses don’t worry much about the fat content, but the fact that it is easier to digest allows new customers to enjoy it.”

Many domestic goat cheeses come from small producers who pay attention to how the goats are raised. Austin calls the Coach Farm goats “a happy herd” whose milk has no additives, hormones, or antibiotics.

Retailers should highlight quality farmstead cheeses and educate consumers about

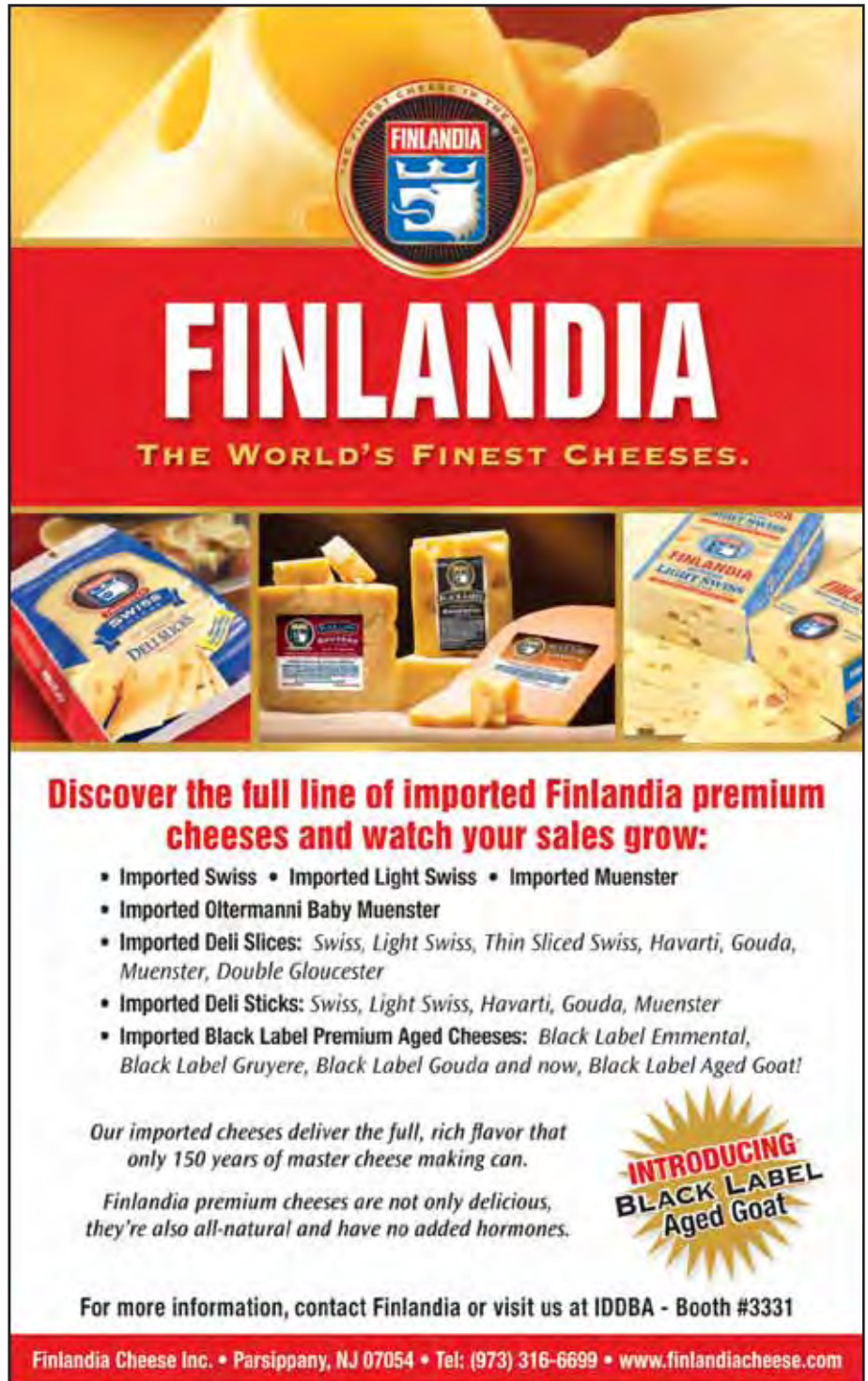
their fine points. Shelf talkers and cut sheets can help point up the health benefits of fresh goat cheeses in comparison to other summer best sellers.

Meyenberg’s Darrimon teaches consumers about the health benefits of goat milk products primarily through printed brochures and packaging, but she also uses the Internet to raise awareness. “I post to blogs on health-oriented Websites to answer questions about the benefits of fresh goat’s milk

SUGGESTING FRESH GOAT CHEESE IS AN AFFORDABLE TREAT AND CROSS-MERCHANDISING IT WITH WINES, NUTS, JAMS, AND HONEYS GIVES CONSUMERS THE PERMISSION THEY NEED TO INDULGE.

rosé wine.” Just add fresh goat cheese buttons and a baguette and customers feel as if they’re on a picnic in the South of France. Suggesting fresh goat cheese is an affordable treat and cross-merchandising it with wines, nuts, jams, and honeys gives consumers the permission they need to indulge.

Goat cheese also represents a counterpoint to luxury — the healthful indulgence. Much of goat cheese’s increasing popularity can be attributed to its healthful nature. Not only is goat’s milk lower in fat and higher in calcium and many vitamins than cow’s milk, but it is also easier to digest due to its smaller fat particles. “This is a great health advantage for those who are lactose intolerant,”



FINLANDIA
THE WORLD'S FINEST CHEESES.

Discover the full line of imported Finlandia premium cheeses and watch your sales grow:

- Imported Swiss • Imported Light Swiss • Imported Muenster
- Imported Oltermanni Baby Muenster
- Imported Deli Slices: *Swiss, Light Swiss, Thin Sliced Swiss, Havarti, Gouda, Muenster, Double Gloucester*
- Imported Deli Sticks: *Swiss, Light Swiss, Havarti, Gouda, Muenster*
- Imported Black Label Premium Aged Cheeses: *Black Label Emmental, Black Label Gruyere, Black Label Gouda and now, Black Label Aged Goat!*

Our imported cheeses deliver the full, rich flavor that only 150 years of master cheese making can.

Finlandia premium cheeses are not only delicious, they're also all-natural and have no added hormones.

INTRODUCING BLACK LABEL Aged Goat

For more information, contact Finlandia or visit us at IDDBA - Booth #3331

Finlandia Cheese Inc. • Parsippany, NJ 07054 • Tel: (973) 316-6699 • www.finlandiacheese.com

and the cheeses made from them,” she notes. Retailers might want to consider blogging about all types of promotions and issues of interest to their current and potential customers on their own company Websites, and they can cross-promote the Website in store with signage and sign-up cards.

Beverage pairings are another popular trend that retailers can promote. Solandt of Montchevré recommends pairing amber beers with fresh goat cheese for summer,

while mentioning that wine and cheese is the classic way to go. “Goat cheese goes with every wine depending on the season,” he says. Feature light, bright summer wines and clean summer beers on goat cheese displays to emphasize summer snacking.

Helping customers keep track of their pairing preferences can keep them coming back. “Get the customer more involved,” advises Darrimon. “Give them an index card, have them record their taste preferences and



PHOTO COURTESY OF REDWOOD HILL FARM AND CREAMERY

keep them in a file behind the counter.” Or create a computerized customer profile if you have the capability. Customers appreciate that you can see at a glance they loved the Frog’s Leap Sauvignon Blanc with Coupole from Vermont Butter & Cheese.

BEVERAGE PAIRINGS ARE ANOTHER POPULAR TREND THAT RETAILERS CAN PROMOTE. FEATURE LIGHT, BRIGHT SUMMER WINES AND CLEAN SUMMER BEERS ON GOAT CHEESE DISPLAYS TO EMPHASIZE SUMMER SNACKING.

Venus flatbreads available in 10 & 13.25 oz trays.
Original, Combo, and Rye Sourdough.

Contact Venus Wafers at 800-545-4538 or
venus@venuswafers.com • www.venuswafers.com

In any customer interaction, the retailer’s enthusiasm and passion for a product will ultimately increase sales of that product. Encourage your staff and your customers to share their ideas for easy and elegant summer appetizer ideas, refreshing salads, delicious grilling recipes, and favorite beverage pairings — and watch the demand for fresh goat cheese soar.

DB