

FERMENT

Happy Hour

Monday, February 11th, 2008

“The butter your sister is sending is very good,” I said to my neighbour one day. “Yes,” he said, “that field always made good butter.” That is long ago and the fragrance is almost forgotten.

Myrtle Allen, *The Ballymaloe Cookbook*

Butter Tasting Menu

PastureLand Cooperative, Unsalted
Southeastern Minnesota

Pine River Dairy, Salted
Manitowoc, WI

Grassland, Salted
Greenwood, WI

PastureLand Cooperative, Salted
Southeastern Minnesota

Wüthrich, European Cultured, N/S (83%)
Greenwood, WI

Organic Valley, European Cultured (84%)
LaFarge, WI

Mt. Sterling Cooperative, Goat Butter
Mt. Sterling, WI

Butter Company Information

PastureLand Cooperative

Contact: Jean Andreasen, (jean@pastureland.coop)

Phone: 888-331-9115

Website: www.pastureland.coop

PastureLand is a small cooperative of family-operated, organically certified grass-based dairy farms located in southeastern Minnesota. They are committed to practicing sustainable farming methods: building the soil, grass varieties and pasture ecosystems to nourish their animals. The co-op members take great pride in their ability to provide the high-quality pasture necessary for healthy dairy herds without having to supplement their diet with grain. Their goal is to the finest tasting butters and cheeses that embody the full benefits of the sun>grass>cow>milk connection.

The flavor of PastureLand’s butter reflects the high quality of the milk from which it is made. Fresh, lactose-sweet organic milk is transported from their farms to a local creamery where their butter is churned in small batches by the resident butter maker. Water is worked out of the cream, yielding butter with a European-style butterfat content – perfect for baking as well as fresh eating.

The bright golden color of their butter is due to naturally high levels of carotene in their pasture grasses. The texture is silky, and the flavor is delicate and sweet with hints of wildflowers, pasture grasses and herbs. Called “the best domestic butter in America” by chef and author Jeremiah Tower, PastureLand’s Summer Gold salted butter was awarded top honors in 2004 and 2005 at the American Cheese Society’s annual competition.

Pine River Dairy

Contact: Lori Olm, (sales@pineriverdairy.com)

Phone: 920-758-2233

Website: www.pineriverdairy.com

The Olm family has owned and operated Pine River Dairy for over 60 years at the current location. The Olm cheesemaking heritage began with the sons of Civil War veteran August Olm in 1877. His great grandson, Roland, continued the tradition of cheesemaking when he purchased Pine River Dairy in 1932. Today the Olm family, now in its sixth generation of dairy food producers, continues to operate the business as a manufacturer of butter. They take the fresh cream from eastern Wisconsin cheese factories to manufacture high quality butters, including salted, unsalted and a high-butterfat European-style.

Grassland Butter

Phone: 800-4BUTTER

Website: www.grassland.com

It was a small beginning over a century ago when John Wuethrich Creamery Company first began picking up cream from small dairies in central Wisconsin to make Grassland Butter. Since then, horse-drawn wagons and sleighs have become trucks and semis; on-farm milk cans have become stainless steel tanks; wooden vane churns have become continuous churns; and finished butter in 60-pound wooden tubs has become consumer packages.

Today, Grassland has over 300 employees and is still family-owned, being operated by the fourth generation of the Wuethrich family. Grassland uses milk from family-owned dairies in central Wisconsin, supporting over 1,500 local farms. They separate the farm-fresh cream and turn that into

butter, while utilizing the leftover skimmed milk and protein to produce various product lines, such as condensed skim milk and UF milk.

Grassland is consistently recognized for their quality butters, winning awards at the Wisconsin State Fair, the US Cheese Championships and the World Cheese Championships.

Wüthrich Butter, by Grassland

Phone: 800-4BUTTER

Website: www.grassland.com

Produced by Grassland, the Wüthrich brand is a European Style Butter, meaning it has added flavor cultures and a higher butterfat percent than standard US Grade AA butters. The higher butterfat content gives it an elasticity and lower moisture content suitable for baking and pastry-making. It also possesses a higher melting point for sautéing.

This European Style butter comes in both salted and unsalted, salted being a better table butter and unsalted preferred by bakers/pastry artists.

Organic Valley

Phone: 888-444-6455

Website: www.organicvalley.coop

Organic and farmer-owned since 1988, Organic Valley has a long-time commitment to environmental stewardship and quality products. Their organic butters are award-winning, and start with certified organic whole milk which is then separated and churned. They produce a variety of butters, including Cultured, European-Style and Pasture.

Mt. Sterling Cooperative

Contact: Shannon Adams

Phone: 608-734-3151

Website: www.buygoatcheese.com

Mt. Sterling Cheese Cooperative is one of the largest goat milk coops in the US, with members from Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. Incorporated in 1976 as the Southwestern Wisconsin Dairy Goat Products Cooperative, they market their goat products under the name of Mt. Sterling Cheese Coop. They produce a variety of specialty goat milk products, including cheeses and butters.

Mt. Sterling's award-winning goat milk butter is one of only a handful of goat-milk butters produced in the US. It is a rich, flavorful butter made from whey cream, and maintains the smooth texture associated with all goat milk products. It is all natural with no colorings – given that goat milk is naturally pure white from its lack of carotene, goat milk butter likewise is stark white compared to cow-milk butters.

BUTTER LINKS

Butter Glossary: Terms and Definitions
www.thenibble.com/reviews/main/cheese/butter/glossary.asp

History of Butter: WebExhibits
<http://webexhibits.org/butter/index.html>

WI Dept of Agriculture's Butter Grading Rules
www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/atcp/atcp085.pdf

List of American Butters not tasted tonight

This is not an all-inclusive list, just a start. You can find many more amazing cultured, sometimes raw-milk, farmhouse butters by talking with producers and people you know locally.

Alcam Creamery (WI)
Alto Dairy (WI)
Beecher's Cheese Company (WA)
Bittersweet Plantation, John Folsie Co (LA)
Bridgeport Creamery (WV)
Cabot Creamery Butter (VT)
Castle Rock Organic Dairy (WI)
Clover Butter (CA)
Crystal Ball Organic Farm (WI)
Crystal Farms (MN)
D'Artagnan Truffle Butter (NY)
Graf Creamery (WI)
Hope Creamery (MN)
Land O'Lakes (MN)
Organic Pastures Raw Milk Butter (CA)
Plugra (PA)
Strauss Family Creamery (CA)
Smith Creamery (LA)
Vermont Butter and Cheese Company (VT)
Westby Coop Creamery (WI)