Foreword

Irish farmhouse cheese plays a fundamental role in the growth and development of Ireland’s artisan dairy sector. From its beginnings over thirty years ago, the sector has grown to encompass 47 producers and over 127 individual cheese types. The sheer breadth of cheese produced signifies the innovation and ingenuity this group of entrepreneurs has to offer.

Research conducted by Bord Bia in 2010 identifies opportunities for farmhouse cheese on the domestic and export markets. Even in the toughest trading environments, farmhouse cheese fulfills specific consumer needs. Throughout our research programme for farmhouse cheese, we have uncovered drivers of brand choice, market segmentation, and consumer purchase processes. The purpose of this guide is to give you information on the cheeses and cheesemakers our artisan sector has to offer. Incorporating these products into your product portfolio will not only enhance your range; it will provide a basis from which consumers will identify your retail or foodservice credentials.

Our strategy to assist small businesses is delivered through our Bord Bia Vantage platform. We encourage you to visit our relaunched site, www.bordbiavantage.ie, to see what’s on offer and find out more about our other small food business sectors.

Aidan Cotter
Chief Executive
Bord Bia
Introduction

Irish farmhouse cheeses are the product of unique interactions between people, place and pasture. Farmhouse cheeses are produced across the country yet each cheese is an expression of its own particular part of Ireland, encapsulating very different elemental aspects of our native landscape. Milleens offers a taste of the wild, salty winds of the Atlantic; Coolea conjures soft rain on mountain slopes; Cashel Blue™ is the expression of lush sweet grasses in hills and valleys; whilst St Tola is redolent of wild herbs in rocky limestone fields.

Yet Irish farmhouse cheese is not just about flavour, it is also about people. In Ireland each artisan cheese is unique to a particular cheesemaker. The transparency of this connection between producer, cheese and place is the key characteristic of Irish farmhouse cheese. By contrast, the importance of regional cheese styles in Continental Europe - coupled with an affineur system where the cheese seller has an interest in hiding the identity of the cheese producer from the ultimate consumer - means that such transparency is rare in mainland Europe.

Each Irish artisan cheese is unique to its cheesemaker, and each cheesemaker has a different story to tell. Some are stories of tenacity in adversity; some of dreams fulfilled; most are mixed tales of triumphs, setbacks and - often obstinate - perseverance. Yet all these stories concern the intimate interaction of people and place in Ireland.

This peerless provenance is a double-edged sword, imbuing Irish farmhouse cheese with dynamism and fragility in equal measure. Irish farmhouse cheese is dynamic in so far as new producers can appear at any moment and contribute to the movement. Yet the industry is fragile too. There is little continuity in Irish artisan cheesemaking and if a cheesemaker decides to cease production, their cheese will, generally, cease to exist too.

In less than forty years Irish artisan cheesemakers have managed to produce cheeses which are the equal of any in the world. We need to recognise this achievement through the continual support of these artisan producers, new and old alike, if we are to ensure the survival of this unique Irish industry in the years ahead.
Pat Hyland, aka Paddy Jack, has been making cheese on his farm at Cuffsboro, in County Laois since 1991. Farmer-turned-cheesemaker Pat started making cheese as a means of adding value to excess milk. Trial and error, coupled with advice from the Dairy Product Research Centre at Moorepark, eventually resulted in Pat developing a number of different cheeses. At that time Cambozola was the only blue brie-style cheese readily available in Ireland. Pat reasoned that an Irish version would fare well with consumers and launched Abbey Blue Brie on the market, alongside a plain brie. His assumption was correct and both cheeses proved to be a success. Pat subsequently added a smoked brie and a hard cheese, Paddy Jack, to the range. All milk is now sourced from one local herd of Fresians leaving Pat more time for cheesemaking and selling at farmers’ markets.

Abbey Blue Brie is a pasteurised soft cheese, made using vegetarian rennet. The rind is a thick bloomy white, with a soft, blue spinkled paste. The flavour is creamy and mild, with a delicate hint of blue.

Abbey Smoked Brie has a smoky white rind and a soft pale yellow paste. The cheese is smoked over ash for five hours. The paste is smooth and creamy with a light smoky flavour that diminishes as the cheese ages.

Paddy Jack is a cheese made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The cheese is rolled in black ash which contrasts with the firm, beige-yellow paste. There is an aroma of earth and cellar from the rind. The flavour is mild and sweet like a young gouda but is punctuated with earthiness from the rind. Sweet, nutty and round, a smooth flavour with little bite.

Abbey Blue Brie
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 1.5kg, 190g mini
- Similar Style: Wicklow Blue, Bleu de Bresse, Cambozola
- Rind: White mould
- Paste: Soft pale yellow paste, with mild blueing throughout
- Flavour: Creamy and mild with a delicate blue flavour
- Age: Available from 3 weeks for large wheels, 15 days for minis
- Pairings: Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year

Abbey Smoked Brie
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 5kg wheels
- Similar Style: Dubliner, Gruyère
- Rind: Covered in black ash
- Paste: Firm pale beige paste, aroma of earthy and cellar on rind
- Flavour: Mild sweet gouda notes, with earthiness from rind, sweet, nutty and round, smooth with little bite
- Age: Available from 18 months
- Pairings: Oaked Chardonnay; Syrah
- Season: Available all year

Paddy Jack Cheese
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 5kg wheels
- Similar Style: Dubliner, Gruyère
- Rind: Covered in black ash
- Paste: Firm pale beige paste, aroma of earthy and cellar on rind
- Flavour: Mild sweet gouda notes, with earthiness from rind, sweet, nutty and round, smooth with little bite
- Age: Available from 18 months
- Pairings: Oaked Chardonnay; Syrah
- Season: Available all year
Judy Wotton started making cheese in Devon in the early 1990s. In 1997 she moved to Ireland where she fell in love with an abandoned farmhouse at Ardagh South, near Baltimore in West Cork. She decided to buy the farm and, with a lot of hard work and dedication, restored it to working order. Judy continues to make very small amounts of cheese on the farm to this day, using raw milk from her Anglo-Nubian goats.

Preservation of milk as a hard cheese was the starting point followed by finding a suitable hard cheese recipe using goat’s milk. Judy hastens to add that official attitudes at that time to the use of raw milk in fresh cheeses also influenced her decision to produce a harder cheese.

Her method is based on a traditional recipe she found in a cheesemaking book. From this she learnt that Wensleydale had originally been made using sheep’s milk, sometimes blended with goat’s milk. She found little difficulty in adapting the recipe to 100% goat’s milk. The recipe is no secret and she teaches it in the cheesemaking classes she runs at the farm. Judy is a passionate advocate of raw milk and says that she would rather cease production than go pasteurised.

Ardagh Castle Goat’s Cheese is a firm but moist goat’s cheese made using milk from Judy’s own goats. Production is seasonal, and Judy makes cheese from March to October each year. The cheeses are aged a minimum of two months before release, so Ardagh Castle is generally available from May to December, depending on stock.

Judy’s own preference is for wheels aged five to six months. The flavour is mild and creamy, with an increasingly nutty finish as the cheese ages.

Judy also makes Gjetost and Goat’s Ricotta from whey produced as part of the cheesemaking process. Gjetost is an unusual, sweet, fudge-y yet slightly savoury whey cheese traditionally served for breakfast in Norway. It is made by prolonged boiling of whey from hard cheese-making.

Judy’s goat’s ricotta is fresh, light and creamy. She adds no salt to her ricotta, so it can be used as a sweet or savoury cheese. Both of these cheeses are generally made-to-order, in season. If you would like to order some contact Judy on 028 205 47, or e-mail jwotton@eircom.net.

Judy’s production is extremely small, and supply is limited. Her cheese is available at Skibbereen Farmer’s Market or direct from the farm.

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Mary Burns and her late husband, Eugene, began making Ardrahan in 1983. They were both lovers of strong flavoured cheeses and felt there had to be a future in Ireland for such a cheese. Initially the couple sold most of their cheese in France, crossing by ferry and then driving to the main French food market at Rungis, outside Paris. Unsurprisingly this system proved unsustainable in the long term, as the demands of running a large dairy farm and making cheese left little time for such foreign adventures. Also, at that time, UK and Irish markets were opening up and as Ardrahan is a washed-rind cheese with a strong flavour, it quickly found its niche in the UK market. Ardrahan has won numerous prizes over the years including Supreme Champion at the British Cheese Awards. In recognition of his contribution to Irish cheese-making, the prize for Best Irish Cheese at the British Cheese Awards is dedicated to the memory of Eugene Burns. All the milk used in the production of Ardrahan comes from Mary's own herd of 120 pedigree Friesians that grazes on this beautiful 200 acre farm. The herd itself was founded by Eugene's father Eugene Burns Senior in 1925.

Young Ardrahan is lactic, pungent and salty. The chalky curd breaks down as the cheese matures, giving way to a creamy, bulging paste towards the rind of the cheese where the bacterial rind is more active. Ardrahan generally maintains a clear line of chalkiness across the centre of the paste, the whey is simply too thick for the enzyme activity on the rind to penetrate to the heart of the cheese. The result is a very pleasing contrast between the creaminess of the outside and the mildy lactic, salty centre, all offset by the pungent farmyard aromas of the rind itself. Ardrahan is a wonderful expression of the high quality milk produced on the farm. Smoked Ardrahan has a brownish, smoked rind. The paste is semi-soft, generally with a line of chalkiness through the centre of the paste. The aroma is one of smoke, peanut butter with roasted coffee notes. Over the past two years, a second cheese has been developed at Ardrahan, Duhallow Cheese. Duhallow has an orange coloured rind, with a yellow creamy paste. The flavour is mild and creamy with notes of butter and a slightly lactic finish. Both Ardrahan and Duhallow are enjoying great success on the UK, European and US markets.

Duhallow
Milk: Pasteurised cow's milk all from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 1.4Kg round
Similar Style: Muenster
Rind: Anato coloured rind
Paste: Semi-soft, lightly golden coloured paste, generally with line of chalkiness across centre of the paste
Flavour: Mild and creamy with notes of butter and a gently lactic finish
Age: Large wheels 4-8 weeks plus
Pairings: Pinot Gris
Season: Available all year
Jane Murphy's involvement with goats started with the visit of a door-to-door life assurance salesman to her home in Carlow in 1979. In the course of their conversation Jane mentioned that her children suffered badly from allergies and eczema. The salesman told her that he had experienced similar problems and had solved them by switching to goat's milk. Jane thanked him for his advice and his generous offers of life assurance, and sent him on his way. However within half an hour the salesman returned with a scrub goat in kid as a present for Jane. The family have kept goats ever since.

Jane soon acquired a second goat, a Saanan from a lady called Norma Cooke. This dairy breed produced infinitely more milk than the scrub goat and gave Jane sufficient milk to start experimenting with cheesemaking on a tiny scale for the family's own consumption. At this stage, the goats were little more than a hobby and dinner party conversation.

However, as the years passed Jane became increasingly convinced that she would like to try her hand at goat farming. Her opportunity arose in 1996 when her husband, Gerard, spotted a notice in the paper advertising the sale of a large goat farm in Co. Cork. The couple drove down to inspect the farm and decided to buy it. The family produces a large range of cheeses, goat's milk and yoghurt from a mixed herd of Anglo-Nubians, Saanans and Alpines on the farm, and some bought in milk from one other source. Ardsallagh is now the largest primary producer of goat's milk products in Ireland.

Ardsallagh produces plain and flavoured soft cheeses, a hard, smoked cheese, and yoghurt from the milk of their own herd of goats.

Ardsallagh Soft Goat's cheese is a mild, fresh goat's cheese made using pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet. The flavour is smooth and creamy. The hand-laddling of the curd gives a very light texture. Ardsallagh Soft Goat's Cheese is available in a range of flavours including black pepper, and grain mustard.

Ardsallagh Hard Goat's cheese is a semi-firm to hard cheese made from pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet. Young cheeses are mild and sweet. The paste hardens and the flavour grows more nutty and salty as the cheese ages.

Ardsallagh Smoked Goat's Cheese is a semi-firm to hard cheese made using pasteurised goat's milk and vegetarian rennet. The cheeses are cold-smoked over beechwood for 4-7 days to impart a distinctive smoky flavour. The secret of this cheese's flavour is the interaction of the goat and smoked flavours on the palate.

Ardsallagh Roulade is a soft goat's cheese flavoured with cranberries.

Ardsallagh has built up an incredible range of high-class cheeses that will not only impress the connoisseur but also the casual consumer. Ardsallagh is now the largest primary producer of goat's milk products in Ireland.
Dick and Anne Keating began experimenting with cheesemaking in the mid-eighties. Their initial aim was simply to make cheese for themselves and their children. Times were tough and the Keatings couldn’t afford to buy cheese for their large family. The reduction in milk quotas meant there was also little chance of selling all the milk they produced from their 17 cattle. Anne began experimenting at the kitchen stove, but admits to having had no idea what she was doing. Her first few batches contained neither starter nor rennet, two ingredients without which it is virtually impossible to make cheese! Over time she developed a passable recipe for the family to eat at home, although she was not really happy with it herself. She brought a sample to David Mitchell, a cheesemaker at Mullinahone coop, who said the cheese had potential but was just not quite right. He lent her an enormous tome on cheesemaking and Anne returned to her stove top experiments. Anne gradually developed a cheese which tasted infinitely superior to her earlier efforts, and Bay Lough cheddar was born.

Although her original intention had been to make cheese for home consumption, as ‘one less item to buy in the weekly shop’, people who tasted Anne’s new cheese said they would happily buy it. The business started through word of mouth as Anne gradually devoted more and more time to trying to expand sales. She implored local shops to stock the cheese, which they did, albeit on a sale or return basis. She approached a national distributor who laughed at the notion of distributing cheese from someone who had not even taken a cheesemaking course. Anne and Dick worked from 6am to 10pm every day milking cattle, making and caring for cheeses and selling wherever they could. By dint of sheer determination they gradually gained toe-holds in various markets.

Three factors helped to secure the future of the Keating’s fledgling business. Firstly, Bay Lough won 2nd prize at the Clones Agricultural show. This was a major confidence boost for Anne—Baylough subsequently won numerous prizes in the Royal Dublin Show, culminating in first prize in 1994.

Secondly, one day Darina Allen rang to enquire about bringing a group from Ballymaloe Cookery School to see the cheesemaking process. Anne explained that Bay Lough was a tiny enterprise and might not be suitable for showing to the students, but was delighted when Darina told her that small, artisan enterprises were precisely what the school was looking to show its pupils. After the visit Darina gave Bay Lough several very positive write ups and used the cheese in a number of different recipes. Demand grew.

Thirdly the Keatings came up with the innovative idea of dipping individual slices of cheese in a protective wax for the hamper market. There were far fewer competitors in this market at the time and the innovation gave the business a massive boost.

The Keatings are now nearing their seventies and have stopped producing their own milk. At its height they had built the herd up to 27 cattle, with all the milk being used in cheese production. Nowadays all their milk is supplied by a neighbour, Jim O’Leary, who Anne says produces 100% superb milk for cheesemaking. Over the past 24 years they have built up a very successful business for themselves, through sheer determination. As Anne says, “never let anyone tell you that you can’t do something.”
Bay Lough Cheddar with Garlic & Herbs

Milk: Raw cow’s milk, small amount of pasteurised also produced

Rennet: Vegetarian

Format: 3.5kg wheels, 300 - 400g waxed sections

Similar Style: Knockanore Herb and Garlic

Rind: Orange wax

Paste: Firm and light yellow, with closed texture, speckled with dried herbs

Flavour: Smooth with dried garlic and herbs, underpinned by smokiness

Age: Sold from 3-4 months

Season: Available all year

Bay Lough Cheddar Smoked with Garlic & Herbs

Milk: Raw cow’s milk, small amount of pasteurised also produced

Rennet: Vegetarian

Format: 3.5kg wheels, 300 - 400g waxed sections

Rind: Black wax

Paste: Firm and light yellow, with closed texture, speckled with dried herbs

Flavour: Smooth with dried garlic and herbs, underpinned by smokiness

Age: Sold from 3-4 months

Season: Available all year

Kate Carmody has been making cheese at Beal Lodge in North Kerry since 1987. Kate represents the sixth generation of chemists in her family, and specialises in Bio-Chemistry, however, cheesemaking is her true passion. Kate is also a fervent believer in the Organic movement and is involved in the GM-Free Ireland campaign to keep Ireland free from the environmental release of genetically modified organisms. Beal Lodge Organic Farm is GM free and was certified organic in 2000, having undergone conversion in 1997. The Beal herd consists of 50-60 pedigree Holstein-Friesians. Kate uses milk from this herd to produce both her Beal Raw Milk Cheddar and Beal Organic Cheddar.

Although Kate has been quietly producing wonderful cheese for years she came to national attention in April 2010 when she appeared on the RTE television programme ‘Dragon’s Den’ and secured funding for the future expansion of the business from Bobby Kerr and Niall O’Farrell, but only after she had attained assurances from each that they had the ‘passion’ required to work with her cheese!
Beal Raw Milk Cheddar

**Milk:** Raw cow's milk from own herd  
**Rennet:** Traditional  
**Format:** 10kg wheels  
**Similar Style:** English Farmhouse Cheddar  
**Rind:** Natural rind, brine washed, smooth rind  
**Paste:** Hard, pale yellow paste, closed texture, with very small cracks in the paste  
**Flavour:** Smooth and mild with butter and hazelnuts when young, with age the cheese starts to pack quite a piquant punch  
**Age:** Available from 6 months onwards  
**Pairings:** Cider, Cabernet Sauvignon  
**Season:** Available all year depending on stock, small quantities produced

Beal Handmade Cheddar

**Milk:** Cow's milk  
**Rennet:** Traditional  
**Format:** 10kg wheels plus 15 kg blocks  
**Similar Style:** English Farmhouse Cheddar  
**Rind:** No rind, aged under vacuum  
**Paste:** Hard, pale yellow paste, closed texture, mature versions can contain small protein crystals  
**Flavour:** Mild, buttery and gentle on the palate. Mature blocks are more cheddary with fermented/yeasty aroma, pleasant sounness with nuts and some bite in the cheddary finish  
**Age:** Available from 3 months, mature version from 10 months  
**Pairings:** Cider, Cabernet Sauvignon  
**Season:** Available in small quantities

Bluebell Falls Cygnus

**Milk:** Goat's milk (heat treated) from own herd  
**Rennet:** Vegetarian  
**Format:** 500g logs, 150g portions  
**Similar Style:** Ryefield, Ardsallagh soft goat's cheese  
**Rind:** Fresh goat's cheese  
**Paste:** White, fresh goat's cheese  
**Flavour:** Smooth and creamy in texture, clean and fresh on the palate  
**Age:** from 2 days to 2 weeks  
**Pairings:** Sauvignon Blanc  
**Season:** Available all year

Bluebell Falls Cheese

- **address:** Ballynacally, Ennis, Co. Clare.  
- **telephone:** 065 683 80 24  
- **email:** bluebellfalls@gmail.com  
- **contact:** Paul Keane

The Keane family has lived as livestock farmers at Ballynacally on the Shannon estuary in County Clare for generations. Cattle were the basis of the family farm until the early 1990’s when goats were introduced. From that point onwards the Keanes moved into the business of goat’s milk and cheese production. They now produce a range of cheeses from Paul Keane’s own herd of 230 milking goats, which are primarily Saanen breed.

All of Paul’s cheeses are named after constellations in the northern sky and are made using heat treated milk and vegetarian rennet.

Cygnus is a fresh goat’s log, the flavour is fresh and creamy. It is also available flavoured with garlic, black pepper and dried herbs or garlic honey and thyme. The cheese takes its name from the swan-shaped constellation of Cygnus.

Orion is a hard goat’s cheese, made from heat-treated milk and vegetarian rennet. It has a firm white interior and a lively orange-y beige coloured rind. The flavour is nutty and sweet, gaining more nuttiness as the cheese ages. Orion takes its name from the famous hunter-shaped constellation.

Pegasus is a mould-ripened, soft goat’s cheese with a soft to semi-soft interior. The flavour is one of salty goat’s butter and mild white mushrooms. The name refers to the winged horse of greek mythology, after which the constellation is named. The cheese is made from heat treated milk.
Bluebell Falls Cheese

Bluebell Falls Cygnus with Honey
Milk: Goat’s milk (heat treated) from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 500g logs, 150g portions
Rind: Fresh goat’s cheese
Paste: White, fresh goat’s cheese with dried garlic, honey and thyme
Flavour: Smooth and creamy in texture, the honey gives sweetness whilst the garlic and thyme add a hint of provencal scrub
Pairings: Gewurztraminer
Age: 2 days to 2 weeks
Season: Available all year

Bluebell Falls Cygnus with Pepper
Milk: Goat’s milk (heat treated) from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 500g logs, 150g portions
Rind: Fresh goat’s cheese
Paste: White, fresh goat’s cheese with black pepper, mixed herbs and fresh garlic
Flavour: Smooth and creamy in texture, with a stronger garlic taste than Cygnus with Honey
Age: 2 days to 2 weeks
Pairings: Gruner Veltliner
Season: Available all year

Bluebell Falls Orion
Milk: Goat’s milk (heat treated) from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 3-4kg
Similar Style: Tomme d’Aydius
Rind: Natural rind, beige exterior
Paste: Hard goat’s cheese, firm white paste with small air bubbles throughout the paste
Flavour: Sweet and fruity when young, gaining nuttiness and complexity as the cheese ages
Age: Sold at 6 months, will age up to 12 months
Pairings: Light bodied whites
Season: Available all year

Bluebell Falls Pegasus
Milk: Goat’s milk (heat treated) from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 170g
Similar Style: Mini Gomhar
Rind: White mould
Paste: White interior, with chalkiness towards centre
Flavour: Mild with herbaceous notes and hints of sulphur
Age: 2 weeks
Pairings: Sparkling Wines
Season: Available all year
Cahill’s Whiskey Cheese is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with Kilbeggan whiskey and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheese is then dipped in a yellow waxed rind. The addition of the whiskey adds a savoury note to the cheese. Cahill’s Whiskey cheese is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Ballyporeen Cheese with Mixed Herbs is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with mixed dried herbs, and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheese is then dipped in a green wax, forming a breathable rind for the cheese. Ballyporeen Cheese with Mixed Herbs is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Ballintubber Cheddar with Chives is a medium strength cheddar to which chives have been added. The cheese is then hand pressed into semi-firm wheels. Each cheese is then dipped in black wax, forming a breathable rind which prevents the cheese from drying out. It has a distinctive flavour which intensifies with age. Ballintubber is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Cahill’s Porter cheese is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with Porter and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheeses are then dipped in brown wax, to form a breathable rind, which protects the cheese from drying out. Cahill’s Porter is remarkable in appearance, a waxed rinded, pale yellow cheese marbled throughout with chocolate brown porter. Cahill’s Porter is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Ardagh Wine Cheese is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with red wine and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheeses are then dipped in red wax, forming a breathable rind for the cheese. Ardagh Wine Cheese is also remarkable in appearance. Pale yellow cheese is marbled with red veins from the wine. Ardagh Wine Cheese is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

The Cahill family has been involved in Irish farmhouse cheese since the early 1980s, when Mrs Cahill began producing cream cheeses from the milk of the Cahill family herd. Over the years the family have diversified into various types of flavoured cheese, mainly produced for the export market. Their Cahill’s Irish Porter Cheese may well be the most widely known of all Irish cheeses.

All Cahill’s products are handcrafted on the family farm using traditional recipes. The Cahill family has been involved in Irish farmhouse cheese since the early 1980s, when Mrs Cahill began producing cream cheeses from the milk of the Cahill family herd. Over the years the family have diversified into various types of flavoured cheese, mainly produced for the export market. Their Cahill’s Irish Porter Cheese may well be the most widely known of all Irish cheeses. All Cahill’s products are handcrafted on the family farm using traditional recipes.

Cahill’s Farm Cheeses Ltd

address: Cork Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick
telephone: 069 62365
cahillscheese@eircom.net
contact: Dan Cahill
web: www.cahillscheese.ie

Cahill’s Original Irish Porter Cheese

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2.27kg waxed wheel, 200g waxed truckle, 200g barrel pack, 200g & 400g parchment pack, 1.1kg half moon
Rind: Brown wax
Paste: Distinctive black-marbled yellow paste, semi-firm
Age: Aged minimum 6 months
Pairings: Irish Porter
Season: Available all year

Cahill’s Whiskey Cheese

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2.27kg waxed wheel, 200g waxed truckle, 200g barrel pack, 200g & 400g parchment pack, 1.1kg half moon
Rind: Yellow wax
Paste: Distinctive tan-marbled paste, semi-firm
Age: Aged minimum 6 months
Pairings: Muscular red wines
Season: Available all year

Cahill’s Ardagh Wine Cheese

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2.27kg waxed wheel, 200g waxed truckle, 200g barrel pack, 200g & 400g parchment pack, 1.1kg half moon
Rind: Red wax
Paste: Distinctive pink-marbled yellow paste, semi-firm
Flavour: Medium flavour with a hint of wine
Age: Aged minimum 6 months
Pairings: Muscular red wines
Season: Available all year

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Cahill’s Whiskey Cheese is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with Kilbeggan whiskey and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheese is then dipped in a yellow waxed rind. The addition of the whiskey adds a savoury note to the cheese. Cahill’s Whiskey cheese is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Ballyporeen Cheese with Mixed Herbs is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with mixed dried herbs, and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheese is then dipped in a green wax, forming a breathable rind for the cheese. Ballyporeen Cheese with Mixed Herbs is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Ballintubber Cheddar with Chives is a medium strength cheddar to which chives have been added. The cheese is then hand pressed into semi-firm wheels. Each cheese is then dipped in black wax, forming a breathable rind which prevents the cheese from drying out. It has a distinctive flavour which intensifies with age. Ballintubber is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Cahill’s Porter cheese is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with Porter and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheeses are then dipped in brown wax, to form a breathable rind, which protects the cheese from drying out. Cahill’s Porter is remarkable in appearance, a waxed rinded, pale yellow cheese marbled throughout with chocolate brown porter. Cahill’s Porter is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

Ardagh Wine Cheese is a medium strength cheese. Select Irish cheese is combined with red wine and pressed by hand to form a semi-firm wheel. The cheeses are then dipped in red wax, forming a breathable rind for the cheese. Ardagh Wine Cheese is also remarkable in appearance. Pale yellow cheese is marbled with red veins from the wine. Ardagh Wine Cheese is made with pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet.

The Cahill family has been involved in Irish farmhouse cheese since the early 1980s, when Mrs Cahill began producing cream cheeses from the milk of the Cahill family herd. Over the years the family have diversified into various types of flavoured cheese, mainly produced for the export market. Their Cahill’s Irish Porter Cheese may well be the most widely known of all Irish cheeses.

All Cahill’s products are handcrafted on the family farm using traditional recipes.
Cahill’s Farm Cheeses Ltd

Ballintubber Cheddar with Chives

- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 2.27kg waxed wheel, 200g waxed truckle, 200g barrel pack, 200g & 400g parchment pack, 1.1kg half moon
- Rind: Black wax
- Paste: Orange-coloured paste flecked with herbs, semi-firm
- Flavour: Mild flavour with a mild onion-y tang
- Age: Aged minimum 6 months
- Pairings: Cider
- Season: Available all year

Ballyporeen with Mixed Irish Herbs

- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 2.27kg waxed wheel, 200g waxed truckle, 200g barrel pack, 200g & 400g parchment pack, 1.1kg half moon
- Rind: Green wax
- Paste: Yellow paste flecked with mixed herbs, semi-firm
- Flavour: Mild flavour with aroma of dried garlic and a herby finish
- Age: Aged minimum 6 months
- Pairings: In omelettes
- Season: Available all year

Elizabeth Bradley started making cheese in 2005 on her farm at Fenagh in County Carlow using raw milk from a neighbour’s dairy herd. Elizabeth developed the cheese for sale at the local farmer’s market in Carlow where her cheeses have built up a loyal following within a few short years. She believes that it is vital to the interests of both farmers and consumers that there is an increase in direct interaction between the two. Elizabeth believes that in the future, to survive, dairy farmers will have to consider further processing of their milk and direct sales, if they are not in a position to increase scale of production. Her own dream is to produce a raw ewe’s milk cheese from her own sheep. Only then, she believes, can she produce a cheese which she can truly call her own. Elizabeth has travelled extensively researching this project, and has spent time in both Romania and France learning traditional methods. This is a dream she hopes to bring to fruition in the near future.

Carlow Cheese

- Milk: Raw cow’s milk
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 4.5kg
- Similar Style: Edam
- Rind: Clear wax
- Paste: Smooth yellow paste, semi-firm
- Flavour: Mild and mellow flavour
- Age: 3-6 months
- Pairings: Off dry reisling
- Season: Available all year

Elizabeth Bradley started making cheese in 2005 on her farm at Fenagh in County Carlow using raw milk from a neighbour’s dairy herd. Elizabeth developed the cheese for sale at the local farmer’s market in Carlow where her cheeses have built up a loyal following within a few short years. She believes that it is vital to the interests of both farmers and consumers that there is an increase in direct interaction between the two. Elizabeth believes that in the future, to survive, dairy farmers will have to consider further processing of their milk and direct sales, if they are not in a position to increase scale of production. Her own dream is to produce a raw ewe’s milk cheese from her own sheep. Only then, she believes, can she produce a cheese which she can truly call her own. Elizabeth has travelled extensively researching this project, and has spent time in both Romania and France learning traditional methods. This is a dream she hopes to bring to fruition in the near future.

Carlow cheese is an Edam-style cheese made from the raw cow’s milk of a neighbouring herd. The exterior is coated with a clear wax, which encases a smooth, semi-firm, golden paste. The flavour is milk and mellow, with hints of butter. Elizabeth also makes a number of flavoured Edams. Varieties include basil and dried tomatoes, black pepper, cumin, chilli, garlic and herbs, and nettles and oregano.
Carlow Cheese Flavoured

**Milk:** Raw cow’s milk  
**Rennet:** Traditional  
**Format:** 4.5kg  
**Similar Style:** Flavoured edams and young flavoured goudas  
**Rind:** Clear wax  
**Paste:** Smooth yellow paste flecked with the particular flavouring  
**Flavour:** Flavoured with basil and dried tomatoes, black pepper, cumin, chilli, garlic and herb, nettle and onion  
**Age:** 3 months plus  
**Season:** Available all year

Carrigaline is a mild to medium strength havarti-style cheese made using pasteurised cow's milk and vegetarian rennet. The O'Farrells use a breathable waxed rind to protect the cheese from drying out. The flavour is buttery, creamy and mild, although the cheese can develop more tang if matured for longer.

Anne and Pat O'Farrell have been producing cheese on their farm at Carrigaline in East Cork since 1987. Pat began farming in 1983, the same year as the reduction in milk quotas which acted as such a spur to farmhouse cheesemaking all over Ireland. Under that arrangement Pat would have earned £5000 a year for 10,000 gallons of milk, not enough to support a himself, Anne and their five children. Pat attended a course in cheesemaking in UCC in 1983-84, and as he says, 'things started from there.'

Pat finished the course with nine different cheese recipes, and whittled this down to three. He then brought samples of all three to the local Supervalu for a tasting. The public reacted far more favourably to one of the cheeses, and this ‘survivor’ went on to become the basis for Carrigaline cheese. Over the next year or so Anne and Pat tweaked the recipe continuously and by the end of 1986 had a cheese which they were happy to sell. Carrigaline Plain cheese went to market the following year and they have never looked back.

In 2000 Pat took the decision to get out of milk production. Time demands and a lack of profitability in milk production forced his hand. The O'Farrells now buy in their milk from their neighbour, to whom Pat transferred his quota in 2000. The milk still comes from pedigree Friesians grazing on limestone and the O'Farrells can take life a little easier.

Anne and Pat O'Farrell also produce a herb and garlic Carrigaline, and a smoked cheese.
Carrigaline continued

**Carrigaline**

**Milk:** Pasteurised cow’s milk  
**Rennet:** Vegetarian  
**Format:** 1.8kg rounds, 400g mini, 200g mini, 150g mini vac packed sections  
**Similar Style:** Havarti  
**Rind:** Yellow wax  
**Paste:** Semi-firm texture, smooth, with small air holes  
**Flavour:** Mild buttery flavour, developing a more distinctive tang as the cheese ages  
**Age:** Aged minimum of 10 weeks, develops fuller, piquant flavour if aged 14 weeks - plus  
**Pairings:** Port  
**Season:** Available all year

**Carrigaline Beech Smoked**

**Milk:** Pasteurised cow’s milk  
**Rennet:** Vegetarian  
**Format:** 1.8kg rounds, 400g mini, 200g mini, 150g mini vac packed sections  
**Similar Style:** Smoked Edam  
**Rind:** Brown wax  
**Paste:** Semi-firm texture, smooth, with small air holes  
**Flavour:** Mild flavour, with gentle smokiness  
**Age:** Aged minimum of 10 weeks  
**Pairings:** Zinfandel  
**Season:** Available all year

**Carrigaline Garlic & Herb**

**Milk:** Pasteurised cow’s milk  
**Rennet:** Vegetarian  
**Format:** 1.8kg rounds, 400g mini, 200g mini, 150g mini vac packed sections  
**Similar Style:** Young garlic and herb gouda  

Patrick and Juliet Berridge have been making brie-style cheeses on their 198 acre farm outside Adamstown, in Co Wexford since 1982. All of their cheeses are made exclusively with milk from the Berridges’ mixed herd of Friessian, Jersey, Angus and Montbelliard breeds. The farm has been in the family since 1963.

St Killian is a hexagonal mould-ripened cheese made from pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The snowy white rind contains a very soft, cream-coloured paste. The aroma is one of butter and mushrooms, with flavours of salted butter and button mushrooms on the palate.

St Brendan is a brie-style cheese made using pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The white rind contains a soft, creamy paste. The flavour is stronger than St Killian, but contains similar buttery and simple mushroom notes.

Emerald Irish Brie is a three kilo cheese produced primarily for export. The cheese is made using pasteurised milk and vegetable rennet. The white mould rind contains a cream coloured paste with aromas of mushroom and citrus. The paste is mild in flavour with notes of whipped cream and mushroom.

**St Killian**

**Milk:** Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd  
**Rennet:** Vegetarian  
**Format:** 250g Hexagon, 150g Mini  
**Similar Style:** St Brendan, Emerald Green Brie  
**Rind:** White mould rind  
**Paste:** Very soft, pale cream coloured paste  
**Flavour:** Very soft and creamy, with notes of salted butter and mushrooms  
**Age:** Aged minimum of 14 days  
**Pairings:** Sparkling wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais  
**Season:** Available all year
**Carrigbyrne Cheese continued**

**St Brendan Brie Mini**
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 250g round
- Similar Style: Emerald Brie
- Paste: Very soft, pale cream paste
- Flavour: More pronounced flavour than St Killians, with a creamy soft interior
- Age: Aged minimum of 14 days
- Pairings: Sparkling Wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year round

**Emerald Irish Brie**
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 3kg round
- Similar Style: St Brendan
- Rind: White mould
- Paste: Mild creamy taste with hints of lemon and white mushroom
- Flavour: Slightly firmer texture, with notes of whipped cream and mushroom
- Age: Aged minimum of 14 days
- Pairings: Sparkling Wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year round

By his own admission Andrew Pelham Burn became involved in cheese ‘by accident’. Curiosity as to how cheese was made led him, in 1998, to take a job with a local Dutch cheesemaker who was making Carrowholly cheese at that time. Andrew worked with her for three years and when she decided to sell Carrowholly in 2001, he took over the operation. All the cheeses are hand crafted in the small village of Carrowholly, outside Westport in County Mayo, on the fringes of the Atlantic. Production here is small.

Carrowholly is a hard, gouda-style cheese made using raw cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The cheese is available in regular and mature versions, aged a minimum of 10 weeks and 9 months respectively. The transparent plasticoat used on the regular version gives it a yellowish exterior, whilst the mature wheels are rinded with a russet-coloured wax. Younger cheeses are smooth and semi-firm, with a mildly sweet and slightly nutty flavour. Mature wheels are firmer, with a darker coloured paste and a fuller, more intense flavour. Crunchy casein crystals can develop in the paste with extended ageing.

Carrowholly is also available in a number of flavours; nettle; pepper; garlic and chive; and cumin.

**St Brendan**
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 1.4kg Octagon
- Similar Style: Emerald Brie
- Rind: White mould
- Paste: Very soft, pale cream paste
- Flavour: More pronounced flavour than St Killians, with a creamy soft interior
- Age: Aged minimum of 14 days
- Pairings: Sparkling Wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year round

**St Brendan Brie Mini**
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 250g round
- Similar Style: Emerald Brie
- Paste: Very soft, pale cream paste
- Flavour: More pronounced flavour than St Killians, with a creamy soft interior
- Age: Aged minimum of 14 days
- Pairings: Sparkling Wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year round

**St Brendan**
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 1.4kg Octagon
- Similar Style: Emerald Brie
- Rind: White mould
- Paste: Very soft, pale cream paste
- Flavour: More pronounced flavour than St Killians, with a creamy soft interior
- Age: Aged minimum of 14 days
- Pairings: Sparkling Wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year round

**Emerald Irish Brie**
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 3kg round
- Similar Style: St Brendan
- Rind: White mould
- Paste: Mild creamy taste with hints of lemon and white mushroom
- Flavour: Slightly firmer texture, with notes of whipped cream and mushroom
- Age: Aged minimum of 14 days
- Pairings: Sparkling Wines: Valpolicella & Beaujolais
- Season: Available all year round

**Carrowholly Cheese**
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 500g rounds, 1kg, 5kg
- Similar Style: Gouda style
- Rind: Transparent waxed rind, yellow colour, mature version uses russet coloured wax
- Paste: Semi-firm texture, with a smooth paste, becoming firmer and slightly darker in colour as the cheese ages
- Flavour: Mild, sweet and slightly fruity, developing nuttiness with age. Mature version is sweet and fruity with a slight acidity and hints of crunchiness
- Age: Aged minimum of 10 weeks, mature version 9 month plus
- Pairings: Alsace Pinot Gris
- Season: Available all year depending on stock

**Carrowholly**
address: Carrowholly, Westport, Co. Mayo
telephone: 098 288 13
e-mail: carrowhollycheese@gmail.com
contact: Andrew Pelham Burn
## Carrowholly Cheese Flavoured

- **Milk:** Raw cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 500g rounds, 1kg rounds
- **Similar Style:** Gouda Style
- **Rind:** Transparent wax, speckled yellow appearance
- **Paste:** Semi-firm texture, speckled with given flavouring
- **Flavour:** Flavoured with Nettle; pepper; garlic and chive; cumin
- **Age:** Aged minimum of 10 weeks
- **Pairings:** Ginger Bread
- **Season:** Available all year

## Cleire Goats Cheese

- **address:** Cape Clear Island, Co Cork
- **Telephone:** 028 39126 / 087 7973056
- **contact:** Ed Harper
- **email:** goat@iol.ie
- **web:** www.emara.com/goats

Sociologist Ed Harper and his microbiologist wife moved to Cape Clear Island off West Cork in 1979. Originally from England, the couple fell in love with the island whilst on holiday and decided to take the plunge and move there in the mid-seventies. In conversation with Ed it doesn’t take long to realise that his various business ventures: his goats cheese and ice creams, the family craft shop, and his involvement in the community broad band company, are all little more than means to an end. That end is to stay living on Cape Clear Island with his beloved goats.

Ed recounts that even as a boy he loved goats, and would spend much of his free time helping out local goat farmers just to spend time with the animals. At one stage in the early 1990’s the Cleire herd consisted of 33 goats, mainly British Alpines, but since then Ed has scaled back the enterprise to 13 milkers, and two males, one of whom is essentially the family pet. A number of years ago the Harpers took the decision not to make investment in the expansion of the business which would have increased capacity up to 6 tonnes a year. The primary motivation for scaling back was logistical. At that time the government proposed a reduction of the ferry service which would have increased capacity up to 6 tonnes a year. The Harpers make a fresh goat’s curd cheese which is flavoured with garlic. The cheese is sold both from the farm and in their craft shop, Harpercraft located above the island pier. The garlic flavouring can be omitted upon request in which form Ed says it makes for excellent cheesecake.
Tom and Lena Biggane started making cheese on their farm outside Newtownshandrum, near Charleville, Co Cork in 2001. As a goat’s milk producer with a passion for cheese, making his own cheese was the next logical step for Tom. To this end he enrolled in various cheese-making courses in University College Cork, experimenting with different styles of cheese. Stephen Bender, a Dutch neighbour, was getting out of cheesemaking at this time and passed on a couple of gouda-style recipes from which Tom developed Clonmore.

All the milk used comes from the Biggane’s own herd of 70 Saanen and Toggenburg goats, which roam over 20 acres of rich Golden Vale grassland. The area is traditionally the preserve of cattle farmers, and Tom describes his goats as ‘spoiled’ to have access to such lush pasture. This rich grazing lends complexity and fullness to their cheese. The family also keeps a herd of cows from which they produce a small quantity of ‘Shandrum’ cheese.

Goat’s cheese production here is seasonal; Tom starts the year’s cheesemaking around St Patrick’s Day and continues to November. The cheese is then aged from three months onwards, and is probably at its best at five to seven months when the initial freshness of the young cheese has developed into a rounder, richer and more complex flavour.

Clonmore is a hard gouda-style cheese made from thermalised goat’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The beige waxed rind contrasts with the speckled bone-white paste within. Mild and sweet when young, the cheese develops notes of fudge, white chocolate and hazelnuts as it ages.

Shandrum is a hard cow’s milk cheese made using calf rennet. The black waxed rind contrasts with the pale buttery paste. The flavour is mild and milky, and not dissimilar to some French tomme.

Clonmore Cheese

address: Clonmore, Newtown, Charleville, Co. Cork
telephone: 063 704 90
contact: Tom Biggane

Clonmore Cheese

Milk: Goat’s milk (heat treated) from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2kg wheels
Similar Style: Gouda style
Rind: Beige plastic-coat rind
Paste: Semi-firm to firm texture depending on age, white paste freckled with small holes through the paste
Flavour: Mild and sweet when young, with notes of fudge, white chocolate and hazelnut, stronger flavoured with age
Age: Aged 3 months minimum, best around 6-8 months
Pairings: Unoaked Chardonnay
Season: Available all year depending on stock

Shandrum

Milk: Cow’s milk (heat treated) from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2kg wheels
Similar Style: Waxed Tomme Style
Rind: Black plastic-coat
Paste: Semi-firm with relatively high moisture content due to age of cheese. Pale yellow paste, with occasional small holes
Flavour: Mild and buttery, with pleasant milky flavour. Delicately flavoured with a hint of herbs
Age: Aged 3 months
Pairings: Unoaked Chardonnay
Season: Available all year depending on stock
Tom Burgess has farmed his land on the Coolattin Estate, near Shillelagh in Co. Wicklow since 1987. He began making cheese here in 2004, and is dedicated to the idea of seasonally produced, artisanal cheddar from raw milk. To this end only raw cow’s milk from his own herd of Fresian-Jersey crosses is used to make Coolattin Cheddar. Cheesemaking takes place at the height of summer, between June and September, when the milk is at its best and the herd are feeding on clover-rich pasture. Tom’s motto is: ‘from pasture to cheddar the same day’, ensuring that only the very freshest milk is used in his cheese - a prerequisite to cheesemaking using raw milk.

Coolattin is a traditional, handmade cheddar made using traditional rennet and raw cow’s milk. Red wax gives the cheese a distinctive appearance and contrasts well with the hard, pale yellow paste within. As is typical of artisan cheddars, occasional fissures punctuate the paste. The flavour is sweet and fruity when young, developing a more rounded nuttiness as the cheese ages. The Willems family have been making Coolea, on their farm near Macroom in Cork since 1979. The Willems belong to the very first generation of Irish farmhouse cheesemakers, whose cheesemaking began as part of an overall vision of agricultural self-sufficiency. Dick Snr and his wife Helen had moved from the Netherlands to the rural Ireland of the 1970s in pursuit of ‘the good life’. Helen actually began cheesemaking as a way of using up excess milk. Gouda was impossible to get locally at the time so Helen wrote home for a recipe and the rest is history.

Nowadays Dicky Jnr has taken over, but Coolea is still made using that same recipe. Over the years the demands of dairying and cheesemaking proved too much and Dicky Jnr now buys in milk from two local herds of Holsteins and Friesians. Dicky only uses milk from grass-fed cattle as milk from silage can taint the cheese as it ages. Similarly only traditional rennet is used as it makes far more age-worthy cheeses.

Dicky’s own preference is for wheels of 14-18 months. At this age the cheeses have developed complex secondary flavours, yet maintain sufficient moisture to keep them juicy and refreshing. The quality of Coolea is testament to Dicky’s attention to detail, and the quality of milk produced in Ireland. The cheese is made using a standard gouda recipe, yet the result is better than most dutch gouda. The secret is simple. Dicky ensures that the high quality of the milk is not lost in production. The result is high quality cheese.

Coolattin Cheddar

Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 15 - 20kg wheels, 2kg sections
Similar Style: Beal, Mount Callan, English Farmhouse Cheddar
Rind: Red waxed
Paste: Hard texture, pale yellow colour, with occasional small fissures
Flavour: Sweet and fruity when young, developing more nutty flavours as the cheese ages, little bite
Age: Aged for 12 months minimum
Pairings: Bordeaux Blends; Cider
Season: Available all year depending on stocks

Coolea Cheese

Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 15 - 20kg wheels, 2kg sections
Similar Style: Beal, Mount Callan, English Farmhouse Cheddar
Rind: Red waxed
Paste: Hard texture, pale yellow colour, with occasional small fissures
Flavour: Sweet and fruity when young, developing more nutty flavours as the cheese ages, little bite
Age: Aged for 12 months minimum
Pairings: Bordeaux Blends; Cider
Season: Available all year depending on stocks

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Young Coolea is mild, semi-firm and buttery, a very pleasant everyday cheese. By contrast Mature Coolea is intensely full flavoured, deep and meaty, notes of toffee and caramel abound and the cheese has a long finish.
Coolea Cheese

**Milk:** Pasteurised cow's milk

**Rennet:** Traditional

**Format:** 9kg

**Similar Style:** Gouda Style

**Rind:** Yellow / orange wax

**Paste:** Firm, closed texture, with smooth paste. The paste becomes slightly deeper in colour and drier as the cheese ages. In cheeses matured 18 months plus, some protein crystals can be seen

**Flavour:** Young cheeses are mild and buttery. By 12 months, the cheese tastes sweeter, with caramel notes. By 18 months, wheels have a deep, intense flavour with toffee notes and some protein crystals present

**Age:** Young Coolea available from 3 months, mature Coolea from 12 months, extra mature from 18 months

**Pairings:** Alsace Pinot Gris (off-dry)

**Season:** Available all year depending on stock

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Cooleeney Farmhouse Cheese

The Maher Family are the fourth generation of Mahers to work the land at Cooleeney, outside Thurles in County Tipperary. The couple has been making cheese here since 1986. All the milk used in production comes from the family’s own herd of pedigree Friesians. Breda and Pat are part of the second wave of Irish cheesemakers—dairy farmers who turned to cheesemaking as a means of making dairying viable in the face of cutbacks in guaranteed milk prices from the EEC. Faced with an excess of milk for which they no longer received a guaranteed price, farmers were forced to find a means of adding value to this milk in order to survive. Cheeses such as Ardrahan and Cashel Blue were also born in this climate.

It was against this background that, in 1984, Breda decided to take a course in cheesemaking in University College Cork. Breda’s background in hotel management meant she had always been interested in food and she was excited by the idea of cheesemaking. Two years later Breda went into production, choosing to make a soft, camembert style cheese because the market was full of hard cheeses, primarily coop cheddars. All the milk used comes from the Maher’s own herd of 200 pedigree Friesians, which the family has built up over four generations.

Cooleeney is a soft, mould-rinded cheese available in both pasteurised and raw milk versions. Cooleeney is made using vegetarian rennet. The white, mushroom-scented rind contrasts with the pale yellow paste. The flavour is one of butter, cream, mushrooms, and earthy wet grass. There is often some slight chalkiness in the centre, which adds a zesty lactic note. Breda also makes numerous other cheeses on the farm.

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**address:** Cooleeney, Moyne, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
**telephone:** 0504 451 12
**email:** info@cooleeney.com
**contact:** Breda Maher
**web:** www.cooleeney.com
Cooleeney Farmhouse Cheese  

Cooleeney Farmhouse Cheese  continued

**Maighean**

- **Milk:** Raw cow's milk from own herd
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 1.7kg, 200g minis
- **Similar Style:** Cooleeney; Camembert
- **Rind:** White mould rind
- **Paste:** Soft cheese with creamy yellow paste
- **Flavour:** Creamy and mild
- **Age:** 6 weeks plus
- **Pairings:** Sauvignon Blanc
- **Season:** Available all year

Cooleeney Farmhouse Cheese  continued

**Daru**

- **Milk:** Pasteurised cow's milk from own herd
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 1.7kg, 350g
- **Similar Style:** Tomme Crayeuse
- **Rind:** Natural rind, grey and dusty appearance
- **Paste:** Semi-hard, yellow paste with small air holes. Discernable chalkiness towards the centre of the paste. Fully ripened cheeses will be broken down all the way through
- **Flavour:** Mild and buttery, with notes of earth and cellar coming through from the rind
- **Age:** 4 months, 6 weeks minis
- **Pairings:** Pinot Noir, Viognier
- **Season:** Available all year
Cooleeney Farmhouse Cheese  continued

Tipperary Brie

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 3kg, 200g minis
Similar Style: Brie de Meaux
Rind: White mould
Paste: Soft yellow paste, with narrow band of chalkiness, when fully matured the paste is smooth all the way through
Flavour: Mild and creamy with hints of butter, undergrowth and wet grass
Age: 8-12 weeks
Pairings: Sparkling wine
Season: Available all year

Gleann Oir

Milk: Pasteurised goat’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 1.7kg, 350g
Similar Style: Tomme de Chevre de Haute Savoie
Rind: Natural rind, mottled with grey appearance
Paste: White, semi-firm cheese with irregular holes through the paste
Flavour: Robust and earthy with hints of cellar and mushrooms
Age: 6 weeks mini, 4 months
Pairings: Viognier
Season: Available all year

Corleggy Cheese

Regulars at Dublin’s Temple Bar food market will be familiar with Silke Cropp and her cheeses. German-born Silke came to live in Belturbet in 1981. Surprised and frustrated by the lack of availability of quality cheese locally, she was determined to make her own. Through a process of trial and error she gradually developed a number of cheeses. Initially Silke kept her own goats, but over time found that the enormous amount of work this involved, coupled with the demands of cheesemaking and selling on markets, was simply too great. Silke now buys in goat’s milk.

Silke is a fervent believer in the benefits of raw milk – all Corleggy cheeses are made using raw milk. The Corleggy cow’s milk cheeses are made using milk from one local herd.

All of Silke’s cheeses are made at Corleggy Farmhouse on the banks of the river Erne, from where she also runs cheesemaking courses.

Drumlin is a hard, raw cow’s milk cheese made using vegetarian rennet. Underneath the brine-washed natural rind lies a hard, pale yellow paste. The paste is smooth and firm when young, becoming harder and drier as the cheese ages. Young Drumlin is relatively mild in flavour, taking on an increasingly piquant bite as the cheese ages.

Corleggy is a hard goat’s cheese made using unpasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet. The brine-washed natural rind contains a smooth ivory-white paste, which takes on a slightly deeper shade as the cheese ages. Young Corleggy is mild, yet richly aromatic, while older cheeses become harder, stronger in flavour with more earthy notes and a discernable piquant finish.
### Corleggy Cheese

**Corleggy Goat’s Cheese**

- **Milk:** Raw goat’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 1kg round, 500g round
- **Rind:** Natural rind (Brine washed)
- **Paste:** Hard, with white paste becoming slightly more beige towards the natural rind
- **Flavour:** Young cheese is mild, yet richly aromatic, older cheeses are harder and more piquant
- **Age:** Aged from 8 weeks to 4 months depending on season
- **Pairings:** Sauvignon Blanc
- **Season:** Available all year

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**Creeny**

- **Milk:** Raw Ewe’s Milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 2.5kg round, 400g round
- **Similar Style:** Pecorino
- **Rind:** Natural Rind
- **Paste:** Hard rind
- **Flavour:** Young Creeny is semi-hard, rich and yet delicately flavoured. At over a year this is a good grating cheese and resembles an aged pecorino, with plenty of bite
- **Age:** Aged from two months to over 1 year
- **Pairings:** Jurancon Sec
- **Season:** Available all year depending on stock

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**Drumlin**

- **Milk:** Raw cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 1kg round, 500g round
- **Rind:** Natural rind (Brine washed)
- **Paste:** Hard, with pale yellow colour and smooth paste, becomes very hard and piquant with extended aging
- **Flavour:** Young Drumlin is relatively mild in flavour, becoming more piquant and saltier as the cheese ages
- **Age:** Aged for a minimum of 6 weeks, can age longer
- **Pairings:** Unoaked Chardonnay, Pinot Noir
- **Season:** Available all year


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### Cratloe Hills

**Cratloe Hills**

- **Milk:** Pasteurised sheep’s milk from own herd
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 2.5kg wheels, large range of rounds and sections from 125g to 450g, available in mild and mature
- **Similar Style:** Pecorino Toscano
- **Rind:** Light wax was added to natural rind
- **Paste:** Semi-firm texture, with very pale yellow paste. Small air holes throughout, more mature cheeses have a harder, more granular texture
- **Flavour:** Mild, sweet and apple-y when young, developing more nuttiness and caramel notes as the cheese ages
- **Age:** Aged from one month to 14 months, mature is 14 months
- **Pairings:** Sangiovese, Jurancon Sec
- **Season:** Available all year depending on stock

Sean and Deirdre Fitzgerald have been producing Cratloe Hills Gold at their farm in Brickhill, Co. Clare since 1988, making it the first sheep’s milk cheese in Ireland. Cratloe Hills was born of the couple’s need to diversify in order to keep the family farm viable. As part of a diploma in Small Business Management, Sean investigated the viability of making cheese on the family farm, and found that it could be a successful business. Over the next six months the Fitzgeralds developed a hard ewe’s milk cheese.

Throughout 1988 to 1990, Sean did numerous tastings and promotions of this cheese, using customer feedback to tweak the recipe. People were looking for something sweeter and less aggressive than what was being offered, and Sean developed the cheese accordingly. Reaction to this cheese was far more positive and in 1993 the Fitzgeralds took the plunge and installed a purpose built cheese plant on the farm.

All the milk used comes from Sean and Deirdre’s own herd of 150 Friesland ewes which graze on the foothills outside Cratloe. Production is seasonal, from February to September and takes place in accordance with the natural lactation cycle of the sheep.

Cratloe Hills is a hard cheese made using vegetarian rennet and pasteurised sheep’s milk. A thin layer of breathable plasticoat is used to rind the cheese, giving it a dusty yellow ochre exterior. The paste is a very pale yellow colour, with small air bubbles. Flavour varies enormously depending on age. Mild Cratloe Hills is sweet with subtle aromas of apple blossom. Fully matured Cratloe is smooth, dry and fudge-y, with pronounced notes of butterscotch and a sublime nuttiness.

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**Cratloe Hills, Brickhill House, Cratloe, Co. Clare**

- **Telephone:** 061 357 185
- **Email:** cratloecheese@eircom.net
- **Contact:** Sean Fitzgerald
German-born Maja Binder has been making cheese at Kilcummin Beg, near Castlegregory on the Dingle Peninsula since 1997. All her cheeses are made using raw cow’s milk which she buys in from a local herd. Generally raw milk is best converted to cheese as soon as possible after milking, and Maja manages to collect the milk and start cheesemaking within one hour of milking. Unusually, Maja uses seaweed from her husband Olivier’s sea vegetable business to flavour her Dilliskus cheese, ensuring that this cheese is a true expression of place, reflecting the contrast of sea and pasture which typifies coastal Ireland.

Kilcummin is a hard raw cow’s milk cheese made using vegetarian rennet. The natural rind is grey-coloured, with a mottled appearance. The pale golden paste is smooth and firm. Mild and milky when young, the cheese develops a pleasant yeasty bite as the cheese ages.

Dilliskus is a hard cow’s cheese made using raw milk and vegetarian rennet. The cheese has a natural brown-grey rind, and a light yellow paste. Dillik, an edible seaweed, is added to the cheese giving a saline, ozone note and a speckled brownish-reddish appearance to the paste.

Kilcummin
- **Milk:** Raw cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 800g round, 2.5kg - 3kg wheels
- **Similar Style:** Tomme
- **Rind:** Natural rind, mottled, dark grey and brown appearance
- **Paste:** Hard paste, with smooth texture
- **Flavour:** Mild and milky when young, developing a yeasty bite as the cheese ages
- **Age:** 3 to 6 months
- **Pairings:** Beer
- **Season:** Available all year round

Dilliskus
- **Milk:** Raw cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 1kg round, 2.5kg - 3kg rounds
- **Similar Style:** Unique cheese
- **Rind:** Natural rind, mottled, dark grey and brown appearance
- **Paste:** Hard cheese with pieces of chopped seaweed through the paste
- **Flavour:** The creaminess of the milk pairs surprisingly well with the savoury, iodine/ozone notes of the seaweed
- **Age:** 3 to 6 months
- **Pairings:** Beer
- **Season:** Available all year round
Jeffa Gill has been making Durrus Cheese on her hillside farm in Coomkeen, West Cork since 1979. Like many of the early artisanal cheesemakers, she saw cheese making as a means of adding value to the milk produced from her herd of eight cows. Quickly she discovered that the washed-rind style of cheese was particularly suited to the moist saline air of West Cork. The Durrus, which continues to be made with raw, unpasteurised milk, has established itself as one of those artisan products which truly reflect the environment in which they are made.

Durrus Cheese has won over a dozen prestigious awards both at home and internationally, and is one of the select cheeses that Slow Food recognises within its Irish Raw Milk Cheese Presidium. Cheese production outgrew the farm’s milk production and in 1989 Jeffa decided to sell the herd and concentrate fully on the cheese production. The milk for Durrus Cheese is now sourced from the single local herd of the Buckley family farm in nearby Colomane. This arrangement ensures that the milk used is specially selected on the farm and is of the high quality demanded by raw milk cheese production for both summer and winter cheese.

Durrus is a semi-soft, rind washed cheese made with raw cow’s milk and traditional rennet. It has a mottled pink-orange rind and a semi-soft creamy paste with an aroma of hay, moss and dry undergrowth when mature. The flavour is long, round and earthy. It is a flavour which is uniquely and unmistakably Durrus. Jeffa describes ‘as a deep complex flavour capturing the elemental nature of this part of Ireland’. When mature, the rind can attract blue-grey moulds which do not impair the flavour and can be washed or wiped off the surface.

The flavour deepens and becomes more distinctive when Durrus is brought to ambient temperature before serving.

**Durrus Cheese**

- **Milk**: Raw cow’s milk
- **Rennet**: Traditional
- **Format**: 1.4Kg round, 360g minis, 250g ógs
- **Similar Style**: Gubbeen, Tomme Fermier
- **Rind**: Washed, rind powdery orange colour, with white, pink and beige depending on condition
- **Paste**: Semi-soft, with small air holes through the cream-coloured paste
- **Flavour**: Buttery, floral and mildly lactic when young, fuller flavour with notes of hay, moss and dry undergrowth when mature
- **Age**: Large wheels 5-8 weeks plus, mini 3 weeks plus, Durrus ógs 2 weeks plus
- **Pairings**: Aromatic whites: Pinot Gris, medium bodied reds, champagne and prosecco, beer
- **Season**: Currently available all year

Frank Shinnick had considered making cheese on his farm since the mid-1980’s. These thoughts finally came to fruition in 1996 when he and his wife Gudrun bought a small second-hand cheese vat in Switzerland. German-born Gudrun had graduated from university with a degree in Agriculture and followed this with a stage at an organic cheese producer’s near Frankfurt. She then went on to make cheese in Switzerland the following summer. Frank and Gudrun married in 1994 and resolved to make their cheesemaking dream a reality.

Throughout 1996 and 1997 Gudrun experimented with a large number of cheese styles, and began selling cheese on the local market in 1998. Frank concedes that the cheeses were not as good then as they are now, but local people were very supportive of their produce. Fermoy Natural Cheese has since gone from strength to strength as Gudrun tweaked recipes and affinage, whilst Frank continued to find ways of producing ever higher quality milk.

The Shinnicks now produce a variety of different cheeses, all using raw milk from Frank’s own herd of Holstein Friesians. All of their cheeses are made using traditional rennet and a mixture of morning and evening’s milk. Gudrun is well versed in ‘smear ripening’ from her time in Switzerland and uses this technique in three of her cheeses.

**Fermoy Natural Cheese**

- **address**: Strawhill, Fermoy, Co Cork
- **telephone**: 025 313 10
- **email**: gudrun1@eircom.net
- **contact**: Frank and Gudrun Shinnick

**St Gall** is a hard raw cow’s milk cheese similar to the Swiss Tilsiter. The natural rind is a faded tan colour, and contains a firm smooth-textured paste with occasional holes. Mild, milky and sweet when young. As the cheese matures it develops a deeper flavour, a tongue tingling sensation, and notes of yeast.

**St Brigid** is a semi-hard, smear ripened cheese. The flavour is mild and buttery in this loaf-shaped cheese. Also available with greek herbs.

**Cais Dubh** is a black-waxed cheese. The flavour is buttery with a mild tang.

**Cais Rua** is a soft smear-ripened cheese. The flavour is mild and creamy with subtle earthy animal notes coming through from the rind.

**Hibernia** is a mature, hard cheese with a black waxed rind. The flavour is fruity and strong, with plenty of bite. Limited availability.
Fermoy Natural Cheese  continued

Hibernia
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 12kg wheels
- Rind: Black waxed, brownish in colour after prolonged maturation
- Paste: Mature, hard cheese with firm yellow paste
- Flavour: Fruity aromas with notes of pineapple and a fierce piquant bite
- Age: Sold at 12 months minimum
- Pairings: Riesling
- Season: Limited availability

Fermoy Natural Cheese  continued

St Gall
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 5kg wheels
- Rind: Natural rind (smear ripened), orange with white
- Paste: Semi-firm paste with small, irregular shaped holes through the paste
- Flavour: Mild when young. As the cheese matures it develops a deeper flavour and a tongue tingling sensation, and notes of yeast
- Age: Sold at 6-8 weeks
- Pairings: Gewurztraminer
- Season: Available all year depending on stock

St Brigid (also available with Greek herbs)
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 3-2.5kg loaf
- Rind: Natural rind (smear ripened), orange with white
- Paste: Semi-firm paste with small, irregular shaped holes through the paste
- Flavour: Very mild, creamy and buttery with subtle earthy/animal undertones
- Age: Sold at 4 months
- Pairings: Beer, Cider, Rioja
- Season: Available all year depending on stock

Cais Dubh
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 5 kg wheels
- Rind: Black waxed
- Paste: Hard cheese with smooth paste
- Flavour: Buttery with a mild tang, also available flavoured with fenugreek seeds
- Age: Sold at 5 weeks
- Pairings: Sparkling wines or red wine
- Season: Available autumn and winter

Cais Rua
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 2.5kg wheel, 300g mini
- Similar Style: Reblochon/ Vacherin
- Rind: Washed Rind with orange/ red exterior
- Paste: Soft cheese, with creamy texture
- Flavour: Very mild, creamy and buttery with subtle earthy/animal undertones
- Age: Sold at 5 weeks
- Pairings: Sparkling wines or red wine
- Season: Available autumn and winter

Cais Rua
- Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Traditional
- Format: 2.5kg wheel, 300g mini
- Similar Style: Reblochon/ Vacherin
- Rind: Washed Rind with orange/ red exterior
- Paste: Soft cheese, with creamy texture
- Flavour: Very mild, creamy and buttery with subtle earthy/animal undertones
- Age: Sold at 5 weeks
- Pairings: Sparkling wines or red wine
- Season: Available autumn and winter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fermoy Natural Cheese</th>
<th>continued</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>St Brigid Beag</strong></td>
<td>(some with green peppercorns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk:</strong> Raw cow’s milk from own herd</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rennet:</strong> Traditional</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Format:</strong> 250g squares</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rind:</strong> Natural rind (smear ripened), red with white</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paste:</strong> Soft white paste</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flavour:</strong> Mild and buttery</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> Sold at 6-8 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pairings:</strong> Chablis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Season:</strong> Available all year depending on stock</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ballyhooly Blue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk:</strong> Raw cow’s milk from own herd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rennet:</strong> Traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Format:</strong> 8kg wheels and .75kg wheels</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rind:</strong> Blue waxed and natural rind</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paste:</strong> Creamy blue paste</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flavour:</strong> Creamy blue</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> 3-4 months</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pairings:</strong> Red wine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Season:</strong> Available all year depending on stock</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emerald</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk:</strong> Raw cow’s milk from own herd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rennet:</strong> Traditional</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Format:</strong> 8kg wheels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rind:</strong> Green waxed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paste:</strong> Large holes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flavour:</strong> Mild and sweet taste</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> Sold at 2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pairings:</strong> Riesling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Season:</strong> Available all year depending on stock</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corkotta</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Milk:</strong> Made from whey from our own cheese</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Format:</strong> 500g</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rind:</strong> Soft and white</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paste:</strong> Soft and white</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flavour:</strong> Mild</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> Fresh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pairings:</strong> Desserts, cheesecakes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Season:</strong> Available all year depending on stock</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Dominic Gryson has been farming in County Meath all his life. He grew up on a mixed farm and, in his own right, specialised in cereals and potatoes. However, Dominic felt that he was very removed from the people who bought his products and this, coupled with an increased awareness of the health issues surrounding dairy products, led him to dairy goat farming.

In recent years Dominic has built a specialist goat unit with adjoining parlour and dairy complex, both built to the highest specification. He has also developed a mixed herd of Sanaans, Anglo-Nubians and British Alpines from some of the best bred goats in the country. He sources his feed from a combination of a ration designed specifically for the goats and produced by McAuley’s Grassmeal Producers, Balrath, who are members of the Irish Grain Assurance scheme and forage produced on specifically sown pasture swards. This ensures the goats produce milk of the highest possible quality.

In 2009 Dominic began producing a luxurious goats’ milk ice cream in a variety of flavours. This was followed by pasteurised goats’ milk and in April 2010, he began to use the milk to produce Tara Bán, a mild block cheddar. Tara Bán is made using pasteurised goats’ milk from his own herd and vegetarian rennet. Tara Bán is smooth with a firm, brilliant white texture. The flavour is mild, milky and clean, with a lovely fruitiness and no goat taint in the finish. It is an extremely versatile cheddar which grates, slices or can be used in cooking and is equally at home on the cheeseboard or in a sandwich. Tara Bán won gold medal in the British Cheese Awards in Cardiff 2010.

Tara Ban
- **Milk:** Goat’s milk from own herd
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 15kg blocks or part thereof
- **Flavour:** Mild, milky and slightly fruity. A more dry and pronounced flavour with age. Clean finish
- **Age:** 3 months for regular. 6-7 months for more mature
- **Pairings:** Sauvignon Blanc
- **Season:** Available all year. Stock depending

Tara Ban is a testament to the quality of the milk produced by Dominic and to the expertise of the cheesemakers in Newmarket Co-op. Dominic hopes to release a more mature version at a year old, which will have a more intense, full flavour.

The Tiernan family have been dairying at Glebe farm near Dunleer in Co Louth for four generations. Like many farmhouse producers David Tiernan started making cheese in order to add value to the exceptionally high quality milk they were producing. In the early nineties the family bought two Montbéliarde cows - now known as Maggie and Katie- from the Jura region in eastern France. This breed is renowned for the suitability of its milk to hard cheesemaking. Their descendents form the basis of the Montbéliarde herd that provides the milk for Glebe Brethan today.

Glebe Brethan is a thermophilic cheese made using raw cow’s milk from the Tiernan’s own herd of Montbéliardes. This milk is transformed into huge 45 kilo wheels, which are aged on spruce timber planks for 6-18 months. The flavour is rich and fruity, with herbal/ floral notes and occasional hints of cellar where the rind flavours have penetrated the paste. With age the paste develops a distinctly nutty/ spicy finish.

Glebe Brethan
- **Milk:** Raw cow’s milk from our own herd
- **Rennet:** Traditional
- **Format:** 40 - 45kg wheels
- **Flavour:** Mellow, fruity and creamy when young, fuller more nutty flavours develop as the cheese ages
- **Age:** Sold at 12 months minimum, extra mature wheels 18 months plus
- **Pairings:** Oaked Chardonnay, Vin Jaune de Jura
- **Season:** Availability all year

Gleann Gabhra

address: Baile Mháe, Teamhair, Contae na Mi
television: 087 173 529
contact: Dominic Gryson
web: dfgryson1@eircom.net

Glebe Brethan

address: Glebe House, Dunleer, Co. Louth
television: 041 685 11 57 / 087 674 2043
e-mail: tiernans@glebebrethan.com
contact: David Tiernan
web: www.glebebrethan.com
**Bellingham Blue**

**Milk:** Raw cow’s milk, from own herd

**Rennet:** Vegetarian

**Format:** 3kg

**Similar Style:** Bleu d’Auvergne, Valdeon Blue

**Rind:** Natural rind, brown, grey and beige, depending on condition

**Paste:** Semi firm pale yellow paste, with large amount of blue

**Flavour:** Creamy and robust, with a good balance between buttery and blue flavours, mild clean, cow-ey notes

**Age:** Sold at 4 months minimum

**Pairings:** Sauternes, LBV Port

**Season:** Available all year

**Gubbeen Farmhouse Produce**

Peter and Anita Thomas started producing Bellingham Blue on Anita’s family farm at Mansfieldstown, near Castlebellingham in County Louth in 2000. Peter set up the Glyde Farm business in 1996 and spent several years researching the Irish market for dairy products, before settling on making a raw milk blue cheese. The cheese was a success from the off, winning ‘Best Raw Dairy Product’ at the International Nantwich Show in England a couple of months after its launch onto the market. This was followed with a Gold medal at the British Cheese Awards in 2001. All the milk used comes from the family’s own herd of Friesians. Peter believes fervently in raw milk and is heavily involved with the Slow Food movement’s Irish raw cow’s milk cheese presidium.

Success has continued in 2010 with Bellingham Blue being awarded the Supreme Champion at the inaugural Irish Cheese Awards.

Bellingham is a strong and rustic Irish blue. Raw milk and vegetarian rennet is used in production. Vegetarian rennet is used in production. The cheese is similar in style to the gutsy blues of Northern Spain than the sweeter styles produced in Auvergne. The mottled brown rind encloses a semi-hard yellow-white paste containing cavernous, mould-lined holes from which the cheese derives its strength.

**Gibbeen Farmhouse Cheese**

Giana Ferguson first made cheese during her childhood in southern Spain, where her family made goat’s cheese on the family’s small farm in Alora, outside Malaga. She later spent time in France where she became familiar with some of the world’s great cheeses, before settling in West Cork where she and her husband, Tom, have made Gibbeen since 1980. Since then Gibbeen has become one of the best known of all the Irish farmhouse cheeses. All the milk used comes from their mixed herd of Jersey, Friesian, Simmenthal and Kerry cows which graze on the Ferguson family farm outside Schull. Giana’s decision to switch back to traditional rennet in recent years has made a discernable improvement to the aging potential of what was already a great cheese.

Gibbeen is a semi-soft washed-rind cheese made from pasteurised cow’s milk. The secret of Gibbeen’s flavour lies in the interaction of the cheese’s mushroom-scented rind and the semisoft, buttery body within. Giana describes her cheese as having “a taste and scent of mushrooms and forests, nuts and a real buttery milky taste especially when young. It is low in salt. The texture is buttery and soft.” Try Gibbeen with ginger bread and darker beers.

Smoked Gibbeen is a semi-hard cow’s milk cheese which is slowly smoked with oak and beech. A black wax is then added to protect the cheese as it ages.

The flavour is buttery and mild with a very subtle touch of smokiness on the finish.
Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses

Smoked Gubbeen

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 1.5kg rounds, 400g minis, 4kg extra mature
Similar Style: Smoked Knockanore, Smoked Edam
Rind: Waxed black
Paste: Semi-hard with yellow body
Flavour: Mild and buttery with a light smoky note, (oak and beech wood used). 5-12 months for extra mature
Age: 5 weeks to 5 months, small 5 weeks-12 weeks extra mature 5 months to 1 year+
Pairing: Cider; Syrah
Season: Available all year

Dan and John Hegarty first hit upon the idea of making cheese on the family farm near Whitechurch, North Cork in 2000. Both brothers wanted to stay on and farm the land but the farm income wasn’t enough to support two families. They decided to add value to their milk by producing traditional farmhouse cheddar. There had once been a cheese factory near Whitechurch, and the brothers were quick to take advantage of the cheesemaking knowledge which remained in the area. After much experimentation, and a degree of trial and error, the first wheels of Hegarty’s cheddar came on the market in 2002. Initially Dan and John also experimented with yoghurts and smoothies, but in recent years have concentrated exclusively on their cheddar.

The Hegarty’s have a herd of 250 cattle, of which 90 are milk cows. From this they produce around 8 tonnes of cheese a year. All their cheddar is matured a minimum of 12 months, with some mature wheels being held for 15 months plus before release. The brothers use traditional cloth binding on their cheddars, which they remove before the cheese is sent out. Dan and John have tweaked and experimented a lot with their cheddar over the years but have recently settled on a recipe which yields more consistent results. The extended aging period for cheddar means that it takes a long time to gauge the exact effect of any variation in cheesemaking or affinage on the cheese, but Hegarty’s is now a cheese going from strength to strength.

Hegarty’s Cheddar is a traditional cloth-bound cheddar made using pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The Hegarty’s remove the cloth from their cheddars before dispatch to minimise problems with cheese mites. The flavour is smooth and nutty with a cheddary tang in the finish.

Hegarty’s Cheddar

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 20 kg wheels, 1/2, 1/4 wheels and sections also available
Similar Style: Beal, Coolattin, Mount Callan, English Farmhouse Cheddars
Rind: Mottled brown, ‘tree-bark’ appearance, Cloth rind removed before dispatch
Paste: Firm with closed texture, pale yellow paste.
Flavour: Smooth and creamy with a cheddary tang in the finish
Age: 12 months minimum to 15 months plus
Pairings: Cider
Season: Available all year

Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses

Gubbeen Farmhouse Cheese

continued

Hegarty’s Cheddar

address: Whitechurch Foods, Church Road, White Church, Co. Cork
telephone: 021 488 42 38
email: whitechurchfoods@eircom.net
contact: Dan and John Hegarty

Dan and John Hegarty first hit upon the idea of making cheese on the family farm near Whitechurch, North Cork in 2000. Both brothers wanted to stay on and farm the land but the farm income wasn’t enough to support two families. They decided to add value to their milk by producing traditional farmhouse cheddar. There had once been a cheese factory near Whitechurch, and the brothers were quick to take advantage of the cheesemaking knowledge which remained in the area. After much experimentation, and a degree of trial and error, the first wheels of Hegarty’s cheddar came on the market in 2002. Initially Dan and John also experimented with yoghurts and smoothies, but in recent years have concentrated exclusively on their cheddar.

The Hegarty’s have a herd of 250 cattle, of which 90 are milk cows. From this they produce around 8 tonnes of cheese a year. All their cheddar is matured a minimum of 12 months, with some mature wheels being held for 15 months plus before release. The brothers use traditional cloth binding on their cheddars, which they remove before the cheese is sent out. Dan and John have tweaked and experimented a lot with their cheddar over the years but have recently settled on a recipe which yields more consistent results. The extended aging period for cheddar means that it takes a long time to gauge the exact effect of any variation in cheesemaking or affinage on the cheese, but Hegarty’s is now a cheese going from strength to strength.

Hegarty’s Cheddar is a traditional cloth-bound cheddar made using pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The Hegarty’s remove the cloth from their cheddars before dispatch to minimise problems with cheese mites. The flavour is smooth and nutty with a cheddary tang in the finish.
Jane and Louis Grubb have been making Cashel Blue™ on their farm at Beechmount, near Fethard, in County Tipperary since 1984. Cashel Blue™ is Ireland’s original farmhouse blue as up until that time no blue cheese was made on the farm in Ireland. Like many early Irish farmhouse cheese producers the Grubbs started making cheese as a way of adding value to their own milk. Providing rural employment was also a key driving factor for the family who have an association with food production in Tipperary dating back over 150 years. Jane, a trained chef spent four years experimenting in an old copper brewey’s vat before the unique recipe was fine-tuned.

Cashel has gone on to become the best known of all the Irish farmhouse cheeses. Over half of all the milk used in the production of Cashel comes from the Grubb’s own select herd of Holstein-Friesians, with the remainder coming from carefully chosen local herds.

Cashel Blue™ is a natural-rinded blue cheese made from pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. Depending on condition, the cheese has a chalky to soft yellow paste and a distinctive blue/green mould. Young cheeses are chalky, lactic and mildly blue whereas more mature versions are rich and buttery with a well-rounded blue flavour. The best wheels of mature Cashel are the equal of any of the world’s great blues.

Crozier Blue

Milk: Pasteurised sheep’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian rennet, small amount of traditional rennet occasionally available
Format: 1.4kg wheels, 350g sections, 175g sections
Similar Style: Cashel Blue™
Rind: Natural rind, grey/pale rind
Paste: Pale white paste, with greyish green mould.
Flavour: Rich, creamy and mild, with sweet blue flavour when mature. Younger wheels are more crumbly, with more acidic flavour
Age: Released from 3 months of age
Pairings: Vin Santo, Vins Doux Naturals from Muscat
Season: Available year round
J.O.D. Foods is a family owned cheese manufacturing business located at Newpark, Effin, Kilmallock, Co Limerick. Here master cheese maker Jim O'Doherty and his staff produce a range of deliciously superior natural and processed speciality cheeses under the Old Irish Creamery brand name for the home and export markets.

It is fitting that this is the brand for the cheese facility which is located in a former co-operative building which Jim acquired in 1992 and which is situated deep in the heart of the lush pastures of the Golden Vale, Ireland’s premier dairying area.

The Old Irish Creamery cheese range has won many awards for excellence of quality at World Cheese Award Shows and at European, United Kingdom (Nantwich) and Irish Cheese Awards, thus endorsing the outstanding cheese products emanating from the County Limerick manufacturing facility.

Old Irish Creamery Extra Mature White Cheddar

- **Milk:** Cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g, 1.25kg and 2.5kg wheels
- **Rind:** Vac-aged. No Rind
- **Flavour:** Mild and milky
- **Age:** 12 months minimum. Vintage versions available in white and coloured
- **Season:** Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Blueberries

- **Milk:** Cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
- **Rind:** Vac-aged. No Rind
- **Flavour:** Mild and smooth with health enhancing blueberries
- **Age:** 3 months minimum
- **Season:** Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Red Wine

- **Milk:** Cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
- **Rind:** Vac-aged. No Rind
- **Flavour:** Mild and smooth with a rich exotic taste
- **Age:** 3 months minimum
- **Season:** Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Cranberries

- **Milk:** Cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
- **Rind:** Vac-aged. No Rind
- **Flavour:** Mild and smooth with a natural cranberry flavour
- **Age:** 3 months minimum
- **Season:** Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Chilli

- **Milk:** Cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
- **Rind:** Vac-aged. No Rind
- **Flavour:** Mild and smooth with a chilli kick
- **Age:** 6 months minimum
- **Season:** Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Blueberries

- **Milk:** Cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
- **Rind:** Vac-aged. No Rind
- **Flavour:** Mild and smooth with health enhancing blueberries
- **Age:** 3 months minimum
- **Season:** Available all year

J.O.D. Foods

- **Address:** Effin Creamery, Kilmallock, Co Limerick
- **Telephone:** 063 712 69
- **Contact:** Jim O’Doherty
- **Email:** jodfoodproducts@eircom.net
Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Chives
Milk: Cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
Rind: Vac aged
Flavour: Mild and smooth with a wholesome chive flavour
Paste: Smooth yellow paste flecked with dried chive
Age: 3 months minimum
Season: Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Herb and Garlic
Milk: Cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
Rind: Vac aged. No Rind
Flavour: Mild and smooth with herb and garlic flavour
Age: 6 months minimum
Season: Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Whiskey
Milk: Cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
Rind: Vac aged
Flavour: Mild and smooth with a hint of Jameson
Age: 6 months minimum
Season: Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Smoked Cheddar
Milk: Cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
Similar Style: Native Irish naturally oak smoked
Rind: Vac aged
Flavour: Mild with a smooth smokey flavour
Age: 6 months minimum
Season: Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Irish Porter
Milk: Cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
Similar Style: Cahills Original Irish Porter
Rind: Vac-aged. No Rind
Flavour: Mild and smooth with a hint of Guinness
Age: 6 months minimum
Season: Available all year

Old Irish Creamery Cheddar with Walnuts
Milk: Cow’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 250g, 1.25kg, 2.5kg, ½ wheels
Similar Style: Cahills Original Irish Porter
Rind: Vac-aged. No Rind
Flavour: Mild and smooth with a note of walnut
Age: 6 months minimum
Season: Available all year
Dutch-born Marion Roeleveld has been making cheese at her old millhouse near Portumna, in County Galway since the mid-00's. Marion trained as a cheesemaker in the Netherlands before coming to Ireland, and in addition to her own cheeses was also instrumental in the development of both Mossfield Organic, and Moonshine Organic Emmenthal. Marion makes two cheeses, a goat’s gouda style using milk from her own herd and a cow’s cheese made using milk bought from a local herd. Both her cheeses are made using traditional rennet. When she started out Marion used to sell the majority of milk from the goats and keep only a small amount for cheesemaking. Over the past few years Marion has built up a loyal following and now most of the milk produced goes into the cheesemaking. Killeen cow’s is made from bought-in milk from a local herd.

Killeen Goat’s is a gouda style cheese made from pasteurised milk and traditional rennet. The natural beige exterior is covered with a thin layer of breathable plasticcoat, which enrobes a smooth ivory paste. The flavour is fresh, sweet, clean and milky. With age the cheese takes on a more pronounced nutty aspect.
Dutch-born Wilma O’Connor fell in love in Ireland during an anthropology research trip in 1975. She moved here full-time on 1st January 1980, having fallen for John O’Connor from Killorglin, who is now her husband. Wilma’s cheese making career started when she used a basic gouda recipe and raw milk from the family farm to make cheese for their own consumption. She recalls that she started making her own cheese because she couldn’t get any Dutch-style cheese in their area at the time.

When education cutbacks in the late 1980’s drastically reduced Wilma’s hours as a career guidance counsellor, she and John decided to start a cheese-making business. By the mid nineties they had built up a good business and were selling their raw milk gouda across Ireland.

In 2004-05, for various reasons, they chose to scale back their operation. Wilma now produces just 2 tonnes of cheese per annum, still using the milk of their own herd. However after over 20 years of problem-free raw milk production Wilma is now effectively forced to batch pasteurise the milk, as the cost of raw milk-related testing is prohibitive relative to her current scale of production. She sells the majority of her cheeses at local markets, as she enjoys the interaction with the public. She also sells to a handful of delis nationwide.

Wilma’s Killorglin Flavoured Cheese

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 10kg, 4.5kg, 2kg
Similar Style: Flavoured Gouda
Rind: Yellow appearance, transparent, breathable plastic coat, speckled
Paste: Semi-firm cheese, harder with age, yellow paste, flecked with particular flavouring
Flavour: Smooth and mild with notes of cumin; clove or dried garlic depending on flavour
Age: Aged 6 weeks to 2 years plus
Season: Small production, available all year, seasonal production
Pairings: Very good with ginger beers and red wines

Wilma’s Killorglin Cheese

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 10kg, 4.5kg, 2kg
Similar Style: Gouda; Coolea: Mossfield
Rind: Yellow appearance, from transparent whey product
Paste: Semi-firm to hard cheese depending on age, yellow to Golden in colour depending on age
Flavour: Smooth and mild in flavour, sweet slightly fruity, mature wheels- stronger, sweeter with more caramel flavour
Age: Aged 6 weeks to 2 years plus
Season: Small Production, available all year, seasonal production
Pairings: Very good with ginger beers and red wines
Agnes and Wolfgang Schliebitz have been making cheese on their farm in West Waterford since 1990. Wolfgang and Agnes had holidayed in Ireland every year since the mid-seventies and long dreamed of buying a property here and making ewe's milk cheese. To this end they travelled extensively and, after a chance encounter with a miserably wet German in Roscommon, consulted a map of rainfall patterns in Ireland. This showed the South East to be the driest part of the country. The couple visited and fell in love with Waterford and moved there soon afterwards. They imported a number of Friesland ewes from the continent and built up the flock to about 80. Over time the demands of milking and cheesemaking proved too great and they decided to get someone else to tend the herd of 120. Initially this system worked well but a problem with a milking machine led to mastitis and milk production was decimated. The Schliebitz's were devastated. Only 30 ewes remained and the future of Knockalara looked uncertain. Agnes and Wolfgang resolved to buy in some cow's milk to bolster production, and made a cow's feta whilst continuing to produce tiny amounts of sheep's cheese.

Ultimately Wolfgang and Agnes made the hard decision to buy in sheep's milk rather than produce their own. They got in contact with Henry Clifton Browne of Crozier Blue who was selling milk from his own herd and now all Knockalara sheep's milk is sourced from here.

Knockalara Fresh Cheese is a pasteurised fresh sheep's milk cheese made using vegetarian rennet. It is pale white in colour with a semi-firm, creamy eat in the. The flavour is sweet, mild, rich, creamy and slightly lactic.

Knockalara Semi-hard Cheese is a sheep's milk tomme made using vegetarian rennet and pasteurised milk. It has a smooth friable texture with a slight chalkiness towards the centre. When young the flavour is mildly citrus, slight lactic and mild. The cheese becomes more crumbly as the cheese ages.

Dromana is a fresh sheep's milk cheese preserved in sunflower oil. It is made using pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet and is available in a number of flavours.

Knockalara cubed is a preserved sheep's milk cheese, kept in olive oil and flavoured with dried herbs and pepper. Waterford Greek Cheese is a cow's milk, feta-style cheese made from pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet.

Knockalara Sheep's Cheese
- **Milk:** Pasteurised sheep's milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 1.5kg
- **Similar Style:** Tomme Fraiche
- **Rind:** Fresh cheese, no rind
- **Paste:** Pale white coloured-paste, firm but creamy
- **Flavour:** Sweet, mildly lactic and creamy
- **Age:** Sold from 10 days up to 5 months
- **Pairings:** Crisp dry white wines
- **Season:** Available all year (seasonal production)

Waterford Greek Cheese
- **Milk:** Pasteurised cow's milk
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 200g vac packs
- **Similar Style:** Preserved Fresh Cow's Cheese
- **Rind:** Fresh cheese rolled in herbs
- **Paste:** Fresh, white cheese rolled in mixed fine herbs and sundried tomatoes
- **Flavour:** Smooth, cool and creamy with notes of herbs and sundried tomatoes
- **Age:** Sold from 1 week plus
- **Season:** Available all year (seasonal production)
Knockalara
Farmhouse Cheese

Knockalara Semi-Hard Sheep’s Cheese

- Milk: Pasteurised sheep’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 1.5kg
- Similar Style: Sheep’s milk tomme
- Rind: Natural rind with white, grey and beige colour, cellar aroma
- Paste: Smooth, friable texture, paste more broken down towards rind than in centre
- Flavour: Mildly citrus when young, slightly lactic, mild and more crumbly when mature
- Age: Sold from 6 months to 12 months plus depending on stock
- Pairings: Jurancon sec, Sangiovese
- Season: Available all year (seasonal production)

Knockalara Flavoured

- Milk: Pasteurised sheep’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 140g cheese in oil
- Similar Style: Preserved fresh sheep’s cheeses
- Rind: Fresh cheese, no rind
- Paste: White, soft cheese preserved in sunflower oil
- Flavour: Available in natural; fine herbs; pepper; roasted sesame
- Age: Sold from 1 week plus
- Season: Available all year (seasonal production)

Dromana Flavoured

- Milk: Pasteurised sheep’s milk
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 140g cheese in oil
- Similar Style: Preserved fresh sheep’s cheeses
- Rind: Fresh cheese, no rind
- Paste: White, soft cheese preserved in sunflower oil
- Flavour: Available in natural; fine herbs; pepper; roasted sesame
- Age: Sold from 1 week plus
- Season: Available all year (seasonal production)

Knockanore
Farmhouse Cheese

Knockanore Plain

- Milk: Raw cow’s milk form own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 2.5/3kg wheels, 1/2 wheels, 150g sections
- Similar Style: Cheddar style cheese
- Rind: No rind, aged under vacuum
- Paste: Semi-firm pale yellow or orange paste, closed texture
- Flavour: Mild and creamy with a subtle cheddar acidity in finish
- Age: 6 months minimum to 2 years
- Pairings: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cider, Port
- Season: Available all year

Knockanore Smoked is made from specially selected wheels of Knockanore cheddar which are then cold smoked over oak chips for 10 days. The oak chips are sourced locally in Lismore. The cheese is made from raw cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The mahogany-tanned smoked exterior contrasts with the yellow paste within.

Smoky notes from the rind dominate the aroma, with a full-on smoked, meaty flavour on the palate.

Knockanore Plain is a cheddar style cheese, made using raw cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. Available in white or red, the flavour is mild and creamy with a subtle cheddar hint in the finish.

Eamonn also makes a number of flavoured cheddars including Black Pepper and Chives, Garlic and Chives, Garlic and Herb.
Knockanore Flavoured

Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2.5/3kg wheels, 1/2 wheels, 150g sections
Similar Style: Flavoured cheeses, garlic and chive, garlic and herb, black pepper and herb
Rind: No rind, aged under vacuum
Paste: Pale yellow colour, flecked with dried herbs
Flavour: Mild and creamy with a herby flavour
Age: 4 months minimum
Season: Available all year

Knockanore Smoked

Milk: Raw cow’s milk from own herd
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 2.5/3kg wheels, 1/2 wheels, 150g sections
Similar Style: Smoked Applewood
Rind: Dark-tan coloured smoked rind
Paste: Semi-firm yellow paste, smooth and supple
Flavour: Rich, intensely smoky flavour, meaty
Age: 4 months minimum, including 10 days cold smoking over oak chips
Pairings: Australian Syrah
Season: Available all year

Peter Ireson started making cheese in the UK in the early 1970’s, as part of his wider scheme to supply all his food needs from his small holding. In 1995 Peter decided to move to Ireland and produce cheese from his own herd of Jersey cattle. He dedicated the next ten years to the project and gradually increased both the size of his herd, and the volume of cheese he produced. Disaster struck in 2007 when TB was found in the herd, and Peter lost everything he had worked so hard to achieve. After long consideration he resolved to go back into cheese production, using raw milk bought in from one carefully selected local source.

Peter says he has no massive ambitions to expand his output above the tiny 1 tonne of cheese he now produces. He only makes cheese in season, from April to October and says he is happy making a genuinely local cheese. Over half of all cheese is sold at the farm door, with the remainder going to local hotels, restaurants and shops.

Peter produces four different cheeses at Knockatee farmhouse. Knockatee is a traditional raw cow’s milk, cloth-bound cheddar made with traditional rennet. Like Lucy Hayes of Mount Callan, Peter favours butter over lard for sealing the cheese before wrapping in cloth. It is aged a minimum of 10 months at which stage it is smooth, nutty and complex with a mild cheddar bite.

Knockanore Cheese

address: Lehid Upper, Tourist, South Kerry, Co Kerry
telephone: 064 842 36
email: knockateedairy@eircom.net
contact: Peter Ireson

Knockatee Cheddar

Milk: Raw cow’s milk
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 10kg truckles. Smaller sections available
Similar Style: Real Raw Milk Cheddar; Baylough; Coolattin, Mount Callan
Rind: Natural, cloth bound rind
Paste: Slightly open texture, pale butter colour
Flavour: Complex, nutty and smooth with a cheddar bite in the finish
Age: Aged 10 months plus
Pairings: Red Bordeaux blends, Cider
Season: Very small production, limited stock available
Knockatee Gouda

Milk: Raw cow’s milk
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 4 - 5kg wheels
Similar Style: Young Coolea; Young Gouda; Killeen Cow’s, Moosfield Organic
Rind: Transparent plasticoat
Paste: Semi-firm texture, smooth, pale butter colour
Flavour: Sweet, smooth and creamy
Age: Aged 2 months minimum
Pairings: Chardonnay, Pinot Gris
Season: Very small production, limited stock available

Kerry Blue

Milk: Raw cow’s milk
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 2kg wheels
Similar Style: Stilton; Bellingham Blue
Rind: Orange wax rind
Paste: Hard blue cheese, firm pale orange paste, with ample blueing
Flavour: Crumbly with strong blue flavour and fruity notes
Age: Aged 3 months minimum
Pairings: Sauternes, Port
Season: Very small production, limited stock available

Beara Blue

Milk: Raw cow’s milk
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 2kg wheels
Similar Style: Stilton
Rind: Natural
Paste: Creamy ivory, softer than Kerry Blue
Flavour: Soft creamy, mild and clean. Gains attitude as it ages
Age: Aged 3 months minimum
Pairings: Characterful reds
Season: Small production, limited supply
Former Civil Servant Helen Finnegan started producing cheese on the family's non-dairy farm at Stoneyford, Co Kilkenny in 2004. Working with bought in milk from the outset, she began by producing a hard goat's cheese from the milk of local man Hugh Daniels' six goats. If her cheese business was to take off in earnest Helen would need far more milk than Hugh could supply. To this end she negotiated a deal whereby he would expand his herd and she would buy the additional milk. Hugh gradually increased the size of the herd to a current level of 100 and Helen began to sell Knockdrinna Gold Goat's cheese at the market in Carlow. Sales took off and Helen decided to expand production by building a purpose build cheese plant in 2006. She hasn't looked back since.

Despite the evident success of Knockdrinna Goat's cheese, market customers persistently asked her for sheep's cheese. In response Helen started buying in ewe's milk from Henry Clifton Browne's pedigree Frieslands and made Knockdrinna Meadow. When Olivia Goodwillie decided to retire in 2007 Helen took the opportunity to buy the Lavistown Cheese name, and started making cow's milk cheese. She has somewhat changed the Lavistown-style, and the cheese is now less like Caerphilly and more like the rare cow's tommes of SW France.

Knockdrinna Gold is a hard goat's cheese made using pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet. The natural rind is beige in colour and contains a semi-firm, white paste. The flavour is mild and nutty with a pleasant goat-iness.

Knockdrinna Meadow Sheep's Cheese is a hard cheese made using pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet. The natural rind is beige in colour and contains a semi-firm, white paste. The rind is a dusty ochre colour and contains a butter yellow paste. The flavour is creamy with a mild buttermilk element.

Knockdrinna Snow is a goat's camembert made using pasteurised milk and vegetarian rennet. As the name suggests, the rind is white with a fluffy snowy texture. Occasional beige spots appear as the cheese ages. The paste is soft and generally chalky, ripening from the outside in. Citrus notes are evident on the palate, with more grassy/earthy notes developing as the cheese ages.

Helen also produces a goat's milk brined cheese, a goat's log and a soft fresh goat's cheese preserved in oil. She also produces pesto and relishes.

address: Main Street, Stoneyford, Co Kilkenny
telephone: 056 772 84 46
email: helen.finnegan@knockdrinna.com
web: www.knockdrinna.com

Knockdrinna Meadow Sheep’s Cheese
Milk: Pasteurised milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 3.5kg
Similar Style: Caerphilly/tomme de vache from S.W France
Rind: Natural rind, light beige grey colour
Paste: Semi-hard texture
Flavour: Creamy buttermilk: flavour when the cheese is young, becoming harder and drier in texture with age. Paste becomes more crumbly as the cheese ages and takes on a tang
Age: 2 months up to 8 months
Pairings: Cider
Season: Available all year

Knockdrinna Snow
Milk: Pasteurised goat's milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 180g
Similar Style: Goat’s Camembert; Gortnamona
Rind: Snowy white, mould rind
Paste: Brilliant white paste, with a soft texture
Flavour: Mild, creamy and slightly citrus early on, developing camembert spectrum of flavours at full maturity
Age: 2 to 8 weeks
Pairings: Côtes du Rhône
Season: Available all year (depending on stock)

Knockdrinna Goat’s Brined Cheese
Milk: Pasteurised goat’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 1kg
Similar Style: Feta
Rind: No rind, fresh cheese
Paste: White and crumbly
Flavour: Crumbly with real depth of flavour and relatively subtle salting
Age: From 1 week onwards
Pairings: Tomatoes, cucumbers & olives
Season: Available all year (depending on stock)
Knockdrinna Meadow Sheep’s Cheese

Milk: Pasteurised Sheep’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 3.5kg
Similar Style: Tomme style
Rind: Natural rind, light beige with pinkish hue
Paste: Semi firm, white in colour, slightly open textured paste
Flavour: Mild, sweet and creamy taking on more pronounced fudge and nutty notes as the cheese ages, roasted lamb flavour, earthiness
Age: 3 months to 8 months plus
Pairings: Sauvignon Blanc
Season: Available all year (depending on stock)

Knockdrinna Gold

Milk: Pasteurised goat’s milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 3.5kg
Similar Style: Tomme d’Aydius, Goat Gouda
Rind: Natural rind, light beige
Paste: Semi firm, white in colour, paste is freckled with small air holes
Flavour: Mild, and nutty with a pleasant goatiness, paste becomes more crumbly as the cheese ages and develops bite, more bite
Age: 3 months to 8 months
Pairings: Jurancon Sec
Season: Available all year (depending on stock)

Knockdrinna Fresh Goats Log

Milk: Pasteurised goats milk
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 150g
Similar Style: Goat’s Log, Ardsallagh; St Tola
Rind: Thin mould rind
Season: Available all year (depending on stock)

Milleens

Milk: Pasteurised cow’s
Rennet: Animal
Format: 1.2kg rounds, Milleens ‘O’ 1kg, Milleens Dote 200g
Similar Style: Munster, Reblochon
Rind: Washed rind, pungent with lively orange colour
Paste: Semi-soft, with smooth paste
Flavour: Pungent farmyard aromas with creamy paste and earthy
Age: 4-12 weeks
Pairings: Off-dry Gewurztraminer, still cider
Season: Available all year

Milleens is Ireland’s longest established farmhouse cheese. Veronica and Norman Steele began making cheese on their land at Milleens, on the Beara Peninsula, Co. Cork in 1976. The ‘History’ section of the Milleens website contains a wonderful piece on those early days, giving a vivid, first-hand account of how the cheese came into being, from the story of their one horned cow, Brisket, onwards. Veronica is generally regarded as the first Irish farmhouse cheese maker, although she is wont to play down her own importance in the development of Irish washed-rind cheese. Norman and Veronica’s son, Quinlan, is now in charge of day-to-day operations at Milleens. The Steeles no longer keep a herd and milk is now bought in from a neighbouring farm.

The new form of Milleens, in O’s and Dotes, is testament to the innovation which Quinlan has brought to the business. Quinlan has taken the innovative step of cutting a disc out of the centre of each wheel. The removal of this disc increased the surface of the doughnut shaped cheese. Traditional rounds are also made.

The Milleens ‘O’ and the dotes differ slightly in both texture and flavour. The ‘O’ is more reminiscent of traditional Milleens, retaining a slight chalkiness at the centre of the paste and that particular earthy signature which is unique to the Milleens rind. By contrast the dotes are softer and more whiffy, with a more active orange rind. They present a winning combination of creaminess and farmyard aromas and are the equal of any Continental washed rind cheese.
Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses

Millhouse Sheep’s Cheese

Swiss-Austrian couple Beni and Elfie Gerber fell in love with Ireland on holidays and decided to move here. Initially they bought a cottage and a small amount of surrounding land. Later they expanded with their own pure-bred flock of East Friesian dairy sheep and started to produce cheese at their Mill House farmhouse at Killeenmore, Tullamore, Co Offaly in 1997.

All the milk used in production is gained from their own small flock. The couple use a traditional Swiss mountain recipe from Beni’s homeland to make this wonderful cheese. Production is seasonal, with morning and evening milking throughout the lactation period. Only raw milk is used in production.

Millhouse is a hard, raw sheep’s milk cheese made using vegetarian rennet.

- Millhouse Milk: Raw sheep’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 2.5kg
- Similar Style: Swiss smear ripened cheeses
- Rind: Natural rind, beige colour with hint of pink
- Paste: Pale ivory in colour, hard, smooth paste with occasional small air holes
- Flavour: Subtle, clean and nutty
- Age: 4 months plus
- Pairings: Chianti
- Season: Limited availability, small production

Millhouse Sheep’s Cheese

- Address: Mill House, Killeenmore, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
- Telephone: 057 93 44 334
- Email: info@millhouseireland.com
- Contact: Beni Gerber
- Website: www.millhouseireland.com

Mary and Gerry Kelly took the decision to convert their family farm to organics in 2000. The Kellys also use biodynamic methods on the farm. This is a system of agriculture which uses points of the lunar calendar to determine which different jobs on the farm should be performed. Their dairy herd consists of Friesians, Ayreshires, and Friesian-Ayreshire crosses. They also keep some rare breed cattle, the rarest of all being an Irish Moiled cow and calf, respectively called Moon Shine Solas and Rua Bawn.

The Kellys have been making fresh cheese and yoghurt at Moon Shine Farm at Lough Ennell since 2006. They soon realised that they needed a hard cheese to compliment their range. Mindful of the amount of time and effort required to develop a cheese from scratch, they contacted Dutch-trained cheese maker Marion Roeleveld. Marion was delighted to work with them and soon developed an emmental-style cheese. All the milk used in production comes from the Kelly’s own dairy herd and is certified organic.

Moonshine Farmhouse Cheese is a semi-firm emmental-style cheese made from pasteurised organic cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The natural rind is a pale beige colour, and the non-rubbery paste is punctuated by irregular holes. The nose is dominated by propionic notes typical of emmental-style cheeses. The palate offers a good balance of sweet, fruity flavours and bassy emmental notes.

- Moonshine Milk: Organic pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 5kg wheels
- Similar Style: Emmental AOC
- Rind: Natural rind (pale beige colour)
- Paste: Semi-firm in texture, paste punctuated by irregular, medium sized holes
- Flavour: Propionic/ emmental nose with good, non-rubbery texture, well balanced between sweet and bassy notes
- Age: Solid at 2-6 months
- Pairings: Beaujolais; Valpolicella
- Season: Available all year

Moonshine Organic Cheese

- Address: Moonshine Dairy Farm, Lough Ennell, Ladestown, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
- Telephone: 087 969 4108
- Email: info@kellysorganic.com
- Contact: Mary Kelly
- Website: www.kellysorganic.com
Ralph Haslam has been farming at Mossfield Farm at Clareen, outside Birr in Co Offaly since 1970. Ralph converted to organic farming in 1999 and developed a gouda-style cheese which was launched in 2005. All the milk used comes from Ralph’s own herd of 80 Friesians which graze the clover-filled pasture of Ralph’s 300 acre farm on the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The cheese has won numerous awards during its short time on the market including, most recently, Best Overall Organic Product at the National Organic Award 2010.

Mossfield is available in a number of different flavours including Garlic and Basil, Tomato and Herb and Cumin Seed, as well as Plain and Mature versions. Only vegetarian rennet is used here.

Mossfield is a gouda-style cheese made from pasteurised organic cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The cheese is covered with a transparent plasticoat and has a yellow, semi-hard paste. The flavour is mild and sweet, becoming more pronounced as the cheese ages.

Mossfield Flavoured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milk:</th>
<th>Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rennet:</td>
<td>Vegetarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format:</td>
<td>5kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar Style:</td>
<td>Gouda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rind:</td>
<td>Transparent plasticoat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paste:</td>
<td>Pale yellow paste flecked with dried herbs or seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavour:</td>
<td>Available in garlic and basil, tomato and herb and cumin seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>3 months minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairings:</td>
<td>Off-dry Gewurztraminer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season:</td>
<td>Available all year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mossfield Organic Farm

address: Mossfield, Clareen, Birr, Co. Offaly
telephone: 057 913 10 02
email: info@mossfield.ie
contact: Ralph Haslam
web: www.mossfield.ie

Mossfield

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milk:</th>
<th>Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rennet:</td>
<td>Vegetarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format:</td>
<td>5kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar Style:</td>
<td>Gouda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rind:</td>
<td>Transparent waxing drying to beige colour, darkens as the cheese ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paste:</td>
<td>Semi-hard cheese with a smooth, pale yellow paste; paste becomes harder and slightly darker with age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavour:</td>
<td>Creamy and sweet when young, Mossfield Mature has a more pronounced, deeper flavour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>3 months minimum. 8 months plus for the mature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairings:</td>
<td>Chardonnay for younger wheels, Alsace Pinot Gris for more mature, Red Bordeaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season:</td>
<td>Available all year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mount Callan Cheddar

Michael and Lucy Hayes have been making Mount Callan Cheddar at their 60-acre family farm in West Clare since 2000. At one stage the couple used both milk from their own herd of Montbeliarde cattle and a neighbour’s Friesians to make two different versions of Mount Callan. The Hayes' have since decided to concentrate on cheesemaking and all the milk used now comes from a neighbour’s herd of 30 Friesians.

Lucy met her future husband in a pub in Australia and the couple settled in Co Clare. Lucy says she first got involved in cheesemaking because she was at home with four young children. Her interest was sparked by reading about traditional cheesemaking methods in old books, and talking to a Dutch cheesemaker who had made cheese locally for years. Lucy began experimenting and eventually produced a cheese she was really happy with. She recalls walking into Sheridans Cheesemongers in Galway with her raw milk, cloth-bound cheddar and asking Kevin Sheridan if he would be interested in the cheese. He was bowled over as he had been searching in vain for a raw milk Irish cheddar for months. He happily took Mount Callan onboard.

Mount Callan is a traditional handmade cheddar made with raw cow’s milk and traditional rennet. The cheese is larded with butter then cloth-bound for maturation. Susceptibility to external cheese mites means that wheels are often stripped of cloth before delivery and the bare rind generally has a mottled grey/beige appearance. The paste is more open textured than many farmhouse cheddars. The aroma from the paste is one of softened butter, with an aggressive cheddar bite on the palate.

Mount Callan Cheddar

- **Milk:** Raw cow’s milk
- **Rennet:** Traditional
- **Format:** 15kg rounds, 4 kg truckles
- **Similar Style:** Cantal, Salers, English Farmhouse cheddar
- **Rind:** Natural (cloth bound), mottled grey/brown exterior
- **Paste:** Hard, pale yellow paste, open textured for a cheddar
- **Flavour:** Notes of butter, with tingly ‘cheddar’ bite on the palate
- **Age:** 9-12 month, limited number of 18 month plus wheels
- **Pairings:** Cider, Viognier, also Lucy recommends Australian Shiraz
- **Season:** Available all year

Old MacDonnells Farm Cheese

Brian and Wendy MacDonnell have had goats on their farm in the Glen of the Downs, Co Wicklow since 1977, but only began to commercialise their produce in the mid 1990s. All the milk used in production comes from their own herd of Saanen goats and their Holstein-Friesian cattle. The Old MacDonnell brand is possibly better known for yoghurts than cheese, but the MacDonnell family produces a range of fresh Mediterranean-style cheeses in a large number of different flavoured.

Old MacDonnell’s cow’s cheese is a fresh cheese made using vegetarian rennet. Old MacDonnell’s Farm Cheeses have a colourful placement of olives, red pepper and rosemary on top of the Tzatziki; lovely colours that anoint the pretty Mini Chevres; a weave of fresh basil leaves and sundried tomato laced through Soft Cheese; and the Mediterranean veg running through the Goat’s Greek Salad.

Old MacDonnell’s Goats cheese is a fresh cheese made using vegetarian rennet. This white fresh cheese is light and creamy with a lively acidity.

Old MacDonnells Farm Cheese

- **Milk:** Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- **Rennet:** Vegetarian
- **Format:** 250g tubs
- **Similar Style:** Fresh cow’s cheeses
- **Rind:** Fresh cheese, no rind
- **Paste:** Soft, fresh cheese, smooth, white in colour
- **Flavour:** Creamy and mildly lactic
- **Age:** Available from 2 days plus
- **Pairings:** Chardonnay
- **Season:** Widely available in the best shops
Old MacDonnells Farm Cheese  

Old MacDonnells Fresh Goat’s Cheese  
(various flavours available)  

Milk: Pasteurised goat’s cheese from own herd  

Rennet: Vegetarian  

Format: 250g tubs  

Similar Style: Fresh goat’s cheeses  

Rind: Fresh cheese, no rind  

Paste: Soft, fresh cheese, smooth, white in colour  

Flavour: Light and creamy with lively acidity  

Age: Available from 2 days plus  

Pairings: Sauvignon Blanc  

Season: Widely available  

Orchard Cottage Dairy  

address: Orchard Cottage Dairy, Rigsdale, Ballinhassig, Co Cork  

telephone: 086 303 78 71  

contact: Joseph Desmond  

Joseph Desmond bought Magpie Dairies from its founders Chris and Phil Rhodes in late August 2010. Magpie Dairies began in the nineties when the Rhodes moved from the UK to Ireland with their four Anglo-Nubian goats. Chris, who had always been interested in cheesemaking, took a job with Jane Murphy of Ardsallagh Goats Farm as a means of learning her trade, and soon the Rhodes were making cheeses of their own. Chris and Phil were then instrumental in setting up Mahon Point Farmer’s Market, which provided a perfect place from which to sell their cheese. The majority of Magpie’s production is still sold here. Magpie Dairies cheeses are also available at Ballymaloe Cookery School.

Joseph Desmond began working with Chris and Phil in May 2010 when he served what he refers to as ‘his apprenticeship’ in cheese-making and production. He also worked at various markets in the area. Joseph had already completed a number of goat’s cheese-making courses with Judy Wooton of Ardagh Castle Cheese and was eager to produce his own cheese. In addition to cheese-making courses Joseph has also recently completed a course in organic agricultural production at the Organic College in Limerick.

In 2010, Joseph moved Magpie Dairies to his family’s 100 acre organic farm in Ballinhassig which specialises in beef production. With the change in ownership and location, so too has there been a change in name; the company and range are now known as Orchard Cottage Dairy. As of August 2010 there are eight milking goats in the Orchard Cottage Dairy herd, which Joseph plans to increase to 12 for 2012. His ultimate aim is to increase the herd to 20, which he says will give him enough milk to reach his planned level of cheese production. Eventually Joseph would like to add a hard goat’s cheese to the range, although he intends to stick with fresh cheese for at least the next 12 months.

Orchard Cottage Dairy currently produces two different styles of cheese using raw milk from eight Anglo-Nubian goats. Both are based on a fresh 152g goat’s cheese. Orchard Cottage Dairy Plain is a very mild, fresh goat’s cheese to be consumed within 10 days of production. In addition Joseph makes two different goat’s cheeses in sunflower oil; thyme and garlic; and sun-dried tomato, basil and garlic. Both of these cheeses are based on the 152g fresh cheese, divided into approximately 13 balls and preserved in oil.
Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses

Orchard Cottage Dairy continued

Fresh Goat’s Cheese
Milk: Raw goat’s milk from own heard
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: 152g ball
Similar Style: Fresh Goat’s Cheese
Rind: Fresh cheese, Brilliant white
Paste: Smooth, creamy paste
Flavour: Very mild, plain flavour yet reflecting the richness of the Anglo Nubian goats’ milk.
Age: Up to 10 days
Pairings: Sauvignon Blanc
Season: Available all year (staggered breeding) Very small production

Goat’s Cheese in Oil
Milk: Raw goat’s milk from own heard
Rennet: Vegetarian
Format: Jars containing 152g of cheese divided into 13 balls in sunflower oil
Similar Style: Fresh Goat’s Cheese, Boilie
Rind: Fresh cheese, Brilliant white
Paste: Smooth, creamy paste
Flavour: Smooth and creamy, with notes of thyme and garlic or sundried tomato, basil and garlic
Age: 4 weeks plus
Pairings: Sauvignon Blanc
Season: Available all year (staggered breeding) Very small production

St Tola Log
Milk: Organic raw goat’s milk, some pasteurised available, from own herd and one other source
Rennet: Animal
Format: 1kg log (regular), 1kg log (mature), 120g Crottin (regular and mature available)
Similar Style: Ryefield, Ardsallagh
Rind: Fresh log (no rind), mature log (natural rind), fresh crottin (no rind), mature crottin (natural rind)
Paste: Young cheeses are pure white on rind and interior, mature cheeses develop a natural, pale yellow rind
Flavour: Young St Tola log is fresh, creamy and sweet. With increased aging the cheese develops discernable lemon citrus notes and a very light hint of thyme, the texture becomes more flinty with age
Age: Sold at up to two weeks mature, up to four weeks
Pairings: Loire Sauvignon Blanc
Season: Available all year

The history of Inagh Goat’s farm dates back to 1978 when Meg and Derrick Gordon began keeping goats and making cheese to earn a living from their 25 acre holding at Inagh in North West Clare. Meg was familiar with cheese making from her time in Normandy, and former tea plantation owner Derrick was no stranger to hard work.

The couple made a success of the enterprise and some two decades later were joined by a neighbour, Siobhan Ni Gharbhith, who was interested in learning the cheesemaker’s art. Meg taught Siobhan how to make cheese and a year later in 1999 Siobhan took over the running of the business. In 2000 Siobhan built a state of the art cheese making facility at her farm near the Gordons’ in accordance with EU regulations, and transferred both cheese making and the herd to this site. All the milk used in production comes from Siobhan’s own herd and one other local goat’s milk producer. Siobhan has also expanded the Inagh Goat range, and the company now produces a number of different goat’s cheese products.

St Tola is a fresh goat’s cheese made using raw organic milk and animal rennet. It is available in fresh and more mature versions, in both log and crottin formats. Young cheeses are brilliant white throughout, with a mild, lactic, creamy flavour. More mature St Tola has a yellowish beige rind, depending on age, and an intriguing citrus/herbal element.

Address:
Inagh Farmhouse, Ennis, Co Clare
Telephone: 065 683 66 33
Email: info@st-tola.ie
Contact: Siobhan Ni Gharbhith
Web: www.st-tola.ie

Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses
St Tola Hard Goat’s

Milk: Organic raw goat’s milk from own herd and one other source
Rennet: Animal
Format: 2.2kg wheels, 450g wedge, 200g vac pac
Similar Style: Goat’s Tomme
Rind: Waxed rind (beige colour)
Paste: Semi-firm to firm in texture depending on age, pale white in colour, with marbled complexion
Flavour: Clean and sweet with a tangy, nutty flavour, becomes flintier in texture, nuttier, drier and slightly saltier as cheese matures
Age: Sold at minimum 3 months, up to 18 months
Pairings: Loire Sauvignon Blanc, Jurançon Sec
Season: Available all year

St Tola Divine

Milk: Organic pasteurised goat’s milk from own herd and one other source
Rennet: Animal
Format: 120g tub, 1kg tub
Rind: No rind
Paste: A whipped, mild, spreadable cream cheese with a luxurious texture and a rich creamy flavour
Age: Sold at minimum 3 months, up to 18 months
Pairings: Jurançon Sec
Season: Available all year

Triskel Cheese

address: Killowen Orchard, Portlaw, Co. Waterford
tel: 086 0744534
email: triskelcheese@hotmail.com
contact: Anna Leveque

Anna Leveque came to Ireland from Brittany in 2006 as part of a Teagasc programme investigating the digital divide and its impact on the farming community. During a subsequent placement she spent her free time milking goats for Hugh Daniels, who supplies milk to Helen Finnegan of Knockdrinna. Anna then began helping out at Knockdrinna and manning market stalls in Thurles and Mallow. She spent time training with Frank Shinnick of Fermoy Natural Cheese and on the 26th October 2009, opened her own cheese rooms in Waterford.

The triskel is a Celtic symbol widely used in Brittany. Anna chose this interwoven triple spiral design after her mother sent her a box of biscuits from Brittany with a triskel on the lid. In early 2010 Anna acquired her own vat and began to experiment with cow’s milk cheeses. Anna uses exclusively raw milk in the production of her cheeses. The goat’s milk comes from Hugh Daniels’s herd, whilst the organic cow’s milk used to make Triskel comes from John Stevenson’s forty strong local herd. Anna believes passionately in raw milk: she feels it is far more natural, and safer for cheesemaking, than cooling the milk, pasteurising it, and waiting around. As she puts it: “with raw milk you just add your starter to the fresh warm milk and off you go.”

Triskel Gwenned

Milk: Raw cow’s milk
Rennet: Traditional
Format: 200g, 1.2kg
Similar Style: Washed-rind cow’s milk dried (larger wheel contains a line of ash, similar to Morbier cheese)
Rind: Brownish rind with smooth yellow paste
Paste: Semi-firm, smooth paste
Flavour: Mild, sweet flavour taking on a farmyard tinge with age
Age: 1 month for the younger cheese 6 to 10 weeks for the larger wheels
Season: Available seasonally
Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses

Triskel Cheese

continued

Triskel Dew Drop
- Milk: Raw goat’s milk
- Rennet: Animal
- Format: 100g
- Similar Style: Fresh goat’s cheese
- Rind: Brilliant White
- Paste: Fresh goat’s cheese
- Flavour: Brilliant white, with smooth, slightly crumbly texture
- Age: up to 3 weeks
- Pairings: Sauvignon Blanc
- Season: Currently seasonally available

Triskel Pyramid
- Milk: Raw goat’s milk
- Rennet: Animal
- Format: 120g
- Similar Style: Semi-fresh goat’s cheese, natural rind, dry salted with ash
- Rind: Pale yellow mottled with grey and blue
- Paste: Lines on the paste
- Flavour: Smooth white paste with flinty texture
- Age: 2 weeks - 4 weeks
- Pairings: Sauvignon Blanc
- Season: Currently seasonally available

Wicklow Farmhouse Cheese

Wicklow Blue
- Milk: Pasteurised cow’s milk from own herd
- Rennet: Vegetarian
- Format: 1.2kg, 150g
- Similar Style: Bleu de Bresse; Cambozola
- Rind: White mould rind
- Paste: Soft, pale yellow paste interspersed with blue mould
- Flavour: Creamy, buttery and mild, with little aggressive blue flavour, the mould rind adds a very mildly white mushroom note
- Age: Available from 3 weeks, to 8 weeks
- Pairings: Côtes du Rhône
- Season: Available all year

The Hempenstall family have been dairying at Curranstown for over fifty years. Dairy farmer John Hempenstall identified a gap in the market for an Irish blue brie cheese and decided to get into cheese making. He started making Wicklow Blue in 2002, bringing occasional vats of his milk down to other people’s facilities in Co Cork. This was very time consuming work but the cheese proved popular and on 17 February 2005 John opened a purpose built facility on his farm at Curranstown, in Co. Wicklow. All the milk used in production comes from John’s own herd of 60 cows.

Wicklow Blue is a blue brie style cheese made using pasteurised cow’s milk and vegetarian rennet. The bloomy white rind enrobes a butter scented, yellow paste with lined with blue green mould. The bloomy rind gives an aroma of fresh white mushrooms and contrasts with the creamy, buttery flavours of the paste. The blue flavour is unpronounced and doesn’t interfere with the overall impression of creamy whipped butter and saled mushrooms on the palate.

Wicklow Blue

address: Curranstown, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
telephone: 0402 91713
e-mail: wfccheese@eircom.net
contact: John Hempenstall
web: www.wicklowfarmhousecheeseltd.ie

address: Curranstown, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
telephone: 0402 91713
e-mail: wfccheese@eircom.net
contact: John Hempenstall
web: www.wicklowfarmhousecheeseltd.ie
Wicklow Farmhouse Cheese continued

**Wicklow Baun**
- **Milk**: Pasteurised cow's milk from own herd
- **Rennet**: Vegetarian
- **Format**: 1.2kg, 150g
- **Similar Style**: Camembert; Brie; St Killians; Cooleeney
- **Rind**: White mould rind
- **Paste**: Soft texture with a pale yellow colour
- **Flavour**: Creamy, buttery and mild, the mould rind adds a very mildly white mushroom note
- **Age**: Available from 3 weeks, to 8 weeks
- **Pairings**: Sparkling Wine; Beaujolais
- **Season**: Available all year

**St. Kevin Brie** *(Brick)*
- **Milk**: Pasteurised cow's milk from own herd
- **Rennet**: Vegetarian
- **Format**: 1kg approx
- **Similar Style**: Camembert
- **Rind**: White mould
- **Paste**: Soft texture
- **Flavour**: Creamy and mild mushroom
- **Age**: Available from 3 weeks to 10 weeks
- **Season**: Available all year

**Wicklow Gold**
- **Milk**: Pasteurised cow's milk from own herd
- **Rennet**: Vegetarian
- **Format**: 3kg, 200g
- **Similar Style**: Knockanore; Beal Organic
- **Rind**: No rind, aged under Vac
- **Paste**: Firm closed texture with pale yellow colour
- **Flavour**: Sweet and mild
- **Age**: Available 4 months, up to 12 months
- **Pairings**: Red Bordeaux Blends, Cider
- **Season**: Available all year

**Glossary of Cheese Terms**

**Acidity**: A refreshing, zingy flavour in cheese. Often found in fresh cheeses, but also characteristic of cheddar flavour.

**Affineur**: A person who purchases cheeses from producers and adds value to the cheese by ageing them (affinage) himself before selling them on. Traditionally cheesemakers themselves often farmers simply could not afford to hold onto cheeses and needed immediate payment for their goods. The wealthier and better-connected affineurs knew that they could buy young cheeses from producers at a relatively low price, age them, and sell them on later for a higher price. The system is especially prominent in continental Europe in areas specialising in the production of very long-ageing cheeses such as Parmigiano-Reggiano and Comté. The affineur system does not really exist in Ireland. Distributors looking for longer aged cheeses tend to work in conjunction with producers rather than buying cheeses and ageing them.

**Ash rind**: Ash has traditionally been used on the continent to rind goat's cheeses. Ash is an inert substance which prohibits the growth of bacteria on the surface of the cheese.

**Bite**: A piquant, aggressive aspect in the finish of a cheese. Characteristic of cheddar and certain sheep's milk cheeses. Stringingly aggressive bite can be indicative of a faulty cheese.

**Blue Cheese**: A cheese inoculated with penicillium roqueforti or penicillum glaucum during the cheesemaking process, often added to the milk after the addition of the starter culture. The cheese is pierced during maturation releasing accumulated carbon dioxide from the cheese whilst enabling oxygen to come in contact with the blue mould within. Irish examples include Cashel Blue™, Crozier Blue, Bellingham Blue, Wicklow Blue and Kerry Blue.

**Brine**: a salt solution

**Buttery**: rich dairy flavour. Often found in soft and semi-soft cheeses.

**Casein**: the main protein in milk.

**Chalky**: refers to the texture of the paste. Most fresh goat's cheeses have a chalky appearance. In externally ripened cheeses it may indicate under-ripeness, although it should be noted that certain cheeses such as Ardrahan are designed to maintain a chalkiness in their centre.

**Cow-ey**: Not necessarily an unclean flavour, but reminiscent of cattle. Not a farmyard aroma.

**Crystallisation**: the clumping together of casein proteins found in cheeses which have undergone extended ageing. Eg: Extra mature Coolea.
Your Guide to Irish Farmhouse Cheeses

Glossary of Cheese Terms

**Curd:** The solid content of the milk. It has the appearance of milk jelly, suspended in the more translucent whey. The curd contains large amounts of moisture which can be expelled by cutting, salting, heating and mincing the curd. The treatment of the curd will determine the style of cheese produced. To make a soft Camembert-style cheese you simply gently ladle curd into a cheese mould to drain slightly. To make a hard cheddar cheese you salt, mince and stack the curd to expel as much moisture as possible.

**Earthly:** Flavour found in milder washed rinds, such as Durrus and Gubbeen. The flavour is reminiscent of mushrooms, forest floor and moss.

**Externally-ripened cheeses:** Cheeses in which enzyme action on the surface of the cheese causes the breakdown of the curd within. These cheeses are characterised by large surface areas relative to the paste within, and relatively short ripening periods. However certain semi-hard and hard cheeses, such as those made by Fermoy Natural Cheese, incorporate an element of external-ripening into their cheesemaking, smearing the rinds of their cheeses with B. linens. Smear ripening in certain semi-hard and hard cheeses, such as those made by Fermoy Natural Cheese, incorporates an element of external-ripening into their cheesemaking, smearing the rinds of their cheeses with the bacterium linens. Characteristic of washed rind cheeses.

**Farmyard aroma:** Indicative of high level of active brevi- bacteria. Characteristic of internally-ripened cheese which is not fully ripe.

**Fresh Cheese:** The interior of the cheese. The paste can vary in texture from nearly liquid to very hard depending of cheese ripening and holding times. The most common form of pasteurisation used by Irish cheesemakers is HTST (High Temperature Short Time) the milk is held at 72°C for 15 seconds, then rapidly cooled, although other methods are also used.

**Gouda:** Traditionally a Dutch-style semi-hard to hard cheese characterised by the use of a gouda starter; curd-washing- whereby the whey-curd mix is washed with hot water to prevent bacteria from converting some milk sugars into lactic acid; and the particular gouda shape, which in side profile resembles a flattened oval. Gouda is often coated with a breathable plastic coat or wax. This type of rind is relatively easy to maintain during the cheese’s maturation.

**Internally-ripened cheeses:** Semi-hard to hard cheeses ripened through the action of internal bacteria- from the original starter culture bacteria, the rennet and the milk- which slowly change the chemical composition, and therefore the texture and flavour of the cheese. This is a far slower process than surface ripening. Irish examples of internally-ripened cheese include Coolea; Mount Callan; Clonmore; and Killeen.

**Junket:** A term used to describe the set milk after renneting.

**Lactic:** An acidic, buttermilk type flavour, refreshing in fresh cheeses. In other styles of cheese it can be an indicator of a cheese which is not fully ripe.

**Mould Rind:** Externally ripened cheeses in which the curd is broken down through the enzyme action of a white mould rind consisting of various Penicillium such as P. candidum and P. camemberti. The surface mould breaks down the chalky curd within resulting in a very soft interior. Chemically this process involves the breakdown of complex molecules into increasingly simple water-soluble compounds, including ammonia. The presence of ammonia in small quantities adds to an overall impression of complexity in the cheese, but large quantities of ammonia render the cheese overripe and unpalatable. Mould rind cheeses are characterised by white, bloomy rinds, soft pastes and an aroma of mushrooms. Irish examples include Cooleemey, St Killian, Wicklow Ban and Wicklow Blue.

**Nutty:** A savoury sweetness, often found in mature hard cheeses.

**Paste:** The solid content of the milk. It has the appearance of milk jelly, suspended in the more translucent whey. The curd contains large amounts of moisture which can be expelled by cutting, salting, heating and mincing the curd. The treatment of the curd will determine the style of cheese produced. To make a soft Camembert-style cheese you simply gently ladle curd into a cheese mould to drain slightly. To make a hard cheddar cheese you salt, mince and stack the curd to expel as much moisture as possible.

**Raw Milk:** Milk in its natural state. In cheesemaking the milk is broken down through the enzyme action of a white mould rind consisting of various Penicillium such as P. candidum and P. camemberti. The surface mould breaks down the chalky curd within resulting in a very soft interior. Chemically this process involves the breakdown of complex molecules into increasingly simple water-soluble compounds, including ammonia. The presence of ammonia in small quantities adds to an overall impression of complexity in the cheese, but large quantities of ammonia render the cheese overripe and unpalatable. Mould rind cheeses are characterised by white, bloomy rinds, soft pastes and an aroma of mushrooms. Irish examples include Cooleemey, St Killian, Wicklow Ban and Wicklow Blue.

**Nutty:** A savoury sweetness, often found in mature hard cheeses.

**Paste:** The interior of the cheese. The paste can vary in texture from nearly liquid to very hard depending of cheese ripening and holding times. The most common form of pasteurisation used by Irish cheesemakers is HTST (High Temperature Short Time) the milk is held at 72°C for 15 seconds, then rapidly cooled, although other methods are also used.

**Pasteurisation:** In milk refers to a process of heat treatment involving various combinations of temperature and holding times. The most common form of pasteurisation used by Irish cheesemakers is HTST (High Temperature Short Time) the milk is held at 72°C for 15 seconds, then rapidly cooled, although other methods are also used.

**Raw Milk:** Milk in its natural state. In cheesemaking the milk is broken down through the enzyme action of a white mould rind consisting of various Penicillium such as P. candidum and P. camemberti. The surface mould breaks down the chalky curd within resulting in a very soft interior. Chemically this process involves the breakdown of complex molecules into increasingly simple water-soluble compounds, including ammonia. The presence of ammonia in small quantities adds to an overall impression of complexity in the cheese, but large quantities of ammonia render the cheese overripe and unpalatable. Mould rind cheeses are characterised by white, bloomy rinds, soft pastes and an aroma of mushrooms. Irish examples include Cooleemey, St Killian, Wicklow Ban and Wicklow Blue.

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is merely a matter of finding the right form of vegetarian rennet for the cheese.

**Rennin:** The main digestive enzyme involved in the coagulation of the milk.

**Rind:** The exterior of the cheese. The rind of short-aging externally-ripened cheeses are generally edible, albeit that they are the strongest part of the cheese. The interaction between the flavour of the paste and the rind in such cheeses is often key to a proper understanding the cheese's flavour. In longer-aging cheeses the rind serves to protect the paste of the cheese over a prolonged period and is best not eaten.

**Starter Culture:** A bacterial culture added to the milk at the beginning of the cheesemaking process. The starter culture serves two functions. Firstly the starter ferments lactose to lactic acid, producing a low pH environment conducive to the operation of rennet. Secondly starters are important to the long term development of the cheese as it ages, acting as ripening agents in harder cheeses. The choice of starter culture makes an important contribution to the flavour of the final cheese.

**Sweetness:** Often indicative of curd washing (see above) as milk sugars have been maintained, and/or the use of a starter culture based on lactobacillus helveticus.

**Surface-ripened Cheeses:** see externally ripened cheeses.

**Thermization:** A form of heat treatment whereby milk is heated to 63°C for 10-15 seconds. Thermization has an effect on both the good and bad bacteria populations in the milk but is milder than pasteurisation.

**Washed-Rind:** Externally-ripened cheese in which the curd is broken down through the enzyme action of a bacterial rind- primarily brevi bacterium linens. The rind of the cheese is kept moist and salty during maturation to encourage the growth of this pungent, orange/ reddish/ pink bacterium. The high salt content of the rind inhibits the growth of most other forms of bacteria, whereas B.linens thrives in this saline, high humid environment. B.linens may also be found on the surface of certain blue cheeses. Washed-rind cheeses are characterised by an orange/ pinkish rind, semi-soft to soft in texture, and a mild to pronounced farmyard aromas. Also referred to as smear-ripening. Irish examples of washed rind cheeses include Milleens, Durrus, Gubbeen, Ardrahan, and Cais Rua. Washed-rind, cow's milk cheeses are the most discernable style of Irish farmhouse cheese.

**Whey:** The liquid content of the milk. It is possible to derive more solids from the whey by heating it to a high temperature. This is used to produce ricotta.

## Glossary of Cheese Terms

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