

Green Glades Creamery

At Green Glades Creamery, Terra Alta, W.Va., the Queen of Quality® label has seen much success. Home to the production of cheddar, Havarti, feta, cheddar curd and two varieties of their own farmstead spreadable cheese, Green Glades Creamery is hoping to soon add Mozzarella to their line up as they expand operations.



Ben and Callee Walsh founded the farm in 2003 with 36 Jersey cows and have expanded to as many as 85 cows back down to their current total of 60. They now sell their cheese-based products at farmers markets, specialty stores and five white table cloth restaurants in West Virginia. They use the Queen of Quality® stickers on all of their retail products and the emblem on all of their signs and banners.

The current herd of Jersey cows average about 12,000 pounds of milk and are bred to calve in April and May to maximize grazing during peak lactation. The herd currently has a fat test exceeding 5.0% and a 4.1% protein test. The cheese production uses 10% of the farm's milk, but will also increase in the next few months to account for the increased markets and product range.

“We sample cheese at all of our markets so we get immediate feedback with our sales,” said Ben. “We also work with about half a dozen chefs on product development and different uses for our products on their menus.”

Green Glades Creamery began producing cheese in May 2011, and became Queen of Quality® producers later that same summer to take advantage of the free and cost-effective marketing materials, as they were already a REAP herd. Since the farm is leased, the creamery was built a mile and a half down the road by their house, where the milk is transported.

“We have always been interested in making a value-added product and we found cheese to be the most amenable,” said Ben.

Green Glades Creamery has participated in several local food competitions. During the West Virginia Recipe Challenge in the summer of 2011 they won the new business division, which is open to all new food businesses and budding food entrepreneurs in West Virginia.

Between the couple, they have varied and extensive education in the agricultural industry, which is being put to great use as they plan, develop and market their homestead Jersey products. Callee earned a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree in animal science, and Ph.D. in biochemistry from West Virginia University (WVU) and is one of the University’s Goldwater Scholars. Ben Walsh earned bachelor’s degrees in agribusiness management and rural development and agricultural and extension education, and a master’s degree in agriculture, forestry and consumer sciences also from WVU.

Ben and Callee have much to look forward to as they expand operations at Green Glades Creamery to fulfill the needs created by growing their retail market base.



Callee at the cheese vat