



Cheese Making at Brue Valley

LACTICHECK ENSURES COST EFFECTIVE QUALITY CONTROL

Brue Valley Cheese

The Brue Valley herd of 490 Holstein-Friesian cows produce one third of the milk needed for Brue Valley Cheese. The balance comes from other local farms delivered direct to West Town House farm.

The cheese is made in traditional open vats with hand turning (cheddaring). The process is overseen by the



cheesemaker using his skills and judgement to ensure the perfect product.

The cheese is matured at the farms in a store, kept at 5-10°C for 10 to 16 months. The cheese is independently

graded at intervals during the maturation to monitor the development of the distinctive flavour, colour, aroma and texture. Cheese is sold as mature or vintage to suit individual customer preferences.

Ron McCann of Brue Valley Farms (part of the West Country Cheesemakers Group) explains how the LactiCheck assists its cheesemakers to maintain their high standards of quality:

“At Brue Valley we need to produce a consistent quality product for the packaged cheese market. Our basic raw material (milk) varies seasonally as well as locally at an individual producer level. This is expatiated by our sourcing of milk from a number of local suppliers.

Our traditional cheese making process involves standardising casein fat ratios using skimmed milk powder. An addition of milk powder to milk needs to be carefully controlled to prevent variations in the composition and flavour of the final product.

Certainly the cheesemakers art in controlling the process in the vat and developing it on the table is vitally important. Understanding why this is necessary, documenting the steps taken and being in a position to repeat the action can only occur from a knowledge base. Accurate, quick, simply derived information from a reliable source is absolutely necessary for this to occur.



While consistent quality is a worthwhile goal producing premier grade product is also important. In these competitive times striving for continuous improvement cannot be left to chance. Equally the avoidance of poor or inconsistent quality is vital for reputation.

The LactiCheck enables us to fine tune standardisation of each vat separately depending upon the milk source, not relying upon historic information from external labs and so our use of powder is much more targeted and cost effective. The LactiCheck has given us a good return on investment, saving us up to £200 per week during the summer and paying for itself inside a year.

LactiCheck

The LactiCheck provides fast, precise and affordable analysis of raw or processed milk and fluid milk products. Compact, light weight and portable, the LactiCheck measures fat, solids, protein, and density without the use of costly caustic chemicals or reagents and in a fraction of the time and cost of bench chemistry methods.

LactiCheck Measuring Parameters

- Fat: 0.3 - 9% ($\pm 0.08\%$)
- Protein: 2 - 5% ($\pm 0.2\%$)
- Lactose: 3 - 7% ($\pm 0.2\%$)
- Solids Not Fat (SNF): 6 - 12% ($\pm 0.2\%$)
- Density: 1.0260-1.0330 g/cm³ (± 0.0005 g/cm³)
- Added Water in Milk: 0 - 60% ($\pm 5\%$)

CheeseCrafter Software

CheeseCrafter predictive yield software automatically captures milk composition data from the LactiCheck and utilises established predictive yield formulae to provide a guideline for anticipated yield. The software records batch data and milk composition, reports predictive yield and provides a modelling worksheet to offer changes or improvements worth considering. The CheeseCrafter software is a powerful tool for cheesemakers to assist decision making to optimise quality and yield for each batch.

