

# FLASH

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## Pure Prairie is committed to producing high quality goat cheese

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**A** locally owned cheese operation in Ada, Okla., is striving to manufacture the highest quality goat cheeses from natural grass-fed and wholesome goat milk.

Pure Prairie Creamery, owned by brothers Bill and Todd Clark, along with business associate Ron Tidwell, named the operation to represent “pure” for wholesome and “prairie” for the grass-fed milk that is used in making the cheeses.

The Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center, located on the Oklahoma State University–Stillwater campus, has assisted Pure Prairie Creamery during its journey.

“I respect the approach that Bill and his group have taken in transitioning the creamery to local ownership,” said Jim Brooks, FAPC manager of business and marketing services. “It has been their priority and commitment from the beginning to ensure that every pound of cheese produced meets the quality and consistency that represents Pure Prairie.”

In February 2008, the brothers and Tidwell purchased the cheese

plant from Haystack Mountain. The cheese plant began in an incubator program provided by Pontotoc Technology Center through the efforts of Hershel Williams, agricultural business coordinator.

Bill Clark, who oversees the operation on a day-to-day basis, said they are committed to manufacturing the highest quality cheese from natural goat milk.

“The health benefits are important when compared to cow-milk products as goat cheese is lower in fat, calories and cholesterol,” Clark said. “Goat cheese also provides more calcium, but fewer carbohydrates than cow-milk cheeses.”

Most people who are allergic to cow’s milk or who are lactose intolerant can use goat-milk products. The digestibility of goat-milk products is primarily due to shorter fatty acid chains and smaller fat molecules than those that occur in cow’s milk.

Statistics state 47 percent of the worldwide population is allergic to cow’s milk, while only 3 percent have any allergic reaction to goat’s milk. Most people who have reactions to cow’s milk or are lactose intolerant can usually consume goat’s milk.

Pure Prairie currently offers seven varieties of goat cheese. All seven are named after Oklahoma native prairie flowers: Plains Sunflower goat cheddar, which is aged for six months; Smoked Plains Sunflower; Firewheel Pepper Jack; Smoked Firewheel; Lazy Daisy Monterey Jack; Smoked Lazy Daisy; and Meadow Garlic, a Monterey Jack with oven-roasted garlic.

Currently, Pure Prairie Creamery is in negotiations with a specialty foods distributor in Moore, Okla. This distributor would purchase the goat cheese and sell to its existing Oklahoma customer base.

Clark said they intend to have products placed in all applicable health food stores, retail grocery stores and restaurants who want to offer natural and wholesome products to their customers.

“Bill and his partners have been very meticulous about every detail since they purchased the business in February,” Brooks said. “They have invested a great deal of time in making sure they have the precise formulations for each variety of cheese, and every label design represents the natural and wholesome cheeses for which they are named.”