



MARY MCCLINTOCK
SAVORING THE SEASONS

Turkey and turmeric

Columnist loves the bird, the spice and the alliteration

I love words, rhymes and alliteration (when words used together start with the same sound).

When pondering how to write about my new local food discoveries, I grinned when I realized they all start with “Tur.” Turmeric may not have much to do with turkey jerky and turkey bacon, but they all start with “tur.”

I mentioned last week that I’d share Maria’s (from Lyonsville Farm) recipe for golden milk, as well as other fresh turmeric tips in time for you to get some at the next Greenfield Winter Farmers Market this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Four Corners School off of Ferrante Avenue in Greenfield (near Federal Street and Route 2).

Visit: greenfieldfarmersmarket.com

When my friend, Grace Edwards, and I talked about turmeric root, she said, “My father is in his mid-90s and he tells everyone he needs to eat turmeric because he does and he has no aches and pains.” Turmeric is known for its many health benefits.

What about the flavor?

Grace said, “Turmeric root in my morning smoothie has been fabulous! I will try the golden milk and use it to enhance my chai spice mix. It’s more mellow than ginger — yummy in a subtle way.”

I looked up other ways to use fresh turmeric root and found this advice from www.chowhound.com: “Peeled and grated, I liked it as part of the mix in meat dishes extended with egg and breadcrumbs, like chicken burgers, meatballs, salmon patties, meatloaf. For a healthy snack, grate it into plain yogurt, with vanilla and a little honey and some grated carrot.”

How do you use fresh turmeric root? Please let me know.

Now, the other “tur” foods.

I was thrilled to hear that Diemand Farm’s store in Wendell (www.thediemandfarm.com) is selling their own turkey jerky and turkey bacon. I asked Brian Bailey (Diemand), who makes the jerky and bacon, to tell me more.

He said, “Both are hand-prepared and all-natural with no artificial preservatives. Both are also gluten-free and nitrate-free.

The turkey jerky is offered in two main styles — teriyaki (sweetened soy sauce with garlic and ginger), as well as barbecue (spicy smoky sweet herbed jerky with a very balanced flavor profile).

They are marinated for three days in the respective brines, then smoked or dried as needed — bacon is smoked, jerky is dehydrated. The meat comes directly from farm pasture-raised turkeys, and offers both depth of flavor and support of a local farm. The turkey bacon is brined Canadian style — it contains fresh thyme, sage, oregano and local maple syrup. It’s not super salty.

The jerky, depending on style, is marinated in a blend of spices, herbs and sauces, including gluten-free soy sauce and sea salt. The jerky has a shelf life of six months minimum. The turkey bacon is good for weeks in the refrigerator.

Is your mouth watering while reading those descriptions? Mine sure is! I laughed when I saw the “good for weeks in the refrigerator” note. For turkey bacon to last for weeks in my fridge, I’d really need to hide it from myself. And, turkey jerky is one of my favorite trail snacks. Thank you, Diemand Farm!

This week we’re eating ...

Golden milk

By Maria Topitzer, Lyonsville Farm in Colrain
4 black peppercorns
Seeds of 2 cardamom pods
2 cloves
1 C. milk
½-inch piece of fresh turmeric root
¼-inch piece of fresh ginger root
honey, to taste

Crush peppercorns, cardamom seeds, and cloves with a mortar and pestle. Chop the turmeric root and ginger (no need to peel fresh roots). In small pan, heat milk along with spices for 2-3 minutes. Let mixture cool until it’s warm, then drain into a cup. Add honey to taste. Drink immediately. Makes 1 serving.

The sign on Maria’s turmeric root basket says: “Health benefits include: anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, colds and coughs, arthritis aches and pains, antioxidant.”

Local food advocate and community organizer Mary McClintock lives in Conway and works as a freelance writer, brand promoter and editor. Send column suggestions and recipes to: mmclinto@yahoo.com

Go(a)t milk?

Cheeses, yogurt, kefir and more at Little White Goat Dairy

By SHELBY ASHLINE
Recorder Staff

As the sun rises over the hills of Orange, covered with golden tree-tops, Rachel Scherer opens the door to her rustic wooden barn.

“Come on ladies!” she calls, and with soft bleats, more than 20 goats of different sizes and colors step from the barn into the daylight.

One by one, Scherer leads each goat by its yellow collar into the milking room and, at just 6 a.m., begins her daily tasks at The Little White Goat Dairy at Heritage Fields Farm.

The Little White Goat Dairy, a 100-percent solar-powered farm at the end of Gidney Road, offers a unique selection of goat milk, yogurt, cheeses and fermented milk called kefir.

“I like to make different flavor profiles than you can get anywhere else,” Scherer said.

The business attracts local customers as well as those from central Massachusetts, many of whom are allergic to cow milk. In fact, an allergy to cow milk is part of what inspired Scherer to start The Little White Goat Dairy.

Baaa-ck to the basics

Scherer and her husband Bruce first purchased the 81-acre farm in 1981. While working as a laboratory scientist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Rachel Scherer started keeping gardens and animals simply to feed her family.

“I just decided I’d really rather just go back to working at home and keeping animals,” she said.

In 2005, she and Bruce started work on the barn, completing all the construction themselves other than pouring the foundation. Being allergic to cow milk, someone recommended that Scherer try keeping goats instead, and she purchased her first Nubian-Saneen cross goats.

Her first goats, however, had very little handling and Scherer decided to increase her flock with two LaMancha goats that were more accustomed to people. She has used LaMancha goats for milking ever since.

“They were just so calm and easy to work with,” Scherer remembers.

Her third LaMancha, named Little White Goat, later became the namesake for Scherer’s business.

“She was my first really good milker,” Scherer said. “She taught me everything I needed to know.”

Getting her dairy production off the ground meant making yogurt, cheese and milk for about seven families, Scherer said, and working four to six hours a day. She decided to make the dairy a full-time business, which entailed taking United States Department of Agriculture classes for first-time farmers and applying for necessary permits.

“By fall 2013, we finally had every inspection and every permit finished,” she said. And so, The Little White Goat Dairy was officially born.

Today, the farm features 24 goats, Scherer said, including two males for breeding. The barn is meticulously divided into a milking room, a milk bottling room and another room for producing yogurt, cheeses and kefir, which she calls “the make room.”

However, not everything is exactly as Scherer had originally envisioned. For



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Rachel Scherer with the namesake of the Little White Goat Dairy at the Heritage Fields Farm in Orange.

example, knowing there was only one other farm in Massachusetts producing just goat milk, Scherer originally intended to sell just milk to fill the demand. However, she quickly found a demand for a greater variety of goat products.

“It’s been successful beyond the business plan,” she said. “We had a five-year business plan and we’ve gone well past it in just our third year.”

A hard day’s work

During milking season, which runs

from April to December, Rachel Scherer starts her day by getting to the barn at 6 a.m. and milking each female goat — called a doe or nanny. Each goat produces between a half gallon and full gallon of milk each day.

Scherer also cleans their sleeping area, puts the milk in a tank for low temperature pasteurization, cleans the milking equipment and cares for the farm’s pigs. Heritage Fields Farm also sells pork, chicken and goat meat.

After breakfast at around 8:30 a.m., Scherer gets started on production. She adds non-GMO cultures to the milk and allows it to incubate for between four and 24 hours, depending on the product.

In the case of feta and chevre cheeses, she said, the mixture separates into curds and whey. The whey is drained.

Often, the next day is spent seasoning and packaging the products. Scherer allows wheels of cheese to dry, rubbing them with salt before adding seasoning. Feta cheese is allowed to age.

Scherer said none of the milk or whey goes to waste, but is fed to the pigs and chickens, which she believes in turn produces better-tasting pork and chicken.

Then, there’s the tedious equipment cleaning, which Scherer said is the hardest part of her work.

“There’s more cleaning than anything else,” she said.

In all, Scherer works 12- to 14-hour days all milking season, using the winter to do maintenance on the equipment and buildings. Her husband Bruce works on the infrastructure and cares for the meat animals year-round.

Despite the hard work, Scherer said she wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I love goats. They’re very sweet and have very different personalities,” she said. “There’s no way I could do this if I didn’t like the animals and producing food in this holistic way.”

A devoted clientele

Customers can purchase The Little White Goat Dairy’s products not only at the farm, but at Amherst Farmer’s Market, Quabbin Harvest in Orange and Simple Gifts Farm in Amherst. Scherer also sells her products through the Massachusetts Local Food Cooperative, an online farmer’s market that delivers orders to pre-determined drop-off points in central Massachusetts.

“We originally thought that most of our business would be from west of here,” Scherer said. “But actually, most

of our customers are from east of here.”

Scherer believes that while western Massachusetts residents can easily access locally-produced food, it becomes more difficult in central and eastern Massachusetts, attracting her business’s main customer base. Other customers, she continued, stop in for the first time on their way to vacation in the Berkshires, then start to come regularly.

“People come here and they taste the milk and the yogurt and they say ‘Wow, this is so much better than what I bought in the store,’” she said. “It’s because it’s fresh ... I make the products like I’m making them for my family.”

Many customers passionately love one particular product or another, so Scherer comes to know her regulars’ orders.

“It’s developed a real following,” Scherer said of The Little White Goat Dairy. “The people who’ve decided they like it really, really like it.”

Scherer particularly prefers direct sales at Heritage Fields Farm and Amherst Farmer’s Market.

“I like to be able to meet people and talk to them about the food,” she said. Plus, it’s a great opportunity to provide samples.

Scherer said customers who come to the farm are invited to tour the facilities, explore the hiking trails or have lunch at the picnic tables along the pond. Of course, they can also get to know the goats behind the whole production.

“They kind of sell the product for me,” Scherer said, adding how happy, friendly and well-cared for the goats are.

“They’re not in this stressed out environment of being a commodity ... We do everything that we can to make sure they have a happy and healthy life.”

Scherer hopes to one day hold regular workshops at the farm. One idea, she said, is to have guests make their own mozzarella cheese and make pizzas together over a fire pit, or have a pig roast.

“I’d like to find ways to bring people to the farm for more than just going to the store,” she said.

Additionally, Scherer is considering expanding her business by excavating into the hillside next to the barn. With a cheese cave set in the hillside, she could offer aged cheeses as well.



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Little White Goat Dairy owners Rachel and Bruce Scherer.



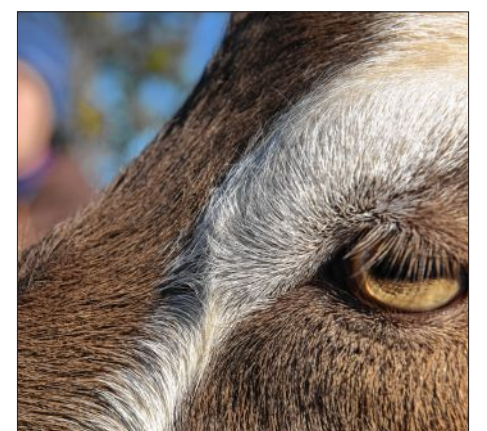
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Some of the products made at the dairy.



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Rachel Scherer puts a temperature probe into the vat pasteurizer/fermenter in the room where they make cheese, yogurt and kefir.



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Goat eye at the Little White Goat Dairy.