

Say Cheese: New Molds for “Old” Cooperative Forms? The Case of Wisconsin Specialty Cheesemaking

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Are cooperatives in American agriculture artifacts of commodity production, the “old economy” or specific economic conditions associated with a by-gone era? Or is there a positive role for cooperative organization in specialty markets, custom-quality production and other “new economy” sectors characterized by fragmented or rapidly changing markets? In this paper we look at a particular kind of new economy industry in the agricultural sector – Wisconsin specialty cheese producers. Like many new economy industries, specialty cheese producers market niche products, rely on select suppliers and distributors, and operate small-scale businesses. Moreover, on first pass, the prospects for cooperatives in specialty cheese production seem quite dim, given the notable absence of conditions typically associated with cooperative enterprise in artisanal agricultural production and local foods subsectors like this one.

Cooperatives traditionally thrived under specific conditions in the U.S. Historically, producers and consumers formed cooperatives to manage hold-ups and other transactions costs they faced with “trusts,” “combines” and investor-owned corporations in key infrastructure sectors. Cooperatives were typically organized by homogenous

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groups, who dealt in relatively homogenous commodities. They emerged from political struggles over corporate consolidation, appearing in waves as farmers and independent producers mobilized to capture fruits of development, promote small stakeholder forms of capitalism, and preserve republican virtues of community, self-sufficiency and self-governance. They drew on cooperative templates and social identities brought to the US from Scandinavia and other northern Europe countries. And they received vital infrastructure support first, from social movements like the Grange and Farmers Alliance, and later, from national regulatory programs that used cooperatives as a redistributive mechanism to support farm incomes. Indeed, some cooperatives became formidable “big” businesses in their own right, as cooperatives like Land O’ Lakes and Sunkist adopted rationalized business practices, allied themselves with supermarket chains to secure outlets for high-volume production, and came to dominate key market segments.

Few, if any, of these conditions seem to characterize Wisconsin specialty cheese production, the focus of this study. New economy producers, like specialty cheese producers, represent the polar opposite of the conventional case for agricultural cooperatives. Indeed, Wisconsin specialty cheesemakers, in key respects, are an industrial district, similar in form and function to the Italian textile or footwear industries. They are involved mainly in high-quality, small to medium batch production of individualized, rather than commodity, cheese. They are a diverse lot, seeking aggressively to differentiate their products, win awards for their produce, and create a niche for themselves. They rely heavily on informal ties and long-term relations to conduct many key business dealings. Moreover, they operate not in a world of predatory corporations, but rather, at least in part, in a world of farmers markets, Whole Foods

Markets, high-end chefs, and local foods restaurants. Perhaps even more pointedly, some cheesemakers quite deliberately reject cooperatives as artifacts of commodity production, big business or market control which are fundamentally inconsistent with their own identities as independent artisans. For these reasons, and perhaps not surprisingly, we find relatively little cooperative activity in our sample of cheese producers.

Yet contrary to historical pattern and theoretical predilection, we do find cases of cooperative organizing, employed by specialty cheesemakers in ways that are deeply connected to their economic practices and self-definitions. This puzzle, we argue below, directly challenges any simple one-to-one correspondence between organizational form on the one hand, and economic sector, transactional characteristics, social structure or social identities on the other. It forces us to reject “excessive institutional determinism” of either the economic or sociological variety. And it forces us to understand instead how producers can and do creatively transpose, edit or redeploy organizational forms to new settings, reconfiguring their elements, rearticulating them with contexts and ongoing practices in new ways, and creating credible “alternative pathways” for small business organizing in otherwise settled domains. “Old” cooperative forms, we find, can be, and have, been retasked, retained to “new tricks,” given new cultural meaning, and may very well have a role of new economy agriculture. Moreover, this is partly possible, we find, because artisanal producers strategically reinvent the cooperative form both “economically,” as a mechanism for managing new economy transactional or governance issues, and “sociologically,” imbuing old forms with new meanings and identities, or realigning the identity of the business organization with the categorical identity of the cooperative.

Specialty cheese production in Wisconsin

Many of the farmers who settled in Wisconsin during the first half of the 1800s were from New York, then the leading dairy producer in the United States, but it wasn't until the late 1800s that dairy came to dominate agricultural production in the state. In 1872 William Dempster Hoard founded the Wisconsin Dairyman's Association, launching Hoard on a career that earned him the unofficial title, "father of the Wisconsin dairy industry."¹ The University of Wisconsin also played a crucial role in the development of the dairy industry, offering various courses around the state to educate farmers – particularly recent German and Scandinavian immigrants – about the benefits of dairying. Moreover, Stephen Babcock, a University of Wisconsin chemistry professor, had two scientific breakthroughs that would revolutionize cheesemaking. First, he created the "Babcock Test" in 1890 to measure the butterfat content of milk, thus allowing dairy farmers to determine which cows produced the best milk for cheesemaking. Second, Babcock worked with bacteriologist Harry L. Russell to create a cold-curing process for ripening cheese. By 1899 more than 90 percent of Wisconsin farms raised dairy cows, and by 1915 Wisconsin was producing more cheese and butter than any state in the United States.²

Until recently most cheeses produced in Wisconsin were "commodity" cheeses, including cheeses of European derivation – most notably, Swiss (Switzerland), Cheddar (England), Mozzarella and Provolone (Italy), Muenster and Limburger (Germany), and Gouda and Edam (Holland) – as well as cheeses first created in Wisconsin, such as Brick

¹ Ellis B. Usher, *4 Wisconsin: It's Story and Biography 1848-1913* 681-82 (1914).

² Wisconsin Historical Society, "The Rise of Dairy Farming" (<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-028/>)

and Colby. In the early 1900s, cheese was produced in small batches at local cheese factories. Wisconsin boasted 2,800 cheese factories in 1922, making it a leading state in dairy and cheese production.³ And, to a remarkable extent, this production was cooperatively organized or embedded, with Wisconsin alone boasting over 170 cheese cooperatives in 1922, and a broader ecology of 716 and 908 milk, cheese and creamery cooperatives, respectively, in 1925 and 1927.⁴ During this era, at least, Wisconsin, its dairymen, and its cheesemakers represented a central locus of cooperative organization in agriculture.

As refrigeration trucks became more common, the need for local production diminished, and the number of cheese plants in Wisconsin declined to approximately 1,500 by 1945. Over the past 50 years, California has increased its commodity cheese production substantially, placing further pressure on Wisconsin cheesemakers. Today Wisconsin has only 115 cheese factories, with slightly over half producing commodity cheeses.

Some of the cheese factories that were vacated by commodity cheesemakers have been refurbished for the production of specialty cheeses. Most Wisconsin cheesemakers refer to “specialty” cheese, rather than “artisanal” cheese, though the distinction between these two concepts is not readily apparent. The American Cheese Society offers the following definition of “artisanal” cheese:

³ Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, “History of Wisconsin Cheese” (http://www.eatwisconsincheese.com/wisconsin/history_of_wisconsin_cheese.aspx)

⁴ Elsworth R.H., 1928. *Agricultural Cooperative Associations, Marketing and Purchasing, 1925*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture. Elsworth, R.H. 1930. *Cooperative Purchasing and Marketing, 1920-1930*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture.

The word “artisan” or “artisanal” implies that a cheese is produced primarily by hand, in small batches, with particular attention paid to the tradition of the cheesemaker’s art, and thus using as little mechanization as possible in the production of the cheese. Artisan, or artisanal, cheeses may be made from all types of milk and may include various flavorings.⁵

“Specialty” cheese, as that term is used by Wisconsin cheesemakers, is well-captured in this definition from the Wisconsin Dairy Artisans Network:

A subjective term used to classify cheeses of exceptional quality, notably unique or produced in limited quantities. Cheeses that are combinations of different cheese types also may be referred to as specialty. For example, Blue/Brie is a soft-ripened specialty cheese with a blue vein mold throughout.⁶

In our conversations with Wisconsin cheesemakers, it became apparent that “specialty” cheese is a broad category, including everything from commodity cheeses with added flavorings (*e.g.*, Havarti with dill) to the mixed milk cheeses of Carr Valley (*e.g.*, Gran Canaria, which is made with a blend of sheep, goat, and cow milk) to the most celebrated Wisconsin specialty cheese, Pleasant Ridge Reserve, which is described on the Uplands Cheese Company’s website as “an artisanal cheese made from the non-pasteurized milk of a single herd of Wisconsin cows fed and managed using natural, ‘old world’ practices.”⁷

All cheesemakers in Wisconsin must be licensed by the State.⁸ Qualifications for a license include working as a cheesemaker assistant under the direct supervision of a licensed cheesemaker; passing a written examination on the laws related to

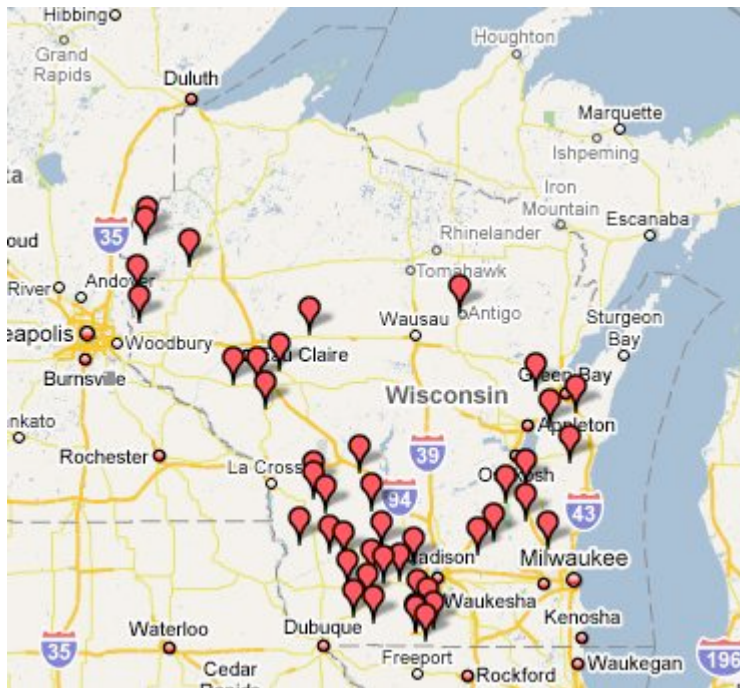
⁵ The American Cheese Society
<<http://www.cheesesociety.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=51>>.

⁶ Wisconsin Dairy Artisans Network (<http://www.wisconsinartisans.com/definitions.html>).

⁷ Uplands Cheese Company (<http://www.uplandscheese.com/>).

⁸ Wisconsin Statutes § 97.17 (“No person shall engage as a ... cheesemaker unless the person has a license from the” Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection).

cheesemaking, the fundamentals of cheesemaking, various aspects of cheese plant operations, and practical knowledge of dairying. The apprenticeship requirement may help to explain the high concentration of cheesemakers in the southwest quadrant of Wisconsin. Below is a map showing the locations of Wisconsin's specialty cheesemakers, many of whom were contacted as part of this study.⁹



Currently, Wisconsin cheesemakers look less like their “commodity cousins” of most of the 20th century than they do an industrial district of small batch, specialty craft producers. They are geographically concentrated. They are a heterogeneous group of producers, pursuing high-quality, small to medium batch production of individualized, cheese, often using highly skilled labor. They work aggressively to differentiate their products, win awards for their produce, create a niche, and establish a name for

⁹ Wisconsin Dairy Artisans Network (<http://www.wisconsinartisans.com/>). The complete list of these specialty cheesemakers appears in the Appendix.

themselves in a world of farmers markets, Whole Foods Markets, high-end chefs, and local foods restaurants. They rely heavily on informal ties and long-term relations to conduct their business dealings. Moreover, it is not uncommon for cheesemakers to self-consciously reject cooperatives as artifacts of an economic world, type of markets or product category that are inconsistent with their own identities as independent artisans.

What role, if any, is there for cooperative organization in this changed world of artisanal cheese? To address this question, have been conducting in-depth, structured interviews with Wisconsin specialty cheesemakers. Each interview was conducted with an official representative of the cheese company, usually the founder, the general manager, or the head cheesemaker. During the interviews we asked the representatives about the basic operations of their business, the company's history, the background of choosing a particular legal form, governance and decision-making issues, and the future plans and goals of the company. We were particularly interested in these interviews in the decisions cheesemakers made about the form of organization, whether or not they considered cooperative forms, and the factors that influenced their thinking on these matters. To date, we have interviewed representatives from eighteen different cheese companies.

Preliminary findings: Three cases of cheese production

Consistent with a profile of a markedly changed world of cheese making, cooperative forms appear comparatively rare in this subsector. Nevertheless, there was variation across cheesemakers in whether or not they engaged or incorporated cooperatives into their operations. Some embraced cooperativism, and in some new and surprising ways, suggesting a continued role for cooperatives even in this changes world.

In this section, we look at factors mentioned in structured interviews with cheesemakers as influencing their choices of organizational form. We focus on three particular cases, which represent distinct patterns of form choice, and use these cases to set up a preliminary typology of specialists' relations to cooperative forms.

Carr Valley (Cooperatives irrelevant?)

Carr Valley is a mid-sized cheese company that has goals to grow significantly over the next several years. They make roughly two million pounds of cheese each year. Although the bulk of their business is in the commodity cheese line (i.e., cheese curds and cheddars), they have a variety of specialty cheese products that they market through retail chains and wholesalers. Even their cheddar cheese products are produced with traditional methods, making the products more artisanal than the bulk cheese of mass producers. (“[M]ore and more [our cheddar] is becoming artisan cheese because the techniques are getting lost. If you look at the video out there now and some of the pictures from the 1930s, there’s like some of the same equipment. So they’re still doing it the same way.”) Like many of the representatives we interviewed, Carr Valley uses “artisanal” not only to describe the specialty, rare forms of cheese produced but also to denote the authenticity of production methods used by the company. Authenticity, and consequently the label “artisanal,” is linked to tradition and novelty.

Carr Valley is not associated in way with a cooperative form. It does not have any official ties to dairy cooperatives nor did they consider using a cooperative legal form. The plant was originally operated as a family business, but in the 1980s the family business split, and one of the remaining family members bought the plant used by the

company today. After the split the company reorganized as a complex legal structure, in which an LLC owned the real estate and the cheese company became an incorporated organization. The owner also created separate corporations to handle storage and warehousing. When asked about the complexity of the legal arrangements, the representative noted that the company's lawyer was largely responsible for the legal choices.

Manager: Well, the same person owns all of [the different companies]. We do have different ends for different ones. His idea, if you ask any of us, we're Carr Valley Cheese Inc. He's trying to get the focus off of just Sid Cook and bring it into Carr Valley and so you're looking at cheese that is made by Carr Valley, not Sid Cook. And that way, if something happens to him, life goes on – it goes on.

Interviewer: And I missed the name of the one in Mauston.

Manager: Wisconsin Pride. We also have another company that's our warehouse, we have a cold storage facility and portage and we call that Portage Cold Storage.

Interviewer: So is that owned by Sid or is that owned by the Corporation.

Manager: Nope, that's owned by LLC.

Interviewer: And as far as you know, there's no contract between these entities, they just sort of do their separate things.

Manager: Yup.... I think what happened was that at one point and time, this is what the company was, but then we added this and then they added this and to come up with different ways of interacting....but I think "Why don't you just put it all together?"

Interviewer: So my sense is that lawyers are involved at some point here.

Manager: Exactly.

Leaving the choice of legal form to a lawyer's discretion is a fairly common practice among the company representatives we interviewed. Relegating legal decisions to a lawyer may have important ramifications for the organization of cheesemaking. One possibility is that there is less heterogeneity in organizational form than might be

beneficial to the specialists. Cooperatives and other more innovative legal forms may be left out of the range of possibilities because the local lawyers do not have sufficient knowledge about how to make these kinds of choices (we discuss this more in relation to the Edelweiss case). As we discuss later, choosing a cooperative form may have special benefits for cheese producers, but inasmuch as choice of legal form is limited to a narrow range these benefits are unavailable to producers who lack the right connections to more sophisticated legal assistance. Alternatively, there may be very “loose coupling” between the *legal* form of cheesemaking enterprise, and its day-to-day activities, practices and problem. Rather than understanding forms as specific controls or guides that proscribe particularly activities or routines, they may function more as general templates, which can be fairly costlessly chosen and adapted to a wide variety of particularly circumstances and enterprise operations. In fact, legal forms may simply be set aside as “something lawyers do,” to be called into play when legal conflicts arises.

Butler Farms (Cooperatives versus artisanal production)

Butler Farms is a small cheesemaking business operated by a husband and wife team. Rather than using milk from cows, Butler cheese is made with sheep milk. Due to the small scale of the operation, they produce six select cheese varieties, which they distribute directly to customers. While in the past the company tried to widen their distribution through large retailers and farmers markets, they found that they could cut costs and enhance their net income through a face-to-face distribution strategy, selling the bulk of their products to local restaurants and stores. Rather than relying on contracts or

purchase orders, their sales are deeply embedded in trusting relationships, typical of relational contracting (Macaulay, 1965; Grannovetter, 1985).

Ya it's [a cash business]. Sometimes it's like "Oh, I forgot my checkbook today" and then it's like "Don't worry about it." A few weeks ago it was a girl from Harvest, you know, and it was "I'm not gonna be here next week but I will be here the next two weeks." And sure enough she came back on Saturday and bought more things and paid for them. You know, [a local specialty food store owner], every couple of weeks she tells us how much she needs, we make the delivery on like Saturday at the farmers market and a few days later the check is in the mail.

Butler Farms's self-definition as artisanal is based on the notion that not only do they produce specialty cheese but that they use atypical distribution methods. The do-it-yourself and "buy local" ethic are deeply engrained in their *modus operandi*.

Butler does not currently organize as a cooperative and do not acquire any milk from cooperatives because they raise all of the sheep on their own farm. But at one time they did belong a cooperative of sheep farmers. Over time, they "drifted away" from the cooperative. Leaving the cooperative was an explicit choice on their part to enhance their independence and preserve their strategy of staying small.

There's a sheep dairy coop, and we belonged to that in the beginning, but we kind of drifted away, it was amicable, as far as I'm concerned. We just didn't go to any more meetings; they were going in a different direction than we were. They were looking to get big and do mass production and national distribution and we were looking to try and stay more local and I think, for me, the split came just...they wanted to go to a big multi-national for making their cheese. And it was like "Why are you doing that?" you know?... we decided that we were going in different directions is all. I see that you're going that way, and I'm not going that way. And it worked out better for us in that it helped us stay small cause it's so hard to do that. It's so easy to try to make more, to try and distribute more, to get more animals...it kind of takes on a life of its own.

We've really struggled to try to stay small ...we've been doing this full time since '93 since we moved here, and I'd say about '02 - '03 the light bulb finally turned on. We said ok, no more farmers markets, no more distributions, and how can we do what we do – we milk only seasonally now.

For Butler Valley, joining a cooperative meant losing some of their autonomy and their connection to the craft of cheesemaking. The cooperative planned to hire an independent cheesemaker to process all of their sheep milk, which would have reduced the production and distribution costs of each farm. While this move may have been economically sound for Butler, their choice to disaffiliate with the cooperative also reflected their commitment to cheesemaking as a craft and family lifestyle. In effect, Butler defined their economic interests *and* business identities in contrast or in opposition to cooperative forms, making cooperative organization relevant to the cheesemaking enterprise, but as something to be avoided or dismissed. Butler thus stands as a second possible category in our typology of cheesemaker-cooperative relations.

Edelweiss Cheese (The “coop fit?”)

Edelweiss Cheese is a mid-sized company, consisting of four farms, that produces roughly 1.2 million pounds of cheese each year. Edelweiss has seven specialty cheese products. The company distributes mainly to local retail stores and through farmers markets. The key distinguishing quality of Edelweiss is that it relies solely on milk coming from grass fed cattle. This unique grazing method helps them distinguish their product from cheese made from grain-fed cows and organic products. Edelweiss claims that grass fed cows produce a higher quality milk and cheese. The manager of Edelweiss stated this quality difference in the following quotation:

Different taste comes off the grass. You’ll pick up the flavors of what their eating, whether its clover or grass or whatever, that’ll get picked up in the flavor profile. And also the color is unbelievable because the carotene is freshly picked it carries through the milk and out into the cream. So the milk is really yellow.

Edelweiss's self-definition as artisanal comes in part because of its unique grass-fed product profile.

But Edelweiss's artisanal identity runs deeper than the kinds of cheeses it produces. Unlike most other specialty cheese companies in Wisconsin, Edelweiss uses a cooperative form to organize its suppliers. While the cheese maker himself is an incorporated entity, he subcontracts for the Edelweiss Grazers Cooperative, a cooperative consisting of four grass-fed dairy farms. The cooperative not only aggregates its milk to supply the cheesemaker, it also owns property and plant where the cheese is produced. The cheesemaker makes 15% of the profit from the sold cheese, and the farmers distribute the rest of the profit evenly among the four farms.

This cooperative arrangement gives more control over the cheese operation to the farmers, but another reason for using the cooperative form is because of its perceived congruence with their identity as artisanal producers. The founder, in the following quote, described the process of choosing the cooperative legal form as a deliberative decision to augment their artisan identity.

Founder: [W]e're trying to set up this whole dairy operation. We think we want to be a coop. Originally we weren't sure if we wanted to be a coop or an LLC... Well, we've worked for coops before and it actually creates a nice sound, you know, to what you're doing. Because I think for what we're doing coops kind of fit together with artisanal thinking, etc.

I would say it was as much for the marketing reasons. And also, I like the idea of trying to share, you know, the wealth. Well, obviously we can't totally share it because we have just a couple investors but the whole ideas of a coop really appeals to me.

Thus, while the other cheese producers focused on other dimensions of their business that enhanced their identity as specialty producers (i.e., Carr emphasized its

method of production; Butler drew on its means of distribution), Edelweiss used organizational form as an identity accentuating mechanism.

The cooperative form had another positive function for Edelweiss – it allowed the dairy farmers to exert control over their internal standards of product quality. Given that grass feeding was such an important input to their eventual product quality, the farmers used the cooperative as a means of control to assure that members maintained this feeding standard.

Founder: So the grazing has been a basis for why we started this coop because we found out that when you graze our cattle we produce a different kind of milk too.... Well, we've had a number of people be interested [in joining the cooperative], but what we've also found is that we've set certain parameters to protect the integrity of it, like we don't want anybody feeding corn silage to the milk cows during the grazing season.

Interviewer: Right.

Founder: Some guys like to feed corn silage. So what we have to do is as a coop...

Interviewer: You have standards, it sounds like.

Founder: Yep, we have standards but what is eventually going to have to happen is we're going to have to get a price that is high enough for these people that they'll say, ok, I'll give up the corn silage because I believe in what you're doing there at that coop.

By making feeding standards an admittance standard to the cooperative, the dairy farms ensure that their cheese products maintain a distinguishable niche position in the market.

Thus, the cooperative form has both symbolic and functional benefits for Edelweiss.

Given that one of the constraints in using the cooperative form is access to the necessary legal knowledge, Edelweiss had to seek special help to create their specialized form. Local lawyers did not have sufficient expertise. When the founders sought help

they first turned to the Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, who in turn put them in touch with a law firm in Minnesota that had extensive experience in doing legal work for Minnesota dairy cooperatives. Thus, in order to construct the particular legal arrangement used by Edelweiss, in which the cheesemaker contracted with a dairy cooperative that legally owned the property, they had to create contacts with external legal professionals.

More generally, Edelweiss points to the possibility that the cooperative form can be used inventively by specialty producers to supplement their identity in a craft economy. To do this, however, the cooperative form is actively mobilized by intentional actors who seek to imbue the cooperative form with new cultural meaning. In the case of Edelweiss this active mobilization was a joint effort of the dairy farmers who sought novel organizing tools with which to supplement their niche identity as artisanal producers of grass-fed products and the Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, an organization that has an explicit mission to promote cooperative use. This *redeployment* of the cooperative form took an old organizational form and infused it with new purpose and cultural connotation.

Conclusion:

Three preliminary findings emerge from our analysis. First, the business of artisanal cheese production in Wisconsin has developed in ways that appeared to have rendered the cooperative form of organization strikingly less common, or relevant, than in the past or than with commodity cheese producers. This is perhaps not surprisingly given the general absence in this specialty subsector of conditions commonly associated with cooperatives. However, we also find that there can be substantial loose coupling

between the legal or organizational form of an enterprise, on the one hand, and its business activities, coordinating practice and day-to-day problems, on the others. We find further that there was variation across cheesemakers in whether or not they engaged or incorporated cooperatives into their operations, variation which supported a preliminary typology of cheesemaker-cooperative relations in this specialty subsector. For some cheesemakers, cooperatives forms seem largely irrelevant; for others, cooperatives appear to represent business practices, product types and general orientations *against* which artisinal cheesemaking's core identity is defined. In some cases, cooperative forms (and perhaps legal forms in general) may be something that can be set aside for most, if not all, day-to-day practices, or used as a foil to distinguish one's niche or identity.

Yet some cheesemakers appeared to embrace cooperatives, refitting or refashioning it to the demands of this subsector, both a governance mechanisms to sustain high quality production, and as a form to express, communicate and perhaps consolidate a new, specifically artisinal identity. This third leg of our typology has potentially important implications. It suggests that cooperatives, and organizational form more generally, are not uniquely or fully determined by "underlying" economic conditions, the characteristics of core transactions or traditional sociological categories and identities. Instead, it supports a more multifunctional or multiple pathways view of industries and organizational form, and that organizational forms are more plastic or flexible than common understood, opening largely unexplored possibilities for retasking and redefining cooperative organizational forms. And, should further research support these notions, it suggests that cooperatives can play a vital role in sustaining new forms of agricultural production.

Appendix
Wisconsin Specialty Cheesemakers

Alto Dairy
N3545 County EE
Waupun, WI 53963
Phone: 920-346-2215
www.blackcreekclassic.com

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Arla Foods, Inc.
489 Holland Court
Kaukauna, WI 54139
Phone: 800-243-3730
www.arlafoodsusa.com

.....
Bass Lake Cheese Factory
598 Valley View Trail
Somerset, WI 54025
Phone: 800-368-2437
www.blcheese.com

.....
BelGioioso Cheese
5810 County Road NN
Denmark, WI 54208
Phone: 920-863-2123
www.belgioioso.com

.....
Blaser's USA
PO Box 36
Comstock, WI 54826
Phone: 715-822-2437
www.blasersusa.com

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Bleu Mont Dairy
Willi Lehner
3480 County F
Blue Mounds, WI 53517
Phone: 608-767-2875
www.cheeseforager.com/bleumont

Braun Swiss Käse
Hoch Enterprises
554 First Street
New Glarus, WI 53574
Phone: 800-624-1675

Brunkow Cheese of Wisconsin
17975 County Highway F
Darlington, WI 53530
Phone: 800-338-3773

Butler Farms
Janet Butler
W13184 Sjuggerud Road
Whitehall, WI 54773
Phone: 715-983-2285

Capri Organic Goat Cheese
Felix Thalhammer
P.O. Box 102
Blue River, WI 53518
Phone: 608-536-3636
www.capricheese.com

Carr Valley Cheese
S3797 County Trunk Highway G
La Valle, WI 53941
Phone: 608-986-2781
Website: www.carrvalleycheese.com

Cedar Grove Cheese
Bob Wills
E5904 Mill Road
Plain, WI 53577
800-200-6020
www.cedargrovecheese.com

Chalet Cheese Cooperative
Myron Olson
N4858 Hwy N
Monroe, WI 53566
Phone: 608-325-4343

Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese
W11555 Torpy Road
Waterloo, WI 53594
Phone: 920-478-4887
www.cravecheese.com

Crystal Ball Farms
Troy DeRosier
527 State Road 35
Osceola, WI 54020
Phone: 715-294-4090

Decatur Dairy
Steve Stettler or Nicole Looze
W1668 Hwy F
Brodhead, WI 53520
Phone: 608-897-8661
www.decaturdairy.com

Edelweiss Creamery
Bruce Workman
W6117 County C
Monticello, WI 53570
Phone: 608-938-4094

Fantôme Farm
Anne Topham
Ridgeway, WI
Phone: 608-924-1266
www.fantomefarm.com

FenceLine
22950 County Road Y
Grantsburg, WI 54840
Phone: 612-521-0450
www.fencelinecheese.com

Gingerbread Jersey
Carolyn and Virgil Schunk
1025 West Lincoln Street
Augusta, WI 54722
Phone: 715-286-4007

Henning Cheese
20201 Ucker Point Road
Kiel, WI 53042
Phone: 920-894-3032
www.henningscheese.com

Hidden Springs Creamery
Dean and Brenda Jensen
1597 Hanson Road
Westby, WI
Phone: 608-634-2521

Hook's Cheese Company
Tony and Julie Hook
320 Commerce Street
Mineral Point, WI 53565
Phone: 608-987-3259

LoveTree Farmstead Cheese
Mary or David Falk
12413 County Road Z
Grantsburg, WI 54840
Phone: 715-488-2966
www.lovetreefarmstead.com

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Maple Leaf Cheese Cooperative
Jeff Wideman or Shirley Knox
N890 Twin Grove Road
Monroe, WI 53566
Phone: 608-934-1234
www.wischeese.com

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Meister Cheese Company
PO Box 68
Muscodia, WI 53573
Phone: 920-387-5740 Ext. 316
www.meistercheese.com

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Montchevre Betin
336 South Penn St.
Belmont, WI 53510
Phone: 608-762-5878
www.montchevre.com

.....
Montforte - WFU Specialty Cheese Company
303 E. Highway 18
Montfort, WI 53569
Phone: 608-943-6771

.....
Mt. Sterling Cheese Cooperative
Alan Bekkum
505 Diagonal Street, PO Box 103
Mt. Sterling, WI 54645-0103
Phone: 608-734-3151
www.buygoatcheese.com

.....
Natural Valley Cheese
Tom Torkelson
110 Omaha St.
Hustler, WI 54637
Phone: 608-427-6907

Organic Choice
251 Industrial Drive
Mondovi, WI 54655
Phone: 715-926-4788
www.nextgenerationdairy.com

Organic Valley Family of Farms
Eric Newman
One Organic Way
LaFarge, WI 54639
Phone: 608-625-2602
www.organicvalley.coop

Park Cheese Company
Eric Liebetau
PO Box 1499
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Phone: 920-923-8484
www.parkcheese.com

Pasture Pride Cheese
Kim Everhart
110 Eagle Drive
Cashton, WI 54619
Phone: 608-654-7444

Roth Käse USA
Kirsten Jaeckle
657 Second Street
Monroe, WI 53566
Phone: 608-328-2122
www.rothkase.com

Salemville Cheese Co-op
3018 Hwy 145
Richfield, WI 53076
Phone: 800-782-0741
www.dcicheeseco.com

Sartori Foods
210 Morse St.
Antigo, WI 54409
Phone: 715-623-2301
www.sartorifoods.com

Seymour Dairy Products
124 E. Bronson Road
Seymour, WI 54165
Phone: 920-833-2900
www.seymourdairyproducts.com

Silver Lewis Cheese Co-op
Karla Erickson
W3075 County Road EE
Monticello, WI 53570
Phone: 608-938-4813

Specialty Cheese Company
Paul Scharfman
455 South River Street
Lowell, WI 53557
Phone: 920-927-3888
www.specialcheese.com

Springbrook Organic Dairy
Theresa DePies
W3151 Haddick Road
Springbrook, WI 54875
Phone: 715-766-2610

Sugar River Dairy
Ron and Chris Paris
N7346 County Highway D
Albany, WI 53502
Phone: 608-938-1218

Uplands Cheese Company
Mike Gingrich
5023 State Road 23
Dodgeville, WI 53533
Phone: 608-935-5558
www.uplandscheese.com

Widmer's Cheese Cellars
Joe Widmer
214 Henni Street, PO Box 127
Theresa, WI 53091
Phone: 888-878-1107
www.widmerscheese.com

Wisconsin Organics
302 W. Stanley St.
Thorp, WI 54771
Phone: 800-299-8533
www.wiorganics.com

Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Cooperative
Yves Berger
N50768 Cty Road D
Strum, WI 54770
Phone: 715-695-3617
www.sheepmilk.biz