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CYPRESS GROVE CHEVRE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF CHEESEMAKING
California Cheesemaker Continues to Lead American Artisanal Cheese Movement

ARTCATA, CA – Jan. 21, 2008 – Cypress Grove Chevre, America's leading goat cheese producer founded by Mary Keehn in 1983, celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2008. The company is known for its award-winning artisanal cheeses, including its signature top-seller, Humboldt Fog, a soft-ripened goat's milk cheese with a layer of ash, and new American classics such as Truffle Tremor, introduced last summer.

Like many food artisans and chefs who were instrumental during the 1970s in shaping California as the national epicenter for food and wine, Mary Keehn founded Cypress Grove Chevre (<http://www.cypressgrovechevre.com>) rather accidentally, as a natural offshoot of her love of good food and her family's rural lifestyle in California's rugged, coastal Humboldt County. "I didn't plan to become a cheesemaker," said Keehn. "I wanted the freshest, healthiest milk for my children, so I started raising Alpine dairy goats for milk. Before I knew it, we had more milk than we could drink, so I tried my hand at making cheese."

Keehn, whose knowledge of biology and chemistry supported her cheesemaking experimentation, quickly perfected a recipe for chevre that was informed by the French tradition but reflected a unique Northern Californian sense of place also known as "terroir." "When we started, if you found goat cheese in the U.S. it was imported from Europe," said Keehn. "French goat cheese has a sharper, tangier flavor that many American palates found overwhelming. Our chevre is creamy and complex and has a character that reflects our little spot on the map with its ancient redwoods and craggy coast. It couldn't be replicated anywhere else." Keehn's cheesemaking hobby soon gave way to cottage commerce when the area's most discriminating local chefs and retailers started asking for her chevre. And in 1983, she made the leap to full-time entrepreneur by founding Cypress Grove Chevre.

Today, the company is still based nearly 300 miles north of San Francisco in the bucolic town of Arcata and supports the community by employing 50 people and sourcing fresh milk from an ever-growing number of local family dairies. Its thoughtfully designed line of fresh, ripened, and aged cheeses is diverse yet focused, and includes its original fresh chevre varieties, Fromage Blanc, Purple Haze, Humboldt Fog, Truffle Tremor, Bermuda Triangle and its Creamline cheeses, Midnight Moon and Lamb Chopper (their sole sheep's milk cheese), among others.

Similar to California wine, American cheese had to evolve for years to gain respect and recognition on an international stage. Mary Keehn is part of a generation of women cheesemakers, which also includes Laura Chenel, Judy Schad, Paula Lambert and Allison Hooper, whose efforts helped craft a new category for American cheese. Along with these cheesemakers, Cypress Grove Chevre is regarded as an industry pioneer whose leadership helped make American artisanal, farmstead and specialty cheese the acclaimed category it is today.

Cypress Grove's cheeses have consistently garnered top awards through the years from all the prestigious shows: American Cheese Society, London World Cheese Awards, U.S. Cheese Championship and in 2007, the coveted Outstanding Product Line Award from The National

Association for the Specialty Food Trade where they bested 2,000 other specialty food companies from over 70 countries.

“We’ve been blessed to be able to do what we love for all these years,” said Keehn. “And I can honestly say that after all this time our team is more passionate than ever about innovating. Truffle Tremor is an example of a cheese that we hope will become a new artisanal classic like Humboldt Fog. It’s a labor of love and we’re proud to be part of a community of American cheesemakers who have created a whole new market for domestic cheese.”

Keehn says Cypress Grove has always championed sustainable business practices, but is now placing a renewed emphasis on land preservation as Humboldt County continues to evolve. The company works closely with local dairy farms and local government to preserve farmland from development, which in turn protects the pristine sense of place that imparts something special to its cheeses. “We’re part of a small, rural community and we’ve always seen it as our place to do whatever we can to support its future, particularly when it comes to protecting the natural environment,” said Keehn. “From land preservation to growing a market for local dairy families to earn a viable living, it’s all part of a bigger picture of stewarding a pretty wonderful lifestyle for future generations.”

Cypress Grove Chevre plans to celebrate its anniversary throughout the year, with a community-wide anniversary party in Arcata slated for September 2008.

About Cypress Grove Chevre

Cypress Grove Chevre is the leading producer of fine American goat cheese including the top-selling American artisanal classic, Humboldt Fog. Founded in 1983 by Mary Keehn, Cypress Grove celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2008 and continues a tradition of innovation by introducing original American cheeses to the marketplace. Cypress Grove produces fresh, soft-ripened and aged cheeses and was awarded Outstanding Product Line at the 2007 Fancy Food Show New York City. Based in Arcata, CA, where the Redwoods meet the Pacific, Cypress Grove’s award-winning family of products are found at fine retail outlets and dining establishments throughout the United States.