



**CYPRESS GROVE CHEVRE FOUNDER NAMED “SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR” BY SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
SBA Honors Mary Keehn for Entrepreneurial and Community Leadership**

**ARCATA, CA** – (April 27, 2009) The San Francisco chapter of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has named Mary Keehn, owner/founder of Cypress Grove Chevre, as its 2009 “Small Business Person of the Year.” In announcing Keehn’s award, the SBA cited her entrepreneurial success as well as Cypress Grove’s longtime commitment to its employees, land stewardship and economic development in Humboldt County.

“Cypress Grove has been a labor of love for me, but our success is due in large part to the great people who work with us,” said Keehn. We’re proud of our Humboldt County roots – that sense of place is evident in our cheese.” Cypress Grove employs 42 people and its cheeses have won numerous awards, including the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade’s (NASFT) “Outstanding Product Line” at the 2007 International Fancy Food and Confection Show in New York, as well as awards from the American Cheese Society, World Cheese Awards, and the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

The SBA’s criteria went beyond product quality and innovation to Cypress Grove’s commitment to its employees and to the community. “Creating a great workplace, supporting our local family dairies and working to preserve the land all reflect our values as a company,” said Keehn. “This award is gratifying as it tells us the business community values that philosophy as well.”

Keehn will receive the award at a “Spotlight on Success” event May 20 hosted by the Arcata Economic Development Corporation at the Arcata Theater Lounge.

Along with the SBA honors, Cypress Grove was also notified in April that two of its most popular cheeses, Humboldt Fog™ and Truffle Tremor™, have been selected as Silver Finalists for the NASFT’s 2009 soft™ Gold Award. The prestigious soft™ (“Specialty Outstanding Food Innovation”) awards recognize the highest quality specialty food and beverage products in 33 categories. More than 1,400 entries were received in 2009, and from that 111 finalists were selected. The Gold Award winners will be announced in June at the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York.

Cypress Grove Chevre was founded in Arcata, California in 1983. Keehn had a small herd of Alpine dairy goats that provided milk for her family and began making cheese from the surplus milk. Soon she was getting orders for her fresh chèvre from area chefs and retailers, and a viable business was born. “I sort of fell into cheesemaking, because I had all this extra milk on hand,” said Keehn. “When we started making cheese, there really wasn’t a market for fine domestic cheeses – everything was from Europe.”

Under Keehn’s guidance, Cypress Grove Chevre made high-quality cheese accessible by giving the cheeses whimsical, easy-to-pronounce names like Humboldt Fog™, Lamb Chopper, and Purple Haze. “We make an artisan product, but we do it with a sense of fun that reflects our personality,” said Keehn. Cypress Grove’s signature top-seller, Humboldt Fog™, is a soft-ripened goat’s milk cheese with a layer of ash. Its newest addition, Truffle Tremor™, was introduced in 2007 and has quickly become the second best-selling cheese Cypress Grove makes.

### **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 celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> 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.