Thoughts and Suggestions of a Practical Swiss Cheese Maker

By Fred Glauser, Five Corners Factory

Ladies and Gentlemen:

When Mr. Elmer asked me to talk before this convention I didn't fancy the idea one bit, because I am not accustomed to public speaking and this is my first experience. But I'll do the best I can. Of course, it would be much easier for me to speak German, but there are many in the audience who do not understand German and only a very few who can't understand English to some extent, so I will say the few words in English, as good as I can.

When we start making cheese at a factory, naturally our first thought is: how can we make a success of it. The foundation for the successful operation of a factory is co-operation between cheesemaker and farmer. A good cheesemaker will always strive to be on friendly terms with his patrons, but nevertheless he will have the delivery of milk under strict control and if he finds fault with a farmer for delivering bad milk or having unclean cans or some other reason, he should not make it public but let only the party concerned know about it, and he should not do this in harsh words, but should give friendly advice and make suggestions as to how the cause of the trouble could be eliminated. The maker should also visit the farms now and then to inspect the barn, milk house and milk utensils, but do this in such a manner that the farmer does not feel offended. The farmers in turn should do everything possible to deliver a clean, healthy milk to the factory and co-operate with the maker in every way.

A weak point with most of our Swiss cheese factories is the lack of intake rooms. Every factory should have a proper milk intake room, as this would very much facilitate milk inspection for the maker. We should also employ in our Swiss
factories different methods of payment. Paying milk by fat test would in my opinion help improve the quality of milk, as it would do away with skimming and watering.

A very important factor for the success of a factory is cleanliness. Every maker should pride himself in keeping his factory clean to the last corner and be clean about himself to be a good example to his patrons at all times. Although the surroundings of a factory may not have direct influence on the success thereof, they should be kept clean and neat to make a good impression on the stranger passing on the road, and thereby indirectly boost our industry.

There is one thing badly neglected in many factories, even such factories which are otherwise kept clean and in good order. That is the whey tank. Where the farmers carry no separate cans for whey but take it home in the milk cans, the whey tank should be washed clean every day just like any milk utensil. If it is not kept clean it soon becomes a breeding place for all kinds of harmful bacterias. They may get in the milk if the cans are not washed clean, as is sometimes the case on Saturday or Sunday nights, and serious trouble may be the result. I even go to the trouble to rinse the whey tank with a B. K. solution after washing.

In the last few years radical changes have taken place in our Swiss cheese industry. Clarification, cooling of milk, the use of starters and the practice of Standardization enable us to put out a product almost equal to imported Swiss cheese. Through cooling immediately after milking we get a much better grade of milk and I believe milk cooling should be compulsory. Without Standardization it would be impossible for us at certain times to make No. 1 cheese. A very important factor in the making of good Swiss cheese is a good starter. In my opinion a good bulgaric milk starter is the best. I was at one time a strong believer in whey starter, but I am positively convinced now that there is nothing better than a good milk starter. However, it can not be used alike in all factories nor can it be used alike at all times in one factory. Each maker has to find out and determine for himself which is the best way to use it for a certain milk. It is by no means a cure all,
but it takes care of a lot of poor milk, which would otherwise make poor cheese. I have had bad experiences with it myself, but I persisted and learned to use it right and I dare say I am getting good results now.

I wish to encourage those makers who have not yet attended a course for Swiss cheese makers at the Dairy School in Madison, to do it this winter and get acquainted with all the different tests and the latest methods in Swiss cheese making. This course is a fine thing, to be sure, but I believe we should have something even better. The Swiss cheese makers should have even better opportunity to learn and educate themselves in their profession and they should have it right here at home, in the center of the Swiss cheese industry, in the Swiss cheese Capitol of the U. S. We should have here in Green county, a model cheese factory with a laboratory and other equipment necessary for a winter school for Swiss cheese makers, where they could go to school not only 2 weeks, but 2 or 3 months during the winter and learn thoroughly the things which they can learn only superficial in 2 weeks. It would not have to be an expensive, elaborate structure, and I believe Green county with perhaps one or two adjoining counties could well undertake to erect such a building.

I thank you.