

Argyle Cheese

Successful Connection Powered by FuzeHub



Executive Summary

[Argyle Cheese Farmer](#) uses milk from a family-owned farm to produce yogurt and artisan cheeses. The 225-acre farmstead has a herd of 50 cows, and is the site of a small outbuilding that houses processing equipment and supports retail operations.

Argyle Cheese Farmer attended FuzeHub's Farm to Fork Solutions that was held in Rochester on October 3, 2014 to:

- Learn about potential support for a planned expansion
- Make connections that could help boost production
- Seek distribution outlets and marketing expertise

Situation

Argyle Cheese Farmer has outgrown its building on Fairview Randles Farm and is in the process of relocating to a much larger facility in the town of Argyle, a rural community north of Albany that has experienced significant job losses. The larger space that the food processor now rents was once the site of a catheter manufacturer that moved operations offshore.

The milk that Argyle Cheese Farmer uses comes from Fairview Randles Farm, which is owned by two brothers, Dave and Will Randles, and has been in the Randles family since 1860. Dave and his wife Marge own the Argyle Cheese Farmer, a separate business entity where Marge is the majority owner. The couple of 43 years work side-by-side in what Marge calls "the cheese factory."

Needs

Argyle Cheese Farmer wants to boost production capacity by a factor of 10 and needed financial and technical assistance to pursue this goal. Moving to a larger building provided more physical space, but buying and implementing new equipment was also essential. Paying for more vats and vessels was only part of the challenge, however. Designing new process flows was critical.

Engagement

When Marge Randles learned about FuzeHub's Farm to Fork event, she drove to Rochester to attend. There, she says she met "two nice ladies" from FuzeHub. Randles then met with representatives from the Center for Economic Growth (CEG), the regional manufacturing extension partnership (MEP) for the Albany area; as well as the Workforce Development Institute (WDI), which also aids economic growth.

Outcomes

Through connections made FuzeHub's Farm to Fork event in Rochester, Argyle Cheese Farmer received on-site visits from CEG and WDI. The cheese and yogurt producer then applied for and won a CFA award for new processing equipment. CEG told Marge Randles that help for the plant layout was also available and assisted Argyle Cheese Farmer with obtaining WDI grant funding to help cover the 32 hours of plant layout consulting services CEG would provide.

Today, Argyle Cheese Farmer has the equivalent of 5 full-time employees. With its expansion, the cheese and yogurt producer hopes to triple its sales in 18 months and hire the equivalent of 15 full-time workers in three years. In a town that was once the "catheter capital of the world", the combination of historic agriculture with modern manufacturing offers a brighter future.

"Putting it on paper helped us to see the whole picture."

--Marge Randles, Owner, Argyle Cheese Farm

"The WDI funding to Argyle was a direct result of the Farm to Fork Forum."

--Bob Trousie, WDI