

Report Summary

This project was done to create a training center for on-farm milk processing, which would educate farmers about the different aspects of operating value-added dairy products businesses on their farms. The center was established at a commercially-licensed, farmstead milk processing facility. Workshops were held each month for participants to learn to make a variety of cheeses and other fermented dairy foods. Instruction was given by experts in the field and participants received "hands-on" and "reality-based" training and education. Sixty people attended ten workshops; most of the participants were farmers and farmstead cheesemakers. The results were very positive and the classes usually had enough attendance to cover costs of operation. Participants found "hands-on" learning, networking, being at a facility that represented a typical farmstead milk processor, notebook materials, and small group size to be the most useful parts of the experience. It will be important in the future to create some classes for beginners and more technical classes, e.g. cheese aging, for experienced cheesemakers.

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