

## Plant makes Lancaster say, 'Cheese'

### Goat-cheese producer employs about 15 people at its new U.S. headquarters

LANCASTER, Wis. -- Move over cheddar, there's a new cheese in southwest Wisconsin.

The leaders of Woolwich Dairy Inc., billed as Canada's largest goat-cheese producer, started operations at the company's new U.S. headquarters in Lancaster earlier this month.

Fresh, soft unripened goat cheese, a spreadable product, will be produced at the new 28,000-square-foot processing facility.

"This is our third facility and this has probably been our most pleasant experience," said Michael Domingues, vice president of marketing for Woolwich. "The state and city employees have been really accommodating."

About 15 people work at the Lancaster cheese plant. In addition, Woolwich purchases the milk used to make its cheese products from about 120 dairy farms in Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Missouri.

"We're really happy with the quality of the milk, and the farmers we have been dealing with have been really impressive," Domingues said.

All of the cheese made at the Lancaster facility will be sold in the United States, he said.

Woolwich is a family-owned company that was started in 1983. It has processing facilities in Ontario and Quebec.

With niche markets becoming very popular in agriculture, Lancaster Mayor Jerry Wehrle said he expects Woolwich to have a bright future in the community.

"I think they are an excellent partner for a rural town," he said. "Being a family-owned business, you can feel the camaraderie between the new employees in that family atmosphere."

The Lancaster site is not functioning at full capacity yet and, because much of the equipment is newer and more efficient than the equipment in the other Woolwich processing plants, Domingues said its full potential is unknown.

"The possibilities are endless at this point; we're just scratching the surface of production capabilities at that plant right now," he said. "As the milk supply increases, we're looking forward to what's going to be coming out of that plant in the future."