



**For Immediate Release**

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## **California's Artisan Cheese Festival – Third Annual Event Tops All** *Third Successful Weekend Celebration Supports Cheesemaking Community*

[PETALUMA CA, APRIL 23, 2009] For the third year, California's Artisan Cheese Festival celebrated the bounty of artisan cheese made in California with another four-day sold-out event. More than 1,800 people from 14 states attended receptions, educational seminars, dinners and marketplace booths provisioned with artisan cheese, experts, authors and cheesemakers from California, Oregon and Utah. Petaluma was again the epicenter of the annual weekend event, issuing a city proclamation declaring the weekend "Artisan and Farmstead Cheese Producers Days" to honor the area's growing artisan cheese community.

This year's theme "Preserving and Advancing the Artisan Food Landscape" explored dairy and farming practices that ensure sustainable food production. "The festival brings local food artisans together and provides an extraordinary opportunity to meet the people who keep our food traditions alive," says festival Executive Director Lynne Devereux. "Over three years nearly 5000 people have come to the festival to have fun learning about artisan cheese and food."

Once again the nonprofit festival will share ten percent of ticket sales with five nonprofit beneficiaries that support the artisan cheesemaking community and its sustainability: The California Artisan Cheese Guild, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, Sonoma Land Trust, the Petaluma Chapter of the Future Farmers of America and Redwood Empire Food Bank. "Donations totaling \$26,000 from the three festivals help strengthen the organizations and their important role in sustaining the dairy and agricultural industries in the North Bay," says Tom Birdsall, festival Founder and President.

This year, the festival was a collaborative effort with the California Artisan Cheese Guild. "This collaboration will further enhance the missions of both nonprofit organizations," said Birdsall. Cheesemaker members of the California Artisan Cheese Guild that provided major support include

Bellwether Farms, Cowgirl Creamery, Fiscalini Cheese Company (with Lange Twins Winery), Laura Chenel's Chèvre, Marin French Cheese Company, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company, Redwood Hill Farm, Cypress Grove Chevre and Meyenberg Goat Milk Products.

In another first this year, the Oregon Cheese Guild sampled their artisan and farmstead cheeses in a seminar and marketplace booth. "Oregon cheesemakers were proud to be part of California's Artisan Cheese festival this year," said David Gremmels, co-owner of Rogue Creamery in Central Point, Oregon, board member of the Oregon Cheese Guild and president of the American Cheese Society. "It was a true highlight in my cheese journey to see and experience the beautiful assortment of California cheeses passionately displayed and enjoyed by cheesemakers and enthusiasts. I was taken by the sincere passion and commitment by those attending to truly understand and experience both the flavor and story behind each cheese. This quintessentially defines the purpose of a guild and the necessity of regional cheese events for makers and devotees," added Gremmels.

Major community sponsors of this year's festival include the Sheraton Sonoma County–Petaluma, Basin Street Properties, Clover Stornetta Farms, Pisenti & Brinker, LLP, First Community Bank, Cal-West Rentals, Pure Luxury Limousine, winetravel.com, Tony's Fine Foods, Sonoma County Tourism Bureau and the Donald & Maureen Green Foundation.

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California's Artisan Cheese Festival  
Sheraton Sonoma County – Petaluma  
**2010 dates:** Friday March 26 through Monday March 29, 2010  
[www.artisancheesefestival.com](http://www.artisancheesefestival.com)