

September, 2007

Kingsmeade Launch New Cheeses and New Branding

With two new blue cheeses added to their range and a fresh look for their labels, Kingsmeade Artisan Cheese is seeking to expand into a wider gourmet market.

Kingsmeade have been producing high quality cheeses at their 30-acre Wariarapa Farm and Factory since 1998. They produce 11 different vegetarian cheese varieties including gouda, brie, havarti, jack, feta, halloumi, emmental & red cheddar. Kingsmeade's latest additions are Tinui Blue and Sunset Blue. Tinui Blue is a ewe's milk blue cheese; Sunset Blue is made from cow's milk and named for its orange and blue hues. All cheeses bear local names for a regional identity—important to the cheesemakers.

Kingsmeade's distinctive new branding has just been launched. It highlights the meadow setting, animal friendly techniques, and environmentally responsible practices in their cheesemaking process.

Kingsmeade is a husband and wife partnership. Miles and Janet King sought a quiet change from their years spent shepherding on a Wairarapa station. They identified a need for cheese suitable for the lactose-intolerant, and produced their first ewe's milk cheese with milk from their own flock of East Friesian sheep. A few years on, the Kings expanded into cow's milk cheeses, sourcing the milk from the Jersey herd on a neighbouring farm.

The pair have developed gentle methods, such as handling their sheep without dogs, and not separating newborn lambs from their mothers. Their pasture contains favourites like plantain, lucerne, clover and dandelions and is planted with wild herbs like chicory, giving a depth of flavour to their milk. There's no need to round up the flock at milking time—the sheep hear Miles' voice and come on their own.

Miles is hands-on at every stage of production including lambing, twice-daily milking, cheesemaking, cutting and wrapping. He started out with very little equipment—fashioning moulds from locally available materials, some of which remain in use today. Over the years he has enhanced his cheesemaking techniques with a combination of reading, trial and error and learning from visiting European cheesemakers. Each batch of cheese is made in his small factory building on the farm. He sells cheese cut from the wheel in person every Saturday at the Wairarapa Farmers Market. Limited editions of new cheeses are available there—his popular manchego will soon be added to the range available nationwide.

A few miles away in their Masterton deli, Janet runs the business end of Kingsmeade, dispatching orders across New Zealand and overseas while selling cheese and locally made accompaniments to drop-in customers.

The Kings hold two Ballance Farm Environmental Awards as well as numerous bronze and silver New Zealand Cheese Awards.

With their new packaging complete, Kingsmeade cheese is now much easier to spot with representations of the wild herbs and native trees on the farm. Each cheese's label includes a flavour description, serving suggestions and the best way to store and serve the cheese. It is available at selected supermarkets and delis nationwide, or from Janet at (06) 378 7178.

Ends

Word count 504

For further information

Kirsten Browne

duganbrowne@ihug.co.nz

Ph 027 358 4751