

[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

Longmont, Colorado
 Saturday, February 14,
 2009

Publish Date: 2/6/2009

Haystack refocuses on cheese

Dairy also will offer retail sales at Longmont facility

By Tony Kindelspire
Longmont Times-Call

LONGMONT — Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy has changed leaders and decided to expand the various lines of cheeses it offers.

The company also is going back to its roots somewhat by selling directly to customers who visit its Longmont creamery at 1121 Colorado Ave.

“When we closed the farm, we lost our off-season retail,” said Chuck Hellmer, the company’s general manager and acting president. “So this is a good way to reintroduce that and re-establish contact with our customers.”

Hellmer takes over running the company from Tim Overlie, who left after the CEO position was eliminated. Hellmer has been chief financial officer since he joined Haystack in mid-2003.

The company — founded in 1992 by Jim Schott, who started by selling his hand-crafted cheeses at the Boulder County Farmers Market — decided last summer to shut down the Niwot farm where the company started. That was after shelving plans to open a second production facility in Oklahoma and relocate the Niwot farm to a much larger plot of land elsewhere in Boulder County.

Overlie was brought in by Schott, who was poised to retire anyway, a couple of years ago to guide the company through the expansion. But when those plans fell through, the company’s board of directors — including Schott, Overlie and Hellmer — decided to eliminate the CEO position.

In essence, Haystack is going from a company that has its own farms to one that just makes cheeses, Hellmer said.

Haystack currently gets its goat milk from a farm near Cañon City operated by Colorado Department of Corrections prisoners. It is in negotiations with a local goat farm and a local cow farm to get more milk, Hellmer said.

Getting cow’s milk will allow it to produce its “Buttercup” brand of “mixed-milk” cheese — which it has done only seasonally in the past — full time.

“There’s so many things you can do with mixed-milk cheese, and there’s not many people doing it,” Hellmer said.

Several other types of new cheeses have been or will be rolled out soon, he said, and the company’s sales continue to grow.

“We’re coast to coast,” Hellmer said, though he noted the Midwest can be a tough region for cheese sales. “There’s such a strong cheese market out of Wisconsin, it’s hard to penetrate there.”



Say cheese

Hilary VanDusen stacks queso de mano in the cooler at Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy in Longmont on Thursday. Haystack Mountain has begun selling cheese directly to the public at its Longmont creamery at 1121 Colorado Ave.

Morgan Varon/Times-Call

Even so, he said, he got a call Thursday from Chicago for an order of cheese. Visitors from that city to the Democratic National Convention in August had tried Haystack's cheeses while they were here and apparently took some home with them.

Tony Kindelshire can be reached at 303-684-5291 or tkindelshire@times-call.com.