



Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited welcomes Black River Cheese Company to its growing cheese business

Mississauga, Ontario – (May 25, 2016) Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited (“Gay Lea Foods”) is announcing an agreement, effective June 1, 2016, to purchase Black River Cheese Company (“Black River Cheese”), further strengthening the Co-operative’s presence in the Canadian cheese sector.

Gay Lea Foods is an award-winning artisan cheese maker, producing a wide variety of cheeses for retail and foodservice under current cheese brands, Salerno and Ivanhoe.

The addition of Black River Cheese, with its strong roots in agriculture-rich eastern Ontario, builds on Gay Lea Foods’ existing cheese operations in Hamilton and Madoc, Ontario.

As the new owner, Gay Lea Foods welcomes old and new patrons to the Black River Cheese store which will remain open as part of the continued commitment to the local community and thriving agri-food sector in Prince Edward County, Ontario. Retail and food service customers will also continue to be served from the Prince Edward County operations.

QUICK FACTS

- Salerno specializes in Italian-style soft, semi-soft and hard cheeses for retail and wholesale.
- Ivanhoe is well known for its cheddar and smoked Gouda and the recently launched *Nothing But CheeseTM* using our own cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses.
- Committed to innovation and growing the domestic cheese sector by offering Canadians more choice and new products, Gay Lea Foods has also launched two flavoured goat cheddar cheeses under the Ivanhoe brand.
- Gay Lea Foods has also recently acquired shares in Mariposa Dairy Ltd, which produces high quality goat and sheep cheese using 100% Ontario fresh goat and sheep milk for Canadian and U.S. markets.

QUOTES

“Gay Lea Foods is committed to growing the market for Canadian dairy and strengthening dairy farmers’ ability to secure markets for our milk. We are pleased to welcome the Black River Cheese Company into our dairy co-operative as part of our continued support for the Canadian dairy industry and Ontario dairy farmers.”

- *Steve Dolson, Chair of the Board*

“As Ontario’s largest dairy co-operative, we are focused on growing a strong, sustainable dairy industry that continues to deliver innovative, market-driven dairy products, while further diversifying the Canadian cheese sector.”

- *Michael Barrett, President and CEO*

ABOUT

In 1958 a group of farmers came together with a common vision – to better the lives of Ontario farming families and co-operatives. Gay Lea Foods is 100% Canadian owned and operated, with 1,240 dairy farmer owners who produce 35% of Ontario’s cow milk, and more than 3,800 members, making it the largest dairy co-operative in Ontario.

Gay Lea Foods has now opened its membership to include licenced dairy goat producers in Ontario and processes goat milk into a range of dairy products as well as serving as a broker in the sector. Gay Lea Foods is driven by innovation and growing the market for Canadian cow and goat milk. Our products include the consumer favourite Spreadables; North America’s first Smooth[™] Cottage Cheese; and an innovative snack made with 100% cheese, *Nothing But Cheese[™]*.

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