



*Savour Pure Winners!*

## **News Release, November 9, 2004**

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COURTENAY, B.C. - Vancouver Island's Natural Pastures Cheese Company from the Comox Valley won several prestigious awards this week at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. Judging carried out at Canada's largest and well known Agricultural Fair recognized seven award winning cheeses crafted by Natural Pastures Swiss Master Cheese Maker.

In the Open Variety Class, Natural Pastures won the top three places. Natural Pastures Cumin Verdelait is the first place winner, it's Garlic and Chives Verdelait the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner and it's unique Wasabi Cheese the 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner. The Natural Pastures sweep in this category extends to the 5th place winner; their Cracked Pepper Verdelait. Wow!

In the Mold Ripened Class, Natural Pastures Comox Brie and Comox Camembert are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place winners. The Royal competition's awards are rounded out with a 3<sup>rd</sup> place win in the Firm Variety Class with their unique Boerenkaas.

All Natural Pastures cheeses are truly luscious, hand made Artisan cheeses. Good cheese making starts with good milk and they only use milk fresh from their third-generation Certified Heritage Farm, Beaver Meadow Farms. Their milk is fresh, pure, pasture perfect; the best in Canada.

One taste of their delicious cheeses affirms their award-winning status, all hand made under the guidance of their Swiss Master Cheesemaker at their federally inspected (CFIA) facility. Many of Natural Pastures delicious cheeses are gold medal winners of the prestigious Canadian Grand Prix Cheese competitions (2002 & 2004), several are Grand Prix finalists and one is a 4<sup>th</sup> place winner at the 2004 World Cheese Championship.

The Certified Heritage Farm designation is earned through their strict adherence to the highest standards of land and animal stewardship. Their pristine pastures and streams flourish with salmon and wildlife, and the 500 dairy cows graze freely on a salad bar of grasses, wildflowers and herbs. Pasture perfect milk. No chemical pesticides. No antibiotics. No growth hormones. No genetically modified anything. Mild seaside climatic conditions and "terroir" of the farm's location contribute to rare, ambrosial taste experiences for those savouring Natural Pastures cheeses. The pure, rich milk produced in this privileged environment is what makes Natural Pastures cheese taste so luscious!

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The careful land stewardship practiced on their farm has won them several environmental awards and their farm is a TLC Land Conservation Partner. The Land Conservancy (TLC) is a non-profit, charitable Land Trust, working throughout British Columbia. Its purpose is to protect important habitat for plants, animals and natural communities, as well as properties with historical, cultural, scientific or recreational value.

This little Canadian Cheese Company is gaining prominence and notice amongst world class cheese-makers, and food connoisseurs. The award winning sweep at the 2004 Royal Winter Agricultural Fair places Natural Pastures and their Swiss Master Cheesemaker once again in the top ranks. President Edgar Smith explains, "We are continually improving our custom methods and searching for special results in the cheeses that highlight the rare taste and uncompromising quality of our fresh, pasture perfect milk from our Certified Heritage Farm in the Comox Valley. The staff at Natural Pastures are committed to creating the best cheeses possible. Our Master Cheesemaker, Paul Sutter, brought his highly skilled craft from Switzerland and found a home for it here in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island."

The climatic conditions and "terroir" of the growing area make a high quality cheese unique. The Comox Valley with its pristine pure pastures, streams, forests and seaside location provide a "terroir" that is unique and rare. The Valley's mild marine climate, fertile soils, natural pure environment, and Beaver Meadow Farms' pasture-fed cattle which supply fresh pasture-perfect milk, all contribute especially delicious qualities to the world class, award-winning Natural Pastures cheeses.

Natural Pastures Cheese is available at Farmers Markets, select retailers such as Thrifty Foods, Choices Markets, Whole Foods Markets, Les Amis du Fromage, the Natural Pastures shop at their cheese plant, and fine restaurants. Find or request Natural Pastures Cheese from your favourite stores and restaurants to savour pure winners!

Addendum attached.

[www.naturalpastures.com](http://www.naturalpastures.com)

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## **Addendum to News Release, November 9, 2004**

### **Natural Pastures Cheese Company**

Edgar, Philip and Doug Smith holistically manage their Certified Heritage Dairy – **Beaver Meadow Farms** in Comox on Vancouver Island, B.C. This third generation Farm was founded, and has been operating continuously, by the Smith family for over 80 years. Fifteen years ago the Smiths switched to an exclusive “natural system” of farming, and in 2000 the Farm earned the designation “Certified Heritage Farm”. This certification means that the Farm adheres strictly to the highest standards of land and animal stewardship. The standards of the Heritage Dairy Farm Association are ensured through annual inspection by an independent, licensed, professional agrologist.

Beaver Meadow Farms’ operations today include: a 500 head pasture-fed dairy herd, a wholistic wood-lot, and cranberry and wasabi cultivation for commercial supply. No chemical pesticides or herbicides. No antibiotics. No growth hormones. No genetically modified anything. And only eco-forestry products are used. Their fresh, pure, pasture-perfect milk supplies the production of their **Natural Pastures** fine hand-made, award-winning Artisan cheeses. The Smiths invite you to savour Natural Pastures luscious, award-winning cheeses, all hand made under the guidance of their Swiss Master Cheesemaker at their federally inspected (CFIA) facility. Many of their delicious cheeses are gold medal winners of the prestigious Canadian Grand Prix Cheese competitions (2002 & 2004), several are Grand Prix finalists and one is a 4<sup>th</sup> place winner at the 2004 World Cheese Championship. Several are top award winners of the 2004 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto.

Today the Farm is much more profitable than 20 years ago.

One of their goals for the Farm, is to create and support the diverse, sustainable landscape of forest, grassland and riparian areas to maintain the native integrity of the Upper Little River Basin. This restored stream habitat supports over 400,000 coho fry - one of the most productive salmon habitats per square meter on the east coast of Vancouver Island. The Smiths cooperate with the local salmon enhancement society, which has built and maintains a fish hatchery on the Farm at

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the head of the stream. Cows are kept out of the entire 10 kilometres of stream and riparian areas through the use of electric fencing. Off-stream watering is provided. In turn, the stream supplies groundwater and irrigation for the pastures, the cranberries and a trout pond.

Their careful land stewardship practiced on the farm has won them several environmental awards and their farm is a TLC Land Conservation Partner. The Land Conservancy (TLC) is a non-profit, charitable Land Trust, working throughout British Columbia. Its purpose is to protect important habitat for plants, animals and natural communities, as well as properties with historical, cultural, scientific or recreational value. They are the winners of the following environmental and business awards:

- Canada Habitat Award 2003
- Comox Valley Economic Development Society, Certificate of Recognition and Achievement 2003
- Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Vancouver Island Business Excellence Awards 2002
- Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce New Business of the Year 2002
- Certificate of Appreciation For Exceptional Efforts to Enhance Fish Habitat in Little River Award, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2000
- Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Environmental Initiative Award 1998
- B.C. Canada Soil Conservation Program, Conservation Award 1992

A requirement for the Smiths' farming at Beaver Meadow, is a far more diverse yet in-depth level of knowledge and practice, than that needed for conventional farming, especially concerning the natural environment. Edgar explains, "It's a management intensive style of farming versus an energy intensive one where you can just apply excessive amounts of tractor fuel, chemical fertilizers...Natural farming is a highly skilled, highly evolved, technical profession and way of life."

For example, at Beaver Meadow Farms the herds are rotated based on a fairly sophisticated system of monitoring plant growth and recovery. The pastures are divided into 1 hectare lots with electric fencing. Cows are moved once and even twice a day between plots, and each plot is left to grow for about 18 days before cows feed again. Cows deposit the manure in the pasture where it

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contributes to superior nutrition of the pasture, instead of the farmer needing to invest time and money into extensive nutrient management. They've planted four kinds of mixed grasses and some natural wildflowers and herbs, like clovers, plantain and dandelions, to flavour what they call their 'fresh green salad bar' and their pasture-perfect milk. The Smiths's also harvest non-grazed pastures and vacuum pack the silage so even in winter, the cows eat Beaver Meadow's own superior grasses, wildflowers and herbs. That's what makes Natural Pastures cheese taste so luscious!

Beaver Meadow Farms' cows are noticeably clean, including their legs and hooves, and disease-free. Many of Smith's practices contribute to this, including the raised sawdust "highways" the Smiths have built for the cows, which connect all pastures and the milking facilities. This results in the cows spending most of their time on verdant pastures or walking on raised sawdust roadways. As Edgar describes, "Our cows are very healthy and live the optimum Canadian lifestyle – their diet is all natural, fresh and additive-free, they spend most of their time outside in mild climate and with their family and friends, they exercise by walking about 90 minutes a day, they feel safe and are safe from predators."

The pure, rich milk produced in this privileged environment is **what makes Natural Pastures' cheese taste so luscious!**

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