



STATE OF IDAHO



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For Immediate Release:

Where is Idaho's Cheese?

BOISE – (October 3, 2012) – For the past decade, the dairy industry in Idaho has grown rapidly and is now the state's number-one agriculture industry in terms of cash receipts. Idaho has become the nation's third-largest cheese producer, making a wide variety of cheeses, including American, cheddar, mozzarella and Swiss. Yet many locavores, or those who just want to support Idaho agriculture, have struggled to find Idaho cheese. Why? Because most cheese made in Idaho is sold to food companies that put their brand on the packaging and distribute nationwide with no reference to where the cheese was actually produced. But that will change this week with the introduction of Idaho brand cheese in Walmart stores across southern Idaho.

"This project has been in the works for a long time" said Leah Clark, manager of the Idaho Preferred program, who worked to bring the cheese industry together with retail giant. "Walmart has been a strong supporter of local products and the Idaho Preferred program. They were very persistent in their efforts to encourage Idaho cheese companies to find a way to identify local cheese in their stores."

The Idaho cheese varieties, including mild and medium cheddars, Monterey jack, Colby jack, pepper jack and mozzarella, will be provided by Nelson-Ricks Creamery, a small, family owned cheese company located near Rexburg. "Not much has changed at the creamery" said Virginia Morrison, sales manager for Nelson-Ricks Creamery Company. "Since 1907, every one of our hand-crafted cheeses has been made with Idaho milk from our loyal, local suppliers including Loveland Dairy, Inc., Callister Dairy, LLP and Darwin Bischoff Dairy Farm, using the same traditional techniques our

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forefathers taught us. That means fresh, natural ingredients, and nothing else. In our opinion, that's just how it should be. We are very grateful for the opportunity to supply the Idaho Preferred Cheese to local Walmart stores."

Nelson-Ricks Creamery will produce some of the varieties in its plant and buy other varieties from Idaho cheese plants. One such plant is Glanbia in Twin Falls. "This is an exciting opportunity for Idahoans to pick up a piece of cheese and easily see that its source was an Idaho dairy. Glanbia doesn't have its own brand but is providing cheese to this program so it's a way for people to buy local," said Jeff Williams, CEO and president of Glanbia Foods. All the cheese varieties will be labeled with a distinctive Idaho Cheese label.

"Walmart is thrilled to offer Idaho cheese as part of the Idaho Preferred program," said Walmart market manager Tory Nichols. "Walmart is committed to supporting local suppliers, which reflects our ever-important goal to provide our Idaho customers with quality, affordable, home-grown selections."

Consumers will find Idaho cheese at Walmart stores throughout southern Idaho beginning this week. Plans are to extend distribution to northern Idaho stores later this fall. To find this locally made cheese, just look for the label with state of Idaho and blue-and-gold Idaho Preferred logo.

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