

A still life photograph showcasing a large wedge of cheese, likely the 2010 National Cheese Champion, Goat Peter farm cheese. The cheese is presented in two pieces: a smaller wedge on top and a larger block below. The cheese has a thick, golden-brown rind and a pale, smooth interior. It is placed on a woven basket made of light-colored reeds. In the foreground, a piece of rustic, golden-brown bread with a porous crumb is visible. A single dark purple grape is positioned to the right of the cheese. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.

The 2010 National Cheese Champion is the
Goat Peter farm cheese by Alistair Catto and
Marianne Loos of Hekpoort near Magaliesburg

Eat, drink, taste, show!

by Liza Burger

The SA Cheese Festival will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2011 when this exclusive event will be hosted from 29 April to 2 May. The festival is aimed at cheese lovers and connoisseurs of good food and wine in general and is the perfect showcase for producers of dairy products and accompanying condiments and wine.

This premier food event is a must-see for all serious contenders in the food industry as 'talent scouts' for restaurants, hotel groups and retail chains flock to the Western Cape to see what is hot and what is not on the local cheese board.

Thousands of cheese lovers from far and wide celebrated the good life at the 2010 SA Cheese Festival. Since its inception, more than 200 000 visitors attended the festival. Sadly, it was the last time the SA Cheese Festival was presented at Bien Donné, as the 10th anniversary of this sought-after culinary event will be celebrated at Agri-Expo's farm Sandringham on the N1, halfway between Cape Town and Paarl.

Celebrate fabulous food

The new venue allows for more visitors and an expansion on the events and display opportunities of previous years and is the perfect celebration of ten awesome years of celebrating cheese.

Driven by a passion for cheese and other agriculture-related products, organiser Agri-Expo brings together food lovers, artisan producers and other food champions in a single extraordinary event.

The festival experience includes the food chain from farm to fork, giving visitors the chance to see where the goodies originate from as both small and national processors have the opportunity to exhibit their products.

Various dedicated sponsors will give a welcome boost to the new venue, such as the Checkers Cheese Emporium, which will host the country's largest selection of cheese under one roof. At the Ladismith Cheese Music Gazebo, visitors will be entertained by live music and children will be kept busy at the Wilde Fruit Juice Kiddies Corner.

Along the Meander route, visitors will find cows, sheep and goats telling the story of milk at the Santam Agriculture Milk Factory. Kids can try their hand at milking, while grown-ups learn from the guardians of tradition at the Worcester Museum how to make butter and cottage cheese the old-fashioned way.

Awards for top processors

One of the highlights of this annual event is the National Dairy Championship. This award ceremony acknowledges the hard work of dairy processors, including categories for cow's, goat's and sheep's milk products ranging from yoghurt to mature cheddar. Last year's overall winning product was the farm cheese from Goat Peter, a small goat's milk cheesery near Magaliesburg. The 2010 top award transformed the relatively unknown Goat Peter overnight into a sought after brand.

Blind judging takes place and prospective entrants can log on to www.cheesesa.co.za/rules.htm for more information.

Qualité awards

The award ceremony at the National Dairy Championship also rewards those dairy products that are not only category winners, but also of superior quality. Achieving a Qualité Award is an extra accomplishment that has significant value in the market.

A Qualité Award is a symbol of outstanding quality for dairy products and is only awarded to South African Dairy Champions, which have obtained a specific minimum point on the international scorecard. Only 20 products achieved Qualité Awards in 2010.

The first objective is to reward manufacturers who have achieved outstanding quality in their products and secondly to make these products recognisable to the client in the trade. Qualité products are continuously checked for quality at various intervals throughout the year to ensure the level of excellence presented at the judging is maintained for that year.

Agri-Expo is continuing to promote the value of the award among manufacturers, consumers, retailers and food aficionados in order to increase the trust in the award.

Bookings only

Tickets will not be sold at the gate but can be booked through Computicket and Checkers stores at R110 for Saturday and Sunday and R90 for Friday and Monday. Senior citizens pay R70 and children 12 years and younger enter free. The festival runs from 10:00 to 18:00 each day and 17:00 on the last day. Corporate tickets are also available to exhibitors who wish to invite clients to the festival.

For more information, contact Agri-Expo on tel 021 975 4440 **M&J**

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