



— *Alvis Family* —
**FARMERS AND
CHEESEMAKERS**

AWARD WINNING
CHEESEMAKERS

from our family to yours





CHEESEMAKERS SINCE 1952, LYE CROSS FARM ARE PROUD TO PRODUCE CHEDDAR CHEESE IN THE HEART OF THE WEST COUNTRY

Situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty, Lye Cross Farm has 4,300 acres of the very best pasture land in the world, which is home to a herd of 1,200 dairy cattle.

The Alvis family's multi-award winning company has secured a strong foothold in the UK market, and also exports to more than 40 countries. Whilst Cheddar Cheese is the most famous cheese in the world, Lye Cross Farm also offers other carefully selected quality cheeses, including Stilton, Red Leicester and Wensleydale. Lye Cross Farm not only sells cheese to supermarkets, shops and delicatessens, but also packages cheese for own-brand labels.

Managing Director, Peter Alvis says: "We are hugely optimistic about the future of our business which goes from strength to strength in the UK; with the rising affluence of emerging markets boosting exports, which now make up 30% of our total income."

Having invested £20 million over the last decade, the business has been able to expand at an impressive rate, with the emphasis very firmly on retaining the production of highest quality cheese. The family are concerned about caring for the environment, animal welfare, and reducing their carbon footprint, and work towards this tirelessly as the business continues to grow. We also run an education programme that 28,000 children benefit from annually.

With the ability to cater for all tastes, Lye Cross Farm produces more than 200 top quality products, and the company looks forward to building on past success for a very positive future.

The dairy makes
70
TONNES
of cheese every week



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MANAGING DIRECTOR Peter Alvis



OVER 100 YEARS OF ALVIS FAMILY FARMING TRADITION

Over 100 years ago the Alvis family began farming this land
7 miles from Cheddar in the tranquil Somerset Vale of Wrington.

Today the company employs more than 130 people and has an annual turnover in excess of £30 million. We are continually investing in new technology, whilst following tradition and using the natural resources available to their full potential.

Tradition is highly valued by the Alvis family. It is for that reason that the eldest son in each of the last 13 generations has been named John. With a fourth generation of cheesemakers being inspired, the sense of tradition within the family is stronger than ever.

Our eldest John of this generation is still very much a hands-on business man and master cheesemaker. He has nurtured the Lye Cross Farm brand into a multi-million pound company, and ensured that the high standards are constantly maintained.

John is also the driving force behind FarmLink. This is a unique education programme which aims to share farm life and the natural world with school children.

John's eldest son, Johnny, is the man behind the opening of a £2 million milking parlour at Regilbury in 2011. This has revolutionised the business by dramatically shortening milking time and allowing routine health checks to be carried out quickly and with ease.

Younger brother, Peter, manages the cheese making operation and is passionate about reducing the farm's energy footprint, with the ultimate aim of becoming carbon neutral. Peter introduced a heat recovery system and a £1.5 million whey-processing unit into the cheese making process. His latest addition is a full set of solar panels as part of the packing facility.

"We are proud of still using traditional methods and skills such as the age-old 'Cheddaring' process – which is turning and stacking the curd gently by hand alongside new processes to make quality cheese. Then it's left to nature and the passage of time, in carefully controlled conditions, for the cheese to mature for up to 18 months."

MANAGING DIRECTOR Peter Alvis



"We've been
making the finest
Cheddar cheese on our
family farm for three
generations"

"We work extremely well as a family and
care very much about the cheese we make
and the future of our successful business."

DIRECTOR John Alvis

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The Alvis family takes the future of agriculture seriously – their livelihood depends entirely on how they look after the land and livestock.



Animal Welfare

The Alvis family's three farms are located across the beautiful Somerset countryside and home to 1,200 Holstein-Friesian dairy cows, 250 of which are organic. These herds, grazing freely around the rolling fields beneath the Mendips throughout summer and housed in the winter for warmth, are the powerhouses of high-quality milk for Lye Cross Farm Cheddar cheese.

Careful management of the land allows the production of 4,500 tonnes of cheese, which is split between organic and conventional

Lye Cross Farm rears beef cattle, which supply top quality meat to our own on-site farm shop.

Livestock eat farm-grown arable crops including wheat, barley, oats, oilseed rape and maize, ensuring sustainable farming with any excess sold.

The careful stockmanship of all animals is paramount and underpinned by the RSPCA's 5 freedoms:

- **Freedom from** hunger and thirst
- **Freedom from** discomfort
- **Freedom from** pain, injury or disease
- **Freedom to** express normal behaviour
- **Freedom from** fear and distress

The Environment

The Alvis family cherish this area of outstanding natural beauty. Nestled amongst steep limestone gorges, waterfalls and wetlands is some of the best pasture land in the world.

We practice organic and non-organic farming – to offer consumers the choice they want at the best possible price.

With careful management both types of farming are sustainable and benefit the environment.

Over the last 25 years Lye Cross Farm has planted more than 12,000 broadleaf native trees, such as Oak, Ash, Beech and Hazel as well as miles of native hedgerows like blackthorn and quickthorn as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Wildlife corridors have been set around arable fields and more than 75 acres of wild meadows managed with flowers like birdsfoot trefoil, cornflowers, poppies, lady's bedstraw, yellow rattle and ox-eye daisy.

The farm is now home to vibrant fauna including Greater Horseshoe bats, owls, hares, frogs, slow-worms, otters, foxes and birds of prey.

Other environmental measures include the creation and renovation of ponds and tributaries flowing into the River Yeo.

A Green Philosophy

Under the guidance of Peter Alvis, Lye Cross Farm has made reducing our carbon footprint a priority, with measures like the introduction of a heat recovery system. To mature cheese it needs to be kept at 10°C. When the sun comes out more energy is required to keep the cheese cool. The investment in 172kW of solar panels ensures that this cooling is completed from green energy. Any excess warmth from the warehouse is drawn out by the heat recovery system and used to naturally heat 50,000 litres of water a day to clean the cheese dairy.

Whey is also processed to leave left-over water clean enough to go into the mains water system saving around 40,000 litres of water daily.

Likewise, whey from cheese cooling tables is naturally 40°C and this heat is used to help in the pasteurisation process saving vital energy.

The hi-tech milking parlour also uses heat from milk and milking machinery to warm water for cleaning cows thereby cutting the electricity bill by two thirds. The parlour uses rainwater collection from the roof to ensure it is almost self-sufficient in water for cleaning purposes.

Managing Director Peter Alvis says:

"Our investments mean we produce top-quality sustainable products. Other renewable energy systems, such as Biomass & Anaerobic Digestion, are being reviewed to see if they can be used within the system to help achieve our goal of becoming energy neutral, along with water reuse systems to reduce the volume of water used each day."

FROM OUR PASTURE TO YOUR PLATE

From our pasture to your plate is the Alvis Family's philosophy, ensuring sustainable and responsible farming today and into the future.

We do our utmost to ensure our business is based on good animal husbandry that is beneficial to the environment and wildlife. This means consumers not only enjoy a superb product but can feel satisfied with Lye Cross Farm's sustainable background.



The milk from the cows is collected every day and delivered the short distance to our dairy.

A by-product of the cheese making process is a liquid that is drawn from the cheese called whey, which is full of nutrients ideal for feeding to our cattle.



The cattle happily eat the balanced diet we give them and in return produce wonderful fertiliser which we use on the fields.

The cows eat the grass in the Spring and Summer from our pastures, we store silage and hay for feeding during the Autumn and Winter.



A STATE-OF-THE-ART PRODUCTION AND PACKING PROCESS

More evident here than in any other part of the business, this is where tradition meets the modern day. By combining advanced machinery with old-fashioned techniques, Lye Cross Farm has grown with the times to create the perfect production chain.

The curds are gently turned by hand and cut into slabs and stacked (Cheddaring) to remove the excess whey.



Delivery and Pasteurising

The 1,200 dairy cows are milked twice a day. Their milk is brought a short distance to the state-of-the-art cheese dairy which handles a total of 45 million litres a year. We combine the 7 million litres from our herd with milk from other local farms, meaning we can produce 1,300 tonnes of organic and 3,200 tonnes of conventional Cheddar cheese every year.

Fresh rich milk is stored in six large silos. The milk is then pasteurised and passes into the four 18,000-litre stainless steel vats with steam jackets. Once this is complete it is mixed with a special 'starter culture' and non-GMO vegetarian rennet to begin its slow and careful transformation into cheese. An on-site laboratory with four staff ensures milk quality and high standards.

Draining the Whey

The curds and whey are run off onto the cooling table then hand-stirred with large shovels to drain off the whey. The whey, packed full of vitamins, protein and minerals, makes an ideal nutritional feed for the farm's cattle.

Cheddaring

The next stage is the unique 'Cheddaring'. This is when the curds are gently turned by hand until they begin to bind together and can be cut into slabs and stacked. This process further removes excess whey and develops the unique texture of Cheddar cheese. The Cheddar is then stacked in blocks and cut while it is still soft and knitting.



Milling and Salting

The blocks are then fed into a mill which cuts them into small pieces. This is stirred and mixed with salt which acts as a preservative.

The 1,200 dairy cows are milked twice a day.

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Pressing

The salted curd is pressed into blocks, then wrapped and boxed using special wooden slats, before being sent to the maturing warehouse to let nature do her work. Once the cheese has been graded and matured it is ready for market. It is cut, sliced or grated, ready for packing and boxing.

Lye Cross Farm has a modern packing facility where the cheese is finally wrapped, labelled and boxed for retail or trade.

"The entire production and packing process takes place at Lye Cross Farm, ensuring maximum quality control as well as a minimum carbon footprint."

MANAGING DIRECTOR Peter Alvis

1,200 Cows
7 MILLION LITRES
of fresh milk every year



A TRUE PASSION FOR CHEESEMAKING

Cheesemaking for the Alvis family is more than a livelihood – it is a true passion. This is demonstrated by our numerous awards and prestigious standing within the cheese industry.

The State-of-the-art Dairy

The new dairy means the Alvis family is capable of annually producing 7,000 tonnes of organic Cheddar and UK territorial cheeses, along with West Country Farmhouse Cheddar and traditional farmhouse cheeses all under the prestigious Lye Cross Farm brand.

A History of Awards

Awards are consistently numerous in both the cheesemaker and retailer classes. Every cheese is carefully selected by our grading team to ensure only the best cheese is entered.

In the most recent awards season, 75% of our entries were recognised as being worthy of an award by the judging panels. Our PDO Farmhouse Mature Cheddar was the most highly decorated cheese, winning almost half our total awards, including 3 Gold awards.

All of our awards come from competitions up and down the country, and include The British Cheese Awards at the Royal Bath and West Show and the International Cheese Awards at Nantwich show.

Stockists

Lye Cross Farm make all of our products in the tranquil vale of Wrington, just 7 miles from Cheddar. However, our cheese ranges are available throughout the UK and globally. Our stockists currently include: various discount retailers, Asda, Marks & Spencer, Ocado, Spar and Waitrose as well as individual shops and delicatessens.

Guaranteed Quality

No expense is spared because quality counts. Every process is controlled and stringent health and safety rules are followed, to ensure a top-class product reaches the consumer.

The family are delighted to have received the Red Tractor Farm Assured Stamp of Approval. This is a recognised mark of quality that guarantees the food consumers buy is being produced to the highest standards possible.



The blocks mature for up to 24 months until the desired texture and flavours have fully developed.

Did you know... The grading of cheese is a highly skilled art form. Carefully predicting the potential of a cheese to develop the desired flavour and texture at maturation.

When you purchase a Lye Cross Farm product you can be confident that is produced to the high standards and that it is consistent in aroma, flavour and texture every time.

“Ensuring our milk is produced to the highest standards whilst maintaining a happy and healthy dairy herd and minimising any impact on the environment is fundamental to our farming practice and cheese production.”

FARM OPERATIONS DIRECTOR Nick Green

75%

Of our competition entries cheeses were recognised as being worthy of awards by judging panels

3
GOLD AWARDS

went to our PDO Farmhouse Mature Cheddar, our most highly decorated cheese, winning half of our total awards.

OUR RANGE OF SPECIALIST CHEESES

Alongside traditional English cheeses, Lye Cross Farm is able to offer an exciting variety of flavour combinations, from smoked and fruity to spicy and herby.

Pepper Red

A spicy combination of Red Leicester Cheese with Red Peppers and cracked Black Peppercorns.



Mango Dale

A delicious combination of Wensleydale Cheese with sweet, juicy Mango and Papaya pieces.



Smoked Cheddar

A classic British Mature Cheddar, smoked over Oakwood the traditional way for a distinctive, natural flavour.



OUR AWARD WINNING CONVENTIONAL RANGE

With flavour profiles starting from Mild all the way through to Vintage, and with the available sizes ranging from 20kg blocks down to 20g mini portions, Lye Cross Farm is able to offer a diverse range of products to suit every need.

With numerous awards to our name, Lye Cross Farm is one of the West Country's finest Farmhouse Cheddar Cheesemakers.

PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN



Cheddar cheese is made all over the world – but Lye Cross Farm's is the real thing!

In order to qualify for the PDO you have to use some of your own milk, and all the milk must come from one of 4 counties – Somerset, Devon, Cornwall or Dorset. In the making of the cheese you have to 'cheddar' the curds by hand. The Cheddar must then mature on the farm in the care of the farmer for a minimum of 9 months.



Vintage Cheddar

A premium quality handmade cheddar, slowly matured for a full flavour and special character.



Extra Mature Cheddar

Handmade on our farm and specially selected for its deliciously strong flavour.



Mature Cheddar

A firm bodied cheese with a full rounded flavour and smooth texture, matured for 9-12 months.



Mild Cheddar

Selected for its mellow flavour with a smooth creamy texture.



Red Leicester

Handmade farmhouse cheese with a sweet flavour and a distinctive red colour.



Double Gloucester

A classic farmhouse cheese with a rich creamy flavour and a characteristic orange colour.



Mature Grated Cheddar

Made with fresh local milk, carefully matured for a full rounded flavour and grated for your convenience.



Sliced Cheddar

A deliciously smooth and creamy textured cheese, sliced for your convenience.

"Our Award winning Cheddars and Territorials are handmade using traditional methods that have been passed down through our family."

MANAGING DIRECTOR Peter Alvis

OUR EXTENSIVE ORGANIC RANGE

Lye Cross Farm is the leading UK organic cheese producer, producing 1,300 tonnes of organic cheese every year from their free-ranging cattle.

The Alvis Family practice two different methods of farming – organic and non organic. Managed properly both are sustainable, do not damage the environment and provide the consumers with choice. Both aim to maintain the long-term fertility of the soil and reduce the use of the Earth’s finite resources.



PLANET FRIENDLY FARMING AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Lye Cross Farm is proud to have been accepted as a member of the Soil Association charity which promotes planet-friendly food and farming through education, campaigns and community programmes.

All the organic cheese is produced from free-ranging cattle fed on a 100%Organic diet of clover-rich grass and silage. The cows spend the majority of their time outside but during bad weather they are brought indoors and given appropriate bedding and adequate space.



Organic Cheddars



Mild Cheddar

Handcrafted organic cheddar carefully matured for a mellow creamy flavour and smooth texture.



Medium Cheddar

Handcrafted organic cheddar carefully matured for a rounded flavour and smooth texture.



Mature Cheddar

Handcrafted organic farmhouse cheddar, carefully matured for a full flavour and firm silky texture.



Vintage Cheddar

Handcrafted organic farmhouse cheddar, carefully matured for a full bodied strong lingering flavour.

Organic Territorials



Cheshire

Handcrafted to create a fine moist crumbly textured cheese with a slightly tangy flavour.



Wensleydale

A moist cheese with a crumbly texture and a mild and slightly sweet flavour.



Double Gloucester

Handcrafted organic farmhouse cheese, developed for its creamy, mellow flavour with a distinctive orange colour.



Red Leicester

Handcrafted organic farmhouse cheese, developed for its delicate sweet flavour and distinctive red colour.



Vintage Waxed Trundle

Our multi award winning organic vintage cheddar is now available in a delicately waxed trundle.



Sliced Farmhouse Cheddar

A deliciously smooth and creamy textured cheese, sliced for your convenience.



Cheddar Snacks

5 tasty organic cheddar cheese snacks for all the family.



Mature Grated Cheddar

A deliciously smooth and creamy textured cheese grated for your convenience.



Blue Stilton

Matured to create a smooth buttery texture with a rounded flavour.



Wensleydale with Cranberries

Handcrafted and subtly blended with organic cranberries, creating a sharp, fruity flavour.



Five of The Best

Double Gloucester, Cheshire, Red Leicester, Wensleydale and Cheddar – an organic twist to a true British favourite.

Our production system works in harmony with nature and has the highest environmental and animal standards

BUILDING LONG LASTING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

Cheese from Lye Cross Farm is now sold in more than 40 countries, with bespoke solutions to meet every requirement.

Business Relationships

Lye Cross Farm exports have gone from strength to strength with business in Europe, Africa, Asia, America and Australia. With over 40 years' experience and a renewed focus on the export opportunity we have developed strong working relationships with each of our customers. Our longest export partner has been with us for 20 years, and this relationship is still going strong.

We have built our reputation on
three generations of expertise
with a passion for quality



Labelling Software

Lye Cross Farm has invested in state-of-the-art labelling software and in-house printing to enable us to react quickly and very flexibly to any bespoke requests. The export team are experienced in managing the often complex export documentation and supply chain arrangements.

With conventional and organic products, as well as low salt organic and non-GMO, and long term partnerships with other producers, Lye Cross Farm has a unique and extensive range, with opportunities for own label products as well as the Lye Cross Farm brand. With the capability to tailor our products for foreign food regulations, we are able to actively seek partners in new markets where we look for a long term approach to building mutually beneficial trading relationships.



"Exports are an important part of our business they now make up 30% of our total income and we are keen to develop our business further with new supply chain partners."

SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR Ian Bugg

"Our customers like dealing directly with a cheese producer. It gives them a better understanding of our integrated family business and the subsequent leaner, shorter supply chain. They also benefit from a 'one-stop shop' approach as we work closely with other UK producers to fulfil all their UK dairy needs."

HEAD OF COLLABORATION Tim Harrap

Using our
state-of-the-art
labelling software and
in-house printing we
can react quickly
to any requests



OUR COMMITMENT TO LOCAL EDUCATION

"We launched FarmLink because I remember as a child my friends who lived in the city coming to the farm and how they enjoyed it."

At Lye Cross Farm we believe it is vital to educate the next generation about farming and the part it plays in the world. This year alone, over 28,000 primary school pupils have benefited from the FarmLink programme. John Alvis is the mastermind behind the interactive education programme which aims to help pupils find out about the environment, the importance of sustainability and how a successful agricultural business is run.

Other regional farms have joined the scheme and during the winter, visits are made to schools to maintain the links made during the summer and learning is tied in with the National Curriculum.

"FarmLink has grown in a very organic, sustainable way and now we have set aside some space for a kitchen classroom and garden so children can actually grow their own food, prepare it, and eat it. This further enhances their learning experience."

While it is still regional, FarmLink is developing links with other partners to create a national organisation.



This year alone,
over 28,000 primary
school pupils have
benefitted from
the FarmLink
programme



"I feel children have become more and more divorced from the land and we wanted to do something positive about this."

DIRECTOR John Alvis

"I liked it when we went on the tractor ride with a big bump"

KATIE W

"I like the farm because it makes everyone happy"

LEE

"We are part of FarmLink and asked our children for comments on our biannual trips. They are so heart-warming from the little Year Ones who have only been a couple of times to Year Sixes who have been year after year."

YEAR 4 TEACHER AT WINDWHISTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, WESTON-SUPER-MARE Abby James





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