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Connecting Local Foods
to Mainstream Markets

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RESOURCES FOR

SMALL CHEESE AND DAIRY BUSINESSES

FIRST STEPS

North Carolina Cooperative Extension maintains offices in each of the state's 100 counties and with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Your local office should be able to connect you with one of the state's dairy agents, who can help you understand your business needs and gain access to techniques, sources, and supplies:

<https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/local-county-center/>. Some of the dairy agents are:

- Marti Day: <https://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/profile/marti-day/>
- Brent Buchanan: <https://cleveland.ces.ncsu.edu/profile/brent-buchanan/>
- Stephanie Ward is a Dairy Science Extension specialist working with statewide youth initiatives and other dairy issues (shward@ncsu.edu)

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) offers a step-by-step resource for food businesses, including regulatory information that will be important in most cheese and dairy business operations: <http://www.ncagr.gov/fooddrug/food/foodbiz.htm>.

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

The U.S. Small Business Administration offers business planning guides for a number of agricultural enterprises at <https://www.sba.gov/managing-business/business-guides-industry/agriculture>.

North Carolina's Small Business Center Network, housed at 58 community colleges, offers close-to-home free technical assistance for small businesses and entrepreneurs, including business planning, marketing analysis, and access to capital. To find your local SBC, visit <https://www.ncsbc.net/>.

The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center offers a guide to cheese and dairy resources for small businesses, including suppliers, trainings, and funding sources, at <http://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/dairy/cheese/>.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Vermont and Wisconsin, two of America's largest cheese-producing states, offer comprehensive business resources for farmstead and small-scale dairies and cheesemakers. Some of these resources may be state-specific; however, a significant portion of those resources are applicable across all states.

Vermont Extension: <http://www.uvm.edu/extension>

Wisconsin Extension: <http://www.uwex.edu/>

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) provides online resources for dairies and cheesemakers:

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/HACCP/UCM292647.pdf>.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

National and state associations for small-scale dairies and cheesemakers can provide a wealth of resources, peer-to-peer networking, and professional training and development.

NC Dairy Advantage is an NC State-based program aimed at studying and improving the NC dairy industry, with a number of research-based resources: <http://www.ncdairyadvantage.com/>.

The American Cheese Society is a national organization: <http://www.cheesesociety.org/>.

The North Carolina Cheese Trail connects consumers with dairies across North Carolina:

<http://nccheesetrail.com/map.html>. In Western North Carolina, the WNC Cheese Trail provides a regional map:

<http://www.wnccheesetrail.org/>.



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