

Edwardsville's Prairie Farms Cheese Division 'Caves of Faribault' Wins Bronze Sofi™ Award

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EDWARDSVILLE - Prairie Farms' Cheese Division, Caves of Faribault, has won the bronze award in the 'Cheese –Cow Milk' category as part of the Specialty Food Association's (SFA) 2020 sofi™ Awards, a top honor in the \$158 billion specialty food industry.

Caves' FelixBlue Cheese was one of 148 winners selected by a panel of specialty food experts from nearly 2,000 entries across 39 product categories. Products are judged on taste, including flavor, appearance, texture and aroma, ingredient quality and innovation. All tastings are blind. This year, for the first time, sofi™ judging was held at the prestigious Rutgers Food Innovation Center following strict safety guidelines.

Felix® is an earthy and fudgy Bluecheese made from unpasteurize



d cow's milk and aged in the sandstone caves of Faribault, Minnesota. Felix honors the Caves of Faribault history with a natural rind cheese that is aged to create a dense, fudgy texture with earthy complexity that highlights the terroir of the caves.

“It is truly an honor to see Felix winning a sofi award so quickly after being introduced to the market,” said Rueben Nilsson, plant manager for Caves of Faribault. “Felix is a great compliment to our outstanding line of cave-aged cheeses that are receiving world-wide accolades for their flavor profiles and complexity.” “It’s a privilege to continue the sofi Award tradition of recognizing extraordinary products and the people behind them,” says SFA Interim President Bill Lynch. “Having great news to celebrate, like the sofi Awards, is revitalizing for all of us in this pandemic year. The sofi finalists represent our dynamic industry-exciting consumers and expanding retail offerings around the world.”

The sofi™ Awards are open to members of the Specialty Food Association, a not-for-profit trade association with specialty food industry members across the U.S. The awards have been given each year since 1972. Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. is one of the largest and most successful dairy cooperatives in the Midwest and parts of the South.

Elements of the cooperative include more than 800 farm families, 8100 employees, 51 manufacturing plants, over 100 distribution facilities and annual sales of over \$3 billion. Prairie Farms is a nationally recognized leader in the dairy industry known for setting the standard for milk flavor innovations and producing award-winning milk, cheese, and cultured dairy products.

With headquarters in Edwardsville, Ill., the Prairie Farms distribution footprint covers over 30 percent of the United States; products are available in grocery chains, mass merchandiser stores, club stores, convenience stores, dollar stores, drug stores, schools, foodservice outlets and warehouse distribution centers. Prairie Farms charitable giving program, Our Caps, Your Cause, supports a variety of non-profit organizations. Caves of Faribault is the specialty cheese brand of Prairie Farms Dairy Cheese Division, a division of farmer-owned cooperative Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. With cheese production facilities located in Luana, Iowa, Shullsburg and Mindoro, Wisconsin, Rochester and Faribault, Minnesota, these plants manufacture award-winning Swiss, Baby Swiss, Blue, Gorgonzola, Cream Cheese, Neufchatel, Gouda, sweet whey, pasteurized process cheeses, cold pack club blends, enzyme-modified cheeses and cheese analogs. About the Specialty Food Association - founded in 1952 in New York City, the Specialty Food Association (SFA) is the leading advocate for the \$158.4 billion specialty food industry. Representing makers, importers, entrepreneurs, retailers, distributors and others in the trade, the SFA aims to champion, nurture and connect its members to deliver traditional and innovative products to consumers that expand consumption of specialty foods. With over 4,000 member companies, SFA helps its members by providing information, research, educational events, and celebrating the industry through its awards programs. The SFA is known for hosting the Winter and Summer Fancy Food Shows and presents the sofi™ Awards honoring excellence in specialty food. Learn more at specialtyfood.com.

