**GREEN COUNTY CHEESE DAYS**

*“Aged Swiss” dating back to 1914.*

Welcome to Green County, Wisconsin and the granddaddy of all food fests in the Midwest – *Green County Cheese Days* in Monroe. September 16-18, 2016 marks more than 100 years of this biennial festival that celebrates the cheesemaking, dairy farming, and Swiss traditions of southern Wisconsin.

Cheesemaking began here in 1846 when Swiss immigrants purchased a few dozen dairy cows. By 1873, the locals were churning out wedges, blocks and wheels of American, Limburger, and Swiss cheese. Today you’ll find more than 50 different varieties, including Emmi Roth USA’s Grand Cru Surchoix, an Alpine-style cheese honored as best of the best in the 2016 World Championship Cheese Contest.

The festival got started back in 1914 when some aspiring entrepreneurs in downtown Monroe were looking to attract visitors and boost business. After a visit to Sauerkraut Day in Forreston, Illinois, they came home inspired, with visions of cheese curds dancing in their heads. The first Cheese Day was planned in less than a month. More than 13,000 cheese sandwiches were served to the 4,000 guests who spent the afternoon dancing in the streets to the sounds of local bands.

Right away you’ll sense the cheesy vibe at this event: old time copper kettle cheesemaking demonstrations, cheese carving, cheese pairings, cheese sampling and meet the cheesemakers in the Cheese Tent. On the menu: gourmet grilled cheese, the best deep-fried cheese curds on the planet, Limburger sliders, and cheesecake on a stick. New this year – a Food Truck Street!

The best and brightest of the area’s bovines (Brown Swiss, Jersey, Guernsey, Holstein, Red & White Holstein, Ayrshire, and Milking Shorthorn) are selected to make the trip to the “big city” to play starring roles in the wildly popular Cow Milking Contest.

All weekend long, visitors enjoy free entertainment on three stages. On the schedule: traditional Swiss music – yodeling and alphorns, plus accordions, rock and roll party bands, polka bands, and Dixieland Jazz. Cheese Days is also pleased to be welcoming – direct from Langnau, Switzerland – the folk dancing group Trachtengruppe Gohl.

For many, the highlight of the weekend is The Swiss Colony Cheese Days Parade, led by a herd of Brown Swiss cows sporting clanging bells and floral wreaths – a nod to the centuries-old tradition of herdsmen bringing the cattle down from the Swiss Alps at the end of the grazing season. Back by popular demand in this year’s parade – Wisconsin Secretary of Tourism Stephanie Klett will dust off the tiara for an encore appearance as official Limburger Queen of the festival.

Join us in Monroe, Wisconsin for this year’s epic celebration of all things cheese on September 16-18, 2016. Like the song says, “Come to Cheese Days in Monroe!”

**Green County Cheese Days in Monroe, Wisconsin**

**September 16-18, 2016**

***“Old World Tradition…Out-of-this-World Celebration!”***

**cheesedays.com, facebook.com/cheesedays**

**Noreen Rueckert, Director (**[**cheesedays@tds.net**](mailto:cheesedays@tds.net)**, 608.328.1838)**