



615 North Main Street, Westby, WI 54667

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Pete Kondrup, General Manager, Westby Cooperative Creamery, phone: 608-634-3181 ext. 120, pkondrup@westbycreamery.com; or, Steve King at 414-218-3835, sking@kbs-gds.com

Westby Cooperative Creamery in collaboration to create the Sip & Savor Driftless Wisconsin Wine and Cheese Trail.

Group receives a Buy Local/Buy Wisconsin Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for this unique agri-tourism trail.

June 8, 2017 (Westby, WI): Seven state dairy/cheese producers, including *Westby Cooperative Creamery*, and seven estate wineries have formed a collaborative group to create the *Sip & Savor Driftless Wisconsin Wine and Cheese Trail*, in what is known as the Driftless Region between Madison and La Crosse, WI.

The group has been awarded one of eight grants, from a field of 33 grant requests; in the 2017 Buy Local/Buy Wisconsin Grant Program from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

The group of 14 participating regional businesses includes these wineries and dairy/cheese companies:

Baraboo Bluff Winery, Baraboo

Arena Cheese, Arena

Branches Winery, Westby

Carr Valley Cheese, LaValle

Rock N Wool Winery, Poynette

Cedar Grove Cheese, Plain

Spurgeon Vineyards and Winery, Highland

Nordic Creamery, Westby

Vernon Vineyards, Viroqua

Organic Valley, Cashton

Weggy Winery, Muscoda

Pasture Pride Cheese, Cashton

Wollersheim Winery & Distillery, Prairie du Sac

Westby Cooperative Creamery, Westby

Branches Winery spearheaded the grant proposal on behalf of the group. The matching grant will support the creation, marketing and promotion, and administration of the trail.

According to Therese Bergholz, owner of *Branches Winery* and Trail Director, "The Sip & Savor Driftless Wisconsin Trail marks an exciting collaboration between Wisconsin's renowned dairy industry, and its growing wine industry. Our goal is to attract consumers from major metropolitan areas to visit these 14 local food growers/producers in the scenic Driftless Region of the state."



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The Trail will be promoted as a year-long opportunity for consumers to experience and shop at these businesses, with three special event weekends scheduled for Fall, 2017, and Spring and Fall 2018. The Sip & Savor Trail events for Fall of this year will be announced in mid-Summer.

Says Pete Kondrup, General Manager of *Westby Cooperative Creamery*, "We are very excited to be part of this unique business collaboration that unites our state dairy industry and wine industry. I don't think there's any other state in the nation that could do this; nor, any other region within our state as scenic as the Driftless Region in which to create this agri-tourism trail; which will be both tasty and educational.

"The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection developed the Buy Local/Buy Wisconsin Grant Program for just this type of idea, which will be very beneficial for each of our businesses."

The economic impact of this agritourism trail will also benefit additional businesses in the region including lodging, attractions, shops, and restaurants. Bergholz explained that the Trail will provide an easy-to-navigate, scenic tour through the spectacular natural beauty of the area including dramatic bluffs, verdant pastures, and lush vineyards. With stops to taste and purchase locally grown foods, award-winning wines, cheeses, and other dairy food products.

The *Westby Cooperative Creamery Cheese & Gift Store* is open 7 days a week, every week of the year, from 8:00am-to-5:00pm; and is located at the Creamery manufacturing facility, 401 South Main Street, Westby, WI 54667; call 1-800-492-9282 x218. Or, visit the Online Store at – www.westbycreamery.com.

The stores feature the ever-popular *Westby* brand Cheese Curds, Hard Cheeses, Cottage Cheeses, Sour Creams, Dairy Dips, Yogurts, candies and other sweet treats, sausages, specialty meats, gift items and more.

"We hope the *Sip & Savor Driftless Wisconsin Wine and Cheese Trail* will inspire many day-long road trips and Wisconsin 'stay-cations' in the years to come," concludes Bergholz.

The Trail's website will be launched in coming weeks. For more information; contact Therese Bergholz, Trail Director, at 608.634.9463 or email at sipsavorwistrail@gmail.com.

The term *glacial-drift* is used to describe the expanding formations and melting recessions in movements by ancient glaciers. Areas of geography untouched by these glaciers and their movements are called *driftless* regions, including southwestern Wisconsin and other areas. This area of Wisconsin is characterized by small valleys, also called coulees, cut into limestone by rivers and streams feeding into the larger Mississippi River valley; and rolling hillsides covered by thick forests, grassland meadows; and, today, planted agricultural land.

Such topography is ideal for dairy farming; and, locally, this region is called the *heart* of Wisconsin's dairy country. This area has been home to *Westby Cooperative Creamery* since 1903; making this farmer-owned dairy cooperative not only one of the oldest cooperatives in the state; but, also one of the oldest in the USA.

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