

# APPLEBY'S CHESHIRE



<b>MILK</b>	Unpasteurised cows milk
<b>RENNET</b>	Vegetable rennet
<b>MADE BY</b>	Garry Gray and the Appleby family
<b>REGION</b>	Abbey Farm, nr Hawkstone, Shropshire
<b>FLAVOUR &amp; TEXTURE</b>	The texture is moistly flaky and crumbly. The flavours are savoury and minerally with a clean, cool, lactic tang.

Appleby's Cheshire is the last traditionally made, clothbound, unpasteurised Cheshire. Their style of cheesemaking is less acidic than most Cheshire, using smaller quantities of starter and is more likely to represent the cheeses made on the farm a hundred years ago. A more acidic style of Cheshire developed in larger dairies and factories in the latter half of the last century.

Today the farm and dairy are managed by Edward and Christine Appleby, helped by their children Paul and Clare and daughter in law Sarah. They graze their herd of Friesian Holsteins on pastures planted with traditional slow-growing grasses, which are fertilised using the manure from the farm. In addition, they are fed maize, wholecrop and grass silage. The silage, which has more dry matter than grass, helps the cows create more fats and proteins in the milk, affecting the flavour and texture of the finished cheese. In addition to the feed they also aim to breed cows whose milk naturally has the balance of fat and protein they need. There is also an element of geographical luck too. The cows graze on the edge of the Cheshire plain beneath which are salt and mineral deposits. These come through in the grass and it is considered that they give the subtle, mineral flavours to the cheese.

Today, the main cheesemaker is Garry Gray. However cheesemaking has been in the family for generations and when we first bought their cheese, the cheesemaker was Edward's mother, Mrs Lucy Appleby. Her experience and knowledge of cheese, its variation and selecting cheese for maturing has been a great help to us.

Mrs Appleby's mother and grandmother made Cheshire. She trained at a local college where she met Lance Appleby. He used to joke that he picked her out because she was the best in her class. When we first met the Applebys it was during a time in the 1980s where likemany farmhouse cheesemakers they encountered problems getting their cheese sold. The traditional route was through the Milk Marketing Board who graded and sold the cheese. The graders, accustomed to pasteurised factory cheese, couldn't understand the variation and subtleties of Appleby's Cheshire. On a visit to the MMB, Edward and Christine discovered pallets of their cheese languishing in the warehouse. The family sat down to crisis talks and decided to go it alone. Edward set off for London with a cheese in the back of the car and the name 'Paxton and Whitfield' in his head. He also walked into Neal's Yard Dairy, slapped the 48lb cheese down on our counter in front of Randolph and said 'Here son, try this. This is real Cheshire'. The rest is history.

