



MILK	Pasteurised goats milk
RENNET	Vegetable rennet
MADE BY	Annette Lee
REGION	Up Sydling, near Dorchester, Dorset
FLAVOUR & TEXTURE	The cheese has a mild, smooth flavour with a slightly citrus tang at the finish. Its texture is a mixture of creamy and crumbly that sometimes reminds us of halva.

Annette Lee left a city job in London in 1990 and on a whim, moved to Devon. There, she spent a year researching goat husbandry during which time she visited a commercial herd of 500 and came away with 50 kids, all needing 4 bottle feeds a day. The goats were kept temporarily on the land of Tony, a farmer friend of hers, who was later to become more closely involved in the enterprise.

Annette gradually built up her herd and soon found herself having to milk 30 goats twice a day by hand. The purchase of a portable milking machine made this task easier and she later moved on to set up a milking parlour capable of milking first six and then 12 goats at a time.

For a while Annette supplied milk to a yogurt and cheese maker and then, after further research into cheese-making and prompted by a cancelled order which left her with hundreds of litres of milk, she started to make cheese in her kitchen and later set up her own cheese-making room in a former garage. While she described her first cheeses as 'horrible disasters', by the time she felt ready to give samples to retailers, they met with praise. Encouraged by this she had a label designed as an art school project and Woolsery Cheese was launched.

Eventually, as farming the goats was becoming too time-consuming, Annette decided to concentrate on cheese-making and Tony switched from farming dairy cows to looking after the goats in Devon and supplying the milk to Annette. By this time, she had moved to Up Sydling, near Dorchester. The whole enterprise was threatened when foot and mouth disease struck in Devon and, as a precaution, all 700 goats had to be put down, losing a herd which had been built up by careful breeding. Even the stock of cheese was ordered to be destroyed.

Fortunately Annette's landlord in Dorset had started keeping goats and she was able to use the spare milk and so keep the business afloat until the situation improved. Since then, Woolsery has continued and has gone from strength to strength. Over the past year, we've had the best Woolsery we can remember and look forward to the new season.

