



Background music

NARRATOR: We live in a world of industrial agriculture and supermarkets. We eat processed food and microwave dinners.



NARRATOR: It's easy for us to forget about the basis of our food source, which of course, is a farm. Believe it or not, they do still exist. And I don't mean the huge, commercial ones you see along highways. I mean a small, local farm. What is it like to run a farm in a world of industry and business?



NARRATOR: I visited Harley Farms in Pescadero, California. Dee Harley, the owner and founder of the farm, began with her story.



DEE: I decided to go into farming, I think by default, if you will. We live on an old cow dairy farm that was built in 1910 and I used to look out into the window and think, "Oh it would be so nice to use it for what it was originally built for."



DEE: And so I met this woman who had some goats and I bought some goats from her... I decided to renovate the lower half of the hay barn, which was a dump. We built a building in a building and created the cheese-making room in the dairy.



NARRATOR: Sam is a tour guide at Harley Farms as well as a good friend of Dee.

SAM: She started the goat farm with the 6 goats from the friend Nancy who had the dairy before and Noreen Sims, the bartender at Duart's, and I were her first investors. So, needless to say, she's come ten-fold since then.



NARRATOR: Harley Farms now has over 200 goats and makes cheese that has earned national and world-wide recognition.



DEE: It's won 1<sup>st</sup> place in national cheese competitions. This last year, we've won a silver medal at the world cheese show, so it's amazing when you think it's made in a converted garage, basically.



NARRATOR: Even with a good reputation, one would wonder how small farms can much business in the current economy and this era of mass-produced food. In fact, Harley Farms had a taste of that kind of commercial distribution.



DEE: we had like, 350-60 goats and  
DEE: we had distributors on the East coast, Midwest and southern California, and we would send it by truck, put it on airplanes and then they would distribute it to specialty stores in their area.



DEE: Through a distributor, it's possible that it can sit in a warehouse for over 2 weeks before it even goes to the store and it just made me feel bad



DEE: because we've put all this effort into the goats, into the feed, the environment where they live, into the people who work with the goats and make the cheese and for it to sit on a shelf for two weeks, it's almost upsetting really, it's not worth it.



SAM: keep it small, keep it personal. and that's Dee's feeling. Every piece of cheese that she puts in that cheese shop is personal...that one of the reason why she quit the distribution of cheeses, because it's more personal to do it right from here.



DEE: So we made a very very very very daring business decision because we basically got rid of 80% of our sales. ...so it was a very very very tough six months, but we got through it, and now it's a new year and January, February and March



DEE: we are reemerging with the baby goats being born and we can milk and made cheese again and so we're starting our season again.



DEE: Money is not—you have to have money to sustain your business—so it's part of it...It's never been the focus. When we wake up every morning, that's not what that's about, it's about living the life. That's priceless.



NARRATOR: Harley Farms therefore pulled out of all the non-local distributors. How could Harley Farms still stand as a small, sustainable farm in the midst of our economy?



DEE: What's interesting about the economy right now is that people are staying at home, eating at home, they're spending more time with their family, (whether they want to or not) and they're not going away for the weekends and they might not be staying in posh hotels or whatever, but they're doing day trips...



Dee: And so, we were popular before, but we've seen a huge surge of people coming to the farm, now...when you would kind of think the opposite because people are using places like ours to come for the day.



CHLOE: You know, people are just attracted to the fact that we are green, and people are just watching their money more.  
NARRATOR: Chloe is a high school senior working at Harley Farms.



CHLOE: But they're coming to a place where they're not wasting it, where people are putting hard work into... It's a fun family trip to do that's not like, you know spending money.



SAM-You know, sitting down and enjoying the cheese, going downstairs and eating... I mean, if you think about it that way, it's not a lot of money. And that's why people come out, and especially when they look online now and see all the babies!



SAM-I mean, my goodness! And what small child doesn't want to get into a pen with you know, 25 newborns or uh, 4-day olds? Little kids, you know? It's a beautiful thing. It's life. It's the cycle of life.



NARRATOR: Julie is another high-school-er working on the farm.  
JULIE: farming is the basis of life. You need farming to live. And a lot of people like the fact that all the stuff is home grown here.



JULIE: Like, the herbs and the flowers, they're picked from our garden here. And everything is just hand made and I heard many people like how this is such a small community. And everybody helps out here, and a lot of people are drawn to that fact.



CHLOE: It's just real. Everyone in town has to put their own hands in to work...it's kind of an effort for us to stay a community and help each other out.



DEE: It's like, you're invited into this world, but the world doesn't stop because you're here. And we're not an entertainment. We're not a petting zoo. We're a real, working farm that has a rhythm, and a very strong routine to the day, every day...



DEE: So we continue and we'll always be very conscious of that and very adamant of that, that we're not an entertainment, petting zoo. That we're a real farm and that comes first, without a doubt.



SAM: I love the dill log, with I use on fish, and the chive log, which I use on pork chops. It's hard for me to say which one I like! And the plain formage which I mix with jam to make my stuffed French toast. (laughs)



JULIE/CHLOE: Cranberry Walnut!  
-Yeah, Cranberry Walnut, I also like the garlic herb... those are my favorites.



DEE: I think the feta is pretty good. There's nothing better than a proper tomato growing in you back garden, sliced up with feta and basil and olive oil... mmm.. actually, even oregano. Unbelievable. The best.

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Credit Image  
Background music