



Pineland Farms is big cheese on national scene

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

It wasn't that long ago that cheese aficionados in Maine were limited to American cheddar and not-very-sharp cheddar, but these days cheese counters are packed with varieties of goat cheese, blue-veined offerings and aged cheeses of many varieties. And among those likely to be found in Maine grocery stores are the offerings of Pineland Farms Creamery in New Gloucester.

Just a decade after the nonprofit Libra Foundation started the creamery at the Pineland complex in New Gloucester, it has become the only Maine cheesemaker that competes on a national scale. You can find it in stores all over the eastern part of the country, and the creamery easi-

ly produces the lion's share of all cheeses made in the state.

"We have the resources that allow us to compete with major players nationally," Bill Haggett, the president and chief executive officer of Pineland Farms Inc., said this week. "We compete with Cabot [Creamery of Vermont], and we think that our quality is certainly competitive. As a matter of fact, we like our cheeses better than theirs."

Pineland's size sets it apart from the rest of the state's cheesemakers, most of whom make cheese on a small scale on their farms or in their creameries. Its story is also unusual. The award-winning creamery is located at the former home of the Maine School for the Feeble-Minded, which served as the state's shelter for mentally disabled people

from 1908 to 1996, when it was closed and abandoned by the state.

The dilapidated campus was in terrible disrepair when it was purchased and resurrected by the Libra Foundation, a private philanthropic foundation created by the late Elizabeth Noyce in 1989. Pineland Farms now is a 5,000-acre working farm, diverse business campus and educational and recreational venue. The creamery was begun in 2005 as a way to use the milk produced by the farm's herd of registered Holstein cows, and the cheese made there sold well.

Haggett said that several years ago, the for-profit Pineland Farms Potato Co. purchased the cheese operation from the nonprofit Libra Foundation. The cheese company

See Cheese, Page C2



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Pineland Farms Creamery produces about 750,000 pounds of cheese each year. That amount has propelled the New Gloucester creamery to the top of the list of Maine's 72 licensed cheese producers.



The Wadsworth-Longfellow House sits tucked away behind a fence on Portland's Congress Street.

TROY R. BENNETT | BDN

A mystery tour

Is the Wadsworth-Longfellow House in Portland haunted?

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

The floors creak, and the lighting is dim.

The beds where Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's parents breathed their last breaths are on view.

Through iron gates, pushed back from the busy avenue, street noise recedes as guide James Horrigan reads the opening line of Longfellow's poem "Haunted Houses":

All houses wherein men have lived and died are haunted houses.

Inside the famous poet's boyhood home on Congress Street in Portland, these words, written in 1852, thunder through the chambers:

*There are more guests at table, than the hosts
Invited; the illuminated hall
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
As silent as the pictures on the wall.*

For the third autumn in a row, animated guide Horrigan leads people through the Federal style home, where the family lived for three generations, to test out the theory. The hair on the back of your neck may stand upright while climbing the creaky staircase at night.



TROY R. BENNETT | BDN
Guide James Horrigan poses with a bust of a young Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in the Wadsworth-Longfellow House on Congress Street in Portland. For the third year in a row, Horrigan will lead tours of the house based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "Haunted Houses."

The poet's words ring out:

*We meet them at the doorway,
on the stair,
Along the passages they come and go,
Impalpable impressions on the air,
A sense of something moving to and fro.*

Narrow hallways. Thick curtains shroud the windows. Eerie lighting. But don't expect fake cobwebs or scary music on this tour.

"I'm not here to Halloweenify the industry. This is a tour of the house led by verses," said Horrigan, who reads stanzas of the poem in a sitting room, bedroom and guestroom, where the poet's parents and siblings lived and eventually died. His sister Anne was the last to die here in 1901.

It's hard to say for sure whether this brick house is haunted. Horrigan is not looking for boogymen in the bedchambers. He interprets the

poem that likely was written shortly after Longfellow's mother died in 1851. The poet took the train up from Boston, the guide suspects, and may have penned "Haunted Houses" on the second floor at a desk looking out over Congress Street.

"This isn't the tour to dress up or go through corn mazes," Horrigan said.

But the devil may just be in the details. Like most poems that stand the test of time, dramatics are not necessary. The words tell the story, goosebumps and all:

*The spirit-world around this world of sense
Floats like an atmosphere,
and everywhere
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapors dense
A vital breath of more ethereal air.*

Longfellow's Haunted House runs through Oct. 31 and is followed by beer and snacks in the ell of the house. Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St., Portland, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Oct. 26-31. RSVs are required. The cost is \$15 for Maine Historical Society members and \$20 for general admission. To register, visit eventbrite.com/e/longfellowsh-unted-house-tickets-18194485195.

It's not too late to plant your garlic

October the perfect month to start bulbs

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

FREEDOM — Thirty-one years ago, Meredith Coffin went to the Belfast Co-op, purchased three heads of garlic, then took them home to Freedom, where she broke them up and experimentally placed the 30 cloves of garlic in the ground.

"Lo and behold, I got 30 heads of garlic," she said. "I liked this exponential growth."

Smitten by her first experience as an allium grower, Coffin decided to keep it up. About a decade ago, she learned how to raise garlic bulb stock for Fedco Seeds, the cooperative seed company based in Waterville. These days, she grows between 500 and 700 pounds per year of organically certified garlic at Wild Cat Farm. She took some time from her autumn planting schedule to share tips for those who haven't yet planted garlic.

First of all, is it too late to plant garlic?

No. In this area of the country, central Maine, October's an ideal month. I've even been known to plant on Nov. 1.

Where should people find good cloves to plant?

See Garlic, Page C2

Growing your own food only the start

BY KATHY BERNIER
SPECIAL TO THE BDN

The idea of growing and preserving your own food is intoxicating. Instead of buying packaged foods shipped from halfway around the globe, you can just stick some seeds in the ground, watch the plants come up and there they are — the beautiful fruits of your labor. Then later in the season, it's so exciting to complete the process by preserving the fruits and vegetables into canned and frozen goods.

Except, is the process truly complete?

It is easy to get so completely caught up in the frenzy of creating food that we can forget the whole point of doing it. The natural grace of fresh food, the way it

See Growing, Page C2

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