



SINGLETON'S DAIRY WELCOMES HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Singleton's Dairy today (26th June) welcomed Her Majesty The Queen to their premises in Longridge, Lancashire. Her Majesty's visit is recognition of the huge contribution Singleton's have made to British enterprise overseas. Singleton's are the only company in Lancashire, and one of only a few in the UK, to have twice been awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

Singleton's have been successfully exporting English regional cheeses since 1995. Although specialising in cheese and butter produced at their own dairy, they also source additional product from other regional food producers from across the UK. The company currently exports to more than 20 countries including the US and China.

During her visit the Queen met with Singleton's Dairy owners Bill Riding and Tilly Carefoot. As brother and sister, Bill and Tilly are the fourth generation of the Singleton family to run the company which began on a local farm in 1934.

Said Tilly Carefoot: "We are delighted that Her Majesty took the time to visit us in Lancashire. We are aware that she takes a close interest in the Enterprise Awards and are honoured that we have been chosen for this special recognition. At Singleton's we have always looked to be innovative and enter new markets while at the same time ensuring we maintain a commitment to quality and a link to our Lancashire roots. I think this comes from the fact we have always been a family owned and run business."

On her visit, Her Majesty also met with staff from Singleton's Dairy, the Mayor of the Ribble Valley and local farmers who supply Singleton's. Bill and Tilly's children will also presented Her Majesty with a selection of Singleton's Cheeses.

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Notes to Editors

Background information concerning Singleton's, The Queen's Award for Enterprise and Lancashire Cheese is attached. Photographs of the event and from Singleton's image library are available - please contact Michael Lough on: 01772 786664 or 07766 381339 for photographs or further information.



SINGLETON'S EXPORT SUCCESS

Singleton's have been successfully exporting English regional cheeses since 1995. Although specialising in cheese and butter produced at their own dairy, they also source additional product from other regional food producers from across the UK to meet the specific needs of international customers.

Singleton's currently exports to:

- USA & Canada;
- Australia;
- Scandinavia;
- Mainland Western Europe;
- Eastern Europe;
- China; and
- Lebanon.

Export sales continue to grow year on year. Last year alone, Singleton's increased export sales by more than 16% representing a value increase of more than one million pounds. This year Singleton's will be continuing to work hard on the export front exhibiting its range of Lancashire and other English regional cheeses in Belgium, Spain, New York, Dusseldorf and Paris.

This excellent sales growth has meant Singleton's has had to increase its labour force to 70 people, an increase of more than 15% in the last 12 months. Singleton's is one of the largest employers in the Lancashire market town of Longridge, where the company has been based for more than 50 years.

In 2000 and 2005 Singleton's was proudly awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise for its innovative development of export markets. To secure this highly regarded award the company had to demonstrate substantial growth in overseas earnings and commercial success, to levels that are outstanding for the goods or services concerned and for the size of their operations.

Singleton's is the only company in Lancashire to have received the Queen's Award for Enterprise on two separate occasions. Not bad for a company that remains family owned and run with a heritage of more than 80 years.

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Notes to Editors

Portfolio of Singleton's images and further information are available from Michael Lough on: 01772 786664 or 07766 381339. Further background information can also be found at www.singleton.uk.com.



THE SINGLETON'S STORY

Singleton's Dairy is one of Britain's most successful independent cheese makers. Located in the heart of Lancashire cheese making territory, and surrounded by some of the finest dairy herds in the country, Singleton's sources all its milk from within a 15 mile radius of the dairy.

Singleton's Dairy began in 1934 when Robert and his wife Duillia Singleton incorporated the company to purchase milk from neighbouring farms. Prior to that time they had been producing fine Lancashire cheese from their own cow's milk at Cromblehome Farm on Beacon Fell in rural Lancashire.

In the early 1900s cheese making in Lancashire was a well established and important source of income for many dairy farmers such as the Singleton's. Lancashire had the deserved reputation of being a high quality, versatile cheese that was equally delicious as an ingredient or eaten on its own.

Singleton's was a very successful dairy from the beginning winning the coveted Supreme Champion award for its Lancashire Cheese in its very first year as a limited company. The future looked very bright for the dairy. However, as the market developed and tastes changed Singleton's struggled to keep pace and in 1959 Alan Riding, grandson-in-law of the founders Robert and Duillia was asked to takeover and attempt to reinvigorate the somewhat struggling business.

Alan proved to be an enthusiastic and very innovative cheese maker taking the company from a relatively small Lancashire cheese producer to a significant force in regional cheese and butter production in Britain. Bill Riding, Alan's son and fourth generation cheese maker joined in 1984 after first attending agricultural college and took full control of the business in 1995 along with his sister Tilly. They have, along with their loyal staff, continued to develop the Singleton's brand and product range building a very successful export arm to the business.

Tilly and Bill have seen the development of a number of very successful British cheese brands such as Grandma Singletons, named after their great-grandmother Duillia Singleton and Beacon Fell Traditional Lancashire which thanks to Bill also has European Protected Designation Origin status to the same level as Champagne or Parma Ham.

More recently, Singleton's have developed a new range of Lancashire Cheese and Butter made exclusively from milk supplied by a small number of farming families in and around the Forest of Bowland, just 5 minutes drive from the dairy. The company has also recently been awarded the Sainsbury's Own Label Regional Supplier of the Year and the Food Northwest Award for International Trade.

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THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR ENTERPRISE

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise are the UK's most prestigious Awards for business performance. They recognise and reward outstanding achievement by UK companies. They are presented in three separate categories:

1. International Trade - recognising companies that have demonstrated growth in overseas earnings;
2. Innovation - recognising companies that have demonstrated commercial success through innovative products or services; and
3. Sustainable Development - recognising companies that have integrated environmental, social, economic and management aspects of sustainable development into their business.

The Awards are made each year by The Queen, on the advice of the Prime Minister, who is assisted by an Advisory Committee that includes representatives of Government, industry and commerce, and the trade unions.

An Award is held for a period of five years from the date of its announcement. However, winners can apply for further Awards in different categories within this five-year period. Awards are formally conferred by Grants of Appointment, and are symbolised by the presentation of hand-made crystal glass bowls on behalf of The Queen by Lords Lieutenants. These presentations are normally made at ceremonies held at winners' main premises, attended by staff, key suppliers and customers.

The Queen's Award to Industry, the scheme's original title, was instituted by Royal Warrant in 1966. The recommendations of a review in 1975 led to the scheme becoming The Queen's Awards for Export and Technology, with separate Awards for outstanding achievement in each field. The Queen's Award for Environmental Achievement was added in 1992.

Following the review in 1999, chaired by HRH The Prince of Wales, the three separate Awards were replaced and are now known generically as 'The Queen's Awards for Enterprise' with three broad-based business categories: International Trade, Innovation and Sustainable Development.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown said:

"Queen's Award winning companies are standard-bearers for the very best of British business. These firms embody the spirit of enterprise and innovation that is so vital to the future of Britain's economy."

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Notes to Editors

Further background information can also be found at www.queensawards.org.uk.



LANCASHIRE CHEESE

Anyone heading off to explore the heartland of rural Lancashire will discover a wealth of hidden gems. From the breathtaking Forest of Bowland with its rolling heather-clad fells to the sweeping pastures of the glorious Ribble Valley, this is a county full of surprises.

But perhaps Lancashire's biggest surprise is its cheese.

Lancashire is the only British county to produce three distinct types of cheese - Lancashire Creamy, Lancashire Tasty and Lancashire Crumbly. Three cheeses reflecting centuries of traditional cheese making in a unique part of the Lancashire countryside.

Cheese-making in the county can be traced back as far as the 12th Century when in 1199 King John granted Preston a Royal Charter to host an annual cheese fair. Through the centuries that followed, cheese production in Lancashire continued to grow with records from the 1300s showing Lancashire Cheese being shipped to London from Liverpool. In truth, the style of this cheese would bear little resemblance to today's styles of Lancashire.

Then from around the 1790's the Lancashire Cheese recipe began to resemble something similar to Lancashire Tasty and Lancashire Creamy of today. The method involved mixing the curd from multiple milkings over 2 to 3 days.

By the mid 1900s cheese production in Lancashire was booming with over 200 farms and creameries producing 4800 tonnes of Lancashire Cheese each year. But the Second World War put a stop to all cheese production as it was classified as a soft cheese which was unsuitable for rationing. This obviously decimated the Lancashire Cheese industry and when Lancashire Cheese production was again permitted in 1948 there were only 22 dairies making Lancashire Cheese, Singleton's being one of them.

The 1960s saw a new Lancashire Cheese enter the market. Lancashire Crumbly was invented specifically to compete with other white crumbly cheeses such as Cheshire, Wensleydale and Cearphilly.

Today sees a resurgence in demand for Lancashire Cheese produced in Lancashire. Singleton's Dairy is one of 7 Lancashire Cheese Makers all within a 10 mile radius of the small market town of Longridge. Singleton's is leading the way with its global export of Lancashire favourites, Grandma Singletons and Beacon Fell Traditional Lancashire.

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