



## PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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### **MILTON'S AUGUST 2018 BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: CONTRARY'S WHEY FARM**

#### **You have goat to be kidding me!**

Milton's August Business of the Month goes to Contrary's Whey Farm & Creamery, which makes hand-crafted soap from goat milk. Located at 53 Watkins Road in Milton, three goats currently reside at the farm alongside their person, Ellie Mesler. Ellie has been making goat soap for five years, but that's not where it all started. Ellie originally began making cheese with the goat milk.

"I started in 2008, moved here in 2011, cheese, cheese, cheese, cheese, until 2013, which was the start of the soaps," Mesler said. The goat milk cheese and regular goat milk are also available for purchase by special order, but the soap has quickly become the priority. "I started off selling 250 bars, then it doubled to 500, then last year it went to 850, so this year I'm doing 1,000 bars," Mesler said. Mesler started making the soaps when she learned about different types of skin sensitivities. "When I was formulating the soap, it was all about taking care of skin issues. It's a product that's geared not just toward skin issues, but for people who really have sensitivities and who can't tolerate other types of soaps," Mesler said.

After taking a medicinal herb class, Mesler began infusing her soaps with different organic, powdered scents. "I grow them, harvest them, dry them, powder them, and put them into my soaps. I have a line of six soaps all together that are all micromanaged," Mesler said. The soap can be infused with calendula, comfrey, lavender, plantain, or rose. Though lavender seems to be the biggest hit for the organic soap bars, Mesler prefers the plain, unscented soap which is also available for purchase.

After facing some difficulty in selling at the Milton farmer's market, Mesler decided to keep the majority of her sales online at her website, <https://goatmilksoapvt.com/>. When asked about what it is like to run a goat milk soap farm, Mesler said, "I can have my goats as pets. A gallon of milk makes about 133 bars of soap, and that's putting a full ounce of milk in each bar. It's working really, really well."

Lastly, the farm is open and welcoming to visitors. Mesler finishes with the invitation that, "The business itself may not help Milton directly, but I've had a lot of children come to the farm. In terms of being quiet, meditative, and hearing 'oh, is that a goat?' it's been great. I've had a lot of people come and just enjoy Milton from that perspective." If you have the time to try something new, consider learning more about Contrary's Whey Farm & Creamery through their website.

Courtesy of Tracey Crocker





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