



The Challenge: Staunton was once a center for dairy processing. Milk from family-run dairies flowed into town to be transformed into bottled milk, ice cream, butter, buttermilk and cheese. Today, small-scale dairies have largely disappeared from the Valley because of economic pressures and an outdated system of milk pricing. Most remaining dairy farms are obligated to sell to a coop, and these coops have no incentive to keep or support these farms. Fewer and fewer young people are entering the profession.

The Solution: Ballerino Creamery came to life to give farms an alternative to the coop model—a place to sell milk directly. This elevates a farm from anonymous to *recognized* and *accountable*. Owner Louella Hill cares not only about keeping family-scale dairying in the Valley, but also about the ancient art of cheesemaking. She started making cheese two decades ago on a farm in Italy. Since then she’s worked in creameries, taught cheesemaking, written about cheesemaking, and even serves as a judge for the American Cheese Society (where she is forced to eat thousands of pieces of cheese). She’s ‘whey’ into cheese.

The Experience: As a founding member of Ballerino Creamery’s “Cheese Club,” you will help us launch. In your weekly cheese share, you’ll find familiar and unfamiliar items and (hopefully) provide lots of feedback. A cheese you love might become a permanent offering of the Creamery. Note that Cheese Club is mainly a selection of fresh cheeses. Regularly (but not every week) you’ll also find aged offerings, such as cheddar, camembert, and blue cheese. All of our cheeses are made with local, high quality, milk that is guaranteed to be antibiotic and hormone-free. Cheeses are pasteurized unless noted otherwise. Here are examples of what weekly shares may look like:

- Week 1: 1 quart of freshly-made buttermilk, 8-oz of cheddar jack
- Week 2: 1 pint of whipped fromage blanc, 12-oz ball of fresh burrata
- Week 3: 1 pint of bubbling probiotic kefir, 12-oz block of queso fresco

A Community Effort: We hope you’ll stay in touch throughout the CSA season (email: ballerinocreamery@gmail.com). Also, please help “spread the cheese” word on Instagram and Facebook by using the hashtag *#ballerinocreamery*. A new business needs the support of its community. We thank you in advance for joining us on this journey.