

Project Profile



Location:

166 Fava Farm Road
Scenery Hill, PA
emeraldvalleyfarm.com

County:

Washington

Description:

Business Expansion

Total Project Cost:

\$80,709



Emerald Valley Farm Artisan Cheese

Copyright ©, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 2010. all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

People:

Alisa Fava-Fasnacht was born to dairy farming, but stumbled into cheese making. On a lark, she decided to make a batch of ricotta, but brought in “way too much milk” and went overboard. “So I shared it with friends,” she says. “Everybody was having a pretty big reaction to it, saying, ‘This is really good.’” Over the next five years she and husband Alan Fasnacht built Emerald Valley Artisan Cheese, riding the wave of interest in locally produced foods.

Progress:

When it came time to expand their penetration into grocery stores, Alisa and Alan got advice from the University of Pittsburgh’s Small Business Development Center. She talked with banks about borrowing, but they got “a gut feeling that it was going to be a stretch for them.” A certain lender, though, kept showing up wherever local food was featured.

That lender, The Progress Fund, loaned them \$78,209 using funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Business Enterprise program and Pennsylvania’s Department of Community and Economic Development.

Impact:

Emerald Valley can now set aside some inventory to make proprietary, premium aged cheeses. Alisa and Alan can also dramatically upgrade packaging, to include a more attractive presentation, nutritional information and bar coding – all prerequisites for going big in the grocery market. That brings recognition to the historic Scenery Hill area and to Southwestern Pennsylvania agriculture. “We want people to know,” says Alisa, “that we are Pittsburgh’s cheese.”

The Progress Fund is an Equal Opportunity Program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington DC 20250

