



Yamily talking with customers about her cheeses.

## FARMERS' MARKET REPORT

By Delaine Volk, Market Manager

Our BCAS Oyen & District Farmers' Market on July 16 saw 225 people sign our guest book, a record for this year!

The Oyen Soccer Club sponsored a bake table, and they sold out of goodies.

Other vendors included: Prairie View Colony, Acadia Colony, BCAS with raffle tickets (prizes were on display this week), Clay Cup Bakery, Anchor of Hope Ranch and Juanita Wagstaff with AVON. Welcome to Lori Bogstie and Wayne Bushey from Saskatchewan. Josie Rafa with Crocus Lane Farms brought beautiful garden flowers in canning jars (she had a very good first market), and Yamily Zavala from Turpial Base with her homemade cheese using recipes from her homeland. (I didn't get a chance to sample). Note: Yamily

holds a Ph.D., Soil Science and Plant Nutrition, and has been employed at CARA in Oyen for nearly eight years.

At the time of writing, we have neither a bake table nor luncheon booked for July 23. Vendors booked at this point are: Turpial Base with homemade cows' milk cheeses, Prairie View Colony, Anchor of Hope Ranch, Lori Bogstie, Acadia Colony, and Juanita Wagstaff.

Dates to remember:

August 6, Acadia Colony is serving turkey dinner with all the trimmings.

August 13, Oyen Soccer Club is serving chilli, bun and dessert. The Bake table will be the United Church women.

If you are interested in booking, please contact Delaine Volk, either by text or call @ 403-664-0320.

Have a smokin' hot week!



The Oyen & District Health Care Foundation would like to acknowledge a most generous donation of \$4000 from the Breaking Ground Diamond Dancers (instructor Tonya Logan). Dr. Petra Muller accepts the donation which will be used to purchase medical equipment. Pictured left to right, Kailyn Thornton, Kiptyn Thornton, Dr. Muller, Cleo Caskey, Piper Opheim and Jersey Girletz.

# Why did Yamily start making cheese?

By Yamily Zavala

Everything started after my mom, Tula, passed away in August 2020. My girls came from New York to be with me for a month to comfort me. I was very sad about not being able to say goodbye to her because of Covid-19 travel restrictions as well as Venezuela's political situation.

Being born in Venezuela, I was used to having at least one meal with cheese almost every day. During that month that my girls were visiting, I decided to make some cheese. They turned out to be very good, very much like the ones from Venezuela and they were better than the ones I have bought in US and Canadian Latin's stores.

Then I started to dig into what requirements I needed to get a license. I followed all the requirements to be licenced. Then I started to fix part of my basement to have my "Queserita" (small cheese-making factory). I named it TurpialBase (the Turpial is Venezuela's National Bird, and Base was for my basement suite).

I remembered when I was a kid, family friends making cheeses in big wooden boxes. They stored them for months in the attic for maturity. When I moved to the Andes region in Venezuela to get my undergrad education I was exposed to other kinds of cheeses. While travelling by bus or car you could stop on the highway to buy food. The first meal you were looking for was the corn-like pancake with hand cheese (Queso

de Mano with Cachapas). Every region in Venezuela has its own type of cheeses and they all were very good when compared with the industrial cheeses we buy in the Latin stores outside of Venezuela.

Two reasons led me to make cheeses: first I needed to distract myself from my sorrow of losing my mom and second the nostalgia of not having a good cheese with the Venezuelan flavour. It turned out that I was not the only Venezuelan-born missing or having nostalgia for Venezuela cheeses. I connected with more than 200 Venezuelans around the world who were missing our cheeses and they helped me adjust my recipes for the most important Venezuelan cheeses (Paisa, Palmita, Queso de Mano, trenza, Guayanes, telita, soft and hard, black and red rind, smoked, among others). I also joined a Latin American cheese master group as well as the Spanish Women Cheese Masters.

All of them have contributed to enrich my knowledge in my

Artisan cheese-making experience. I have learned not only how to make our Venezuelan cheeses but also artisan cheeses from Mexico, Argentina, Spain and I have also shared my Venezuela cheeses with them. I will be bringing to the cheese lovers from this part of the world, the most delicious artisan locally made cheeses from around Latin America and beyond. My Artisan cheeses are made with natural, probiotic ingredients, no preservatives and they will evolve over time. I will recommend trying them just for fun...

And what has been very interesting during this process is the connection that I have found about making delicious cheese, with making good healthy soil. It is fascinating to understand how important microbiology is for accomplishing both delicious healthy cheese and productive healthy soil. Soils and cheeses need to be alive (with the right biology) for them to have a good structure with balanced nutrients to feed the plants, livestock and to feed us.

