

Forty-two Years and Counting!

January, 1974

The little drive thru dairy was down for the count. Bankrupt! The very nice people who owned the business ran out of money. Some people said they were so kind that when wholesale prices went up, the owners were unwilling to raise their prices. Eventually they ran out of money. My father and I were told by a friend that the business was available through bankruptcy court.

Dad and I drove over from Castro Valley to meet with the Bankruptcy Trustee at the little drive thru dairy. We agreed to pay the Bankruptcy Court the amount owed to creditors, and arranged to lease the building from Edward Ames, a very well-known Palo Alto commercial real estate professional. We arranged a lease that began with a 2 year term, and included two more 5 year terms. A very long time when you are only 23 years old!

Did you know?

We actually processed our own milk!

From 1974 until about 1979, the **Milk Pail** was actually pasteurizing and packing Whole, Low Fat, and Non-Fat milk in the area that now displays German meats, Bulk Grains, 300 different cheeses, and our Nut and Dried Fruit rack. In 1974, Peninsula Creamery would unload 580 gallons [2.2kL] of raw milk from their Gilroy farm off the “Tanker Truck” four and five days a week. The raw milk was placed in two 300-gallon [1.14 kL] stainless steel pasteurizer kettles. We then injected steam into the walls of the two kettles to heat the milk to 145 degrees F (63 C) for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, the milk was legally pasteurized, and we then separated some of the cream from the milk, ran the milk thru the Homogenizer, and then pumped the warm milk thru a “Milk Cooler” that reduced the milk temperature to 38 degrees Fahrenheit (3.3 C).

In late 1979, the **Milk Pail** moved the milk filling equipment into my family dairy business located in Hayward. It was at that time that the **Milk Pail Market** began to evolve into the Open Air European Market that now has become so popular in our community.

Who cut the cheese? Milk Pail Dairy!

When the **Milk Pail** first opened in February 1974, we did not sell any cheese. Then, sometime in 1975, the **Milk Pail** bought some wonderful 10 lb. [4.5 kg] cuts of 3 year old Extra Sharp Wisconsin Cheddar. We put those 10 lb. cuts out for sale, and those families in station wagons bought 7 blocks the first two weeks. I was amazed! Then we located a baby scale, printed some simple labels, and bought a box of plastic wrap.

At a restaurant supply house, we located a huge double handled cheese knife. The **Milk Pail** could now take 10lb blocks of cheeses, and cut them into 1lb pieces. We were now in the “fresh cut” cheese business!

We quickly added about thirty different cheeses. Mozzarella from Skim Milk, Muenster, New York Cheddar, Danish types, French Brie, Canadian Sharp, British Cheddars, parmesan and Romano from Wisconsin, and a unique cheese from Finland called “Turunmaa.” That was before 1980!

Then, at a party, someone told me they thought the “Milk Pail Dairy” name was cute, and it’s too bad that the person didn’t drink milk. Little did they know how many things we sold at the **Milk Pail!** So, within a month, I changed our name to **The Milk Pail Market** ... a European Open Air Market!