

# Green ant cheese set to hit US shores

## PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

A luxury cheese topped with native Australian green ants is expected to be available at specialty stores in the United States in the coming weeks.



Made in the Adelaide Hills region of South Australia, Anthill is a soft goat cheese (chevre) topped with green ants.

The quirky cheese made by [Woodside Cheese Wrights](#) was awarded a “Super Gold” at the World Cheese Awards in 2016 soon after its release but has previously only been available in Australia.

However, new technology to extend the shelf-life of the product has been implemented and the company is hoping to send the product with its next shipment to New York in about two weeks time pending final FDA approval.

Sourced from Crocodile Dundee country in the Top End of Australia, green ants have been eaten by indigenous Australians for thousands of years and are becoming increasingly popular as a native food.

Head Cheese Maker and CEO Kris Lloyd described the taste of the ants, also called weaver ants, as a combination of kaffir lime and lemongrass “that give a little citrus pop almost like having a sherbet”.

The “super creamy” chevre is five days old and is high in acid with a pH level of about 4.2.

“It just comes together beautifully, there’s this great marriage of acid flavours that just work,” Lloyd said.



“There’s no other cheese in the world that has green ants on it and it tastes amazing.”

The Adelaide Hills, about 30km east of the South Australian capital Adelaide, is emerging as a world renowned region for premium wine, cheese and fresh produce.

Woodside Cheese Wrights began using native Australian ingredients in their products about 15 years ago and have cheeses infused with a range of bush foods including lemon myrtle, saltbush, pepper berries and edible flowers.

Despite success within Australia, the company had not previously done a lot of exporting aside from small quantities into Singapore.

But it was the 2016 success at the World Cheese Awards in Spain that opened the door into the United States. The 25-year-old company began airfreighting cheese to the US in March and has already doubled the size of its fortnightly shipments to several hundreds kilograms at a time.

The cheeses are sold in New York, Connecticut, Michigan and California through retailers including Dean & DeLuca.

“They are loving it because it’s something that they just can’t get and it’s an opportunity for them to experience something that’s uniquely Australian,” Lloyd said.

“I want to be creative by taking ingredients from our own backyard and use them in our cheese making – it’s what we should be doing in Australia instead of copying everything that the French, the Greeks and the Italians are doing.

“I’m new world, nobody is telling me I can’t put ants on my cheese. I haven’t got an appellation of origin control that tells me that the cow needs to be pointing this way and the moon needs to be shining that way before I can milk and make our cheese.”

Lloyd is hopeful the green ant cheese will be well received by Americans and drive further export growth, possibly into other markets such as the United Kingdom and Asia.

“For us to grow in the United States it will just come down to our ability to maintain the high quality of the products,” she said.



Adelaide Hills cheese maker Kris Lloyd. Picture: Jacqui Way Photography



Woodside Cheese Wright’s Monet combines fresh chevre seasoned with a selection of special herbs topped with edible organic flowers.

“The appeal is there, the cheeses they have chosen are quite unique and if we are going to put Australian food culture on the map this is probably the way to go about it.”

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