

## Biography: Richard Clothier, Managing Director, Wyke Farms

[www.wykefarms.com](http://www.wykefarms.com)

As the Managing Director of Wyke Farms, the UK's largest independent producer of cheese and milk processor, Rich Clothier knows cheese and farming. In fact, producing award-winning Farmhouse Cheddar has been a natural process for the third-generation family member, as the Clothier clan have been producing Wyke Farms cheese and butter to the same recipe for over a century in the heart of Somerset, England. More than just a passion for cheddar and love for all things fromage, Rich maintains a deep-rooted dedication to expanding the family business his Grandmother started back at in 1902.



Over the past 15 years, Rich has demonstrated his strong track record of operational delivery and **commercial acumen** by growing the family business and increasing distribution to include more than **20 countries worldwide**. Since his inception as Managing Director, the Wyke Farms brand has **grown consistently year on year by over 40%**, including **82% year on year in 2006** alone. Today the company stands as the fastest growing cheddar brand at a rate of 50%, reflecting an increasing consumer interest in provenance. The Wyke Farms brand is the 4th largest in the category and the **only independent company in the top10 cheese brands**. Pitching against the biggest European PLC's and Irish and New Zealand dairy boards has become a way of life for Wyke. Once a small family farm with a very special recipe, Wyke Farms today makes the most of its unique category position and **produces over 12,000 tonnes of cheddar per year**.

As a child, Rich began developing his taste and knowledge for cheese from his father, John Clothier, who learned the art of cheesemaking and treasured secret family recipe from Rich's grandmother Ivy. Rich has worked in all areas of the business from farming through to manufacture, product development and sales. He returned to the family business in Somerset, after studying Agriculture, Dairy Science & Management, where passion for cheese, particularly cheddar, continues to thrive. His experience of the weakness of other sectors of agriculture, particularly meat, when negotiating with retail customers and manufacturers helped him to drive the Wyke business strategy and focus the business on its key points of difference. Rich firmly believes that strong branding has enabled Wyke to thrive when many other independent cheese businesses have failed. **Over the past 10 years Rich has played a key part in the business key negotiations with its 150 farmer milk suppliers and its multiple retailers.**

Rich is a keen follower of markets and the potential impacts on commodities. His understanding of raw material production and manufacturing gives a unique view of both sides of the fence. Rich is a devout Marketeer and studies brand data and consumer behaviour. The Wyke business believes in strong input from consumer focus groups and customer feedback – only by understanding consumers needs can we meet them effectively.

As the Managing Director of Wyke Farms and a devout cheese connoisseur, Richard Clothier offers a wide variety of expertise in all things fromage, examples are not limited to but include:

- Wine and cheese pairings
- User's guide to cheese (particularly cheddar)
- Trends within the UK and European dairy market
- Recipes for the cheese lover
- Agricultural commentary
- Multiple retail buying strategy

**For further information and interview opportunities**

**please contact – Jodie Welton**

**[jodie@connectedpr.eu](mailto:jodie@connectedpr.eu)**

**+44(0)7887 780464**

