

Forget the cowpat and make cheese
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From Mr Peter Papprell.

Sir, Dorset dairy farmer Margaret Scribbins' swipe (Letters, February 18) at Tesco chief Sir Terry Leahy is ill judged. It is supermarket shoppers who are the aggressive buyers on price, as they travel up and down the aisles.

The same shoppers will also buy at farm shops and farmers' markets or eat out where the chef has sourced ingredients with provenance and flavour that is distinctive to the landscape. Here price is secondary.

On the British Isles dairy map, Dorset has eight artisan cheesemakers out of the 200 referred to in your Enterprise article "Sweet smell of success in cheese league" (December 19 2009). In the next county, Somerset, is one of Britain's leading artisan cheese exporters at Castle Coombe – run by a dairy farmer, Glyn Woolley, who was profiled in a recent Entrepreneurship article "A roving ambassador for cheese" (February 3). Dorset Drum is one of the cheeses he exports.

Micro creameries are opening and selling to their local communities real milk, cheeses, butter and yoghurts made on the premises. All are alternative growing markets for the dairy farmer. Each day at noon, we taste one of 900 British Isles artisan cheeses, chosen for the character of flavour, landscape provenance and story of the cheesemaker's path to business survival.

As I write, today's cheese is Bertelin Staffordshire PDO from a herd of pedigree Friesian cows near Stafford.

Debbie Williams, the cheesemaker, left Harper Adams Agricultural College with a degree that included a one-year secondment to the Tesco dairy team.

Ms Scribbins – better to use the cowpat for heat generation, reduce your fuel bill, and make cheese.

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