

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Valley Queen Cheese Factory Announces Board Member Transition

MILBANK, S. DAKOTA -- After 61 years of dedicated service to Valley Queen Cheese Factory, Inc., Rudy Nef, Milbank, S. Dakota, is transitioning from his role as a board member to a board observer. Mitch Davis, St. Peter, Minn., is assuming the board seat vacated by Nef. The announcement was made Friday, August 23, during the company's board meeting in Sioux Falls. To mark the occasion, Governor Kristi Noem proclaimed August 23, 2019, as Rudy Nef Appreciation Day in South Dakota.

Valley Queen's Chairman of the Board Ray Trankle explained, "When Rudy decided it was his time to step aside, he wanted someone to replace him who had extensive business background in the dairy industry and who has cheese and whey experience. Mitch Davis is an ideal candidate for our board because of his business and dairy industry experience."

When he was nine years old, Nef started working at Valley Queen where he wrapped butter for 50 cents an hour. He went on to graduate from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, with a degree in dairy science in 1955 and then served in the U. S. Army, stationed in Germany, from 1955-1957. He then returned to Milbank to begin his fulltime employment at Valley Queen.

In 1970, Nef and his partner, Max Gonzenbach, assumed the leadership of Valley Queen from their fathers, both named Alfred, who together had founded the company in 1929. The business has flourished for 90 years under their leadership and today markets its dairy products globally.

Davis currently manages Davis Family Dairies, LLC, a dairy and beef animal system with over 19,000 animals of which 8,700 are milked each day by 140 employees. He grew up working in the family cheesemaking and spray drying business Davisco Foods International, Inc. A graduate from the University of Minnesota, Davis earned a bachelor of science degree in food science and nutrition. While at Davisco, he worked in most areas of the business with an emphasis on products derived from whey.

"Needless to say, Rudy's decision to step aside from active board involvement will be a loss," Trankle said. "But, it allows Rudy and his wife Marilyn more flexibility in their retirement. I am pleased that we found the ideal individual to take Rudy's board seat, and am confident that Mitch will be a real asset to the board as we deliberate policy matters that drive the business forward."

Founded in 1929 by Alfred Nef and Alfred Gonzenbach, Valley Queen continues to be owned by the Nef and Gonzenbach families today. Valley Queen annually converts 1.5 billion pounds of high-quality milk into natural cheeses, dried lactose, WPC80 and anhydrous milk fat. These products are marketed and utilized by private-label and nationally recognized consumer food companies. Valley Queen's owners, board of directors and 260 employees strive to become the premier, privately owned dairy manufacturer in the United States. For more information, visit www.vqcheese.com.