

Micro Brew Ingredients Going to the Dogs

By Mark Sherry, Tri County News

What has been produced by Rowland's Calumet Brewery in Chilton has been making customers happy for many years—and now some of those customers are dogs.

No, canines are not lining up at the bar to try one of the many micro brews on tap at Rowland's, but behind the counter is a supply of dog treats made in large part with by-products of the brewing operation.

Longtime friends Mike Barany and Pat Rowland began Specialty Treats LLC in February of this year and began producing Micro Treats in the basement of Mike's home at 122 Heimann St. in Chilton.

The idea came when Mike and his wife were on vacation in Missouri. They glanced over a menu at a local brewhouse and something caught Mike's eye—and he said it was not a micro brew. It was a bag of spent grain treats for dogs. After a little bit of thought, Mike said he decided to pose the idea to Rowland—who did not need a lot of convincing after once seeing a hunting dog chew through a bag of spent grain.

"Well three years have passed and with a little bit of determination, perspiration, and beer, Specialty Treats LLC was formed," Barany said.

Every Monday night from about 5:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. since February, the two men retreat to Barany's basement forming and baking dog treats, sometimes joined by other friends. "The process is simple but very time consuming," Barany said. "What a perfect combination—a brew master and a Briess employee."

Barany said it is not an accident that the ingredients encompass a wide variety of what Briess Malt & Ingredients Co. in Chilton uses—malt grain, sorghum, rice flour, and malt extract. The men started out with one oven in Barany's basement and now have added a second, occasionally using their kitchen oven as well. Pearl, Mike's chocolate lab, serves as the quality control manager and taste tester.

Barany said he recalls a few Monday nights when the home's smoke detectors went off because of the steam generated by the ovens, warranting an inquiry from upstairs as to what was happening. That problem was fixed when he contracted his neighborhood electrician to install another oven and rewire the smoke detector which was directly over the first oven.

Rowland and Barany originally started with one generic flavor but later decided if Rowland's beer patrons like a certain variety of beer they also might buy that variety of dog treats for their dog(s). That is why Specialty Treats LLC now offers Stout, Dark, Amber, and Nut Brown treats. They also recently produced a batch of Oktoberfest and are looking to have all treats available for each flavor of beer Rowland's offers.

The men admit to learning some things along the way, such as using silicone pans so that the treats do not stick to the pan. Treats are baked for about one hour, 45 minutes and then have to dry for 96 hours using fans and a dehumidifier.

In addition to Rowland's Calumet Brewery, the treats are available at Vern's Cheese's gift store, Farm & Home, Doggy Dos by Jess, Papa Don's, and Terra Verde. Local financial institutions including State Bank of Chilton and Premier Financial Credit Union are handing out the treats to their canine customers at their drive-through windows. They were available at the recent Beer Festival in Chilton and will be at Crafty Apple Fest this fall, and the young company also has donated product to local causes.

The treats are very reasonably priced compared to other all-natural dog treats as an eight-ounce bag can be purchased for \$5.

"There's more in the works," Rowland said about the business which has a Facebook site.



Erica Bates (left) and Tammy Pethan of the Chilton Chamber of Commerce officially welcomed Specialty Treats LLC—operated by Pat Rowland (second from left) and Mike Barany—to the Chamber's membership list. Barany's chocolate lab Pearl also found her way into the photo.

Mark Sherry photo