



## From Ewe to You

Our family property 'Towri' is located in South East Queensland Australia. Towri, meaning 'family gathering' in aboriginal, roughly 300 acres Towri is home to 350 Awassi milking sheep, 5 alpacas, 2 donkeys, some loud chooks (chickens), 2 very energetic Jack Russell's, 7 retired Polocrosse horses, and last but not least our most important asset....our faithful sheep dog 'Abby'.

For those who haven't heard of the Awassi breed, let me fill you in. Originating in Israel, also known as the fat tale sheep, the Awassi is a quiet natured, tall framed, droopy eared sheep. Imported into Australia in 1998 to help improve the sheep milking industry, giving approximately 1 gallon per ewe per milking. Towri leaves the lambs on their mothers and only separates at night for an early morning milking, resulting in happy ewes, happy lambs.

The Awassi breed in recent years has also developed a name for itself in the meat industry as a long muscled carcass breed, resulting in a more tender option for slow cooking. As sheep breeds go, we couldn't ask for a better all-round option.

So, you want to make sheep cheese? Hopefully, you have access to some ewe's milk. If it is fresh from your own sheep, you can heat it to 100f and add a B Flora starter culture, (for 10 litres (2.642g) of milk, add approx. 8 to 10 grains of starter} or a cup of cultured buttermilk, which will also work as a starter for the milk. Add 1ml liquid rennet, ( note; much smaller amount than for cow milk, this is because sheep milk has a lot more solids and coagulates easier) gently stir for at least 1 minute, keeping at temp.

Allow to sit at 100f for up to an hour, checking after 30 minutes for a clean knife cut. Cut into ¾ inch squares and turn gently. I use a large whisk to gently incorporate the curd. Allow to sit for 5 mins, before stirring gently again, stir for approx. a minute, each time, to expel whey from the curd, leave another 5 mins, then stir again, this time they will be firmer.

Now it is time to hoop your curds, if you don't have cheese moulds, you could use, a large round pasta strainer, so the whey can escape through the holes. You will need to turn your cheese after approx. 10 mins,( making sure, you don't lift the strainer/mould off the cheese) on to a cake rack, with maybe a chux perforated, cloth underneath.

Turn twice before bed. Next day, turn again and when nice and firm, you can remove mould and hand salt your cheese, with approx. 1 tablespoon of cooking salt, all over. If you have a wine fridge or pantry sitting at between 53f and 61f, put cheese on rack in a container, with lid ajar, for 9 days min., turning every day and removing any whey from container. It should have a nice even rind starting to form and taste clean and buttery.

Alternatively, you can cut it after salting and make an oil marinade with your favourite herbs, making sure the cheese is fully covered with the oil. Keep for at least 24 hours, before eating. The longer you can mature your cheese, the better it will taste, remembering practice, makes perfect. Remember, to keep all utensils spotlessly clean, to stop cheese from spoiling.

Enjoy!

Happy Cheese Making

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