

Coolea



Milk type: Cow

Milk treatment: Pasteurised

Coagulant type: Animal rennet

Location: Coolea, Cork



The flavours of this cheese are sweet and rich with hints of caramel, butterscotch and honey. Coolea is smooth and close textured, reminiscent of Dutch Gouda.

Dick and Helene Willems moved from Holland to County Cork, Ireland in the late 1970s. They started making Coolea on their own farm as a hobby in 1981, and the business was fully established by 1986. In 1998 their son Dick junior took over the cheesemaking.

We visit Helen and Dick Willems twice a year on our visits to Ireland. We have been buying Coolea since the 1980s, and export the cheese all over the world.

They buy milk from two farms, one of which is further away but on drier land, and better during the wetter weather at the beginning and end of the season. The cheeses made from this milk tend to be sold younger and do not have as much depth of flavour.

The other is close by, on wetter land and provides better quality milk in the summer when the weather is drier. Through extensive tasting we have come to find that the cheese made from this milk tends to be capable of maturing for longer and has a more interesting and intense flavour. They use this farm's milk between March and October. This tends to be the Coolea that we select to mature in London. Generally we sell Coolea somewhere between eighteen months and two years old.

