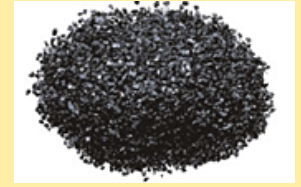


From our Cheese 101 class-room...

WHAT IS ASH?



At the cheese school in France we always joked about ash being a result of the cheesemaker smoking on top of the vat waiting that the milk "flocculate" meaning the proteins start coagulating!

At Vermont Butter & Cheese, smoking inside the creamery is prohibited, of course! and we even have a "Stop Smoking Program" to help our employees take on healthier habits.

So what ash has to do with cheese then?

Ash was first use as a way to protect the cheese through the long winter or during the affinage process. Ash is specifically used in the lactic curd cheese such as goat cheese to neutralize the surface acidity of the cheese which will then allow the yeast and mold to grow on the surface to create the rind.

Ash is made out of fine particles of carbonized vegetable matter such as pines or grape vines. We bring our ash directly from France and then blend it with salt to create the right mix that will help the geotricum yeast to growth on the surface of the cheese during the affinage in our cave.

Once the rind is formed, the cheese has a slight white cover but you can see some gray underneath. There is nothing wrong with this. It is all made on purpose and our Fromager doesn't smoke over the tubs of Bonne Bouche waiting for 24 hours while the milk turns into curd!

