

CURD PROGRAM PILOT



THE DAIRY PRODUCTS TECHNOLOGY CENTER (DPTC) AT CAL POLY, SAN LUIS OBISPO IS PROUD TO LAUNCH THE PILOT COHORT OF THE CURRICULUM FOR UNDERSTANDING AND REIMAGINING DAIRY (CURD) PROGRAM, A HYBRID TRAINING EXPERIENCE DESIGNED TO EQUIP EMERGING CHEESEMAKERS WITH THE SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, AND PRACTICAL SKILLS NEEDED TO CRAFT HIGH-QUALITY ARTISAN AND INDUSTRIAL CHEESES.

For the pilot offering, accepted participants will receive complimentary registration and will play an essential role in shaping the future of the program. This program is ideal for individuals focused on becoming professional cheesemakers intending to start their own and/or already working for a cheesemaking business. No prior experience is required, however the CURD program is not intended for home artisans. This highly selective program combines online foundational modules with intensive, hands-on production training in San Luis Obispo, California.



Daphne Zepos
Teaching Endowment



Sponsored by the PCC-DBII (Pacific Coast Coalition - Dairy Business Innovation Initiative), Supported by DTZE (Daphne Zepos Teaching Endowment)



Sponsorship Opportunities Available

If you are interested in contributing to the program or volunteering to present, we would love to hear from you. We are still seeking guest speakers to share their expertise and insights with attendees. Please connect with us at curdprogram@gmail.com for more information or to get involved.

PROGRAM CALENDAR

TOPICS	COURSE DURATION	DEADLINE & DISCUSSION
Introductory Zoom	1 Hour	February 5th, 2026
Module 1: Milk	10 - 12 Hours	March 3, 2026
Module 2: Food Safety	10 - 12 Hours	March 31, 2026
Module 3: Cheesemaking Basics	12 - 15 Hours	April 28, 2026
Module 4: Cheesemaking Styles I	2 - 4 Hours	May 26, 2026
Module 4: Cheesemaking Styles II	2 - 4 Hours	July 2, 2026
In-Person Hands-On Training	2 Weeks	August 10-21, 2026
Module 5: Commercialization	2 - 4 Hours	September 29, 2026



MEET CURD'S FOUNDER

Dr. Carmen Licon is Director at Cal Poly's Dairy Products Technology Center (DPTC), where she drives innovation for dairy manufacturers. She was an Assistant Professor for Food Processing and Engineering at Fresno State's Department of Food Science and Nutrition. She holds an M.S. and Ph.D. in Agricultural Science and Engineering from the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, as well as a B.Sc. in Food Engineering from Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico. She is also a Certified Cheese Professional by the American Cheese Society. She is Director of the Pacific Coast Coalition, a position she has held since Fall 2021. In addition to her academic and research accomplishments, Dr. Licon actively champions innovation and empowers the artisanal cheese community. Her passion and leadership serve as a driving force, inspiring the next generation of cheese makers and dairy professionals.



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[DairyProductsTechnologyCenter](https://www.dairyproductstechnologycenter.com)



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Tentative In-person Hands-on Training Calendar

WEEK ONE

DATES	TOPICS	DURATION
August 9, 2026	• Welcome Dinner!	1 - 2 Hours
August 10, 2026	• Milk processing / Dairy Diagnostics • Different cheese samples comparison • Benchtop Paneer	8 Hours
August 11, 2026	• Washed Rind Production • Bloomy Rind Production	8 Hours
August 12, 2026	• Gouda Production	8 Hours
August 13, 2026	• Semi-soft Cheese Production • Lab Practical	8 Hours
August 14, 2026	• Field Trip • Milk Microbial Testing	8 Hours

WEEK TWO

DATES	TOPICS	DURATION
August 17, 2026	• Milk Microbial Testing • Blue Veined Cheese (Open Mold)	8 Hours
August 18, 2026	• Fresh Cheese Production • Practical Sanitation Exam • Sensory Practical Test	8 Hours
August 19, 2026	• Hispanic Style Cheese • Cheese Innovation Project	8 Hours
August 20, 2026	• Cheese Innovation Project	8 Hours
August 21, 2026	• Cheese Innovation Project Presentation • Graduation Dinner	8 Hours
August 22, 2026	• Return Back Home! (OFF TO OWN ADVENTURES)	





Cheesemaking Hands-on Training Calendar

AUGUST 9 - 21, 2026



PLEASE NOTE: Pickup times may vary from the program

TIME	SUNDAY, AUGUST 9	TIME	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12
6:00 pm	Welcome Dinner at Bear & the Wren	8:15 am	Hotel pick up
TIME	MONDAY, AUGUST 10	9:00 am	Brining Bloomy & Washed Rind
7:30 am	Hotel pick up	10:30 am	Break
8:00 am	Welcome	10:45 am	Semi-Soft Cheese Production
8:30 am	Creamery Tour & Milk Pasteurizing	12:00 pm	Lunch
8:45 am	Paneer Benchtop Production	1:00 pm	Semi-Soft Cheese Production
11:45 am	Break-Cheese Comparison	2:15 pm	Break
12:00 pm	Lunch	2:30 pm	Semi-Soft Cheese Production
1:00 pm	Milk Processing	TIME	THURSDAY, AUGUST 13
	- Milk sampler weigher and milk hauling - Antibiotic testing	7:00 am	Hotel pick up
2:15 pm	Break	7:30 am	Gouda Cheese Production
2:30 pm	Sanitation	10:30 am	Break
	- ATP Swabbing - Microbial Testing - Sanitation Procedures	10:45 am	Gouda Cheese Production
TIME	TUESDAY, AUGUST 11	12:00 pm	Lunch
8:15 am	Hotel pick up	1:00 pm	Gouda Cheese Production
9:00 am	Bloomy & Washed Rind Production	2:15 pm	Break
10:30 am	Break	2:30 pm	Gouda Cheese Production
10:45 am	Bloomy & Washed Rind Production	TIME	FRIDAY, AUGUST 14
12:00 pm	Lunch	8:30 am	Hotel pick up
1:00 pm	Bloomy & Washed Rind Production	9:00 am	Halloumi Production
2:15 pm	Break	12:00 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm	Bloomy & Washed Rind Brine Making	1:00 pm	Sanitation, Microbial, & Lab Practicals



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TIME	MONDAY, AUGUST 17	TIME	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19
7:30 am	Hotel pick up	7:30 am	Hotel pick up
8:00 am	Hispanic Style Cheese Production	8:00 am	Innovation Project
10:30 am	Break	10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Hispanic Style Cheese Production	10:45 am	Innovation Project
12:00 pm	Lunch	12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Hispanic Style Cheese Production	1:00 pm	Innovation Project
2:15 pm	Break	2:15 pm	Break
2:30 pm	Hispanic Style Cheese Production	2:30 pm	Innovation Project
TIME	TUESDAY, AUGUST 18	TIME	THURSDAY, AUGUST 20
7:30 am	Hotel pick up	8:30 am	Hotel pick up
8:00 am	Blue Cheese Production	10:00 am	Step Ladder Creamery Tour
10:30 am	Break	12:00 pm	Lunch
10:45 am	Blue Cheese Production	1:00 pm	Innovation Project
12:00 pm	Lunch	3:00 pm	Comte Tasting
1:00 pm	Blue Cheese Production		
2:15 pm	Break		
2:30 pm	Blue Cheese Production		
TIME		TIME	FRIDAY, AUGUST 21
		8:30 am	Hotel pick up
		8:45 am	Innovation Project
		12:00 pm	Lunch
		1:00 pm	Presentations
		2:30 pm	Pictures and Survey
		6:00 pm	Graduation Dinner Reception



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