

The \$11,000 butter from ‘The Bear’ is handmade in Shoreham, Vt.

The show makes a not-so-subtle reference to Animal Farm Creamery, originally based in Orwell. Has newfound fame changed life on the farm?

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Is any butter in the world worth \$11,000? Carmy Berzatto (Jeremy Allen White) of “[The Bear](#)” sure thinks so. Season three of the Emmy-winning TV series sneaks in a reference to the real-life culinary world through a subtle nod to the [Animal Farm Creamery](#), originally from Orwell, Vt.

In the show, Carmy’s Uncle Jimmy (Oliver Platt) is extremely upset when he learns how much “Orwellian butter” is costing the family restaurant (\$11,268, to be exact), asking if it comes from “a rare Transylvanian goat.” Carmy insists it’s worth the price, a sentiment echoed by many actual fine dining restaurants across the country.

A pound of Animal Farm Creamery’s cultured butter is \$60, making it not only expensive but also hard to get: Only a small percent of the product is sold to the public through [Saxelby Cheesemongers](#), but the majority of it goes to the farm’s seven regular restaurant clients. Some of their most notable accounts are [Thomas Keller’s The French Laundry](#) and [Per Se](#), [The Inn at Little Washington](#) and [Amar](#) in Boston.

Part of the butter’s allure is its scarcity. Hilary and Ben Haigh, owners of the Animal Farm Creamery, make roughly 130 pounds of the butter each week, milking 12 of their cows for the dairy. Their restaurant accounts fluctuate in the amounts they order, and any surplus is made available for purchase via Saxelby’s, or on rare occasion [Momma’s Grocery](#) in Cambridge or specialized distributor [Larder Foods](#) in Alabama.

While flattered by the attention the creamery has received since that particular “The Bear” episode aired, the Haighs have no plans to change how they do things. Alongside an increased demand for the butter are requests to tour the farm, which the couple politely turns down. They run the creamery themselves and have no additional help — and therefore no time for tours.

“All of a sudden we’re getting a lot of interest, and people are like, ‘Oh, you must be selling out,’” Hilary Haigh said in a recent Zoom interview. “We have weekly standing orders. So for us, it actually doesn’t change that much as far as the amount of product, because we move as much as we can make every week.”

The Haighs bought the Orwell creamery in 2022 from its original owner and operator, Diane St. Clair. Looking to expand their farm, [Rolling Bale](#) in Shoreham, Vt., to include dairy products, the couple reached out to St. Clair, a family friend, in August of 2021 and started training with her, preparing to take over. By November of the same year, they started construction. In February, St. Clair’s beloved Jersey cows were trailered to their new home, only a 10-minute drive away.

“Shoreham wouldn’t have worked for ‘The Bear’ reference the way they did it,” said Ben Haigh, laughing. “It goes back to the roots of Animal Farm, which is great,” added Hilary Haigh.

For the first few months, while their creamery was still being built, the Haighs would milk the cows at their farm and then bring the cream to Orwell to process at St. Clair’s plant. The months of observing and learning St. Clair’s process ensured that the butter turned out the same, creamy, light, and slightly sweet. The restaurants that originally partnered with St. Clair transitioned over to the Haighs as she handed them the reins.

Their specific process is what makes the butter so good. “We milk the cows twice a day here,” said Hilary. “Every time before we milk, we hand skim the cream off the bulk tank.”

That cream is then stored for up to three days in a fridge before being pasteurized in batches, 25 gallons at a time. A *Lactobacillus* culture is then added, and the butter gets churned the next day. Once it’s cultured, the product is rinsed by hand and worked into butterballs on a marble tabletop, ready to be shipped out within approximately a week of being made.

The small scale of the operation also allows the couple to be attentive to the cows, or “our girls” as Hilary Haigh fondly referred to them.

Having to monitor just 12 cows at a time means the Haighs are able to take great care of them individually. Plus, she said, “We have space for everyone in the barn all the time.”