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## **Focus on Business**

By Ameerah Cetawayo

Cheese, please!

Readers in southcentral Kentucky should know that it was Barren County cheese that helped a chef in Louisville recently win the Great Kentucky Seafood Cook Off.

According to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Patrick Colley, executive chef at the Louisville Country Club, edged out Chef John Hutson of Equus Restaurant in Louisville by 0.5 points to win the second annual Great Kentucky Seafood Cook Off.

The competition was July 16 in Louisville.

Colley's winning dish was bourbon Kentucky prawns over sweet corn, Tabasco sauce and Kenny's white cheddar grits with Kentucky sorghum barbecue sauce. It was topped with baby spinach, sweet onions and a country ham hush puppy.

Kenny Mattingly, owner of Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese, said the honor comes at a time when he is seeing record demand for his product. Mattingly's sales are up 50 percent over last year, he said. Sales during the Kentucky Derby accounted for 20 percent of sales for the year, with at least 8,000 pounds of cheese sold, according to Mattingly.

"It is always an honor when our product is used in that way as part of a recipe that wins an award. It's always humbling to me," Mattingly said. "Years ago when I first started, I looked forward to the day when our cheese is a part of everybody's lives ... and now we're enjoying that in a big way."

Kenny's Farmhouse cheese began operating in July 1998 as a way to make Mattingly's family-run dairy farm sustainable. In the company's first year, Mattingly made 4,000 pounds of Gouda cheese.

Now the company produces 50,000 pounds of cheese in 23 varieties.

The Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese brand is becoming more common and demand is at an all-time high for Mattingly's product, and is featured in eight farmer's markets in the state.

"So we send a lot of cheese and then also restaurants are pretty busy during the summer," Mattingly said.

Consumers can find the same cheese that helped Chef Colley win the Great Seafood cook-off at the regional farmer's market in a parking lot near The Medical Center on U.S. 31-W By-Pass on Tuesdays and Saturdays and at the farmer's market on Scottsville Road at the Ashley Center on Tuesdays and Saturdays.