26 January 2021

**Statement from Wilma:**

Yesterday we mentioned on social media that we were suspending accepting orders for delivery to addresses in Northern Ireland. The response on Twitter to this has been overwhelming. So, I wanted to explain in a little more detail why we have made this decision.

We make unpasteurised organic cheese with the milk from our organic farm. We mainly sell this cheese direct to customers through our website. While online sales have always been important to us, the impact of covid means that 80% of our cheese is now sold this way - with cheese dispatched in small quantities and sent overnight by courier direct to our customers’ own homes.

The paperwork now required to send products of animal origin into the single market is understandably designed for moving large volumes of produce. In other words, it’s simply not designed for businesses like us.

Our understanding is that every delivery of organic dairy products into Northern Ireland now requires a vet’s health certificate and an organic inspection certificate, plus associated export paperwork. This would be required for every order. Our average order value is around £35. The costs of compliance with the new requirements makes direct to consumer sales of our cheese into Northern Ireland simply not viable.

We are not unfamiliar with exporting. Ten years ago we exported ice cream from our sister company, Cream o’ Galloway, to South Korea and the export paperwork required to do this was similar. The difference is the scale. Vet certificates and export paperwork are justifiable to enable export of a shipping container of ice cream. It simply isn’t justifiable, from a business point of view, to do this for an individual order of cheese.

The biggest blow for us is telling our existing customers in Northern Ireland that we can no longer send them cheese. We are so sorry to be unable to find a workable solution. The frustrating thing is that we are actually closer to Northern Ireland than we are to Glasgow or Edinburgh – people in Northern Ireland are more than our customers, they’re our neighbours.

We have been taken aback at both the interest in this on social media, and the support for our business. We are so grateful, thank you.