

RAW materials: John milks Pixie the goat while Wendy keeps her steady. RF21FP19304



A hobby to get your teeth into

HUSBAND and wife John Earnshaw and Wendy Davison have a most unusual hobby – making cheese.

The couple, who live on Tippetts Farm, Cowpe, keep five goats and decided to turn the animals' milk into cheese, and very successful they were, too.

John (53) is chief cheese maker and has won first prize at agricultural shows in Cheshire and Todmorden with his Cowpe Goats' Cheese.

The couple's daughter Joanne (8) must have the most unusual lunchbox butties at Waterfoot Primary School because she loves the cheese and is always asking her dad to make more.

Strict European legislation prohibits them from producing the cheese commercially, but family and friends are only too happy to help them devour the savoury treat.

It takes four pints of milk to create one small round of cheese, two days for it to mature and then, if properly stored, it will last for nearly a week.

The couple demonstrated their hobby at a bite-size course at the

by Catherine Smyth

Kingfisher Centre at Futures Park where six people learned the new skill.

John also uses the milk to make goats' yoghurt.

They have crossed their dairy herd with South African Boer goats so that the billy goat kids provide good meat. Unwanted kid goats are sent to the abattoir and end up in the couple's freezer.

John said: 'Free range goat meat is a bit like lamb but without the fat and very healthy.'

The couple have now divided their farmhouse into living quarter and separate bed and breakfast accommodation, and they hope to run weekend courses teaching visitors traditional skills like cheese making, hedge laying and dry-stone walling.

Wendy (46) said: 'We were approached to have a bridleway put through the land when they were mapping out the Mary Towneley Loop and through that we get visitors booking accommodation with their horses and mountain bikers who are completing the trail.'



FINISHING touches: John adds a sprinkle of salt to preserve and season the cheese. RF21FP19404