

Whey

Whey is what you have left after making cheese. It is high in protein, fat, and solids. Municipal waste systems and your septic system will not appreciate having regular infusions of this in their systems. To obtain permits, you will often be asked what you plan to do with your whey and waste water.

Creameries deal with whey in many different ways. Listed below are some of the ways we have found creameries handling whey:

- Pigs and chickens. It has protein, solids, and fat. Parma ham is an excellent example of a whey fed pork product. When mixed with grain and pasture, it makes an excellent feed for pigs and chickens. Unless you have a contract with a local person to take the whey on a regular basis, do not count on the local guy and have a contingency for them not showing up.
- Field Spreading. A number of dairy farm operations have the waste water and whey pumped into liquid manure storage. This is then field spread. It can also be directly field spread. Solids may need to be filtered to prevent clogging of sprayer nozzles. For smaller operations, they can contract with larger dairy farms that have liquid manure storage a tipping fee.
- Bark Beds. Do NOT put in a bark bed. They have failed all over the country. NRCS loves them. DO NOT install one. Milk coagulates and clogs. It does not dissipate.
- Holding Tank and Septic Guy. Sink a holding tank into the ground and have septic guy pump it out on a regular basis. Costs a lot, but may be the only way.
- Whey butter, Gytost, Ricotta, etc are all made from whey. You will need appreciable amounts of milk to make whey butter, but the other products are commonly made on farms. In some states, they will allow ricotta to be made on raw milk cheese operations because of the high temperatures needed to make this cheese. Check with local authorities before considering this.
- Planned wetlands. It is a viable system and NRCS does have plans for them. They are used on a number of farms.