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Recipes for fighting desertification

Camel chocolate and other delights

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“The best way to protect and develop camels is to make them economically attractive”, says Nancy Abeiderrahmane, manager of the Tiviski Dairy in Mauritania.

So fight desertification by trying out one of the following items:

Camel milk

Camel milk is almost a magic potion, with an extremely high vitamin C content of 3.5 mg per 100 ml. It is regarded as an aphrodisiac in Arab culture, and among the Somali, it is the only drink you can offer an important guest. In Kazakhstan it is used for curing tuberculosis, in India it's an antidote for typhoid, and in Pakistan a therapeutic for jaundice.

Traditional camel cultures have always been aware of the health-promoting effects of camel milk. Gradually scientists are now also showing that camel milk boosts the human immune system. It contains 30–100 times as much lactoferrin as cow's milk. Lactoferrin is a fairly recently discovered iron-containing protein that has been shown to have antiviral, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and anti-carcinogenic effects.

Especially interesting are its properties alleviating juvenile diabetes, a disease that is becoming rampant among India's and China's urban middle class. Other ailments against which it may be effective are autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, psoriasis, lupus, allergies, peptic ulcers and maybe even skin cancer.

Camel chocolate

A camel dairy in the UAE and an Austrian chocolatier recently teamed up in a joint venture to produce chocolate made from camel milk, sweetened with honey from Yemen. A proposed plant will start production in June 2006. It plans to produce 50 tons of camel chocolate per month, targeted at the wealthy customers of luxury hotels in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. (www.despardes.com/Food/news/camel-chocolates-mar16.html)

Camelbert

Making cheese from camel milk can be difficult, but the Mauretanian Tiviski Dairy processes camel milk into modern, high-quality products.

The dairy buys camel, cow and goat milk from semi-nomadic livestock owners and processes the fresh milk into various market products, including pasteurised milk, sour milk, cream, yoghurt and cottage cheese. “Camelbert” is one of their specialty items. (www.tiviski.com)

Camel vodka

Mongolian nomads in the Gobi Desert distil a delicious drink from soured camel milk with low alcohol content, known as “camel vodka”.

Camel ice-cream

Camel ice cream was first promoted by the Israeli scientist Reuven Yagil, but the National Research Centre on Camels in Bikaner, India, now also produces a delicious camel milk-based *kulfi*, a local variation on ice-cream. (<http://www.icar.org.in/nrccm/home.html>)

Low-cholesterol meat

Because of its low cholesterol content, Australia’s National Heart Foundation has put camel meat on its list of highly recommended food items. “Camburgers” and “camfurters” are among the products that have been produced by a team of scientists around Prof. Farah at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (www.camelgate.com).

Camel oil and cosmetics

Camel oil, produced in Australia, is lower in cholesterol than other animal cooking fats, and can be used to make soaps and cosmetics, even creams for sensitive baby skin. A line of cosmetics based on camel milk is also the dream project of Nancy Abdeirrahmane from the Tiviski Dairy. (www.tiviski.com)

More information

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Websites with further information

www.pastoralpeoples.org

www.despardes.com/Food/news/camel-chocolates-mar16.html

www.tiviski.com

www.camelgate.com