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SPORTS, 1B

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Trump's tariffs taking toll on cheese trade

U.S., Canadian farmers fret amid tit-for-tat

Michael Collins
USA TODAY

GREENSBORO, VT – On Mateo Kehler's family farm, at the end of a dirt road about an hour from the Canadian border, the cheesemaking starts before darkness lifts over the pastures and pines of northern Vermont.

A truck with fresh milk from cows that graze in nearby fields rumbles toward Jasper Hill Farm's big blue barn, painted with a mural of a starry nighttime sky and a blue-cheese moon. An American flag stretches over the entrance.

Two hours to the north, in a small, leafy, French-speaking village, Jean Morin steps into the former Catholic church he bought for 1 Canadian dollar and turned into part of his cheese factory. The pungent smell of aging cheese fills a temperature-controlled room as Morin surveys shelves holding hundreds of wheels of the fromage he produces at the old rectory next door.

Kehler's and Morin's cheesemaking businesses sit on opposite sides of the United States-Canada border. But both are feeling the same pain of the tariff war between the United States and Canada.

"The reality is that there's nobody that is winning," Kehler said. "Everyone in these border communities is losing."

Kehler, who co-founded Jasper Hill Farm with his brother Andy, worked for a decade to penetrate Canada's highly regulated dairy market to sell his artisan cheeses north of the border. He had finally made inroads and was looking to expand when President Donald Trump slapped tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of Canadian products, including

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2 decades of gigs, Grammys, fostering Fab Four memories from Tennessee-based tribute group

Jay Powell Columbia Daily Herald | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

For almost 20 years, The WannaBeatles have been sharing a love of their famous Liverpool namesake on stage. • The Tennessee-based group's journey has taken its members around the country, earning them good times, great performances and a 2012 Grammy nomination, something unheard of for a tribute band. • The group's story continues to this day. They recently performed in Columbia as part of Puckett's Live on The Square series. But, fans may not know that the band's origins and success is full of surprises, stretching beyond local gigs and their undying Fab Four fandom.

Band origin includes side of fajitas

Much like how The Beatles got its start in the Liverpool underground Cavern Club venue, The WannaBeatles' origins began in 2007 after an impromptu performance at a Franklin Mexican restaurant, founder and frontman Dennis Scott jokes.

At the time, Scott and drummer David Toledo were performing locally around Nashville, but they weren't getting the crowd response they were aiming for.

"It wasn't even a band. We were just hired to do background music, and were playing songs from the American Songbook, but nobody was paying attention" Scott said.

"I knew we all loved Beatles songs, and so I said, 'Hey guys, let's play some Beatles songs.' And all of a sudden, people were tapping their feet. I went to the manager and asked how about doing a monthly Beatles night, and he said, 'Si, Si, Beatles and fajitas,' and the rest is history."

Once the Beatles-centered shows began, they quickly became popular, Toledo said.

"It was getting sold out every time, just packed. That's what I remember most," Toledo said.

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The WannaBeatles' 2012 album, "Fab Fan Memories – The Beatles Bond," features stories told by fans and is hosted by Louise Harrison (George Harrison's older sister).



WannaBeatles bassist and keyboardist Nathan Burbank stands by a framed check featuring signatures by John Lennon and Paul McCartney at DSP Productions in Frankln.

TOP: The WannaBeatles perform at Puckett's in downtown Columbia on Nov. 6.
PHOTOS BY JAY POWELL/THE DAILY HERALD

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