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Contact: Phillip Tong, director
Dairy Products Technology Center
805-756-6102; ptong@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly Ice Cream to be Featured Thursday in Annual Capitol Hill Social

SAN LUIS OBISPO - An ice cream made by Cal Poly's Dairy Products Technology Center will be featured Thursday at the International Dairy Foods Association's 27th annual Capitol Hill Ice Cream Party.

About 8,000 people – most of them members of Congress and their family and friends – are expected at the event at Upper Senate Park, across the street from the Capitol.

Cal Poly's English Toffee Reduced-Fat Ice Cream with Probiotics will be served at the VIP tent, where most of the senators and representatives will gather.

The ice cream has about 27 percent less fat than normal ice cream. It was made with probiotics, beneficial bacteria linked to digestive health and immunity. Probiotics have a long association with dairy products. The health benefits of probiotic consumption are usually associated with yogurt. Probiotics are added during the fermentation of milk in the making of yogurt. But they are not widely used in the ice cream industry.

"This ice cream is a prototype. It's not a product that's out on the market," said Phillip Tong, director of Cal Poly's Dairy Products Technology Center. "We added enough probiotics so that you get the same benefit as yogurt, but it still tastes like ice cream. It's more health-oriented, with the reduced fat. It's a pretty good product."

Tong said the Dairy Products Technology Center made a limited supply of the ice cream for the Dairy Management Inc. booth at the annual Institute of Food Technologists meeting this month in Anaheim.

According to the California Dairy Research Foundation, which supports research at Cal Poly on behalf of the state's dairy industry, the ice cream was produced to showcase dairy ingredients to food manufacturers seeking innovative new product ideas.

A representative from the International Dairy Foods Association sampled the ice cream at the booth, Tong said, and then contacted Cal Poly about including the product at the Capitol Hill event. Cal Poly sent about 5 gallons of the ice cream.

"We think it's a big deal to have Cal Poly featured on a national stage," Tong said, "and we hope our California representatives will find that fun."

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