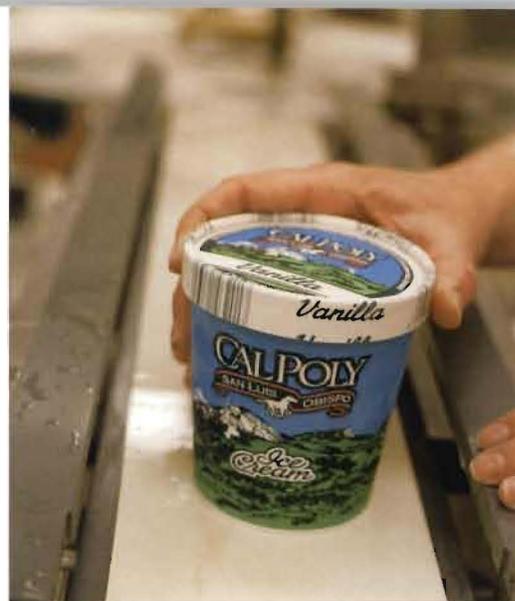


2COOL



BY TERESA HENDRIX

JUST IN TIME FOR SUMMER, the Cal Poly Creamery is getting back into the ice cream business.

In bright, redesigned cartons featuring a blue sky over Bishop Peak and the green hills of the Seven Sisters, Cal Poly Ice Cream is planning a return to the shelves of Campus Market and Central Coast groceries after a decade-long hiatus.

Year-round flavors include chocolate chip, mud pie, cookies and cream and the venerable vanilla. Soon, there will be limited edition seasonal flavors, too.

The return of Cal Poly Ice Cream sales is thanks in large part to the Oreggia Family Foundation. Support from the foundation is paying for a full-time creamery manager, Jerry Mattas, who oversees ice cream and cheese production and day-to-day creamery operations.

In addition to funding the staff position, the foundation purchased \$60,000 worth of commercial ice cream processing and packaging equipment for the creamery. The state-of-the-art equipment allows a team of 10 students to turn milk from the Cal Poly Dairy into 1,400 pints of ice cream in one batch over the course of six hours. A special mixing unit allows "inclusions" -- fruit, chocolate pieces, candy bar crumbs, cookie crumbs, you name it.

"Before, we would have had to do everything by hand," explained Dairy Products Technology Center Director and dairy science Professor Phil Tong. Ten years ago, when students made ice cream, "It was a little tricky. It could get like that episode in 'I Love Lucy' with Lucy in the chocolate factory," Tong recalled.

Now, under Mattas's watchful eyes, students calibrate the ice cream equipment, fold in ingredients, set the flow rate at which soft ice cream swirls into the pints, and wheel away carts of full containers for final freezing.

That final, colder freeze changes the structure of the ice crystals within the ice cream, making it harder and even changing the flavor, Tong explained.

The return of Cal Poly Ice Cream and continued Cal Poly Cheese operations have the creamery humming. Students working there are gaining real-life experience, not only in the nutritional chemistry of ice cream and applying chemistry and microbiology to food processing, but also in plant operations, engineering and marketing.

Since none of the creamery projects receive state funding, all have to be self-supporting. Which is another good reason to buy a pint of the new ice cream: Supporting Cal Poly just plain tastes good. □

