Cal Poly Creamery Students Gearing Up for Annual Cheese Sale

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA - Cal Poly Creamery students are preparing for the largest annual December Cal Poly Cheese sale ever - with production up an estimated 10 percent from last year.

Cal Poly Cheese gift packs are available for sale once a year and all sales proceeds are re-invested into the program.

The program's award-winning cheese is made and packaged entirely by university students working with dairy professor Nana Farkye. The process begins months earlier when milk is collected from Cal Poly's own dairy cows. Students then get hands-on experience in creating, wrapping, selling and shipping their cheeses.

Cal Poly Cheese plant manager Jerry Mattas works with students to ensure all standards of cheese identity, and state and federal regulations, are met. "All credit for the flavor, texture and quality goes to the students," said Mattas.

Mattas says that students from other majors participate in the program as well. "Our doors are open to anyone at Cal Poly who wants hands-on experience - which shows that our students are willing to explore different avenues in their educational experience."

Cal Poly's dairy herd consists of 60 percent Jersey and 40 percent Holstein cows, a split that adds to the nutritional value and flavorful quality of the final product. The cheese is aged for months in the cold room and sells out every year.

The Cal Poly Creamery is offering seven varieties of cheese, in five different packaged assortments. Gouda, Smoked Gouda, Mustang Cheddar, Smoked Cheddar, Chipotle Jack, San Luis Lace and Reduced Fat Lace. The Lace cheeses are Cal Poly originals that are based on Swiss-style cheese, but with smaller holes, or "eyes," as they're properly called.

Five gift packs are available. The Green & Gold Special, Mustang Sampler and Smokey Pack each contain three 12-ounce packages of cheese; The President's Choice contains four packages; and the Poly Grande contains 12 ounces of each of the seven cheeses produced this year.

"We have a lot of repeat customers," according to dairy major Christina Weststeyn. "One customer in Louisiana ordered a gift pack after tasting the cheese at Cal Poly. We also get a lot of orders off the Internet."

The Creamery has been making dairy products for the local community since 1903.

For a listing of cheeses, packages and prices, and ordering information, visit www.calpolycheese.com or contact the students at (805) 756-6644 or creamery@calpoly.edu.

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