

July is National Ice Cream Month

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan designated July as National Ice Cream Month and the third Sunday of the month as National Ice Cream Day. In 2009, National Ice Cream Day will be Sunday, July 19.

The U.S. ice cream industry generates about \$20 billion in annual sales and provides jobs for thousands of citizens. About 9% of all the milk produced by U.S. dairy farmers is used to produce ice cream, contributing significantly to the economic well-being of the nation's dairy industry.

Founded in 1900, The International Ice Cream Association (IICA) is the trade association for manufacturers and distributors of ice cream and other frozen dessert products. Its 80 member companies manufacture and distribute an estimated 85% of the ice cream and frozen dessert products consumed in the United States. IICA, as a constituent organization of the International Dairy Foods Association, can be found online at www.idfa.org.

Everybody has a favorite flavor or brand of ice cream. While each manufacturer develops its own special recipes, ice cream production is basically the same everywhere.

The most important ice cream ingredients come from milk. The dairy ingredients are crucial in determining the characteristics of the final frozen product. Federal regulations state that ice cream must have at least 10% milkfat, the single most critical ingredient. The use of varying percentages of milkfat affects the palatability, smoothness, color, texture and food value of the finished product. Gourmet or super premium ice creams contain at least 12% milkfat, usually more.

Ice cream contains nonfat solids (the non-fat, protein part of the milk), which contribute nutritional value (protein, calcium, minerals and vitamins). Nonfat dry milk, skim milk and whole milk are the usual sources of nonfat solids.

The sweeteners used in ice cream vary from cane or beet sugar to corn sweeteners or honey. Stabilizers, such as plant derivatives, are commonly used in small amounts to prevent the formation of large ice crystals and to make a smoother ice cream. Emulsifiers, such as lecithin and mono- and diglycerides, are also used in small amounts. They provide uniform whipping qualities to the ice cream during freezing, as well as a smoother and drier body and texture in the frozen form.

These basic ingredients are agitated and blended in a mixing tank. The mixture is then pumped into a pasteurizer, where it is heated and held at a predetermined temperature. The hot mixture is then "shot" through a homogenizer, where pressure of 2,000 to 2,500 pounds per square inch breaks the milkfat down into smaller particles, allowing the mixture to stay smooth and creamy. The mix is then quick-cooled to about 40°F and frozen via the "continuous freezer" method (the "batch freezer" method) that uses a steady flow of mix that freezes a set quantity of ice cream one batch at a time.

During freezing, the mix is aerated by "dashers," revolving blades in the freezer. The small air cells that are incorporated by this whipping action prevent ice cream from becoming a solid mass of frozen ingredients. The amount of aeration is called "overrun," and is limited by the federal standard that requires the finished product must not weigh less than 4.5 pounds per gallon.

The next step is the addition of bulky flavorings, such as fruits, nuts and chocolate chips. The ingredients are either "dropped" or "shot" into the semi-solid ice cream after it leaves the freezer.

After the flavoring additions are completed, the ice cream can be packaged in a variety of containers, cups or molds. It is moved quickly to a "hardening room," where sub-zero temperatures freeze the product to its final state for storage and distribution.

Labeling Definitions

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets standards of identity for many foods so that consumers will get a consistent product, no matter what brand or type they buy. For ice cream, FDA permits the use of nutrient descriptors such as "light," "reduced fat" and "lowfat" so that consumers know exactly what they're selecting in terms of nutritional content. These FDA standards follow the federal Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA), which governs all food labeling.

- Ice cream is a frozen food made from a mixture of dairy products, containing at least 10% milkfat.
- "Reduced fat" ice cream contains at least 25% less total fat than the referenced product (either an average of leading brands, or the company's own brand.)
- "Light" ice cream contains at least 50% less total fat or 33% fewer calories than the referenced product (the average of leading regional or national brands.)
- "Lowfat" ice cream contains a maximum of 3 grams of total fat per serving (? cup).
- "Nonfat" ice cream contains less than 0.5 grams of total fat per serving.

I had the pleasure of enjoying ice cream with root beer making a root beer float while at the National Ag in the Classroom Conference in St. Louis last week. I plan on writing something up on my trip for next week's column.

Enjoy some ice cream to keep you cool on the 4th of July and remember to thank our dairy farmers who work so hard to provide us with their products.

Bloomin' Bash at Hillbilly Daylilies

A fun event for the whole family to benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Panhandle. This July, Hillbilly Daylilies will present their first-ever "Bloomin' Bash" to benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Panhandle. Hillbilly Daylilies, located in Bunker Hill, WV, specializes in field grown daylilies and every July invites customers to visit and experience over 350 varieties of daylilies in peak bloom. Customers are able to purchase the daylilies of their choice and Hillbilly Daylilies digs and prepares them on the spot.

The Bloomin' Bash, being held on July 11th, will not only showcase thousands of beautiful flowers in bloom, but also gives visitors the chance to participate in several educational workshops ranging from growing a kitchen herb garden to encouraging pollination in your own back yard. Hillbilly Daylilies owner and event coordinator, Lisa Giles, is excited about this inaugural event, "We have worked very hard to make this a fun event for the whole family. With the educational workshops for adults, fun garden projects for the kids, live music, vendors, and food, there really is something for everyone. And, it is a great way to support Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Panhandle."

Admission is \$5 per person and children under 5 years old are admitted free. Gates open at 9am and the event lasts until 6pm. Food and ice cream will be available from Texas BBQ and Rock Hill Creamery with live bluegrass music by Sleepy Creek and Skystone. Antique Tractors and Steam Engines will be on display and daylilies will be for sale.

The Berkeley-Jefferson Master Gardener Association will be on hand giving out lots of gardening info and answering questions.

Workshops for adults include Growing a Kitchen Herb Garden 10am; Rain Barrels 11am; Native Plants in the Home Landscape 12pm; Composting 101 1pm; Pollinators in Your Backyard 2pm; and Growing Herbs to Use and Enjoy 3pm. The kid's tent will be hosted by Denis Scott, WVU extension agent, and will hold fun garden projects. For more information and to pre-register for workshops: call 304-229-6698 or visit their website at www.HillbillyDaylilies.com. Hillbilly Daylilies is located at 1105 Giles Mill Road, Bunker Hill, WV 25413.

July 18, 2009-Food Preservation Workshop

Just as home gardens and farm markets are brimming with produce, a timely food preservation workshop will be given on Saturday July 18, 2009 at Trinity Episcopal Church, 200 West King Street, in Martinsburg. Guest speakers including, Sue Flanagan, Berkeley County WVU extension agent, and Master Gardeners will give demonstrations and provide directions on proper food handling, crop selection and home preservation of fruits and vegetables. The speakers will demonstrate the different methods of preservation such as canning, freezing,

vacuum sealing, drying or cold storage and discuss how to choose the best varieties of produce from the garden or the market. There will also be educational exhibits, light refreshments and door prizes.

The workshop is free and open to the first 60 participants that pre-register by calling 304-264-1936. Sign-in will be from 8:30-9:00am and the workshop will be 9:00am-11:00am. Please use the entrance and parking lot on the College Street side of the church. This workshop is sponsored by the Berkeley County WVU Extension Service, Berkeley Jefferson Master Gardener Association and co-sponsored by Trinity Episcopal Church.

Berkeley County Youth Fair Dates and Dates to remember

- Poultry Blood Testing - Saturday, July 18, 2009 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.
- Goat Health Check - Thursday, July 9th 5:30 - 7:00 pm. This health check is for Breeding Stock only - No Market Goats need to attend. For additional information regarding this health check contact Michelle McDonald at 304-676-1601.
- 62nd Annual Berkeley County Youth Fair dates are August 3 - 8, 2009

West Virginia State Fair dates 14-22, 2009. For more information on the WV State Fair go to <http://www.statefairwv.com/>

Penn State Agricultural Progress Days August 18 - 20, 2009 for more information go to <http://apd.psu.edu/>

Garden Tips

- Seed late corn and snap beans
- Seed kale and broccoli
- Control cabbage worms
- Seed or plant endive
- Watch for tomato blights
- Seed carrots and Swiss chard

Until next time ...Happy Fourth of July! Happy Gardening and Farming!

Mary Beth Bennett, Ph.D. is a WVU Extension agent and associate professor. She can be reached at 264-1936, MBBennett@mail.wvu.edu or on the web at <http://www.berkeleyextension.com>