

Clemson Ice Cream A Running History

First Person History from 1945 to 1949. Notes from a conversation with Sam E. McGregor (Class of 1949) by John U. McGregor (Class of 1982) on Sunday October 2, 2007.

Clemson Ice Cream probably started sometime in the 1920's. Articles were often written in the student newspaper (The Tiger), Anderson Daily Mail and the Greenville News so a search of these achieves may turn up some Clemson Ice Cream history.

The first Clemson Creamery was located in the basement of the Dairy Building that was behind Sikes Hall next to the amphitheater. The Dairy Building was a two story building with the Dairy Science Department located on the first floor and the Animal Husbandry Department located on the second floor. The Agricultural Sales Room was located on the first floor and was a very small room about the size of a large closet. The Ag Sales Room housed a female sales attendant that sat behind a bar and sold the following products...single and double scooped ice cream in cake cones or paper Dixie cups (5 and 10 cents respectively), 16 oz milk shakes, milk in glass bottles, 1 pound blocks of butter, buttermilk and chocolate milk by the glass. The basic ice cream flavors were peach, vanilla, strawberry, chocolate and lemon custard. The Dairy Building was a brick building of the architectural style of Long Hall. The Dairy Building was torn down with the construction of Newman Hall and Martin Halls in the mid to late 1950's. Creamery operations moved to Newman Hall in 1956.

Some interesting stories...

Professor B. E. Goodale was the faculty member in charge of the creamery and dairy manufacturing courses and had a major influence on all of the dairy students. One time a student by the name of Charlie Cousins forgot to fasten the door on the butter churn and when Professor B. E. Goodale turned on the churn the gate came flying open and covered Professor B. E. Goodale in fresh cream.

A student by the name of Bob Row from Brooklyn, New York once put peach coloring into a vat of what he thought was ice cream mix. It was not ice cream mix but buttermilk so Professor B. E. Goodale decided to sell the pink colored buttermilk and market it to people as a study to see if people liked the idea of colored buttermilk. The student Bob Row, became known as Pink Buttermilk Bob Row for the rest of his days and Clemson.

Just like today, there were many places where students would create a dirt path by taking short cuts across the grassy areas instead of taking the sidewalks. They would spread cow manure as fertilizer on the dirt paths to try and get students to use the sidewalks.

The most famous and recognized Clemson Ice Cream story was a hoax that was played every year on the freshman "Rats". They would come on the PA system at lunch and make an announcement that the freezers had broken down at the creamery and that free ice cream was available. The freshman would take the stainless milk pitchers from the tables in the dining hall and rush over to get ice cream. The upperclassman would tell them they needed something bigger and to go get milk cans or trashcans so they could bring them some ice cream back as well. There would be some 300 to 400 freshman lined up outside the sales room (some cutting classes to stay in line) only to find out that it was a hoax when they entered the sales room. This story and scene is depicted at the Cadet Life Garden located in the Botanical Gardens located on Perimeter Road.

In January of 1991 operations of the Clemson University Dairy Processing Plant were transferred from the Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Science Department to Clemson's Business Services. Business

services continued operations of the full facility with retail sales being delivered through the Ag Sales Center in Newman Hall. With this change in 1991 there began a history of little if any academic work or student involvement with the production of Clemson Ice Cream.

In April of 1995 operations of the dairy processing facility were transferred to ARA (ARAMARK) the university's food service provider. It was during this period that the full dairy manufacturing facility was closed and turned into a packaging science laboratory. ARAMARK continued to manufacture Clemson Blue Cheese with the purchase of milk from Mayfield Dairies but the ice cream manufacture was subcontracted to an outside vendor, first located in Tennessee and then in Wisconsin. Retail sales continued through the Newman Hall location that was named Uniquely Clemson at some point in time.

In 2000 the Ag Sales Center in Newman Hall was closed and ice cream sales were moved to the food court located in the newly built Hendrix Student Center. The operation was renamed Tiger Treats and was part of a frozen dairy retail operation including Freshens Yogurt. During the period of 1995 to 2000 there were many complaints about the quality of Clemson Ice Cream. This was primarily due to the poor distribution network that handled Clemson's Ice Cream that was being manufactured by a subcontractor located in Wisconsin and then distributed to Clemson for retail sale. When ice cream is allowed to thaw and refreeze it takes on a very icy texture. This was the major defect that generated the complaints of "Clemson Ice Cream isn't the same. They don't even make it anymore."

In 2001 the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department created the Clemson MicroCreamery and assumed the production operations for making Clemson ice cream (Blue Cheese operations remain with ARAMARK). This was a major shift in previous efforts because the new ice cream freezing operations were now completely operated by students bringing back a strong academic focus to the production of this unique product that had been lacking since the 1960's. Students carried out this operation by purchasing a commercially available ice cream mix that was converted to ice cream by a small freezing operation that was set up in the old Ag Sales Room of Newman Hall. The students designed this space with glass windows so the freezing operations could be seen by visitors in Newman Hall. The students of the MicroCreamery sold the ice cream wholesale to ARAMARK which in turn resold the product through Tiger Treats in the Hendrix Student Center. It was during this time that the students started their signature ice cream flavor program that allows an employee of the MicroCreamery to design their own unique ice cream flavor that carries their name i.e. Brad's Caramel Cookie Dough, Ashley's Hot Apple Pie, Heather's Goober Goo, etc.

In June of 2006 the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department assumed the entire operations for the manufacture and retail sale of Clemson Ice Cream. At this time the source of the ice cream mix was changed from a commercially available product back to Clemson's original formula. This mix is now custom manufactured by a former graduate of Clemson working in the dairy processing industry. The mix is then delivered to Newman Hall where the students freeze it into Clemson ice cream. The students also collaborated with Clemson's Class of 1955 Golden Anniversary Committee; funds were secured to renovate an old hair salon located at the east end of the Hendrix Student Center into an Ag Sales Market and Entrepreneurial Center. The name of the sales center is the '55 Exchange in honor of the Class of 1955. The operations are run entirely by students with some faculty oversight. The retail center is a blending of tradition and forward thinking concepts which is captured by the center's tag line... "Where Tradition Flavors the Future". At any time the center may employ up to 35 students from across the campus with revenues going to support Clemson students and academic programs. One exciting feature of the '55 *Exchange* is the Tiger Slab, where customers can customize their own unique ice cream flavor using Clemson Ice Cream and an assortment of special mix-ins. The center is open seven days a week except during academic holidays and also offers other Clemson products for sale including Music CDs, eggs, blue cheese and half gallons

of ice cream.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE '55 EXCHANGE

- **Operate a World Class Facility**
- **Be Self Sustaining**
- **Engage Students**