

Go Ahead! Indulge In Some Ice Cream

BY KIMBERLY HERR

NEW HOLLAND — Be patriotic — eat an ice cream cone.

That's right, folks, this week was national ice cream week. And what a wonderful reason to splurge on a large, triple-dip ice cream cone in your favorite flavor. I mean, after all, if you need an excuse to blow your diet, just chalk it up to your duty as an American.

And, while you're splurging, you may as well go all the way and treat yourself to real, honest-to-goodness homemade ice cream.

Some of the best to be found is on a farm nestled in the New Holland area. This farm, complete with cool breezes from the many trees, is inviting enough on a hot summer's day, add the temptation of freshly-made ice cream, and the scene becomes irresistible.

The farm and ice cream works belong to Ben Z. Lapp and family.

They have about 50 cows on their 60-acre farm. They get about 350 gallons of milk per day and make about 400 gallons of ice cream each week.

The Lapps went into the ice cream business about eight years ago. Since that time he switched from milking twice a day to milking three times a day because they needed the extra milk.

Lapp, who is a member of the Amish church, explained he began making ice cream for members of his church, and his interest grew from there.

So, apparently, did the demand.

Lapp sells his ice cream at a small shop on his farm, at the Green Dragon Market and Auction and at a market in Reading. During the summer months, his employees hand dip about 4,000 cones per week.

His customers have a choice of 19 flavors. All of the ingredients are fresh and natural. Ten days after milk is taken from the cow, the purchaser will have consumed the ice cream, according to Lapp.

The whole process takes place on Lapp's farm. An observer can follow the milk all the way from the cow to the finished product without ever stepping outside.

The process begins in the barn when the cows are milked. From

there, it is taken upstairs in the barn. It is placed in a 200-gallon steel vat where the ice cream mix is made. The mix consists of milk, cream, sugar and dry milk.

Both cane and corn sugar are used, and the cream comes from a local cheese company.

The mixture is then heated and moved onto the next step of the process where it is homogenized. It then moves on to the holding tank.

From the holding tank, the mixture travels down into a first-floor room which is connected to the barn.

If you are fortunate enough to be there at the right time, you can grab a taste of your favorite flavor while it is still in soft form.

In this room is Mary King, one of Lapp's busy employees.

She actually makes the mix into ice cream. Containers of wonderful-looking ingredients line this room. From strawberries to blueberries to walnuts in a maple sauce, this room holds all the goodies that make the ice cream complete.

Mary, who works about 20 hours per week, is kept busy making the ice cream and cleaning the equipment every time she starts a new flavor. Hanging above her head are biblical verses of encouragement.

"I sometimes need that encouragement through the summer," Mary laughed.

After Mary makes the ice cream, she places it in containers and puts them into a freezer, which can hold 800 gallons of ice cream.

A door on the other side of Mary's room leads the visitor into the ice cream shop.

Here are two more huge freezers. One stores ice cream to be dipped by hand and another stores the ice cream that is already packaged.

The shop is open Monday through Thursday from noon until dark. Fridays and Saturdays, the shop opens at 8 a.m. and closes at 7 p.m. At least they try and close at 7 p.m., however, some nights people just keep arriving for more ice cream.

The Lapps prefer to sell their ice cream by the cone, but do package

Mary King, one of Lapp's employees, works with the ice cream as it comes from the machine in soft form. She has already added the ingredients, and will now pop it into the freezer to harden it.



some of it for the convenience of those who want to take more than one cone along home with them.

The packaged ice cream really comes in handy during strawberry season when everyone wants to buy gallons of vanilla ice cream, according to Lapp.

Vanilla is the favorite flavor of those people buying packages, however, raspberry takes the lead for those buying cones.

And it isn't only the customers who like to nibble on Lapp's ice cream.

Esther Glick, another one of Lapp's employees, works in the processing room, where the milk, sugar, and cream are combined. Although she works around ice cream all the time, she never tires of it.

In fact, she was on her way to treat herself to a cone when she was interrupted by a reporter.

Before Esther, Mary and some of their other employees came in



John's favorite flavor is vanilla, even if it melts quicker than he can eat it.



Jonas and John, Lapp's four-year-old twins, enjoy the ice cream made on Daddy's farm.



the picture, Lapp and his wife Lena did all the work themselves.

They made the ice cream in their home at night after working around the farm all day.

For the past several years, the ice cream has been made every Tuesday and Wednesday. The mix is made on Thursday and then allowed to sit for several days. According to Lapp, this makes for a better flavor.

Although the mix is kept for several days, the original milk is not, and it is often put into the mix the same day it is taken from the cow.

The milk that Lapp also sells is sometimes in the hands of the consumer just two hours after it comes from the cow.

By the end of the week, the ice cream that is made on Tuesday and Wednesday has been sold.

While Lapp has created a successful operation, he is determined to keep the business a family one.

That way he remains in control of what goes into his ice cream and where it is sold.

His ice cream currently contains about 16 percent butterfat, which makes it rich and creamy, and, you may be thinking, much more fattening.

However, Lapp explained that the difference in calories from an ice cream that is low in butterfat to one that is high is not as great as people think.

Therefore, it is perfectly proper for you to go ahead and order an

ice cream cone and not even think of the calories.

If it's any consolation, while you are taking the very first lick of your cone, millions of others are doing the exact same thing.

Last year Americans ate more than three billion quarts of ice cream. That averages out to about 15 quarts per person.

So, go ahead, if you didn't have an ice cream cone during this past week, spoil yourself this weekend and cool the heat with ice cream.

