

College Student Helps Develop New Frozen Yogurt Product

BONNIE BRECHBILL

Franklin Co. Correspondent
UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre
Co.) — "What is food science
anyway?" Christiana Keener is
often asked when she mentions
her major.

The Penn State senior has a
ready answer: "Think about a
tomato growing on a vine, and
wheat growing in a field in the
midwest. Everything involved in
making a can of ravioli from them
and placing it on your grocery
store shelf is food science."

People often confuse food sci-
ence with home economics, nutri-
tion or food service, Keener, 23,
said. "Sometimes they ask me if
I'm going to open my own
restaurant."

Food science is a combination
of chemistry, biology, nutrition
and engineering, Keener said. Sta-
tistics and sensory evaluation
(taste testing) are both important.

Keener plans to use her food
science knowledge to develop
reduced-fat or non-fat desserts. "I
have a sweet tooth," she admitted.
"Like many consumers, I don't
like to pay for it (calorie-wise)."

"I like the products that are out
there, but there could be a greater
selection. Americans are con-
cerned about their health and their
fat intake. But sometimes we want
something sweet to eat."

Considering that outlook,
Keener must have been in four-
percent-fat heaven when she was
accepted as a paid summer intern at
the Haagen-Dazs technical center
in Fairfield, NJ in 1992. She com-
bined her science background and
her creativity to help create sever-
al frozen yogurt products. "It was
exciting for someone who doesn't
even have a bachelor's degree
yet," she said.

There had been some projects
milling around at Haagen-Dazs
for awhile, according to Keener,
and those ideas were combined
with hers.

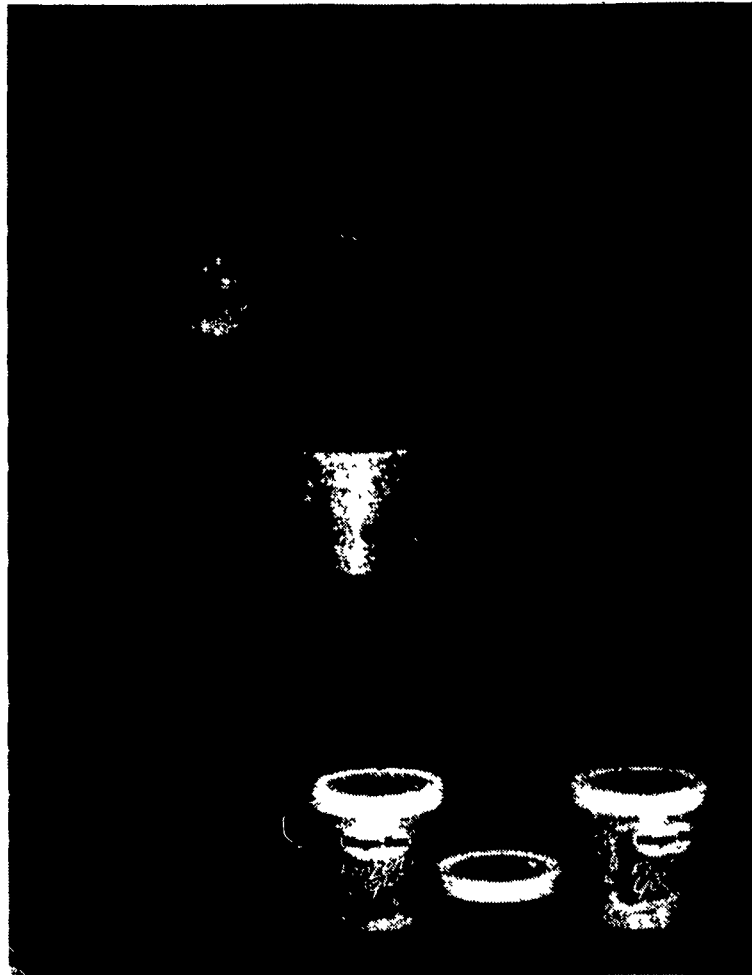
"I was surprised at how much I
was respected. My supervisor,
who has a PhD., wanted to know
what I thought of her ideas. These
people had years of experience
and education. It was amazing
how much they respected my
ideas for products that were seri-
ously being considered for the
market."

On her first day at Haagen-
Dazs, Keener had an idea for
Strawberry Cheesecake Craze, a
cheesecake-based frozen yogurt
with a strawberry swirl.

"I wanted to make it more like a
cheesecake-eating experience,"
Keener explained. "The big differ-
ence between this and other
cheesecake frozen yogurt pro-
ducts is the inclusion of graham
cracker clusters. You're getting
pieces of the crust with every bite,
just like you would if you were
eating a forkful of cheesecake."

Strawberry Cheesecake Craze,
which is in Haagen-Dazs's
Extras line of frozen yogurt, has
seven grams of fat per cup.
"That's a lot better than eating a
piece of cheesecake," she
observed.

While Keener did a lot of work
on Strawberry Cheesecake Craze,
she was not at Haagen-Dazs long
enough to complete the process of
getting it onto the market. Her
supervisor continued with it, how-
ever, and Strawberry Cheesecake
Craze is now available in central
Pennsylvania and elsewhere.



Christiana Keener helped to develop three varieties of Haagen Dazs frozen yogurt while working as a summer intern.

Keener's supervisor at Haagen-
Dazs, Sherri Slocum, said that the
summer intern was "very much a
perfectionist. She was always
looking for the right answer."

Keener spent a lot of time in the
product development lab in pur-
suit of those answers.

The lab looked less like a
laboratory than like a well-
equipped kitchen. "It had a micro-
wave, freezers, lots of counter
space, and lots of ingredients and
flavorings," Keener said.

In this encouraging environ-
ment she worked on various mix-
tures for new frozen yogurt pro-

ducts. "I varied the levels of the
goodies (what food scientists call
'particulates') to mix into the fro-
zen yogurt background."

Of course, Keener had to taste
her creations.

"It was a requirement for the
job," she said. "I rarely ate dinner
after working."

When Keener was satisfied
with a product, her supervisor and
the director of product develop-
ment would try it. If they
approved, it went on to the mark-
eting department.

"Marketing decided if it was the
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During Thanksgiving break from college, Christiana got reacquainted with her family's ram, Tom. Christiana showed sheep from fifth grade through high school, but no longer has time due to her college studies and summer internships.

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