

Southside Scoops

New this year, Call Hall Dairy Bar has expanded to the Student Union.

For many students and alumni, a double scoop of purple pride in a waffle cone brings to mind fond memories of college afternoons spent at Kansas State University. Since Call Hall's 1964 debut, the only place to get purple pride was in the Call Hall Dairy Bar on the north side of campus, but now the favored blueberry ice cream is also available on the south side of campus.

The Department of Animal Sciences and Industry unveiled a new retail spot in the K-State Union in August 2017 known as Call Hall in the Union. The retail counter serves all the same flavors as the traditional dairy bar from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and aims to reach a new audience.

"It is a great opportunity to reach students who are on that side of campus," says Jared Parsons, dairy plant manager for Call Hall.

The decision to open a second retail site came after a survey, where students identified ice cream as something they wanted in the Union. During the Union renovation, plans were created to add Call Hall to the food services. Caribou Coffee had ice cream from the processing facility before the

upgrade, so it made sense to go with a Call Hall retail area says John Kessler, food service manager for the Union shop.

The Union location deals in all things ice cream and ice cream-related. Purple pride is the most popular flavor, says Kessler.

Dairy Education

In addition to selling ice cream to students, Kessler says the stand is a perfect way to connect with consumers about agriculture. Television screens provide educational information about the dairy industry and how ice cream is produced.

"What we have the opportunity to do here is no different than what they have the opportunity to do on the north side," Kessler says. "The only difference is the fact that in a given week we may see 70,000 people through the Union."

Kessler says the stand connects with consumers through a mutual interest in ice cream and can then explain animal science because of the product.

Call Hall ice cream is that it is a perfect example of the farm-to-table concept that has grown increasingly popular. From the dairy cow to

the point of sale in the Union, everything in the process of getting ice cream to the consumer occurs within a 16-block radius.

The retail center in the Union has also allowed the Call Hall processing facility to streamline its flavor-making process. Instead of making several flavors a week with lots of wasted product, Parsons and the plant are making only four to five flavors a week. The added retail space on campus has also allowed the plant to market all of their ice cream on campus.

Before Call Hall in the Union, the ice cream was sold around town at different retailers. The plant does not really need to sell to third party customers anymore, which Parsons considers an improvement.

"We are a university plant and we need to be servicing the students and K-State affiliated entities," Parsons says. "We aren't in the business of competing with other manufacturers."

The Union location goes through seven tubs of ice cream a day. When the stand first opened they were selling 10 to 15, 3-gallon tubs daily, but as students returned to a school routine that number has decreased.

Room for Growth

Certainly winter temperatures affect consumers' appetite for ice cream, but Kessler believes there is room to increase sales.

"There is definitely room for growth," Kessler says. "The Union is an entry point for most of campus and one of the first buildings visited during tours. We have a lot of

traffic and can definitely capitalize on that."

While the Union would like to increase its sales, it is also conscious of its limitations. The K-State Call Hall processing facility is currently processing at capacity. Producing 450 gallons of ice cream a week, Parsons says the plant is at its maximum. Additional ice cream processing equipment, storage area and freezer space is necessary if the plant is to handle anything more than the two dairy bars on campus.



One way Parsons manages the processing limitations is through the seasonal demands. In months when there is not a lot of ice cream

production, cream is frozen and saved for higher production times.

"We live by the law of averages here. People are counting on us and we don't want to drop the ball as a plant," Parsons says.

Student-centered

One group counting on Call Hall is students. Kessler says it was important to give students what they wanted, and the added bonus is that the students are the ones providing this service for their peers.

From the cows milked at the K-State Dairy Teaching and Research facility to the ice cream packed in the plant, and finally the cone dipped in the Union, students are involved every step of the way. Student labor is an incredibly important piece of Call Hall ice cream.

Kessler says, "All of these processes are also done by student labor. It's for students by students, serving students." ❏

Jill Seiler
Valley Center, KS



Scott Kirk, a student worker, mixes up a shake for a customer in the new Call Hall Union store.