IN CONCLUSION
PART 4

By Hank Sweeney and Ted Galloway
Classic Mix Partners

Over the last three articles we have offered procedures that can assist you in operating a “best in class” dessert operation serving a “best in class product”. We will conclude the series with a review of concepts to assure uniformity, compliance with microbiological standards, good sanitation practices and assisting with meeting labeling and regulatory requirements.

A common thread that runs through virtually all successful ice cream shops is a comprehensive operational system that is repeatable by every employee engaged with your store. These systems should encompass everything from opening the door in the morning to locking up at night and all the activities and functions in between. A high quality ice cream/gelato can only be made from best quality ingredients which are properly portioned, balanced, processed, stored and served in a clean and sanitary environment.

To that end there are a series of steps that are referred to as Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Implementing SOP will help assure that you have the opportunities for success; failing to enact rigid SOP will increase the likelihood of failure through inconsistency. In the end, your choice will decide the direction and outcome. Please refer to the previous three articles for details to assist with the development of your store’s SOP’s.

One of the best ways to verify the validity of your SOP’s is to participate in NICRA’s Ice Cream Clinic and by entering the Best Flavor and/or Best New Flavor contest. You may submit ice cream, frozen custard, gelato, 10% soft serve or frozen yogurt for evaluation. Your submissions will be judged by the standards used for hard ice cream evaluation since there are no standards for judging these other products. NICRA will only use the universities that are the top scoring schools in the Collegiate Contest sponsored by The Food Processing Suppliers Association (FPSA), The American Dairy Science Association, and the USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Dairy Programs.

The 2009 sensory evaluations for Vanilla and Strawberry samples will be conducted by Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina under the direction of Dr. Johnny McGregor.

In addition to the sensory evaluations all entries for the Ice Cream Clinic will be tested for butterfat content, solids, standard plate count and coliform testing. These tests will be conducted by Q Laboratories, Inc, an independent testing laboratory located in Cincinnati, Ohio. The microbiological standards that all samples must meet in order to be considered for any of the competitions are as follows:

- **Standard Plate Count** – Less than 50,000 bacteria per gram
- **Coliform Count** – Less than 10 coliform per gram for vanilla
- **Coliform Count** – Less than 20 coliform per gram for all other flavors

All your product’s delightful flavor attributes can be put aside if your ice cream submittal does not meet the microbiological standards due to a high bacteria count caused by poor personal hygiene and/or flawed store design, cleaning or sanitation practices.

**Personal Hygiene:** Starting at the beginning with you and your employees. The following procedures come directly from the 2007 NICRA Sanitation DVD.

Hand washing is probably the most important step in personal hygiene and also the easiest step that all staff members should follow in order to eliminate any potential for contamination of product. If feasible a designated hand wash sink should be available. All staff should wash their hands:

- Before a shift begins
- Any time they change tasks
- If staff members touch their face or hair
- After performing any cleaning duties
- After eating
- After smoking
- After restroom visits
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Yes, the rules apply to you the shop owner and all your staff. You must lead by example and not make exceptions to these just because you are the boss.

Cleaning and Sanitizing - Let’s start first with a definition of each.

Cleaning is the removal of food or dirt from the surfaces being cleaned. There are four factors that can affect the efficiency of our cleaning.

1. The type of dirt or food we are trying to remove
2. The temperature and hardness of water that we use for cleaning
3. The type of cleaning agent we use
4. The amount of pressure and duration of cleaning we use

Sanitizing is the act of removing or reducing the growth of harmful microorganisms. The two principle methods to sanitizing are heat and chemical. Chemical sanitizers include chlorine, iodine and quats. Chlorine kills a wide range of micro-organisms without leaving a film but it quickly deactivates around dirt and is corrosive to metal and can be affected by temperatures over 115 degrees. Iodine is effective in low concentrations and stays active in dirt but is less effective than chlorine. Iodine does become corrosive at 120 degrees. Quats remain active for only a short time but are non corrosive and non irritating. Quats do leave a film and may not kill certain microorganisms.

Remember – Sanitizers work most effectively on completely clean surfaces!

For more valuable information on proper cleaning and sanitizing contact NICRA to order its in depth Sanitation DVD.

Inventory Management - The most overlooked and underrated of your shop’s operational systems, but critical none the less.

• A constantly monitored list of all the products you purchase is a great way to track and maintain a record of your inventory, whether it is perishable or non perishable. This list should include when the product was delivered and what is the expiration date or best by date.
• Rotate all your stock food and nonfood products in a First In First Out (FIFO). This is especially important with your perishable products such as mix.
• Track, record and label when products or ingredients are opened and when to use them by.
• Make sure that all ingredients that are opened and not completely used are stored with proper lids or sealed properly according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
• Track, record and label when ingredients are placed to be thawed from a frozen state.
• Do not use ingredients past their expiration date or best by date. Waste is an awful result of expired products but using out of date ingredients is like playing Russian roulette with your customer’s health, your products flavor and functionality and your reputation.

Ice Cream Manufacturing - Like with everything in an efficient system planning and documentation are critical. In order to manufacture the best quality ice cream you must purchase a high quality mix and ingredients (flavor, inclusions, and toppings). This assures you are on your way to processing a consistent product vital to your success. The easiest way to ensure that consistency is to maintain a Recipe/Production book. This book should include the exact measurements for each product manufactured of mix, flavors and inclusions. It should detail precise directions in how to compile and blend those ingredients into the mix. The run times for processing that recipe should be defined. The required time for the product to freeze down in the blast freezer should be defined. Define the procedures for cleaning and washing fresh fruits or berries. Fruits and berries can be a source of microorganisms, including coli, yeast and mold. The use of a natural fruit and vegetable wash is a recommended step for any berries or fruit. There are several brands on the market currently. Do not use ingredients that have an expired code date or have not been properly stored according to the manufacturer’s recommendation.

All buckets, utensils or mixers that come in contact with the
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Convention Program Highlights

Wednesday Afternoon 4-Hour Session - How To Open An Ice Cream Store

- Why Offer Ice Cream Cakes
- Electronic Marketing - What’s Available & How To Do It
- Extreme Ice Cream: Not Your Typical Scoop
- Beginning Cake Decorating
- POS - Credit, Debit & Gift Cards
- Grass Roots Marketing
- Economic Stimulus Package - What’s Available
- Liability Insurance - What Do You Need?
- What’s Hot, What’s Not Supplier Discussion
- Running Your Store Legally
- Security Features of Paper Money - Secret Service
- Handling Recalls & Allergens
- Health Department Issues
- Marketing Your Brand
- Round Table Discussions
- And Much, Much More

Special One Day Trade Show Registration on Thursday, November 5 to visit the Exhibits only

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There will be Social Events and Award Presentations

- Past Presidents Reception
- NICRA's Ice Cream Clinic Exercise
- Best Flavor & Best New Flavor Contests
- Golf Tournament
- Suppliers Exhibits & Party
- Forrest Mock Person of the Year Award
- Bryce Thomson Scholarship Awards
- Promotion of the Year Award
- Don & Charlie’s Restaurant Dinner
- Tour of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Home & Studio

Check our Web Site for a complete schedule of seminars and events: www.nicra.org

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National Ice Cream Retailers Association • 1028 W. Devon Avenue
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product in blending or pre production should be thoroughly cleaned, sanitized and air dried. Do not allow buckets, utensils or mixers to remain covered with dairy mix after blending for a prolonged period of time. Have a bucket of sanitizer available to place used utensils in between batches. Clean and sanitize all surfaces between batches.

Traditionally the preferred method of manufacturing ice cream or gelato is in a batch freezer. That does not mean that the batch freezer is the only freezing method. Today the use of continuous freezers, modified continuous freezers, also known as frozen custard machines and even soft serve machines are common in the industry. The procedure for the cleaning and sanitizing your “Ice Cream” machine is fairly consistent no matter what type of machine being used. Before using your mechanical wonder to produce ice cream, the machine must be properly cleaned and sanitized. Refer to your owner’s manual, actually read the whole document from cover to cover and follow the recommended procedures with out short cuts.

Product Packaging and Labeling—The product packaging process begins with personal hygiene. Wash hands first. Head covering and disposable gloves should be used if required and changed every time a new task is undertaken. A glove is only useful as a sanitary barrier if clean. Only use properly clean and sanitized scoops or spades to manipulate the dispensed finished product.

Make sure any single use container you are filling with your dairy dessert product is clean and sterile. All reusable containers such as your store’s ice cream dipping buckets and pans must be made of food grade material, free of nicks and scores on the product contact surfaces. If they have surface defects, discard them immediately. All acceptable containers must be cleaned, sanitized and air dried before use. Always place these containers on a clean sanitized surface before, during and after filling. Filled containers should immediately be covered tightly and placed in your blast freezer. All filled containers should be identified with an easily readable code date. This is the only way you can track when the product was made, what ingredients were added to the product run. You should have a log for each product run that identifies the code date you applied to the finished product, what were the code dates of every ingredient, inclusion, flavoring and mix that was added to that run. There should be forms readily available to accommodate these records and written procedures to back up these procedures that you and your employees can review for training purposes. These records are essential to your organization’s success if you would ever be identified with a potential source of a food borne contamination illness. Records will be your only avenue to prove what you produced, on what date with which ingredients. Do not risk the success of your business by not implementing proper SOP to track your finished products.

Labeling your products is very important for proper legal identification. All product labeling must comply with the sweeping Nutritional Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) passed in 1990 and the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act of 1997 and changes to all labeling laws since then. You should request the assistance of your State’s Department of Agriculture for proper requirements for labeling your products if they are being sold in containers to be taken off premises, or they are being sold off premises for wholesale or retail. They can also arrange for you to obtain the proper legal license that covers the activities of your dessert operation. Be careful of creative marketing statements. The legality of those statements are defined under various clauses in these regulations and may not be legal. A commonly used illegal misstatement in marketing for example is claiming a 4% soft serve product is “96% fat free”. WRONG! Dairy dessert products never had 100% fat contained within the formula so this claim exposes the store to State and/or Federal enforcement. Do not be creative by not knowing the legality of the statement. Check with your Department of Agriculture or dairy supplier to assist you in developing legal marketing statements. Ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of the law.

Great and repeatable Standard Operating Procedures are an essential step to assure that you have systems to make “Best in Class” dairy dessert products. If these SOP’s are not written, they can not be reviewed for improvements. If your SOP’s are not written, they can not be taught because the procedures will change depending who teaches the procedures. If your SOP’s are not written, they can not be followed because there is not a step by step guide to follow even if properly trained. Lack of SOP’s will mean your product quality and functionality will be different every time. Through these four articles we have attempted to offer a procedure development guide for the first timers, augment the library of information for those who have practical experience or reinforce the knowledge of the experts in the ice cream industry. We hope that the assimilation of these ideas and concepts will help you produce a dairy dessert product that is “Best in Class” today, tomorrow and in the future. Best of luck and success from your friends in the industry, Hank and Ted!

**BUTTER PRICES**

August 28, 2009 - Grade AA Butter finished at $1.17. The weekly average was $1.1685. (2008 price was $1.6230)

September 4, 2009 - Grade AA Butter finished at $1.18. The weekly average was $1.1725. (2008 price was $1.6075)

September 18, 2009 - Grade AA Butter finished at $1.27. The weekly average was $1.2365. (2008 price was $1.6600)

Support prices for butter start at $1.05. Butter prices are reported from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange every Friday. The Merc is considered a spot market for butter. Merc prices are important to dairy farmers because the value of the fat and fat differentials in raw milk are established from the prices quoted from the Exchange, and Merc prices are used in the BFP update.

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Elenka has become synonym of success in gelato and confectionary making. Elenka products, which are based on quality and Italian tradition, give gelato and pastry makers the tools necessary to make their craftsmanship stand out from the rest. Elenka and Howard Gordy, Inc. work together to provide constant guidance and assistance in finding the right solution for each customer.
Only a few more booths are left! The following companies have already signed up to exhibit at the 76th NICRA Annual Meeting and Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona, November 4-7, 2009:

- Advanced Gourmet Equipment & Design
- Aromitalia
- Ashby’s Sterling Ice Cream
- Azar Nut Co.
- Bakery Crafts
- Berzaci Mfg.
- Bo Deans Baking Co.
- H.C. Brill/Henry & Henry
- Classic Mix Partners
- ConAgra Foods
- Concord Foods
- CRS, Inc.
- Dingman’s Dairy
- Dippin’ Flavors
- Dolcetti Gelato
- Frosty Products
- Great Lakes Ice Cream & Fast Food Assn.
- Green Mountain Flavors, Inc.
- The Ice Cream Club
- Ice Cream Outfitters
- Jelly Belly Candy Co.
- Joy Cone Company
- Lloyds of Pennsylvania
- Lochhead Vanilla
- Lucks Food Decorating Co.
- The National Dipper Magazine
- National Flavor Products Co.
- Nielsen Massey Vanillas
- PreGel America
- Sani Serv
- T. D. Sawvel Co, Inc.
- Sensory Effects Flavor Systems
- Stoelting LLC
- Straws by M
- Successful Ice Cream Retailing
- Taylor Company
- T.R. Toppers
- Trahin Miller Insurance Co.
- Emery Thompson Machine
- Upstate Niagara, Inc.
- Yo Cream International

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and based on hope. Just like it took homeowners a couple of years to realize there homes are worth less, many commercial property owners are still in denial.

Having said that, it is important to realize that good spaces still command a premium rent and they are still hard to find and lock into for reasonable time periods. Ice cream shops still compete with smoothie, sandwich and coffee shops for the best locations. We have no problem recommending a higher rent situation if the traffic, visibility, demographics, etc. warrant it.

In fact the rent factor should be secondary to your analysis of the potential stores ability to generate revenue. We would be much more likely to spend, say $4,000 per month for a store that we thought would generate at least $300,000 in annual sales than $1,500 per month for a store we thought would only do $150,000 in annual sales. In this example, even though the rent is 2 ½ times higher, your gross income after cost of goods and rent is almost twice as high. In other words, the rent factor is relative.

If your lease is coming up for renewal in the next year or so, now is a good time to begin dialogue with your landlord. The idea of retaining a good tenant will be attractive, so don’t wait, act now. And if you are considering a new location, now is a good time to evaluate what’s out there and possibly “go for it”.

NEW SUPPLIER MEMBERS

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Fax: 516/883-2664
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Wednesday, November 4, 2009

7:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Noon – 1:00 PM  
Board of Directors Lunch  
Noon – 5:00 PM  
Open Registration  
Suppliers Setup Exhibits  

1:30 PM – 5:30 PM  
Convention Kick Off Program  
Industry Experts Answer Your Questions on Opening  
A Successful Ice Cream Business  
Moderator: Jim Mitchell, Woodside Farm Creamery  
Moderator: Joe Venuti, Bedford Farms  

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM  
Trends in the Ice Cream Industry  
Tom Zak, Concord Foods, Oringer div.  

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM  
Opening Your First Ice Cream Store  
Anthony Moravec, Zaharako’s Inc.  

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM  
Break  

2:45 PM – 3:30 PM  
Costs for Getting into the Ice Cream Industry  
Jim Ross, Flat Pennies Ice Cream  

3:30 PM – 4:15 PM  
Store Design & Layout  
Jim Marmion, Advanced Gourmet  

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM  
Break  

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM  
Selecting Your Team of Advisors  
George Lochhead, Lochhead Vanilla  

5:00 PM – 5:30 PM  
Ask the Panel  
Questions & Answers with Industry Experts  

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM  
NICRA Past Presidents Reception & Cash Bar  

7:00 PM – 8:15 PM  
Welcome Dinner (Ticket Required)  

8:30 PM – 10:00 PM  
Your Best New Flavor Contest  
Exhibits Open - Cash Bar  

Thursday, November 5, 2009

7:00 AM  
10 Minute Officer & Board of Directors Meeting  

7:15 AM – 7:45 AM  
First Timers Meeting  
Jay Rentschler, Upstate Niagara, Inc.  
Lisa Sorrentino, Anderson’s Frozen Custard  
Jim Ross, Flat Pennies Ice Cream  

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM  
Registration Open  

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM  
Welcome & Opening Remarks  
Larry Hedrick, Superstition Mountain Historical Society  
Lost Dutchman and His Mine  

8:30 AM – 10:30 AM  
Keynote Speaker: Bob Negen, WhizBang! Training  
Moderator: Bob Turner, Dairy Corner  

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM  
Exhibits Open  

10:35 AM – 11:55 AM  
Coffee Break  
Visit Supplier Exhibit Room - Win NICRA Bucks  

Noon – 12:45 PM  
Luncheon (Ticket Required)  

1:00 PM – 1:45 PM  
Best Coffee Flavor Contest  

1:50 PM – 3:00 PM  
Promotion of the Year Award Presentations  
Lynda Utterback, The National Dipper  
Moderator: Kathy Giordano, Sno Top, Ltd.  

3:05 PM – 3:20 PM  
Coffee Break  

3:20 PM – 4:20 PM  
Concurrent Sessions  

Why Offer Ice Cream Cakes  
Kelle Messer, Eskamoe’s Frozen Custard  
Moderator: Jeff Myers, Double Dip  

Electronic Marketing – What’s Available & How To Do It  
Rich Johnson, Rich’s Ice Cream Catering  
Rick Pizzi, Pizzi Farm Ice Cream  
Katie Dix, Capannari’s  
Moderator: David Zimmermann, Royal Scoop  

Extreme Ice Cream: Not Your Typical Scoop  
Arlety Estevez, PreGel America  
Moderator: Juergen Klooo, Joy Cone co.  

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM  
Concurrent Sessions  

Beginning Cake Decorating  
Elizabeth Rigg, Bakery Crafts  
Moderator: Robin Turner, Dairy Corner  

To Be Announced  
Self Promoting, Marketing Yourself & Your Store  
Henry Gentry, Henry’s Homemade Ice Cream  
Moderator: Carolyn Tolley-Gentry,  

6:00 PM  
Evening Reception & Dinner  
Don & Charlie’s Restaurant (Ticket Required)  

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Friday, November 6, 2009

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Convention Registration

8:30 AM
10 minute Officer & Board of Directors Meeting

8:45 AM - 10:15 AM
Concurrent Sessions
Advanced Cake Decorating
   Kasia Wilk, Lucks Food Decorating Co.
   Moderator: Robin Turner, Dairy Corner
Grass Roots Marketing
   Holly Anderson & Lisa Sorrentino
   Anderson’s Frozen Custard
   Moderator: Lorna Ross, Flat Pennies Ice Cream
Economic Stimulus Package
   Bruce Hodgman, Small Business Administration
   Moderator: Todd Truax, Almost Heaven

10:15 AM - 10:45 AM
Coffee Break

10:45 AM - 11:55 AM
Concurrent Sessions
Liability Insurance – What Do You Need?
   Roger Trahin, Trahin Miller Insurance Co.
   Moderator: Kasandra Rasnake, Trahin Miller Ins.
Off-Site Events – Catering
   John Pitchford, JP’s Frozen Custard
   Carl Chaney, Chaney’s Dairy Barn
   Moderator: Pam Pitchford: JP’s Frozen Custard
Givers Get – A Guide to Charitable Contributions & Marketing
   Kelly Larson, Sweet Temptations

11:00 AM - Noon
Supplier Meeting

Noon - 12:45 PM
Luncheon (Ticket Required)

12:45 PM - 1:10 PM
Ice Cream Clinic Review
   Dr. Johnny McGregor, Clemson University
   Moderator: Ray Sheehan, Avondale Dairy Bars

1:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Exhibit Hours

1:20 PM - 2:00 PM
Ice Cream Clinic

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM
Concurrent Sessions
   Ken Huffer
   Moderator: Rick Dietsch, Dietsch Brothers
Handling Recalls & Allergens
   Rich Draper, The Ice Cream Club
   Moderator: Heather Draper, The Ice Cream Club
What’s Hot, What’s Not
   Jay Rentschler, Upstate Farm
   Tom Zak, Concord Foods, Oringer div.

Darian Rottman, Lochhead Vanilla
Margaret Anderson, Taylor Freezer of New England
   Moderator: John Hinkle, National Flavor Products

3:15 PM - 3:45 PM
Coffee Break

3:45 PM - 5:00 PM
Concurrent Sessions
Health Department Issues
   Robert Stratman, Department of Environmental Services,
   Maricopa County
   Moderator: Craig Nielsen, Nielsen Massey Vanilla
Marketing Your Brands
   Troy Sawvel, T.D. Sawvel Co., Inc.
   Moderator: David Deadman, Chocolate Shoppe
Seasonal Opening & Closing Checklist
   Mary Humphreys-Goldenthal, Springer’s Ice Cream
   Moderator: Terry Michels, Queen City Creamery

5:15 PM - 9:00 PM
NICRA Party Sponsored by the Suppliers
Bryce Thomson Scholarship Silent & Live Auctions

Saturday, November 7, 2009

8:00 AM
10 Minute Officer & Board of Directors Meeting

8:30 AM - 10:00
Hands On Dipping & Making Sundaes, Banana Splits, etc.
   Mary Leopold, Leopold’s Ice Cream
   Nanette Frey, Frey’s Tasty Treat
   Moderator: Neil McWilliams, Spring Dipper

9:30 AM
Leave for Optional Golf Tournament (Ticket Required)

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM
Coffee Break

10:15 AM - 12 Noon
Round Table Discussions
Get Your Final Questions Answered
   Vince Giordano, Sno Top, Ltd.
   Bill Kircher, Dingman’s Dairy

1:00 PM - 4:30 PM
Tour - Taliesin West – Frank Lloyd Wright’s Western Home & Studio (Ticket Required)

6:30 PM
Cocktail Party

7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Awards Banquet (Ticket Required)

PLEASE NOTE: Seminar topics and/or dates and times are subject to change due to the availability of speakers.
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MISSION STATEMENT FOR NICRA
The mission of the National Ice Cream Retailers Association (NICRA), a non-profit trade association, is to be the leader in the frozen dessert industry that others look to for help, support and education. NICRA will promote business growth and development throughout the industry.

VISION OF THE ASSOCIATION
NICRA will associate with similar associations dedicated to the same interests. NICRA will facilitate communication and education that both newcomers and veterans in the industry desire to be successful. NICRA will maintain a feeling of family within the association as it grows, and be dedicated to responsibly managing the association while maximizing value to the members.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY
NICRA is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all of its endeavors. To that end, NICRA shall not tolerate any words or acts of discrimination, harassment or any inappropriate behavior in general against any person affiliated with NICRA, including its members and guests, with regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

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