

## Chilling Out with Protein

According to The Food Channel's recently released Top 10 snack trends, consumers are eating more substantial snacks packed with protein as meal replacements, and eating them more often. However, the high-protein snack category needs some livening up – products that go beyond bars and beverages. Frozen novelty manufacturers are primed for the challenge, as dairy proteins contribute to a desirable texture in frozen desserts and at the same time provide the creamy, rich flavor consumers appreciate.

The Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison, through funding by the U.S. Manufacturing & Ingredients Marketing program at the U.S. Dairy Export Council, Arlington, Va., developed a formula for a chocolate-flavored frozen protein dairy snack. (See table.) A serving contains 120 calories and 3 grams fat, while functioning as an excellent source of protein (12 grams) and calcium (265 milligrams).

The product contains three dairy ingredients: whole milk, milk protein

Ingredient	Usage Level (%)
Whole milk	62.0
Milk protein concentrate 70	14.6
Crystalline fructose	10.0
Cocoa powder	5.0
Erythritol powder	4.0
Whey protein isolate	3.7
Vanilla extract 2X	0.7

concentrate (MPC) and whey protein isolate (WPI). The whole milk contributes rich dairy flavor and provides structure and texture stability. The MPC adds dairy protein and calcium, while also contributing to a desirable texture. The WPI provides the boost of easily digested and readily absorbed proteins that enable the “excellent source” claim. The final product is a cool and creamy high-quality protein snack.

For more information, visit [www.innovatewithdairy.com](http://www.innovatewithdairy.com). ■



The newest flavor-packed creation from **Blue Bell Creameries**, Brenham, Texas, is Spiced Pumpkin Pecan ice cream. “This is a recipe we have been working on for some time,” says Carl Breed, director of marketing. “You have your basic pumpkin ice cream that is popular during the fall months, but we wanted to create a flavor that was much more than simply pumpkin. We tried several different combinations of added ingredients until we found one we could not stop sampling.”

The sugar-coated pecans and cinnamon-honey-praline sauce are what set this pumpkin-based ice cream apart from all the rest. “The pecans and sauce are what really enhance the flavor of this ice cream,” Breed adds. “The spiced pumpkin ice cream is very similar to what a pumpkin pie tastes like, add in the sweetness from the pecans and sauce and you have something spectacular.”

To encourage purchase, limited quantities were produced. It debuted in stores in November and is only available while supplies last.

### Encouraging trial

When marketing cools creations, it is important to raise consumer awareness. Otherwise these innovations will get lost behind the cookie dough and mint chocolate chip.

Daily coupon buying websites leverage the power of collective bargaining to provide incredible local deals that offer huge savings for consumers while also promising sales numbers and hopefully new long-term customers to participating merchants. As a result, these group deal sites have

become quite popular this year. In the food business, they are a great way to encourage trial of a new concept, including off-the-wall ice cream flavors dished out at scoop shops.

The original, and by far the most successful collective buying vendor is Chicago-based Groupon.com, which has established itself in more than 250 markets around the world. Through Groupon.com, **Herrell's Ice Cream**, Northampton, Mass., sold 443 certificates valued for \$10 worth of product. Groupon.com customers purchased the certificate for \$5, a 50% savings, and were able to make their purchase at the ice cream retailer's flagship store where innovative ice cream flavors such as jalapeño, key lime cardamom and Twinkies can be found alongside the traditional chocolate, strawberry and vanilla.

LivingSocial, Washington, D.C., a similar daily deal vendor, sold 664 \$6 certificates for \$12 worth of product

at **Chicago Creamery**, an ice cream shop in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. The half-price deal makes it easier to experiment with frozen concepts such as Avocado-Macapuno (avocado ice cream with sweetened coconut pieces), Donut 'N Cream (ice cream stuffed with donut chunks), Halo-Halo Fiesta (vanilla ice cream with bananas, pineapple and coconut gels, red and white beans and Rice Krispies) and Paludeh (rose water and lime sherbet with pistachios and rice noodles).

Anything is possible when it comes to America's favorite dessert: ice cream. ■

