



Cal Poly Dairy Products Technology Center Celebrates 25 years of Excellence

The Dairy Products Technology Center (DPTC) celebrated its 25th Anniversary October 25-27, 2012. Originally established in 1987, the DPTC is now recognized globally as a Center of Excellence that supports the premier dairy region of the world. "The DPTC wanted to take some time from our busy schedules to hold this celebration to acknowledge those who have contributed to the success of the DPTC over the last 25 years and to launch the next 25 years of education, research and outreach for a global dairy industry", according to DPTC director Phil Tong.

The celebration kicked off on Thursday, October 25th with a mini-symposium on Dairy Products Technology and Future Innovation Opportunities. Speakers included the university president Jeffrey Armstrong; Norm Olson, professor emeritus of the University of Wisconsin and founding Director of the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research; PDave Barbano, professor of Food Science from Cornell University and Current Director of the Northeast Dairy Foods Research Center, John Jeter, CEO and President of Hilmar Cheese, J; and an industry panel made up of Larry Jensen, CEO of Leprino Foods, Erika Smith a senior principal scientist at General Mills, and Bill Graves, Senior Vice President of Dairy Research Institute (DRI). The symposium looked at the history of the Dairy Research and the formation of the National Dairy Foods Research Centers, Cal Poly's Dairy Products Technology Center being one of them. It also covered the role of the university both today and in the future. The industry speakers gave their perspective of the needs, opportunities, and challenges of the industry as a whole and how the Dairy Centers can help them. (for additional information see separate story on the mini-symposium)

On Friday the DPTC hosted an Open House. It included tours, lab demonstrations, free ice cream, and drawings for Cal Poly Cheese Gift Packs. Many former faculty, staff, alumni, as well industry supporters and the public were on hand to get an up close look at the facilities and information on the work is currently going on at the center. Drawings of a proposed expansion of the facilities that support the DPTC were unveiled. "We need to update and expand our facilities to accommodate a new Masters in Professional Studies program. Additionally the new space will enhance our abilities in dairy foods research and applications work as well as improve our ability to deliver an expanded program of training and industry outreach", said Tong.

Later that day, Alton Brown, the Food Network's favorite foodie, was on campus for two special events. The DPTC, Cal Poly Arts, and ASI hosted the events. The first one was a free event for the students. "The student session for Alton Brown was a huge success. Nearly 800 students came to listen to him speak and meet him afterwards. I was also pleasantly surprised at how entertaining and funny Alton was. Overall, it was a great event," according to Sarah McAtee, ASI Events Outreach Supervisor. That sentiment was echoed by Emma Sandquist, a 2nd Year Food Science Major, "The whole event became an exciting social connection as well as an inspirational moment for students working hard to enter the field. His humor, open discussion, his confidence for a field not well understood by the public reinforced something we already knew; we love food, we love science and we love what we're learning."

He later gave a performance at the Performing Arts Center outlining his Top 10 Myths of Food Science. "Alton Brown's

presentation on his top 10 food science myths was very enlightening and sparked conversation within the audience, which was very easy for us since Alton's humorous charisma was so welcoming. It was a great and fun celebration of the DPTC," said Geoffrey Elliot a second year dairy science student. According to Alton Brown, if he was left on island and only had one food it would be cheese! Alton Brown blends the science and art of food folklore and comedy making him the perfect complement to the week's events.

Prior to the evening performance the University President, Jeffery Armstrong addressed guests at a 25 year DPTC reception. "I've been told over and over again and now I've seen it, that Cal Poly grads take 6-12 months less training and it's all because of the dedication of our faculty and our staff here at the university and the Dairy Products Technology Center." He went on to say, "The success of the Dairy Products Technology Center as a byproduct of collaboration... that's the way we are looking at the future. For Cal Poly to continue to be the best, to continue to turn out these resourceful professionals and innovative leaders we've got to collaborate even more and we have to solidify these partnerships." Dr. Phil Tong reflected on the event, "This was a special evening to have university leaders, industry leaders, and our DPTC family together for the evening. Having President Armstrong spend the evening with us and to speak so highly of the DPTC team, its value to the university, and site the DPTC as a prime example of Cal Poly's "learn by doing" philosophy and partnership with industry was extremely gratifying to me."

On Saturday the celebration concluded with an alumni/industry picnic. It was chances for all to sit back enjoy some great BBQ (provided by the Animal Science Department), reminisce and catch up with old friends.

According to IAAC member, Erika Smith from General Mills, "It been a really cool opportunity to meet new people but to also reconnect with people I know from other dairy research centers. I like the whole symposium concept was a nice addition, the Alton Brown activities, I always enjoy going to the dairy center and meeting with the students to see what they are working on. It's nice to have a longer time period instead of just coming in for the day and leaving."

"It was great to see so many students return to Cal Poly to join us for this celebration, to learn of their professional success, and to hear they are living happy and productive lives," expressed Dr. Tong. He went on to state, "It was a special celebration that in some ways was very nostalgic and other ways full of excitement for the future of the DPTC. I am proud that we were able to take an idea and then 25 years later showcase the impressive array of education, training and research accomplishments of the DPTC. But even more, I am excited about the solid foundation we have established to do much more to serve our State's and our nation's dairy industry in the next 25 years."

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