



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## It's National Ice Cream Month—Here's the Scoop

PATTY RITCHIE July 11, 2016



If there's one food that screams summer, it's ice cream. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan declared July as National Ice Cream Month, and in turn, encouraged people across the country not only to enjoy this delicious treat, but also to celebrate the hardworking people responsible for producing it.

Wondering how ice cream was invented, or how it has become one of our favorite summertime foods? Here's the scoop:

**Cool beginnings:** Milk-based ice creams were introduced in the 10th century, but before that, ice cream—as part of its name implies—was made from ice.

**A sweet history:** The very first ice cream cone was put together at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis Missouri when an overwhelming number of customers forced an ice cream vendor to team up with a nearby waffle vendor to produce the infamous “waffle cone.”

**Ice cream—an American tradition:** It wasn't until the 1930s that ice cream appeared in grocery stores. By WWII, the cool treat became so popular that it turned into an American symbol of sorts. In fact, in 1943 the United States Armed Forces was the world's biggest ice cream producer.

**Milking it:** 10.3 percent of milk produced in the United States goes to making ice cream. And, it's estimated that over their entire lifetime, cows can produce enough milk for 9,000 gallons of ice cream.

**A family affair:** According to the International Dairy Foods Association, the majority of ice cream makers in the United States have been in operation for more than 50 years and many remain as family-owned businesses.

**Americans love their ice cream:** It's estimated that every year, the average American consumes nearly 22 pounds of ice cream.

**A vanilla victory:** What's the most popular ice cream flavor? Plain old vanilla, which makes up 20-29 percent of overall sales of ice cream. Chocolate comes in second, with other flavors like strawberry, chocolate chip mint and cookies and cream following close behind.

Here in New York State, dairy is our leading agricultural sector, with over 5,000 family farms milking over 600,000 cows. Each of those cows helps to produce nearly 2,500 gallons of milk

per-year, some of which goes toward churning out—you guessed it—ice cream.

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, it is a top priority for me to support our state's hardworking dairy farmers. Earlier this year, I was proud to lead the charge to secure funding in the new state budget for programs like Cornell PRO-DAIRY and others that are helping dairy farmers across the state to expand their businesses and to continue to produce everything from milk and cheese to yogurt and of course, ice cream.

There are few things more refreshing on a hot day than a cool treat, so as summer's heat—and National Ice Cream Month—continue, I hope you'll take time to indulge and help support New York's dairy industry at the same time.