2023 Year in Review
Dear Babcock Customers,

It is with great pleasure that I am able to present to you the 2023 University of Wisconsin Babcock Dairy Annual Report. With this report, we hope to give you insight into some of our accomplishments and highlight the major events over the past year. I am hopeful that the information contained in this report will provide an informative and fun look into the workings that are happening here at Babcock Dairy.

Over the past few years, a major renovation has taken place to update the original Babcock Dairy built in 1951 to a modern, state-of-the-art facility, finished in April 2023. This new facility, a part of the Food Science Department located within Babcock Hall, has created a lot of excitement within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as well as across the UW–Madison campus. It was designed and built to provide a modern learning environment for current and future students. These students will now have the opportunity to receive a hands-on experience unlike many others.

This report touches on some of the fun and exciting events going on at Babcock Dairy in 2023. It is filled with images that will provide a behind-the-scenes look at the renovation and many other major events throughout the year. I hope you enjoy the read, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our customers, campus leadership, our donors, Food Science faculty and staff, and Babcock Dairy Staff. Without every one of you, we would not be able to continue to provide the services and experiences that we have come to be known for. We look forward to continuing the tradition that has been established here at Babcock Dairy with excitement for the opportunities that are still to come.

Sincerely,

Casey Whyte
Babcock Dairy Plant Manager
December 2023
The dairy industry in Wisconsin contributes $45.6 billion to state industrial revenue.¹

In 2021, Wisconsinites bought 75.4 million pounds of ice cream and sherbet.²

Babcock Dairy single serve cases made up over 25% of online sales as of October 2023.

The average person eats 45.8 pints of ice cream per year.³

In 2021, Wisconsin produced 25% of the nation’s cheese.²

Wisconsin cheesemakers produced 3.47 billion pounds of cheese in 2021.²

The dairy industry in Wisconsin contributes 9% of milk in the U.S. is used to make ice cream.²

90% of Americans have ice cream in their freezers.³

In 2021, Wisconsin produced 9% of the nation’s cheese.²

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1UW Extension
2Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
3Wisconsin Farmer
Dairy Plant Renovations

This year, the Babcock Dairy Plant saw its first completed renovation since 1951, allowing the facility to run using more modern technology and produce a higher-quality output.

The renovation included the addition of a new high-flow ice cream maker, Human-Machine Interface touch screens, increased freezer and cooler capacity, new deep freezer storage racking, an updated receiving bay, a new Quality Control lab space and new piping, tanks, pumps and valves.

“It was quite a task to take the 1950s Dairy Plant and turn it into a cutting-edge, state-of-the-art facility,” Scott Rankin, professor and chair in the Department of Food Science, said. “I want to express my appreciation for what we will accomplish in the next phase. For the many thousands of future students and professionals, I want to say thank you all for helping us achieve this great accomplishment.”

The construction project included nearly 29,000 gross square feet of renovations for the Babcock Dairy Plant and a three-story addition to the Center for Dairy Research.

On April 13, Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin spoke at a grand opening event in Babcock Hall.

“This project shows what we can accomplish when the university, industry and government work together,” Mnookin said.

The State Building Commission gave the final approval for the project’s funding in February 2020. The final budget for the project was $72.9 million, with funding from UW-Madison, the State of Wisconsin and private donors. More than 200 private donors raised over $18 million for the project.

Zimmerman Architectural Studios worked with representatives from the state Division of Facilities Development and UW-Madison to create the architectural plan for the renovations, and Membrane Process and Controls led the construction in the plant. C.D. Smith Construction led the building construction for the project.

Chocolate Shoppe produced ice cream for the Dairy during the renovation. Rock Cheese, along with a few local dairies including Chalet Cheese Coop and Edelweiss, produced Babcock Dairy cheese until the Dairy Plant was running at full capacity.

“This project shows what we can accomplish when the university, industry and government work together.”

Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin
Dairy Plant Renovations

“Babcock Hall and its world-class facilities are now just another reason that dairy enthusiasts will continue to look at Wisconsin as a leader.”

Randy Romanski, DATCP Secretary

“For the many thousands of future students and professionals, I want to say thank you all for helping us achieve this great accomplishment.”

Scott Rankin, Food Science Department Chair
Grand Opening

Mnookie Dough

One of the first flavors produced in the newly-renovated Dairy Plant was Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin’s honorary flavor: Mnookie Dough. The ice cream has a vanilla-flavored base with cookie dough chunks and swirls of caramel and fudge.
New Menu Items

Bucky’s Veg Out
This new, vegetarian sandwich features spinach, cucumber, tomato, garlic aioli, guacamole and jalapeno cheddar cheese on wheat bread.

Top-Selling Specials

Ice Cream Feature Flavors

175 S’more Years
Chocolate ice cream with a marshmallow swirl and graham cracker crumble to celebrate UW-Madison’s 175th anniversary.

Berry Proud Parent
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a raspberry swirl and chocolate chips.

Thanks a Latte
Coffee-flavored ice cream with a peanut butter swirl and Oreo pieces.

Peaches and Cream
Peach-flavored ice cream with peach chunks.

Lemon Bar
Lemon-flavored ice cream with a graham cracker swirl.

Mint Fudge Marble
Mint-flavored ice cream with a fudge swirl.

Cherrity
Cherry-flavored ice cream with a fudge swirl and Door County cherry pieces to promote the Partners in Giving campaign.

Churro
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a raspberry swirl and chocolate chips.

Black Raspberry Cheesecake
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a black raspberry swirl and cheesecake pieces.

Pumpkin Pie
Pumpkin spice-flavored ice cream with a graham cracker swirl.

Caramel Apple
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a caramel swirl and apple chunks.

Pumpkin Pie
Cherry-flavored ice cream with a fudge swirl and Door County cherry pieces to promote the Partners in Giving campaign.

Peaches and Cream
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a black raspberry swirl and cheesecake pieces.

Thanks a Latte
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a raspberry swirl and chocolate chips.

Pumpkin Pie
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a graham cracker swirl.

Peaches and Cream
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a black raspberry swirl and cheesecake pieces.

Pumpkin Pie
Vanilla-flavored ice cream with a graham cracker swirl.
Babcock Dairy produced 175 S’more Years, a custom ice cream flavor, honoring UW–Madison’s 175th anniversary in October 2023. The flavor is a chocolate-based ice cream with a marshmallow swirl and graham cracker crumble. It was produced for the first time on October 18 and will continue to be produced through June of 2024.

This flavor won in a public voting contest against three other flavors: Demi Semi Confetti, a cake batter ice cream with a strawberry swirl, cheesecake pieces and sprinkles; Demi-Semi-Sweet-Centennial, a chocolate ice cream with a fudge swirl and chocolate crunch; and Flamingos on the Hill, a pink strawberry ice cream with sprinkles and chocolate chips.

Scott Rankin, Food Science Department Chair and Professor, suggested the creation of a commemorative flavor for the 175th anniversary in the spring of 2023. The 175th Anniversary Planning Committee brought the idea to Babcock Dairy and developed a list of flavors for voting.

Nearly 8,500 members of the UW–Madison community voted in the flavor contest, and over 40% of voters selected 175 S’more Years.

While Dairy Plant staff predicted struggles with the marshmallow variegate, the first round of production went smoothly. Three students, Aaditya Mehta, Shubh Oswal and Aman Jain, assisted with the three-gallon production process.

To honor UW–Madison’s 175th anniversary, Babcock Dairy also produced a limited-edition cheese called Cranniverscherry.

Cranniverscherry is a Brick-style cheese with Wisconsin Rapids cranberries and Door County cherries. The cheese was released with 175 S’more Years on October 31, 2023, to the public and select retailers.

The cheese was served at an exclusive event for campus donors on October 26.
Blattner Table

Thomas M. Blattner was a friend of the department and a colleague to all. He was an integral leader and member of the Food Science Department and served a crucial role in stewarding and overseeing the Department’s operations as well as the Babcock Dairy Plant and Babcock Dairy Store. We are honored to etch his legacy in the Babcock Dairy Store with a table dedicated to Tom Blattner.

Badger Consulting

With the help of the UW–Madison School of Business’ Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Babcock Dairy is implementing a comprehensive business plan.

After a year-long process of creating a business plan with an out-of-state consulting firm, store manager Kari Backes and plant manager Casey Whyte turned to the SBDC for help implementing the lengthy plan. The SBDC recruited the help of a student-run organization called Badger Consulting to create suggestions on how to best implement the business plan.

“We are very grateful for Michelle’s help, the SBDC, and the students who helped us,” Backes said. “We were extremely pleased with it, from beginning to end.”

Whyte and Backes met with Ethan Kofman and Mitchell Carroll, student leaders from Badger Consulting, for seven weeks to determine target customers and effective marketing strategies for Babcock cheese and gift boxes.

One such strategy focused on targeting alumni, including alumni businesses. UW–Madison alumni have many memories associated with Babcock Dairy’s brand, making them an ideal target market for gift boxes. Badger Consulting also recommended an increased use of Facebook and LinkedIn to connect with alumni and parents of UW students.

Carrol and Kofman gave pricing recommendations based on similar offerings in the market and suggested an increase in storytelling with marketing content.

“Helping out a UW–Madison business was really exciting for us,” Carrol said. “We all felt very passionate about it because we tried the product – it’s great – and we just wanted to give back, to help them in any way we can… We were honored that they were willing to have us come to give them help.”
Communications Specialist

This year, Babcock Dairy expanded the communications intern position into a full-time role. The communications specialist position is responsible for social media, newsletter content, customer service, marketing and communications strategies, design, media management, website content and other communications-related tasks.

The communications specialist position was filled by Caroline Crowley, a 2023 graduate from UW–Madison’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Crowley received a B.A. in journalism and strategic communications with a certificate in environmental studies. Previously, she served as an intern for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a managing editor for the Badger Herald.

So far, the position has increased engagement from social media by over 50%, and has seen positive outcomes in sales from newsletter content. Crowley has developed a comprehensive social media strategy and future advertising campaigns.
National Ice Cream Month

July is National Ice Cream Month! To celebrate, Babcock Dairy offered customers a chance to win a $25 gift card to the Babcock Dairy Store. Customers entered their favorite photos of Babcock ice cream. Voting was held on Instagram stories. The competition was tight, but Judy Tronstad came out on top.

University Creamery Managers Conference

This year’s University Creamery Managers Conference was hosted by the Brigham Young University Creamery. Casey Whyte and Kari Backes, the plant manager and store manager, attended the conference in June. After hearing from amazing speakers and touring local dairies, the group explored Utah by traveling up a ski lift!
This year’s staff retreat was on August 18. After a staff meeting, we toured the Dairy Barns, ate Panera and went on a Scavenger Hunt. Casey, Greg and Tonya won, but it was a close race. The scavenger hunt was a great way to explore more of campus, taking contestants through gardens, new buildings and more.
Thank you for supporting Babcock Dairy!

Photos courtesy Caroline Crowley, Michael P. King, Althea Dotzour, Bryce Richter and Kari Backes
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