

MMPA and Michigan State University Team Up to Provide Fresh, Nutritious Product to the MSU Food Bank

Dairy farmer members of the Michigan Milk Producers Association teamed up with the dairy plant at Michigan State University to produce cheddar cheese for the MSU Student Food Bank. MMPA donated 2,000 gallons of milk to the dairy plant that was made into 800 two-pound blocks of cheddar cheese.

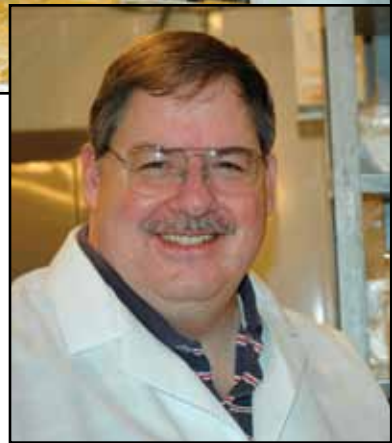
The MSU dairy plant donated the time and processing to convert the milk to cheese. The MSU dairy plant serves as a working laboratory for students looking to gain experience in food processing. The dairy plant makes cheese and ice cream that is sold at the two MSU dairy store locations on campus and other venues around East Lansing.

“Donating milk for this project helped two groups of students,” says Carl Rasch, Director of Milk Sales for MMPA. “It gave the food science students more practical experience in cheese making and it provided a nutritious product to the food bank.”

John Engstrom, manager of the MSU dairy plant, coordinated the cheese donation. “It is hard for us to help everyone who asks for product donations



Student workers at the MSU Dairy Plant helped make and distribute the cheese made from milk donated by MMPA. (inset) MSU Dairy Plant Manager John Engstrom



throughout the year,” Engstrom says. “Having MMPA donate the milk allows us to make the donation to the food bank.”

The MSU Student Food Bank, a completely student-run food bank set up to help other students on campus, serves 500 to 600 people a month. Most of the clients are graduate students and their families. While the food bank works with the Red Cross and other organizations to provide food, they seldom get fresh products like cheese.

“We have never had cheese to give away before,” says Kristin Moretto, director of the MSU Student Food Bank. “I know our clients are going to be very surprised and excited to see the MSU cheese and we feel great being able to give them such a great product.”

The first batch of “Spartan” cheese was delivered to the food bank in March. Engstrom hopes to enlist more milk companies to keep a steady supply of cheese at the food bank.

“I would like to see this project continue,” Engstrom says. “The MMPA donation will last about 3 months. If I can enlist more partners we can offer a year-round supply of cheese to the food bank. The people coming to the food bank rely on the donations to get their nutrition. We think it is important to include dairy products to help provide a balanced diet.”



MSU Student Food Bank is an entirely student-run food bank established to help other students in need. Pictured with the first delivery of “Spartan Cheese” is Food Bank Director and graduate student Kristin Moretto.