

At Ease

Forty-one miles from campus there's a little creamery that makes 40 flavors of the best ice cream in the country, is run by former Texas A&M students and convinces the cows that Brenham is heaven.

In an attempt to see what impresses all those cows on the commercial, *At Ease* took a road trip to Blue Bell Creameries Inc. to get the scoop on the little creamery in Brenham.

It all started in the early 1900s, explained tour director Cynthia Kenjura.

Originally called the Brenham Creamery Company, Blue Bell produced only butter. But folks in Brenham urged the company to use some of its excess cream to make ice cream. Finally in 1911, the creamery began making ice cream — two gallons at a time.

Back then, the ice cream was delivered by horse-drawn wagons. But the 1930s brought refrigerated trucks, and the creamery obtained its first truck in 1936.

During the '30s, Kenjura said, it was fashionable to name dairy products after a flower, like Lilly (in Bryan) and Carnation. Thus, the company's name was changed to Blue Bell — named after the state flower, the bluebonnet.

Blue Bell introduced a supreme ice cream by 1940, Kenjura said, and in the '50s stopped making butter and concentrated on the ice cream.

We all scream . . .



for ice cream!

story by Anne Dejoie
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"They decided they would just devote all their energy to making a good ice cream," Kenjura said. They, of course, refers to company president Howard and his brother and chief executive officer Edward F. Kruse — both graduates of Texas A&M who began making ice cream with their father when they were 11 and 13 years old.

Despite penetration into Houston and other markets in the early '60s, Blue Bell continued to hand-pack the ice cream until the company moved into its current building in 1972.

Blue Bell's manufacturing has become automated and the products are distributed to 13 warehouses in Texas, but the company still puts a little tender loving care into every scoopful of ice cream it produces.

However, Blue Bell has never actually owned its own dairy, and the cows don't all live in Brenham anymore.

"We have always purchased the milk from dairies, at one time local," Kenjura explained. "Now the abundance we need is so tremendous that it comes from all over the state."

Once small enough to use its own milk cans to collect fresh raw milk, Blue Bell now buys the milk from co-ops that purchase it from the dairies.

Kenjura said that 50,000 cows are milked every day to provide the