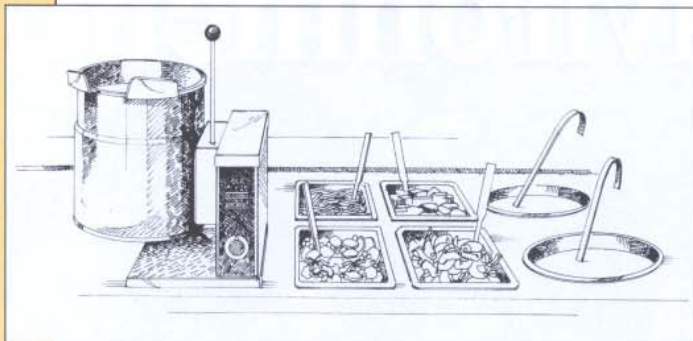


***Fellow operators pass along their best food safety ideas and product finds.***

***Soup's On***

Before the demand for soup went through the roof prompting a switch to large soup dispensers, the Soups Station at Chicago's **Marshall Field's 7 on State Gourmet Food Stations** made soup to order for each customer. The station used mini steam-jacketed kettles, or oyster cookers, to quickly heat soups in single-serve portions. Soup ingredients, including stocks, were held



separately in adjacent cold wells at 38°F. When a customer ordered, servers placed all the requested ingredients into one of the station's four countertop kettles and heated the soup to temperature. The kettle brings the ingredients to the required safe temperature more quickly and uniformly than would a heating element below a stockpot on a range. The kettles reduce the food safety risks associated with cooling and reheating large amounts of soup and improve the quality, so that ingredients, like vegetables, don't go limp.

***Keeping Cones Germ-Free***

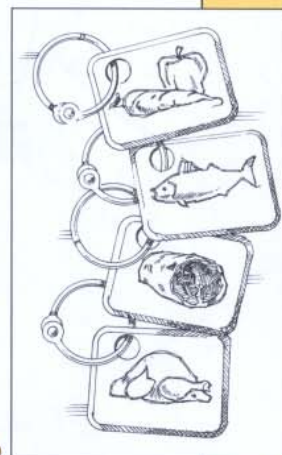
So you think scooping ice cream is relatively sanitary, right? The server grabs the scoop from the dipper well, dips it into the ice cream and dollops it onto the cone. Hold it right there—what's keeping the germs off the cone? At the **Chocolate Shoppe** in Madison, Wis., it's a simple napkin that employees are trained to grab before they take the cone. Why not just use disposable gloves? Vice President Dave Deadman thought of that, but his employees have to handle money at the register as well as serve cones. That process would involve countless times of removing and putting on new gloves. Pre-wrapped cones were also an option, but they didn't come in every size, and the shop is known for its own homemade waffle cones. "It's just a matter of teaching the workers the right procedure," says Deadman. "Wash hands, grab a napkin and use it to grab the cone."

***Create a Cooling Curve***

Foodservice Consultant Kevin Freeborn is teaching his ServSafe® students a new method to make sure their foods are cooling safely: He urges them to create their own cooling curve chart. "Take something dense, like mashed potatoes, and put it in a shallow pan in the refrigerator," Freeborn explains. "After writing down the starting temperature, continue to take the temperature every 10 to 15 minutes, and plot the temps on a chart (time on the x-axis, temperature on the y-axis)." This creates a curve as the temperature comes down, he says. As long as the food has cooled to 70°F within two hours and 41°F within another four hours, you know your unit and storage method is working to cool food safely. If it's not cooling safely, you'll know you need to find another cooling method (see the Chill Factor, page 13). Once the curve chart is completed, you can use it as a resource for checking other foods: Take the food's temperature after an hour and compare it to your curve chart. If the temperature is equal to or lower than that on the chart, you know it's cooling down effectively.

***Picture Perfect Storage***

If many of your workers use English as a second language, take a tip from the **Suffield House** nursing home in Southwick, Mass. Foodservice Director William Steinka drew pictures of meat, fish, dairy and vegetables and used those to label the shelves in his walk-in storage units. Now employees know what items should be stored where without having to have a command of the language, plus they're great reminders for everyone, English- and Spanish-speaking alike.



**Do You Have A Great "Try It" Idea?**

You probably have lots of great food safety tips that are old hat to you but could be great new ideas for another operator. We want to hear from you. E-mail us at: [blorenzini@fermag.com](mailto:blorenzini@fermag.com) or fax 847/873-0918. Make sure to put "try it idea" in the subject line. Contact us as well for info on products mentioned above. Call 847/873-0340.