

Back to Basics – Aerated Confections

Taffy Processing

All types of pulled or aerated chewy candies share the same production process at the start. Recipe-specific ingredients and second-stage steps determine the outcome.

Gianni Ruffinatti

Ruffinatti

In continental Europe, *taffy* is defined as fat-containing, low-boiled candy having a residual moisture content ranging between 4.5 and 9 percent. Types of product that fall within this category are varied and include plain, unpulled milk caramels, fudges, traditional English toffees and all types of pulled or aerated chewy candies with or without milk and butter.

The production process for all of these items starts, however, in the same manner, so we can safely include them in our discussion.

BASIC PRODUCTION METHODS

Batch Cooking and Cooling

Historically, batch cooking was the original production method (Figure 1). All quantities are recipe driven. First, preweighed quantities of water and/or milk and sugar were combined in a gas-heated copper pan. When the mix was brought to complete solution and boiling point, a preweighed quantity of glucose was added. The new mixture was again brought to the boiling point before fats, emulsifiers and any recipe-specific ingredients were added. At atmospheric pressure, continuous mixing was performed as the desired cook temperature was reached.

When steam cooking replaced gas-fired batch cooking, standard production was carried out in double-jacketed kettles with integrated mechanical mixers. The recipe-dri-

ven cooking ingredients, methods and procedures remained essentially the same as under the original gas-fired system. Traditional confectioners shut off the kettle's steam supply approximately 1°C below the final cook temperature to cope with latent heat retained in the copper cook vessel. With the mixer still running, heat-sensitive ingredients such as gelatin mixtures and varieties of flavors and colors could be added. After that, the cooking vessel would be emptied.

Originally, hot and liquid product output from the cooking vessel was discharged into wheeled carriers and then spread onto cooling slabs (Figure 2) to facilitate heat dissipation. At this stage, if required by recipe, additional ingredients, such as dry acid crystals or icing sugar and rework product were sprin-



Gianni Ruffinatti is president of Ruffinatti. He began his apprenticeship in the confectionery industry in 1970 at Boots Chemist.

Batch Cookers — Old and New



Figure 1