



'Fro-yo' frenzy hits the Chicago market by Kim Mikus

Northbrook native Michael Farah, a newcomer to the industry, studied the Pinkberry craze while visiting his father in Los Angeles. He left his job as a crude-oil futures trader to study and perfect the concept and plans to open his first Berry Chill at 635 N. State St. in Chicago in February with other yogurt bars close behind.

Farah, 29, prefers to be known as a "yogurteur." Not wanting to confuse his product with TCBY's, he calls his healthy product "chilled yogurt."

"It's the same consistency as soft serve, but it's not watered down and it's a little creamier," he explains.

He says he is the first in the nation to offer a lactose-free option that's 25 calories an ounce, fat free, contains more than a gram of protein and has more calcium than milk. "It's a healthy alternative," Farah said of the 8-ounce serving with three toppings that will cost about \$5. Most importantly, he says he will serve authentic yogurt.

He's looking to expand in five cities this year while working on deals with sports stadiums and airports.

Farah said "the whole concept is going to expand big time in the next few years. People in Chicago don't understand how big this is going to get."

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