

Consumer Concern About Diet-Heart Or Weight Control Not Major Factors Affecting Markets For Dairy Products

The diet heart controversy and the dieting and weight watching actions are not major issues affecting the markets for dairy products, according to data compiled for American Dairy Association by Universal Marketing Research Dr. G. G. Quackenbush, ADA's director of marketing and economics, said these data indicated that "the whole milk market has been affected slightly, that butter sales were affected more by dieting and weight watching than by the diet-heart issue, and that cheese sales, having increased in per capita consumption may have been helped."

Dr. Quackenbush noted that Universal Marketing Research interviewed a national sample of 3,422 persons age 15 and over, both males and females, from May 30 to June 14, 1969. The questions asked were stated exactly as they were in similar studies in the 1950's and in 1961.

Q. "Some people have been concerned that diet and the kinds of food people eat may be associated with heart disease. Have you heard anything about this?"

A. The percent who answered "yes" was 36% in 1957, 34% in 1959, 50% in 1961, and 56% in 1969.

Dr. Quackenbush points out that while there is an upward trend, it is important to realize that only about half of the people admit to being aware. To put this 56% figure in perspective, compare it with knowledge of the cigarette-cancer controversy.

Q. "Some people have been

concerned that cigarette smoking may be associated with cancer. Have you heard about this?"

A. Almost everybody, 97%, are aware of this issue.

Diet-Heart

Among those who are aware, what do they know or think about heart disease? Is diet the only cause? The sample group was handed a list of statements to which they were asked to respond. Here are some examples:

1. "Diet is the only factor causing heart disease." In response only 3% said they believed it, but 91% said they didn't and 6% didn't know.

2. "A person's blood should contain no cholesterol." Only 9% believed this but 70% said they didn't and 21% said they didn't know.

3. "Medical doctors know the cause of heart disease." Here 35% said they believed it, 51% said they didn't and 14% said they didn't know.

4. "The human body manufactures some of its own supply of cholesterol." Found that 64% believed it, 7% didn't believe it and 29% didn't know.

5. "People with low cholesterol in the blood never have heart disease." Only 10% believed it, 62% didn't believe it and 28% didn't know.

Dr. Quackenbush points out that these data express a high degree of intelligence which, in his opinion, would parallel a national sample of medical doctors or nutritionists.

A list of items was read to the total sample (3,422 persons) and the sample was polled whether they believed or didn't believe that the item causes heart disease. Overweight was

believed by 91%, a cause of heart disease, high blood pressure, 85% cholesterol in the blood, 64%; cigarette smoking, 75%; worry and frustration, 80%; and heredity, 55%. The rest said they didn't believe or didn't know. These answers, again, according to Dr. Quackenbush, indicate a high level of intelligence. He pointed out that four of the items — overweight, high blood pressure,

cigarette smoking, and worry and frustration, exceed cholesterol in the blood in present believing.

The 56% of the sample who were aware of the diet-heart issue were asked the following open end question in order to determine whether milk and other dairy products were implicated:

Q. "What kinds of food have you heard might be associated with heart disease?"

A. The percent mentioning milk went from 3% in 1957 to 4% in 1959 and 1961, and to 7% in 1969. The percent mentioning some other dairy product or dairy products went from 3% in 1957 to 10% in 1959, from 13% in 1961 to 22% in 1969.

Q. "Are people who are aware of the diet-heart controversy doing anything as a result to alter their diets?"

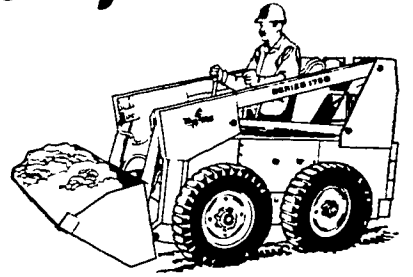
A. This study shows that about one-third think they are and two-thirds think they aren't doing something about their diets.

In order to determine the extent that the diet heart issue has affected consumption of dairy products, the respondents were given a list of foods and asked which ones they ate or drank yesterday. This poll was taken prior to any discussion of diet-heart, dieting or weight watching. Included on the list were cheese, plain milk and butter. The term "plain milk" was used during the years to be synonymous with "whole milk."

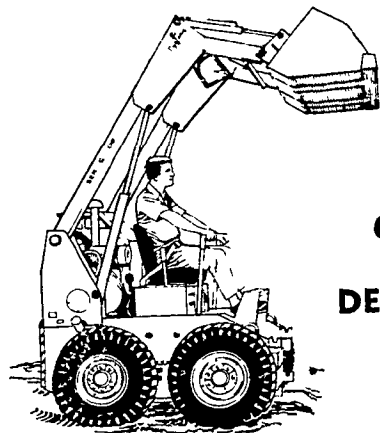
Of the total sample, 59% reported drinking whole milk yesterday (interpreted from now on as on an average day). But 60% of those aware and 57% of those not aware drank whole milk (Continued on Page 11)

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