

Think Bigger With Metric

How would you like to have an automatic five percent increase in sales of bottled milk and a 10 percent increase in sales of butter and cheese?

This would solve a lot of problems for the dairy industry, and it could happen sometime soon! This sales increase won't be the result of promotion campaigns but rather it will come indirectly from an expected national change in our measuring system.

You're constantly hearing more talk about conversion to metric measurement in the United States, and many people feel it will come in the next decade either by legislation or voluntarily.

But let's look at how it would give us that five percent sales

increase. People who now buy a quart of milk under our English system would continue to buy a "metric quart" or liter which is five percent more volume than a quart. Thus buying of the same number of quarts in the new system would bring an automatic five percent increase.

What about the 10 percent increase in butter and cheese sales? It would work the same way. A pound of cheese in the English system will be sold as a "metric pound" or half-kilogram, which is 1.1 pounds. We can expect that every housewife who buys a pound of cheese today will buy a half-kilogram equivalent after metric change-over.

Increased sales are just one advantage of going metric. The

whole measuring system is more simple to figure than our present one. It's a decimal system with all units 10, 100, or 1000 times in size. For example, 1,000 milliliters of milk equals one liter; 1,000 liters equals a kiloliter. Just move a decimal point rather than the complex calculation of two cups to a pint; two pints to a quart; four quarts to a gallon; and 42 gallons to a barrel. The main advantage of the metric system is its simplicity. All volumes, distances and weights are divided into three convenient units (10, 100 and 1,000) compared to 80 different units in the English system.

Many educators believe that the whole metric system can be learned in one hour while some English units never really become familiar without reference to a chart or table. All our measurements will be on the same basis as our money system—10 mills to a cent, 100 cents to a dollar. If you can think money, you can think metric! Dollars and cents are easy figuring. With the metric system, every measurement will be that simple. About the only thing that will not change is the clock on the wall because metric and English time measurement are the same.

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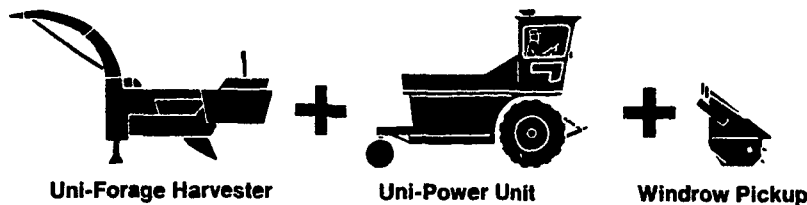
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There's no need to worry about metrication when and if it comes. The change will be made gradually, probably over a 10-year period. This is the way it is being done in Great Britain, and it is progressing without major troubles. In the United States, many businesses and industries have already made some changes (most laboratory tests, for example, have been done and reported in metric for a long time) but metrication won't be complete until it is taught in our schools and recognized by trades, businesses, industry and the government.

Milk may, in fact, play a key role in the change-over to the metric system, as it did when Britain started its conversion several years ago. The returnable pint bottle was the basic package for milk, being sold in small quantities because refrigerators were not common and milk had to be used up fast.

Conversion to metric meant that a pint equaled 454 grams—an awkward figure to work with. So the conversion of a pint was to 500 grams and a quart to 1,000 grams or a liter. Housewives accepted the change. And since milk is a children's food, the "metric pint" became a familiar unit to start school children toward learning the new system.

The dairy industry, from producer to retailer, was delighted with the increase in volume of milk bought and used by the consumer under the new measurement system.

The first step toward American metrication has been made. In 1972 the U. S. Senate passed a bill to officially go metric, and the House is considering similar legislation. The U. S. Department of Commerce and Bureau of Standards officially recommend it, and many commercial groups are ready to change.

Metrication is a must for the United States who now stands almost alone in the world using a system which hinders world trade. The simpler system would also bring efficiencies in accounting that are badly needed in many businesses.

Going metric, of course, has some disadvantages. There will be confusion even in the gradual change. Equipment will be made obsolete but many materials have less than a 10-year life, and when replaced, they would be

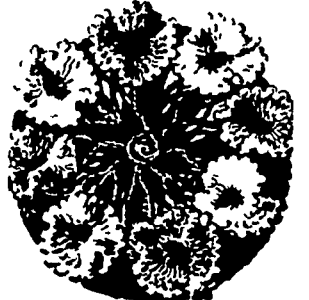
with metric equipment.

The United States can profit by the experience of India (now fully converted), Britain (now changing over), and Japan (converted on an unscheduled plan). We probably won't do it the same way, but we have the proof that it is possible.

When will metric measure come to the United States? Many experts feel we will be started by 1980 and English measure will be well phased out by the end of the century. It's time right now to start to "think metric" in your business or trade so you will be ready when it comes.

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