

Dairy industry smiling over cheese purchases

SOUTHAMPTON — Per capita cheese, consumption in the U.S. increased 93 per cent from 1960-1976, a performance unmatched by any other staple food in the country. And, in 1976 it jumped to a record 16.0 pounds per person, for the biggest annual increase in 31 years! So says Dairy Council Inc., headquartered here.

Cheddar and including Colby and Monterey Jack, accounted for 92. of these 16.0 pounds. Americans ate almost a pound more per capita over 1975 from this cheese group. And Cheddar remains, by far, the most popular cheese in the country, with its popularity continuing to grow. Total 1976 U.S. cheese consumption was up to almost

3.4 billion pounds, or nearly 400 million pounds more than in 1975. Cheddar's proportion of this was 44 per cent.

Other cheeses showing per capita consumption gains in 1976 included Mozzarella, Swiss, Provolone and Parmesan. The additional cheese that Americans ate in 1976 was virtually all in natural forms, as opposed to processed cheese/cheese foods and spreads.

Cheese Production Sales

Matching the 1976 record cheese consumption was an all-time high total U.S. cheese production of 3,337 million pounds. This is 14 per cent more than the previous 1974 record output of 2,937 million pounds and 19 per cent more than was registered in 1975.

All cheese types showed production increases in 1976. The American variety was up 25 per cent over 1975 and largely accounted for the total U.S. cheese production increase with 62 per cent of the nation's cheese output. Cheddar led the way be

recording the largest cheese production gain in this group. It jumped to 1,606 million pounds, a 33.3 per cent increase over 1975. Italian-type cheeses accounted for another 22 per cent of the total production, Swiss 6 per cent and all others, 10 per cent.

Mozzarella registered the biggest Italian gain to 506 million pounds, a 10.6 per cent increase over 1975.

Sales of American cheese exceeded 1.9 billion pounds, 12 per cent more than in 1975. The other cheeses averaged a 10 per cent sales growth.

Several factors are contributing to the cheese explosion in America:

- Increases in family incomes, leading to increased cheese sales/consumption.
- Greater interest in ethnic cooking, such as Italian/Mexican cuisine, where cheese is a major ingredient.
- Trend toward away-from-home eating and corresponding growth in fast-food outlets, which use

cheese in many dishes (e.g., pizza, cheeseburgers, and tacos).

•Fewer full meals being eaten. Cheese, as a "now" food that's instantly ready to use, suits today's new eating habits where people are eating fewer full meals and doing more snacking and "grabbing a quick bite."

•Increased awareness of cheese's nutritional value. Since cheese is an animal source protein, it rates with meat, fish, and fowl as a complete or first-class protein. That means it has all the essential amino acids needed by people to meet their daily protein requirements. It's also high in food energy and a good source of calcium, phosphorus and vitamin A.

People are gaining a greater knowledge of the diversity of cheese types and their uses. This is due in

large part to increased promotional efforts by cheese/food companies.

In-store merchandising efforts have increased, as reflected by larger cheese sections. Where cheese retailers had only 40 different cheeses from which to choose 50 years ago, today some are showing as many as 200 of the different kinds available, and they're using more dynamic cheese displays.

Dan Carter, a past National Cheese Seminar president, said in 1976:

"We (in the cheese industry) are in a growth industry that has a potential to double again in the next 20 years. There is no other food industry as exciting in volume growth and profit as cheese. It remains one of the fastest growing consumable foods in the U.S. today and continues to grow in profitability."

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NEW YORK, N.Y. — A certificate recognizing New Jersey as the 14th state officially accredited free of tuberculosis in cattle was presented to state officials recently by Dr. F. J. Mulhern, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The certificate was presented to Phillip Alampi,

New Jersey secretary of agriculture, in the auditorium of the State Office Building, Trenton, N.J.

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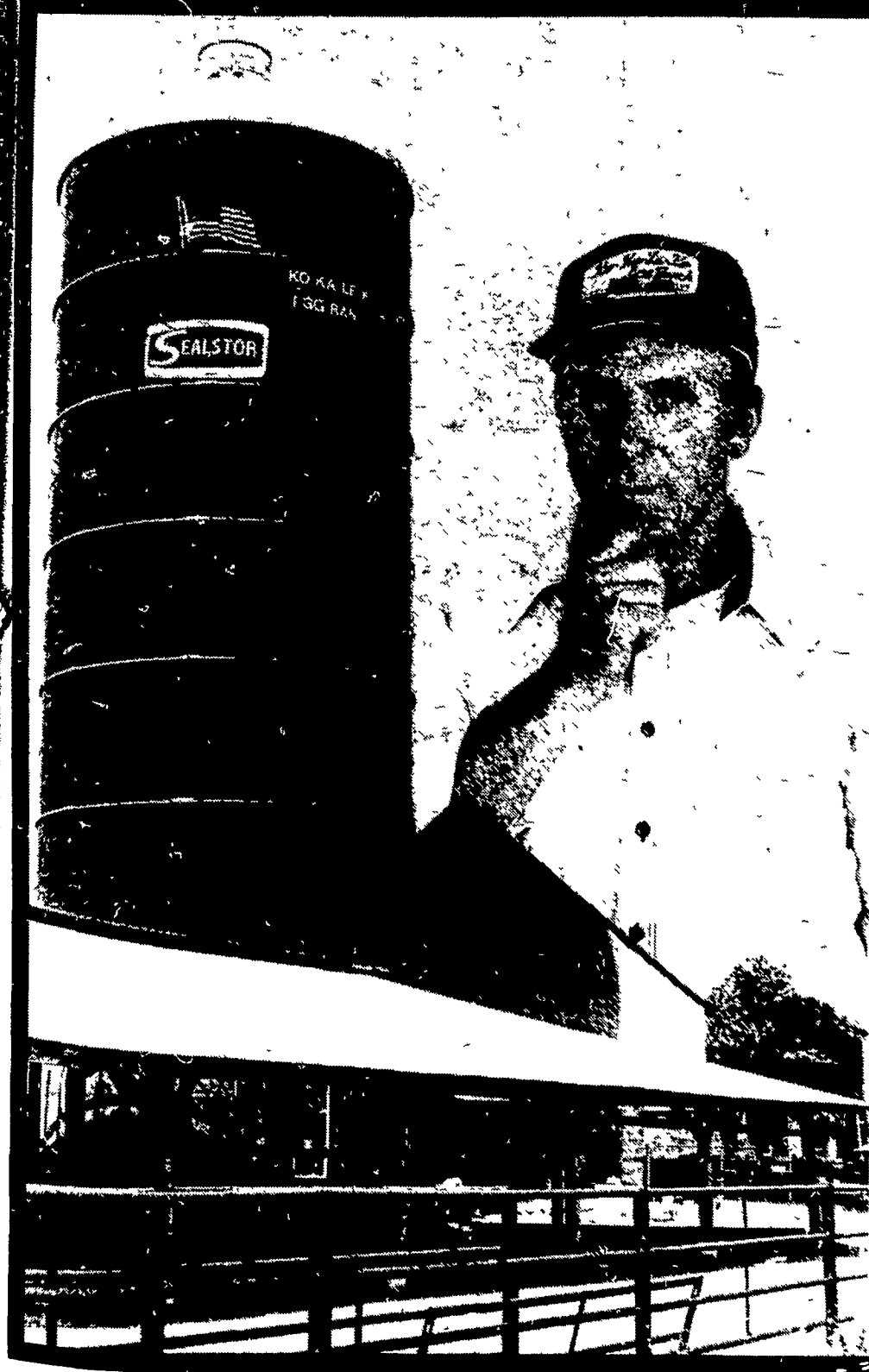
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