

# Dairy advertising dollars,

# where do they go?

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Staff Correspondent

TOWSON, Md. — The amount deducted from one dairyman's milkcheck, a one-percent figure per hundredweight, seems insignificant to the budgets of the advertising world.

But multiply a single producer contribution by 7,500, the number of farm families contributing to dairy advertising in the Middle-Atlantic Milk Marketing area, and the budget bottom line for promotion comes to some six million dollars.

"I don't think people are aware of the magnitude of this program," asserts Dick Norton, manager of the Mid-Atlantic Advertising and Promotion Agency. "Dairy products advertising is alive and well."

Norton heads a staff of four, headquartered in the Carroll Building on LaSalle Road in Towson. Other staffers are Carol Gray, director of communications, Joyce Graybill, dairy promotion director, and Cathy Preis, administrative assistant and bookkeeper.

The Middle-Atlantic agency is the regional funding office for the national American Dairy Association, the umbrella establishment that covers a variety of milk products promotion and nutrition research programs.

Established in 1945, the second region organized in the nation, Mid-Atlantic agency is the child of far-sighted dairymen of the post-war era who saw the need to promote their product. Mid-Atlantic funding comes primarily from dairymen in the Federal Order No. 4 area, but some funds are also contributed by checkoffs from Orders No. 2, the New York area, and Order No. 36, of western Pennsylvania. Bulk of the budget monies, about \$5,400,000 is spent locally, aimed at the high population centers of Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the triangle of York-Lancaster-Harrisburg.

"It's a total marketing program, based on nutrition education. We go where the people are located," Norton explains. "We're also involved with both dairies and grocery centers, building markets for dairy products, and have about 85 percent market penetration in 3,000 area supermarkets."

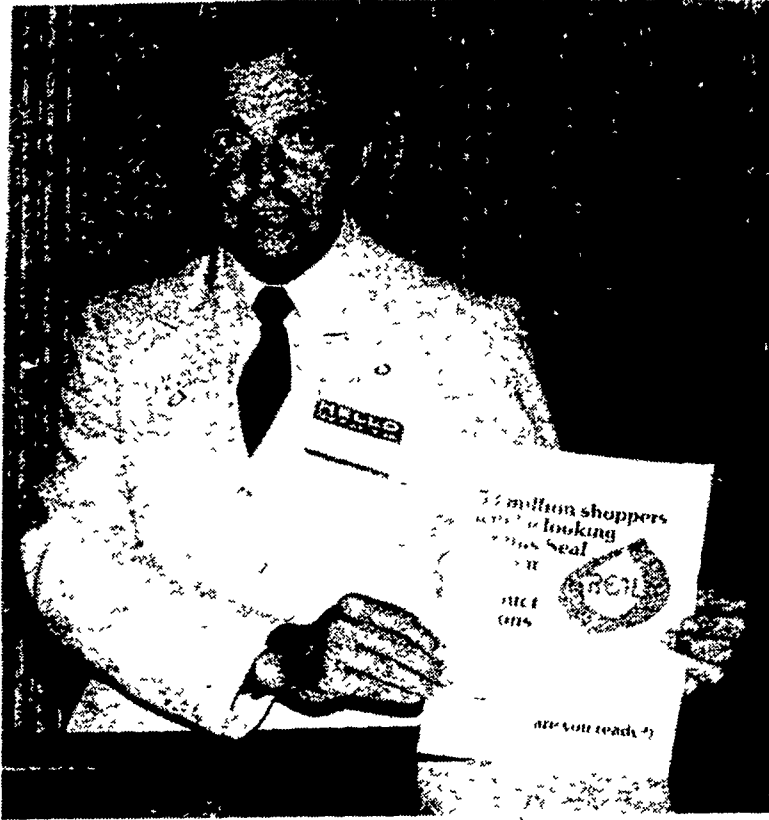
Imitations are the newest threat to the dairy product market, and Norton says about 50 million dollars are being spent advertising imitation products, an amount equal to the funds spent on dairy advertising.

"Almost everyone has a 'look alike' product, and some cheeses are making big inroads," Norton adds.

Dairymen's biggest gun in the imitations battle is the recently developed REAL seal, a trademark logo of the United Dairy Industry Association. The stylized milk-drop symbol is allowed to be used only on labeling of products having genuine dairy ingredients. REAL seal use implies quality, freshness and the high standards represented by the dairy industry's strict production and handling regulations.

Most of the Middle-Atlantic agency's current promotions are part of an all-out national campaign to educate shoppers to recognize the red-outlined milk drop symbol and the genuine dairy products it represents.

"We're beginning to get milk re-involved in everyone's life style," is Norton's capable explanation of the newest trends in milk promotion. "We've lost breakfast, lunch and dinner to today's life styles; we've lost those family meal occasions where milk was traditionally served. So now we



With a REAL job on his hands, Dick Norton, head of the Mid-Atlantic Milk Marketing Agency sees the identification of genuine products a real plus for both dairy farmers and quality-minded consumers.

have to go where the game is played."

And the game is played at places like the seashore, theme amusement parks and the growing number of fast-food establishments.

So, that's where the agency is looking with their innovative advertising. Catching consumers where they play has led Middle-Atlantic into a new type of advertising campaign, a team link-up with "promotion partners."

Foster Grant sunglasses is a summer partner, linked up in a special promotion to enjoy the vacation season with milk. And a special offer on "Soft Soft Drink" milk beach towels also makes use of the "Real" seals as redeemable coupons.

REAL seals can be used toward lowered gate prices at Kings' Dominion theme park, too, a program the agency is also hoping to use with Hersheypark.

Cooperative advertising has been successful beyond anticipation, for both partners, to the point where the Middle-Atlantic agency is now being approached by firms interested in tying into the sales standard represented by the "Real" seal campaign, Norton boasts.

Potential suitors in the REAL seal promotional matings are such nationally-known as Tastykake, Time-Life publications, and the McDonald's food chain.

Norton says McDonald's, for instance, is interested in eliminating their "junk food" image, a goal that fits perfectly with the REAL dairy products theme. Recent market testing with the chain, featuring the McDonald's "Happy Meal" which

included milk, showed highly favorable results.

Although not the highest-budget item, one agency activity that touches both farmers and consumers personally is the Dairy Princess program.

Although agency staffers oversee some aspects of the dairy princess pageant and promotion events, hundreds of dairy farm volunteers plan and carry out the shopping mall, supermarket and school visits where consumer contacts are made.

Dairy farmer contributions also are directed at nutrition education and product research through other branches of the American Dairy Association.

Nutrition education is the foundation of all dairy promotional programs, aimed at teaching shoppers the nutritive benefits of milk and its products. National Dairy Council and its local affiliates administrate the educational activities, holding numerous school and industry seminars and workshops, publishing nutrition literature for school and public use, and making frequent contacts with media representatives.

Research is conducted mostly through the programs of DRINC, Dairy Research, Inc., where expanded uses for dairy products are being sought. Sterile milk is one of the research headlines, a product with prolonged shelf life at room temperatures made possible through flash high-temperature treatment. Dairy scientists are also close to breakthroughs on the freeze drying of both whey and milk, powdered products that would cut storage space needed and greatly lengthen storage time.



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