

Fighting to quench nation's thirst

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Soft drink makers, coffee roasters, and the dairy industry are all vying for the loyalty of this generation of consumers, but there's no doubt who holds the current lead. Americans consumed enough soft drinks in 1983 to average 40 gallons per person, and the figure may still be rising. The average was less than 18 gallons back in 1963.

Coffee, not soft drinks, was the top beverage then, with Americans sipping java at the rate of 38 gallons per person. Today, the two beverages have switched places, and coffee consumption has fallen to about 25 gallons per person per year.

Milk, too, has taken a beating, with consumption per person dropping in 16 of the last 20 years, according to a recent article in the Agriculture Department's FARMLINE magazine.

It reports the findings of Economic Research Service economist Karen Bunch and analyst Julie Kurland after they studied shifts in per capita beverage consumption. They point to the following trends:

— Either Americans have gotten

thirstier, or the plain old glass of water is out of favor. Overall consumption of commercial beverages rose about 18 gallons per person between 1963, from 116 to 134 gallons a year. Apparently, we now head for the refrigerator, the vending machine, the fast food outlet, or the pub—rather than the water tap—when thirst strikes.

— Of total beverage consumption, roughly one glass out of five is an alcoholic drink. On average, Americans consume 28.4 gallons of beer, wine, and liquor a year per person, up from 17.6 gallons in 1963. Beer consumption per person climbed 60 percent in the last 20 years, and wine consumption more than doubled.

— Fruit juices are doing well, more than keeping up with population growth. Average consumption per person rose more than 100 percent from 1963 to 1983.

— Milk drinking dropped 6.7 gallons per person, from about three of every ten beverages consumed to one out of five. Use of whole milk plunged from more than 29 gallons per person in 1963 to less than 16 gallons, but sharp gains for low-fat and skim milk

offset part of the loss. Surveys show that even youngsters 6 to 12 years old are drinking less milk these days.

— Coffee, the most popular beverage in 1963, now ranks third after soft drinks and milk, and just a gallon per person ahead of beer. Changing tastes and lifestyles, price trends, health concerns, and the switch by manufacturers to a more bitter bean are possible explanations. Whatever the reasons, the industry is trying to reclaim a "coffee generation" of its own among young professionals. According to the International Coffee Organization, 81 percent of individuals in their twenties were coffee drinkers in 1962, compared with only 43 percent in 1983.

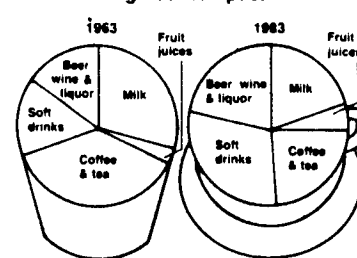
— Soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquor contribute about 10 percent of the daily calories consumed by Americans, up from only 5 percent in the early 1960's.

In the continuing competition for consumers, further gains for one beverage will probably have to come at the expense of another, says economist Karen Bunch. By

most estimates, Americans are close to drinking their fill, and growth in U.S. population is very slow.

Soft drink manufacturers seem to be reaching for new customers with no-caffeine, diet, and NutraSweet-sweetened sodas. Beer is going light and low alcohol, possibly to appeal to more women. Unless milk can succeed with the health and nutrition appeal, it may continue to lose ground.

Winners and Losers in Shares of Total Beverage Consumption



Alfred College to hold Dairy Day

ALFRED—"Alfred Dairy Day" is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 28, with several speakers, a panel discussion, and a tour planned during the program at Alfred State Agricultural and Technical College.

The one-day event, which is open to any interested persons, is being arranged by the college's School of Agricultural Technologies and Office of Special Academic Programs.

Theme for the day is "Feeding the Dairy Cow," with presentations scheduled from 9:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the college's central dining hall. A \$3 registration fee is being charged to cover expenses.

Students enrolled in a dairy herd management course taught by Russell Giesy will be taking part in the program as well as faculty.

For example, Ann Luno, of Springville, will welcome the participants on behalf of the college, while William Edington, of Gainesville, will serve as moderator of a panel discussion. Other students will introduce the various speakers.

During the morning session, participants will have a choice of

these three presentations:

R.D. Smith, professor, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University, "Nutritional Influence on Reproduction."

Gary Bigger of Batavia, Extension Specialist, "Alternatives in Supplementing Roughages."

Ronald Stutzman, associate professor, Department of Plant and Animal Science at Alfred State College, "Maximizing Nutrients From Forages."

Following lunch, a dairymen's panel is scheduled on the topic "Feeding and Managing Our 20,000-Pound Herd."

Panelists will include Francis Andrea of Ellicottville, Ronald Button of Jasper RD 1, Paul Lewis of Rexville, and Dennis Smoker of Genesee, Pa.

Featured speaker at the final session will be Gary Snyder of Randolph, representing Farm Credit Service of Olean. He will discuss "Maximizing Income Over Feed Cost."

After the program, participants will be joined by students and faculty members for a tour of the college's dairy facilities, including its computerized milking parlor.

CONSTRUCTION

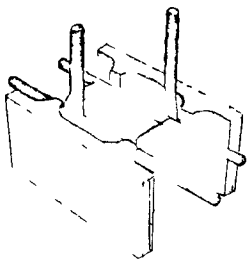
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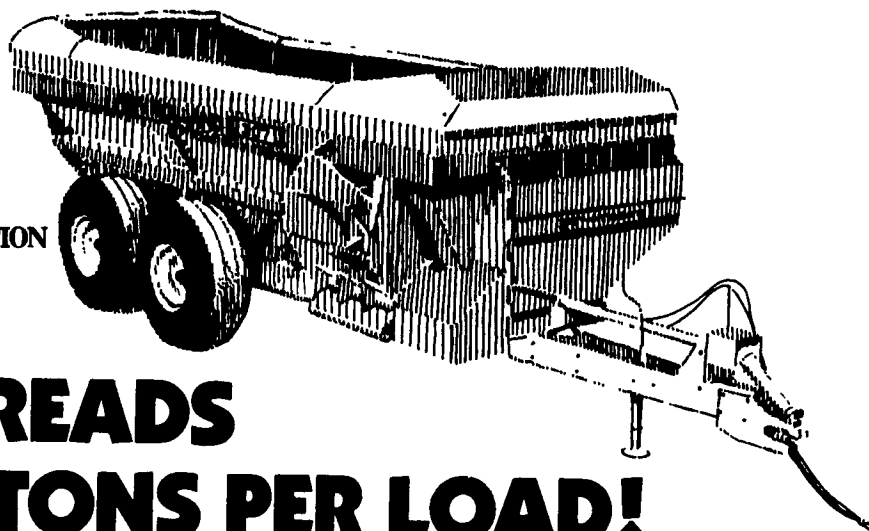
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