

Low Fat Milk Pumps Up Pennsylvania Milk Sales

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania fluid milk sales are going up, up, up.

Milk producers got the good news at the June meeting of the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program.

PDPP's White Lite ad campaign boosted sales dramatically during its first month in western Pennsylvania supermarkets, according to Bill Smedley, commodity promotion chief for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

And low fat milks sparked a 2.3 percent increase in total fluid milk sales in Pennsylvania last year, it also was reported.

Smedley drew on milk sale figures compiled by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board to make his point.

The state upswing in Class I sales is in contrast to national sales where cheeses, yogurts and specialty items have increased dramatically the past three years

while fluid milk sales remained fairly flat.

Just how effective is milk advertising and promotion in Pennsylvania?

"Let's look at the record," said Smedley, using preliminary sale figures from the Pittsburgh-Erie market area.

For the January-March period, 2 percent sales ran 5.98 percent ahead of the same three months of 1986 he pointed out.

Then along came PDPP's 2 percent White Lite milk in late March, he noted, with an advertising blitz of pretty girls, trendy tunes and a slogan that suggested "2 percent milk, 100 percent beautiful. Try some on."

According to dealers and supermarket managers, a horde of western Pennsylvanians did. And the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board sale records appear to agree.

"In April," Smedley said, "2 percent sales posted a 9.67 percent

increase over the same month in 1986. Or almost double the average gain registered by all 2 percent milks in the January-March period."

Should White Lite and the ad campaign get the credit?

"Dealers tell me White Lite is new business. It's not taking away from other 2 percent milks," Board Chairman Jim Harteis explained to board members.

"It was the only really new product or advertising effort in the market," Smedley pointed out.

A review of 1986 milk sales by Consultant Bob Williams revealed that whole milk is still the favorite milk drink in Pennsylvania with 51.7 percent of all fluid sales but that 2 percent and skim milks are gaining.

Standard milk sales actually fell 5 percent in 1986 while low fat sales increased 9.4 percent, he said. This compared to 1985. Among the low fats, 1 percent milk lost 19.3 percent in sales while 2 percent milk

statewide gained 19.8 percent. Skim milk had an 8.5 percent increase.

The other action, the advisory board:

• Heard how Dairy Councils build sales with such innovative ideas as video tapes for use in doctor waiting rooms, and a visiting professor program to instruct medical students on basis of good nutrition.

• Learned Dairy Councils also take action against misleading advertising with dairy overtones. Such as calcium pill advertising, for one. And New York dairy councils are credited with preventing ban on chocolate milk in public schools there.

• Approved \$25,422.25 in matching funds for 130 July-December milk promotions by 35 county and regional committees.

• Reviewed plans for "Summer Love Sundae Tuesday" ice cream festival July 28 on capitol steps in Harrisburg. Over 9,000 sundaes

were served at the 1986 party.

• Heard enthusiastic report on twin June Dairy Month kickoffs at Reading, June 2, and Pittsburgh, June 11. Both received strong media attention. Promotion Coordinator Cindy Weimer announced. Over 11,000 dairy treats were distributed in Market Square, Pittsburgh, it was disclosed, with people "wall to wall."

• Received brochures on a new dairy recipe contest featuring a \$1,000 grand prize and Farm Show Week cookoff. Contest also has added a co-sponsor — the Penn State Home Economics and Family Living Extension.



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