

Dairy Promotions Gear Toward More Sophisticated Consumer

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
ROBESONIA (Berks Co.) — Consumers are changing. Their wants and needs are different than a decade ago.

To understand how to reach the changing consumer, the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program held workshops to teach promoters how to successfully promote the dairy industry.

According to Betsy Dupuis, "Consumerism in the 1990s is the power of personal choice."

The generic American family no longer consists of a mother, father, and children. Households are shrinking in size. There is a greater number of households with fewer members.

By the year 2,000, it is predicted that there will be more people over age 50 than under 18 years. This means unprecedented economic strength by those who want to live longer so they eat healthy foods, smaller meal sizes, and exercise.

"Our job as an industry is to let them know the importance of dairy products in the diet," Dupuis said.

With 56 percent of all women between the ages of 16 and 68 in the workforce, and that percentage expected to rise, there is a rise in demand for convenience food with simplification of meals and recipes.

"Dairy promoters need to hand

out simple recipes for promotion. Do not use recipes with more than five or six ingredients," she said.

Studies also show that many teenagers are doing the grocery shopping for their families. They are buying convenience foods because they don't know how to cook.

The focus during the 1990s is on health and fitness. "Lean is in: Fat is out," Dupuis reported.

"Consumers are settling for a three-ounce portion of meat and while this isn't much, it is better than not buying meat at all," said Dupuis.

While there is an emphasis on fresh products, there is an increase in closet dessert eaters. "Consumers will eat a salad so they can splurge on the best dessert in the restaurant.

"The dairy industry has really rich desserts and this is what we need to play up," Dupuis stressed. "Don't be afraid to talk about good desserts at promotions."

Technology is making creative communications possible. Shopping cart videos are being tested in supermarkets across the nation. As a customer wheels a shopping cart around the grocery, an electronic beeper picks up a sales pitch on products as the shopper passes items on the store shelves.

While methods such as these educate the shopper, it is expected that the consumer will deal with communication overload and confusion about conflicting information.

Food tastes are changing. While many ethnic groups settle in the states, they not only continue to cook some of their own traditional dishes but also introduce these foods to their friends and coworkers.

"Our society adapts to the new cultures by including dishes such as Japanese stir fry, Italian, and Mexican dishes in their diet."

Consumers will continue to become more sophisticated, more impatient, more affluent, and more powerful.

Laura Long-Lesher, communications specialist with PDPP, told the promoters how their 15 cents per hundred weight dollars are



From left: Deann Hess, Farm Report producer of WGAL-TV; Betsy Dupuis, promotions specialist with PDPP; and Laura Long-Lesher, communications specialist with PDPP review eye-catching ads that are geared toward today's consumer.

helping promote products.

"The dairy case is the most profitable part of the grocery store," she said. She recalled that the REAL seal was stressed in the early '80s, but the emphasis has now slacked off. "Tie it in with every promotion," she said.

She urged promoters to be creative by focusing on local needs.

Lesher reported that at a recent restaurant trade show, the dairy stand was the hit of the show. By promoting "Cheers — non-alcoholic drinks, they found consumers are interested in them. "Pregnant women need to drink milk but no alcohol. They love dairy Cheers."

During a promoter's panel, county chairpersons reported on successful promotions in their counties. Julie Greider from Lancaster

County reported that 132 T-shirts for newborn babies were distributed during June dairy month. Lebanon County reported success with their Summer Love Tuesday when kids help turn ice cream at the local library, and ice cream and ice cream scoops were raffled.

Berks County reported that the sundae building at the Kutztown Fair helped revitalize the Fair. The promotion included games such as a REAL tug with whipped cream layered on concrete. Similar to a tractor pull, contestants are pulled

through the cream. Prizes were free milk shakes from the milk shake wagon.

Specialty items available for promotion programs were introduced. Some of the items are fortune cookies with dairy fortunes, gigantic toothbrushes, recipes, and Hershey chocolate cows, tins, and a barn box.

Other workshops were led by Deann Hess, Farm Report producer of WGAL-TV, on media relations.



"The REAL tug was a big success at the Kutztown Fair."

Kids Visit Orchard During National Apple Month



Five-year-olds from a daycare center examine an apple tree at Linvilla Orchards. The Delaware County farm operates Pennsylvania's most ambitious orchard tour program, entertaining and educating more than 40,000 students annually.

WIFE Protests Cuts

OGALIALA, NE — "Wife protests the budget cuts made in the new farm bill," says Elaine Stuhr, Bradshaw, NE, national president of Women Involved in Farm Economics.

"The industry that provides the most abundant and affordable food and fiber of any country in the world is being treated unfairly in the budget cutting process," says Stuhr. She asks, "What business can survive if they receive less today for their products and efficiency than they did ten years ago?"

"The combination of low commodity prices and increasing production costs are already creating critical conditions for many farmers," adds Stuhr.

Stuhr points out, "The proposed increase in user fees on dairy,

sugar, tobacco, peanut and honey products will ultimately be passed on to the consumer. Grazing fees paid by ranchers leasing public land are proposed to increase more than 450 percent."

"These issues will be a high priority of WIFE's National Convention," according to Stuhr. The grassroots organization will meet November 14 to 17, 1990 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

JoAnn Smith, Assistant Secretary of Marketing & Inspection (USDA), will keynote the convention on November 14. Smith served as president of the National Cattlemen Association, was chairman of the board for Federal Reserve Bank, Jacksonville, Florida and served on the board of governors of Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Help With Home Buying

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — "Steps for Homebuyers," a workshop series on how to buy a house will be held Mondays, November 5, 12 and 19, 7:00-9:30 p.m., at the Chester County Cooperative Extension, 235 W. Market Street, West Chester.

The three-evening series begins Monday, November 5, with "Step One: Finding a House to Fit Your Budget" which includes advantages and disadvantages of homeownership, checking out the local housing market, finding out about financing, and setting realistic expectations.

"Step Two: Sizing Up the

Structure" will be held Monday, November 12. Topics covered include assessing structural quality, checking out the electrical, heating and plumbing systems, and testing for radon.

The series concludes Monday, November 19, with "Step Three: Learning about the Purchase Process." Working with a real estate agent, understanding the paperwork, learning about legal aspects and homeowner's insurance will be discussed.

For information, contact the Chester County Cooperative Extension at 215-696-3500.