

National Dairy Board Gets To Business

ARLINGTON, Va. — The National Dairy Promotion and Research Board met late November in Portland, Ore., to discuss and plan milk-selling strategem.

The 36 dairy producers from across the U.S. who comprise the board spent the first night discussing likely dairy industry influences and challenges of the next five years. Members identified fat and cholesterol as two factors that the National Dairy Board can address while working to increase sales.

The board also voted to hold a special planning and budget meeting Feb. 19-20 in Chicago to involve the entire board rather than just the administration and finance committee as is typically the case.

The remainder of the meeting focussed on the following five program areas.

Advertising And Sales Promotion

As part of the goal to increase fluid milk sales by 2 percent in the coming year, the National Dairy Board has committed just over \$2 million from the fiscal year 1992 budget to support a chocolate milk campaign.

The majority of those funds comes from the existing \$16 million fluid milk budget. Expenditures for the 12-month program beginning in March are expected to total around \$6 million.

"NDB will fund the production of a television commercial titled

'Why drink chocolate milk' as well as costs of the national television media campaign and production of a radio commercial," said Maureen Varnon, director of advertising and promotion programs.

For the first two months of the campaign, all NDB fluid milk media will be devoted to chocolate milk. After the chocolate milk kick-off, NDB will continue to support chocolate milk in 60 percent of the "spot" markets (based on geographic location with separate negotiations to advertise during local programming in specific markets), while resuming white milk advertising on cable and syndicated television.

"State and regional promotion boards may complement the campaign with regional radio advertising and point-of-purchase materials, chocolate additive manufacturers may provide tie-in promotion and dairies may do cooperative advertising," Varnon said.

"Per capita fluid milk consumption in our youth segment target, ages 6 to 17 years old, has increased by more than a gallon over the past three years," Varnon said.

To continue the on-going activities for increasing milk consumption within the segment, the board voted in favor of airing a new 30-second animated commercial

targeting children ages 6 to 12, and a 15-second and 30-second commercial targeting teens ages 13 to 17.

The commercials emphasize the good taste and growth benefits of milk and will begin airing on network, cable and spot television in early December.

Public Relations

Dovetailing into the advertising and sales promotion campaign and providing additional support for chocolate milk, a program in cooperation with the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) was approved by the board.

Along with the AAPD, the National Dairy Board will spend up to \$150,000 educating dentists and the public about the nutritional and dental benefits of chocolate milk.

"The AAPD considers chocolate milk a preferred, nutritious snack and is willing to lend their professional support to our chocolate milk efforts," said Dick Weiss, NDB senior vice president of public relations. "This investment in professional communications will definitely enhance both industries advertising efforts."

The AAPD/National Dairy Board plan includes a media tour in New York City by key spokespersons and scientists with a focus on diet, dental cavities, cheese consumption properties offering

cavity prevention and choosing preferred snacks.

Also, there is to be 25 media placements of AAPD spokespersons January through March in various magazines and on television programs discussing preferred snacks and growing up cavity-free.

The PR strategy also includes submitting articles for use in professional publications, and preparing a cadre of trained spokespersons armed with the facts about dairy products, specifically chocolate milk.

Market Research

Market research with the greatest potential for near-term effect on dairy product sales was a study of consumer reaction to solids-added milk.

Added nonfat solids are primarily protein, increasing milk's nutritional value. In taste tests conducted in the Midwest, comparing 1-percent and 2-percent fat content milk with and without added solids, focus group participants preferred solids-added milk.

That preference was even stronger after consumers understood the nutritional difference between the two milks.

Consumers showed a strong interest in trying the solids-added product if available in their preferred alternative; for example, 1-percent milkfat.

Research indicated that nutrition was the driving factor for interest in the product, followed by better taste.

"From a marketing viewpoint, solids-added milk appears to have potential," said Bill Diggins, head of NDB's market research. "And

consumers are often willing to pay more for nutrition."

Based on this preliminary research, the board will conduct more extensive quantitative research to further examine the market potential of solids-added milk.

Product And Nutrition Research

Keeping in line with the overall objective to listen to consumers for program direction, the product and nutrition research committee unveiled an evaluation plan that will be used to identify and direct research with the best potential for a direct return to dairy product sales.

Past examples where consumer research was used to drive new programs or evaluate existing commitments are iron fortified cheese, a 40 percent fat spreadable butter and a new technology for removing cholesterol from butterfat.

Two dairy foods research centers were granted funding extensions by the board. Both the research center in California and the Minnesota/South Dakota center were given \$400,000 each year for fiscal years 1993 through 1996.

The research objective areas of the California center are modification of milk components composition including protein and lactose; technologies for product development efforts, including cheeses; and fluid products, specifically chocolate milk and cultured milks.

Key research areas for the Minnesota/South Dakota center are genetics of dairy starter cultures; dairy food quality and safe-

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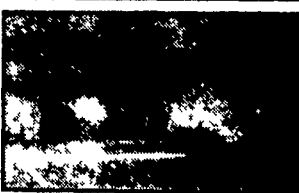


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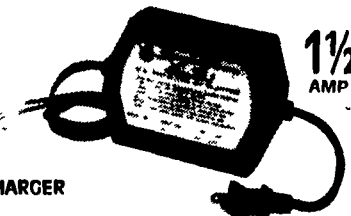
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