New Zealand Society of Animal Production online archive

This paper is from the New Zealand Society for Animal Production online archive. NZSAP holds a regular annual conference in June or July each year for the presentation of technical and applied topics in animal production. NZSAP plays an important role as a forum fostering research in all areas of animal production including production systems, nutrition, meat science, animal welfare, wool science, animal breeding and genetics.

An invitation is extended to all those involved in the field of animal production to apply for membership of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production at our website www.nzsap.org.nz

The New Zealand Society of Animal Production in publishing the conference proceedings is engaged in disseminating information, not rendering professional advice or services. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production and the New Zealand Society of Animal Production expressly disclaims any form of liability with respect to anything done or omitted to be done in reliance upon the contents of these proceedings.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

You are free to:

- **Share**— copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Under the following terms:

- **Attribution** — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
- **NonCommercial** — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.
- **NoDerivatives** — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you may not distribute the modified material.

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Giving Consumers More Reasons to Drink Milk

S. J. HAYLOCK

Fonterra Research Centre (formerly New Zealand Dairy Research Institute), Private Bag 11-029, Palmerston North, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

The options confronting consumers when choosing a milk product continue to expand. This is driven from the recognition that consumers have different needs and that milk is perhaps the best nutritional raw material that can be used to deliver a range of enhanced nutrition and health benefits. Products that target the needs of specific age groups, health concerns, or greater affordability, all give consumers greater justification for consuming milk. Similarly, the ever-increasing range of product formats, flavours and new products containing milk that are supported by emotive marketing campaigns will ensure that consumers continue to have plenty of justification for having that extra glass.

Keywords: consumer; milk; human nutrition; stage of life.

INTRODUCTION

Milk drinkers are being confronted with an ever-expanding choice of milk products and ways to consume milk. The take-it-or-leave-it days of standard whole milk powder or non-homogenised whole milk are a distant memory in many parts of the world.

The change from a single commodity milk to a range of “this-is-for-me” milk products has resulted from a greater awareness of consumers’ different needs, recognition that milk is an excellent vehicle for delivering a range of nutrition and health benefits, and the advancement of new processing technologies that enable milk to deliver specific benefits to consumers.

Consumers’ needs

Milk marketers have used a number of approaches to capture consumers’ interest in drinking milk.
• By targeting products to specific age groups
• By targeting product benefits to relevant health concerns
• By making products affordable
• By providing greater choice in format, pack size, flavour and new product options
• By giving milk products more emotive brand values without compromising the strong nutrition message

Products designed for specific age groups

We are all aware that people have different nutritional needs depending on age (Figure 1). A number of milk companies have used this requirement to establish product ranges that provide products for specific stages of life. NEW ZEALAND MILK has described this strategy as providing nutrition for life.

It is common to see a range of milk powder products that are designed for specific life stages (Table 1).

Products targeting specific health concerns

To be successful, a product must address health issues that consumers believe can be addressed by the consumption of milk. The linkage milk = calcium = bones is generally very clear in consumers’ minds. Children must drink milk to grow strong bones. Adults must drink milk to prevent osteoporosis. Bone health is a very credible health concern that milk can address.

Mothers are well aware of the nutritional benefits that milk provides to their children. In recent times, speciality children’s milks have gone beyond just providing good nutrition. Mothers want foods for their children that can provide enhanced immunity or resistance to disease. Many milk products for children are now formulated with...
a range of ingredients that enhance immunity. Some common fortifiers are: prebiotics, probiotics, zinc, selenium and selected vitamins.

However, consumers do not believe that all health issues can be addressed by consuming milk products. Research shows that consumers are likely to look elsewhere for solutions to acute health issues such as cancer or heart disease. Milk products are more closely associated with building disease prevention rather than providing treatment. The link between the health issue and the product benefit must be a credible proposition to the consumer, or it must be possible to establish the link through education.

Making products affordable

The global market has virtually eliminated the availability of low cost milk to the consumer. The price of standard consumer milk products in virtually all countries is influenced significantly by the global commodity price for milk. This means that a basic milk product that is very affordable to most people in a Western country can be beyond the financial means of many families in developing countries. However, people in these developing countries recognise the value of milk and aspire to provide milk products for their family.

A number of companies have developed products that can provide good milk nutrition but at a lower price to the consumer – generally 10–20% lower than for standard whole-milk products. These products are milk based but usually have a proportion of the higher-value milk protein or milk fat components substituted with lower cost vegetable- or cereal-derived ingredients. This approach has enabled many consumers to now regularly consume milk products. NEW ZEALAND MILK has launched products in Venezuela and the Philippines that are based on this model in which good milk nutrition is provided in a lower cost product (Figure 2).

TABLE 1: Life stages and milk products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Stage</th>
<th>Product Feature or Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milks for pregnant and feeding mothers</td>
<td>Will contain essential nutrients: calcium, iron and folate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant formula for babies up to 12 months</td>
<td>Will be formulated to meet strict CODEX requirements and provide full infant nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-on formula for babies from 6 months to 2 years</td>
<td>Will provide essential nutrition and often be formulated with features linked to claims for enhanced immunity and brain development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing-up milk powder for children aged 1 to 4 years</td>
<td>Will often be an extension of the Follow-on formula, concentrating on brain development or immunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Superkid” milks for children aged 4 to 8 years</td>
<td>Will usually have some “fun elements” and provide nutritional features supporting general growth and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tween and teenage milks</td>
<td>Generally fat reduced and calcium fortified; will tend to be more female oriented and will, thus, often be iron fortified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milks for young adults</td>
<td>Will target different life issues from those for the young adults, such as bone or heart; will still be low fat and calcium fortified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milks for older adults</td>
<td>Will generally address specific nutrition or health issues of the elderly – high protein and high calcium are important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2: New Zealand milk’s lower-cost products.

Consumer choice – product formats, pack sizes, flavours, milk plus options

There has been massive expansion in the options that consumers now have for consuming milk.

The traditional product formats of milk powder, pasteurised-chilled, long-life UHT, evaporated, sweetened condensed and cultured are still the base options. However, within each of these formats, there has been significant differentiation based on fat content, fortifier addition or use function – for example, the recent release of milks for speciality use in cappuccino coffees.

An expanded range of pack sizes and pack types has also provided consumers with more choice. Milk was traditionally drunk in the home, but now pack sizes providing single-serve use are common. Also, milks are now being packed into single-serve cans and plastic bottles – packaging formats once the sole domain of soft drinks and juices.

More recently, consumers have had options of products that are combinations of milk with non-milk ingredients. Products with significant levels of juice and cereal ingredients provide product variety. A number of acidified products that use a low level of milk solids have become very popular drinks for children in China.

More emotion and a strong nutrition message

Marketers have made significant changes to the way in which milk products are promoted and viewed by consumers. As with all consumer products, the messages
that brands communicate to consumers are extremely important in influencing the way consumers feel about products.

Traditional brand values for many consumer milk products have been about nourishment, quality and safety. These values no longer set products aside from one another. They are now all mandatory for the consumer milk business. Marketers are now using more emotive values to provide brand differentiation. Some of the new brand values for consumer milk products are about “providing protection”, “being cool and fun”, “looking good, feeling good” and “improving quality of life”.

Getting kids to be enthusiastic about drinking milk has long been a problem for parents. The taste and the product image of milk are often not designed with the kid consumer in mind. One campaign in which the brand talks directly to the kids is Soprole’s Huesitos (Little bones) campaign in Chile. This campaign uses a series of cartoon characters to talk to kids in their own language about the benefits of drinking milk and why it is cool to do this (Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3:** Soprolé Huesitos, milk product range for kids.

We have seen significant expansion in the options consumers have to drink milk. This trend will continue as milk marketers find more benefits they can add to milk products.