

Promoting the Nutritional Value of Dairy Products

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Thank you for inviting me here today. You have asked me to do something I've been wanting to do for a long time—discuss the topic of **promoting** nutrition.

First, I want to make it crystal clear—I am not a nutritionist. In fact, I am not in the scientific disciplines *per se*. I am a professional in the field of public relations—a piece of the marketing puzzle. And, as a key player in the dairy and food industries, I have many thoughts I want to share with you.

A major point is simply this: Promoting nutrition is big business—and apparently getting bigger. Have you watched television lately? Looked at a cereal box? Read a newspaper?

Americans are being bombarded by more and more promotional messages, and more and more of them have to do with nutrition...

Moderate

Reduce

Fiber

Calcium

Fat

Cholesterol

Sodium

These and others are becoming household words. All of a sudden, we are hearing nutritional messages from products we never thought had one!

Well, I am happy to report that the dairy industry has long believed in promoting nutrition and we've long taken what I believe to be a very responsible approach. We are committed to a **total** promotion program. There is an unfortunate tendency to think of promotion by some merely as advertising and sales promotion activities. While these elements are basic, they are not the only pieces of the marketing puzzle I alluded to just a moment ago.

With the increase in promotional messages being communicated to the consumer, all of us have to be creative with our own promotion messages. What is going to make my message different from others? More memorable? More actionable? That's what we have to ask ourselves constantly because the answers to these questions are not absolute—they change almost as quickly as the fickle consumer who can be illusive, unpredictable and given to self-interest.

So, back to a point I made earlier—Promotion is a puzzle of many pieces and that applies to nutrition as well as to any other issue. In my organization, United Dairy Industry Association—a group which represents state and regional organizations within the dairy industry—we look at promotion in these divisions:

- **Marketing** and Economic Research
- **Nutrition** Research and Nutrition Education
- **Product** and Process Research
- **Advertising** and Sales Promotion
- **Communications** and Public Relations

There is a tendency in my industry—and indeed in many I believe—to regard marketing research as justification for a particular promotion program. We devise promotion campaigns because the research tells us certain things. We continue the campaign because the research tells us it is working.

But marketing research should be telling us much more. It should be painting a big picture for us, and those of us in marketing should be figuring out how our products fit into that picture—both now and in the future.

You'd better know what the trends are—and then figure out how you can fit into those trends. As our Marketing Research division has analyzed the situation, here are some major trends:

- **The Aging** of America
- **Growing** Affluence of Americans
- **Changing** American Household
- **The Quest** for Convenience
- **New Eating Trends** Both at Home and Away
- **Strength** and Stability of the U.S. Economy
- **Competitive** Activity and Innovation within the Food Industry
- **Changing** Lifestyles—by that I mean mainly interest in health and fitness and nutrition and diet concerns.

Let's take a cursory glimpse at each of these trends because I believe you'll see them reflected—at least I hope you will—in some specific dairy promotions I'll describe to you later. All of these trends certainly affect how we communicate our nutrition messages.

We as a country are getting older. Americans will die at a faster rate than they will be born—by the year 2,014, population experts predict deaths will exceed births.

In 1983, the average age of the U.S. population was 30.9 years old—in the year 2,000 it will be 36. In 1985, about one-fourth of the population was 50 years old or older, but that segment controlled **three-fourths** of the nation's financial assets.

Good news for housing sales, appliances, furniture—and I believe nutritious foods.

Potentially bad news for trendy clothing, beer, cassettes, videos and junk foods.

The aging of our population is directly tied to the growing affluence of it, the second trend. For the first time, the 65-and-over segment exceeds teenagers in numbers. They have discretionary income and their spending veers towards stocks and bonds, low-maintenance housing and travel. **Meanwhile**, younger Americans are living in the two-income household or woman-as-head-of-household. The American household is not the same as it was just a few years ago.

The working woman phenomenon has tremendous impact on us in the food industry—she wants her food fast and convenient. And if she can't prepare it under these conditions, she'll buy it out. She is interested in nutrition to be sure—but she is no longer going to dish it up at traditional sit-down family meals. We in dairy counted on her in the past to be the gatekeeper who “takes care” of her family's nutritional needs. We can't do that anymore. Families are eating out more, either together or individually.

What are we as dairy food promoters doing about all of this? Well, we are trying to educate **all** family members—not just moms and future moms—about nutrition. We're devising strong promotion programs to communicate to the food-service industry. We're developing convenience products and packaging.

Another trend I mentioned is the state of the U.S. economy. It has been strong. **Consumers** continue to spend more and more for food, totaling \$74 a week on groceries on the average.

At the same time, dairy prices have held firm, a very positive factor for us. Dairy foods always are a great **nutritional** value—now they're a real price value too.

Americans have always prided themselves on their innovative skills—we want to be the first with the most and the best. The food industry is no exception. What we are seeing now in the way of innovation is intense levels of advertising competition and increasing development of **imitation** dairy products.

If we look at industries as a whole, we can see that dairy is no where near to competing with its adversaries when it comes to advertising dollars:

The soft drink industry outspends generic and branded milk advertising by roughly to 7 to 1!

The second innovation I mentioned—development of imitation or substitute dairy foods—is an ominous one, indeed. These foods challenge dairy products on two vulnerable fronts: Health concerns and price. Many of these foods claim lower fat, Cholesterol and calories levels while at the same time they are more inexpensive.

Fortunately, we have two factors in our favor: **quality** and our own product innovations which are helping us offer the same virtues of imitations with better taste and quality. You'll see these efforts when I describe our work in new product and process research.

Finally, let's look at that overused word—lifestyles. They've been described ad nauseum in the media—the people who have them have been called YUPPIES, DINCS and heaven knows what else!

But what does it all really mean?

It means—according to our Research division—that product **image** is paramount. We must market products whose image is consistent with that of its user.

Our senior vice president of Marketing Research described changing lifestyles in a recent speech.

“During the 1950s tradition and family life were sacred,” she said. “The times were conservative.”

The 60s ushered in an upheaval of the 50s values—mores were questioned; issues were faced with near revolutionary zeal. The 70s offered integration—moderation became accepted. The 80s comprise a self-oriented decade, dominated by Yuppie acquisition, the era of “me.” You need only look at our constant friend television to illustrate this swing. In the 50s Ozzie, Harriet and their two mischievous—but really good kids—reigned. In the 80s it's Dynasty—where mink coats and unhappy mates are disposed of at whimsy. Off-spring no longer worry about getting permission to use the car on Saturday night—now they ponder whether to take their Porche or the Van.

Perhaps one of the more positive outcomes of this me-orientation is that we are taking care of little number one—or at least we are saying that we are. People today are concerned—if not downright obsessed—about health, nutrition and fitness. Why? **Because** they want to live better and longer. They want to exercise right. And while they're doing that, they want to wear their Jane Fonda leotards and Reebok tennies. And they want to eat right. They claim to prefer slenderizing Sushi which for all of its low fat, low cholesterol virtues poses a great parasitical danger.

Our research suggests to us in the dairy industry, however, that much of this health talk is just that—talk. While people are setting goals of living a different way, and, therefore, eating a different way, they are not acting out these goals.

Some recent studies show this: One-third of Americans exercise with regularity. The number of regular committed exercisers has actually declined a bit—from 33 percent in 1983 to 30 percent in 1985. Only 16 percent of adults claimed to exercise every day in 1986.

Likewise, dieting appears to have peaked earlier in the 1980s. Under one-third of American adults currently report they seriously diet.

Our own current dairy attitudes and usage study—a very large sampling of consumers—indicates little change in consumer ratings of general nutrition and health-oriented items. A section of this study attempts to segment U.S. teen and adult population based on lifestyle elements. We have statistically formed 11 “meaningful” lifestyle clusters—only two of which can be at all linked with “health-oriented” mentality. Combined, they represent 19 percent of the population. The remaining 81 percent do not fall into the health camp we hear so much about.

Paradoxically, this does not mean we should disregard health issues when we promote dairy foods. Far from it. The research I've cited describes **behavior**—not thought. Consumers do think—and are concerned—about exercise, nutrition and health—and all the ramifications.

If you're promoting products, you better convince consumers to **think** those products fit into healthy lifestyles—whether or not they're actually living them.

They say they don't want fat, cholesterol, calories, artificial ingredients, salt. They say they **do** want calcium, protein and vitamins...

I think you can see that this poses some severe challenges to us in the dairy world. We are part of the do's and the don'ts.

So, I think we're doing what any of you would do—we're accentuating the positive and we're dealing with the negative through a variety of ways... **Education** is one. Did you know that many people would be shocked to learn that their own bodies produce most of the cholesterol in their blood streams? Secondly, we're developing different dairy products.

Now let's look at some dairy product promotion in the context of the divisions I enumerated when I started.

The dairy industry is very fortunate indeed to boast a very highly regarded nutrition component—National Dairy Council which is part of United Dairy Industry Association.

National Dairy Council has been operating since 1917 in two basic nutritional fields: research and education.

National Dairy Council promotes nutrition and dairy product consumption through its philosophy of a diet of balance, moderation and variety, a diet that necessarily includes meats or protein, grains, fruits and vegetables...and dairy foods.

Basically, the nutrition research area provides the information for the nutrition educators to talk about. Since the dairy industry adopted a national promotion check-off which all dairy farmers pay—15 cents per hundredweight—three years ago, our research efforts have increased dramatically.

In 1983 National Dairy Council administered about one-half a million dollars in dairy research—today it's over the five million dollar mark. **Current** studies focus on everything from lactose intolerance to the relationship of eating cheese and dental caries. These studies are not exercises in Ivory Tower philosophizing. It was a small exploratory research project funded by NDC several years ago that led to the discovery of a possible link between calcium intake and reduced risk of high blood pressure, a relationship that is going to add to the tremendous advantages of sufficient calcium intake, a subject about which we already are hearing much in regard to osteoporosis and bone health.

The research side of the NDC house customarily talks through third party endorsers—opinion leaders in allied industries. These include researchers, of course, medical doctors and other health organizations. We often present workshops or symposia on the programs of the meetings of the Institute of Food Technologists or American Dietetic Association, for example.

One of our most ambitious programs is our Visiting Professor in Nutrition tour. Medical students and dental students in this country do not receive a thorough education in nutrition. In fact, many take just one course in their college experience. The Visiting Professor in Nutrition program

provides students in leading medical and dental schools with additional lectures in nutrition from prestigious researchers funded by the dairy industry.

Our Nutrition education programs in schools have long been the envy of other commodity groups. This status has been achieved through years of reliable, unbiased work with educators. Last year, NDC updated its classroom program for first through sixth graders with nutrition messages that fit right into the changing lifestyles I described earlier. And while they're at the business of learning, kids have fun. In one exercise they try to eat a cracker while using their lips to chew—not their teeth, which of course need calcium to develop. In another, they stir up a yogurt parfait.

Apparently, educators like these lively techniques because to date NDC has sold more than 25,000 teacher kits—well over the projected goal set for March of **next year**.

Another way our nutrition education efforts promote dairy products is to adults. We already have programs in weight management, calcium and osteoporosis—and we're broadening these adult efforts with a new program that will address today's busy and changing lifestyles.

We are fortunate indeed to have affiliated Dairy Council units throughout the country to take these programs to the grass-roots where we believe they work very effectively.

In product and process research, another division which I enumerated at the outset, we are adding to product promotion by reflecting much of the trend information we discussed. Our research is achieving a better understanding of the composition of milk and how its elements can be separated, restructured and combined in different ways. Some of the processes allow product developers to break milk down into these smaller parts and even create new food categories. New foods will contain all or part of the different components and nutrients found in milk. Others will use more or less of one component—such as calcium, fat or lactose—to form a product acceptable to consumers.

Granted, we are already doing some of this now with high-calcium milk and lowfat milk and cheeses—but these products will taste better when new technologies are in place. Some of these new processes you'll doubtless hear lots more about are ultrafiltration, column separation and freeze concentration.

I'd be kidding you if I told you I understood these high-tech sounding processes, but I do understand this: they are helping us create new product prototypes which we can promote. I'll mention two briefly.

At the moment, we at United Dairy Industry Association are in a scale-up cooperative venture to produce a spreadable butter which has **half** the calories, fat and cholesterol of regular butter. Still, it is a real dairy product with real dairy flavor.

Second, we are working on flavored milks and, in particular, carbonated milk. If you haven't heard about this research, I'd be surprised. It certainly captured the imagination and fancy of the media last fall.

These clips prove at least one thing: when you change milk,

you change nature and that makes news...and news...and more news. So product and process research **does** promote—it is fundamental to our future successes.

But yes, nothing promotes like advertising and sales promotion. In 1987 the dairy industry will spend about \$180 million on generic advertising and sales promotion. This takes into account national and regional efforts.

The trends we talked about earlier and the role of Marketing Research, in general, are very instrumental in our advertising programs. To see how, let's look at a couple of our milk campaign ads. I don't think you'll be surprised to hear that Milk is America's Health Kick.

What we see in these clips is a positioning of milk to fit contemporary America. These ads feature milk both as a beverage for in-home and out-of-home consumption. It is a fun drink—and as you can see by the energy displayed by the commercial's personalities, it fits right into all kinds of activities...for the young, the older, and just about everyone in between. You will note that milk fits the lifestyles of ethnic Americans as well.

The nutrition message is there, too...maybe not in so many grams but by implication. Look at the healthy activities these personalities are participating in. And of course, the lyrics of the song tout...“Milk, America's Health Kick”—Everybody knows how to do **that** kick.

Our cheese advertising has played heavily on the consumer trends of convenience, in- and out-of-home eating and desire for taste, quality and naturalness.

Likewise, current butter ads stress naturalness, taste and wide appeal of this product whose quality is widely perceived by the consumer. A nutrition message communicated in our butter ads is that butter and margarine have the **same** calories. A surprising number of consumers labor under the misconception that margarine is lower in calories.

The “**REAL**” Seal on dairy products is yet another way the dairy industry promotes nutrition to the consumer by assuring him or her that the product is all nutritionally that's expected. To date, more than 1,200 companies are part of our “**REAL**” Seal program. Some of these are Burger King, Pizza Hut and Hardees.

The impact of these firms is pretty impressive when you consider that McDonald's is the world's largest consumer of domestic dairy products, using annually **1.8 percent of all milk** produced by U.S. farms. The average McDonald's restaurant last year served

- 80,000 milkshakes
- 55,000 real dairy soft serve cones and sundaes
- 18,500 pounds of Cheddar cheese.

Pizza Hut uses more than 120 million pounds of Mozzarella each year—it takes the production of 100,000 cows just to keep Pizza Hut pies topped with the real thing!

Point-of-purchase promotions are yet another promotional vehicle, and if you'll reflect, you probably can recall some first-hand. We customarily develop fall cheese, holiday, spring cheese and June Dairy Month Point-of-Purchase promotions. For the second year in 1987,

American Dairy Association and the Beef Industry Council and Beef Board cooperated on a spring cheeseburger promotion. We expect to be repeating that highly successful partnership in 1988 as well as other promotions.

We emphasized the tremendous growth in foodservice—eating out—earlier, and our advertising types are zeroing in on this market. We publish Real Dairy Discoveries, one of the most successful foodservice programs ever conducted by American Dairy Association, our advertising organization within United Dairy Industry Association. One of its strongest themes tells the restaurateur—Don't try to cheat your patrons with imitations whose taste and nutritional qualities are not those preferred in real dairy products.

An independently conducted survey indicates that awareness of American Dairy Association among foodservice operators cannot get much higher—95 percent of those surveyed.

Finally, I'd like to describe briefly the role I personally know best in the promotional puzzle—that of communications and public relations. You know, I realize that it's hard to define public relations. My neighbors of 14 years still can't figure out what it is I do every day, and I'm not sure my parents have ever figured it out. Fortunately, my husband is in the same business, so I don't get misunderstanding there... only suggestions. Anyway, the point is that a lot of people out there think public relations is all about image—that intangible, illusive “something” that simply can't be defined.

Well, I suppose that perception is not all bad. I talked earlier about how important image is, but I certainly think public relations is much more focused than this.

We are part of promotion because we deal in messages—very concrete messages, but instead of purchasing time for them—like advertising does—we have to make the media **want** to print them or air them for free—as part of news or talk shows or health shows or the like.

Public Relations has an advantage in promoting complicated issues like nutrition because it is not necessarily bound by time and length constraints. A commercial can be 30 seconds—or perhaps 15 or 60 seconds—but a discussion by a nutrition expert on a TV talk show can run much longer—sometimes the length of the show.

To promote nutrition, the communications and public relations efforts of our dairy organization encompass news releases to both health professionals and consumers, media training for our nutrition spokespersons, media placement activities, presentations like this one and work on brochures, video news releases and many related areas.

So there you have it—an interdisciplinary mix which best describes how the dairy industry approaches nutrition promotion. While advertising and sales promotions are the highly visible components—as well they should be—there are many functions which support their efforts, expand them and penetrate markets not so easily influenced by advertisements.

The bottom line results, I'm happy to report, are very encouraging. From 1983 through 1986, milk and dairy

product consumption increased 10 percent. This is the largest and longest sustained dairy product sales increase ever.

Now for the bad news...

All this increased attention to nutrition is a bit scary...at least to me—and here I am going to give you some of my personal opinions.

First, the interest in nutrition and its promotion have created an unfortunate race to make simplistic messages out of complicated information. This simplistic approach is explained away under the guise of making scientific information understandable to the consumer.

Perhaps, but it is causing severe miscommunications. First, we've lost sight of the individual. Nutrition needs vary depending on stage of life, pregnancy, lifestyle and other factors. They aren't the same for everybody.

Suddenly, we have a laundry list of good foods/bad foods for everyone when in reality a healthful diet draws from a variety of foods from the major food groups. To eat excessively from one is no more healthful than eliminating another.

Let's stop categorizing and begin educating!

Still, even when messages and health claims are well and accurately expressed, we may miscommunicate.

Allan L. Forbes, director of the office of Nutrition and Food Sciences at FDA's Center on Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, recently said that the consumer—"likes tidy causes and effects and prefers definites to maybes. He often puts his own interpretation on reports. When scientists say 'risk,' the consumer sometimes hears 'causes,' or when scientists say 'moderate,' that is interpreted as 'eliminate' and 'many of us' as 'all of us.' "

The result, he says, is that we get bizarre diets and supplements and fads that eliminate certain foods and are way heavy in others tending to do the very thing scientists least want: zeroing in on one specific nutrient.

I agree with Mr. Forbes. How else can you explain the popularity of such radical—and, I believe, potentially dangerous—diets as that of Harvey and Marilyn Diamond in their blockbuster bestseller "Fit for Life"?

Health is governed more by influences than absolutes—this is another complicated message we—and here I include all of us in positions of influence in our spheres—must start playing back to consumers. Don't forget genetics! How important is this factor—no one knows with certainty, and yet few scientists argue that it wields a mighty—if not prominent—influence, especially when applied to specific risks and diseases.

Recently I heard a radio ad for Bertoli olive oil—it implied

that moving to Italy would negate the risk of heart attack because Italians eat olive oil—and olive oil doesn't contain cholesterol.

Then, there are those Fleishmann TV ads where a 30ish young man rather heavily implies that his longevity is much more secure now because he's switched to margarine.

There may be a germ of truth in these and other overstated health claims in advertising—and yet I am overwhelmed by the distortion—a harmful distortion that rips off the consumer.

Here's what Business Week had to say in a recent article entitled "Tell Us It's New and Improved—But Keep Health Out of It." "It's impossible for consumers to sort through the babble of health claims and figure out which are backed by reliable scientific evidence. Some claims are largely meaningless. Margarines and vegetable oils boast of having no cholesterol—but no vegetable product contains cholesterol."

The article continues to quote a principal of the Wistar Institute for biological research as noting, "that's like saying: 'Always use Mobil gas because there's no cholesterol in it.'"

Nutrition messages are sometimes undermined by the other side of the media. So far we've been talking about advertising—but reporters and editors also have a responsibility—perhaps an even greater one—to accuracy. By its nature, news, is **new**. That's why we don't hear daily reports that the U.S. food supply is the safest in the world.

There's nothing new in that—this happily has been the situation for some time. So instead the news tend to focus on the exception:

- Biological contamination during food processing
- Allergies to dairy foods or lactose intolerance
- A fad diet

There's not much we can do about news coverage as long as these and other topics are accurately reported. If they're not, we should not be shy about pointing out inaccuracies, however. And—just as important—we should be smart in using the media to promote our **new** headlines:

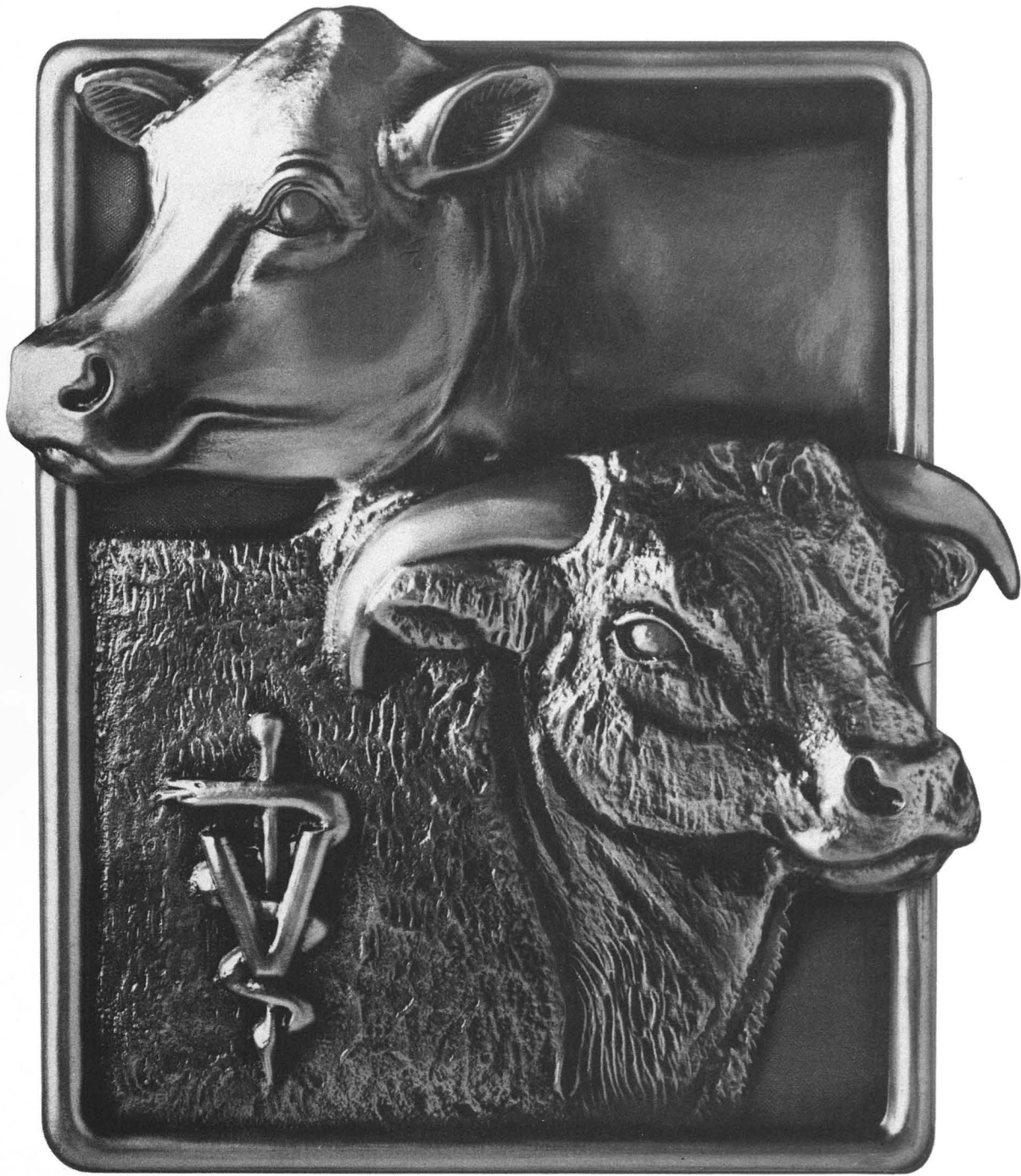
New products

New nutrition findings

New consumer research findings

I hope you as doctors, scientists and leaders in your communities will help us in the dairy industry promote good nutrition.

Communicate its complexity, its individuality—its importance. Use your influence and dedication not only to increase the wellness of the animals you treat—but ultimately the consumer you—and all of us—serve.



Announcing the AABP Award for Excellence in Preventive Veterinary Medicine

The American Association of Bovine Practitioners and MSD AGVET invite you to participate in the only awards program that recognizes outstanding efforts in bovine preventive medicine.

Awards will be presented to two practitioners each year. One will be given to the outstanding program in beef production. The second award will honor an equally sound program for dairymen.

A \$1,500 general fund scholarship contribution will be made by MSD ADVET in the name of the award recipient to his/her veterinary college of choice. Plus, each award will include a specially designed bronze plaque in bas-relief.



Entries are judged by an AABP panel solely on the merits of the individual programs.

To obtain an entry form and additional information on this year's awards program contact: Harold E. Amstutz, DVM, AABP Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Box 2319, West Lafayette, Indiana 47906.

Funding for this program is provided by MSD AGVET, the agricultural and animal health division of Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, NJ 07065.



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