October was a significant month – the tenth anniversary of what is widely seen as the birth of the current functional foods market in Europe and the U.S. October 1995 saw the launch of Benecol, the first sterol-based cholesterol-lowering food, and one carrying the then novelty of a health claim, in Finland. Ten years later – as no-one predicted – it’s Europe that has become the biggest global market for such cholesterol-lowering products, with the development of the American market lagging behind.

Based on IRI and AC Neilsen data and industry estimates supplied to New Nutrition Business by our readers, it’s possible to say that approximate retail sales values of the main sterol-based food markets – taking all brands into account and erring on the side of caution – stack up as follows:

Europe $600 million/€500.5 million
Japan $130 million/€107 million
U.S. $75 million/€62.5 million
Total $805 million/€671.5 million

The irony in these figures is that for much of the last decade Europe’s food industry has complained loudly that the EU’s lack of a single Europe-wide system for health claims has been holding back functional food innovation and in particular Europeans have drawn unfavourable comparisons with the U.S. system. Clearly such concerns were unfounded. Cholesterol-lowering health claims for sterol-based products have been allowed in the EU since 1999 and though some countries (notably Denmark) have been reluctant to allow them to be used and though the Novel Food Committee’s approval of new sterol ingredients was sluggish, the companies involved have followed the tried-and-trusted European way of getting country-by-country regulatory acceptance of their claims. And, apparently this has been no hindrance to the development of the market.

The answer to this question is not a simple one. “The real potential and growth opportunities still seem to be outside of North America, and particularly in Europe,” said Charles Butt, chief executive officer of Forbes Medi-Tech, the Canadian company that provides plant sterols to several food companies for functional applications. “That’s where the opportunities lie.” For Forbes in particular, European opportunities beckon because the company produces sterols that are non-GMO, a distinction that tends to be important to European consumers.

“In North America,” Butt continued, “it’s an awareness issue. Consumers generally aren’t as receptive as European consumers to purchasing functional foods. For manufacturers in North America, it’s always easier to do a flavour enhancement, for example, than to do functional-food positioning.”

Another aspect of the American mentality that undermines demand for the cholesterol-lowering products currently on the market – Benecol, Take Control, Smart Balance, Heart Wise and Yoplait Healthy Heart – is what Butt describes as the "pill-popping mentality" of U.S. consumers. “In Europe,” Butt believes, “the attitude is to eat healthier; in the United States, it’s eat what you want, and then take a vitamin. With cholesterol, that has evolved into eat what you want, and then take a statin. That is starting to change but only slowly.”

Ken Harris, a principal of packaged goods marketing consultants Cannondale Associates, agreed that the arc of Pravachol and other statin drugs in the U.S. marketplace has had a huge impact on how well cholesterol-lowering foods have fared. Harris mentions another factor as well: that Benecol and its ilk may have been overshadowed in the marketplace first by all the hype surrounding low-carbohydrate diets, and then by their recent leveling off.

“The Atkins diet shows immediate results with weight-loss, and that can have more impact on consumers than the fight against the invisible forces of high cholesterol.”

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Mars and Hershey dabble in the dark side

Two giants of the chocolate business are pursuing two very different strategies in their bid to market the healthfulness of chocolate. Mars is emphasizing its unique technology that allows it to preserve the flavanols in chocolate and, under the CocoaVia brand, is rolling out specially-formulated chocolates specifically targeting heart-health. Rival Hershey, meanwhile, is taking a very different route and has chosen instead to communicate the intrinsic healthfulness of all dark chocolate products. DALE BUSS reports.

Hershey is placing a new label on its dark chocolate products touting the fact that cocoa is a great source of flavanol antioxidants. 24.6% across the segment in food, drug and mass-merchandising stores, according to Hershey. Sales of the company's own dark-chocolate products have risen 33.3% during the same period.

Hershey is attempting to keep up with Mars in the identification of its dark-chocolate products with the growing consumer awareness of the heart-healthiness of the flavanols in cocoa. The company is placing a new label touting the fact that cocoa is a great source of flavanol antioxidants and also listing the total percentage of cocoa solids in its dark-chocolate products, both candy bars and canned baking cocoa.

Special Dark and a new product called Extra Dark, with even more cocoa solids and flavanols than regular dark-chocolates, are now carrying the label. Extra Dark is available in large, European-style bars and in an assortment of dark-chocolate miniatures that are flavoured with combinations of fruits and nuts including blueberries, cranberries, macadamias and almonds.

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Hershey's isn't offering Extra Dark in the traditional small-bar style because “it’s intended to fit into the premium market, and the large bar is the preferred style there,” Debra Miller, senior nutrition scientist for the Hershey, Pa.-based company, told New Nutrition Business.

Extra Dark is 60% cocoa, Miller said. On the front of the packaging appears the seal – consisting of a cocoa bean and leaf and the words “natural source of flavanol antioxidants” – and an asterisk that instructs consumers to refer to detailed nutrition information on the back of the package.

“We wanted to make sure we communicated the great news that natural antioxidants are found in cocoa and also wanted to make sure we made a balanced nutrition statement,” Miller said. She said that Hershey is conscious of the need to strike a balance in its marketing and communications “between health benefits of dark-chocolate and looking at fat and calories. Health benefits are usually just an interesting side note for people as they’re choosing a treat. Right now, we’re looking at this as a great choice for a treat among treats – that’s where we feel comfortable right now. The obesity issue is still out there, and we want to make sure this is done in a favourable way.”

Because Hershey wants to promote the healthfulness as well as taste of its dark-chocolate products, it is using its consumer website to provide more detailed nutrition information about dark-chocolates than ever before. “It’s a little more sophisticated a science message than we have had,” Miller said.

“We’re also doing some clinical-trial work with this bar, which is important. We want people to connect cocoa with the potential health benefits. Our bar delivers on that promise.”

Mars, meanwhile, is finally rolling its CocoaVia “healthy snack” line of dark-chocolates into major retail chains, touting the patented and proprietary Cocolate processing system that Mars says helps heart-healthy flavanols to “remain active” and “not destroyed.”

Two giants of the chocolate business are taking their competition to a whole new level this fall around the nutrition properties of dark-chocolate. Both Mars and Hershey are launching new initiatives with products, messaging and packaging that are designed to legitimate the health halo that they’re trying to build around the flavanols in their dark-chocolate products.

Dark-chocolate confections are enjoying a three-year, compounded annual growth rate of 24.6% across the segment in food, drug and mass-merchandising stores, according to Hershey. Sales of the company’s own dark-chocolate products have risen 33.5% during the same period.

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Hershey has launched a new product called Extra Dark, with even more cocoa solids and flavanols than regular dark chocolates, and carrying the antioxidant logo. Extra Dark is available in large, European-style bars and in an assortment of miniatures that are flavoured with combinations of fruits and nuts with a healthy image, including blueberries, cranberries, macadamias and almonds.

After two years of offering CocoaVia exclusively on the Internet, the Hackettstown, N.J., brand owned by Masterfoods Inc. has just introduced new chocolate bars in “original,” “crispy” and blueberry-and-almond flavours as well as chocolate-covered almonds. Mars also
rolled out a retail version of the granola-based snack bars that it has been selling online since fall, 2003.

“We’ve spent more than 15 years on scientific research and worked with top-tier scientists and really want to do the right thing for consumers,” said Marlene Machut, director of health and nutrition communications for Mars. “There’s a public-health benefit here if you want to look at nutritionally responsible servings [of CocoaVia]. This is the beginning. We have a variety of new things in the pipeline, even potential pharmaceutical applications. Our mission is to be built on sound science and do the work and give consumers nutritionally responsible products.”

The CocoaVia items are the first products to be launched under Mars’ recently established new unit, Mars Nutrition for Health & Well-Being, which is charged with developing new foods, snacks, beverages and “lifestyle support.” They also include cholesterol-brewing plant sterols and extra calcium, vitamins and minerals as part of a brew of nutrients that, properly packaged and marketed, will set CocoaVia apart as a truly healthful snack brand – not just another chocolate bar.

CocoaVia bars and small bags of almonds now are available in five-packs for a suggested retail price of $4.99 initially at Wal-Mart and Target stores and at the Fred Meier supermarket chain in the northwestern U.S. as well as natural-foods retailers. Machut declined to detail Mars’ further rollout plans for CocoaVia.

Interestingly, Mars decided to offer CocoaVia at first only in packages of five and not as individual bars and bags, largely to further promote the brand’s positioning for healthfulness.

“Right now, being a health brand, we believe that the way you can get the benefit from these products is from a consistent consumption regime,” Machut said. “So while you can certainly enjoy the product every once in a while and there would be nothing wrong with buying just one bar, the real benefit comes from daily or regular consumption.”

The presence of sterols in CocoaVia products further calls for regular consumption, Machut said, because the Food & Drug Administration dictates that consumers must get two sufficient servings daily of plant sterols for the substances to reduce cholesterol levels significantly.

“Two CocoaVia products a day, or one a day with a spread with sterols, are how you get the true cholesterol-reduction benefits of these products,” she said. “That’s another reason this product isn’t on the ‘indulgence’ side of things: We could never recommend indulgence products as a regular consumption routine for health.”

Mars is so intent on manufacturing a “non-candy” image for CocoaVia that it is having the products placed in what Machut called the “healthy-snack” aisles of stores. “Consumers, health professionals and retail customers have said that, with the nutritional background we’ve shown them for the product, they’d expect to see it in the healthy-snack aisle.”

Machut said that Mars took so long to bring CocoaVia to retail because “we learned a lot from having it online. We were able to go one-on-one with the consumer and talk with them about what made sense for them in the product, what kind of communication worked for them – this was a totally different execution and product area from where we’ve been before. We wanted to be true to the consumer. We wouldn’t have been able to do all that one-on-one work with the consumer if it were already at retail.”

Machut denied that competition between Mars and Hershey was heating up over flavanols, clearly stressing the separation between CocoaVia and any other dark-chocolate products. She noted that Mars has offered its Dove dark-chocolates for a few years, which also is made with Cocoaapro cocoa, and labeled that way. “If you’re just looking for an indulgent product that has been made to retain flavanols, then that is your product,” she said. “If you’re looking for something that really is about health, then you go to CocoaVia.”

Miller, of Hershey, also declined to posit that the nutrition platform comprised a new arena of competition between the two longtime rivals. “We don’t understand anything about what Mars is purporting, so we can’t comment,” Miller said. “We just go with the data we have.”
McDonald’s Corp. continues its determined march into healthful territory with its announcement that the world’s best-known fast-food chain plans to begin posting nutritional data on some product packages next year.

Cathy Kapica, McDonald’s global director of nutrition, told New Nutrition Business that the company believes “this will help dispel myths and misconceptions about McDonald’s menu. This is the next generation of information that we’re putting in the hands of consumers to make our products easier to understand for their particular needs. The information itself isn’t new; but our way of conveying the information is.”

Beginning in February in its restaurants in Turin, Italy, McDonald’s plans to print the calories, protein, fat, carbohydrates and sodium contained in some of its most popular menu items on the wrappers and boxes for those products. It will be posted on the packages at all of the roughly 13,600 McDonald’s restaurants in the U.S. during the first half of 2006, and at about 20,000 restaurants worldwide by the end of the year. Language and nutritional-testing obstacles for now will keep the data offered in the other 10,000 or so remaining restaurants in smaller foreign markets.

The information will be conveyed via simple icons that will be used for each of five major nutritional elements: calories, protein, fat, carbohydrates and sodium. In addition to listing the amount of each element in the item, a bar chart will show the percentage each element provides of the recommended daily allowance for an average adult in a 2,000-calorie-per-day diet. “This was an approach that we thought consumers would easily understand,” Kapica said.

In fact, she said, McDonald’s European operations spearheaded the development of the graphic approach as they sought ways to be able to convey information simply and uniformly across all of their national and language markets. “There are multiple cultures and multiple languages there, plus there are no Europe-wide reference values,” Kapica explained.

“The challenge was Europe: We figured if we could find a solution for Europe, we could adopt it globally. That’s why we came up with the language-free approach. We also figured that other locations could add languages if they wanted to, but we wanted to start with efficiencies across countries.”

Some critics immediately pounced on McDonald’s announcement, asserting that it would be much better for the chain to post such nutritional data more prominently on its menu boards or elsewhere in the restaurant instead of giving them the information on the package, after their purchases have been made – presumably, purchases of products poorer in nutrition than what they might have chosen with full information beforehand.

But Kapica rejected that notion, noting that detailed information about the nutritional aspects of McDonald’s products is available for any consumer ahead of time in a variety of places, including on the web and in detailed brochures at its restaurants.

“What we think this will do is help dispel myths and misconceptions about McDonald’s menu,” she said. “It shows how much choice and variety and what kind of quality options we have. Tests with consumers have been very positive, and we look forward to rolling this out around the world.”

**McDonald’s European operations spearheaded the development of the graphic approach as they sought ways to be able to convey information uniformly across all of their differing markets.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Fat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>13g</td>
<td>9g</td>
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</tr>
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The shaded bars represent the percentage of the average daily requirement for each nutrient that the menu item provides.

This line represents one-third of the average daily allowance, helping customers to plan three balanced meals a day.
FDA sees red over cherry health claims

Cherry growers and juice processors in the U.S. Midwest reacted stiffly to letters that 29 of them received in late October from the federal Food & Drug Administration (FDA), warning them against touting on their product labels and websites the alleged benefits of tart-cherry juice in fighting various diseases.

The FDA’s warning letters demand that the cherry companies stop alleging health benefits such as cancer mitigation on their labels, their websites or on other websites to which they provide links. The agency considers online information and claims to be part of what it defines as labeling of the cherry products.

The FDA said the claims depicted cherry juice as a drug even though such products haven’t been approved by regulators as a drug. Cherry-juice producers for several years have been promoting their product as an antidote to various conditions and have noted that tart cherries are extremely high in antioxidants and flavonoids.

But several cherry-industry company owners and other figures were perturbed and suggested to New Nutrition Business that they weren’t just going to roll over to the agency’s demands.

Compliance with the FDA demand would require “subordination of our customers’ best interests,” said Michael Potter, chairman and president of Eden Foods Inc., in Clinton, Michigan, which produces and distributes cherry and apple juices, juice concentrates and blends. The FDA cited Eden’s claims on cherry-juice concentrate, for example, that attested to tart cherries’ “ability to ease symptoms of … arthritis, and gout” and that the allagic [sic] acid in the fruit “is known as a potent anti-carcenogenic [sic]/anti-mutagenic compound.”

“But,” added Potter, “I can’t afford to fight them.”

Joe Gawuga, owner of Heritage Products International, asserted that his company “isn’t making any claims but we’re just saying what Michigan State University research says about cherry juice and arthritis and gout. [The FDA] doesn’t want you to say that or have anyone give testimonials to say that either,” said Gawuga, whose Livonia, Mich., company distributes cherry-juice concentrate and tart-cherry capsules.

“But that’s the law,” Gawuga added, “and we have to follow the law.” Among other things, Heritage Products’ website says that the flavanoid queritrin, found in tart cherries, “is one of the most potent anti-cancer agents ever discovered.”

Michelle White, president of Leland Cherry Co., said that she was “surprised” by the FDA’s action but said that her Leland, Mich., company would comply with the FDA’s demands. But “if anything,” she added, “this action by the FDA … may generate more interest in tart cherries, which may spur additional scientific research, the results of which may actually increase sales over time. We are not worried.”

Stephen de Tar, president of Brownwood Acres Foods, said that his company’s goal is “to be able to publish [tart-cherry] research studies while not making what the FDA considers health claims.”

Some of the processors’ websites refer visitors to the website of the Cherry Marketing Institute, which makes various claims about cherries’ health benefits and disease-fighting properties of tart, otherwise known as Montmorency, cherries, including statements that they can, “help relieve the pain of arthritis and gout and help fight cancer and heart-disease.” The Cherry Marketing Institute’s website also contains downloadable brochures about cherries’ health benefits, such as, “Cherries: The healing fruit”.

The institute itself wasn’t cited by the FDA, but some FDA letters scored cherry processors for referring to the institute’s website.

“Tart cherries are tasty, delicious and natural foods that have many beneficial nutrients and micronutrients,” said Jane DePriest, director of marketing for the Lansing, Mich.-based not-for-profit trade group.

“They’re very healthy food. And the FDA encourages eating lots of fruits and vegetables, so cherries are part of a healthy diet.”

The Cherry Marketing Institute’s website conveys strong messages about cherries’ health benefits.
High-fat dairy foods cut colorectal cancer risk

Women who eat lots of high-fat dairy foods and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) could reduce their risk of colorectal cancer, suggests research from Sweden’s Karolinska Institutet and Central Hospital, Västerås (1). Their study suggests that eating an extra two servings of high-fat dairy foods a day could reduce colorectal cancer risk by up to 13%.

Few epidemiologic studies have specifically evaluated high-fat dairy food consumption, and none have evaluated CLA intake, in relation to colorectal cancer risk, so the researchers prospectively examined these associations in a group of 60,708 women aged 40–76.

There were 798 incident cases of colorectal cancer during an average 14.8 years of follow-up. After adjustment for age and other potential confounders, the women who consumed four or more servings of high-fat dairy foods per day (including whole-milk, full-fat cultured milk, cheese, cream, sour cream, and butter) had a multivariate rate ratio of colorectal cancer of 0.59 when compared with controls.

Seoul researchers found that inverse associations of risk for the disease were found for milk, kimchi (fermented cabbage dish), vegetable and fruit intakes. Significant trends of decreasing risk of colorectal cancer emerged with more frequent intakes of vitamin A, β-carotene, and vitamin C.

The protective associations were also observed for calcium and fibre. Energy consumption was associated with an increased risk in the highest tertile of consumption. The highest tertiles of rice, cake, and fish intakes were related to higher colorectal cancer risk.

“This study further supports the protective effects of antioxidant vitamins and calcium associated with vegetable and milk consumptions and confirms a relevant role of dietary intake against colorectal cancer risk for Koreans,” conclude the authors.


Daily dairy could lower inflammatory disease risk

Someone who consumes dairy products every day could reduce their risk of inflammatory disease such as arthritis or cancer. University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers have found that one of the isomers of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), a group of fatty acids found in milk, is a natural regulator of the COX-2 protein, which plays a significant role in inflammatory disease.

“It’s clear from previous research that CLA prevents inflammatory damage resulting from immune response,” says Mark Cook, a professor of animal science in UW-Madison’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

“We’ve identified the biochemical mechanism by which this occurs.”

CLA, which is synthesized by microbial fermentation in the rumen of dairy cows, exists naturally in a number of structural forms. Cook’s team determined that one of the variants inhibits the COX-2 protein by blocking a key cellular pathway. The COX-2 protein is known to play a significant role in many inflammatory diseases and is an important drug target for treating arthritis and cancer, Cook says.

While the amount of the anti-inflammatory isomer of CLA in milk is small relative to other fatty acids in milk, there may still be enough to elicit an effect if someone consumes dairy products every day, says Cook. He is planning a study, in collaboration with researchers in the dairy science and food science departments, to determine whether the amount of anti-inflammatory CLA in milk can be increased by changing dairy cow diets.

Funding for the study included contributions from BASF and Natural Lipids, Inc.


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**NEWS DIGEST**

in 20 young healthy women using the dual stable isotope technique. The researchers found that fractional calcium absorption in CCSM did not differ from that of cow’s milk, but both were higher than that of TCPSM. “Our result suggests that calcium absorption is equivalent for CCSM and cow’s milk at similar calcium loads,” conclude the scientists.


"NOTEWORTHY" FLAVANOID RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED BY NIH

For the first time, research on phenolics and flavanoids – compounds found in plant foods such as berries, grains, and tea – is highlighted in the annual bibliography of the most noteworthy dietary supplement research papers, published by the U.S. National Institutes of Health. The Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) at the NIH released the 2004 issue of the Annual Bibliography of Significant Advances in Dietary Supplement Research, which includes abstracts of the 25 most noteworthy dietary supplement research papers published in 2004, as judged by an international team of reviewers. That the bibliography highlights flavanoids reflects growing interest in these substances and their potential health effects, say its publishers. In addition to the papers on phenolics and flavanoids, the bibliography for 2004 includes papers on antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, botanicals, fatty acids, and other ingredients contained in dietary supplements.


HIGH TUFA INTAKE IN IRISH DEMANDS PUBLIC HEALTH EFFORTS: STUDY

Some individuals in a recent Irish study of 105 healthy volunteers had intakes of trans unsaturated fatty acid (TUFA) as high as 26g day, mainly from margarine spreads. The mean TUFA intake of the total group was 5.4g/day, within current dietary recommendations (2% energy intake). Mean energy intake was 10.6 MJ/day, and 34% was provided by fat.

The mean energy intake of the total group was 5.4g/day, within current dietary recommendations (2% energy intake). Mean energy intake was 10.6 MJ/day, and 34% was provided by fat. Saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fats are the most common forms of dietary fat. These fats are found in both plant and animal foods, and they play an important role in maintaining a healthy diet.

**Tea, apples may lower Type-2 diabetes risk**

Apples and tea may have a modest risk-lowering effect on Type-2 diabetes, according to Harvard research.

The researchers hypothesised that flavanoids, as antioxidants, may prevent the progressive impairment of pancreatic ß-cell function due to oxidative stress and may thus reduce the occurrence of Type-2 diabetes. They examined the association of dietary flavonol and flavone intake with Type-2 diabetes, and biomarkers of insulin resistance and systemic inflammation, in nearly 40,000 women aged 43 and over.

While their results do not support the hypothesis that high intake of flavonols and flavones reduces the development of Type-2 diabetes, they could not rule out a modest inverse association with intake of apples and tea.

Women consuming one or more apples per day showed a significant 28% reduced risk of Type-2 diabetes compared with those who consumed no apples. Tea consumption was also inversely associated with diabetes risk but with a borderline significant trend (four or more cups/day vs. none: RR 0.73).


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**Cosmopolitan lifestyle could allay cancer threat**

If the cancer-inhibiting properties of red wine don’t tempt you, why not try a cosmopolitan, the cranberry-based cocktail? Scientists have discovered a new compound in cranberries that prevents metastasis, the spread of cancer to other parts of the body.

Catherine Neto from the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth discovered the compound, which prevents cancer cells from breaking away from the primary site and spreading to other parts of the body. Metastasis inhibits the molecular scissors on the cell surface that snip away at the anchors holding cancer cells in place.

The cranberry compound inhibits the growth of human lung, colon and leukemia cells in culture, but does not affect healthy cells.

Navindra Seeram, UCLA Centre for Human Nutrition, says that the effect of this compound is a new finding, and that the identified compound could form the basis of a cancer drug. Related compounds in red wine are more active in alcohol, and Seeram thinks the same could be true for this compound.

Meanwhile, a Case Western Reserve University study suggests that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables could be a good defense against prostate cancer.

Studies suggest that increased intake of flavanoids which are common in fruits and vegetables may be associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer, according to Sanjay Gupta, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Case School of Medicine Department of Urology. Apigenin is a flavanoid commonly found in fruits and vegetables, as well as herbs.

“Flavanoids have aroused considerable interest recently because of their potential beneficial effects on human health”, Gupta said. “Apigenin has been shown to lower inflammation and oxidative stress, and exerts growth inhibitory effects on cancer cells.”

Gupta and his team orally fed apigenin to mice two weeks before implanting a prostate tumour, then continued the feedings for eight weeks. In a second protocol, apigenin was fed to mice two weeks after tumour implantation.

The first protocol mimicked prevention regimens, while the second followed therapeutic regimens for cancer.

In both cases, the apigenin slowed tumour growth and did not appear to cause any adverse side effects.

Apigenin also resulted in a decrease in IGF-1 (insulin-like growth factor) levels, as well as a significant increase in IGFBP-3 (insulin-like growth factor binding protein) levels, which is associated with a decreased risk for these same cancers. The effect impacts the survival of prostate cancer by triggering cell self-destruction.

“Apigenin may prove useful in the prevention and therapy of prostate cancer by shutting off the IGF signalling that leads to prostate cancer cell growth and/or development,” Gupta said.

“Our findings suggest that apigienin could be developed as a promising agent against prostate cancer,” Gupta said. “The next step is to evaluate apigenin action on other molecular pathways which have relevance to prostate cancer.”

Your eyes are what you eat – including fish

Consuming foods rich in omega-3, such as tuna, may reduce risk of dry eye syndrome, a painful and debilitating disease affecting more than 8 million people in the U.S., by 68%.

In the first study of its kind to examine modifiable risk factors, researchers from Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH) and Schepens Eye Research Institute (SERI) – an affiliate of Harvard Medical School and the largest independent eye research institute in the world – found that the amount, type, and ratio of essential fatty acids in the diet may play a key role in dry eye prevention in women.

According to lead author Biljana Miljanovic, MD, of the Divisions of Preventive Medicine and Aging at BWH, “Our study set out to examine how changing dietary habits in America, primarily a shift in the balance of essential fatty acids we are consuming, may be associated with onset of this eye-disease.

We found that a high intake of omega-3 fatty acids…commonly found in fish and walnuts, is associated with a protective effect. Conversely, a higher ratio of omega-6, a fat found in many cooking and salad oils and animal meats, compared to omega-3 in the diet, may increase the risk of dry eye syndrome.”

In the study, based on a survey of 37,000 women, those who reported eating at least five servings of tuna per week had a 68% reduced risk of dry eye syndrome compared to women who consumed one serving per week. Other fish types that have lower levels of omega-3 fatty acids did not appear to protect against dry eye syndrome.

Women with the highest levels of omega-3 in their diets reduced their risk of dry eye syndrome by 20% compared to women with the lowest levels of this fat in their diet.

A dietary ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 greater than 15:1 was associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk of dry eye syndrome in women. Currently, the average American diet consists of a similarly high ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids.


More tuna or less?

Americans are being urged to keep up their fish consumption as new survey data reveals a decline in fish consumption.

The National Women’s Health Resource Center held a major press conference on October 26 in Washington that, for the first time, summarized the range of new studies focusing on the risks and benefits of seafood consumption.

Of key significance, the press conference showcased the results of a five-part study conducted by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis (HCRA), which found that if Americans reduce their fish consumption, there may be serious public health consequences, such as an increased risk of heart-attack and stroke.

The conference also announced a national “teach in” for women so that they will be able to make their seafood decisions “based on fact and not fear.” Concerns about the methyl mercury content of some fish, which may harm the developing foetus, have caused a dilemma for women, who also want the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids.

“U.S. government recommendations for women of childbearing age are to modify consumption of high-MeHg fish to reduce MeHg exposure, while recommendations encourage fish consumption among the general population because of the nutritional benefits,” notes the HCRA, which convened an expert panel to quantify the net impact of resulting hypothetical changes in fish consumption across the population – covering, specifically, stroke risk, coronary heart-disease mortality risk and the impacts of both prenatal MeHg exposure and maternal intake of n-3 PUFA on cognitive development.

Published in the November issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, the studies found that:

- Fish consumption confers substantial relative risk reduction of stroke compared to no fish consumption, with the possibility that additional consumption confers incremental benefits (central estimate of 2.0% per serving per week).
- Increasing maternal docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) intake by 100 mg/day increases child IQ by 0.13 points.
- Consuming small quantities of fish is associated with a 17% reduction in CHD mortality risk, with each additional serving per week associated with a further reduction in this risk of 3.9%. Small quantities of fish consumption were associated with risk reductions in nonfatal MI risk by 27%, but additional fish consumption conferred no incremental benefits.

Continued on page 10

HEART BENEFITS OF OLIVE OIL

Swapping an olive oil and sunflower oil blend for extra virgin olive decreased LDL and apo AI levels, and the estimate of 10-year cardiovascular risk, in a study from Spain. Fourteen postmenopausal women (63 ± 11 years) were assigned to exchange during 28-day dietary period a
Folic acid, homocysteine and health

Daily doses ≥0.8mg folic acid are needed to achieve the maximum reduction in plasma homocysteine concentrations produced by folic acid supplementation, report UK researchers. Doses of 0.2 and 0.4mg are associated with 60% and 90%, respectively, of this maximal effect.

Supplementation with homocysteine-lowering B vitamins is expected to reduce cardiovascular disease risk, note the researchers, but there has been uncertainty about the optimum regimen to use for this purpose. They reviewed 25 randomized controlled trials involving individual data on 2,596 subjects to determine the lowest dose of folic acid associated with the maximum reduction in homocysteine concentrations and to determine the additional relevance of vitamins B-12 and B-6.

The proportional reductions in plasma homocysteine concentrations produced by folic acid were greater at higher homocysteine and lower folate pretreatment concentrations; they were also greater in women than in men. After standardization for sex and to pretreatment concentrations; they were also greater in women than in men. After standardization for sex and to pretreatment plasma concentrations of 12 μmol homocysteine/L and 12 nmol folate/L, daily doses of 0.2, 0.4, 0.8, 2.0, and 5.0mg folic acid were associated with reductions in homocysteine of 13%, 20%, 23%, 23%, and 25%, respectively. Vitamin B-12 (0.4 mg/d) produced 7% further reduction in homocysteine concentrations, but vitamin B-6 had no significant effect.

Meanwhile, researchers in the Netherlands and Scotland have found no evidence that high homocysteine and low folic acid cause dementia in elderly people; rather, they are likely to be a consequence of the disease and not a contributory cause.

In the prospective, population-based, longitudinal study of 599 subjects, cross-sectional associations between serum concentrations and cognition were assessed at 85 and 89 years of age.

In the cross-sectional analyses, serum concentrations of homocysteine and folic acid were significantly associated with cognitive performance, but serum concentrations of vitamin B-12 were not. In the longitudinal analyses, there were no significant associations of serum concentrations of homocysteine, vitamin B-12, or folic acid with rate of cognitive decline.


GI lowering no better than calorie lowering for weight loss: study

Lowering the glycemic load and glycemic index of weight reduction diets did not provide any added benefit to energy restriction in promoting weight-loss in obese subjects in a study of 22 obese people (1).

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three diets providing 3138 kJ less than estimated energy needs: high glycemic index (HGI), low glycemic index (LGI), or high fat (HF). For the first 12 weeks, all food was provided to subjects (feeding phase). Subjects were instructed to follow the assigned diet for 24 additional weeks (free-living phase). At 12 weeks, weight changes from baseline were significant in all groups but not different among groups (-9.3 ± 1.3 kg for the HGI diet, -9.9 ± 1.4 kg for the LGI diet, and -8.4 ± 1.5 kg for the HF diet).

All groups improved in insulin sensitivity at the end of the feeding phase of the study. During the free-living phase, all groups maintained their initial weight-loss and their improved insulin sensitivity. Weight-loss and improved insulin sensitivity scores were independent of diet composition.

Meanwhile, mice with the mouse model of Alzheimer’s disease showed improvements in their condition when treated with a high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet (2). A brain protein, amyloid-beta, which is an indicator of Alzheimer’s disease, was reduced in mice on a low-carbohydrate diet (2). A brain protein, amyloid-beta, which is an indicator of Alzheimer’s disease, was reduced in mice on the so-called ketogenic diet. The report runs counter to previous studies suggesting a negative effect of fat on Alzheimer’s disease.

“This work supports the premise that key aspects of Alzheimer’s disease can be altered by changes in metabolism. It also highlights the interaction of dietary components and how such components influence the metabolic state”, write the authors.

One of the biggest challenges faced by anyone marketing a nutritional brand is how to communicate the health benefit of your product in a way that consumers can easily understand and relate to.

It's not such an issue for energy drinks, for example, where you soon know whether you've had the energy “kick” that you are looking for. It's also not such a major issue for probiotic products (or at least those that are efficacious) since consumers know soon enough whether their intestinal health has got any better. But it is a problem for products whose benefit can't be seen or felt – products that, for example, lower cholesterol or blood pressure or fight osteoporosis. It's also a challenge for products that address issues that consumers are interested in, but where experience of ineffective products has made them suspicious of claims – as in the field of weight-loss.

One solution to this question that is proving particularly successful is the “consumer challenge” – the invitation to consumers by brands to experience the benefit or get your money back. We examine this strategy in depth on pages 24-28.

Kellogg too, has got results from consumer challenges in the weight-loss area, leading to the successful re-positioning of its Special K brand and a major long-term growth in brand sales.

As well as getting customers to “feel the difference” you can of course also “show them” the difference. This tactic was pioneered in Asia back in the 1990s by Fonterra, New Zealand’s main exporter of dairy products, in support of its Anlene brand, a high-calcium milk marketed throughout Asia which has been clinically proven to prevent bone-loss when two glasses are consumed each day. But how do you demonstrate such a benefit? Who, after all, knows what the status of their bone-health is? And “high calcium” milk isn’t exactly a very compelling proposition – it’s a product that any competitor could easily copy.

Fonterra’s answer was to provide consumers with a bone-scanning service: teams, made up of trained health professionals, visit clinics, supermarkets and shopping malls where they set up bone scanning machines and offer free bone scans to passers-by (see illustration).

The bone scan is a measure of bone-mass density and it’s a safe and reliable way for people to find out about their bone-health. The test includes an interpretation of the results by a health professional as well as nutrition counselling.

Since its launch in 1991 Anlene has carried out an astonishing 15,000 bone scans in Malaysia alone and across Asia the company is thought to have carried out more bone scans than the entire region’s hospital system and the data has been available to the region’s medical communities.

The reward for this educational investment has been that Anlene, a highly profitable brand, has built and maintained market leadership in value-added milks across Asia – taking a 70% share in Malaysia for example – and successfully holding off competitors who do not provide such a bone-health service.

The lesson from the examples of Kellogg, Danone, Fonterra and others is clear. Consumers, it seems, value companies and brands that provide them with useful knowledge and education and which show them how to integrate into their lifestyle a product that delivers a real benefit that they understand.

Whether you are showing consumers the difference, like Fonterra, or helping them feel the difference, like Danone, you must make a difference. For that service consumers will reward you with their loyalty.
Communicating the health benefits of fruit

At a recent conference a researcher working for a raspberry marketing group asked me how his clients could communicate the cancer-fighting benefits of their products if they are not, as at present, allowed to put a health claim to that effect on the product label.

His client’s problem is that in the UK, where the question was asked, it’s actually illegal (under the Cancer Act 1936) for any food product to talk about curing or treating cancer.

Similar restrictions on mentioning cancer, and other medical conditions, apply in most countries.

For many in the fresh fruit and vegetable industries that’s a frustration, since there’s ample evidence for the cancer-fighting potential of a number of common fruits and vegetables. But this frustration – and the desire to use an overt health claim linking their foods to cancer – is also a sign of the lack of marketing know-how in the fruit industry. Most fruit growing or trading groups have, with very few exceptions, no experience of brand marketing or nutrition marketing. And most of their experience is simply of selling their fruit as unbranded, undifferentiated commodities, rather like some sections of the dairy industry which compete in liquid milk only and focus on cost and volume.

It is this lack of experience that was on show so tellingly in the marketing efforts of a number of American cherry companies that the FDA recently slapped down (see page 6) for making medicinal claims about Montmorency cherries.

The FDA’s warning letters last month to mid-western cherry growers and juice processors demanded that the companies stop alleging health benefits such as cancer mitigation on their labels, their websites or making links to other websites that make such claims. The FDA said the claims depicted cherry juice as a drug even though such products haven’t been approved by regulators as a drug. For example, the FDA cited claims by Eden Foods Inc., that attested to cherries’ “ability to ease symptoms of... arthritis and gout” and that the allagic [sic] acid in the fruit “is known as a potent anti-carcinogenic [sic]/anti-mutagenic compound.” Another company, Heritage Products, allegedly stated on its website that the flavanoid queritrin, found in tart cherries, “is one of the most potent anti-cancer agents ever discovered.”

Information leaflets such as this one were very specific about cherries’ disease-fighting properties.

Some of the processors’ websites refer visitors to the website of the Cherry Marketing Institute, which like Eden Foods Inc. carries statements such as the one that cherries can: “help relieve the pain of arthritis and gout and help fight cancer and heart-disease.”

While we are in no sense inferring that there’s anything deficient about the science supporting cherries’ health benefits, it’s also true that making claims that foods can fight specific diseases remains impermissible without FDA approval.

The cherry marketers might have less of a problem if they’d invested in some marketing know-how – and they can look within the fruit industry for an example. Dole, for instance, one of the world’s largest fruit marketers, has made health – and specifically wellness (as opposed to cancer-fighting) – an integral part of its strategy. The Dole Nutrition Institute provides nutrition information to the public via published articles, brochures, a bi-monthly newsletter, its website (www.dolenutrition.com), videos, training programmes and the Dole Fresh Choices magazine. The Dole Nutrition Institute’s communication focus isn’t on making cancer-fighting health claims (you won’t find any on their website) but on providing, “the latest in diet, nutrition, fitness, recipes and natural beauty,” and acting as a “farmers market for the mind, giving subscribers access to the most up-to-date research findings while also providing a provocative dose of opinion on topics ranging from obesity to body image.” Dole uses a wealth of consumer-friendly communications and what you might call nutrition-is-easy-and-fun tools and places a heavy emphasis on PR.

As we have said before, fruit has the potential to be a big part of the future of functional foods, but right now the science of fruit is far ahead of the marketing competence and business vision of the largely production-focused industry that produces it. The examples of Pomegranate and pomegranate juice (see New Nutrition Business May 2005) and Ocean Spray shows how growers can add value through branding and marketing. More companies need to think like the pomegranate and cranberry producers – and if they don’t then the fruit industry will find the levers of the wellness market moving ever more-firmly away from them and into the hands of processed food companies with superior branding know-how and application development skills and fruit growers will spend the rest of their days on the commodity treadmill of chasing volume up and costs down.

E D I T O R I A L

NOVEMBER 2005

NEW NUTRITION BUSINESS

www.new-nutrition.com
It was in October 1995 that the first Benecol-branded cholesterol-lowering spread was launched in Finland. It was an event that can be said to have marked the beginning of the functional foods business in Europe. It captured the attention of the world’s food industry, and the media, and speculators rushed to buy the shares of its inventor, the Turku, Finland-based Raisio Group.

Consultants, investment bankers and the like massively over-hyped Benecol’s potential – and as a result when Benecol didn’t meet their excessive expectations Raisio’s share price suffered and much of the industry was scared off the apparently risky world of functional foods.

But ten years later, Benecol-branded products are earning, we estimate, over $350 million in retail sales in 20 countries and Raisio’s Benecol ingredients business is showing a healthy and increasing operating profit – making Raisio in fact one of the very few companies in the global health ingredients business that is profitable.

Raisio’s Benecol plant stanol ester ingredient operation is part of its Life Sciences division, which in 2004 had total sales of €53 million ($63.4 million) and an operating profit of €3.3 million ($3.9 million). Of this Benecol alone generated 85% of the division’s sales and all of the operating profit (the fledgling diagnostics business, acquired in 2003, which is also in the same division, is at break-even).

In the first 6 months of 2005, Benecol’s €3.9m operating profit accounted for 80% of total Raisio profits – making it by far the most profitable part of Raisio’s €216.2 million of sales in the period’s first half.

What has produced the turnaround? There are three factors:

1. A significant shift of strategy.
2. A shift to a collaborative effort between multiple innovative partners, resulting from the new and better strategy.
3. The consequent development (by one Benecol partner) of an innovative new product format for delivering cholesterol-lowering benefits. The format has become more widely available, so the fortunes of the company have been transformed.

And it is no exaggeration to say that the new packaging format has been as important as the original invention of Benecol, if not more so, since without packaging innovation Benecol might still be languishing in a slow-growth niche, as so many cholesterol-lowering products are (see pages 16-18).

To re-cap briefly on what is a well-known story, Benecol is a patented plant stanol ester, the result of a true innovation by Raisio, which figured out how to add this esterified plant sterol to foods (and specifically to fats). Benecol was soon clinically demonstrated in published, peer-reviewed studies, to be effective in lowering LDL cholesterol by 15%, and many, many studies since have served only to re-confirm this finding.

The original Benecol strategy, Raisio freely acknowledges, was too risky, depending as it did on just one global partner (the McNeil Nutritional Group, part of the Johnson & Johnson pharmaceutical group). Raisio in a sense can’t be blamed for the error, since there was no shortage of consultants claiming that it was the pharma companies who had the skills to succeed in functional foods, little realizing that they in fact knew nothing about food or about marketing.

“Pharma thinking” resulted in the initial communications about Benecol being highly medicalised and its benefit being “avoiding death”, as Titta Ezra, vice-president of marketing for Raisio Life Sciences, put it at the recent New Nutrition Business Healthy Foods Summit in Brussels.

Added to that Raisio and its partner focused only on using Benecol in yellow fat spreads (understandable as Raisio was the market leader in Finland in such products). The company adopted a super-premium price strategy — pricing Benecol spreads at five times the price of regular products — and the possibility of future competition was ignored.

The marketing message had several problems, such as:

• Paying a premium price for a cholesterol-lowering product means you must first know what your cholesterol level is and whether it is elevated — and in reality few people have cholesterol tests.

The launch of Benecol-branded dairy drinks delivering your daily-dose of plant stanol ester in a 70g drink – an innovation by Raisio’s Swiss partner Emmi – has transformed the European cholesterol-lowering market and the fortunes of Raisio. These products alone generate almost €100 million ($120 million) in retail sales in Europe.

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Elevated cholesterol is a problem you can’t
see or feel – so you can’t experience or see the benefit of the product unless you go for another cholesterol test.

• The science communication was too heavy-handed and “scary” for consumers – as well as contributing to confusion.

Raisio’s Ezra summarized the current Benecol strategy. It is:

• Based on multi-partner thinking – not just one partner
• Focused on being more than an ingredient supplier – the Benecol brand has been licensed to the food industry
• Focused on different food applications – creating a wider menu
• Targeted at strong local food companies and brands
• Adding value to existing leading brands rather than investing in building its own food brand – adding value to partner brands and businesses
• Placing effort on Raisio’s own Benecol sales and on producing stronger marketing as well
• Focused on R&D for new food applications, developing Benecol further and including new functional ingredients and bioactive compounds.

Today Raisio works with 14 partner food companies who produce more than ten different types of food applications under the Benecol brand and market these products in 20 countries.

In fact it’s fair to say that the choice of Benecol partners – strong local food companies – and the focus on new applications have been pivotal to the fast-developing success of Benecol.

The best example of this – and the single-biggest result from the new partnership approach – has been the daily-dose packaging innovation – a 70g bottle. The brainchild of Emmi, the medium-sized Swiss dairy group which is a Benecol partner and is also one of the most innovative dairy companies in Europe, if not in the entire Western world, a 70g bottle of Benecol dairy drink delivers in one convenient shot all the plant stanol esters you need each day to achieve a 15% reduction in LDL cholesterol.

Emmi put the product in its home Swiss market as well as south Germany and Austria, and other Benecol partners began selling the drinks (often getting them made by Emmi) in Spain, Portugal, Finland, Poland, Iceland, the UK and Ireland.

In its first year 100 million bottles of Benecol yoghurt drink were sold in just a handful of European countries, equating, by our estimates, to €100 million ($119.8 million) in retail sales.

In the UK, Europe’s single-largest market for cholesterol-lowering products, daily-dose drinks are on track for sales in excess of £55 million ($66 million) this year.

But Raisio hasn’t relied only on the daily-dose format to turn round its fortunes. In Poland, where it markets Benecol spreads itself through a subsidiary, the company has out-marketed Unilever, though it has only a fraction of the resources of its giant rival, and has become the leading brand in cholesterol-lowering spreads, taking a 68% market share.

For Unilever, for whom its Pro.activ cholesterol-lowering brand is a flagship, with worldwide sales of €300 million ($359.4 million), to lose ground in a key growth market like Poland or a major market like the UK must be a dent to its pride.

There are three key lessons from the Benecol story:

1. The importance of taking a long-term view of success in the nutritional business – ten years to get to success seems to be the standard in this industry and many, many health ingredient businesses that have been around as long as Benecol are still losing money.

2. The importance of ranking application development and packaging innovation alongside science.

3. That even minnows can compete with – and beat – giants. This retail year sales of consumer products under the Benecol brand look set to exceed those marketed by Unilever under its rival Pro.activ brand. In this case Unilever’s skills in science and its muscle have not been any more useful than the innovativeness and market aggression of the many medium and small companies who make up the Benecol army. Goliath, remember, fell to David.

Ten years ago a little-known Finnish company was a pioneer in the successful development of functional foods – today that same company, with its partners, is a pioneer in the successful marketing of functional foods. Like Nokia in mobile phones, in food Raisio has successfully brought together science with marketing to create an international success story. It’s yet another lesson from an innovative small country.
Coca-Cola learns a hard lesson about the crowded world of heart-health

Coca-Cola’s bold move into cholesterol-lowering orange juice, with Minute Maid Heart Wise, looks set to become the niche brand position that we predicted it would be. By Julian Mellen tin.

It’s two years since Coca-Cola-owned Minute Maid, the second-biggest orange juice brand on the U.S. market, embarked on one of the boldest initiatives to market a product made with plant sterols ever seen on the North American market. Today Coca-Cola proclaims its Heart Wise cholesterol-lowering orange juice a success: “We call Heart Wise an unqualified success at this moment,” Ray Crockett, Minute Maid spokesman, told New Nutrition Business. But what exactly is a “success” in this market?

First a market fact: according to data from Information Resources Inc. (IRI), in supermarket, drug and mass-merchandise stores (with the exception of Wal-Mart, which does not supply data) Minute Maid Heart Wise had sales of $27.8 million in the 52 weeks to October 2005. That’s a very respectable performance after almost two years on the market. And yet it’s also a very modest level of sales for a brand that started out with Heart Wise’s advantages. A senior U.S. food industry executive recently told us that sales of less than $100 million were regarded as fairly “niche” in the U.S. market, a point of view we’ve often heard before.

What’s more this level of sales is all that has been achieved despite attractive packaging, product format, branding and a very clear cholesterol-lowering health claim on the label – and most particularly despite attractive pricing, for Heart Wise retails at exactly the same price as regular Minute Maid orange juice, thus eliminating the barrier to purchase represented by the massive price premiums normally associated with cholesterol-lowering products, such as spreads like Benecol, which are typically priced at a 300% premium over regular spreads.

Such an aggressive pricing strategy, we believe, suggests that the original strategy conceived for Heart Wise may have been to achieve a mass-market level of sales – as Tropicana did for its calcium-fortified orange juice when it priced it at the same point as regular juice. In fact, thus far Heart Wise has done no better than the highest sales value achieved by Benecol at its peak.

Heart Wise has become, says Coca-Cola, who won’t comment on the strategy, the fifth-biggest-selling SKU in the Minute Maid line, after original Minute Maid orange juice, the original variety fortified with extra calcium, pulp-free and Country Style products. But even so, Heart Wise still has achieved, after almost two years, only a 1.1% value share of America’s massive $2.6 billion refrigerated orange juice market. What’s more, having notched up over $21 million in sales in its first year on the market, the brand added only another another $6-$7 million in sales in its second year.

A QUESTION MARK OVER THE VALUE OF INGREDIENT BRANDS

Heart Wise is the result of a product development partnership between Minute Maid and sterol supplier Cargill. Minute Maid said last year that the addition of Cargill’s CoroWise ingredient brand to the packaging of Heart Wise, “really helps reinforce that there’s something different about Heart Wise…We saw the benefit to Minute Maid.” Whether the CoroWise brand does really add value for the consumer – and whether consumer awareness and understanding of the ingredient brand is at a meaningful level – is something that the current extent of Heart Wise sales suggests has yet to be proven.

In the meantime the addition of plant sterols is costing Minute Maid 16 cents a package (according to information supplied earlier this year) – and the company was almost certainly counting on a significant increase in volume to offset this increased cost. Whether the volume is currently sufficient to yield profits despite the higher cost is a matter of speculation that we’ll leave to our readers.

Heart Wise has also got a problem of intensifying competition in its targeted benefit of “lowering cholesterol”. A walk round an American supermarket will soon reveal that Heart Wise’s competition isn’t only the pricey cholesterol-lowering spreads, but the tens of products from whole-grain cereals to soymilk to oats to tea and more proclaiming their heart-health benefits. In fact, “cholesterol-lowering” can be said to have become an everyday marketing message in the U.S.. To take just one example, General Mills in September last year re-formulated its entire range of breakfast cereals with whole-grains, thus enabling its entire range to carry FDA-approved cholesterol-lowering claims and making the American breakfast cereal aisle “functional” at a stroke.

Last year a senior Coca-Cola executive spoke to New Nutrition Business of Heart Wise in terms of it being, “the next big innovation that we could do in orange juice to continue our leadership in health and wellness innovation.” It looks as if there will still be some years to go before Heart Wise’s sales fulfill that particular ambition.

As we said in February this year (see New Nutrition Business February 2005), if Heart Wise can hit $40 million in sales by the end of 2007 then Minute Maid will have created a successful niche brand and for that they should be applauded. But as beverage industry guru and consultant Tom Pirko put it earlier this year: “I don’t see enough equity [in Heart Wise] that it can be the foundation of an empire. It’s just doing OK.”
Overall, Harris concluded, “Consumers don’t necessarily perceive the need for these products or believe in the efficacy of them even if they do appreciate what they are supposed to do. And they don’t appear willing to spend a premium for these products even though they have been proven to work.”

**SPREADS**

**Europe:** The reasons for the advance of Europe and the sluggishness of the U.S. may have a lot to do with product formats and with brands. Benecol may have been a new brand when it was introduced onto the European market in the form of a table spread, but rival Unilever had the advantage that its forty-year-old Flora and Becel polyunsaturated spread brands were already well-known across Europe and in many countries – such as the UK and the Netherlands – were already explicitly associated with heart-health. It therefore made sense for Unilever to launch its Pro.activ cholesterol-lowering product as an extension of one of these brands (Flora in some countries, Becel in others) and in many countries Pro.activ also benefited from existing heart-health oriented marketing, both to consumers and health professionals. With a background of brand trust it’s hardly surprising that Flora/Becel Pro.activ spreads have risen to become a €200 million ($239.7 million) brand in Europe.

**U.S.:** In the U.S., meanwhile, sterol-based spreads have struggled. McNeil, the marketer of Benecol, in 1999 put an alleged $100 million behind the launch of Benecol – only to secure less than $30 million in sales. Both Benecol and Unilever suffered from the problems of a lack of brand equity with consumers – Unilever had no existing heart-health brand in the U.S. so was forced to create an entirely new one, called Take Control – and of 500% price premiums compared to regular products. “If you and your doctor are deciding between Benecol and Pravachol IO, and Pravachol is 30 cents a pill and Benecol is 50 cents a serving, that doesn’t make for a good comparison for Benecol,” Ken Harris, consultant for Cannondale Associates, told New Nutrition Business last year.

In response GFA Brands Inc. entered the market with a much lower-priced product, an extension of an existing brand, called Smart Balance Plus. But Robert Harris, GFA’s president, told New Nutrition Business that sales had been disappointing even at that price point. Smart Balance, whose other regular spread products are

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**CHART 1: NEW APPLICATIONS FOR STEROLS IN YOGHURT AND ORANGE JUICE HAVE ACCELERATED THE GROWTH OF STEROL-BASED CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING FOOD IN THE U.S.**

- **2005 SIZE OF EUROPEAN MARKET FOR CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING DAILY DOSE DAIRY DRINKS (BENECOL, PRO.ACTIV, DANACOL)**
  - Retail Sales: €154 Million ($180 Million)
  - Market Share:
    - Unilever Pro.activ: 40%
    - Benecol: 35%
    - Danone Danacol: 25%
  - Largest Markets:
    - UK: €75 Million/$190 Million
    - Spain
    - France

  *Note that some industry sources value the market as high as €250 million ($300 million)*

Source: AC Nielsen supermarket scanning data
selling well, added marine omega-3 oils to the sterol-enhanced variety of Smart Balance in an attempt to jump-start sales of the product, but, according to IRI data, this has apparently not produced the desired result.

As the chart shows, sales of cholesterol-lowering spreads have actually been declining, a decline that appears to be accelerating as the brand owners withdraw brand support.

**DAILY-DOSE DAIRY DRINKS**

**Europe:** This is a European phenomenon with no parallel in the U.S. Daily-dose dairy drinks (delivering your daily requirement of sterols in a single shot) have notched up €154 million ($180 million) in sales – all incremental to existing business. The creation of such a new business is something to admire, particularly in the challenging world of nutrition. It’s an excellent demonstration, as we have said many, many times in these pages over the years, that to be successful in functional products, packaging innovation is as important as innovation in science.

**JUICE – MINUTE MAID**

**U.S.:** We look in depth at the performance of Coca-Cola’s Minute Maid Heart Wise juice on page 15. In summary, with sales of $27 million after almost two years on the market, Heart Wise is still selling as a niche product rather than the mass-market product that the pricing – exactly the same price as regular orange juice – suggested Coca-Cola might have been hoping to achieve. But, the CEO of Forbes Medi-Tech, said that he understood that Heart Wise is “doing best in the higher socioeconomic markets of the Northeast and California.” He welcomed the arrival of Heart Wise in the market “because it can only enhance” consumer perception of and reception for sterols. “It’s a good application, and it shows that there are lots of opportunities for everyone in this market.”

However, Heart Wise, although a very well thought-out concept, lacks the elements of packaging innovation and extreme convenience that have helped make the daily-dose dairy drinks so successful in Europe. With this in mind we can’t believe that it will achieve the same level of success in the U.S. as Benecol dairy drink has achieved in Europe.

**Europe:** With daily-dose dairy drinks getting established in the minds of cholesterol-conscious European consumers as the optimum product form – and having the benefit of extreme convenience and, thanks to the common usage of daily-dose bottles in the probiotic sector, the package being accepted by consumers as a sign of a healthy product – it’s hard to see how a product like Minute Maid Heart Wise, or any other juice drink, in anything other than an equally convenient daily-dose-type format can make much headway. It would, after all, be very unusual for consumers to switch from a highly convenient product form to a less convenient one, so we think that orange juices and the like will find themselves selling at very modest levels compared to daily-dose dairy.

**YOGHURT – YOPLAIT**

**U.S.:** General Mills’ Yoplait brand Healthy Heart yoghurt, launched earlier this year, has apparently not produced the desired result. This is a European phenomenon with no parallel in the U.S. Daily-dose dairy drinks (delivering your daily requirement of sterols in a single shot) have notched up €154 million ($180 million) in sales – all incremental to existing business. The creation of such a new business is something to admire, particularly in the challenging world of nutrition. It’s an excellent demonstration, as we have said many, many times in these pages over the years, that to be successful in functional products, packaging innovation is as important as innovation in science.
STRATEGY CASE STUDY

NOVEMBER 2005

FINNISH KNOW-HOW BEHIND U.S. DAIRY DEBUT

As the first yoghurt available in the U.S. that both contains cholesterol-lowering plant sterols and is also enriched with calcium, Yoplait’s composition is protected by MultiBene patents, a family of patents developed by Professor Hekki Karppanen, who is a medical doctor by training as well as a Professor of Helsinki University. In addition to the health claim and the Corowise logo, the Healthy Heart label also carries the MultiBene logo and the statement “sold under license from MultiBene Products Oy”.

In a nutshell, MultiBene’s ingredient is a combination of three minerals and plant sterols. Worldwide patents protect simultaneous enrichment of food items with plant sterols and any of the mineral nutrients calcium, potassium or magnesium – in other words, a MultiBene license is required whenever one of the three mineral nutrients are also added to plant sterol-enriched foods, and vice versa, when foods enriched with calcium, potassium or magnesium are fortified with plant sterols.

The license agreement between MultiBene Group and General Mills Inc. entitles General Mills to use the compounds covered by the MultiBene patents in yoghurts, breakfast cereals, cereal bars and soy-based drinks in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

For more on MultiBene see the November 2004 and March 2005 issues of New Nutrition Business.

U.S. sales of cholesterol-lowering spreads have actually been declining, a decline that appears to be accelerating as the brand owners withdraw brand support.

year, was the first yoghurt – and the first dairy product – available in the U.S. with cholesterol-lowering plant sterols. Two servings of Yoplait Healthy Heart are needed each day to achieve a cholesterol-lowering effect. Healthy Heart was launched at a suggested retail price of 79 cents. That is 15% premium over regular Yoplait six-ounce cups. The health claim on the product reads:

Plant sterols, eaten twice a day with meals for 0.8g daily total, may reduce heart-disease risk in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Yoplait Healthy Heart has 0.4g per 6oz.

“Much of our communication will be targeted towards women whose awareness of heart-disease is growing,” Arielle Loeb, Yoplait Marketing Manager, told New Nutrition Business at the time of launch.

In its first ten months on the market Yoplait notched up $21 million in sales. That’s not bad, but not world-changing. Yoplait now needs to maintain its momentum. There have been many similar cholesterol-lowering yoghurts launched in Europe. Most have achieved “healthy size niche” status, although there have also been some withdrawals, such as the Benecol yoghurt marketed under the Netherlands’ leading dairy brand, Campina.

KEY LESSONS

So what are the key lessons from the American and European experiences of cholesterol-lowering products? In summary:

1. That brands matter. Unilever’s brand equity helped propel sales of its spreads in Europe. The lack of brand equity by any of the players in the U.S. spreads market hindered the development of the whole category – and made it harder to justify premium prices, which consumers will often be more willing to accept from brands they trust.

2. Price premiums for such products appear to be more acceptable to Europeans than to Americans. Europeans have willingly paid 500% price premiums for spreads and such premiums haven’t stymied the category as they have in the U.S.. On the other hand, brand equity and brand trust – specifically for Unilever’s Flora/Becel umbrella brands – may have played a significant part in consumers’ willingness to pay such premiums.

3. Applications development matters. The cholesterol-lowering category has only begun to grow as the benefit became available in more product types.

4. Packaging innovation and product presentation are extremely important.
Japan’s cholesterol lowering food market moves beyond oil and mayonnaise

Although still a niche, Japan’s cholesterol-lowering food market has grown rapidly over the last five years, driven mostly by healthy cooking oils. Now more growth is forecast as sterols appear in new product formats. Takeshi Takeda, managing director of Tokyo-based consultancy firm Global Nutrition Group, explained the market to JULIAN MELLENTIN.

Despite the famously healthy traditional Japanese diet, Japan has as much potential as a market for cholesterol-lowering foods as most other industrialized countries. The progressive Westernization of Japanese eating habits, which resulted in an increased fat intake, especially saturated fatty acids contained in animal fats has contributed to a steady increase in average blood cholesterol levels in the general population from the 1960s onwards. According to a study by Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, conducted in 2000, 26.3% of men and 35.1% of women have total serum cholesterol levels over 220mg/dL. Two groups in particular had high cholesterol – post-menopausal women (46.9% of women in their 50s and 45.5% in their 60s exceeded the 220mg/dL limit) and men in their forties and fifties (of whom 26.3% and 35.1% respectively had elevated cholesterol).

Annual sales of products that are marketed as cholesterol-lowering are variously estimated (for 2003, the latest year for which reliable data is available) at between JPY11.36 billion ($98.2 million/€81.1 million), by the Japan Health Food & Nutrition Food Association (JHNFA), and JPY15 billion ($129.7 million/€107 million), by the Global Nutrition Group, Inc. (GNG).

Currently six ingredients, plant sterols (including plant sterol ester), low-molecular-weight arginine, soy protein, dietary fibre from psyllium seed, chitosan and phospholipids binding soy protein, are approved as active ingredients to address elevated cholesterol under FOSHU (Foods Of Specified Health Usage – the Japanese regulatory system for functional foods with health claims).

At present the majority of cholesterol-lowering food products sold in Japan are cooking oils with FOSHU registration. As Chart 7 shows, products using plant sterols have the largest share (84%) of the cholesterol lowering FOSHU market, with retail sales of JPY12.6 billion ($108.9 million/€90 million) followed by low-molecular-weight arginine with JPY1.5 billion ($12.9 million/€10.7 million) in sales and soy protein with JPY500 million ($4.3 million/€3.5 million) in sales (3.3%). As soymilk was recently registered and launched as a FOSHU-approved product to lower cholesterol, soy protein's share of the market is expected to increase.

The cholesterol-lowering segment of the Japanese market is dominated by just three brands, which between them account for 94% of all sales of cholesterol-lowering products. The two biggest cholesterol-lowering brands are Kenko Sarara, a cooking oil from J-Oil Mills, part of the Ajinomoto Group, with 2003 sales of JPY9.6 billion ($83 million/€68.6 million), and Econa Healthy & Healthy, a cooking oil from Kao with sales of JPY3 billion ($25.8 million/€21.4 million). Both of these brands have sterols as their active ingredients. The third-largest cholesterol-lowering brand is a drink called “Cholesscare”, from Taisho Pharmaceuticals, with JPY1.5 billion ($12.9 million/€10.7 million) in annual sales. (See chart 2).

The cholesterol lowering market started growing rapidly in 2001, as Chart 7 shows, after Ajinomoto – the company which is today the biggest player in Japan’s cholesterol-lowering market – launched the Kenko Sarara cooking oil brand, in September 2000. Kenko Sarara was registered as FOSHU-approved in December 2001 and has since continued to grow. Ajinomoto went on to launch, in August
2004, a mayonnaise-like, FOSHU-approved, sterol-based product called Pure Select Saralear and today Ajinomoto Group is the biggest player in the cholesterol-lowering market through its Kenko Sarara and Saralear products.

As the above examples illustrate, the two major product forms among plant sterol-based products are cooking oil and mayonnaise-like products. Kao’s Econa Healthy & Healthy brand of oil was the first plant sterol product registered under FOSHU, as Chart 4 shows. It was developed by adding sterol to Kao’s existing – and highly successful – Econa functional cooking oil brand, which contains diacylglycerol, for control of triglycerides and body fat. Plant sterols occur naturally in oils, such as soy oil, but at low levels. Plant sterols have limited solubility in regular cooking oil, of which the main ingredient is triacylglycerol, making it difficult to add plant sterols to increase the sterol content. However, plant sterols are very soluble in diacylglycerol, the main ingredient of Kao’s Econa oil, enabling Kao to develop and introduce plant sterol containing cooking oil ahead of its competitors.

Ajinomoto, meanwhile, focused on soy germ oil as a source of plant sterol esters. The company launched its Kenko Sarara brand in September 2000, simultaneously applying for FOSHU approval for the product. Ajinomoto decided to launch the product before getting a FOSHU approval as it wanted to establish its position in the market before Econa – launched in 1999 – could dominate the market. When Kenko Sarara gained FOSHU approval in December 2001, Ajinomoto renewed the product and re-introduced it in February 2002. Similarly, Nisshin Oil Mills (now Nisshin Oillio) focused on rice germ oil as it contained a high level of plant sterol esters and used rice germ oils as the basis for its functional cooking oil.

Ajinomoto’s selection of soy germ oil and Nisshin Oil Mills’ selection of rice germ oil as raw materials was influenced strongly by the fact that natural ingredients are preferred in the cooking oil market by Japanese consumers. Unilever, on the other hand, uses highly-processed esterified plant sterols to increase sterol solubility for a wide variety of applications. Unilever introduced its global cholesterol-lowering brand Pro.activ onto the Japanese market in September 2001, with the launch of the FOSHU-approved Rama Pro.activ spread.

Until Kao introduced Econa (targeting triglycerides and body fats), neither functional cooking oil nor functional condiments had existed in the Japanese functional food market.
market. According to point of sale data for 2003 from Nippon Shokuryo Shimbum, Kao’s Econa was the top brand in the entire Japanese cooking oil category and “Econa” branded products were also listed among the top 10 brands in mayonnaise and salad dressing categories, despite the brand’s premium price. As Chart 5 shows, functional cooking oils are five to six times more expensive than regular products. While regular cooking oil is sold at JPY468 ($4/€3.34) per 1,500g, Kao’s “Econa” is sold at JPY748 ($6.47/€5.35) per 500g – a 380% premium on a price per 100g comparison, while J-Oil Mills’ “Kenko Sarara” is sold at JPY640 ($5.53/€4.57) per 450g, a 360% premium to regular oils. The strength of these brands illustrates Japanese consumers’ strong preference for healthier oils and willingness to pay a premium for health.

While the cholesterol-lowering cooking oil market is quite large, the market for cholesterol-lowering dietary supplements is small. GNG estimates the value of the plant sterol dietary supplement market is as little as JPY100 million ($860,000/€715,000) in annual sales. A handful of companies offer plant sterol products as part of their product line only to fill shelves at drugstores. The leading supplement brands include Nature Made Plant Sterol, from Otsuka Pharmaceuticals, and Actio Plant Sterol & Soy Isoflavone, from Asahi Food & Healthcare. In general, new functional ingredients are introduced to consumer markets as dietary supplements and expand into foods once consumer recognition reaches a certain level. Plant sterols, however, started out with functional foods at a time when no supplement companies were making efforts to promote the functionality of plant sterols or targeted cholesterol lowering.

More and more ingredient suppliers - including foreign companies such as ADM, Cognis and Cargill, as well as Japanese companies like Tama Biochemical, and Riken Vitamin – now offer plant sterols and they are focused on developing new applications for plant sterols beyond the now well-established sectors of cooking oil and mayonnaise-like products. The Toyo Hakko company also recently announced that it has developed a fermented plant sterol which is effective in reducing body fats, hence plant sterols are expected both to appear in many more new product forms as well as to new target conditions.

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In a move which is the first of its kind Nestlé and Unilever are collaborating on a co-marketing campaign on a specific health platform: Nestlé’s Shredded Wheat breakfast cereal brand and Unilever’s Flora pro.activ brand have launched a joint promotion entitled Cholesterol Busting Breakfast. The campaign was “probably about a year in planning,” according to Andrew Pyne, Corporate Affairs Manager with Cereal Partners UK, a joint venture between General Mills of the U.S. and Nestlé which manufactures cereals for the UK and Irish markets and sells them under the Nestlé brand. “The two companies could see an opportunity, and a synergy, with the cholesterol message.”

Flora pro.activ is the leading cholesterol-lowering brand in the UK and Ireland, with a portfolio of products spanning spreads, a milk, yoghurts and daily-dose yoghurt drinks, so its involvement in the campaign comes as little surprise. Cholesterol Busting Breakfast is seen as a natural adjunct to its ongoing cholesterol-lowering/heart-health promotional work, but this latest development is new territory even for Flora pro.activ: “We’ve never done anything like this before, working with a third party,” explains Anne-Marie Hanly, Assistant Brand Manager, Flora, Ireland. “We work with other companies like Weight Watchers. We work with committees and events, but not specifically with any other brands,” she told New Nutrition Business.

So why Shredded Wheat’s involvement? According to Andrew Pyne, “Shredded Wheat was talking about cholesterol and no other brand was, either within the Nestlé portfolio or the ready-to-eat cereal sector. Due to its being a brand initiative, the natural fit was with the Shredded Wheat positioning. Both [brands] have been at the forefront of developing groundbreaking marketing with the objective of improving the nations’ health. Whilst one is an older brand [Shredded Wheat] and the other a relatively new brand [Flora pro.activ], the commonality between the two in terms of heart messages and target made them very natural partners to work together.”

Shredded Wheat is currently the biggest Nestlé cereal brand in the UK; in 2004, sales amounted to £55 million ($97.6 million/€80.9 million) – up 12% on 2003– and in Ireland, “The Shredded Wheat Franchise has consistently been amongst the top 20 brands,” according to Pyne.

Though Britain and Ireland still have amongst the highest CHD-related mortality rates in Europe, these figures are falling as a result of better dietary management, fitness regimes and medication. The timing, simplicity and convenience of the Cholesterol Busting Breakfast initiative – plus the involvement of two trusted food brands – may well help to strengthen the growing trend for individualised diet-health management, in addition to focusing consumer awareness on the dangers of LDL cholesterol. And with Irish and British people amongst the largest consumers of breakfast cereals in the world (where cereals are rapidly becoming ‘anytime’ foods, thanks largely to work done by Kellogg’s), Cholesterol Busting Breakfast is an important cholesterol-lowering initiative.

Cholesterol Busting Breakfast will run for a minimum of eight weeks, and up to ten,
“depending on stocks,” according to Hanly, and is currently being highlighted on special 12- and 24-biscuit packs of Shredded Wheat, and across the Flora pro.activ milk, spreads and yoghurt range. In-store leaflets – available from all retail outlets – inform consumers how they can ‘Eat breakfast, and help beat cholesterol’, while also highlighting the cholesterol-busting properties of both brands.

While neither Cereal Partners nor Unilever could divulge promotional budgets for the campaign (the companies are conducting their own individual promotions), Unilever’s Hanly told, New Nutrition Business that, “There hasn’t been any TV [ads] produced for the promotion. It’s not really one of the biggest [campaigns]. The biggest one for Pro.activ this year was with Lulu, the ‘Lulu challenge’ [Flora pro.activ’s 3-week cholesterol-lowering challenge], and that would have been seen as a bigger initiative and the money would have [gone] there.” Unilever in fact invests heavily in supporting its Pro.activ brand, with initiatives such as free cholesterol-screening, recently offered to thousands of visitors at an Over 50s exhibition in Dublin – its second such initiative this year – in an effort to raise cholesterol awareness among the age group most at risk.

“To produce additional bespoke advertising was not deemed necessary,” says Cereal Partners’ Pyne. “This campaign has worked very [well] within multiple retailers. Both brands have got strong in-store presence, and our own account teams have worked hard to get additional presence in-store. The promotion is also in line with the key brand messages for both brands…In addition, both brands raised cholesterol awareness with their own marketing vehicles – Shredded Wheat showed their cholesterol ad, Flora had their ‘Lulu challenge’; [they] also conducted a direct marketing campaign.”

For Cereal Partners Cholesterol Busting Breakfast has a natural fit with its ongoing Whole Grain Nation campaign, which aims to highlight the importance of whole-grains in the diet and the heart-health benefits they offer (see box). Following the lead of co-owner General Mills in the U.S., earlier this year (2005), every Nestlé-branded cereal was reformulated to contain whole-grain as ‘part of an overall drive by Nestlé to help make it easier for consumers to make healthier food choices’.

At present, none of the parties involved in Cholesterol Busting Breakfast has plans to extend the initiative to any other brands, but they aren’t dismissing this idea out of hand. “We may do something again with Shredded Wheat,” says Hanly. According to Andrew Pyne, “Cereal Partners are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle, of which a balanced diet is key. Within our portfolio we have a number of brands with strong health credentials and as such, we will continue to communicate these in the future.”

It will be interesting to see what the results are of Cholesterol Busting Breakfast in terms of both brands’ positioning. Just as interesting is the possibility that the new Unilever-Nestlé alliance may usher in the dawn – in the health arena at least – of a new age of co-operation between food producers and brands that have traditionally competed for the same consumer base.

Cholesterol Busting Breakfast is a reminder that health is now the key driver for the food industry, leading some of the largest companies and brands in the world to adopt strategies that once would have been unthinkable. Now Unilever and Nestlé have set an historical precedent, who might be next?
Embracing life’s challenges

One of the trickiest questions faced by marketers – and one of the most important success factors for nutritional brands – is how to communicate the health benefit of your product in a way that consumers can easily understand. One solution to this question that is proving particularly successful is the “consumer challenge” – the invitation to consumers by brands to experience the benefit or get your money back. MARGARET FOLEY looked at the way some companies make a good “challenge” work.

By the time you read this, I could very well be a self-made woman. Since writing this piece, I could have lowered my cholesterol by 15%, dropped a jeans size, lost up to 1% of my body fat. I may have experienced a ‘kick start’ to a healthier lifestyle, be feeling ‘great in a fortnight’, or perhaps be feeling ‘the difference’. I could even be walking those magical 10,000 steps per day. In a world where food companies are often accused of contributing to the health woes of nations, several high profile brands have been throwing down the health gauntlet to consumers through the use of consumer challenge programmes – tailored, quick-hit health solutions that promise results for those who abide by the rules of the programme.

In the UK and Ireland, as elsewhere, Kellogg’s is more active than any other company in terms of the number of consumer health challenge programmes that the company has brought to market, to the extent that the company’s Special K and All Bran brands have become synonymous with consumer challenges, with five high profile programmes in the last five years and a sixth underway. Founded on a number of key common principles, these programmes have succeeded in attracting a staggering number of consumer-participants while also repositioning breakfast cereal as an ‘anytime’ food and helping Special K to overtake Kellogg’s Cornflakes as the leading Kellogg’s grocery brand in the UK.

Where Kellogg’s has led, others have followed. Danone in particular has been active in using consumer challenges as part of its marketing mix. The ‘2-Week Actimel Challenge’, for example, has become a seasonal fixture over the last three years, and the company’s Activia and Vitalinea yoghurt brands have their own challenge programmes. Unilever has become the latest company to use this tool, unveiling its ‘3-Week Cholesterol-lowering Challenge’ in support of its market leading Flora pro.activ cholesterol-lowering brand.

Despite their widely varying target health benefits, Kellogg’s, Danone’s and Unilever’s challenge programmes all share some common principles:

1. Talking to women
   More motivated and more interested in health than men, it is women who matter most to the targeting of consumer challenges, either directly as the clearly identified end-consumers of the product (as with Special K, Activia and Vitalinea), or the messengers used in advertising to promote the challenge programmes (Actimel, All-Bran and Flora pro.activ).
   But women are also quick to complain when promotions for consumer challenges use female role models that they feel are inappropriate, or when they feel patronised. For instance, when TV commercials for Danone’s ‘Actimel Challenge’ first appeared they were criticised by female respondents to TV advertising surveys (such as those conducted by the UK’s regulator for TV programmes) and by mothers in a range of chatroom sites, such as www.mumsnet.com, for their use of sexist stereotypes, with some respondents referring to the woman role models as ‘ditsy’, hyperactive females who included “embarrassing” mother figures.

2. Easy-to-understand health benefits
   Some challenge programmes convey the targeted health benefit explicitly in their titles – such as Kellogg Special K’s ‘Drop a Jeans Size’ and ‘Body Fat Challenge’. Setting out its stall upfront helped Kellogg’s to reposition the Special K brand in consumers’ consciousness as one of ‘shape management’ – and moved it away from its traditional ‘diet’ image. The company’s follow-up Special K programme – ‘10,000 Steps a Day’ – saw the brand extend its image into fitness and consolidate its position as a leader in ‘shape management’. Other companies for whom brand/product repositioning is not an aim simply use the brand name to build connection to the health benefit, such as the Actimel Challenge, or rely on consumers already accepting the connection between the brand and the claimed benefit.

3. How to follow the programme – the rules of the challenge
   Keep them simple, keep them short. ‘One bowl of All-Bran every day for a fortnight’. ‘Just three portions of Flora pro.activ a day’. Challenge programmes are all careful to include references to their use in connection with a healthy diet, exercise and ‘lifestyle’. 
4. Duration

The duration of any challenge programme is best described in terms of days or weeks, and the shorter the duration, the better. The longest of the programmes is 12 weeks, when Special K’s ‘10,000 Step Challenge’ advised participants to work their way up gradually over 12 weeks to their final target of walking 10,000 steps per day. Consumers are attracted to quick-hit solutions – there is less danger that they’ll become bored with them or stray from the rules, and they can see and feel success relatively quickly. To would-be participants, a programme whose efficacy can be measured in days or weeks appears both manageable and worth doing.

5. The convenience factor

Challenge programmes are notable for their appeal to consumers’ innate desire to do the right thing – but with the smallest effort on their part. It is particularly attractive to consumers that the programmes can be incorporated into their everyday lifestyle, with minimum disruption or changes. Brands like Special K, All-Bran and Flora pro.activ have benefited from having a range of different products under the brand so that consumers can enjoy variety and also stick with the challenge at multiple meal occasions. But there are pitfalls – although last year’s ‘Drop a Jeans Size’ was a huge success for Special K, with over two million people taking part, the programme still came in for criticism. Participants reviewing the ‘Kickstart’ programme on www.reviewcentre.com and www.dooyoo.co.uk complained that eating so much cereal (two bowls per day) was ‘boring’, and inconvenient to do at lunchtime. When the programme was reincarnated this year – as the ‘Body Fat Challenge’ – participants needed only to eat one bowl of cereal per day, and could introduce Special K bars and Lite Bite corn snacks as substitutes for in-between meal indulgences. Danone Actimel’s one-shot 100ml daily-dose probiotic drinks also benefit from being highly convenient and easy for consumers to take without making any changes.

6. Use appropriate role models.

This is perhaps the element of the challenge programme that has the most potential to either win over or alienate consumers and role models for challenge programmes need to be chosen with care. The most successful are those seen by consumers as appropriate and realistic – and having a sense of humour doesn’t do any harm. As the face of Unilever’s Flora pro.activ three week cholesterol-lowering challenge, 56-year old Scottish singer/actress, Lulu, would seem to have been a logical role model to appeal to the brand’s target age group. They were her contemporaries and could empathise with Lulu’s health concerns, because they shared them. She also appealed to both women and men alike. Not a big enough celebrity to frighten off ‘ordinary’ would-be Challenge participants, Lulu was felt to be still enough of a household name to appeal to middle aged and older consumers.

Even when the role models chosen are only actresses or models, the “wrong” appearance can cause problems, as Kellogg’s found. While the principles behind its 2003 Special K ‘Kick-Start’ programme were deemed to be safe, the company was reprimanded by the ITC (the UK’s commercial TV regulator), for the way in which the programme was communicated through what was described as “irresponsible” TV advertising – the slim actress featured was deemed to be “promot[ing] the diet towards those who had no need to lose weight.” Special K’s latest initiative – ‘Body Fat Challenge’ – is currently fronted by curvier female actresses, one of whom at least does appear to be a little larger than the advertising industry’s norm.

On the other hand Kellogg scored a bullseye in 2004 when it signed up actor, William Shatner, better-known as Star Trek’s Captain Kirk, to be the face of the company’s All-Bran ‘Feel great in a fortnight’ challenge. In addition to the mountain of affectionate media attention that Shatner’s involvement created, the series of humorous adverts for the Challenge helped to reposition All-Bran as the leading ‘inner health’ cereal in consumers’ minds; healthy bowels were now just one part of the All-Bran health package – ‘inner health’ was redefined to also mean increased energy levels and “feeling lighter”. Shatner’s self-deprecation, good humour, age, physical appearance and willingness to self-parody – plus viewers’ inescapable, sentimental memories of his days as Captain Kirk – were key elements to All-Bran’s gaining consumer approval for its Challenge. A year later, Shatner is still fronting the £3 million (£3.3 million/€4.4 million) campaign, and All-Bran has become a significant brand, having extended the brand name (and Challenge) to include all of Kellogg’s bran products.

7. Use appropriate gadgets and promotions.

Gadgets are particularly appropriate to challenges where day-to-day measurability is a key component. Special K’s ‘10,000 Step Challenge’ offered participants the opportunity...
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th>Kellogg's Special K</th>
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<th>Kellogg's Special K</th>
<th>Kellogg's All Bran</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target consumer</td>
<td>Women who want to lose weight and gain a healthier shape; must have BMI over 25</td>
<td>Overweight women aged 18+ with BMI over 25</td>
<td>Anyone interested in increasing/maintaining their fitness level – but who are pressed for time</td>
<td>People who want to obtain/ maintain balanced inner health and immunity</td>
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<td>Slogan/s</td>
<td>Kick-Start your healthy lifestyle today!</td>
<td>Lose up to 1% body fat</td>
<td>Be a Loser</td>
<td>Feel great in a fortnight</td>
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<td>Health benefit/s</td>
<td>Weight-loss;</td>
<td>Shape management;</td>
<td>Increased level of daily fitness;</td>
<td>Improve your inner health;</td>
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<td>Healthier shape;</td>
<td>Healthy lifestyle maintenance</td>
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<td>Improved cardiovascular fitness;</td>
<td>Feel lighter;</td>
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<td>improved muscle tone; Better</td>
<td>Feel more energetic</td>
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<td>Duration</td>
<td>Two weeks</td>
<td>28 days</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>Two weeks</td>
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<td>Rules for success</td>
<td>One bowl of Special K or Crunchy Nut with semi-skinned milk for breakfast; one bowl for lunch or dinner; eat a third nutritionally balanced meal</td>
<td>One bowl of Special K for breakfast; replace indulgent snacks with Special K products; other meals and fruit as normal</td>
<td>Measure current step level; Increase activity by 10% every week; Set SMARTER goals</td>
<td>One bowl of any All Bran cereal every day for a fortnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role model/s</td>
<td>Models/actresses playing disillusioned dieters and gym-goers</td>
<td>Model/actress playing 20-74-year-old William Shatner</td>
<td>74-year-old William Shatner (actor most famous for his role as Star Trek's Captain Kirk)</td>
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<td>Gadgets/promotion</td>
<td>Body fat analyser (£4.99/£7.25 plus two on-pack tokens); Win gym membership online; 50% off (private health insurer) BUPA lifestyle health check</td>
<td>Pedometer (£3.99/£5.65 plus two on-pack tokens); Printable chart to track progress</td>
<td>8 million Challenge packs; Online e-mails from William Shatner Free Cholesterol Lowering Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>New best friend</td>
<td>On-pack information about scientific research behind Challenge principles; Communal diary – online entries from genuine Challenge participants; 7-day eating plans; Style tips; Online BMI calculator; goals to stay motivated</td>
<td>Healthy eating and cooking tips; Exercise and fitness tips; Lifestyle and body confidence tips; Body shape; Participants send in their tips; online; Downloadable body fat loss progress chart</td>
<td>Sample exercise routines; Personal pedometer regime; SMARTER (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timed Enjoyable Record)</td>
<td>Register for Challenge updates from William Shatner; Get a friend to take part with you; Online fibre calculator; Recipes using bran; Message board for participants to provide their own tips, suggestions and stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educate</td>
<td>Website provides; FAQs about health; Information on body shape; Newspaper pull-outs; Also a TV campaign</td>
<td>Website provides; Information on body fat; Fat loss information; Online BMI check; Body fat analyser (incl. online demonstration)</td>
<td>Website provides; Shape management information; Instruction leaflet for the pedometer; Information on the benefits of walking; Real life case studies</td>
<td>Website provides; Online fibre-wise quiz; Benefits of fibre; Information about All Bran pro-active product range; FAQs about probiotics; Also an Intensive TV campaign</td>
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<td>Congratulations &amp; commiserations – after the Challenge</td>
<td>Life after: Drop a jeans size – tips on how to stick to healthy living principles</td>
<td>Follow healthy eating guidelines after the two weeks</td>
<td>Walking tips and programmes and stretching programmes aimed at preparing participants for ‘Kellogg’s Cornflakes Great Walk 2005’</td>
<td>Life beyond the Challenge tips on fibre-rich foods, fruit and vegetables, and exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kelloggs.co.uk">www.kelloggs.co.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.kelloggs.co.uk">www.kelloggs.co.uk</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.kelloggs.co.uk">www.kelloggs.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign successful!</td>
<td>29.4 million people were aware of the Challenge, 2.1 million people took part; Mixed reviews – some participants said initial benefits didn’t last, they were hungry long before lunchtime; eating cereal at lunchtime proved inconvenient, eating so much cereal was boring</td>
<td>650,000 pedometers sold in five month period; Challenge extended to Cornflakes brand via “Walking for Health” campaign; “Great Walk 2005” nationwide initiative attracted massive media attention; Special K now the #1 Kellogg’s brand in UK</td>
<td>Opportunity to rebrand all Kellogg’s bran cereals under All Bran powerbrand; Use of William Shatner as role model considered considerable media interest, and injected humour into campaign; Successful repositioning of brand as ‘inner health’ rather than ‘healthy bowel’ brand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Marketing Case Study

**Programme title**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danone Actimel</th>
<th>Danone Activia</th>
<th>Danone Vitalinea 0%</th>
<th>Unilever Flora pro.activ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actimel Challenge</td>
<td>Activia Challenge</td>
<td>The Vitalinea Programme</td>
<td>3 week challenge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Target consumer**  
- People who care about their digestive health  
- Primarily women with minor digestive problems  
- People trying to lose weight  
- Mostly middle-aged people interested in improving their heart-health by lowering their bad cholesterol

**Slogan's**  
- Feel better or your money back;  
- Feel the difference in 8 weeks  
- Lose up to 8 pounds in 8 weeks  
- Lower your cholesterol in 8 weeks

**Health benefit/s**  
- Inner wellbeing; Digestive health; Immunity  
- Digestive health  
- Weight-loss  
- Lower LDL cholesterol by 10-15%; Healthier heart

**Duration**  
- Two weeks  
- Two weeks  
- Two weeks  
- Three weeks

**Rules for success**  
- One bottle of Actimel each day for two weeks  
- One pot of Activia a day  
- Two pots of Vitalinea 0% yoghurts a day; follow a personalised, nutritionist-designed balanced eating plan; follow the exercise tips provided  
- One bottle of Flora pro.activ a day or three products from Flora pro.activ range

**Role model/s**  
- Models/actresses playing independent young women, and mothers  
- Models/actresses playing middle aged mother & 20-something daughter  
- Model/actress playing 20-something independent woman  
- Lulu (1960s pop singer; now 56-years-old)

**Gadgets/promotion**  
- Money back offer;  
- On-pack money-off coupons  
- Online registration for a personalised, balanced eating plan, devised by nutritionists  
- Free Cholesterol Lowering Guide; Nutritional advice; Exercise and lifestyle tips; In-store money-off vouchers

**New best friend**  
- Consumer Careline; Online ‘general well-being’ quiz  
- Advice and tips about healthy living and nutrition – aimed at keeping Programme participants interested and motivated; Link to national nutritionists’ website  
- Free Careline; Online hints and tips “to keep you going”; Extracts from Lulu’s daily Challenge diary, including the expert advice she received (Cholesterol Lowering Guide); Recipes using Flora pro.activ; Online ‘Healthy Heart Test’

**Educate**  
- Label & website describe: How Actimel works; Digestive health & wellbeing benefits; Product sampling: 1.5 million bottle door drops; Trolley posters including information about Actimel product range Also an intensive TV campaign  
- Website provides information on Bifidus digestivum and the digestive system; Digestive health benefits; TV campaign; Intensive press campaign; ‘Inner health’ guides  
- Website explains: How programme was developed; Research results; Information about Vitalinea 0%; Good food info; Guide to healthy dining; healthy living and nutrition  
- Website explains: What plant sterols are and what they do; How to have your cholesterol level measured; Tips for better diet; Information about Flora pro.activ product range; TV and press campaign; Online links to other relevant health sites

**Congratulations & commiserations – after the Challenge**  
- Tips for maintaining healthy heart (diet, lifestyle, fitness)

**Year launched**  
- 2003, 2004, 2005  
- 2003; 2005  
- 2005  
- 2005

**Timing**  
- Marketing spend  
  - £3m; £2.8m £4.6m  
  - £1m; £3m  
  - £3.5m

**Website**

**Campaign successful?**  
- 71% of participants said they’d recommend Actimel to a friend; Actimel is the fastest growing and #1 ‘functional food’ brand in the UK and Ireland; In Autumn 2004, of 9.5 million Actimel purchases during the Challenge, only 45 people asked for their money back!  
- Nine out of ten people who took the Challenge felt the difference (survey of 218 patients with minor transit problems)  
- Strengthens Vitalinea’s position as a leading weight-loss yoghurt; Extends Danone yoghurt range into health segment beyond digestive health; Programme still ongoing at time of writing  
- Strengthens Flora pro.activ’s position as the leading cholesterol-lowering food brand in Ireland and UK; Challenge still ongoing at time of writing – 4,000 Irish people requested copies of Cholesterol-lowering Guide
MARKETING CASE STUDY

An extract from Lulu’s Challenge Diary with expert advice and tips on nutrition, fibre and steps to leading a healthy lifestyle.

to purchase pedometers to help them to monitor their daily progress. One of the most successful promotions of recent years, over 650,000 pedometers were purchased at a price of €5.65 each ($6.80) plus two on-pack tokens in a five month period. And although sales figures for the brand’s latest gadget – the Body Fat Analyser (£4.99/€7.25 plus two tokens) – were unavailable at time of writing, there is little reason to assume that this promotion will prove any less successful.

Money-off vouchers and money back promotions are frequently used by digestive health brands where evidence of success is tougher to quantify – after all, losing body fat is easier to measure than ‘feel[ing] the difference’. Money-back-if-not-satisfied promotions – as used by the Danone Actimel and Kellogg All-Bran challenges – are direct promotions – as used by the Danone Actimel and Kellogg All-Bran challenges – are direct and personal invitations to consumers to prove the product and health proposition wrong. Paradoxically, their use actually helps to reinforce with consumers how unlikely it is that the challenge will fail. During one three week money-back ‘Feel the Difference’ challenge last year, Danone sold a whopping 9.5 million bottles of Actimel in the UK alone – with only 45 people asking for their money back on the grounds that they didn’t feel any ‘difference’.

Other gadgets that have been used in challenges include personalised eating plans (the ’Vitalina Programme’), downloadable progress charts (’10,000 Step Challenge’, ’Body Fat Challenge’), and information packs like Flora pro.activ’s Cholesterol-lowering Guide, which combines extracts from Lulu’s challenge diary with expert advice and tips on nutrition, fitness and healthy lifestyle. To date, over 4,000 Irish people have applied for copies of the Guide – Unilever Ireland told New Nutrition Business that this was “a much higher redemption rate than normal promotions,” and the company expects this number to have risen even further by the time the challenge has ended, later this year.

8. Become your consumer’s ‘new best friend’.

Getting consumers to participate is important – but keeping them on the programme for its duration (and loyally buying a product or brand for its health benefits after the challenge has ended) is just as essential.

Most consumers want to be healthy on their own terms, at their own pace, and with as little change as possible to their daily lives. For a challenge to be a success with consumers, it helps if it can offer participants all the individual attention that they would get from their best friend. The nature of each challenge programme therefore is built around encouraging and supporting participants; educating them and keeping them informed; helping with their motivation during – and after – the challenge.

Websites dedicated to individual challenge programmes have become increasingly important to the successful implementation of such initiatives. In addition to their round-the-clock accessibility, websites offer a myriad of resources not available through other media, such as more detailed information about the science behind a particular challenge; how the principles of the challenge work; message boards; eating plans; online calculators (for example Special K’s ’Body Fat Challenge’ Body Mass Index calculator); links to nutritionists and health professionals; sample exercise routines; fitness plans; real life case studies; health FAQs and more. Particularly popular are diary and message board sites on challenge websites, where current and former ‘real life’ participants can exchange tips and advice, recipes and supportive messages with one another. Occasionally, online participants get to hear from the principal role model. People on the All-Bran Challenge, for example, can register online to receive update e-mails from William Shatner.

Many of the challenges examined offer ongoing support and education for participants who have come to the end of their programme; each includes tips and advice about healthy eating, lifestyle and fitness. Others target specific areas covered by the challenge programme: for example – All-Bran offers ’Life beyond the Challenge’ which comprises tips on (specifically) fibre-rich foods, fruit and vegetables, as well as fitness advice; the ’10,000 Step Challenge’ provides walking and stretching programmes for people wishing to take part in 2005’s ’Kellogg’s Cornflakes Great Walk’.

SUMMARY

While they’re still relatively new, challenge programmes are becoming more commonplace. Kellogg and Danone are particularly enamoured of the strategy and each run a minimum of one challenge programme each year. This year saw Danone extend the challenge strategy to its Activia and Vitalinea brands – no little thanks to the success of the company’s previous Actimel Challenge campaigns. And at the time of writing, Kellogg’s has just launched its latest Special K ’Kick-Start’ programme in Ireland – the ’Autumn Challenge’ (’two meals, two boxes, for two weeks’) – building on the brand’s successful repositioning as an iconic leader in ‘shape management’. With ’Kick-Start’, Kellogg’s has found a formula that works for Special K, and while the company may name-change a programme here and there, it knows not to mess with its essentials.

Challenges have to be fun, flexible, and interesting – as well as delivering realistic, achievable results. They must offer long-term support and education to participants. And all the while, products must taste good and also fit into consumers’ everyday lifestyles. For food manufacturers and consumers alike times have never been quite so...challenging.
**Functional & Healthy Eating New Product Launches**

Each month we summarise recent new product launches from around the world.

- Part 1 and 2 USA  
- Part 3 and 4 Rest of the World

American new product roll-out information is a custom-made report provided for New Nutrition Business exclusively by Datamonitor.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beverages</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bossa Nova Beverage Group, Inc.</td>
<td>Bossa Nova</td>
<td>Bossa Nova Acai Juice has been introduced in Original, Mango and Passionfruit flavors. Said to be a pure, clear juice that is “fresh and delicious,” and “lightly sweetened with certified organic agave,” it “delivers more antioxidants per serving and per calorie than any other juice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PepsiCo.</td>
<td>Tropicana</td>
<td>New Fruit Smoothies. Literature states, “Made with 100 percent fruit juice and fruit puree, one 11 oz. serving counts as 2 1/2 servings of fruit making Tropicana Fruit Smoothies a convenient, nutritious option.” To be introduced this fall by Tropicana Products North America, an affiliate of PepsiCo, the “line of all-natural, fruit blended beverages,” also includes Mixed Berry and Tropical Fruit flavors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakewood Juices Inc.</td>
<td>Lakewood Juices</td>
<td>Heart Healthy Pomegranate and Heart Healthy Tart Cherry 100% Fruit Juice Blends are said to have no sugar added, no artificial flavors or colours, no preservatives and the labels are flagged, “Super anti-oxidant.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Sales of Winter Haven</td>
<td>Noble 100% Pure Juice</td>
<td>A new line of “tropical flavors” targeted toward Hispanic and Asian consumer, they are said to be packed with powerful antioxidants from tangerines (with vitamin C, folic acid and vitamin A), guavas (a great source of vitamins B1, B6, vitamin C, niacin and phosphorus), and mangos (rich in fibre, vitamin A and C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPG Enterprises</td>
<td>Tart is Smart 100% Natural Juice</td>
<td>These “premium single-strength” juices are offered in Tart Cherry, Cherry Berry, Cherry Blueberry and Cherry Grape flavors. They are said to be all natural, to have no sugar added and to have a tart cherry juice base that is high in antioxidants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Brands, Inc.</td>
<td>LiteBlue</td>
<td>New LiteBlue Reduced Calorie Juice Cocktail is offered in Blueberry and Blueberry Raspberry varieties and “each 16 oz (500ml) glass of LiteBlue (tm) contains as much juice as a full serving of fresh blueberries.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IZZE Beverage Company</td>
<td>IZZE</td>
<td>New Blackberry, Clementine and Pomegranate flavors of IZZE Sparkling Fruit Juice in new 12-packs of single serving 8.4 fl. oz cans. Available in the U.S. and in Canada, the new size is said to be “ideal for parents who want to buy a healthy beverage in bulk for lunch boxes and after-school treats.” IZZE Sparkling juice is “an all-natural blend of pure fruit juice and sparkling water, is free of caffeine, artificial ingredients, high-fructose corn syrup, and all other refined sugars.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven, Inc.</td>
<td>Formula 7 Fitness Beverage</td>
<td>Presented in 20 ounce bottles, they are said to contain functional ingredients B vitamin complex, green tea polyphenols, HCA and chromium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Eleven, Inc.</td>
<td>Formula 7 Energy Beverage</td>
<td>The new private label Formula 7 line is said to contain products fortified with vitamins, minerals, herbs, antioxidants, amino acids and other natural ingredients. Ingredients include “Vitamins B and E complex, green tea polyphenols and Siberian ginseng.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajinomoto USA, Inc.</td>
<td>Amino Vial Pureedge</td>
<td>Ready-to-Drink Supplement Beverages, formulated with all natural ingredients, are said to contain no artificial flavors, colourings or sweeteners. Each Pureedge “delivers 1,850mg of branched-chain amino acids and arginine, with only 50 calories per 8 fl. oz. serving.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerade (Coca-Cola)</td>
<td>Powerade</td>
<td>New Option Low Calorie Sports Drink “provides electrolytes and B-complex vitamins at levels comparable to regular Powerade, but with fewer carbohydrates and 80 percent fewer calories than Gatorade(r). Powerade Option, which is sweetened with a blend of sucralose, Ace-K and HFCS, contains 10 calories and two carbohydrates per 8 fl. oz. serving.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candies, Chocolate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masterfoods USA (Mars)</td>
<td>CocoaVia Chocolate Bars</td>
<td>New CocoaVia Chocolate Bars in individually wrapped 0.78 oz. (22.1g) Blueberry &amp; Almond, Original or Crispy varieties. Package text for the Blueberry &amp; Almond variety reads, “Promotes a healthy heart - Formulated to help reduce bad cholesterol - Promote healthy circulation.” CocoaVia Chocolate Bars contain natural plant extracts which have been proven to reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) by up to 8 percent. CocoaVia is made using the CocoaPapo(r) process. This guarantees the retention of high levels of naturally occurring cocoa flavanols to help promote healthy circulation. These cocoa flavanols are similar to those flavanols found in red wine and green tea. CocoaVia contains heart healthy vitamins B6, B12, folic acid, antioxidants C and E, and is an excellent source of calcium. We select only the finest quality, all natural ingredients for use in our products, like specially selected cocoa beans. Wild Maine blueberries, fresh almonds and other wholesome ingredients.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masterfoods USA (Mars)</td>
<td>CocoaVia</td>
<td>Chocolate Covered Almonds label text reads, “Promotes a healthy heart - Fresh, healthy almonds smothered in smooth, premium dark-chocolate - (they) are an unbeatable afternoon break. Real chocolate pleasure and real heart-health benefits in scrumptiously satisfying morsels.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cereals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Mills</td>
<td>Fibre 1</td>
<td>Fibre 1 Cereal has been introduced in Canada. Package text states, “Delicious very high fibre flakes and oat clusters - 44 percent of your recommended daily fibres.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Valley Co. (Hain Celestial)</td>
<td>Health Valley</td>
<td>Multi-Grain Square-Emz Cereal is available in Apple Cinnamon and Honey Nut flavours. Package text for the Apple Cinnamon variety reads, “Excellent source of whole grain - 7g fibre - Excellent source of iron, zinc, &amp; six B vitamins.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blue Diamond Growers Blue Diamond New Natural Almond Nut Thins Nut & Rice Cracker Snacks, said to be free of wheat, gluten, and trans fat. They are

Organic Milling Co Nutritious Living New Whole Grain Heart Mates Cereal literature states, “With a delicious and hearty blend of whole grains, soluble fibre and real honey taste. Heart Mates is a cereal the whole family can enjoy.” The box is flagged, “High fibre: 5g - Reduced Sugar: 5g - Low Sodium - Low Fats/No trans fats... Can help lower both cholesterol & blood pressure.”


Quaker Oats Co (PepsiCo) Quaker High Fibre Instant Oatmeal in Wild Berry Medley and Raisin & Spice varieties. Label copy for each is tagged, “Smart selections made easy.”

Quaker Oats Co (PepsiCo) Mother’s Crunchy Corn A new Fruity Bumpers variety. Package text reads, “All natural ingredients - Low fat - 100 percent natural fruit flavoring.” They are said to be targeted toward mom and deliver flavours that kids will love.

Eat Well Be Well Foods, Inc. New Est Well Be Well Sugar Free Instant Oatmeal labels are tagged, “No sugar alcohols - Diabetic friendly.” Literature states, “Our sugar-free Instant Oatmeal is sure to become a family favorite, appealing to children and adults alike. Just add hot water and you have a perfect sugar-free, low-fat treat with a generous 6 grams of ‘heart healthy’ fibre per serving... Made with whole grain oats and sweetened with Splenda.”

Ozery’s Pita Break Inc. Ozery’s Low Fat Country Oatmeal Crackers are said to be free of artificial preservatives, to contain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, and to be made with natural ingredients. Promotional literature states, “(They) are a unique and health conscious cracker offering. Made with finest wholesome ingredients, this low-fat cracker will satisfy your customers’ appetite for healthier foods.”

Blue Diamond Growers Blue Diamond New Natural Almond Nut Thins Nut & Rice Cracker Snacks, said to be free of wheat, gluten, and trans fat. They are packaged in a 120g box.

Van’s International Foods Van’s Hearty Oats Anti-Oxidant Plus Frozen Waffles are said to contain 1,000 mcg of Omega-3 and to have the antioxidant power of one pomegranate. Label is flagged, “Excellent source whole grain - 5g fibre - 1g soluble fibre - Good source of calcium - 1000 mcg Omega 3 - No cholesterol - 5g protein - No trans fat.”

Schneider Foods, Inc. Schneider’s SmartLunch A new line of Meal Kits is now available in Canada under the Schneider’s SmartLunch brand name. The meals are said to be low in fat and high in vitamins, fibre, and calcium. The Meal Combos are available in Pepperoni Pizza, Bagel and Mini-Deli varieties. The Bagel Combo “uses an assortment of better-for-you foods such as a 60 percent whole wheat bagel, one percent milk, and real fruit treats.”

Storyfield Farm (Danone) Storyfield Farm Organic Banana Berry Smoothie Drinkable Lowfat Yogurt is available in a single-serve bottle. Label copy reads, “Lowfat yogurt - 1 percent milkfat - Helps boost calcium absorption.” The refrigerated beverage is said to be a good source of fibre and to have six live active cultures and inulin.

Storyfield Farm (Danone) Storyfield Farm All Natural Light Fruit on the Bottom Yogurt is sold in single-serve cups. Labels are flagged, “3g fibre - No aspartame or sugar alcohols. They are said to have 100 calories, 0g fat, 3g fibre and 25 percent RDI calcium per cup. Each variety is claimed to have no artificial sweeteners, to be sweetened with naturally milled sugar and erythritol (a naturally fermented sugar), to be made with milk from cows not treated with the synthetic growth hormone rBGH, to include 2g of inulin that helps boost calcium absorption, to be an excellent source of calcium and protein and to have a unique blend of six live active cultures.

Ronzoni Foods Canada Corp Catelli Healthy Harvest Flax Omega-3 Pasta in Spaghetti and Rotini versions. Literature states, “Healthy Harvest Flax Omega-3 pasta is a source of omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are a factor in the maintenance of good health.”

Renee’s Gourmet Foods Inc. Renee’s Gourmet Wellness Dressing This Wellness Dressing has been introduced in flavours that include Pom-Berry, a blend of pomegranate and blueberries that deliver “a boost of antioxidants.” Literature states, “All Renee’s Gourmet Wellness Dressings are dairy free, lactose free, gluten free, trans fat free, have no added refined sugar and contain omega 3 fatty acids.”

Komal Herbals, Inc. Komal Herb-All New All Natural Health Bar is said to be formulated with Pras, which is said to be a herbal tonic made from over 40 herbs. “Pras is said to be a proven energizer, immunity booster and pre-emptive tonic.” The product is offered in Oatmeal Brown Sugar and Oatmeal & Dates varieties.
### Highlights

- **Clif Bar Inc.** Clif Bars: The new Clif Kids Organic ZBar is said to be designed just for kids, to fuel their growing, active bodies. Claimed to contain "the right combination of protein, carbohydrates, fibre and 12 vitamins and minerals."

- **Hershey Company** Hershey's New Hershey's Cocoa Special Dark Baking Cocoa is flagged, "Natural source of flavanol antioxidants - Since 1894."

- **GFA Brands** Earth Balance: All Natural 100% Pure Fruit Bars include a Pear Blueberry flavour. Wrappers that are flagged, "Nutritionally equal to two whole apples."

- **7-Eleven, Inc.** Formula 7 Energy Bar: A new Chocolate Crunch Energy Bar is to be marketed under the Formula 7 private label brand. Said to be fortified with vitamins, minerals, herbs, antioxidants, amino acids and other natural ingredients and to include B vitamin complex, bee pollen, green tea polyphenols and kids nut extract.

- **Del Mar Nutrition** Clue Cholesterol Control Bar: Said to be "pan-packed with six natural ingredients to lower cholesterol naturally" these bars are available in Oatmeal Raisin and Oatmeal Chocolate Chip flavours.

- **Kellogg Co.** Nutri-Grain: Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars in Strawberry and Apple Cinnamon flavours and Yogurt Bars in a Strawberry variety are offered in new 8-count, "tear strip packs" by Kellogg Co. of Battle Creek, MI. The new Tear Strip Packs are made to make it easier to grab 'n go and to see when you're out of your favorite snack. They are said to be made with whole grain oats and real fruit to be an excellent source of calcium and to include 9 essential vitamins and minerals.

### STAPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hershey Company</td>
<td>Hershey's Special Dark Baking Cocoa</td>
<td>Flagged, &quot;Natural source of flavanol antioxidants - Since 1894.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Earth Teas</td>
<td>Good Earth Decaffeinated White Tea &amp; Green Tea Blend</td>
<td>Flagged, &quot;A natural source of antioxidants.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional Medicinals</td>
<td>Traditional Medicinals Just for Kids</td>
<td>&quot;All natural&quot; Good Earth Decaffeinated White Tea &amp; Green Tea Blend is flagged, &quot;A natural source of antioxidants.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BABY FOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Parmalat</td>
<td>Vaalia</td>
<td>Parmalat has extended its Vaalia range with yogurt which is suitable for babies and toddlers. This range contains a maximum of ten percent sugar and LGG and is free from artificial flavours, artificial colours, sweeteners and preservatives. Available in a 360g pack of six 60g tubs.</td>
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### BEVERAGES

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Radnor Hills</td>
<td>GI Frustades</td>
<td>A range of sparkling fruit drinks with a low glycemic index (under 55 on the GI scale), made from Welsh mineral water. They are said to provide a longer lasting energy source, keeping blood sugar levels stable. They contain no artificial colours or sweeteners, have natural fruit flavours and are sweetened with fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Teutoburger Mineralbrunnen</td>
<td>Christinen Glyx</td>
<td>New under the Christinen brand is Glyx, a flavoured mineral water which is made without crystal sugar, with fibre, which is low in calories and has a low glycemic index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>McNeil Consumer Nutritional</td>
<td>Benecol</td>
<td>McNeil Consumer Nutritional has extended its cholesterol-lowering Benecol range to include Orange &amp; Apple Flavoured Mineral Water. It is claimed to be the first non-dairy drink containing Benecol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Mornagha Milk Industry</td>
<td>TBC Skin Management</td>
<td>New from the TBC series, developed between the company and TBC (the top beauty salon chain in Japan), is this beauty drink with collagen and royal jelly, as well as vitamin C that satisfies 33% of the RDI. It also contains aloe pulp. This series has been highly popular since its launch in April 2001, amongst women in their 20s to 30s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Vimto Soft Drinks</td>
<td>Vimto</td>
<td>Vimto has extended its Indigo range to include Unwind and Uplift. Unwind is a still drink with chamomile and passiflora said to be calming after a stressful day. Uplift is a sparkling drink with guarana and ginseng to give a natural high. Both variants are aimed at women aged 17 to 34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Laboratorios Heredia</td>
<td>Adisol Heredia</td>
<td>Adisol Heredia Te Tea is intended to help eliminate the factors that lead to excessive weight gain. This herbal tea helps normalize the digestive system and can be served hot or cold.</td>
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### BREAD AND BAKERY

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Bimbo</td>
<td>Bimbo Activ</td>
<td>Pan Blanco is white sliced bread with calcium, antioxidants, vitamins and omega 3 to &quot;help regulate cholesterol.&quot; Available in a 475g loaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Bimbo</td>
<td>Bimbo Activ</td>
<td>Sin Cortezas is sliced, crustless white bread with antioxidants, calcium, vitamins and omega 3 to help regulate cholesterol. Available in a 450g loaf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Bimbo</td>
<td>Bimbo Activ</td>
<td>Magalenas are sponge cakes with calcium, antioxidants, vitamins and omega 3. New Selenium Enriched Wheat Bread, with less salt and a lower GI. The selenium is claimed to help maintain a healthy heart and immune system. According to the manufacturer, the bread is made by adding selenium to the soil the wheat grows in, rather than adding selenium at the manufacturing stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Nutrilaw</td>
<td>Nutrilaw</td>
<td>New wild strawberry flavours of this sterol-based, low fat, low-lactose, sugar-free cholesterol-lowering dairy drink. Each pack contains 4 x 100ml daily dose bottles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DAIRY & DAIRY SUBSTITUTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Valio</td>
<td>Valio Gefilus</td>
<td>Mustikkav-Kedelma-Keitto is a yogurt drink with blueberries, raspberries and lactobacillus GG lactic acid bacteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Valio</td>
<td>Evolus</td>
<td>New raspberry and lingonberry flavours of the Evolus blood pressure control dairy drink. It is enriched with sea derived calcium and vitamins, and is fat-free and low in lactose. Each pack contains 4 x 100ml daily dose bottles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Valio</td>
<td>Benecol</td>
<td>New wild strawberry flavours of this sterol-based, low fat, low-lactose, sugar-free cholesterol-lowering dairy drink. Each pack contains 4 x 100ml daily dose cartons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW PRODUCTS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DESSERTS &amp; ICE CREAM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td>Yoplait</td>
<td>Yoplait Le Rice</td>
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<td>Yoplait has extended its Le Rice range of chilled desserts to include three Sport flavours with whey protein concentrate to aid in muscle growth and repair after training. They are claimed to be ideal as a recovery snack after sports. The entire range is 97% free from fat, is a natural source of calcium, and is free from artificial colours, artificial sweeteners, preservatives and gluten. The desserts are low GI.</td>
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<td>Meiji Dairies</td>
<td>Healsta</td>
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<td>A premium ice cream that contains lactic acid bacteria. It contains 12.5% less sugar than Parmalat’s Vaalia regular low-fat yogurt, with less than 0.15% fat per serving, and is free from artificial flavours, artificial colours, preservatives and gluten. It is naturally sweetened, contains LGG and has a low GI.</td>
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<td><strong>MEALS &amp; MEAL CENTERS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finland</strong></td>
<td>Raisio</td>
<td>Go Green</td>
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<td>Go Malaysian Malay Nanas is rice and Malaysian curry pot with soya and vegetables, spiced with chilli and pineapple. It is vegetable based, protein and fibre rich and has a low GI value. Each pack serves one person, is frozen and microwaveable.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kletzl</td>
<td>Kletzl</td>
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<td>Puten Kletzler are 100% turkey sausages with oligofructose, calcium, magnesium and probiotic cultures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SAUCES &amp; SEASONINGS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Japan</strong></td>
<td>QP</td>
<td>Kewpie Defe</td>
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<td>A new type of mayonnaise, branded QP Defe, of which a daily dose of 15g will lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol.</td>
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We’d like to thank everyone who participated in the New Nutrition Business Healthy Foods European Summit, held at the Hotel Le Plaza in central Brussels on October 19th and 20th.

Over 100 people took part and we enjoyed excellent presentations and discussions.

Summit participants can download all the Summit presentations from the website: www.healthyfoodssummit.com

We look forward to seeing you all there next year for an even more exciting event!

In the meantime here’s a selection of feedback from participants at the Summit:

“I appreciated the practical approach of the seminar topics, the breadth of the discussions and debate, and the calibre of the speakers.”

“The Healthy Foods European Summit gave us an excellent review of leading topics including bringing innovative, healthy and functional foods to the market; health claims legislation; innovation and product branding; and childrens’ nutrition and obesity.”

“This was a really excellent conference.”

“Excellent first time event – refreshing to hear the European perspective.”

“Excellent coverage of wide ranging issues.”

“Very enjoyable and informative. Standard of speakers generally very high. Good mix of topics, issues and styles.”

“The conference gave an excellent overview of the health food issues at the moment. I think the Summit gave me an excellent overview of both business and science and the regulatory aspects. Other seminars tend to focus on science or business.”

“Getting slides via website – an excellent idea.”

“Excellent programme – lots of interesting people.”

“The mixture of academia and industry is good.”

www.healthyfoodssummit.com
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