SYMPOSIUM: Milk Composition Variability and its Relation to Milk Marketing

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Introduction

The word "marketing" in the title of this symposium reflects the increasing concern felt by many individuals and organizations about the per capita use of milk during the past decade. It has declined slowly but steadily. The reasons are unclear and complex. The words "composition variability" suggest one of the reasons, and provide a major challenge which the discussions to follow will try to meet.

Are variations in composition apparent to the consumer? Do such variations influence the decision to purchase? Should we alter the present composition of milk? If so, how, and how much? What controls are necessary, and are they workable? What about "double standardization"? How do pricing systems influence these concepts? These are some of the searching questions which must be answered.

No other single food commodity equaled milk in its annual usage of 558 pounds per capita in 1971. This means that a lot of things have been done right in its production, processing, distribution, and utilization over the years. Yet we are still seeking answers.

The American Dairy Science Association has long been interested in the composition of milk. Members of the Association have researched in depth the many and diverse factors which determine the composition of milk as produced by the cow. Other members have studied almost every conceivable fractionation of that product. Now we must look ahead to the application of that research.

Nutritional labeling provides both an awesome challenge and a golden new opportunity to proclaim to consumers the goodness of milk if we can be creative enough in using it. Iron fortification may provide another opportunity. With open minded, visionary approaches we can be assured of success in the future.

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