



Paper outlines how to lure lactose intolerant consumers back to dairy

By Guy Montague-Jones, 06-Oct-2010

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Support from independent sources and targeted marketing campaigns are the keys to convincing lactose intolerant consumers to come back to dairy, according to a new report from the Innovation Center for US Dairy.

The consumer research indicated that 81 per cent of people who consider themselves lactose intolerant are open to consuming dairy products so long as they can do so without suffering symptoms. Its estimations suggest that this group translates into a 273m gallon opportunity for the US dairy industry.

In its white paper, the Innovation Center, which is a branch of the US trade group Dairy Management, set out how the industry can go about unlocking the lactose intolerant market.

Dispelling myths

Jim Layne, vice president of strategic initiatives at Dairy Management, told DairyReporter.com: *"There is a clear opportunity for the industry to dispel myths about lactose-free milk and communicate that it is 'real' milk with the same nutrient benefits as regular milk.*

"By positioning lactose-free milk as a nutrient powerhouse, more lactose intolerant consumers may be compelled to incorporate milk back into their diets."

Part of the challenge is to persuade consumers and health professionals that avoiding dairy is not the first solution to symptoms of lactose intolerance. Layne said emphasising the importance of dairy in the diet is crucial to this process.

"Reducing consumption of dairy foods due to concerns about lactose intolerance can result in a lower intake of essential nutrients – in fact, milk supplies four of the seven nutrients for which adults have low intakes: calcium, potassium, magnesium and vitamin A."

Independent experts

To get this message out to consumers, Layne said the industry needs to obtain the support of independent experts. *"Vast support from credible thought leaders and health professional organizations provides important messaging opportunities to help promote dairy's inclusion in the diet."*

Targeted marketing campaigns also have a role to play in getting lactose intolerant consumers to return to dairy, according to the Innovation Center. Its white paper split the market into four segments that offer the most significant growth opportunities for lactose-free milk and dairy.

These groups include the health wealthy, family milk lovers, avoiders and the aware and managing. The white paper identifies strategies to target each of these groups.