



Sharon Gerdes

Coffee in Your Milk

Coffee is the most popular beverage worldwide, with more than 400 billion cups consumed each year.

The increasing sophistication of American coffee consumption means expanded opportunities for the dairy industry. A 2007 Mintel report revealed that in the United States, 51% of women and 38% of men use some type of “whitener” in their coffee.

Sales of both hot and iced specialty coffee drinks have grown significantly in the past decade. A 2009 National Coffee Association Drinking Trends Report finds that 35% of adults over age 18 in the United States have consumed a cappuccino over the past year, and 25% of that same group sipped a latte, up from 22% the previous year. Innovative coffee/milk beverages, which incorporate a variety of dairy ingredients, just might be the hottest or coolest ticket in town.

The foodservice industry has experienced robust growth in specialty coffee drinks. In the most recent year ending October 2009, Americans purchased more than 4.5 million servings of hot coffee in foodservice establishments. During the same period, they purchased 2.9 million servings of specialty coffee beverages, including cappuccinos, espressos and lattes. Servings of specialty coffee beverages in the foodservice arena have grown 60.9% over the past six years.

Americans consumed more than 300 million hot cappuccinos in the past year in foodservice establishments, a growth of 48% from the previous year ending October 2009. Hot lattes also are popular, with nearly 600 million served in foodservice for the same period, a growth of 18% from the previous year.

Although most consumers like it hot, statistics show that an increasing number of Americans are purchasing iced coffee. For the same period, total servings of iced specialty coffee drinks were nearly 300 million for total foodservice, a growth of 6% over the past year.

New milk-based coffee beverages can be very indulgent and use premium ingredients. For example, Caribou Coffee is now blending its chocolate-based specialty drinks with real chunks of chocolate from Guittard Chocolate Co.

The recent economic downturn means that many consumers are creating upscale coffeehouse beverages at home. Mintel reports that 57% of U.S. consumers are drinking more coffee at home. UCC Milk and Coffee claims to be the world’s first canned coffee product. This Japanese product has been reformulated in celebration of its 40th anniversary and contains a combination of white milk and powdered milk to offer a milder and richer taste. General Foods International Mocha Latte Coffeehouse Beverage Mix includes a frothy layer of foam and contains both nonfat milk and a nondairy creamer.

The choice of a dairy companion to coffee runs the gamut, from skim milk to full-fat cream, and also includes soy options and nondairy creamers.

In the fluid arena, many coffeehouses use gallon cartons of milk, but innovative options such as bag-in-a-box are emerging. “We sell aseptic (six months nonrefrigerated) and fresh (30 days refrigerated) milk to regional coffee shops. Foodservice establishments enjoy the ease and convenience of the concentrated products,” notes Trish Corby, president and CEO, Good Cow Co., Boise, Idaho. “Our products were specifically developed for cafes to be a more efficient and environmentally conscientious way to purchase milk than traditional retail packages. The foaming and taste characteristics are generally superior to their traditional milk source since it is packaged within 24 hours of milking and does not get oxidized due to the packaging and dispensing of the product. Also, our products maintain the same total solids standards throughout the year, so there is no variation in product quality.”

In dry dairy ingredients, innovation might mean special granulation in milk powders to minimize dust and reduce blockage in vending machines. For optimal foaming properties, select a lower heat nonfat milk powder, which has a higher content of occluded air due to the higher content of non-denatured whey proteins.

Starbucks uses dairy ingredients in just about every beverage they sell, except drip-brewed coffee and tea. “Milk is the

largest component in latte, cappuccino and Frappuccino beverages. Our very successful Vivano smoothie line incorporates whey protein in addition to milk to deliver a nutritional, good-tasting beverage under 300 calories per grande cup (16-ounce serving),” notes Robert Vu, director of product safety and quality at Seattle-based Starbucks.

Starbucks proudly touts the health benefits of dairy with a Web site quiz, “How Nutritious Is Your Latte?” It educates consumers to the fact that a grande (16-ounce) nonfat latte provides 50% of the recommended servings of dairy. Weighing in at only 130 calories, this beverage packs 45% of the Daily Value for calcium, 35% of the Daily Value for vitamin D and more protein than two eggs. A Quick Reference Guide of “Nutrition Claims for Dairy Products” is available at www.InnovateWithDairy.com.

“Dairy is a very important part of our business,” Vu says. “Starbucks has been working closely with the U.S. Manufacturing & Ingredient Marketing program, to keep up with innovation in dairy products as well as to gain fundamental knowledge in dairy science, nutrition and processing techniques. The checkoff-funded U.S. Ingredient program has put us in contact with researchers at prestigious universities for technical advice and consultation. I have used the InnovateWithDairy.com Web site to search for potential ingredient suppliers and co-packers. In short, the U.S. Ingredient program has been a valuable partner for us, and has given us an extra edge in developing new products.”

Real dairy ingredients can boost nutrition, provide a consumer friendly label, and provide the perfect complement to hot or cold coffee. ■

Sharon Gerdes is a food industry consultant who works with the U.S. Manufacturing & Ingredient Marketing program at the U.S. Dairy Export Council to promote the use of dairy ingredients in food and beverage formulations. For assistance, contact the Dairy Technical Support Line at 800/248-8829 or techsupport@innovatewithdairy.com.