

# EASY MONEY

While there are few sure things in food merchandising (and in life), the ability for dairy operators to spur sales by leveraging in-store displays appears to be a strong bet.

As illustrated in our cover story which starts on page 28, a 16-week test of displays last year that was supported by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy registered strong sales increases.

The displays, which centered on breakfast, snacking and dinner and cross-merchandised dairy products with selections from other store departments, generated a 19.2 percent average incremental increase in units sold across the displays. Milk-based products had an average gain of 28.8 percent.

In addition, there was a 20.5 percent average incremental increase in dollar sales across the displays, with an average of 29.8 percent for dairy items.

Paul McGillvray, vice president of sales and marketing for Roche Bros. Supermarkets LLC, a Wellesley Hills, Mass.-based chain of 15 supermarkets that participated in the test, notes that "there are quite a few ways to merchandise dairy products away from the dairy case that increase sales for retailers and dairy producers alike. Anytime you can take product out of its primary location, put in a secondary placement and create a solution for the shopper, more products will be sold overall."

Bill Bishop, chief architect of Brick Meets Click, a Barrington, Ill.-based information advisory firm, also partook in the study and says such merchandising ve-

hicles are important because consumers want to know more about food and how to use the items.

"These projects have provided retailers with creative ideas for how they can grow their overall dairy sales and sell a lot more dairy products," he states. "Without a study like this, the retailers are focused on individual products; now they are focused around excitement in the dairy department."

Demonstrating programs that can spur category sales, however, is just a beginning step. Getting retailers to actually embrace and implement new concepts is the more important, and perhaps most difficult, aspect.

"Retailers need to understand that shoppers have so many options on where to buy perishables," says Rebecca MacKay, vice president—strategy, insights and planning, for Rosemont, Ill.-based Dairy Management Inc., a domestic and international planning organization that is focused on building demand for dairy products. "They must understand the needs of consumers and meet them if they are to earn shopper loyalty." ◉



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