

Retail

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NEWS & MARKETING IDEAS TO HELP SELL MORE CHEESE

Dairyfood USA introduces SnackUps with plans to expand line, distribution

By Rena Archwamety

BLUE MOUNDS, Wis. — Dairyfood USA, well-known in the industry for its extended-shelf-life spreadable cheese wedges and naturally smoked Gouda, is expanding its offerings in the snack category.

This month, Dairyfood USA's new SnackUps brand of cheese dips with pretzels launches at retailers nationwide. SnackUps pairs Wisconsin-made Cheddar or Smoked Gouda cheese dip with crispy pretzels in a convenient grab-and-go package. While a cheese dip and pretzel snack concept previously was available under Dairyfood USA's Glacier Ridge retail brand, the new SnackUps brand now draws more attention to the product and what's inside.

"Everyone was loving our product's quality and the concept, but any hesitation from the category managers focused on the graphics. We decided it was time to have a major redesign. That's when we created our SnackUps brand," says Brett Thompson, vice president of sales and marketing, Dairyfood USA.

"The major thing we wanted to do with the package redesign was see more of the components.

Consumers can now visually see more of the cheese in the bottom cup and more of the pretzels in the top cup."

Brett Thompson
DAIRYFOOD USA

"We put more emphasis on what the product was versus the Glacier Ridge Farms brand," he notes. "The major thing we wanted to do with the package redesign was see more of the components. Consumers can now visually see more of the cheese in the bottom cup and more of the pretzels in the top cup."

"There still is room to grow, and more and more retailers are putting in specific grab-and-go sets.

We always felt there was a need for a good quality cheese snack, and every set should have a cheese and pretzel option."

Brett Thompson
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Thompson says this new eye-catching design draws attention to the quality of the product inside. In addition to visual appeal, the new package design also is more functional, allowing retailers to double stack the product for improved merchandising opportunities.

SnackUps will start appearing this month in retailers and alternative channels nationwide, while the company also is preparing to present to club stores. Dairyfood USA has and continues to develop a number of merchandising options for the product.

"The functionality and benefits of SnackUps include that the product does not need refrigeration and can be merchandised anywhere within the store. Dump bins will be available to help display the product," Thompson says. "One benefit of the product is that it is shelf stable while maintaining our high quality standards."

Dairyfood USA has invested in its own chip cup filler and has plans to expand its SnackUps line to include mini tortilla chips and bread sticks in new dip combinations in the future. Clean label refrigerated options also are available for its private label customers.

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Photo courtesy of Dairyfood USA

NEW BRAND — Dairyfood USA's newly-launched SnackUps brand of cheese dips with pretzels pairs Wisconsin-made Cheddar or Smoked Gouda cheese dip with crispy pretzels in a convenient grab-and-go package.

Dairyfood USA historically has focused mostly on private label, which currently makes up approximately 90% of its business. The company continues to grow its offerings of wedges, spreads, dips and snacks under its own brands — Glacier Ridge, Sonoma Jacks, Queso de Casa and now SnackUps. Dairyfood USA also has a licensing agreement with Moe's Southwest Grill to use on its queso dips.

Dairyfood USA has a long history of providing high-quality products to private label customers. It started with Stauffer Cheese, which was founded in 1953 by Alex Stauffer, a Hungarian immigrant who brought his family's long history of successful cheesemaking to Wisconsin.

In 1982, Stauffer Cheese became part of the ALPI Co., headquartered in Salzburg, Austria. In 1995, the company's name was changed from Stauffer Cheese to Lactoprot USA Inc. In 1998, Lactoprot USA joined the Artax Group, headquartered in Linz, Austria. And in 2007, the Wisconsin company again changed its name to Dairyfood USA to better reflect the company's expanded mission with a focus on consumer products. Current ownership is under Biomerx GmbH, Linz, Austria, and

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DAIRYFOOD USA

DRC Investments LLC, Middleton, Wisconsin.

Since its beginnings, the company has served retail, gift-packing and institutional foodservice industries across the United States with a variety of its award-winning cheeses. Today Dairyfood USA is one of the largest specialty cheesemakers in North America, whose customers include some of the most well-known names in their respective industries.

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DAIRYFOOD USA

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Thompson says. “We’re always here to listen to our customers. We are constantly working with our customers on product and/or packaging improvement.”

Thompson notes that some examples of trends the company has seen in the past couple of years include customers looking for cleaner label options, which has led Dairyfood USA to make more refrigerated items, as well as higher demand for queso dips.

Dairyfood USA serves many markets, including gift-packing, transportation, snack, foodservice, club stores and traditional retail. Its products are split about 50-50 between retail and foodservice. Recently, the company has focused on expanding its presence in alternative channels and now is doing business with every major U.S. convenience store distributor.

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Brett Thompson
DAIRYFOOD USA

“Over the past year, Dairyfood USA has invested heavily in personnel and also equipment to further expand its product into the convenience store arena,” Thompson says. “We’ve made significant inroads with all convenience store distributors across the country.”

Convenience stores have shown great interest in Dairyfood USA’s shelf-stable snack products, though they also have been dealing with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We all have been forced to do business a little differently this year. Rolling out new products is exceptionally challenging during this time. We are now arranging virtual meetings instead of making those in-person presentations and product cuttings,” Thompson says.

“Following the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe more consumers are going to be more price-conscious going forward. We’re looking at more snacking concepts that hit the \$1.49-\$1.99 price point,” Thompson adds.

Dairyfood USA also has made

adjustments in its Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, plant. Employee distancing and body temperature checks are monitored daily. Masks have been required plantwide, and frequent cleaning of all common area touch points has been common practice for several months as all sanitation efforts continue to follow local guidelines, Thompson says.

“Virtual school learning has also presented new challenges to our business. Dairyfood USA has made employee schedules more flexible for parents with children learning from home,” he says. “Everyone at Dairyfood USA has worked extremely hard keeping our business moving forward.” CMN



Photo courtesy of Dairyfood USA

VARIETY BOARD — In addition to its private label offerings, Dairyfood USA continues to grow its offerings of wedges, spreads, dips and snacks under its own brands, which include Glacier Ridge, Sonoma Jacks, Queso de Casa and now SnackUps. Additionally, the company has a licensing agreement with Moe’s Southwest Grill to use on its queso dips.

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