

# Evaporated milk was first convenience food product

As far back as the Old Testament's reference to "the land of milk and honey", milk has been celebrated as one of the essentials of life and deserves its reputation as one of nature's most nearly perfect foods.

For more than a century, a favorite form of this nutritious food has been evaporated milk. In tune with today's penchant for healthful eating, evaporated milk, brimming with nutrients, proteins and vitamin D, is making its way into a wide variety of dishes, from traditional favorites to modern cuisines. Boasting a rich heritage, this world-acknowledged, quality convenience food is enjoying a culinary renaissance.

The evaporated milk industry has its roots in the early 1880s in England, and the idea of preserving and concentrating milk by heating it in sealed cans was first developed in Switzerland. Nevertheless, it was the success of the United States sweetened condensed milk business around the time of the Civil War that really launched the evaporated milk industry.

At the end of the Civil War in 1956, Charles A. Page, U.S. Consul to Switzerland, persuaded his brothers to join him in the rich dairy-land region around Cham. There they built Europe's first sweetened condensed milk plant.

Between 1880 and 1883, the Swiss plant manager, John Meyenberg, experimented with evaporating and sterilizing milk without sugar and invented the technology that would lead to evaporated milk production.

Ironically, however, Meyenberg couldn't interest the Cham plant owners in using his process, so he moved to the United States. In 1884, he received U.S. patent No. 308421 for "an apparatus for preserving milk", and in 1885 he and Louis Latzer, a farmer, founded the Helvetia Milk Condensing Company ("Helvetia" is Latin for Switzerland) in an old wool factory in Highland, Ill.

On June 14, 1885, just four months after opening their doors, the two were delivering one of the first modern convenience foods, "Highland Evaporated Cream".

The new product was a rapid success. In its first year, 10 cases of eva-

## Food for Thought

By  
**Ann Hinsdale  
Knisel**

Cooperative  
Extension



porated milk were donated to victims of a tragic fire in Galveston, Tex., signaling the future role evaporated milk would play in feeding war-torn Europe.

The first ad for evaporated milk, in 1893, called it "a perfect instant food" and in 1894, the first recipe booklet appeared. By 1895, evaporated milk was popular both in western mining areas where fresh milk was scarce and in the South where there was little refrigeration. Consumers quickly recognized its value as a safe, wholesome and convenient baby food, as well as a nutritional ingredient for cooking that had the added benefit of storage stability.

Upon enactment of the Pure Food

and Drug Law in 1906, manufacturers designated their product as evaporated milk instead of "evaporated cream". Since 1923, evaporated milk has been produced under uniform federal standards.

In 1909, the first application of homogenization in the dairy industry was introduced with evaporated milk. The careful control of time and temperature in this system destroys any bacteria which may be present and makes it possible to control color, flavor and consistency.

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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON INCREASING PROPERTY TAXES

The Township of Palmyra will hold a public hearing on a proposed increase of .0918 mills in the operating tax millage rate to be levied in 1989.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, August 10, 1989 at 7:30 P.M. o'clock in the p.m. at Palmyra Township Office, Fire Hall.

If adopted, the proposed additional millage will increase operating revenues from ad valorem property taxes 4.85% over such revenues generated by levies permitted without holding a hearing.

The taxing unit publishing this

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