Consumer Consumption Patterns of Chocolate and Confectionery

Recorded history shows a long recognized existence of confectionery products, dating back over 40 centuries. There is evidence of a baking and confectionery business operating out of the Egyptian temples around 1200 B.C. Jumping ahead to the history of the U.S., the Dutch bakers of New Amsterdam, now known as New York City, were the first confectioners in the new colonies. In the late 19th century, the candy industry was characterized by a rapid growth in the penny candy segment, targeted specifically to children as the consumers.1

Only within the last few decades has consumer consumption data become more detailed and readily accessible. This presentation includes a discussion of consumer consumption patterns of confectionery based on three sources of data: international and domestic per capita information, dietary intake surveys conducted by USDA, and a recent serving size survey sponsored by the confectionery industry.

PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION

The European industry organization for confectionery and biscuit products (CAOBISCO) together with the International Office of Cocoa, Chocolate, & Sugar Confectionery (IOCCC) conducts an annual survey among its members and affiliated collaborators for production or sales statistics, including export and import, of confectionery products.2 After the data is reviewed for accuracy, per capita consumption is calculated as production plus imports minus exports divided by population.

There are several limitations to the use of per capita consumption data. First, the definitions of products, specifically sugar confectionery products, varies among countries. Second, this data is often referred to as “disappearance” data in that it reflects the amount that disappears from the food supply, not necessarily what is consumed. Per capita data overestimates consumption and does not reflect user characteristics.

Of the countries surveyed in 1993, the combined per capita consumption of both sugar and chocolate confectionery was highest in Denmark (13.1 kg/person/year). The Spaniards and Japanese had the lowest consumption (3.9 and 3.5 kg/year, respectively). The U.S. population consumed an intermediate amount of 10.0 kg/year (Figure 1).

The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) also requires an annual survey of all manufacturers who produce consumer confectionery product, which is approximately 350 companies. Small firms that manufacture confectionery for retail sale on the premises are not included. Gum, as well as cough drops, medicated candy, roasted peanuts, and unsweetened popcorn are not included in the survey statistics. Surveyed manufacturers record the quantity of product physically shipped, i.e., products sold, transferred to other establishments of the same company, or shipped for import or export sales. The survey provides per capita consumption calculated in a manner similar to the CAOBISCO/IOCCC survey and identifies the various types of confectionery produced. Chocolate confectionery in this survey includes products which contain either real

Joan L. Apgar and Frances H. Seligson, Ph.D., R.D.
Hershey Foods Corporation

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