

## XII. THE MADISON AVENUE CHA-CHA

"Governments lie; the press catches them at it."

-Anon.

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Where's the Beef?  
The Incredible edible egg.  
Milk. It's fitness you can drink.  
Beef Gives Strength.  
Enjoy the best! Iowa corn-fed beef.  
How to live high on the hog and steer  
clear of the fat.  
Somehow, nothing satisfies like beef.  
America, you're leaning on Pork.  
Come to Marlboro country.  
You've come a long way, baby.

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If logic were the criterion, the agricultural revolution would have put an end to the animal food habit 10,000 years ago, but human inertia is a powerful deterrent to change. In the modern age, advertising is another major obstacle, since the media routinely suppress vegetarian opinions in fear of losing food advertising revenues. In this area, the lies are *not* exposed by the press.

Advertising began 3000 years ago with the selling of slaves, cattle, and imports. By 1758 Samuel Johnson observed that, "Advertisements are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused, and it is therefore become necessary to gain attention by magnificence of promise and by eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetick."<sup>1</sup>

Things have only gone from bad to worse since then. The current U.S. outlay for advertising runs about 2.39% of the GNP or ~ \$145 billion<sup>2</sup>, more than twice as much as the next ten countries combined and up from about \$10 billion in 1950. Distributions vary depending on the media. Local newspapers account for 25% of U.S. ad expenditures and 17% of food marketing expenditures.<sup>3</sup> TV, newspapers, radio, and billboards attract the rest.<sup>4</sup>

The *generic* advertising of food products is funded by commodity check-off programs, which date back to 1880 with state taxes given over for agricultural promotion.<sup>5</sup> This wasn't enough, so several commodity groups organized voluntary programs with advertising funds contributed by the farm producers. Under this system, "free riders" who refused to pay their share, but benefitted from everybody else's ads, became a problem. State governments then obligingly stepped in with legislation for nonrefundable advertising assessments, that are

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<sup>1</sup>See note 22. Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol.1, p 103.

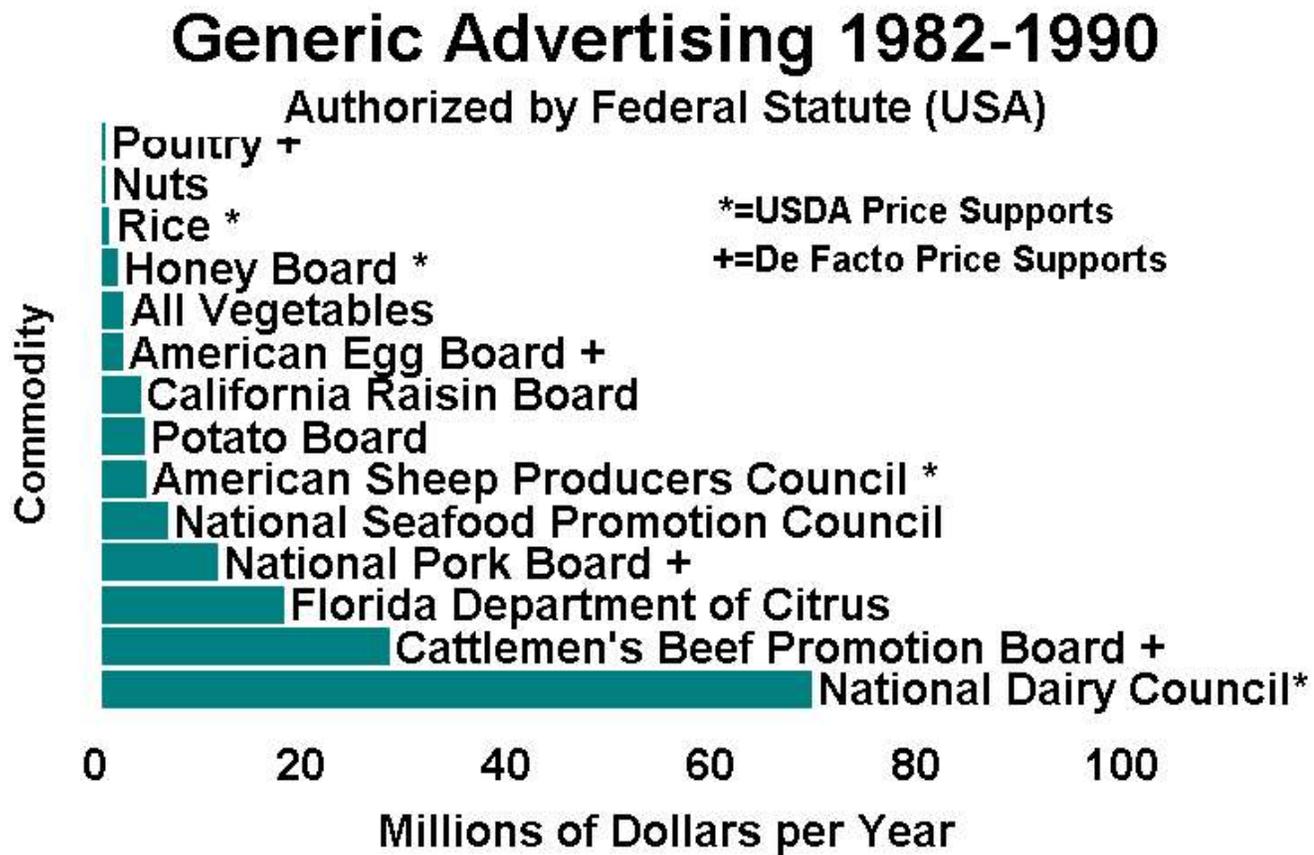
<sup>2</sup>Starch INRA Hooper. *World Advertising Expenditures: A Survey of World advertising Expenditures in 1985*. pp 5-10. Mamaroneck NY, 1986.

<sup>3</sup>Kinnucan H, Thompson S, and Chang H. *Commodity Advertising and Promotion*. Iowa State University Press. Ames, 1992. ISBN 0-8138-1297-6. p 4.

<sup>4</sup>Microsoft Corporation. *Microsoft Small Business Consultant and Stat Pack*. (Licensed from the Regents of the University of California). Redmond WA, 1988.

<sup>5</sup>See note 3. Kinnucan. p xiv.

deducted from the prices farmers receive when they sell, and are regarded by docile farmers as a tax write-off or an investment. Putative "free riders" no doubt view it as another strong arm act by the government. Costs follow:<sup>6,7</sup>



Milk marketing orders, which "constitute a government sanctioned monopoly designed to give producers greater control over prices, income, and product distribution,"<sup>8</sup> finally led to the Dairy and Tobacco Act of 1983 which mandates a collection of \$.15/lb of fluid market milk from dairy farmers. The industry spends \$145 million/year on advertising and another \$55 million/year on "education and research," for a total of \$200 million/yr<sup>9</sup> including the generic ads.

In 1988, the Mid-Atlantic Milk Marketing Association had its "educational" wrists slapped. The Baltimore Vegetarians (now the Vegetarian Resource Group) brought MAMMA's "Milk Has Less Than 4% Fat," campaign

<sup>6</sup>See note 3. Kinnucan. p 344.

<sup>7</sup>Morrison RM. *Generic Advertising of Farm Products*. United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. Agricultural Service Bulletin Number 481. p 3. Washington, 1985.

<sup>8</sup>See note 326. Kinnucan. p 24.

<sup>9</sup>See note 326. Kinnucan. p xiv.

to the attention of the Consumer Protection Division of the Maryland Attorney General, who exacted a penalty of \$3500 from MAMMA for "consumer education," and a promise not to do it again.<sup>10</sup> While milk *is* only 4 grams fat per 100 grams of milk (hence 4% fat by weight), that 100 grams carries 70 Calories. Each gram of fat carries 9 Calories so the milk is actually  $4 \times 9 / 70 = 51\%$  of Calories from fat. Using Dairy Council logic, a simple way to reduce fat content still more would be to thin it out with water ten times, then it could be claimed to be ".4% fat milk." Alas, it would still be 51% fat by Calories, and so dairy interests always present nutritional "education" in nutrient/weight terms.

The Maryland ruling did not spread out of state, and since then, the fast food joints have picked up on the dairy industry's mathematical flim-flam. McDonald's "91% fat free hamburger" is actually  $\sim (100-91)(\text{gm}) \times 9(\text{Cal}/\text{gm}) / 180(\text{Cal}) = 81/180 = 45\%$  of Calories from fat,<sup>11</sup> and the "93% fat free chicken" now being hyped by the chicken chains is  $\sim (100-93) \times 9 / 155 = 40\%$  of Calories from fat.<sup>12</sup> The genetic engineering of low fat, low cholesterol beef, is a waste of time from a scientific viewpoint, since saturated fat and cholesterol are essential to the cell membrane integrity of any viable food animal. From the sales viewpoint, however, the beef, pork, and chicken people could solve their fat problem at no cost at all, by following dairy's lead. Just mix in an equal weight of water, and the 91% fat-free hamburger becomes 94.5% fat-free hamburger soup. The 93% fat-free chicken becomes 96.5% fat-free chicken soup.

Ah, the miracles of advertising are like the loaves and the fishes! Fundamental to all animal food advertising is the confuse-o-gram, example shown below:

<b>Living With Osteoporosis</b>		
<b>Sources of Calcium (This Patient Information has been made available through a grant from Roerig)</b>		
	<b>Portion</b>	<b>Calcium (mg)</b>
T-bone steak	12 oz	32
Round steak	3 oz	5
Pork chop	1 chop	7
Fried chicken	1/2 chicken	61
Fish (herring)	3 oz	63
Fish (snapper)	3 oz	34
Applesauce	1/2 cup	5
Banana	one	7
Cherries	1 cup	16
Fruit cocktail	1/2 cup	6
Pineapple	1 slice	6
Fried egg	one	26
Hard boiled egg	one	28
Omelet (butter, milk)	three eggs	141
Poached egg	one	28
Scrambled egg	one	47

This meaningless, but strangely typical, list appeared in a throw-away medical journal.<sup>13</sup> The text stated, "The chart shows foods which are good sources of calcium." Variable volume and weight measures are used, so no ranking is possible. Also, it should be noted that whenever the terms "portion," or "servings," appear in place of the word "Calories," a generous "portion" of balderdash is about to be "served."

<sup>10</sup>Consumer Protection Division. *Letter to Charles Stahler-Baltimore Vegetarians*. Maryland Attorney General. Aug 22, 1988.

<sup>11</sup>See note 46. USDA #8. Item #367.

<sup>12</sup>*ibid.* item #737.

<sup>13</sup>Urban Medicine. *Living with Osteoporosis*. Medical Publishing Ent. Fair Lawn NJ. May 1992;7(2). No ISSN.

Adding Calories from USDA #8, and some real heavy hitters(\*), the whole effort is hoisted on its own petard with a quick calcium/Calorie sort :

Clearly, if anyone did take the first list to heart, they *would* have to learn to "Live with Osteoporosis," since there wouldn't be much calcium in their diet. However, poetic justice was at least rendered, since the Dairy Council is usually the prime offender in the *calcium* confuse-o-gram, and its product was originally omitted.

Current USDA nutrient tables are set up much like confuse-o-grams, which is not surprising in view of the USDA's protective and paternalistic relationship with the animal food industry. USDA #72, *Nutritive Values of Foods*, abounds with cans, containers, cups, gallons, loaves, oz, packets, pieces, servings, slices, tbsps, tsps, wedges, and finally variable gram weights. However, there are no standardized USDA "nutrients per 100 Calorie" tables from which idle curiosity and a thumb could quickly ferret out the most nutritious foods, which for the most part would not be dairy and meats, but leafy green vegetables, which give the most nutrients for the fewest Calories.

<b>SOURCES OF CALCIUM (REVISITED)</b>		
	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Calcium (mg)</b>
<b>ADDED:</b>		
<b>Seaweed, (ogo or limu) *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1062</b>
<b>Bok Choy *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1055</b>
<b>Turnip greens *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>921</b>
<b>Collard greens *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>559</b>
<b>Cheese, Parmesan *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Cheese, Swiss *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Kale *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Romaine lettuce *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Milk, whole *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Broccoli *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>ORIGINAL:</b>		
<b>Omelet (butter, milk)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Scrambled egg</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Fish (snapper)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Fish (herring)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Poached egg</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Hard boiled egg</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Fried egg</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Fruit cocktail</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Pineapple</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Cherries</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Applesauce</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Banana</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>T-bone steak</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Fried chicken</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Round steak</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Pork chop</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>

The Beef Industry Council likes *fat* confuse-o-grams. Beef ads leave weight and nutrient data hanging in the air, apparently on the assumption that readers don't own calculators. On the left is the hype, on the right the percent of Calories from fat.

<b>Beef.</b> Real Food For Real People. Source: U.S.D.A. Handbook No. 8-13		<b>FAT</b> Percent of Calories Source: Pocket Calculator	
 <b>TOP ROUND</b> 5.3 gms total fat* (1.8 gms sat. fat) 162 calories	<b>29%</b>	 <b>EYE OF ROUND</b> 5.5 gms total fat* (2.1 gms sat. fat) 155 calories	<b>32%</b>
 <b>ROUND TIP</b> 6.4 gms total fat* (2.3 gms sat. fat) 162 calories	<b>36%</b>	 <b>SIRLOIN</b> 7.4 gms total fat* (3.0 gms sat. fat) 177 calories	<b>38%</b>
 <b>TOP LOIN</b> 7.6 gms total fat* (3.0 gms sat. fat) 172 calories	<b>40%</b>	 <b>TENDERLOIN</b> 7.9 gms total fat* (3.1 gms sat. fat) 174 calories	<b>41%</b>

The Food and Nutrition Board has done a little cha-cha of its own to stay out of print with an RDA for fat, but anything over 30% Calories from fat is too much for the McGovern Committee,<sup>14</sup> whose advice was thoroughly disturbing to the "fat lobby" back in 1977.<sup>15</sup> Anything over 10-20% is probably too much for persons interested in fitness.

<sup>14</sup>Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. *Dietary Goals for the United States*. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, 1977.

<sup>15</sup>See note 290. Hausman.

## OTHER PLAYERS

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RADIO COPY: National Pork Producer's Council. 12/30/86

SFX: TELEPHONE RINGING IN RECEIVER.

MAITRE D': Allo. Chez Blanc restaurant.

JUNE: Hello, this is June Jenkins...

ANNOUNCER: It's no surprise that white meat dishes are popular. What is surprising is that the white meat in this restaurant is pork. The other white meat. Pork is nutritious and surprisingly low in calories (sic) and cholesterol...

JUNE: Well, I guess I understand that. I'll tell Harry to pick up an order from your restaurant tonight.

MAITRE D': I can tell him for you. He iz here now, dining with your lovely daughter.

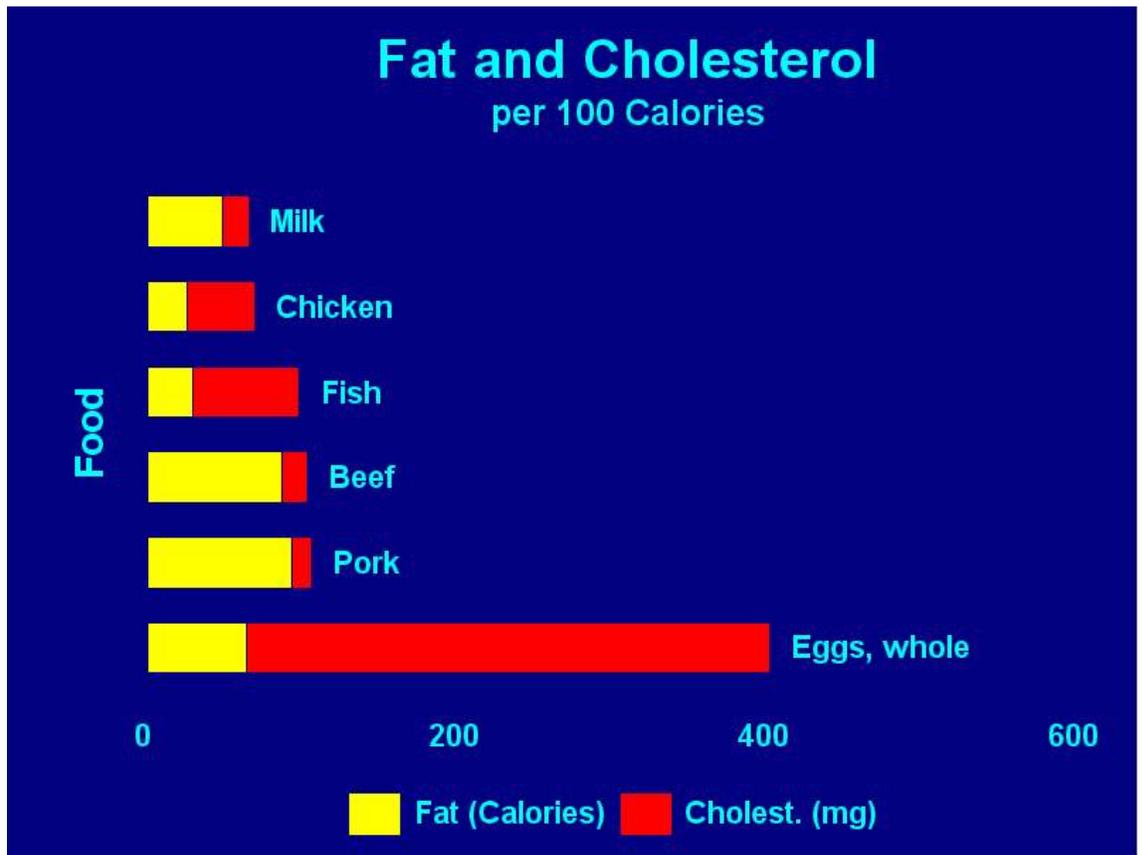
JUNE: We don't have a daughter.

SFX: PHONE CLICKS.

ANNOUNCER: Pork. The other white meat. A message from America's pork producer's.

Poor June. Dirty Harry has run off with another lady because June never learned how to cook a pig. This radio copy was scrutinized by a U.S. Senate hearing on health and nutrition claims in advertising.<sup>16</sup>

Neither pork nor chicken (the first white meat) is a big time fat buster, but animal food aficionados do get their pick: too much fat or too much cholesterol, or too much of both (right):



<sup>16</sup>*Health and Nutrition Claims in Food Labeling.* U.S. Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs. One Hundred First Congress. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, 1991.

The total of \$750 million/year for commodity advertising is dwarfed by the \$9 billion for brand name food advertising.<sup>17</sup>



While the Potato Board generic ads came to \$5.7 million in 1988, the potato chip companies sank \$46 million into pushing a product that, due to the fat layer on the fried chips, has roughly a quarter of the nutrient/Calorie ratios of a baked potato. One might reasonably argue that the more something has to be advertised, the more likely it's bad for you.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>See note 326. Kinnucan. p xv.

<sup>18</sup>*Advertising Age Yearbook*. p 36. Crain Books. Chicago, 1984. ISBN 0-87251-093-X.

Fast food advertising on television runs up a tidy bill by itself:<sup>19</sup>



So, what to do about the imbalances of dairy, egg, fast-food, junk-food, meat, and poultry advertising? One solution would be for the fruit and vegetable growers to advertise more aggressively. However, while plant foods netted \$11.8 billion in sales in 1987, the small growers won't kick in for generic advertising. They feel "it would be difficult to devise an equitable method to assess fees from producers of the approximately 162 different fruits and vegetables grown and commercially marketed in the United States."<sup>20</sup> The growers also believe "the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables are already well known,"<sup>21</sup> so why waste the money?

Except for the California Raisin Board and the Florida Citrus Board, the plant food growers seem reluctant to involve themselves in nutritional politics, advertising, or education. The Potato Board, an exception, mounted

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<sup>19</sup>Jacobson MF, and Fritschner S. *The Completely Revised and Upgraded Fast-Food Guide*. p 20. Center for Science in the Public Interest. Workman Publishing. New York, 1991.

<sup>20</sup>GAO/RCED-92-15 *Generic Promotion of Produce*. p 2. Resources, Community, and Economic Division. United States General Accounting Office. Washington, 1991.

<sup>21</sup>*ibid.* p 4.

an "advercation" campaign in the 80's to counter the notion that potatoes are fattening.<sup>22</sup> Using cookbooks, food page editors, magazine articles, and TV, the Potato Board was able to improve the public perception of potatoes as a nutritious food from 55% in 1973 to 81% in 1975, honest advertising for a change. But in essence, most food advertising goes for foods that have a negative impact on health.

#### OTHER STRATEGIES:

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Cigarette ads are uniquely obnoxious. Recent articles in the Journal of the American Medical Association concluded that Camel's "Old Joe," was recognized by 91.3% of 6-year-old children,<sup>23</sup> and was "far more successful at marketing cigarettes to children (grades 9-12) than to adults (ages > 20)."<sup>24</sup> Taxpayers are gouged three times: first, tax dollars are used to administer USDA tobacco administration programs. Next, the tobacco industry takes a tax deduction on its ~ \$2.5 billion/yr advertising bill which forgives about 35% or \$870 million.<sup>25</sup> Lastly, we all chip in to pay the ~ \$65 billion/yr medical bills<sup>26</sup> for the citizens who get taken in by those virile cowboys from Marlboro Country and the glamorous courtesans in the Virginia Slims ads. (Curiously, smoking is a serious risk for both male impotence and wrinkled female skin).

Much the same arguments apply to the animal food industry. First, our taxes are used for outright supports to the dairy industry, and as de facto supports for the meat and poultry industries, into which taxpayers pour ~ \$5 billion/yr for feed grain.<sup>27,28</sup> This financial break allows the animal food interests to fund the tax-deductible nutritional education/propaganda that leads the public to make further use of disastrously unhealthy food that could not even hold its own on a free market. Lastly, our taxes go to pay the ~ \$123 billion medical bills for all the heart attacks, cancers, and related calamities that inevitably follow.

Cigarette advertising again provides a model for strategy. JAMA's call for an outright ban on cigarette advertising is attractive, and lawyer John Banzhaf, of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), argues that commercial speech is *not* protected by the first amendment.<sup>29</sup> However, when cigarette broadcast advertising was

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<sup>22</sup>Ross Roundtable on Medical Issues. *Nutrition Education for physicians-Problems and Opportunities*.p 14. Ross Laboratories. Columbus, 1980. LCCC No. 80-52247.

<sup>23</sup>Fischer P, Schwartz M, et al. *Brand Name Logo Recognition by Children Aged 3 to 6 Years*. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1991;266(22):3145-3148. ISSN 0098-7484.

<sup>24</sup>DiFranzi J, Richards J, et al. *RJR Nabico's Cartoon Camel Promotes Camel Cigarettes to Children*. *ibid*. pp 3149-3153.

<sup>25</sup>Advertising is a tax deductible business expense. Corporate tax rates are 35%, above income of \$18 million/year. Tobacco income is \$50 billion/year, according to The Tobacco Institute ((202)-457-4800), so savings (S) from income (I) tax deductions on advertising (A≈\$2,500 million) are:

$$(S)=.35(I)-.35(I-A)=.35(A)=\$870 \text{ million.}$$

1994 Instructions for Forms 1120 and 1120A. U.S. Department of the Treasury, OMB and IRS.

<sup>26</sup>See note 213. *Lung Disease Data 1993*.

<sup>27</sup>See note 243. *Agricultural Statistics, 1989*.

<sup>28</sup>See note 262. Durning.

<sup>29</sup>Banzhaf J. *Ads for Dangerous Products May be Banned/Regulated:Cigarette Ads Enjoy Little First Amendment Protection*. ASH Smoking and Health Review. May/June 1992 Vol XXII (3):2. 2013 H. St. NW Washington, DC 20006.

banned in 1971,<sup>30</sup> the tobacco companies, previously airing 80% of their ad dollars on TV, hardly blinked. With the \$1.5 billion/yr savings in advertising costs,<sup>31</sup> they diversified. R.J. Reynolds bought up Nabisco and Philip Morris took over General Foods, so the remaining media, which in some cases devote as much as 70% of space to advertising,<sup>32</sup> must now cave in not only on the issue of animal food and packaged junk-food but also on the tobacco issue.

Currently, there are a number of lawsuits pending against tobacco companies, charging wrongful death from heart attack, lung cancer, oral cancer, etc. If one of these suits succeeds, the tobacco industry will fall, but so will the judicial system, that would overnight be jammed with back-to-back liability suits. Worse, if cigarette companies can be held liable for the damage caused to people foolish enough to use their product, then bicycle, motorcycle, and skateboard manufacturers, to name a few, will also go out of business. In essence, we will have illegalized risk taking.

However, advertising costs are currently tax deductible (right). U.S corporation taxes, adopted in 1909 and personal income taxes, adopted in 1913,<sup>33</sup> may be unconstitutional to begin with. Arguably, if we are to have income taxes, they should be flat rate taxes, lower, and with none of the deductions that make the IRS such a lucrative maze for bureaucrats and the cunning entrepreneurs who find ways around the bureaucrat's rules.<sup>34</sup> Arguably, of the items that are currently deductible, the first to lose that status should be business expenses for advertising and promotions. *If they can't tell the truth, why should we pay them to teach?* Without tax deductibility, advertising expenditures would shrink and the surviving media could tell both sides of vital issues such as the effect of smoking and diet on human health. Parsimonious advertising might finally come down to "A has product B to sell at price C and with desirable features x, y, and z."

<sup>30</sup>McAuliffe RE. *Advertising, Competition, and Public Policy: Theories and New Evidence*. D.C Heath & Co. Lexington, 1987. ISBN 0-669-12391-9. p 3.

<sup>31</sup>White L. *Merchants of Death: The American Tobacco Industry*. William Morrow and Company. New York, 1988. ISBN 0-688-06706-9. p 120.

<sup>32</sup>See note 22 *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol.1, p 104c.

<sup>33</sup>*ibid*. Vol.9, p 269.

<sup>34</sup>See note 275. Friedman p 306.

Opponents would be the ~ 4000 ad agencies,<sup>35</sup> who in the last 10 years lost 13% of their business to direct marketing and junk mail, but who still get 15% commissions on media billings.<sup>36</sup> The library contains shelfloads of books on advertising which fall into two main camps: authors who *do* advertising and authors who want to do something *about* it. Some of the former discuss sophisticated mathematical models correlating product sales with advertising input,<sup>37</sup> but seem aimed mostly at convincing sponsors that their ads are working at all.

A good deal of effort could have been saved here; the estimated increase in beef sales of .28 lb/household/mo. after the "Beef: Real Food for Real People" promo,<sup>38</sup> reflects human gullibility, not partial differential equations.

Some of the latter books, although written by admen<sup>39</sup> who believe the U.S. economy would collapse without their services, admit that 80% of the public believe advertising dishonest and degrading. One brand new ad writer, asked if wasting her Ivy League education was distasteful, replied with a question: "Did you ever eat a pigeon?"

The alcohol, junk food, and tobacco industries would also protest a "no ad deductions" policy. Most of the food that is heavily advertised has been adulterated, chemicalized, sugared, salted, and packaged for the profit of the manufacturers rather than the nutritional benefit of the buyer. If the policy spread beyond health-related commodities, other complainants would likely be makers of inferior products, since the superior products sell themselves anyway.

Allies would be consumers, who should experience a drop in prices, taxpayers weary of subsidizing their own deception, and activists like Adbusters<sup>40</sup> who feel that the commercial priorities of advertising have almost destroyed culture.

In any event, price-supported and ad-deducted animal food interests currently shape medical and lay opinion by simply backing authorities who favor the use of drugs and animal foods, and suppressing equally informed individuals who feel that most disease is the result of lifestyle error, preventable and often correctable by exercise, a vegan diet, and no recreational drugs.

Doubtless, citizens have a right to eat as high off the hog as they please, but they also have the obligation to pay the full cost of the hog, including the growing costs, advertising costs, and lastly their own medical costs.

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<sup>35</sup>See note 22. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol.1, p 106.

<sup>36</sup>Business Week. *What Happened to Advertising?* McGraw-Hill.Sept 23, 1991.p 66. ISSN 0007-71351.

<sup>37</sup>See note 353. McCauliffe.

<sup>38</sup>See note 326. Kinnucan. p 65.

<sup>39</sup>O'Toole J. *The Trouble With Advertising*. p 6. Times Books. New York, 1985. ISBN 0-8129-1265-9. .

<sup>40</sup>Adbusters Media Foundation. *Adbusters Quarterly*. 1243 West 7th Ave. Vancouver BC, V6H 1B7.