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FTC Disputes Sugared Cereal Ads

With an advertising barrage aimed at every home in the country, the Kellogg cereal people are spreading the word that sugar-coated breakfast foods are highly nutritious and don't contribute to tooth decay.

At our request, the Federal Trade Commission has compiled evidence that demolishes most of the company's major advertising claims. The data, though not yet adopted in final official form, raises authoritative challenges to the theme of Kellogg's lavish new advertising campaign.

The ads contend, for instance, that "ready-to-eat cereals do not increase tooth decay in children." The FTC cites a study of animals to the contrary. It shows that a heavy diet of pregared food, even when washed down with milk, causes tooth decay.

Kellogg assures the public that sugared cereals are nutritious. In the study furnished us by the FTC, Dr. Jean Mayer, the renowned diet authority, protests that even when fortified, "the total effect is one of inadequate nutrition."

The adverse evidence, according to federal experts, applies to similar claims by General Mills, Quaker Oats and other cereal firms. In fairness to Quaker Oats, it should be noted that they have welcomed an FTC probe of cereal ads directed at the nation's children.

Kellogg has come up with three studies purporting to support the nutritional benefits of sugared foods. But experts have found them based on "allegedly inadequate methodology" and "allegedly insufficient evidence,"

the documentation provided us reports.

Of the potential dental problems involved for children, the FTC declares: "Frequent nibbling between meals on small amounts of highly sugared cereals might contribute significantly to tooth decay."

In disputing Kellogg's sweet sell, the study also states: Sugar contributes nothing to human nutrition besides calories—no vitamins, no minerals, no proteins . . . A calorie of sugar contains no more energy than a calorie of anything else."

The FTC found an array of misstatements and errors advanced by Kellogg's admen:

- The company claims there is no more sugar in an ounce of sweetened cereal than in an apple, banana or glass of orange juice. This statement is based on cereal containing 30.8 per cent sugar. Not only do many other cereals contain far more sugar, but the refined cereal in a breakfast food can cause more cavities than the natural sugar in fruits, according to the experts.

- Kellogg has ballyhooed the statement that "sugar consumption in the U.S. has remained unchanged for the last 50 years." Government analysts found the company's own charts show sugar consumption shooting up 13 per cent since 1960.

- Kellogg's figures are contradictory. In one document, for example, Kellogg claims only eight per cent of its sugared cereals are eaten directly from the box without milk. In their new ads, the company gives the figure

as an even lower six percent.

Oswald File—The Pentagon may have thrown away files showing Army intelligence agents were ahead of almost everyone else in establishing the background of Lee Harvey Oswald as the killer of John F. Kennedy.

We recently told how the Defense Department had "deep-sixed" some of the records on the hectic events at Dallas even though the Justice Department ordered everything to be kept. Since then, FBI files have yielded some clues to what the material might have contained.

The FBI records show the Army's 112th Army Intelligence Group at San Antonio was alertly supplying solid leads to Oswald's turbulent past within two hours after Oswald's arrest in November, 1963. Intelligence agent Lt. Col. Robert E. Jones was on the phone informing the FBI of Oswald's desertion to the Soviet Union, his marriage to a Russian woman and his pro-Castro Cuban activities in New Orleans.

All the Army had to go on in that short time was the fact that an identification card in Oswald's wallet when he was captured bore the fictitious name "Alex Hidell." Jones and other intelligence agents swiftly connected this with an "A. J. Hidell" known to have distributed pro-Castro pamphlets in New Orleans.

From there, the links were made to Oswald through the FBI and the Army's files. In the wake of the destruction of the Pentagon files, the Army intelligence agents on that day may never get full credit for their work.