

U.S. Plugs Tobacco Abroad but Not Here

By Don Oberdorfer
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The U.S. Government is warning Americans against the dangers of cigarette smoking—but overseas it is quietly spending taxpayers' funds to subsidize cigarette commercials, and a slick new pro-smoking film, "World of Pleasure."

The cigarette promotion work is part of the "product development" program of the Foreign Agricultural Service, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The aim is to sell more American tobacco abroad.

During the current fiscal year, Uncle Sam is pouring \$210,000 into advertising to sell selected brands of cigarettes to the people of Japan, Thailand and Austria. In each case, the cigarettes involved use substantial amounts of American leaf.

Some of the promotion money goes to foreign newspaper and magazine ads, but most is used for television.

Foreign audiences are not told that Uncle Sam is subsidizing the ads. Nor do the cigarette packs involved bear the warning, now required by Federal law in the United States, that "cigarette smoking may be hazardous to your health."

The Federal money is funneled to foreign cigarette makers through four U.S. trade groups — Tobacco Associates Inc., Burley and Dark Leaf Tobacco Export Assn., Leaf Tobacco Export Assn. and Virginia Dark-fired and Sun-cured Export Assn.

Meanwhile, operating through the same trade groups, the Agriculture Department is subsidizing a new Warner Brothers film, "World of Pleasure," to be shown in England, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and Egypt.

The United States is paying

\$106,000 in foreign currency for its share of the film.

In a contract with Warner Brothers, the trade groups add a contribution of their own.

A script of the 23-minute technicolor film on hand at the Agriculture Department contains scenes such as this:

"A young man and girl (over 21) run up to the surf and light and enjoy cigarettes as they look at the sea. Boy offers pack. Girl takes two cigarettes, placing one in boy's lips, one in her own. They light up, enjoy their cigarettes . . ."

According to Hugh G. Kiger, director of the tobacco division of the Foreign Agricultural Service, the contract provides that Warner Brothers will distribute the film as a short subject with its theatrical features abroad.

Moviegoers will not be informed that it is subsidized by Uncle Sam or the U. S. tobacco industry.

[Sen. Warren G. Magnuson (D-Wash), a leading congressional sponsor of the U.S. law requiring a health hazard warning, on cigarette packs, expressed shock last night at the reports, Associated Press reported.

"How can a civilized country promote increased cigarette smoking in foreign countries when its own Congress has decreed that domestic consumers must be warned of the potential hazards of cigarette consumption?" he asked in a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman.

[An Agricultural Department spokesman said the programs were prepared under a congressional authorization to expand overseas markets for U.S. farm commodities.

[In his letter Magnuson called on Freeman to report on the programs, adding that if the report is accurate, "I would like to know what future course you plan to take with respect to these matters."]