Milupa started as a small family business dealing in biscuits and sweets in Friedrischsdorf, Germany in 1921. Founded by Emil Pauly, the name Milupa is an anagram of the last three letters of his first name and first three letters of his second name. The Pauly family began to develop cereal based meals in 1933 and launched its first infant formula, Milumil in Europe in 1964.

Milupa was acquired by Dutch company Nutricia in 1995. A holding company was created by the name of NUMICO to reflect the first syllables of Nutricia, Milupa and Cow & Gate, an earlier acquisition. In 2007, NUMICO was in turn acquired by Groupe Danone, making Milupa part of Danone.

Milupa’s main market is in Europe. Figures submitted in an arbitration case concerning the Milupa trade name show that prior to its acquisition by Danone, its infant foods had a market share in Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Turkey, Bosnia and Cyprus of over 30%, in Austria of 60% and in Slovenia of 85%. The company now also markets aggressively in the Middle East.

Look at this!

In July 2009, the UK Advertising Standards Authority upheld complaints brought by the UK IBFAN group, Baby Milk Action, over an advertisement for the Milupa Aptamil brand of follow-on formula. The ad says Aptamil is the ‘best follow-on milk’ and claims that ingredients called immunofortis help to protect against infection. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found, after a two year investigation, that the ad is in breach of the advertising code clauses on substantiation, truthfulness and comparisons. The ASA also told Milupa to remove claims about infant immune system benefits because of lack of evidence.

Milupa, in its defence, said that Immunofortis had been approved at European Commission (EC) level, and because it was the only one containing both prebiotics and nucleotides, it was therefore superior to other follow-on formulas on the market. It provided a table of ingredients and nutritional benefits to show why this was so, but the ASA said it was not substantive enough to back Milupa’s claim that its formula was the best. The ASA noted the EC had called for further research into Immunofortis, and the level of evidence Milupa had supplied was not sufficient.

Editor’s note: The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in February 2010 gave an opinion that the evidence provided by parent company Danone is insufficient to establish a cause and effect relationship between the consumption of Immunofortis and the initiation of appropriate immune responses including the defence against pathogens. While the EFSA opinion was still pending, Milupa forged ahead with an application to the UAE Ministry of Health in January 15, 2010, to place an ad in newspapers to announce a series of medical symposia on its range of Immunofortis baby milks. The draft ad persisted in claiming that Immunofortis has been clinically proven to naturally strengthen the immune system despite the UK ruling and questions regarding the legitimacy of the Immunofortis claims in Europe. Fortunately, Milupa’s request was turned down by the authorities in Abu Dhabi.