

# Campaign for ethical marketing

June 2004



According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "Marketing practices that undermine breastfeeding are potentially hazardous wherever they are pursued: in the developing world, WHO estimates that some 1.5 million children die each year because they are not adequately breastfed. These facts are not in dispute." You can help to stop marketing malpractice.

The *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* was adopted as a 'minimum requirement' for all countries by the World Health Assembly (which sets the policy of the World Health Organisation) in 1981. The *International Code* aims to protect breastfeeding by restricting company marketing practices and to ensure breastmilk substitutes are used properly when these are necessary. A number of Resolutions address questions of interpretation and changes in marketing practices and scientific knowledge, and have equal weight to the *International Code*.

## Companies exposed in new monitoring report

**Background:** Members of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) from around the world monitor baby food companies against the Code and Resolutions. Monitoring results from recent exercises are gathered together in the report *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004*, which profiles the 16 biggest baby food companies. Nestlé is once again found to be responsible for more violations than any of its competitors.

Company responses to violations highlighted on these action sheets demonstrate their refusal to accept the validity of the Code and Resolutions and their attempts to excuse blatant malpractice through denials and deception. Judge what the companies are doing yourself by downloading the report from the IBFAN website ([www.ibfan.org](http://www.ibfan.org)) or ordering a copy from Baby Milk Action (tel: 01223 464420, price £10 including UK postage and packing (£30 for for-profit organisations).

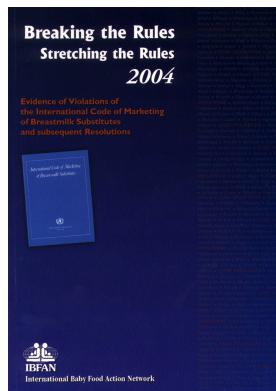
The report gives the contact details of the companies enabling you to write directly to the Chief Executives who put their own profits before infant health.



Companies should not give inducements to health workers, but they are widespread. They also serve to promote the company name and sometimes brand names. Nestlé's tissue box for the doctor's surgery in Thailand (left) follows the label design of its Nan infant formula.



Some violations in the report, such as this, have been targeted on past action sheets. Companies then claim they are old news. If they have not been reported, companies claim they have been hoarded. What they do not admit readily is their guilt.



*Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2004* presents evidence of violations from 69 countries. It describes 2,000 violations and includes over 700 pictures of the companies' own materials. Some examples are given here.

The report was launched at the UK Parliament on 13 May 2004 in conjunction with a motion from Members of Parliament calling for action to stop malpractice and for new WHA Resolutions to address new trends.



"Wyeth baby, great future" - in China, Wyeth mails promotional leaflets and newsletters to mothers.



"A teat so close to the real thing, this could be mummy" says Tommee Tippee in the UK, one of the countries to produce a separate summary report.



The monitoring has found companies are increasingly suggesting common infant feeding occurrences, such as 'reflux' require medical intervention with specialized formulas. Other formulas are claimed to help develop a child's intelligence. Examples from Mead Johnson.

## Please help to save Brazil's baby food marketing law

Brazil is achieving significant increases in breastfeeding rates thanks, in part, to its strong law implementing the Code and Resolutions, but the law is now under attack. The law was recently revised and now covers baby food for children up to three years of age. The previous law covered products for children up to one year of age and it was found companies undermined breastfeeding in the ways they promoted milks and other foods for children over one year of age.

The law introduced in 2003 requires whole milks to carry a 'Ministry of Health Warning' stating the product should not be used for infant feeding except on the specific advice of a health worker. As we have exposed in the past, Nestlé promotes its whole milk, *Ninho*, in the infant feeding sections of supermarkets and pharmacies alongside infant formula costing three times the price (also see right). Poor mothers who have decided or been persuaded not to breastfeed often use whole milk in place of formula, increasing the risk of ill health. Nestlé claims that as whole milk is not a bona fide breastmilk substitute it can market it however it likes and has refused to remove it from the infant feeding sections. It does, however, put the health warning on the labels in Brazil as required by the law.

News has now reached us that there is to be a challenge to the law in the Brazilian congress by the milk companies which object to having to put the 'Ministry of Health Warning' on their products.

Please send a message to the Brazilian congress asking them to stand firm against industry pressure c/o Baby Milk Action or by email via our website. Suggested message:

Brazil is admired around the world for its success in promoting and defending breastfeeding. As well as its famous milk bank network and imaginative promotional methods, such as the baby friendly postal workers and fire workers, Brazil's implementation of marketing requirements for baby foods is seen as an example for others to follow.

It is a great concern, therefore, to learn of the attempt by milk companies to weaken the Brazilian Regulations RDC N° 222 (*Regulamento Técnico para Promoção Comercial de Alimentos para Lactentes e Crianças de Primeira Infância*) by questioning the need for warnings on the labels of products, such as whole milks. The inappropriate use of whole milks for infant feeding is well known, and monitoring shows that some companies actually encourage this. Strong warnings are, therefore, essential to ensure mothers are aware that whole milk should not be used for infant feeding.

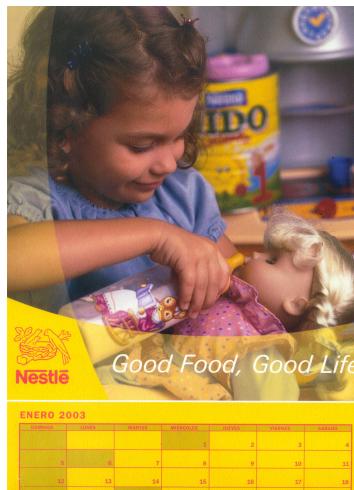
I ask you to do all you can to defend the Regulations against this irresponsible attack and to monitor company marketing practices to evaluate whether it needs strengthening in other areas. For example, it is a great concern that nothing can presently be done to stop companies promoting whole milks in the infant feeding sections of pharmacies and supermarkets alongside infant formula.

Join Baby Milk Action (£15 waged, £7 unwaged) to receive our *Update* newsletter. 23 St. Andrew's Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX. Tel: (01223) 464420.

E-mail: [info@babymilkaction.org](mailto:info@babymilkaction.org)

**[www.babymilkaction.org](http://www.babymilkaction.org)**

## Nestlé still the worst of the baby food companies



"Good Food, Good Life" Nestlé claims on this 2003 calendar in the Dominican Republic.

Yet encouraging the use of *Nido* whole milk for bottle-feeding is the height of irresponsibility.

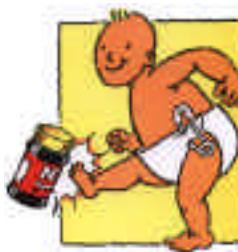
Nestlé has acknowledged that its whole milk is totally unsuitable for infant feeding, but argues that as it is not a proper breastmilk substitute it can market it how it likes.

Nestlé is again found to be the worst of the companies. You can write to the man responsible.

Suggested letter to Peter Brabeck-Letmathe CEO, Nestlé S.A., Av. Nestlé 55, CH-1800 Vevey, Switzerland. Fax: 41 21 924 2813.

IBFAN's *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules* 2004 report shows Nestlé aggressively marketing infant formula and other breastmilk substitutes in violation of the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly. Your continued malpractice and refusal to bring your company's marketing policies and instructions to staff into line with the Code and Resolutions, as requested by IBFAN and UNICEF, is deplorable.

Nestlé frequently attempts to divert attention from its aggressive marketing of breastmilk substitutes by highlighting that some mothers living in poverty use unsuitable substances for infant feeding, such as whole milks. As you are aware this happens, why does Nestlé continue to promote whole milks in the infant feeding sections of pharmacies and supermarkets? Why has Nestlé produced a 2003 calendar in the Dominican Republic showing a young girl giving her doll a feeding bottle, with *Nido* whole milk on display behind her? This attempt to gain extra profit from mothers who have been persuaded not to breastfeed, but cannot afford your infant formula, demonstrates the contempt you show for the mothers who you claim trust your company.



**Baby Milk Action** coordinates the 20-country international Nestlé boycott which has prompted some improvements to

marketing practices. The boycott focuses on Nestlé because it controls about 40% of the world market in baby milks and uses its influence to undermine controls on marketing activities. Monitoring shows Nestlé to be the largest single source of violations worldwide.  
⇒ If you are boycotting Nestlé products, such as Nescafé coffee, write and tell Nestlé.