

NUTRICIA – Alert!

On Friday, 20 February 2004, Dutch TV (RTL4), screened a news item entitled : “Kinderen voor Kinderen” (Children for Children). It showed a children’s choir with Chinese kids singing a popular Dutch tune with lyrics translated into Chinese. Nutricia has ordered 50,000¹ of the CDs which will be used as a gift for Chinese mothers who buy Nutricia baby food.

The Director of Nutricia China, Marc de Rouw, who is shown on TV arranging Nutricia products and promotional items², says “mothers who buy a tin of baby food during March and April 2004 will get a free CD³.”

The commentator says “this advertising blitz is a smart move by Nutricia” and explains there are plenty of babies for Nutricia since 20.4 million babies are born in China every year, as opposed to only 20,000 a year in Holland. Chinese children have grown up with traditional opera or revolutionary songs and to have ‘real’ children’s songs is a dream fulfilled. Nutricia thinks therefore, that masses of mothers will be attracted to Nutricia’s shelves to buy baby food in order to get the free gift.



In its enthusiasm to make money, Nutricia violates the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes which says:

“Manufacturers and distributors should not distribute to pregnant women or mothers of infants and young children any gifts of articles or utensils which may promote the use of breastmilk substitutes or bottle feeding” (Art 5.4)

Nutricia’s Director ends by saying: (with these CD’s) ... **“we have gold in our hands.”**

Source: RTL4 TV News, 20 Feb 2004

China has implemented the International Code into law. Article 10 of the Chinese “*Rules Governing the Administration of Marketing Of Breastmilk Substitutes*” (October 1 1995) states: “*It is forbidden to make propaganda, including the transmission and publication of any reportage, articles and pictures relating to breastmilk substitutes, through mass media including radio, movie, TV, newspaper, journals, books, audiovisual products and publications, etc.*” (translation by UNICEF)

IBFAN calls on Nutricia to stop this campaign now before it starts in March. The company must not use gifts of popular Dutch songs in CDs to increase sales of baby food to the detriment of infant health in China. As a transnational company, Nutricia must respect the International Code at all levels and national law and policies adopted to protect breastfeeding. Breastfeeding saves lives and should never be undermined by any kind of promotion seeking easy ‘gold’ for the company.

Details on page 2

Penang, Malaysia, 27 February 2004



Shown on this display are three Cow & Gate (Numico) formulae, a poster promoting Cow & Gate baby food and in the background, three other tins of Nutricia formulae. Source: RTL4 TV News, 20 Feb 2004



"Nutricia proudly presents ..."

The CD cover under this title also shows the names of the artists as well as a pack shot of a Nutricia formula. Source: RTL4 TV News, 20 Feb 2004

¹ An article in Algemeen Dagblad (16-2-2004) says Nutricia will give away a CD with the purchase of a tin of baby food. The company has ordered 50,000 – 100,000 CDs for use in an advertising campaign on China's East Coast. A sequel is expected later on this year.

² Mr de Rouw is shown setting up a display of NUMICO formulas: Cow & Gate 1, 2 and 3. These sell at 150 RMB per tin of 900 grams. Another set of formulae shown are a different Nutricia brand called "Kissing my Baby" in Chinese. These cover the same age range as Cow & Gate: 0-6 months, 6-12 months and 12 months up to 3 years. "Kissing my Baby" is much cheaper as it sells at 88 RMB per tin of 900 grams. There is a poster with a happy baby and a pack shot of Cow & Gate 2, a follow-up formula. The Nutricia Director is seen on TV arranging the CD against the Cow & Gate tins.

³The CD cover indicates that the CD is the first volume in its series. The cover shows the Nutricia company name, the "Kissing my Baby" brand name and a pack shot of "Kissing my Baby 3", a growing up milk for older babies. The entire "Kissing my Baby" range includes "Kissing my Baby 1" and "Kissing my Baby 2" infant and follow-up formulae.