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CONTENTS

- 6 **Cargill Campaign Responds to Struggling Economy**
- 10 **Stocking System Streamlines Ace Hardware Openings**
- 12 **Retail Media: Cold and Flu Calculator, Digital Dealership Screens**
- 20 **Feature: Social Networking**
- 22 **Ricci at Retail**
- 24 **Report: Candy**
Despite strong sales, confectioners still struggle to find space away from the shelf
- 32 **World View**
- 34 **In-Store Marketing Expo Preview**
Microsoft sponsors FutureVision Gallery, will unveil two new retail inventions



Page 39

- 39 **Dickies Calls on Factory Workers to Frame Campaign**
- 40 **Wii Fit Targets Non-Gamers**
Semipermanent encasings will remain in stores through the holidays

6 SHOPPER MARKETING NEWS

Don't Like Flank Steak? Try Maranada

Company research led to renaming beef cuts to reel in cash-strapped shoppers

By Aaron Baar

WICHITA, KAN. — Beef cuts such as “ball tip” or “flat meat” do not, on the surface, seem appetizing. But give them a new name — Cabrosa or Cordelico, perhaps — and you’ve got an entirely new segment of mid-range priced meats.

So goes the thinking behind Cargill Meat Solutions’ value cuts, lesser-known and lower-priced cuts of meat branded as an economic way to contin-

marketplace where certain consumers are no longer able to purchase certain cuts,” says Elizabeth Desbien, brand manager. “The whole idea of giving [these cuts] a fanciful name was to make them more appealing to these consumers.”

Company research showed 41% of consumers want more variety when it comes to meat cuts, and a similar number requested a better understanding of different cuts or preparation assistance with those cuts. The core of Cargill’s promotional program (developed by Associated, Wichita, Kan.) is

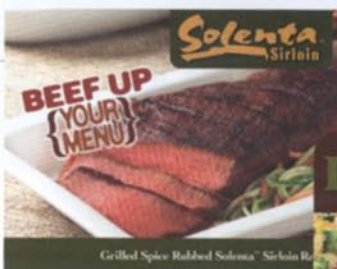
4 ½-inch by 6-inch cards that include not only recipe and preparation tips but ideas for side dishes as well. Another factor: Company research found 66% of consumers would more likely purchase a fresh beef brand if it included possible sides and menu information.

“Instead of just telling a consumer how to prepare these cuts, we gave them whole menus,” Desbien says. The cards include a shopping list for all of the menu items, making meal planning a simple in-store process, she

66% of consumers would more likely purchase if it included menu information.

ue providing beef during tougher economic times. The product was born out of company research that showed 30% of consumers are cutting back on beef purchases due to economic pressures. According to an April Cargill consumer trend study, 12% of consumers have shifted to “cheaper” stores for grocery purchases, and another 24% will continue to do so if the economy stays soft.

“We knew there was a gap in the



Grilled Spice Rubbed Solenta® Sirloin Beef

says. The promotion is only through in-store efforts.

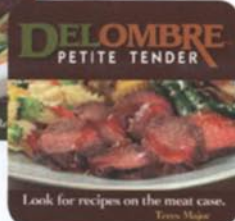
While Cargill could have opted for on-package recipes, the company and agency decided separate menu cards were a better way to give the lesser-known cuts some further cachet in the market. Package labeling shows the cuts fully prepared, with encouragement to look for the recipe cards in the meat case.

To further attract consumers to the cuts, Associated developed 90-degree stands with attractive shots of the cuts fully prepared, with the phrases “Beef up (your menu)” and “Affordability and variety never tasted so good.” (The company initially attempted freezer case wobblers, but retailer feedback said those devices came loose too easily.)

With more than 2,000 stores — and representation in 27 of 50 states — the marketing materials were consciously designed for easy retailer setup, Desbien says. Kits arrived with letters detailing the ideal in-store setup, though

OCTOBER 2008

Cargill used only in-store efforts, including recipe cards (left) and on-pack stickers (below), to promote its rebranded value cuts.



Look for recipes on the meat case. Terms: Steaks

individual stores were given leeway as to which elements to use.

During the value cuts’ initial launch in the summer months, the menu cards leaned heavily toward grilling preparation. As consumers moved into the time-crunched back-to-school season, the menu cards were updated to include versatile indoor or outdoor preparation. During the holiday season, the focus will be on roasts and other heartier fare, Desbien says.

Although the promotion is likely to remain as it is — with menu cards, 90-degree signs and on-package attractiveness — Desbien wouldn’t rule out using some in-store electronic advertising in the future. “I think electronic media is an opportunity,” she says. “But when that would happen and how that would happen, I’m not sure.”