



Texas Agricultural Extension Service

Texas Citrus Market Promotion

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Prior to the 1983 freeze, Texas citrus production and value exceeded the combined total production and value of all other tree fruits and nuts in the state. Nonetheless, Texas citrus production ranked behind Florida and California-Arizona production, although Texas grapefruit production is second only to Florida in the U.S. The Texas citrus industry must, therefore, pursue aggressive and effective promotion and marketing strategies to maintain and expand its share of the total citrus market, primarily for fresh fruit but also for processed products.

TexaSweat Citrus Advertising, Inc. was organized in 1962 as a non-profit, non-stock corporation for the purpose of promoting the sale of fresh Texas citrus fruit. TexaSweat is under contract to the Texas Valley Citrus Committee (TVCC), which administers the Federal Marketing Order for Texas citrus. It is funded through assessments collected by TVCC on a per-carton basis for all Texas citrus shipped fresh through commercial channels. This assessment is paid equally by shippers and growers.

The Board of Directors of TexaSweat consists of 11 members—five grower members of Texas Citrus Mutual (TCM) selected by TCM, five shipper members selected by TexaSweat. The remaining director is elected by the other 10 and must be a citrus grower who is not a member of TCM. Directors are elected for a 2-year term.

TexaSweat's objective is to create and maintain an overall positive image for the Texas citrus industry. Market promotion activities are primarily directed to wholesale and retail levels to encourage the purchase and further the promotion of fresh Texas citrus. Public relations activities, educational

materials and advertising are directed at the produce trade, retailers and consumers to enhance awareness and create greater preference for Texas citrus.

Market research is essential to determine market preferences, market trends and perceptions regarding Texas citrus and to enable the most effective use of the limited funds available for the promotion of Texas citrus.

TexaSweat has contracted with the Texas A&M University Market Research Center and others to conduct market research over the years. Many of the points emphasized in market research reports in the past have been implemented by the Texas citrus industry. However, the changing trends and perceptions in the marketplace require continued research and evaluation to improve the total marketing program for fresh Texas citrus fruits.

Promotional Activities

The overall objective for the TexaSweat marketing programs has been to create a demand for fresh Texas oranges and grapefruit by influencing the trade to conduct promotional activities which would encourage greater sales to consumers. Publicity through media channels was designed to strengthen merchandising efforts and create favorable consumer attitudes for Texas citrus. Target audiences were the receiving trade, retailers and consumers. The overall promotional program is comprised of merchandising, advertising and public relations programs.

Merchandising programs aimed at the trade serve one primary purpose—to motivate the

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receiving trade and retailers to purchase citrus from Texas. Once Texas citrus is part of the produce department, there is a two-fold objective. First, TexaSweat promotions are set with retailers to generate eye-catching displays of Texas oranges and grapefruit in a prominent area of the produce department. Secondly, ad features and in-store promotions are scheduled to increase normal sales. Very positive results are being achieved by offering national promotions and promotions set on an individual company basis.

Within the advertising category, commercials or ads are placed in newspapers, or on radio or television. Both the trade and consumers are the target audience, with tie-in benefit provided for the retailer. To qualify for the tie-in, retailers must create features for Texas oranges and/or grapefruit through their own form of advertising and in-store promotion. The messages to consumers have included custom-designed radio jingles with the lyrics "Texas Ruby Red grapefruit, you never had it so sweet." Print ads have utilized the same theme.

Contact with consumers has been strengthened through public relations programs. Avenues were established to transmit pertinent information to the produce trade and to consumers through cost-effective means. Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, educational programs and many other vehicles have been used to convey nutritional information, recipes, serving suggestions and general industry information.

New Promotional Program

As the Texas citrus industry continues its recovery from the 1983 freeze, new promotional efforts have been developed to create both trade and consumer awareness of the rejuvenated industry and its superior quality fresh citrus. The new program is based on the evaluation of a nationwide study of consumer attitudes towards Texas Ruby Red grapefruit, conducted during the 1987-88 season under contract by TexaSweat. The new program will be implemented for the 1988-89 season.

Several points will be emphasized to create a stronger position for Texas fresh citrus:

- Work old markets to regain the market share lost to competitors since the freeze.
- Concentrate on key areas to reinforce Texas citrus in the minds of retailers.
- Improve distribution.
- Increase trade and consumer awareness of Texas Ruby Red grapefruit as the best Ruby Red grapefruit.
- Reinforce the premium quality image of Texas Ruby Red grapefruit.
- Provide additional information to consumers to increase visibility of Texas citrus.

These points will be emphasized in traditional promotional programs as well as national tie-in food promotions with other commodity groups.

Moreover, the industry has joined together to develop a unified and progressive image for the new Texas citrus industry. This new look includes a new logo, similar to an authentic seal, and new decal designs and shipping carton designs.

Another major change is the development of two new marketing names for Texas red grapefruit varieties. Both Rio Red and Star Ruby grapefruit will be marketed jointly as "Rio Star" to reflect their deep red flesh color. Ruby Red and other slightly redder varieties and selections such as Henderson and Ray will be marketed under the name "Ruby-Sweet." The new names should distinguish Texas-grown red grapefruit from that of competitors and also should provide acceptable market differentiation between the various degrees of interior red color of Texas-grown red grapefruit varieties.

Finally, quality standards have been upgraded by the Texas Valley Citrus Committee for fresh citrus shipped commercially under the Texas Citrus Marketing Order. "Texas Fancy" is an improved U.S. No. 1 grade for grapefruit. "Texas Choice" is an improved U.S. No. 2 grade for grapefruit and oranges.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin.

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