Preventing Listeriosis From Mexican-style Soft Cheeses In Pregnant Hispanic Women In The U.S.

Marjorie Davidson, PhD
The problem: Illnesses from Mexican-style cheeses

- Outbreaks of listeriosis in Hispanic community in California, Texas, North Carolina, and others
- Outbreak of tuberculosis in NYC
Cheese is made with unpasteurized milk

- Cheese is brought into the country illegally for personal use or for sale i.e. door to door
- Cheese is made at home in “bath tubs”
The Solution

• Campaign to educate Hispanic women about the importance of eating Spanish style cheeses made with pasteurized milk
What is Hispanic marketing?

• Reaching target audiences in their language
• Using messages and methods that show understanding of the culture and its sensitivities
Hispanic Consumer Profile

• Distinct sub-groups unified by Spanish
• Open to new product/service information
• Loyal to spokespersons, celebrities and sponsors
• Largest segment of the Hispanic population are Mexican-American
Value Indicators

- Respect for Authority
- Family Values
- Cooperative vs Competitive
- Church Influence
Enhance education already underway

- Work with partners
- Create a product/program that could be duplicated in other states
Research in the Hispanic Community

- Held discussion groups with pregnant women
- Held discussion groups with health care providers to pregnant women
Findings

• Needed to explain carefully what Queso Fresco was; people knew different terms
• Most thought cheese was safe because they ate it “in their home country”.
• Despite outbreaks there was little awareness of the problem in the Hispanic community
If You Are Pregnant . . .
Eating Certain Cheeses Could Harm Your Baby!

Cheeses made from unpasteurized milk can contain bacteria called *Listeria*. It can make your baby sick — even before he is born.

- Don’t eat Mexican-style soft cheese like Queso Fresco, Panela, Asadero or Queso Blanco unless the label states that it is made from pasteurized milk.

- Do not buy or eat Queso Fresco sold door-to-door.

- If you think you may have eaten contaminated cheese while pregnant, call your doctor or clinic.

Visit [www.cfsan.fda.gov](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov) for more information.
Outreach and Education

• Outreach to health care providers who care for pregnant women in the Hispanic community
Outreach and Education cont.

- Developed training program for promotoras (health educators) to do education in the community
- Training in Texas and NC
Education and Outreach

- Developed fotonovella (educational story) on risks of eating queso fresco made with unpasteurized milk while pregnant
Outreach and Education

- National campaign to the Hispanic media
- Media tours with the Hispanic media carried out in California, Texas, and North Carolina
The Food and Drug Administration Launches an Educational Campaign Targeted to the Hispanic Community to Raise Awareness about Listeriosis Risks Associated with Consumption of Queso Fresco

La Administración de Drogas y Alimentos de los Estados Unidos (FDA), lanza una campaña para informar a la comunidad hispana acerca de los riesgos de la Listeriosis, debido al consumo de Queso Fresco.
How to get information

- A “how to” carry out a public health campaign to the Hispanic community on the risks of listeria in cheese made with unpasteurized milk is available on CD and on FDA home page.
Evaluation

- FDA Survey of consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviors
- Infant Feeding Practices Study