

CONCENTRATES: THE INDUSTRY GOES BIG TIME

Introduced in 1946, They Became Winners Overnight, Upping Frozen's to Volume Status

It was frozen concentrated orange juice which made the frozen food department a focus of overall supermarket merchandising programs. It was the first industry product that could compete on volume terms with virtually any other item in the food store.

This achievement alone would be enough to assure frozen orange juice a prominent niche in frozen food history. But the industry's Cinderella product has done much more than this.

The product was an outgrowth of World War II, when a powdered citrus juice was developed for the military. Previously, the search for methods of removing water from orange juice had been the subject of experiments for many years, especially in areas of crystallization and evaporation.

Early Research

During the 1943-44 season, research personnel of the Florida Citrus Commission investigated a type of frozen concentrated orange juice in which the product obtained from vacuum evaporation was diluted with freshly extracted juice and then frozen.

A three-member team headed by Dr. Louis G. MacDowell determined that the concentrating process should be halted short of that point where the product becomes a powder, at which time the natural juice would be added in order to retain the flavor and appearance of fresh product.

A patent covering the process, based upon the work of the investigating team during the 1943-44 and 1944-45 seasons, was applied for in 1945 and granted to the three researchers.

The patent then was assigned to

the United States of America as represented by the Secretary of Agriculture and is the basic process today for frozen concentrated orange juice packed worldwide.

The product took off like a rocket following its retail introduction under the Snow Crop label in 1946.

Although the quality of the first packs would be rated considerably below present standards, orange juice concentrate from the beginning had advantages, immediately perceptible to the consumer, over both canned juice and fresh oranges. Its flavor was superior to that of the hot pack product while it was cheaper and more convenient than fresh.

Spectacular Publicity

Its retail introduction in significant quantities in the 1947-48 season was accompanied by spectacular publicity. Article after article in consumer publications hailed the new glamour food. Promoted before the end of the decade by big show business names of the day—Bing Crosby, Kate Smith, Arthur Godfrey, Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca among others—it qualified on every basis for outstanding success.

In short, frozen orange juice concentrate put frozen foods into the big time.

But while the advent of concentrate was warmly greeted by retail buyers, their enthusiasm also implied far-reaching repercussions which were destined to shape future marketing patterns.

For frozen orange juice was peculiarly suitable to chain requirements. It represented major stable year-round movement in a range where private label pricing



Frozen orange juice concentrates proved a bonanza for depressed Florida citrus industry, quickly making vast citrus acreage valuable. Frozen orange juice contribu-

tion is measured against the fact that now approximately 64.5 percent of state's orange crop goes into concentrate, 46 years after the product first appeared.

was particularly effective.

At first, of course, food store operators by necessity had to buy frozen orange juice under one of two advertised brands. These were Snow Crop, which had opened up retail markets for concentrate in New York and Philadelphia in 1946, and Minute Maid, which debuted in 1947 after packing for the Snow Crop label the previous season.

But the two brands did not hold their monopoly for long. By 1949-50, Florida canners and citrus grower groups were beginning to put up their own concentrating facilities to meet fast-rising consumer demand for the industry's new wonder product.

Salvation for Growers

One can easily appreciate the eagerness with which the Florida citrus industry viewed the emergence of concentrate by looking back at the scene in the state in 1947-48 when growers were unable to find profitable markets and oranges were left to rot.

One of the earliest concentrate producers was Florida Frozen Fruits in Haines City. Head of this operation was Charles M. Henderson who went on to become manager of Pasco Packing Company's frozen concentrate division. Henderson later moved over to Mrs. Smith's Pie Company, Pottstown, Pa., as general sales manager of its frozen food division.

Pasco Jumps In

Among the earliest brands of frozen orange juice were the Old South, Pasco and Floridagold labels of Pasco Packing Company. Pasco had been canning citrus products on a 60-acre site in Dade City since 1938. It began to freeze orange juice in 1948-49 and soon grew to become the industry's largest private label packer. It continues as the leader in private label under its present identity of Lykes Pasco Packing Company.

At about the same time, Florida Citrus Canners Cooperative, Lake Wales, one of the earliest canners of grapefruit sections and citrus juices, began to concentrate and freeze orange juice for Birds Eye. When General Foods put up its own concentrate plant for Birds Eye in Florence

Villa, Florida Citrus Canners began promoting concentrate under its Donald Duck brand, well-known in hot pack juice. In 1970, the co-op changed its name to Citrus World, Inc.

Other grower cooperatives also constructed concentrating plants in the late 1940s and early '50s.

Winter Garden Citrus Products Cooperative, Winter Garden, put up a concentrating facility for its

members and released its Whole Sun and Sunshine State brands. And several other grower cooperatives joined forces to process their fruit through the B&W Canning Company concentrate plant in Groveland.

Twenty-one concentrating plants were in operation in Florida by the beginning of the 1952-53 pack season.

Among them was the Flamingo brand, marketed by Leigh Foods which was headed up by advertising mogul Douglas Leigh, creator of electronic spectacles which lit up Broadway. This venture, which started in 1950, terminated three years later when the brand was taken over by Winter Garden.

Labels Proliferated

The labels for frozen concentrated orange juice proliferated so rapidly that, by the beginning of 1953, 90 had been registered with the Florida Citrus Commission.

The great majority were price labels. Since they did little advertising, they obtained sales momentum through their price advantage over name brands. In the early days this was two to three cents on a six-ounce can.

Marked, Basewood, Corporation, of America store audits in the closing months of 1952 found that these unadvertised labels were already ringing up 50 to 55 percent

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1st Frozen O.J.



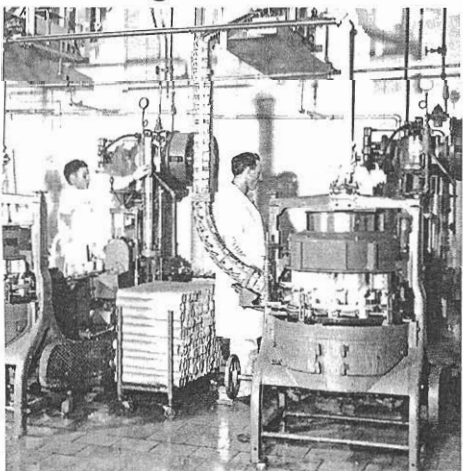
"Vacuum sealed product" by California Consumers Corporation, Los Angeles, this #10 can of single-strength product appeared under Trujalis label in 1936, predating concentrates by 10 years.

1st Frozen O.J. Concentrates



Snow Crop, packed by Vacuum Foods, later to become Minute Maid, was marketed in New York and Philadelphia in 1946. The next year, Vacuum Foods introduced the Minute Maid label. Original cans are pictured above.

Can Filling in Florida: 1949



This can filling operation in Lake Wales plant of Florida Citrus Canners Cooperative has a Rube Goldberg quality today, but it was last word in automation three years after concentrating began.