Background information about infant milks

The international infant milk market

The global infant nutrition market was valued at USD 71.40 billion in 2018 and is estimated to reach USD 98.90 billion in 2024. Infant milks are the fastest growing packaged food product in the world, with most of the growth in Asia. As in the UK, the international infant milk market is dominated by a small number of companies who market their products under a wide range of brand names. The USA market is dominated by Abbott and Mead Johnson (owned by Reckitt Benckiser), accounting for 80% of products sold, and more than half of infant milks sold in the USA are sold through supported government welfare programmes (Kent, 2006). The Western European market is approximately the same size as the USA market in volume terms, and the leading companies are Nestlé and Danone.

It is not easy to find information about where infant milks are made, as ingredients can be sourced from one country and processed elsewhere. It is thought that Ireland produces 0% of the base powders for Danone in Europe as well as many milks for direct export to China. Milks sold in the UK are also likely to be made in a number of European countries, primarily France and Germany. Increasingly, companies are setting up infant formula production in parts of Eastern Europe and Asia and New Zealand manufactures milk for the Chinese and Asian sub-continent market.

More information on the global infant formula market can be found through the International Baby Food Action Network (www.ibfan.org).