

Saccharin sells despite warnings

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

Canadian laboratory rats may have ruined it for saccharin lovers, but they haven't stopped diet soft drink drinkers from enjoying a bottle of sugar-free soda pop.

A new federal law requires all sugar-free soft drinks substituting saccharin for sugar to carry warning tags over the neck of quart sized bottles. Despite this, business goes on as usual for two local beverage bottlers.

According to Jim Coleman of the Royal Crown Cola Bottling company, the required paper tag warnings are a "screwy deal," but they haven't scared anyone away from drinking sugar-free colas.

"It's really a screwy deal," he says. "No one can seem to really understand the whole purpose of these tags or just what we're going to do with them in six months."

The tags warn consumers that the use of saccharin-filled products "may be hazardous to your health." The saccharin, the tag briefly explains, has been "determined to cause cancer in laboratory animals."

The tags began showing up attached to quart-sized bottles on grocery store shelves more than a month ago, after federal regulations requiring the warnings went into effect.

The tags may be new, but in a few months they'll disappear, Coleman says.

"We've got 18 months of this labeling until they decide whether or not to continue the ban on saccharin," he says. Beverage bottling companies will have until June to place signs in strategic spots of grocery



stores that sell saccharin-filled drinks to complement the bottles' label.

The Royal Crown Cola Bottling Company supplies about six sugar-free drinks to area stores and the Willamette Beverage Company, which bottles 7-Up, Pepsi-Cola and Dr Pepper, supplies five. Every quart of sugar-free soft drink must have a tag on it, which increases labor costs.

According to Paul Ostrander of Willamette Bottlers, just putting the tags on the bottles may take up to 10 extra man-hours each day.

The Royal Crown bottlers hired kids to tag their bottles, Coleman says. But, after the tags were all placed on the existing stock, about \$5,000 to \$6,000 worth of the small paper warning labels were thrown out.

Even with the tags, sales of sugar-free drinks haven't wavered. Both Royal Crown Bottlers and Willamette Beverages have been selling about as many sugar-free drinks as they usually would, Coleman and Ostrander say.

"Any studies that the government has done show that the chances of getting cancer from saccharin from these drinks are pretty slim," Coleman says.

"But if there is any chance that people could get cancer from saccharin, then I suppose they need to be warned."

The tags are due to be replaced with bottle caps carrying a similar warning, Coleman says, which may also be ignored.

"Anyone who has read anything on it has probably made some decision to stop using saccharin by now anyway," Coleman says. "But, I guess the warnings are mainly for the kids."

Grant applications ready

A total of \$5,500 in music grants will be awarded to students of serious music in the Sixth Annual Financial Federal Savings and Loan Association Musical Showcase.

Applications are now available for the competition, which is recognized as one of the largest in the United States, according to Joseph Naughton, competition director. The category for this year's competition is violin.

The showcase is open to students between the ages of 17 and 28 who have studied at an accredited conservatory or music school or have had private instruction with a recognized teacher.

Students interested in participating in the 1978 competition should write for an application to Naughton, Competition Director, Financial Federal Savings and Loan Association, 8991 S.W. 107th Ave., Miami, Fla. 33176. Application deadline is Sept. 1.



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