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**New Diet Drink has Half the Calories of the Leading Brand**

by Linda. McCandless

**GENEVA, NY:** "Honey, I shrunk the kids, the dogs .... and myself" could be a popular jingle in six months time if the "Drink & Shrink" fullness diet is successful in its national launch. Entrepreneur "Boo" Grace, a fitness and nutrition expert who visited the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY, with her group last week, developed the product after trying 11 different diets that did not work. "All the diet plans I tried frustrated me, tasted awful and left me hungry," she said. "They affected my health like a yo-yo. I lost weight but always gained more back."

In developing the processing for the diet drink, Grace received assistance from Cornell University food scientists Andy Rao, Herb Cooley, and Olga Padilla-Zakour at the Experiment Station. Grace has offered to donate five percent of the royalties her group receives to the Experiment Station, in appreciation for the work done on her behalf.

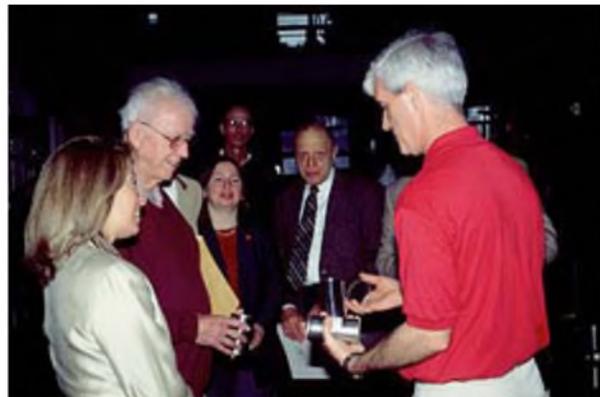
"There is no assurance that we will enjoy a big success, however, if we are successful, Boo's royalty stream will be impressive," notes Irwin Pearl, spokesperson for the Tobo Marketing Group that will be marketing the diet program. Tobo intends to introduce the products with a two-minute, direct response TV commercial. A 30-minute infomercial may follow at a later date.

"On TV we will introduce the powdered mix in 15 oz. cans, individual serving packets and snack/meal bars," said Pearl. "Premixed cans will be added to the line when retail distribution begins. Plans are for four flavors to start and then four additional flavors will be added later."

The four introductory flavors are vanilla, chocolate, coffee, and berry. The drink, whose formula has received a U.S. patent, contains important vitamins and minerals as well as protein and fiber. Tobo expects to go head to head with the current market leader in diet drinks. "Drink & Shrink" has half the calories of the leading



At the "Drink & Shrink" Forum on April 29, Boo Grace made a donation of \$3500 to associate director Bob Seem for the food science department at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station to purchase a computerized temperature sensor and the software for its use in the Pilot Plant. CREDIT: J. Ogradnick/NYSAES /Cornell



(l-r) Patti DeMatteo, Cecil Grace, Olga Padilla-Zakour, Tom Gibson and Len Shofer watch as Cornell food scientist Herb Cooley demonstrates cans sealed by the Dixie Can Closer in the Fruit and Vegetable Processing Pilot Plant, at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, during the tour for the "Drink & Shrink" entrepreneurs and marketers. CREDIT: J. Ogradnick/NYSAES/Cornell

brand.

Pearl explains that promoting food products with a direct marketing campaign on television can create a swell of consumer demand that retailers like Wegman's or WalMart are forced to respond to with all-important shelf space.

About 50 Station employees and community leaders had the opportunity to taste the vanilla and chocolate versions of the "Drink & Shrink" diet shakes during a forum held April 29, at the Station.

During the forum, Grace talked about the inspiration for her "fullness" diet program. "Drink & Shrink" is only 100 "luscious" calories, but consuming the drink makes a person feel full because of its proprietary fiber formula. When people feel full, they do not have the desire to eat.

"Most diets leave a person feeling deprived," said Grace. "As a result, they overeat."

Two glasses of "Drink & Shrink" a day, along with some low-cal snacks like the "Drink & Shrink" power bar, are the basis of a 1500-calorie-a-day weight loss program that regular people can realistically follow and feel satisfied, according to Grace.

During the forum, Andy Rao addressed the rheological studies that were conducted in the laboratory by Herb Cooley and himself, to ensure consistency, appearance, and food safety. Grace made a \$3500 donation to associate director Bob Seem for the Cornell food science department at Geneva to purchase a computerized temperature sensor and software for its use in the Pilot Plant.

After the forum, Cornell graduate students from the food science department started blenders a-whirring, and participants stayed to sample the product. "It tastes like a milk shake and seems to make me full," said one participant, who preferred chocolate. "It certainly tastes better than other diet drinks I have tried."

## Future

Six people were involved in the "Drink & Shrink" visit: Boo Grace, her husband Cecil, Len Shofer, Rena Northrop, and Patti DeMatteo, Irwin Pearl, and Arthur Low from the Tobo Group. After their visit, Herb Cooley commented, "They were very impressed with the laboratories and pilot plant," and "particularly happy with the fact that we have some of the best minds in food science right down the hall from each other, capable of assessing potential problems and applying the latest innovations."

Work will continue on proper nutrition labeling along with nutrition content and sensory issues. "Some flavor and thickness issues in the liquid drink need study," said Cooley. "Although the powdered product is excellent, transition of the material to the canned product will take some more work. They want it to be the very best, so some changes in ingredient concentration will be evaluated along with flavorings."

"We also need to identify a processor that can co-pack the product," said Cooley. "This should be relatively easy given the unit operations we have in the pilot plant. Hopefully, this can be a NYS processor."

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