

You Snus, You Lose

By Cheryl Dudley

Facts and Stats

“B” Average for AUGUST

According to Idaho Code 39-5701 the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare must inspect each business that sells tobacco to ensure that it does not sell tobacco to minors. In AUGUST 2007

- ❖ 161 Vendors were inspected.*
- ❖ 27 Vendors sold to the inspecting minor.
- ❖ The compliance rate for the month of August 2007

Prevent the Sale Web site

www.preventthesale.com/idaho

- Learn about the law
- Take the tobacco quiz
- See what the ID's look like
- Play the Game "Would You Sell to This Person?"

Cigarette Sales Dip: New Tobacco Products Rise

As no-smoking laws sweep the nation and cigarette sales continue to fall, Big Tobacco is alarming the public health community by devising other ways to try to make tobacco appealing. With smokeless products representing the only booming part of the U.S. tobacco market, snus is an effort to boost sales with a product that — unlike most smokeless ones — doesn't require users to spit out the residue.

Snus rhymes with "goose," and is a Swedish type of smokeless tobacco. It comes in teabag-like pouches that a user sticks between the upper lip and gum, leaves there for up to 30 minutes and discards without spitting.

Snus represents an attempt to move smokeless tobacco beyond stereotypical users such as baseball players and rodeo cowboys, and into offices or restaurants where people want a nicotine fix but can't light up or spit.

R.J. Reynolds, second in U.S. tobacco sales, is expanding tests of its Camel Snus. Its ads have a "pleasure for wherever" tagline and a playful tone. Its "abridged guide to snusing" says, "Picture yourself stuck in the center seat 44B of an airplane: You can mope, or you can Snus."

Public health advocates aren't smiling. Although some say smokeless tobacco poses fewer health risks than cigarettes, they note that it has been linked to various types of cancer and warn against using any tobacco product.

"What on the surface looks promising could turn out to be a public health disaster," says Gregory Connolly, director of tobacco control research at Harvard School of Public Health.

He says the products are still addictive, and unless the Food and Drug Administration can regulate tobacco, consumers won't know what's truly in snus. A bill that would give the FDA such authority passed a U.S. Senate panel Wednesday and is gaining co-sponsors in the U.S. House.

Under laws in every state, snus and other tobacco products may not be sold to anyone younger than 18. But many health advocates see the new smokeless alternatives as an attempt to

create a new generation of tobacco users.

Snus will "increase the number of people who use tobacco," says Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "It's market protection. This way, the big companies win no matter what tobacco products people use."

Cigarette sales in the USA have fallen steadily for two decades as tobacco taxes have risen, studies have warned of health risks and laws have expanded smoke-free zones from indoor spaces to outdoor areas such as parks. Government figures indicate 44.5 million Americans smoke, down from a peak of 53.5 million in 1983.

The only part of the tobacco market in which sales are soaring is "moist snuff" such as Skoal and Copenhagen, which are placed between the lower lip and gum but not chewed. Other types of smokeless tobacco, including chewing tobacco and "dry snuff," have fallen in popularity. Snus is most akin to moist snuff.

Sales of moist snuff in the USA more than doubled in volume from 1986 to 2005, according to a report this year by the Federal Trade Commission. Tobacco companies' spending on promoting such products rose more than five-fold.

Major tobacco companies are careful not to make any advertising claims that their smokeless products have fewer health risks. Snus containers carry one of three required warning labels that say the product is either "not a safe alternative to cigarettes," "may cause mouth cancer" or "may cause gum disease and tooth loss."

But sales of Snus, sold under the name Taboka, have not gone well. A USA TODAY visit to a dozen convenience, tobacco and Wal-Mart stores in Indianapolis found that consumers have shown little interest in Taboka.

"I haven't sold any at all," says Pat Bowman at The Tobacco Shop. He says even people who had coupons for free samples didn't want Taboka once they knew what it was. "I couldn't give it away."

By Wendy Koch, USA TODAY

Inspections for 2007

Per Idaho Code, the minimum number of inspections to be completed in 2007 is determined multiplying the number of permittees in 2006 times the violation rate in 2006 times 10.

Based upon this calculation, the minimum number of inspections to be completed in 2007 is **2352**.

Minors' Access to Tobacco Products

Among Idaho's middle school students under age 18, female smokers (55%) are more likely than male smokers (36%) to have purchased their last pack of cigarettes in a convenience store. Female smokers (87%) are also more likely than male smokers (81%) to have NOT been asked to show proof of age when they bought cigarettes during the previous 30 days. And, among middle school smokers under age 18, female smokers (16%) are nearly half as likely as male smokers (28%) to be refused cigarettes when trying to buy them in a store.

Who Smokes the Most?

Idahoans aged 18 to 24 made up 11% of the total statewide population and roughly 40,000 members of this population segment smoke. Not only do a greater portion of 18 to 24 year olds smoke, but among those in that age group, students (10.4%) were much less likely than non-students (29.2%) to be current smokers.

Think About It

Your job as a tobacco retailer is one of the most important in preventing the sale of tobacco to minors. Training employees on a regular basis can assure that they feel confident in saying "no" to the sale of tobacco products to minors. The risk of making an illegal sale isn't worth it. The result can be costly fines and license suspension. But that is only part of the risk. On a broader scale, the sale of tobacco to minors can mean a death sentence to the minor, since the majority of addicted smokers start as minors. A high compliance rate can mean a healthier country.



Hope you're enjoying a safe and happy summer!

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