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Corporate: More products from New Zealand Milk

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NEW Zealand Milk (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, popular for its brand of Fernleaf and Anlene milk, is expected to introduce several other products, including those in the beverage and food category.

"We are at an advanced stage. . . we are ready to commercialise it," New Zealand Milk (M) managing director Richard Ng said.

He added that the company is working on non-dairy formats, but declined to identify any particular product that it plans to introduce or the timing.

However, Ng told Business Times that he was confident the company will be the first such Malaysian entity to introduce non-dairy formats.

The introduction of new products into the market will depend on the stage of development of that particular market.

Ng said the new range of products will be a result of Malaysia-based research and development (R and D) as well as R and D conducted in other parts of the world.

"Our R and D team is testing new concepts, making new products, putting them on trial and running consumer tests to prepare for commercialisation," he said.

Ng pointed out that the company's Malaysian R and D centre was the first to introduce the Anlene yogurt.

New Zealand Milk (M) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the New Zealand Dairy Board.

The parent company invests up to US\$30 million (US\$1 = RM3.80) a year on R and D, while the Malaysian entity puts in about 1 per cent of its total annual turnover for that purpose.

New Zealand Milk (M)'s R and D is also backed by its parent company.

For the financial year ended May 31 2000, the company registered between RM200 million and RM250 million in turnover.

As an immediate step the company is expected to introduce Fernleaf full cream yogurt, following the success of its low-fat Anlene yogurt.

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The company also plans to launch two to three new products in the later part of the year _ both in the milk and near milk (a product where there is only a small quantity of milk) categories.



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In addition, the Malaysian market will be able to enjoy the innovative liquid product offerings developed in Brazil, Argentina or Chile.

On the possible increase in the prices of its dairy products, Ng said only its Growing Up Children's Milk will see an increase this month, of about 5 to 6 per cent.



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"The price of bulk powder from New Zealand has increased over the last two years by close to 60 per cent," he said, adding that New Zealand Milk will continue to absorb as much of the increase as it can.

Last week, Nestle announced that it was increasing the price of its dairy product and Milo with effect from April 1.

New Zealand Milk (M) is the lead company for New Zealand Milk Asia in product development, marketing and transfer of expertise.

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