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SPECIAL EVENTS



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» The pros and cons of milk

Nov. 9, 2007 -- Those of us close to the dairy industry are aware of the research and arguments -- both for and against -- surrounding milk consumption. If it's hard for us to keep all the studies and campaigns straight, can you imagine what it's like for consumers who are constantly bombarded with information from a multitude of media?

ProCon.org, a nonprofit research project that promotes "education and informed citizenship by presenting controversial issues in a simple, nonpartisan pro-con format," is dedicated to sorting through the noise. One of its latest offshoots is MilkProCon.org, a one-stop shop of sorts that rounds up most of the major arguments for and against milk consumption by the major players and usual suspects.

The site is well organized, offering overviews like the "Top 10 Pros and Cons" along with more detailed analyses on types of milk, nutrition and policies governing the dairy industry. The arguments on each side are presented using direct quotes from authority figures or statements by interest groups. Each "authority" is assigned a star ranking based on status and closeness to the issue.

I've found MilkProCon.org to be a good resource, especially when you're looking to quickly answer a question like who said what about this and what's the counter-argument. The site's administrators admit their star ranking is not perfect, and I found this to be most evident in the facing arguments over flavored milk where the American Academy of Pediatrics is given one star and Amy Lanou of PCRM has three, just because she has an "MD" after her name -- forget that she represents an organization devoid of broad academic support that virulently opposes consumption of any animal products and is joined at the hip with PETA.

A casual journey through the site reveals that the pros and cons are pretty evenly matched, though I think pro-dairy holds a slight edge. In any case, I find MilkProCon.org to be a useful educational tool.

- J.D.

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