

For Immediate Release

## **CARU RECOMMENDS TYSON MODIFY CERTAIN ADVERTISING FOR CHICKEN NUGGETS**

*New York, NY – May 19, 2010* –The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has determined that Tyson Foods Inc. should modify television advertising to avoid discouraging or disparaging healthy lifestyles and to better depict foods in the context of a balanced meal.

Broadcast advertising for “Tyson Chicken Nuggets” came to the attention of CARU during its routine monitoring of advertising directed to children. The commercial aired during children’s programming on Nick Jr.

The commercial at issue featured several scenes of children in meal-time settings:

- *Scene One: The meal includes meatloaf, broccoli and milk. The child feeds his meatloaf to the dog.*
- *Scene Two: Spinach Fettuccine with mushroom cream sauce and milk. The children push the pasta back and forth to each other.*
- *Scene Three: Veal chop, corn, a roll and milk. The older child put his veal chop on the baby’s highchair tray.*
- *Scene Four: Salmon, carrots, spinach, apple juice. The child, partially hidden under the table, looks at her meal as though she does not intend to eat it.*
- *Scene Five: Tuna casserole, asparagus, apple juice. The child spoons tuna casserole into the trunk of his toy car.*

At the end of the commercial, a mother gives her daughter Tyson’s Chicken Nuggets with ketchup and green beans. The camera then focused on a shot of the product (with the mother, child and a glass of milk in the blurred background) while a voiceover stated, “now made with 100% all natural ingredients.”

In its initial inquiry, CARU questioned whether the advertising discouraged or disparaged healthy lifestyle choices, whether the final shot depicted a balanced meal and whether the product was made with “100% all natural” ingredients.

Tyson responded that both the content and the air play of the ad were not directed toward children under 12 years of age, but instead were directed toward the parents of picky eaters who were “co-viewing” afternoon television. The advertiser presented evidence to show that 43% of the Nick Jr. audience is made up of women ages 25-54 with children ages 2-5. The advertiser maintained that the commercial did not discourage or disparage healthy lifestyle choices, but was instead a humorous portrayal of the types of behavior every parent witnesses at one time or another.

With respect to CARU’s concern that the final shot of the commercial did not depict a “nutritionally balanced meal,” the advertiser stated that appropriate size servings of three of the major food groups were present, but acknowledged the milk appeared in a blurred background. The advertiser further stated that it never depicts foods of questionable nutritional value with its products.

In determining whether the commercial was primarily directed to children, CARU considered factors that included the content of the media, the projected audience demographics, the extent to which other advertising that aired within the same program slot was intended for children under 12, whether the advertisement appeared during, or just before or after, a television program aired during what is generally understood to be children’s programming, and the advertiser’s intent.

CARU determined that the advertising at issue was directed to children under the age of 12 and that the advertising discouraged and disparaged healthy lifestyle choices. CARU determined that the final blurry background shot was not sufficient to depict the advertiser’s product within the framework of

a nutritionally balanced meal and recommended that the Advertiser clearly display at least three of the five food groups when showing children in mealtime settings.

Finally, CARU determined that the advertiser could support the claim that the product was made with "100% all natural" ingredients.

Tyson, in its advertiser's statement, said the company had "discontinued the subject advertisement prior to being contacted by CARU and participated in the CARU process voluntarily as a responsible advertiser."

Tyson took issue with CARU's decisions, but said that "we ... will abide by the decision and encourage CARU to consistently monitor and apply its guidelines to all food advertising."

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***CARU's inquiry was conducted under NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU's decision, and the advertiser's response will be included in the next NAD/CARU Case Report.***

**About Advertising Industry Self-Regulation:** The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971. NARC establishes the policies and procedures for the National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the CBBB's Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and the Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

The NARC Board of Directors is composed of representatives of the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc., (AAAA), the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB), Direct Marketing Association (DMA), Electronic Retailing Association (ERA) and Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation.

NAD, CARU and ERSP are the investigative arms of the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. NARB, the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate NAD/CARU cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children's advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB's primary source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. ERSP's funding is derived from membership in the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising industry self-regulation, please visit [www.narcpartners.org](http://www.narcpartners.org).