

An IBFAN-ICDC report on baby food marketing practices



This page forms part of the global monitoring report – Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2010. Companies' marketing behaviour is measured against the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and WHA resolutions.

Hipp

Company profile & Code violations

The Executive Summary to Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2010 is available at www.ibfan.org

Hipp is a private company founded in 1932 by Georg Hipp when he began commercialising a milk-enriched rusk flour first concocted for babies by his grandfather, Joseph, in 1899. Today, the company is still owned by the Hipp family. It is headed by Claus Hipp, who has dominated the company's advertising campaigns with testimonies of environmentally friendly policies and organic culture.

Hipp's eco-campaigns do not, unfortunately, extend to being Code friendly. The company's main marketing channel is through offering product samples to new mothers, engaging its customers through interactive web-sites and hotlines for parents, all of which are prohibited by the Code. Hipp also unabashedly courts the health profession through gifts big and small and other incentives. These strategies place Hipp squarely in IBFAN's register of systematic Code violators.

Hipp products are mainly sold in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Because of declining birth rates in Western Europe, Hipp looked for new growth opportunities. It now exports to ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle and Far East, where birth rates are higher. Exports account for roughly one-fifth of Hipp's total sales.

The other option Hipp has gone into is diversification. The company is currently focusing on repackaging its existing Hipp product range for target groups beyond the toddler age, namely senior citizens. Hipp also has its own baby-care line Hipp Babysanft in Germany.

LOOK AT THIS!

An IBFAN researcher displays Hipp promotion harvested by monitors in just one country. These include a doctor's coat, pens, brochures and leaflets, balloons and a host of other gadgets brightly advertising the Hipp name, and products.

Claus Hipp
General Manager
Georg-Hipp-Strasse 7
Pfaffenhofen, D-85276, Germany
Telephone: (49 8441) 757-0
Fax: (49 8441) 757-402
Web: <http://www.Hipp.de>

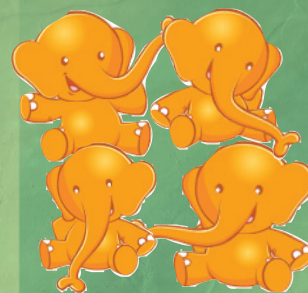
Products include:

Infant formula: Pre Hipp Bio, Hipp Bio, Hipp HA, Hipp HA Plus, Hipp Organic First Infant Milk

Follow-on Formula: Hipp Organic Follow-on Milk, Hipp Organic Good Night Milk, Hipp Organic Hungry Infant Milk

Complementary foods: Hipp Organic Cereals, Hipp Organic Wholesome Pots, Hipp Organic Fennel Drink

Logos



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Promotion to the public and in shops

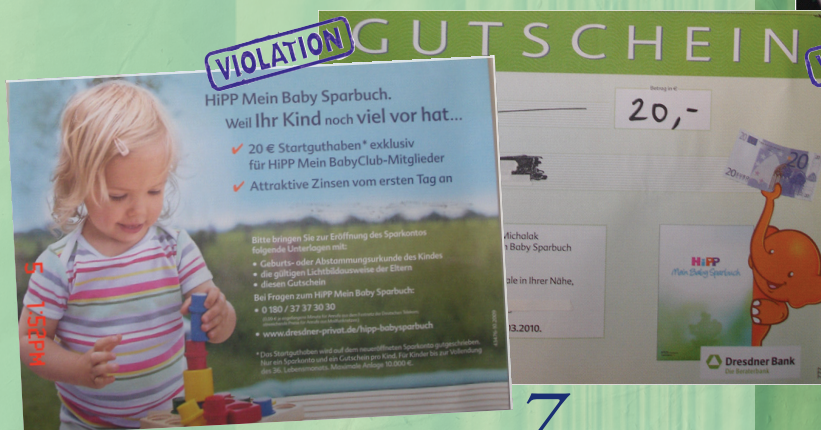
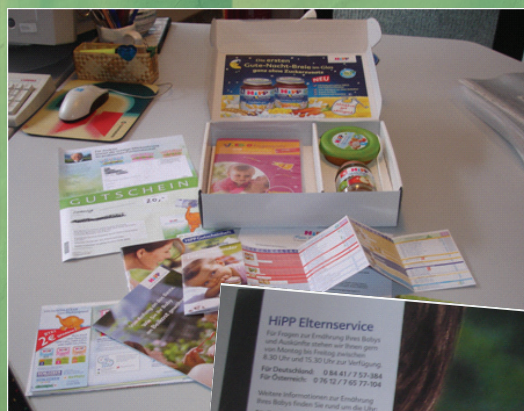
- Article 5.1 of the Code prohibits advertising and all other forms of promotion of products under the scope of the Code.
 - Article 5.3 of the Code bans promotional devices at the retail level.
 - Article 5.4 of the Code prohibits companies from giving samples and gifts to mothers.
 - Article 5.5 of the Code prohibits marketing personnel from seeking direct or indirect contact with pregnant women or mothers.
- ❖ In Armenia, a big Hipp billboard (see 1) makes its mark on a street in Yerevan while a smaller but no less effective poster with the Hipp name and logo positioned on top a product stand (see 2) gets into the psyche of mothers as they shop.
- ❖ In Croatia, Hipp 2 follow-on milk is placed on special offer. (see 3)
- ❖ In France, ads in parenting magazines promote Hipp Biologique products such as Hipp 2 follow-on formula and jarred foods. The ad for follow-on formula explains that it is based on the breastmilk model and states *"your motherly instinct tells you to give him the best at every stage, Bio Hipp follow-up formula becomes the most natural solution after mothers' milk!"*. Emphasis is given to the organically sourced ingredients in Hipp jarred foods marketed as suitable from 4 months, *"because your baby deserves the best"* ignoring that at 4 months, the best for baby is breastmilk. (see 4)
- ❖ In Germany, Hipp's home country, mothers are invited to join the Hipp Baby Club via the internet to receive free gifts, vouchers and Hipp publications. (see 5)



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- Once a mother signs up as a member, she receives an enticing gift pack through the mail containing product samples, order forms, discount vouchers and booklets promoting Hipp products with titles like *"The best from the very start"* and *"how to get your baby used to complementary foods (from 4 months)?"* (see 6)
- Babies whose mothers join the Hipp Baby Club get a €20 head start in life. Mothers are seduced to become members and get the money by presenting a coupon and a birth certificate at a specified bank! (see 7)



7

- In Spain pharmacies give out 32gm sample sachets of **Hipp Organic Follow-on** recommended for use from 4 months. The description on the label reads, *"for the natural development of your child"*. Another statement on the packet explains how *"your baby is at a very sensitive stage"* and *"his immune system is not very developed"*, implying that **Hipp 2** is the best option rather than breastfeeding. The sample is also available in health centres. (see 8)



8

- In the UK:
 - As in Germany, the UK Hipp website also invites mums to join the Hipp Baby Club. (see 9)
- Like everywhere else, the emphasis at the UK website is on Hipp's organic products so that *"parents will have the peace of mind that they are feeding their baby the purest possible baby foods."*

The Advertising Standards Authority in the UK told Hipp (early Oct 2010) that its claims on brain health because of Omega-3 additives, were misleading and should be amended.



9

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❖ In the UAE:

- A full page ad in the 7 Days free newspaper asks "Why is Hipp Organic mum's choice?" followed by the exclamation "Ben knows why!". The answer given: "At just 6 months, Ben takes his nutrition very seriously. Mummy Catherine is confident that Hipp Organic baby foods taste just like her own home cooking. And she can reassure Ben that it contains no harmful chemical residues such as pesticides". However, the packshots of some products advertised show the products labeled as suitable for "Stage 1, from about 4 months." (see 10)
- A retail shop linked to the Hipp company offers special discounts for Hipp Follow-on milk twin-pack. (see 11)



- ❖ In Vietnam, stickers offering bonus points which can be used to redeem diapers are pasted over product labels. (see 12 & 13)



Hipp label is not in the local language. Sticker promoting 27 bonus points and free gift with purchase has been pasted on the label.

Power of the free gift: Consumers may not know what they are buying but a local language sticker promises free goodies.



A paste over sticker announces free diapers worth 50,000VND (US\$3.05) with the accumulation of 200 points. One label is worth 5 points.

Good Night Milks – may not be so good after all

Concerned that companies such as Hipp are promoting **Good Night Milks** for infants six months of age and above, the UK Department of Health asked a Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition to assess the risks associated with the use of such products.

The Committee could not identify any scientific evidence that shows "Good Night" milk offer any advantage over the use of currently available follow-on formula or infant formula.

Apart from undermining continued breastfeeding, the Committee feared that parents may be led to believe that it is desirable for babies to sleep longer despite considerable variation in normal sleeping behaviour. There is also a risk that mothers may consider the product suitable for "settling" their infants and use these products on other occasions as well as bedtime.



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Promotion to health workers & health facilities

- Article 6.2 bans the promotion of products within the health care system.
 - Article 6.3 prohibits the display of products, placards and posters or the distribution of company materials unless requested or approved by the government.
 - Article 7.3 provides that there should be no financial or material inducement to promote products.
- ❖ In Armenia:
- A visiting doctor at a maternity hospital is given a doctor's coat with a Hipp logo to wear, much to her chagrin. She later discovers that such things are commonly given to hospital staff. (see 1)
 - A display of booklets and teas is found at the foyer of a conference hall while other Hipp paraphernalia are placed on each delegate's chair at a meeting co-sponsored by Hipp. (see 2)
- ❖ In Croatia, Hipp materials are also placed on every delegate's chair at a health professionals' meeting sponsored by Hipp. There is a special Hipp stand for the display of a full range of Hipp products.
- ❖ In Mongolia, information sheets for doctors double as advertising materials for Hipp 2. (see 3)
- ❖ Hipp poster found in a Vietnamese maternity hospital associates breastfeeding with Hipp products through display of the Hipp name and logo. (see 4)



Oops!

Hipp's distributors in the UAE, Arab Beverages Est., unwittingly wrote to ICDC in early 2010 magnanimously offering to donate Hipp products including infant formula to hospitals! The products were near expiry.

When informed that it would be in violation of the Code, the company immediately retracted the offer of infant formula. They reiterated their offer of complementary foods– new stocks, not old ones! Arab Beverages was again asked to refrain from donating. This time, they did not come back.

In May 2010, 70 kilos of Hipp follow-on milk was sent to poor families in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by a business entity linked to Arab Beverages. This donation contradicts guidelines on donations and will put infants' lives at risk.

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Labels

- Article 9 of the Code requires labels to NOT discourage breastfeeding but inform about the correct use of the product, the risk of misuse and abide by a number of other points.
- WHA resolution 54.2 (2001) advises exclusive breastfeeding for six months which means that the recommended age for use of complementary foods cannot be under six months.
- From Armenia to Kyrgyzstan to Vietnam and the UAE, Hipp labels its complementary food products as suitable from 4 months. Where they can get away with product promotion, they do so. See bottle lid from Vietnam below.

Armenia



Hipp teas are still marketed for babies as young as 1 week in Armenia.

Vietnam



Sticker on this Hipp lid says in Vietnamese, "Convenient for mothers, superior for baby".

A Hipp label for prune purée as of 4 months in Vietnam – written in English, French and German.

Croatia



Kyrgyzstan



United Arab Emirates



Label is not in Arabic

JUST IN

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This page contains information received after the company report has been finalised. They are assembled alphabetically by country and not sequentially according to Code articles.

- ❖ In Armenia, Hipp is promoted in retail outlets via special displays and gifts with purchase. (see 1)

- ❖ In Croatia:

- Immunisation certificates, note papers and a wall clock (see 2) in a paediatric clinic all bear the Hipp brand name and logo.

- A TV ad promoting **Hipp purée** for use from 5 months shows a baby speaking its first words and taking its first steps. The voiceover explains how first words and first steps need not be perfect but first purée must be. Hipp's General Manager and PR front man, Claus Hipp makes an appearance to guarantee the quality of the purée. The ad also announces a special offer of a children's DVD which will be given with product purchases. (see 3)

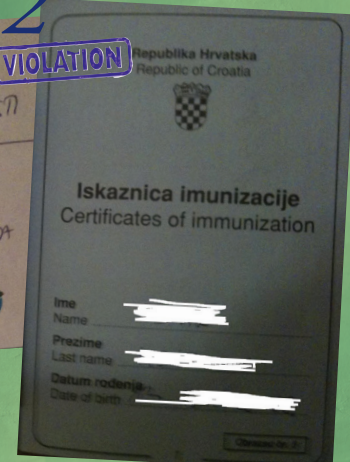
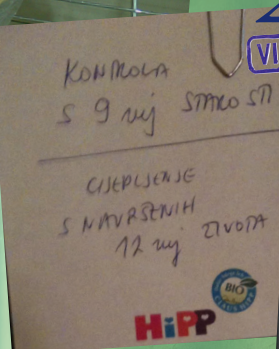


VIOLATION

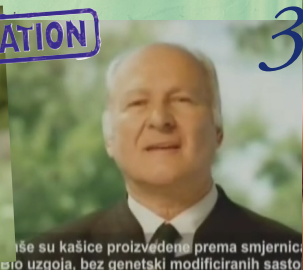
VIOLATION



VIOLATION



VIOLATION



3



VIOLATION



Baby's first words ... a close up of the label showing 5 months ... Mr. Claus Hipp makes an appearance assuring parents the wholesomeness of Hipp products.

- ❖ In Germany:

- Hipp labels for **Wohlfühl-Tee** (Well-being tea) is labelled for use from 1 week. An accompanying leaflet says that the tea is good for baby's little stomach. (see 4)
- Discounts and gifts on Hipp jarred foods and juices, teas, follow-on and good-night milks are often available in supermarkets. Gifts include feeding bottles. (see 5)
- A large 6-page spread in a parenting magazine promotes Hipp's "new practical baby cup" puréed foods with the words "augen auf (eyes open)", "mund auf (mouth open)". The ad is obviously intended as a wall poster due to its size. (see 6)



4

VIOLATION



5

VIOLATION

6

