

Plastic Sticks For Ice Cream

By JAMES J. NAGLE

New York Times (1857-Current file); May 28, 1972;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times pg. F14

Plastic Sticks For Ice Cream

By JAMES J. NAGLE

Another bit of Americana—the wooden ice-cream stick—is about to give way to plastic.

Borden, Inc., expects to use some 500 million plastic sticks this year. The traditional wooden ice-cream stick business runs to about 7 billion a year.

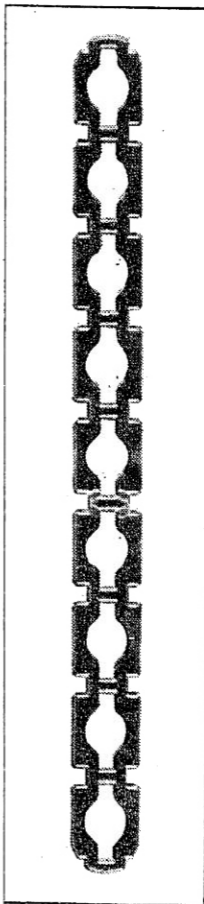
An Israeli artist, Theo Coster, invented the new product in the nineteen-sixties, thinking he had created an inexpensive children's toy. The sticks, which come in various bright colors, have notched edges so that they can be connected to each other to construct just about anything a child might want to build with them.

In the spring of 1969, Mr. Coster's agent, Jaap Bar-David, met with Lyle Smith, corporate marketing director for the dairy and services division of Borden, who conceived the idea of using the sticks in ice cream.

It took a year of experimentation to find the plastic formula that would satisfy the requirements of the Federal Food and Drug Administration while retaining the necessary rigidity and flexibility in the stick.

The sticks were then test-marketed in Florida. After 15 months, it was found that children preferred plastic sticks to the wooden variety by about a 20-to-1 ratio and adults by a 6-to-1 ratio, according to Mr. Smith.

In addition, earlier this year, Borden closed a deal with General Mills under which a package of six sticks—Borden calls them Elsie Stix—is included in every box of cereal. General Mills is spending about \$200,000 in network and local spot TV promotion while Borden will also spend \$500,000 for its own TV promotion of the new sticks.



The new kind of stick