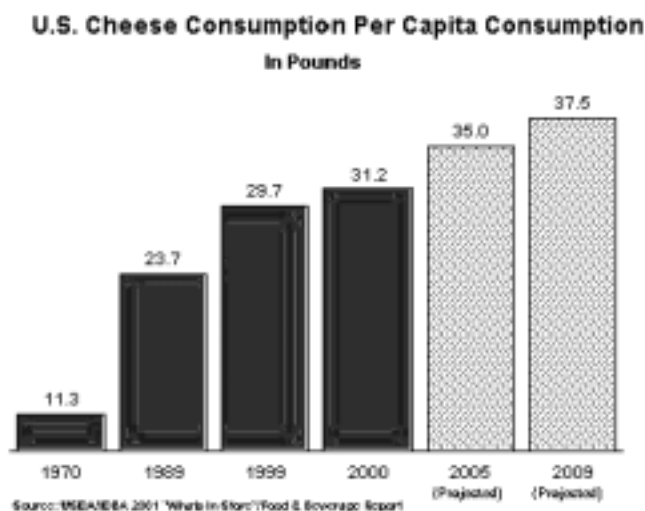


This increase in production is a response to an increase in cheese consumption in the U.S.:



This example illustrates an upward-moving trend and shows market support for cheeses within the United States. Put simply, consumers are eating more cheese. Based on this information, producers wanting to market specialty cheeses should recognize this opportunity as favorable.

A favorable market condition does not guarantee success of all new products - some will fail. It does, however, provide a foundation from which producers can better assess feasibility, profit potential, and begin to identify potential customers.

Does a producer always have to market products based on upward-moving trends? It depends. It certainly is easier to market a product in a category that is experiencing increasing demand. If the market is growing, producers can acquire entirely new customers. If the market isn't growing, producers are required to attract existing customers (and their money) from existing competition. The latter is a difficult task. **It is no secret in marketing that it is nine times easier to retain a customer than it is to convert an existing customer to your product.** Converting an existing customer takes a great deal of money, advertising, and a distinct competitive advantage. Lacking effective advertising (before and after the sale) and a clear competitive advantage will make market entry nearly impossible. If market entry doesn't look favorable, overall feasibility doesn't either.