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Inter-office Memorandum

Subject: Tobacco Cost Reduction by Modification
of G-13 Blends

Date: May 4, 1982

To: Dr. J. P. Dickerson

From: D. P. Johnson

A number of proposals have been made in previous memoranda for reducing RJR tobacco costs without sacrificing product quality. Among these is a proposal to reduce the burley content of our blends, since burley is the most expensive primary tobacco used. To help accomplish this, I recommend that consideration be given to changing the ratio of flue-cured to burley in our G-13 blends. At present, most of these blends contain three parts burley to one part flue-cured. Since all of our cigarette blends contain 12% or more G-13, this means that a minimum of about 37% of our burley is puffed. Although puffed burley retains much of its normal smoking character, it nevertheless is altered, and its impact is reduced. This, coupled with the fact that about 40% of our burley also is denicotinized, probably demands a higher percentage of burley in our blends to achieve the desired flavor level.

Two factors contributed to the initial decision to adopt a high burley blend for puffing. First, puffing imparts a significantly lighter color to tobacco, and puffed flue-cured was especially conspicuous in the cigarette filler. Thus, burley, with its naturally dark color, was chosen, and initially it was the only type puffed. Secondly, flue-cured tobacco retains considerably higher levels of residual freon than cased burley, and additional information was needed on the rate of dissipation of freon and its fate during the burning process. This question has since been answered, and concern for both factors has abated. Therefore, if the burley to flue-cured ratio in the G-13 blends could be changed to a high level of flue-cured and a low level of burley, perhaps a reduction in total burley could be made and an overall cost reduction realized.

Recently, a high flue-cured/low burley G-13 blend has been adopted for the ultra low tar brands because of the high levels of G-13 in these products. However, these brands represent a relatively small percentage of our total production.

A secondary, but very important, benefit to be gained by reversing the tobacco ratio is improved product uniformity. G-13 is combined with the remainder of the blend in the top dressing drum, and in spite of Manufacturing's best efforts, uniform blending is not always achieved.

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