



**ON THE SHELF:** These are some of the grey groceries on sale at Shoprite/Checkers outlets around the country.

# Here's what local companies had to say...

## **Kraft Foods South Africa (Cadbury)**

"Kraft Foods South Africa is aware that various retailers are bringing a variety of our brands into the country, but cannot control what these retailers import and are not legally responsible for brands in South Africa that are not imported or produced by us.

"However, we do receive questions from consumers via our local consumer helpline, mostly related to limited availability. We direct all consumer queries to the retailers that have imported the products, and Kraft Foods South Africa has verbally highlighted the potential consumer confusion to our retail partners."

## **Unilever SA**

(Shoprite is importing a European market variant of Sun-silk shampoo and selling it at

a far cheaper price than the Sun-silk sourced by Unilever SA. It has also imported other Unilever products from the EU.)

"It has come to our attention that some of our retailers are stocking Unilever-branded products which have been imported from outside the country. Unilever has not authorised the import of these products, but we have no legal right of recourse to stem the tide of these grey imports and are thus dependent on retailers to comply with the Consumer Protection Act as a method of governance in this regard.

"We cannot comment on price differences, as this is confidential to the respective retailers and their offshore sources, and we are thus not privy to this information.

"We have not received any queries or complaints from

our consumers regarding these products. However, should we receive any complaints, we will endeavour to assist the consumer and protect the Unilever brand."

## **Nestlé South Africa**

"Nestlé South Africa is aware of the importing of Nestlé products from other Nestlé markets by local retailers. We will assist consumers with regard to product information. Our consumer services division has been provided with the relevant product knowledge to assist them when responding to queries about these imported products. We have so far received only one complaint – about the Nestlé Toffee Crisp Bar."

Asked if Nestlé South Africa was happy to see these imported Nestlé products on shelf, alongside local Nestlé products, the company said:

"Product variety increases choice for local consumers' convenience and pleasure."

Responding to my observation that many of the imported Nestlé chocolate bars were very close to their best-by dates, and in the case of one batch of Nestlé Shreddies, were past their best-by date, Nestlé South Africa said: "Although the merchandising of these imported products is the responsibility of the retailer, we will assist in the monitoring of quality standards on shelf."

## **Proctor & Gamble**

Commenting on Shoprite's decision to import P&G's Fairy Dishwashing Liquid, so far on sale only in KZN branches of Shoprite/Checkers, P&G South Africa said: "We were not made aware by Shoprite that they intended to bring this brand into the South

African market and have not assisted them in doing so.

"We can not prohibit them from doing so, but the necessary support infrastructure would not be in place from our side to deal with consumer questions or complaints. And by law we cannot be held liable for any issues related to these brands. So these calls would be re-directed to the retailers."

## **Pioneer Foods**

Boxes of Weetabix Oatbix Bites sit alongside Bokomo Weet-Bix products on Shoprite/Checkers shelves.

"Shoprite imported the product without the knowledge or co-operation of Pioneer Foods. Weetabix is not allowed on local shelves due to the obvious trademark infringement with Weet-Bix and we have started with the process to address this issue."