

'All I really wanted was a tv set'

By JULIE FRANZ

Beatrice refuses \$16M in scratch

CHICAGO—If trouble truly comes in threes, then Beatrice Cos. is about due for a reprieve.

First the stormy tenure of chairman James Dutt ended with his ouster. Then former Esmark chairman Don Kelly moved in with an unfriendly, but successful, takeover bid.

Now, an Atlanta math whiz, who happens to be a Procter & Gamble salesman, claims Beatrice owes him \$16 million in the "Beatrice Monday night winning lineup" point-of-purchase promotion, conducted earlier this year by Lorsch Group, Los Angeles.

Beatrice says it canceled the

contest after learning of his 4,000 correct entries, suspecting he had "obtained them in a manner that may have compromised the fairness of the contest," according to a national newspaper ad Beatrice ran Nov. 29. The company has "initiated an investigation."

What Beatrice executives will find, contestant Frank Maggio told ADVERTISING AGE, is that their Fullerton, Cal.-based Hunt-Wesson unit, several of their Atlanta sales reps and grocery store managers there are at fault.

Beatrice's sales reps "weren't

even doing their jobs by getting those cards into the stores," he said, claiming many reps gave him cards out of their car trunks.

Mr. Maggio computed that the game had only 309 configurations for the 3 million cards. He figured he was home free. "All I really wanted was a tv set," he said.

The contest "allowed consumers to try and win prizes by correctly [scratching off] the number of touchdowns and field goals scored in each of the first eight 'Monday Night Football' games," a Beatrice statement said.

Each game on ABC-TV was worth two points for a total of 16 points. Prizes would have been awarded according to the total score, ranging from three points (to win Beatrice product coupons) to 16 points (a trip for eight to the Super Bowl or \$20,000).

Mr. Maggio started scratching off the whole top line of the first "Monday Night Football" game, revealing the pattern for the rest of the card. Although that voided the first game, rendering him ineligible to win the big Super Bowl trip, it didn't prevent him from

winning other prizes, which Mr. Maggio calls "Beatrice's boo-boo."

With 4,000 winning game cards in hand, Mr. Maggio called Beatrice to warn that he would be sending his cards via registered mail as required by the rules. Beatrice then killed the contest.

Mr. Maggio flew to Los Angeles Dec. 5, the day before the contest was to end, to mail his cards to Lorsch because "there was no way I was going to stick \$16 million worth of winning tickets in the mail during the Christmas season."

Beatrice has said it "has no intention of honoring" Mr. Maggio's game cards. Mr. Maggio now computes his best chance of winning to be through a lawsuit. #