



**George Lazarus**  
On marketing

local supermarkets), Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio. My Own Meals should hit a low seven-figure volume in 1989.

As for Toys "R" Us, whose average store is pushing \$10 million in annual sales, the toy retailer has been into kid-related foods and products in a small way for some time, selling baby foods, cereals, infant formula and disposable diapers.

## Toys 'R' Us goes beyond play food

Supermarkets have been selling toys and non-food items for years, so why shouldn't Toys "R" Us return the favor?

Giant retailer Toys "R" Us, which accounts for 23 percent of all toy sales in this country, is taking on the My Own Meal line of shelf-stable meals.

Some 86 stores, or about a fourth of the chain's total, will begin selling the five varieties of My Own Meal in late September.

"It's a big break for us," says Mary Anne Jackson, a former Beatrice Cos. executive, who three years ago founded My Own Meals Inc., a Deerfield firm. "If our program works with those Toys 'R' Us stores, we have a chance to go national with them."

Jackson, president of her firm, likes the prospects of selling the line in the \$4.5-billion sales toy chain because of traffic and the opportunity to build awareness.

"Toys 'R' Us is a kids store; we've got meals for kids, so it's a good fit," she told this column. Jackson said she approached Toys "R" Us, a Paramus, N.J. firm, three months ago.

Chicken Please and My Kind of Chicken are the best sellers of the My Own Meal line aimed at youngsters 2 to 8.

Toys "R" Us stores in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Kentucky, New York and New Jersey will carry the line initially.

My Own Meals has distribution in about 1,000 stores in Illinois (Jewel, Dominick's and other