



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 18, 2020

Bye, Bye, Mrs. Butterworth's. So Long to the Chef. Food Companies Continue Change of Logos

The Great Pantry Purge of 2020 continues.

After Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben were run out of the kitchen yesterday, next on the high-priority hit list of racist logos were Mrs. Butterworth, the malevolent maple syrup matriarch, and the menacing man known as "The Chef" who serves steaming bowls of Cream of Wheat.

The companies that make those products surrendered the cherished brands late yesterday.



Those corporate ablutions will also help completely disinfect the American food industry and scrub it clean of anything and everything that might possibly offend someone.

"We Understand"

The racial overhaul of the food industry's beloved images [began when](#) Quaker Oats announced that Aunt Jemima had mixed her last batch of pancakes.

Then came the Mars company's announcement that Uncle Ben, purveyor of converted rice and other products, would have to "evolve."

But alas, and alack, no kitchen cabinet or refrigerator will be left unopened.

Conagra's Mrs. Butterworth will be fired, too.

"The Mrs. Butterworth's brand, including its syrup packaging, is intended to evoke the images of a loving grandmother," [Conagra said](#) in a prepared statement. "We stand in solidarity with our Black and Brown communities and we can see that our packaging may be interpreted in a way that is wholly inconsistent with our values":

We understand that our actions help play an important role in eliminating racial bias and as a result, we have begun a complete brand and packaging review on Mrs. Butterworth's.

It's heartbreaking and unacceptable that racism and racial injustices exist around the world. We will be part of the solution. Let's work together to progress toward change.

Not too confidently, the [Washington Post reported](#) that Mrs Butterworth's "shape, believed to be created using as a model the black actress Thelma 'Butterfly' McQueen, who played Prissy in the 1939 film 'Gone with the Wind,' has been criticized for perpetrating the stereotype of the 'mammy,' an enslaved black woman who raised her master's children."

The Chef, a black man who serves a piping hot bowl of B&G's Cream of Wheat, also evokes unhappy memories of America's dark past, and so he, too, must go.

"We are initiating an immediate review of the Cream of Wheat brand packaging," the [company's news release said](#). "We understand there are concerns regarding the Chef image, and we are committed to



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evaluating our packaging and will proactively take steps to ensure that we and our brands do not inadvertently contribute to systemic racism. B&G Foods unequivocally stands against prejudice and injustice of any kind.”

[The Post helpfully told](#) readers that the Chef “brings to mind Jim Crow-era stereotypes of subservience. In earlier times, the man was named Rastus, a moniker often used for characters in minstrel shows, and was portrayed in the company advertising as semiliterate.”

Whatever the Chef’s reading and writing abilities, few if any Americans likely thought anything of “Jim Crow stereotypes” when they ate their Cream of Wheat before heading off to school, but that aside, neither company disclosed what the new marketing images will be.

Who’s Next?

Point is, the old ones had to go, particularly given the death of George Floyd and ensuing riots.

A company that refuses to comply with the demand to jettison “offensive” images, a [university advertising professor told](#) the *Post*, “could be left with a brand that is smoldering on the heap,” an unfortunate metaphor given the number of buildings across the country that have gone up in flames.

The *Post* also offered a helpful hint for the next company to attack:

The swift succession of moves by these food companies threw into contrast the few major national brands remaining on supermarket shelves whose names or mascots have provoked controversy. Chiquita Banana, whose mascot is a Carmen Miranda-esque figure stereotypical of Latin culture, did not respond to an emailed query.

The *Post* did not explain whether Chiquita’s mascot is racist, although it might be assumed as such because it is a “Carmen Miranda-esque figure stereotypical of Latin culture.”

Nor did the *Post* venture to guess whether the [Godfather’s](#) and [Little Caesars](#) restaurant chains must change their names because they insult Italians.

Image: [flickr.com/Mike Mozart](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mikemozart/)

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