
PRESS RELEASE



DANONE

Paris, May 18 2009

Daniel Carasso, founder of the Danone brand in France dies at the age of 103

It was with great sorrow that Danone's Chairman and Chief Executive Franck Riboud, its Board of Directors and all its staff members learned of the death on May 17 of Daniel Carasso, the company's Honorary Chairman.

Daniel Carasso's father Isaac created the Danone brand in Spain, in Barcelona, in 1919, using the diminutive of his son's name, "Danon" -- "little Daniel" in Catalan. Ten years later, Daniel Carasso brought the Danone brand to France, setting up Société Parisienne du Yoghourt Danone before he had even turned 25.

Later, Daniel Carasso set up Dannon in the US and launched his dairy-product brand in other countries including Mexico, Brazil and Morocco. In 1967, Danone acquired Gervais and in 1973, after meeting Antoine Riboud, he merged his business with the BSN Group, becoming its Honorary Chairman.

To the very end of his life, Daniel Carasso played an active role in the business of Danone, participating in key events such as the celebrations, hardly two months ago in France and Spain, of the Danone brand's 90th anniversary.

Danone's Research and Development Center in Palaiseau carries his name.

"We all know how much our group, which carries his first name, owes to Daniel Carasso, who dedicated all his boundless energy and optimism to its success ever since 1929. His elegant silhouette was familiar to many, who crossed his path every day at our headquarters on the boulevard Haussmann in Paris. His intelligence, his clear judgment, his passion for innovation, his curiosity and serenity, his humanity are things that I will personally miss a great deal and that the Danone group as a whole will sorely miss. All our staff members join me in expressing their sincerest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to his family." Franck Riboud

About Danone

Danone is a Fortune 500 Company and one of the most successful healthy food companies in the world. Its mission is to bring health through tasty, nutritious and affordable food and beverage products to as many people as possible. Fulfilling this mission is a major contributor to Danone's continuous fast growth. Danone with 160 plants and around 80,000 employees has a presence in all five continents and over 120 countries. In 2008, Danone recorded €15.2 billion sales. Danone enjoys leading positions on healthy food in four businesses: fresh dairy products (#1 worldwide), waters (#2 on the packaged water market), baby nutrition (#2 worldwide) and medical nutrition. Listed on Euronext in Paris, Danone is also ranked among the main index of social responsibility: Dow Jones Sustainability Index Stoxx and World, ASPI Eurozone and Ethibel Sustainability Index.

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An exceptional destiny

Daniel Carasso was born in **1905** in Thessaloniki, where his family had found refuge from persecution in Spain more than four centuries earlier. In 1916 Daniel's father, Isaac Carasso, decided to return to Spain permanently with his family, and it was there that he invented Danone three years later. Interested in the work of Élie Metchnikoff, he was struck by the number of children suffering from intestinal disorders in the period following the First World War and decided to produce yogurts with ferments supplied by the Pasteur Institute. He distributed his products through pharmacies in Barcelona and on doctors' recommendations.

In **1923**, Isaac Carasso sent his son Daniel to France to study at the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce business school in Marseille. Once Daniel had graduated, his father encouraged him to learn more about bacteriology and thus improve his knowledge of ferments and his capacity to use them to the best effect. To this end, Daniel Carasso went to Paris to attend a training program at the Pasteur Institute, a choice that was to have decisive implications for the future of Danone.

Daniel Carasso launched Danone in Paris in **1929**, when yogurts were hardly better known there than they had been in Barcelona ten years earlier. He was nonetheless quickly successful in setting himself apart from the competition through a combination of superior quality and packaging, backed by advertising that emphasized, as it already had in Spain, the health benefits of yogurt. His business grew rapidly.

In **1941**, the Nazi occupation of France during the Second World War forced Daniel Carasso to leave, and he entrusted Danone France to Norbert Lafont and Danone Espana to Luis Portabella – - both of whom would remain close friends. Daniel went to the US, where he set up Dannon US a year later. He returned to Europe in 1945 and set about the relaunch of the two businesses in France and Spain. This proved so time-consuming that he scaled back his commitments in the US by stages and in 1959 Dannon was sold to the US company Beatrice Foods -- only to be reacquired by BSN Gervais Danone in 1981.

Economic momentum was quick to pick up in post-war Europe and from 1950 to 1966, Danone posted impressive growth. In **1967**, it merged with Gervais to create Gervais-Danone, number one in France for fresh dairy products.

But the real turning point, leading up to the recognition of Danone as a global brand, came in **1972**, when Daniel Carasso met Antoine Riboud, marking the first step towards the merger of their two businesses a year later.

In 2003 Daniel Carasso used these words to describe what happened: “Our goal was very simple. And very ambitious. We wanted to build a food group with the muscle to compete with international heavyweights, combining the Danone brand and products with the industrial know-how and financial resources of BSN. For me, the creation of BSN-Gervais Danone was the crowning reward for a lifetime of efforts. Antoine became the Chairman and CEO, while Jacques Corbière, Chairman of Gervais, and I became his deputies. Today, 30 years on, the merger has clearly lived up to my hopes. Danone is not only a brand recognized around the world, but our group’s extraordinary expansion has been achieved in accordance with the human and professional values that have underpinned its identity from the start.”