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R.G. Barry Reinvents Itself as The Dearfoams Company

New Customer and Consumer Based Focus Takes Leading Slipper Company in Fresh, New Direction

March 9, 2005, 2005 – New York, NY - Dearfoams, the slipper category leader owned by R.G. Barry, debuts its fresh new strategy and brand look for the Fall 2005 Market this week in New York. “Dearfoams is poised for renewed growth and retail dominance after implementing significant operational changes during 2004,” says CEO Thomas Von Lehman.

The Company’s new growth strategy focuses on providing superior retail customer service and innovative consumer products. Changes include re-focused product design and retail selling strategies, along with expansion of the company’s Hong Kong based quality and sourcing team as all manufacturing has moved to Asia.

Beginning with Fall 2005, consumers will see and experience the new Dearfoams Company first hand. Dynamic new packaging and merchandising vehicles will begin shipping to retail in June. Consumers will see a new, softer, more personal Dearfoams logo, and contemporary, eye-catching packaging - color coded by usage category for easy identification and incorporating new lifestyle photography. This dramatic new look and feel for the Dearfoams brand clearly communicates the emotional connection that consumers feel with the product and will visibly differentiate the Dearfoams brand at point of sale.

Extensive Consumer Research Leads New Brand Positioning, Product and Merchandising Strategies

Over the last six months, the Dearfoams company has conducted extensive proprietary consumer research which serves as the foundation for its new brand positioning and consumer marketing efforts. “Dearfoams has nearly 40% of the upper tier slipper market and is the #1 brand among consumers who have purchased slippers in the past 18 months. We are determined to leverage our very strong brand awareness and strength in the marketplace with fresh and innovative new products and marketing programs designed specifically to meet all of the at home footwear needs of our consumers. And our retail partners are responding very positively to our relaunch and our new product efforts.” says Von Lehman.

Results from the Company's proprietary consumer research studies have revealed extraordinary insights about consumer attitudes, usage behavior and shopping preferences, and that research forms the basis for Dearfoams' new "lifestyle at home" brand positioning platform. "Most surprising was the very strong emotional connection consumers have with their slippers and the high involvement they have with the category. Even more important was the understanding that consumers use slippers throughout the day, whether they're on the go around the house or ready for some down time, coupled with the fact that they wear slippers all year round," says Glenn Evans, Senior Vice President, Creative Services & Sourcing. "By understanding how consumers use their slippers at home, we've created three usage categories ... Relax at Home, Active at Home and Fashion at Home ... that specifically address our consumers' various needs," says Evans.

The consumer research, brand positioning and marketing initiatives were developed in conjunction with Agility Consulting, LLC – specialists in strategic business development based in Greensboro, North Carolina. Advertising and public relations agencies have also been retained to fully leverage and effectively communicate the enormous strides the Dearfoams company has taken in the past year. A new trade advertising campaign, launched this week, will further reinforce the strength of the Dearfoams brand with both its retail customers and consumers.

About Dearfoams

Dearfoams is a registered trademark of R.G. Barry Corporation. The Dearfoams identity and personality have been firmly established with consumers and retailers over a span of more than 50 years of category leadership, styling and innovation. The company has corporate headquarters located in Pickerington, Ohio and a new showroom location in New York City.

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