China Mengniu Dairy Co. Ltd. (2319

JPM-pp1

HK)

**Asia Pacific Equity Research** 

24 March 2015

# **Overweight**

Price: HK\$35.70 23 Mar 2015 2 Target: HK\$41.50

Price Target: HK\$41.50 PT End Date: 31 Dec 2015

FY14 Preview - Reporting on 25 March 2015

China Mengniu Dairy is expected to report its FY14 result on 25 March, 2015 after market close. The company will hold its briefing around 9:30am on 26 March, 2015, Hong Kong time.

- Margin expansion on track due to product mix upgrade: While Mengniu's 2H14 top line growth likely normalized we expect margin expansion to be on track. In FY14 product mix improvement was a major driver for margin expansion. In 2015 we expect low raw milk prices to further help margin improvement along with continuing product mix improvement. For FY14 we are looking for c16% sales and c32% earnings growth. We have tweaked up our estimates by 4% as we expect the company to report better control in operating expenses in 2H14 with promotional efforts directed only for low-end products. For FY15 we are looking for 10% sales and c16% earnings growth. We expect low raw milk prices to benefit dairy players as competition is generally benign with no need for a big A&P push. We reiterate our OW call on Mengniu with a Dec-15 PT of HK\$41.50.
- Normalizing revenue growth in 2H14: We expect to see Mengniu's top line for core business growth to come in at c8% y/y in 2H vs c18% y/y growth in 1H, due to weaker volumes at low end products hence the need to lower prices with promotions. At the same time our channel checks indicate that high end products' volume growth remain intact. For the core business (excluding Yashili) following a 13% y/y increase in revenue in FY14, we expect c10% y/y growth in FY15 driven by high end volumes as well as blended ASP increase.
- 2H14 margin backed by product mix and better opex control; low raw milk price new driver for 2015: We expect Mengniu to continue to deliver strong GPM expansion in 2H14 though at a lower pace than 1H14. For the core business we are looking for 250bps GPM expansion in 2H14 largely driven by product mix improvement. We believe Mengniu had better control on A&P spending in 2H14 and expect 60bps y/y improvement in EBIT margin for 2H14 which translates into 20bps y/y improvement for FY14 at EBIT margin level. In 2015 on top of favorable product mix, being raw milk costs will be an additional driver for margins and we now expect 60bps improvement for core business EBIT margin.
- Key issues to look out for during the result briefing: 1) Management's expectation for raw milk price trend in 2015, 2) Business updates of its newly launched UHT products, 3) The competition landscape in high-end liquid milk and the intensity of promotions.

Table 1: JPM's estimates on Mengniu's 2H14 and FY14 results

| RMB mn             | 22,689   | 24,368   | 7.4%      | 43,357   | 50,204   | 15.8%     |
|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Sales revenue      | 2H13     | 2H14E    | % chg y/y | FY13     | FY14E    | % chg y/y |
|                    | 22,689   | 24,368   | 7.4%      | 43,357   | 50,204   | 15.8%     |
| COGS               |          |          |           |          |          |           |
|                    | (16,511) | (17,252) | 4.5%      | (31,660) | (34,706) | 9.6%      |
| Gross profit       |          |          |           |          |          |           |
| Gross margin       | 6,178    | 7,130    | 15.4%     | 11,697   | 15,499   | 32.5%     |
| -                  | 27.2%    | 29.3%    |           | 27.0%    | 30.9%    |           |
| EBIT               |          |          |           |          |          |           |
| EBIT margin        | 958      | 1,059    | 10.6%     | 1,852    | 2,306    | 24.6%     |
|                    | 4.0%     | 4.3%     | 10.070    | 4.3%     | 4.6%     | 24.070    |
| Net interest       | 4.076    | 4.570    |           | 4.570    | 4.070    |           |
| Net linerest       | 100      | 161      |           | 199      | 238      |           |
| Associates         | 100      | 101      |           | 199      | 250      |           |
| Associates         | 124      | 170      |           | 154      | 353      |           |
| Pretax profit      | 124      | 170      |           | 104      | 333      |           |
| Tax                |          |          |           |          |          |           |
| Tax                | 1,182    | 1,390    | 17.6%     | 2,205    | 2,898    | 31.4%     |
| Effective tax rate | (181)    | (200)    | 10.7%     | (367)    | (453)    | 23.5%     |
|                    | -15.3%   | -14.4%   |           | -16.6%   | -15.6%   |           |

| Net margin                     | 871   | 1,046 | 20.1% | 1,607 | 2,121 | 32.0% |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Minority interests  Net profit | (130) | (143) | 9.9%  | (231) | (323) | 39.9% |

Source: Company reports. Source: Company data and J.P. Morgan estimates.

#### **Investment Thesis**

We highlight Mengniu as our top pick in the China Staples space given: 1) Mengniu is positioned in a growth segment with low competitive intensity; 2) product mix is driving margin expansion; 3) strong market share gains expected in the IMF segment; and 4) strong ties with Danone.

We continue to expect DD growth in the dairy sector from 2013-17. Urbanization trends and our deep dive into expenditure patterns show that all food sub-categories are on a decreasing trend as a percentage of average Chinese household consumption expenditure, except for dairy (and dried and fresh fruits and dining out), which is on an increasing trend. We are also positive on the company's strategy to focus on higher-end products (resulting in margin expansion barring any raw milk cost spikes), and continuous improvement in upstream and strong backing by parents.

### Valuation

Our Dec-15 PT is HK\$41.5 based on 26x one-year forward P/E, which is pegged to the historical mean.

# **Risks to Rating and Price Target**

Key risks to our rating and price target include higher-than-expected A&P spending, a shortage of raw milk supply in China, and slower momentum in Mengniu's high-end products.

#### Consumer

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#### **Ebru Sener Kurumlu**

(852) 2800-8521

ebru.sener@jpmorgan.com

**Bloomberg** JPMA KURUMLU <GO>

### Shen Li, CFA

(852) 2800 8523

shen.w.li@jpmorgan.com

### George Hsu

(852) 2800-8559

george.hsu@jpmorgan.com

# Dylan Chu

(852) 2800-8537

dylan.chu@jpmorgan.com

J.P. Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Limited

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|   | Date      | Rating | Share Price<br>(HK\$) | Price<br>Target (HK<br>\$) |
|---|-----------|--------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
|   | 10-Apr-08 | UW     | 20.45                 | 18.00                      |
|   | 21-Sep-08 | UW     | 20.00                 | 3.80                       |
|   | 17-Apr-09 | UW     | 13.02                 | 8.10                       |
|   | 28-Jun-09 | UW     | 18.60                 | 14.50                      |
|   | 09-Sep-09 | OW     | 20.80                 | 23.00                      |
|   | 08-Dec-09 | OW     | 27.50                 | 32.00                      |
|   | 29-Apr-10 | OW     | 23.55                 | 30.00                      |
|   | 01-Sep-10 | OW     | 22.30                 | 26.00                      |
|   | 02-May-11 | OW     | 23.85                 | 30.00                      |
| http://gfd.opp.omog.ipmoboog.pct/G000/com/gr/gopools/chort/2              | 31-Aug-11 | OW     | 25.35                 | 35.00                      |
| http://gfd-app.emea.jpmchase.net:6080/server/console/chart/?              | 12-Oct-11 | OW     | 25.65                 | 33.00                      |
| shareClassId=503709&shareClassServerId=4&chartDesignation=1&actionType=0  | 10-Jan-12 | OW     | 19.74                 | 24.00                      |
| sinaroenasira escreta sinaroenasion roma nacinarizzong nation romanistro. | 10-Feb-12 | OW     | 22.40                 | 27.00                      |
|   | 27-Mar-12 | OW     | 21.95                 | 26.00                      |
|   | 02-Jul-12 | OW     | 20.35                 | 25.00                      |
|   | 28-Aug-12 | OW     | 23.00                 | 28.00                      |
|   | 13-Dec-12 | OW     | 20.35                 | 24.00                      |
|   | 19-Jun-13 | OW     | 26.85                 | 30.50                      |
|   | 29-Aug-13 | OW     | 31.75                 | 36.00                      |
|   | 04-Nov-13 | OW     | 33.00                 | 38.10                      |
|   | 26-Mar-14 | OW     | 35.55                 | 43.00                      |
|   | 08-Jul-14 | OW     | 35.25                 | 42.50                      |
|   | 28-Aug-14 | OW     | 35.45                 | 43.00                      |
|   | 25-Nov-14 | OW     | 31.05                 | 40.50                      |
|   | 25-Feb-15 | OW     | 35.65                 | 41.50                      |

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|---|------------|---------|-------------|
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