

Sugar coated campaigning



The Food Magazine wishes for a little more consistency in the 'dietary recommendations' promoted by the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**. Recently backing a reduction in meat consumption under the headline 'healthy eating for you and the environment,' the group is nonetheless happy to lend its name and logo to the promotion of high sugar foods and drinks. Its link-ups with **Coca-Cola** and **McVitie's Penguin** do seem to conflict with the charity's message to avoid heavily processed foods and to eat foods produced locally. A 'Coke Zone' promotion offers purchasers of the drink the chance to donate on pack points to the group (that **Coca-Cola** then converts to cash), and a special **Penguin** site (www.thepenguinsquest.co.uk) runs the group's panda logo side by side with penguin bars and has encouraged young people to send off for fundraising and sponsorship packs that also display the candy bar.

These are tough times for charities – but would **WWF** find it acceptable for groups like The Food Commission to start taking cash from oil or logging companies in an effort to promote healthy eating? Our guess is no! And, don't worry, we take no money from companies, and have no plans to.



Pretzel strawberry salad

The Food Magazine gets regular 'care' packages from a reader in **New York** who keeps in touch to update us with missives 'from the processed food front'. Most recently we received – a spray container of pancake mix; an on-packet pretzel recipe idea for - 'Pretzel strawberry salad' (containing, amongst other things, pretzels, gelatin, frozen whipped topping, sugar, cream cheese and butter); and the packaging for a breakfast sausage with added maple syrup. The latter presumably designed to mimic the taste one traditionally gets from a home-cooked breakfast of pancakes, and sausage, where the syrup may have naturally drifted onto the meat side of the plate. But, who needs the real thing anymore? The reader is also perturbed that **Spaghettios** – pasta in tomato and cheese sauce – can be labelled as having a full serving of veggies per portion. Amid the lengthy, and mostly incomprehensible ingredients list, tomato paste is the only thing that might actually seem akin to a vegetable. Reminds us of the time when, under the Reagan administration, a school lunch cost saving proposal was tabled that, if passed, would have allowed ketchup to be classified as a vegetable.



Photo: hospitalnotes.blogspot.com



Winner of a Gold Medal in the Cat sick and Sludge category of the Hospital Food Olympics?

Traction Man

The poor quality of hospital food is a longstanding joke – but also an issue of major concern to many health professionals who say the nutritional quality of the food is often worse than that served up in prisons.

Now, an online blogger has been posting 'Notes from a hospital bed - the ramblings of a poor sod forced to spend months in traction in an NHS hospital bed'. Driven round the bend by immobility, Traction Man thought mealtimes might be highlights during otherwise bleak days, but no such luck. So, instead of eating the food, he started posting pictures of it to friends, and on the web, inviting guesses as to what the dishes were.

Under headlines such as: Hospital food bingo, Should I repair my shoes with it or eat it; and The slop hits the fan – he offers us a taste of his suffering. In 'Come dine with me' – he threatens to invite some of his least favourite people – including George Bush – to suffer along with him.

While some of his comments are less than PC and less than kind – he does draw attention to a failure by UK health authorities to tackle longstanding concerns over food served up to patients – a situation they have long promised to remedy, but failed to do so.

<http://hospitalnotes.blogspot.com>

Coke or booze the best options?

While it is good to see the charity **Drinkaware** encouraging us to cut back on our consumption of alcoholic drinks on nights out, it is rather sadder to see the message plastered around what looks like a giant ad for **Coke**. The drinks industry funded charity is running a range of ads under the slogan 'Why let the good times go bad', not all of which suggest high sugar drinks as breaks between alcoholic ones on nights out. But, this was the only one in sight in this neighbourhood.



A thirst for free water

The flower display in this disused relic from the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association is certainly attractive. But, how nice it would be if it actually still dispensed water. In fact, these are found all over London parks, relics of a time when people were just beginning to be aware of the benefits of access to a healthy, free supply of water. The Association was set up by philanthropists in 1859, in the wake of terrible cholera epidemics that the epidemiologist John Snow had only just figured out were linked to sewage contaminated water supplies. But, fountains in parks and other public spaces have been inadequately maintained in recent years, and in many there are none at all working anymore. The **Children's Food Campaign** is now calling for drinking water fountains to be brought back into use – saying especially that free supplies will help parents avoid having to purchase expensive, or sugary soft drinks in park cafés.

NOW SHOWING

The Food Magazine

www.foodmagazine.org.uk

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

published by TheFoodCommission

£7.00 - WHERE SOLD

REFUNDABLE WHEN YOU

SUBSCRIBE TO THE FOOD MAGAZINE

SEE PAGE 25 - PLEASE KEEP YOUR TILL RECEIPT

Big screen junk food bonanza!

INSIDE

Movie madness

Toxic lunch box

Hidden enzymes

Real bread

ISSUE 86 ► SEPTEMBER/NOVEMBER 2009

£7.00 - Refundable when you join us

see page 25

ISSN 0953-5047



Reverse trick or treating

It is the time of year when American kids get their costumes and sweet bags ready, for the holiday that is second only to Christmas in many childrens' hearts. Halloween is huge in the States, and it is a chance to accumulate a hoard of sweets that can last the prudent child many weeks. How sorry we were as children for the poor few who had been roped into trick-or-treating for UNICEF – shaking a little coin tin to raise funds for poor youngsters a world away seemed a cruel punishment to most of us Brooklyn kids and we thanked God for parents without a social conscience, as we raced to the next house to accumulate more loot.

Now an excellent campaign organisation has sent us information about a fund/awareness raising proposal – reverse trick or treating. Parents send a cheque off for a kit – and instead of collecting sweets, it's the kids who give out fair trade chocolates along with information about human rights abuses in the cocoa industry. At the same time, I have been perusing my 'Summer Survival Kit' from the Change4Life team. How it sets the family pulse racing, with suggestions like 'Have fun with your pedometer indoors' and the budget option 'Hide pennies around the house and get the kids to help with the housework.'

Adults really do know how to have a good time don't they. Please don't get me wrong – I am a firm admirer of the group behind the trick-or-treating idea – the America-based International Labor Rights Forum is a fantastic organisation. If only our Department of Health had pitched the multi-million pound Change4Life budget in their direction the world really would be a better place – with child slavery in the cocoa industry genuinely on the ropes, and with some blameless American youngsters allowed to trick-or-treat in peace.

It has all set me off thinking about the unintended effects of some approaches we adults take to getting children to aspire to become healthy, responsible, members of society. Which was roughly the topic for a discussion I took part in at the Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival, along with Sheila Dillon, John Gummer and Lady Caroline Cranbrook.

There is certainly little evidence that appealing to better nature and common sense works - for adults or children. Partnerships with the junk food industry to promote healthy living - hmm, the only ones surprised that isn't working are our public health tsars. Working harder for less money, and fewer days off, while millionaires proliferate? Gets me out of the door every morning for a brisk walk to work after my bowl of gruel.

The thing is – I really do believe that citizenship, and the individual pursuit of good health, could be pretty much painless. Even joyous. Getting paid a decent income; working fewer hours so you have time to cook, and grow some of your own food on a local allotment; being able to walk to school through less traffic clogged streets, where the number of fast food restaurants has been limited; watch junk food ad free TV; getting a healthy, free meal at school in a decent length lunch hour; eating foods that regulators have ensured are produced without cosmetic additives – all of this is painless for the individual and doesn't involve the horrendous guilt, worry and sadness that so much health promotion is about.

All of this is echoed repeatedly by the fantastic writers in *The Food Magazine* – by Tm Lobstein (pg.22), Guy Watson (pg.16), Bee Wilson (pg.12), and Andrew Whitley (pg.10). The young people we know do not want to die young, or live lives blighted by ill-health, scoffing chocolate bars produced by child slaves. Duh as my son would say. But, too many will continue to do so – because those with the power to change all of that are so terrified of alienating industry, that they alienate the rest of us instead.

Joanna Blythman

Editor: Jessica Mitchell	Trustees and Advisors: Joanna Blythman, Dr Eric Brunner, Prof Michael Crawford, Robin Jenkins, Peter Koenig, Jane Landon, Prof Tim Lang, Dr Tim Lobstein, Dr Alan Long, Jeanette Longfield, Diane McCrea, Prof Erik Millstone, James Postgate, Dr Mike Rayner, Prof Aubrey Sheiham, Hugh Warwick, Simon Wright.	Printed on recycled paper by Rap Spiderweb www.rapspiderweb.com Retail distribution (sale or return) by Central Books. www.centralbooks.com Unless otherwise indicated all items are copyright © The Food Commission (UK) Ltd 2009 and are not to be reproduced without written permission.
Campaigns Coordinator: Anna Glayzer 020 7837 2250		
Design & Artwork: Graham O'Connor 078 7509 6625		
Cartoonists: Sam Findlay, George Hughes, Emile Sercombe.		

Inside The Food Magazine

News

Labelling helps diners change course	1
Bottled water companies and PR spin.....	1
Sweden leads the way on ecological nutrition	2
FSA to study adverse reactions to aspartame	2
Get the balance right	2
How easy is it to get a healthy school lunch?.....	3
Food Standards Agency ad campaign to tackle salty cereals	3
Doctors back a low carb diet	3
Have fun with Apple Day	3
Dying of hunger	4
TV & product placement.....	4
The Food Commission News	4

Features

Poets' corner	5
Movie madness.....	6
'Toxic lunch box:' myth or reality?	8
Chuck Snacks off the Checkout	9
The unbearable lightness of baking	10
Hidden enzymes	12
Legal, decent, honest and true?.....	15
Gazpacho and coffee.....	16
How climate change is sucking small-scale farmers' livelihoods dry	18

Book reviews

The End of Food	22
The End of Overeating	22
kid's kitchen.....	23
Your letters	23
Join us	25
Backbites	26

Contributors
Tim Lobstein, Jane Landon, Natasha Payne, Andrew Whitley, Guy Watson, Bee Wilson, Dr. Tamara Galloway, Emile Sercombe, Jo Barrett, Brie O'Keefe.

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of The Food Commission.
Cover Images: istockphoto.com

Food Commission websites
The Food Commission: www.foodmagazine.org.uk
Action on Additives: www.actiononadditives.com
Chew on this website: www.chewonthis.org.uk

The Food Commission consists of the charity The Food Commission Research Charity (registration 1000358) and the not-for-profit company The Food Commission UK Ltd, which permits the organisation to undertake trading activities. The idea is that any surplus income from trading, such as income from *The Food Magazine*, is used to support our campaign work. Donations to the charity are used to support our education and health promotion work, including those aspects of campaigns which are of an educational and health promotional nature. The two sister organisations have separate accounts and separate meetings of their trustees/directors. This combination of a trading company and a charity is fairly standard among non-governmental organisations, and is recommended by the Charity Commissioners.

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc35d.asp

Advertising: *The Food Magazine* does not accept commercial advertising. Loose inserts are accepted subject to approval – please contact Anna Glayzer at The Food Commission for details. Call 020 7837 2250 or email anna@foodmagazine.org.uk



Labelling helps diners change course

Calorie labelling on food chain menus is in full swing in New York City. Restaurants with 15 or more branches, and standardised menus, must offer calorie information prominently, at point of sale to help consumers make healthier choices. This means menu boards at **Dunkin Donuts, KFC, McDonald's** and the like post this information on menu boards in font at least as large as the price. There are no exceptions, and all menu items must include the information.

The New York scheme is showing early signs of success, with a health department survey of 1,600 customers at 51 different food locations showing around 60% of people are aware of calorie information, and around 25% of those use the information to make lower calorie choices. There is evidence that restaurant chains are reformulating menu offers, and ditching some of their highest calorie items.

The Food Magazine spoke to customers outside New York restaurants this summer, and found a mix of views. "Are you calling me fat," was the reply of one **Dunkin Donuts** customer to a question about whether she used calorie labelling. Others noted they used the information when they were on a diet, or if they were trying out a new item. One mother noted that she had not used the information in a **McDonald's** because, "I was just feeding the kids, I wasn't eating."

Here in the UK, there is a voluntary menu labelling scheme in place – coordinated by the Food Standards

Agency, and aiming to ensure, "clear and easily visible calorie information at the point where most people choose their food." *The Food Magazine* has visited six branches of catering chains that have signed up to the voluntary scheme; the September visits were to **Pizza Hut, KFC, Wimpy, Burger King, Subway**, and **Pret A Manger**.

At **KFC**, we found no obvious change from our visit in June – when we asked for calorie information, staff gave us a tray liner. Nutritional information is on the back. No information was available at all at **Pret A Manger**, or **Pizza Hut** and staff said they had nothing to give out to members of the public. **Subway** continues to provide information on their food service counter – pasted onto the glass on a small poster. At **Burger King** staff just gave us a brochure 'In the spotlight so you're not in the dark.' However, the **Wimpy** chain we visited offered calorie information on menu boards in font as large as the price for three menu items; other calorie information is on a page in the back of one of their many menus. Staff also gave out a brochure called a 'Nutritionary'. It offers nutritional information, but in a limited way. For example, for desserts it gives total carbohydrates, but not sugars.

So, a mixed bag, and not particularly impressive when compared to New York City. With UK consumers eating on average one in six meals out, and more if you include snacks, there is a lot to gain if more was done to



Sign in a McDonald's window in Brooklyn, New York

help consumers to make healthier choices. In the USA, legislation similar to New York's is now before Congress – which could mean action on this in every state of the union. No such action seems in sight in the UK.

Bottled water companies and PR spin

Bottled water companies are using PR spin, and planning scare tactics about tap water in an effort to combat falling sales. The Food Commission has received *A statement from Hildon Natural Mineral Water*, which claims that, "incompetent sources", criticise bottled water, and suggests the company will, "put controversial issues into the correct perspective."

Under headlines such as - "Who's next", and, "Is it safe" – the brochure provides weblinks to old news stories about cancer drugs in tap water, and school closures in Northamptonshire due to contamination with cryptosporidium. What the brochure makes considerably less clear is that both stories are considerably more than a year old. The brochure also asks, "So which of us REALLY does pose the biggest threat to the environment?" Hildon's answer – the carbon footprint of the bottled water industry is one twentieth that of the tap water industry.

The company claims to welcome an open and fair discussion, and

presumably to continue supplying bottled water to high profile customers such as the House of Commons. Meanwhile, *Scotland on Sunday* has reported on a leaked memo and subsequent email exchanges between PR professionals who lobby on behalf of the bottled water industry, including one working for the Natural Hydration Council. The NHC's founder members are three major bottled water companies – **Nestlé (Vittel and Perrier brands), Danone (Volvic and Evian brands) and Highland Spring**. The exchanges followed the publication of the annual report of the Drinking Water Quality Regulator in Scotland which revealed that two tap water samples in 2008 had been found to be contaminated with E Coli. The NHC noted that such information could be useful, "should the media turn hostile to our cause," with a colleague suggesting, "Clock the E Coli data. Good to keep up our sleeve." The PR people further noted that such information could be useful in briefing journalists, so long as subsequent articles did not name them as its source.

In response to the story, an NHC spokesperson denied denigrating tap water, noting that the group keep an eye on the water industry, and that it promotes the consumption of all water. The Regulator in Scotland, Colin McLaren, leapt to the defense of tap water, noting that the report concluded that 99.75% of the supply met safety standards, with rare failures dealt with quickly.

The campaign group Sustain has produced two research reports in the past two years on health and environmental issues around bottled and tap water, and says there is clear evidence that tap water is better for the environment and health than bottled:

- tap water in the UK is one of the highest quality tap waters in the world; research shows no evidence that bottled water is 'cleaner' overall
- tap water is great value for money providing 50 glasses for a penny (500 times cheaper than bottled water);
- taste tests continue to show that tap water is equal to the taste of bottled water;
- bottled water generates thousands of tonnes of plastic or glass waste, most of which is not recycled; and
- although most bottled water sold here is from the UK or Europe, some continues to be shipped thousands of miles,



- all bottled water uses dwindling energy supplies - in production, transport, refrigeration and so on - contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, and
- it is estimated that two gallons of water are used, for every gallon of water purified to put into the bottle.

The campaign group has has notable successes in persuading people to give up bottled water in favour of tap for health and environmental reasons, for example, the Food Standards Agency no longer uses any bottled water at all in its offices.

To see the reports, *Turning the tap* (2008) and *Have you bottled it?* (2007) visit Sustain's website: www.sustainweb.org

Sweden leads the way on ecological nutrition

Guidelines for making food choices that are both healthy and ecologically-sound have been developed by the Swedish authorities. The summary document 'Environmentally Effective Food Choices' has been circulated around other EU member states, and if no major objections arise, they should be implemented in Sweden this autumn.

Foods covered include meat, fish/shellfish, fruits, berries, starches (potatoes, cereals, rice), vegetables & legumes, cooking fats and water. Recommendations include eating seasonal, locally-produced fruits, vegetables and berries; and avoiding bottled water, soda and palm oil. Eating meat less often and in smaller quantities is a central recommendation. Such dietary patterns are beneficial to consumer health and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the guidelines, "With a few exceptions, healthy food choices can also go hand in hand with choices that are good for the environment." The guidelines are the first of their kind – and are an important contribution to discussions about the development of national dietary advice that maximises both health benefits and benefits to the environment.

UK to follow

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' 'Council of Food Policy Advisors' has just published its first report. Professor Tim Lang, a Board member of The Food Commission, is one of the Advisors.

The Council names three priority areas to focus on:

- Defining an environmentally sustainable healthy diet;
- Government setting an example via public procurement; and
- A UK fruit and vegetable strategy.

Work is already progressing, particular around the development of a fruit and vegetable strategy that will boost consumption and ensure environmentally sound production and distribution. UK consumers still eat fewer than three portions of fruit and veg a day on average – the Government admits its five-a-day target needs new ideas if it is to be a success.

Meanwhile in Scotland, *Recipe for success* – Scotland's first food and drink policy has been published. It notes some progress on linking issues of health and sustainability. And promises as a next step to put a Health and Sustainability Framework in place which will allow it to better assess the impact of policy on diet and sustainability.

FSA to study adverse reactions to aspartame

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has started an 18 month study into the artificial sweetener aspartame which is used in products such as Coca-Cola Zero and diet Pepsi. It is also marketed as NutraSweet or Canderel. The study will not test the safety of the sweetener, which the FSA says is already established, but will focus on people who have reported bad reactions to the sweetener. Many people have reported symptoms to the FSA such as headache or upset stomach after consuming the sweetener, or products containing it.

A number of UK retailers have removed the sweetener from own-label products, including Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, and Asda. Most recently, Asda won a high court battle with Ajinomoto (the world's biggest producer of the sweetener) for the right to keep on labelling its 9000 'Good For You' own label food and soft drink products as containing 'no hidden nasties'. The packaging pledges no 'artificial colours or flavours, no aspartame, and no hydrogenated vegetable oils'.

The FSA says the study results could be used as part of an EU wide study, but it is somewhat unclear how the research can look into adverse reactions without also by implication considering the safety of the sweetener. Dr Erik Millstone, an advisor to The Food Commission, has long campaigned against the sweetener, saying the evidence used to establish its safety record is weak and flawed.



How easy is it to get a healthy school lunch?

From this term all primary school children in two areas will get a free, healthy lunch every day as part of a Government pilot programme. Generally, only families on some state benefits can access free school meals, meaning that many living on low incomes are denied such support.

The 2 year long free school meal pilots in Newham, London and County Durham will be joined by a pilot in Wolverhampton that will ease current income eligibility criteria. The pilot programmes come at the same time as the final stage in the revamp of school food menus – with every state school now offering lunches that meet tough food and nutrient based standards. An average school lunch must include at least one portion of vegetable or salad and one portion of fruit, and also restricted amounts of fat, sugar and salt and minimum levels of nutrients such as iron, zinc, calcium and vitamins. There are restrictions on the type of drinks on offer, and the snacks that can be offered at break times.

Judy Hargadon, chief executive of the School Food Trust says: "The nutrient standards are key to ensuring all children have access to a healthy and nutritious lunch at school but they will only be beneficial if children take up the meals on offer. Recent research highlights that there could be as many as 300,000 children currently missing out on the opportunity of a free school meal. Reasons behind this are complex, but parents tell us that stigma and not knowing whether they are eligible or not can put them off signing up."

The SFT is working to improve take up of free school meals, but the problem remains, coupled with the fact that many families on low incomes

feel it is cheaper to give a packed lunch rather than pay for a meal if they are ineligible for free lunches. Despite this, the government has proved reluctant to move to universal free school meals – which many campaign groups, including The Food Commission, have demanded. Their pilot programme aims to evaluate the benefits of a move in that direction.

However, the programmes have been set high hurdles in terms of how they are to be evaluated, with consideration of whether they: reduce obesity/have an impact on a child's BMI; change eating habits at home; impact on behaviour and academic performance at school; improve school standards; and improve general health and well being.

Newham mayor Sir Robin Wales is clear already that the free school meals pilot will be a great benefit to his area: "This pilot means we can make a huge difference to the lives of our pupils and our families, particularly those on the breadline. We are one of the country's poorest boroughs and many families have felt extra pressure on their budgets during the recession. This is a great way of both putting money in their pockets and of improving children's health and fitness - one of our top priorities - to boot."

According to The Food Commission, "The best way to solve the problem of low take up of meals, and the exclusion of many on low incomes is to offer all children a free school lunch. There is some evidence from previous work, that it is also cheaper in the long run – removing the administrative burden of eligibility checking. The criteria set for evaluation of the pilots are unrealistically high, and broad. We think one free lunch a day should be a social right – there is already enough evidence that making healthy eating easier and cheaper does society and individuals much good."



Food Standards Agency ad campaign to tackle salty cereals

The Food Standards Agency will run an ad campaign, starting in October, warning about the dangers of eating too much salt, and encouraging consumers to choose lower salt versions of their favourite foods and meals. Cereal manufacturers are up in arms as they expect that some of their products and brands will be specifically targeted by the ads as being too high in salt.

Cereal manufacturers have recently been criticised by Which? for the levels of salt in some of their products. The campaign organisation surveyed the nutritional content of 100 breakfast cereals, including one that contained as much salt per 100grams as salted crisps, and reported on the progress of manufacturers in reducing salt levels in cereals. Just over half of the cereals met the FSA's salt targets for 2010 of 0.8g per 100g of product, but 46 were over this. 30 were already meeting the proposed 2012 salt targets of 0.68g per 100g.

The ad campaign is the latest step in the FSA's five year drive to reduce adults' average daily salt intake to a maximum 6 grams. As we go to press, the FSA has not confirmed the content of the ads, but a spokesperson is on record as saying that the ads will not pick on cereal in particular, nor demonise cereal manufacturers.

Doctors back a low carb diet

If a new climate deal is not agreed this December at a UN summit in Copenhagen, it will mean a, "global health catastrophe," say 18 worldwide medical organisations.

The call to action comes in the form of a letter from doctors' groups carried in *The Lancet*, and the *British Medical Journal*. In an accompanying editorial, Lord Michael Jay, who chairs the international health charity Merlin, and Professor Michael Marmot of University College London, say that a new global climate treaty could deliver win-win solutions – opportunities, not cost: "A low-carbon economy will mean less pollution. A low carbon-diet (especially eating less meat) and more exercise will mean less cancer, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease."



Get the balance right

The FSA's Eatwell Plate shows the type and proportions of foods we need to eat in order to have a healthy diet, but UK dietary advice has not so far taken into account environmental considerations.

But, the Food Standards Agency has just updated the fish and shellfish advice to consumers on their Eatwell site. The Agency still recommends at least two portions of fish a week (including one oily fish), but it asks people to: "try to choose fish that has been produced sustainably or responsibly managed; look for assurance scheme logos; be adventurous and eat a wider variety of fish species."

Want to know more, visit:

www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/eatwellplate/



Dying of hunger

While much government and campaigning energy rightly focuses on action to prevent overweight and obesity, it is also important to act on the fact that people still die of hunger in the UK.

According to Karen Darnell, former national statistician with the UK Statistics Authority, information from death certificates shows that 61 people were recorded as dying of malnutrition in the UK in 2008. These deaths were where malnutrition was the underlying cause, and not a complication arising from another condition, for example, cancer of the stomach.

Malnutrition may be mentioned elsewhere on the death certificates of people in such ‘disease-related’ cases. If these secondary mentions of malnutrition on death certificates are included along with those cases where it was listed as the main or underlying cause of death- malnutrition was the main cause or a contributory factor in the deaths of 323 people in the UK in 2008. Such disease-related cases can include those who became malnourished through dementia or mental illness.

According to a 2008 report from the Advisory Group on Malnutrition, *Combating malnutrition: recommendations for action*, malnutrition is associated with a range of socioeconomic factors including poverty, social isolation and substance misuse. The burden of malnutrition is worse in areas of deprivation, and that is why there is a clear North/South divide in its prevalence. The cost to the public purse of disease related malnutrition in 2007 was more than £13 billion, and the majority of people at risk are under 65 years of age and live in the community.

The group says the problem is likely to get worse, affecting more than the 3 million currently at risk or suffering from malnutrition, due to the effects of: an ageing population, care in the community as opposed to institutional settings, shifts in patterns of food distribution, and an increase in associated conditions (for example, stroke, dementia).

At a minimum, the group is calling for a cabinet level nutrition strategy that addresses issues of food poverty, nutritional inequalities, poor quality nutritional care and gaps in service provision.

TV and product placement

Culture Secretary, Ben Bradshaw, is soon to release the full details of a consultation on product placement on television programmes. It could see the adoption of guidelines that would allow commercial broadcasters to take cash in return for including brands on TV shows.

Any proposals will be subject to a twelve week consultation period, but Bradshaw is understood to want new guidelines in place by the new year. A relaxation of current restrictions will be welcomed by commercial broadcasting companies who have complained about a loss of ad revenue following recent restrictions on the types of food and drink advertisements that can be shown during children’s TV programmes.

Health groups, including the Royal College of Physicians, have written in concern to Bradshaw, noting that research with children shows that such ‘embedded’ adverts are more effective at getting their messages across. The scale of such advertising is potentially huge, with some programmes in the USA (where product placement restrictions are weak) including around 250 product references per show.

The Food Commission will be joining other campaigners in responding to the consultation proposals – saying that we want less junk food advertising on TV, not more!



Food Commission News



Greta Scacchi and Jessica Mitchell at the Children’s Food Festival, Oxford in June this year.

Subscription Boost

Check out the subscription page in this issue (pg.25) for ways you can help support our work by subscribing to *The Food Magazine*. We are starting a campaign to boost subscriptions by 1,000 in coming months as we need these funds to continue our campaigning journalism and research. We still take no forms of advertising or commercial sponsorship – and we want to keep it that way. Why not gift a subscription to one of your friends, or our school partners can check out the new **Parents and Teachers scheme** – (we’ll be sending you all an email about this in the next few weeks) just sign up, and then for every parent or teacher that joins from your school, the school gets 10% of the subscription price back to spend however it likes. Contact Anna Glayzer for more information – anna@foodmagazine.org.uk or 020 7837 2250.

Please see our donation call in the letter that comes with this issue of *The Food Magazine*. We hope you enjoy the bumper sized edition, and the new full colour look.



Leading Lights

The Food Commission has been campaigning to get well known people to sign up to our new Celebrity Charter and agree not to promote high fat, salt and sugar foods. We launched the campaign in the headline debate at the **Children’s Food Festival** in Oxfordshire. **Sheila Dillon**, presenter of BBC Radio 4’s **The Food Programme**, chaired the discussion, and was joined by actor **Greta Scacchi**, Food Commission Director **Jessica Mitchell**, Dunraven Secondary school student **Lola Hyndley**, and PR person **Tracey Poulton**. **Greta Scacchi** is keen to support the campaign – and will be doing some writing for *The Food Magazine*. We still need to raise more funds to promote what we are calling the **Leading Lights campaign**, the website is not yet live, but you can sneak a peek and check out our Celebrity Charter at www.foodmagazine.org.uk/leadinglights/index.html

Look out for this Parents and Teachers scheme informational email coming to your inbox soon!

Photo: Hugh Warwick



Conferences, events, and reports

We are co-hosting this year’s **Caroline Walker Trust Annual Lecture** – our speaker is the author **Bee Wilson** whose talk is called *Death in the Pot!* Food Adulteration Past and Present.

Jessica Mitchell will be giving a talk about her report *I hear it’s the closest to breast milk* (published by the Caroline Walker Trust www.cwt.org.uk) in the controversial issues section of the **National Nutrition and Health Conference** in November. Jessica has also joined **Sheila Dillon**, Former Agriculture Minister, **John Gummer**, and **Lady Caroline Cranbrook** to discuss how we can get children eating more healthily – at the **Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival**.

This autumn we will be publishing our look into catering and artificial colourings (check out **Action on Additives** www.actiononadditives.com).

Many, many thanks as ever to you for supporting us through donations, and your memberships. We are finding the economic times tough for a small not-for-profit organisation – but your support allows us to continue campaigning for safer, healthier food through our projects and journalism.

Food, Society and Public Health

This fascinating conference will be held on the **5th and 6th of July 2010** at the **British Library Conference Centre**. The Food Commission is helping to organise the event, as part of the **British Sociological Association’s** Food Study Group. It will look at how food systems and eating habits are changing in response to the worldwide economic downturn, and ever present environmental concerns, including climate change. It will consider whether current policies and interventions to improve diet and reduce levels of obesity remain pertinent, or whether we need new solutions in a changing world. **Sheila Dillon**, presenter BBC Radio 4’s **The Food Programme**, **Harriet Friedman** of the University of Toronto, and **Claude Fischler**, CNRS Paris, are confirmed speakers.

Email **Dr. Wendy Wills** w.j.wills@herts.ac.uk to find out how you can submit an abstract for the conference; to get tickets email: conference@britsoc.org.uk See www.foodmagazine.org.uk/foodconference for more information.

Poets’ corner

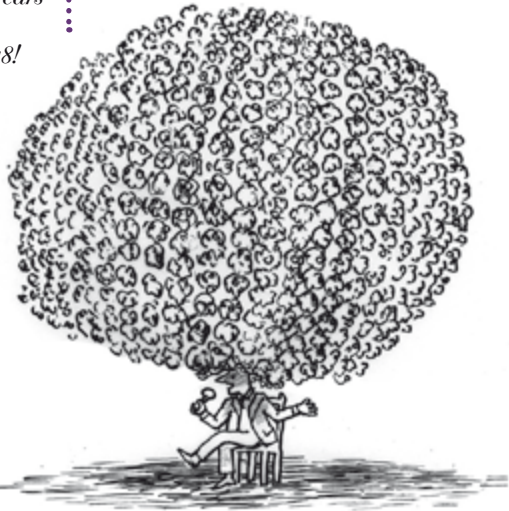
Emile Sercombe is a performance poet who performs at venues all over the UK, and round the world should anyone invite him to. His fantastic poems are often delivered with music, in costume, and with his beautiful, characterful voice. His hat for the Transplant Now poem is a site to behold. To contact him, email: emile.sercombe@virgin.net

TRANSPLANT NOW

by *Emile Sercombe*

Good evening.
Transplant Now
our weekly radio probe into the
frontiers of micro-surgery
Hello listeners
I have been working for some
years now
in the area of vegetable
transplants
o you say?
yes
this is true and
speaking off the top of my head
my particular field at present is
cabbage
How did this start you ask
Well I discovered personally that
a thoroughly dirty scalp makes
excellent soil for mushrooms
then I wondered would it also do
for other vegetables
so I experimented with just an
acre of cabbages
people laugh at me
but ha ha ha
I say
I have a fine crop of green
where once I was bald
I am shielded from the sun and I
make good use of rain
when it is windy my fine leaves
rustle
comforting music around my ears
and at 20 pence a cabbage
my harvest will be worth £648!
What then?
lie fallow for a while?
goodness me no!
I intend to rotate my head
give it a comb
then on the left
2 acres of leeks
to the right
potatoes and cauliflowers
down the centre
like a mohican
600 yards of sweetcorn
after that crop
over to Greece for a couple
of months

cultivating vineyards on the slopes
and
olives on the plateau
Do I still do mushrooms on the
side
you are wondering
yes my earholes are active all year
round!
(pulls mushroom)
just wash this wax off
there now
try one!
umm delicious!
goodbye
Thankyou
If you would like to know more
about cultivating your talents
lines are open now and the
number is
oi
if you’re outside Nottingham
oi 7
oi you 6
5 oi oi
whatcherfink
Thankyou for listening and
goodnight.



NOW SHOWING

Movie madness

by Natasha Payne

The lights dim, the crunchings and munchings start, and the big screen lights up – hey presto you are at the movies. But before the main feature starts – you will first be treated to the adverts. And all too often, that means junk food – and booze.

A *Food Magazine* survey of cinema adverts played along with films viewable by children and young people (certifications U, PG, 12A, and 15) shows that promotions for sugary products and alcohol are most common. Just three of the 14 films watched were entirely clear of such advertising. Viewers of Ice Age 3 at the Odeon in Oxford were treated to 5 ads for less healthy foods – Ben&Jerry Phish Food frozen yogurt, Haribo Star Mix, Oreo biscuits, Coco Pops, and Cadbury Clusters. In two of the films we viewed, even 12A film goers were treated to adverts for alcohol products such as Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Stella Artois beer, Absolut Vodka, and Jack Daniels whisky.

Kids' cinema ads – sugar and booze

All of the films surveyed were shown before 9pm, between June and September, at Odeon cinemas in Oxford and London. Using the nutrient profiling model designed by the Food Standards Agency, all of the food and soft drink products in the table would be judged as less healthy and would be therefore be subject to advertising restrictions during TV programmes of particular interest to young people up to the age of 16.

Particularly inappropriate were the adverts for Stella Artois, Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Absolut Vodka before My Sister's Keeper (12A) shown at 5:15pm. According to Ofcom regulations for television, drinks that contain more than 1.2% alcohol by volume must not be transmitted in the advertisement breaks immediately before or after programmes aimed at young people or during weekdays between 4:00pm and 5:45pm.

The youth interest of TV programmes is judged using a complex formula which judges the child share of the audience; if it is large enough proportionally, in comparison to the number of adult viewers, ads can be banned. Cinema advertising is not subject to the same regulations – and therefore to the same calculations about whether ads are appropriate for the viewing audience. Cinema is governed by a weaker, voluntary code set out by the Committee on Advertising Practice that says that marketing communications should not, "disparage good dietary practice."

Food and drink products

Magnum Temptations
Ben and Jerry's Phish Food Frozen Yogurt (included visuals for other frozen yoghurt & ice cream flavours including Cherry Garcia, and Chocolate Fudge Brownie)

Haribo Star Mix

Cadbury Clusters

Oreo biscuits

Coco Pops

Bertolli Spread

J20

Alcohol products

Jack Daniels

Stella Artois

Absolut Vodka

Peroni Nastro Azzurro

Other

Butlins, as sponsor of Odeon Kids Saturday morning cinema, ran a long advert, including a scene of ice cream sundae eating, with the words: Did you know there were 40,000 litres of ice cream eaten each week at Butlins.

U=Universal which means suitable for all ages; PG = Parental Guidance, but unaccompanied children of any age may watch; 12A = 12 and above can see on their own, younger children only if accompanied by an adult; 15 = only suitable for 15 and over

Films and rating

PG Films: Coraline 3D

U Films: Ice Age 3
12A Films: Year One; Transformers; My Sister's Keeper; Julie and Julia; 500 Days of Summer; The Time Traveler's Wife
15 Films: District 9

U Films: Ice Age 3

U Films: Ice Age 3
12A Films: Year One; Transformers; My Sister's Keeper

U Films: Ice Age 3
PG Films: Night at the Museum

U Films: Ice Age 3
PG Films: Night at the Museum

12A Films: Transformers; Julie and Julia

PG Films: Coraline 3D

12A Films: The Time Traveler's Wife
15 Films: District 9

12A Films: My Sister's Keeper

12A Films: My Sister's Keeper

12A Films: My Sister's Keeper

PG films: Bedtime Stories

Restricting advertising

The *Food Magazine* has long campaigned for a 9pm watershed on advertising less healthy food and drink, including alcohol, on television. Current Ofcom regulations represent progress, but many ads for less healthy foods are passed for broadcast, and viewed by millions of young people. This happens when the child share of the audience, in comparison to the adult share, is not high enough. However, the system is a positive step, unlike the relatively unregulated world of cinema advertising.

A simple system for cinema would be to link advertising restrictions to film rating. It would be straightforward to apply the rating system to ads so that any film deemed suitable for children (U, PG, 12A, 15) would not be allowed to carry alcohol or unhealthy food ads (according to the nutrient profiling criteria used by Ofcom).

The film ratings are there to guide parents, but currently they cannot relax during the ad breaks.

Food and the movies

It is difficult to even make it into the actual screen to see the ads for high fat, saturated fat, salt or sugar foods without scooping up some yourself. A visit to an Odeon cinema as part of our survey showed a huge wall of such foods dominating the central lobby. There are sweets to be scooped by the bag, chillers with soft drinks, bagged sweet and salty popcorn, loose versions, bagged sweets and chocolate bars. No fruit is in sight.

FilmFeast is the big food promotion – a bag selling for £2.95 – that will give you popcorn sweet or salty, a drink (you can choose water), and either Magic Stars, Smarties – or raisins – but, on the day we visited the raisins were not on offer.

Big poster promotions advertise the Drink Pledge – with Pepsi Max – if staff do not offer you a drink when you order food, you get one free.

And the Odeon Premiere Club is a reward scheme that allows you to accumulate points from purchases – which you can use to buy loose popcorn, and dispensed soft drinks.

Selling advertising space to cinemas

Cinema adverts are eye catching – they are on a big screen, and tend to be longer than TV advertisements. People are not likely to see them often, so they need to be memorable. Ad space is sold by companies such as Digital Cinema Media which has around 65% of the market due to their work with clients such as Odeon. The company sells a range of packages, for example, the Family Focus. For £928,368 companies get their ads placed during a certain number of films aimed at families, and can request specific times of year to have the ads placed. The companies doing the advertising do not generally choose time of day, or specific films – DCM does these negotiations and planning for them. For the fee DCM gives companies estimates of the number of people who will see the ads.

ENJOY THE REWARDS
USE YOUR ODEON POINTS TO GET DRINKS, POPCORN AND TICKETS



Popular cinema

A trip to the cinema can be an expensive treat – tickets are not cheap, and the food prices high. But, according to the UK Film Council's *Statistical Yearbook* (2009) cinema going is one of most popular forms of entertainment in the UK. Despite the credit crunch onset there were increases in both box office takings and the number of admissions, with box office receipts topping £850 million. Around 60% of the population goes at least once a year, and 18% go once a month.

Tamara Galloway is Professor of Ecotoxicology at the University of Exeter, UK. Her research focuses on understanding the biological effects of common environmental pollutants, including the controversial plastics additive bisphenol A.

There has been a great deal of attention given in recent months to the suggestion that chemicals present in the food we eat may be contributing to ill health. Many of these stories have centred on the use of plastic items for preparing and packaging food and drinks and on a chemical found in certain kinds of plastics, called bisphenol A. How much of this attention is media hysteria and how much is driven by real scientific concern? Here, we look at some of the facts behind recent headlines and attempt to place them in context.

Plastic packaging and food

Plastics can be generated in high volumes and have low production cost. It is perhaps unsurprising that they make up the most important food and drinks packaging material by market

moderate amounts of cold water from polycarbonate plastic containers for just one week could increase the amount of BPA entering the body by two thirds.

Why is BPA controversial?

Several clinical studies have now identified a link between exposure to BPA and adverse health effects such as diabetes and changes in liver function. Last year, a team of researchers from the UK were the first to show a link between BPA and heart disease in adults. There is also concern that BPA may alter early patterns of development and behaviour in young children. Children are at greater risk because they are less able to break down and eliminate BPA from their bodies. Babies may be exposed if they are fed formula heated in plastic bottles containing BPA.

How is BPA use controlled?

Canada was the first country to ban the use of BPA in babies' bottles in October 2007, closely followed by a number of states in the USA. The California State Assembly has just controversially struck down a Bill that would have banned the use of BPA in packaging materials used for foods and drinks aimed at children 3 and younger. In Europe, the limits of exposure to BPA were set in 2006 and remain at 0.05mg/kg body weight per day, i.e. based on current guidelines, a 65 kg adult could consume 3250 micrograms per day (3.25 milligrams/day, about the weight of an apple pip). The European Food Safety Authority issued a statement in October 2008 supporting the current limits of exposure, despite concerns that health effects have been reported at levels below this cut-off. There have been no large-scale studies of the UK or Europe population. The situation is made more complicated by differences in the legislation between Europe and the USA. In Europe, most focus is on how much of a chemical can leach into food, whereas in the USA, regulation is based on estimates of how much people are exposed to each day.

'Toxic lunch box': myth or reality?

by Dr. Tamara Galloway

value, in an industry that generates billions of pounds each year. Most plastic is destined for single use before being discarded. Environmental concerns have centred not only on the amount of waste generated, but also the potential for chemicals to leach out of the plastic and into foodstuffs.

What is bisphenol A?

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical that has been used for many years for making certain kinds of plastics and resins. It was first produced in the 1930s as a hormone mimic and is now extensively used as a building block to make a type of hard, clear plastic called polycarbonate, which is found in food and drinks containers, plastic eating utensils, CD cases and many other products in everyday use. BPA tends not to be found in the softer, more flexible products such as single-serving water bottles. BPA is also found in epoxy resins, which are used as coatings inside some food and drinks cans and in dental sealants.

How does BPA get into the human body?

BPA is detectable in over 90% of the population. For most people, exposure is believed to come from food and drinks packaging. Acidity, heat and mechanical damage (for example from heating and stirring the contents) may increase the amount of BPA that comes out of the plastic and enters the food or drink. Polycarbonate food and drinks containers cause most concern because they are re-usable and repeated use leads to increased leaching. A recent study in the USA showed that drinking

Is it possible to avoid BPA altogether?

It would be almost impossible to avoid BPA altogether. Bisphenol A is in many products and current labelling guidelines mean that it is not always obvious which products contain it.

How can you tell if a plastic container has BPA in it?

Polycarbonate plastics and resins containing BPA are not specifically marked, so at present this is not really possible. Compounds marked with the recycling symbol '7' may contain polycarbonate, although this label also includes other kinds of plastics. Many larger retailers have started to produce products labelled as 'BPA free'. Research published last month by Environment Canada revealed that some babies bottles labelled as BPA free still contained small quantities of the substance, highlighting the need for a definition of what 'BPA-free' actually means for the consumer.

What next?

Although the risks posed by exposure to BPA are likely to be very small, they are very small risks to very large numbers of people, as almost everyone in the population is exposed to this chemical. Despite this, European regulators are unlikely to see a ban on BPA as necessary or cost effective as the commercial implications of such a move would be huge and polycarbonate remains a very useful material.

People can take simple and effective steps to limit their exposure by avoiding storing or heating food in containers containing BPA and by balancing their consumption of canned versus fresh foods. Manufacturers are already exploring 'green' innovations in manufacturing processes that can drastically reduce BPA levels in polycarbonates, which could be helped further by better labelling.

Used safely, plastics and their myriad of everyday uses remain one of the 20th century's significant achievements, but if you are taking a sandwich to work for lunch, you may still want to check the labelling on your lunch box.



Chuck Snacks off the Checkout

by Natasha Payne

Back in 2003, The Food Commission launched a campaign, **Chuck Snacks off the Checkout!**, after complaints from members of our Parents Jury that supermarkets were encouraging kids to pester their parents to buy unhealthy foods as they went to pay for their shopping. Many big chains promised to do better, but now, six years on, a survey for *The Food Magazine* has found that many of Britain's supermarket superpowers are still stocking tills with high fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) foods for impulse buying.

The Food Magazine surveyed the checkouts in summer 2009 in 28 stores from major supermarket chains Waitrose (3 shops), Somerfield (4 shops), Co-op (2 shops), Iceland (2 shops), Tesco (7 shops), Sainsbury's (6 shops), and Marks and Spencer (4 shops), in locations around London and Oxford. Only Waitrose checkout areas were entirely free of HFSS food and drink. Somerfield and Co-op stores (prior to their merger), Marks and Spencer and Iceland all had confectionery of various types within easy reach and sight of children.

Tesco and Sainsbury's visits showed that the checkout areas in larger stores were free of such promotions, but in the newer, smaller stores (Tesco Express and Metro & Sainsbury's Local) such displays abounded, and all included a variety of confectionary, and in some instances soft drinks and salty, bagged snacks. Such items were often found distributed on both sides of checkout queues – as people waited to pay, they walked through what amount to 'tunnels' of less healthy foods.

Where our survey found these foods and drinks, we found a lot of them – all such checkouts had at least ten different items, with some checkout areas having more than 50. To top it off, many of the tills we saw also had booze alongside where customers queued.



Top products on sale

The survey of products found that foods and drinks which would be banned from being advertised during television programmes of particular interest to children and young people were sold near checkouts surveyed. Nestlé and Cadbury chocolate bars, along with packets of Haribo were the most commonly displayed food products. Coca-Cola was the most commonly found drink, and Walker's crisp varieties were the most common bagged snack.

Store policies

The chains have a variety of policies about less healthy food promotion on checkouts. Waitrose told us these were discouraged, but could be left to the discretion of individual store managers. Tesco and Sainsbury's told us these were now permitted. Iceland did not return our calls. Marks and Spencer has a policy of having one sweet free till in each store, but this was not clearly evident during survey visits. Somerfield (no policy) has now been taken over by the Co-op (policy says HFSS products should not be promoted); in any case, we found the Co-op stores visited in breach of their own guidelines.

Chuck snacks off the checkouts

The Food Commission would like all retailers to adopt firm policies for banning checkout promotions of HFSS foods – and we would like to see these policies enforced at all store locations. With the exception of Waitrose, our snapshot survey shows all stores have some way to go.

The unbearable lightness of baking

In the credit crunch year to April 2009, Britons bought very slightly more bread than the year before, halting a 50 year decline. Still, over two thirds of it is made with highly refined white flour and it remains among the cheapest in Europe. It elicits routine derision from visiting Continentals and some locals have abandoned it altogether on the grounds that it does not agree with them. Andrew Whitley, author of *Bread Matters* and co-founder of the Real Bread Campaign, ponders British bread past, present and future.

In 1758 the Assize of Bread, first promulgated in 1266 to control prices and stop bakers selling underweight loaves, was altered, making white bread more profitable to bake than brown. This defied economic logic: after all, to make white flour involved discarding at least 30 per cent of the whole grain. From earliest times, lighter, whiter bread had been a luxury most accessible to those able and willing to partake. "I like white bread, but white bread doesn't like me," wrote wealthy Roman playwright Seneca, an early observer of the perils of confusing occasional indulgence with staple diet. But in the emerging capitalist economy of eighteenth century Britain, aided by a government seeking to curry public favour at a time of poor harvests, high prices and bread riots, millers and bakers sought competitive advantage by responding to – and stimulating – a growing desire to turn the special into the everyday. Most people knew nothing about nutrition and though the mansions, carriages and clothes of the well-to-do were well beyond reach, white bread was one facet of the good life that the poor could sometimes share.

Not everyone was oblivious to the health consequences of the growing desire for white bread, especially among the poor. In 1771, Tobias Smollett encapsulated an interplay of economic forces and consumer preference whose features sound surprisingly familiar:

The bread I eat in London is a deleterious paste, mixed up with chalk, alum and bone-ashes; insipid to the taste and destructive to the constitution. The good people are not ignorant of this adulteration; but they prefer it to wholesome bread, because it is whiter... Thus they sacrifice their taste and their health, and the lives of their tender infants, to a most absurd gratification of a misjudging eye; and the miller or the baker, is obliged to poison them and their families, in order to live by his profession. (The Expedition of Humphry Clinker)

By the second half of the eighteenth century - agricultural modernisation, population growth and land enclosures were pushing self-sufficient cottagers off the land into towns where low wages ensured that they could survive only on the cheapest food. As industrialisation took hold, commentators reported on the high proportion of income that the poor spent on bread, a situation made virtually inevitable since, in the words of a Factory Commission report in 1833,

'too often the dwelling of the factory family is no home; it is sometimes a cellar, which includes no cookery, no washing, no making, no mending, no decencies of life, no invitations to the fireside'.

Cash-poor and time-poor from fifteen-hour mill shifts, the 'factory family' subsisted on the world's first industrial convenience food: British white bread.



Roller milling replaced stone grinding in the 1870s, enabling an even more complete removal of the most nutritious parts of the grain from white flour. Leading nutritionist Jack Drummond wrote in 1939:

'from that time to the present day a large part of the population of England has been subsisting on diets containing considerably less vitamin B1 than is physiologically required'.

The health effects of the industrial working class diet impinged on official consciousness only when the British Army, having reduced its minimum height requirement from five foot six in 1800 to five foot, still had to reject 40% of recruits to the South African War (1899-1902) because they were physically unfit to serve.

A growing consensus among nutritionists, and wartime supply problems, led to the fortification of white flour with chalk (calcium carbonate) in 1941 and the creation of the 85 per cent extraction rate National Loaf in 1942. Despite evidence of the latter's role in improved public health, the millers and bakers lobbied hard for a return to white bread (now fortified with iron and two B vitamins) which was finally permitted in 1953. For a brief period, Britain saw how the assumed national preference for very white bread could be modified by the simplest of regulatory expedients. According to Elizabeth David, between 1953 and 1956 white bread, costing 19 pence against the National Loaf's subsidised 12 pence, commanded less than one per cent of the market. But in 1956, the National Loaf was abolished and an opportunity was lost to entrench the advantages to public health produced by a subsidy on more nutritious bread.

The scientific consensus on the superiority of wholemeal flour withered; diets in general seemed to benefit from the greater variety of foods available as post-war austerity gave way to the modern era of subsidised agriculture and international trade. Green revolution plant breeding delivered high-yielding wheat varieties, responsive to intensive chemical inputs and selected for improved baking performance, not nutrition.

The final stage in the industrialisation of bread came with the invention in 1961 of the Chorleywood Bread Process. British wheat could now be substituted for expensive imported grain and turned into cheap, light, white bread using high-speed mixing, an array of chemical additives and processing aids, greatly increased amounts of yeast and zero fermentation time. Rapid concentration in the industry saw the number of small and medium-sized bakeries fall rapidly. Craft bakeries now have a three per cent market share in Britain, compared to 65 per cent in France and Germany, 80 per cent in Austria and 90 per cent in Italy.

The emergence in the last twenty years of wheat-related digestive disorders has revealed the true price of British baking 'efficiency'. Modern wheat varieties are 30-40 per cent lower in key minerals and, grown with chemical fertilisers, contain elevated levels of proteins (the omega-gliadins) that trigger auto-immune responses such as coeliac disease. Cutting fermentation time to zero locks up nutrients like calcium, iron and folate, increases glycaemic index and prevents beneficial lactobacilli from making bread more digestible. Worst of all, a host of industrial enzymes, replacing now-banned chemical additives, deliver that cloying texture and nature-defying perma-softness that epitomises our national bread. A regulatory stitch-up defines these enzymes (one of which - fungal amylase - is a known allergen) as 'processing aids' and therefore off-label: what hope for the latter-day 'mis-judging eye'?

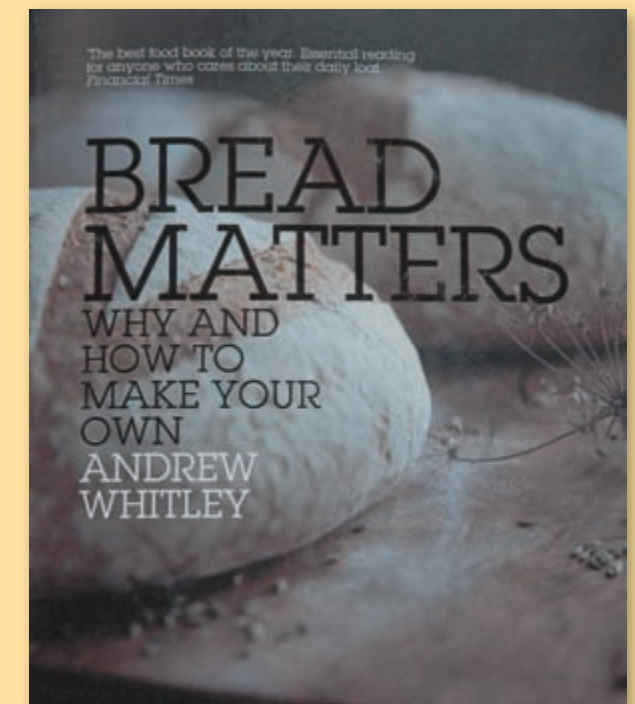
Despite its long-term decline, bread is still an important part of the British diet, especially in benefit households. If each mouthful now contains fewer nutrients, the effect on personal consumption, and hence perhaps on obesity, is obvious. And while many of the negative changes in our bread have been inadvertent, some practices, such as millers extracting wheat germ with its vital vitamin E to sell for twice the price of flour, amount to blatant theft by an industry that is happy to charge higher prices for 'healthier' options that have a few of the trendier nutrients put back, often in synthetic form.



Rising to the occasion: students on a Bread Matters course check the progress of their *pain de campagne* with teacher Andrew Whitley (left) www.breadmatters.com



A **Real Bread Campaign**, hosted by **Sustain**: the alliance for better food and farming, has recently emerged to put all this right. Cherishing what Ruskin called 'local associations and hereditary skill', it defines real bread as made without additives, ideally from local grain grown to maximise its vitality, and fermented long enough for good digestive and nutritional things to happen. It asks for honesty in labelling so that people know what they are being sold. It wants to harness the latest scientific research to find out why, for instance, fast-made bread sits on our stomachs and why grains like spelt seem to offer hope to people who thought they would never enjoy a loaf again. Above all, it seeks to rebuild our bread culture from the ground up, encouraging everyone to make, share, celebrate and enjoy good bread, supporting fulfilling jobs in neighbourhood bakeries whose lower energy intensity and shortened supply chains make them fitter for the future than today's purveyors of prettily packaged pap. Will our descendants survey those ingenious factories, as we marvel at the monuments on Easter Island, and wonder what it was that their masters worshipped even as their ecological niche crumbled?



***Bread Matters* reveals what goes into industrial bread, why you should avoid it and how to make *real bread* at home**

Hidden enzymes

Food writer and historian Bee Wilson investigates food processing aids...

"I've checked the label," people often say. "And it hasn't got anything bad in it." Increasingly, savvy British consumers have a long searching look at the label before they buy packaged and processed foods, to reassure themselves they don't contain too many scary or off-putting ingredients. What we often don't realise is that the manufacturers may have subjected the food to a range of bewildering 'processing aids', enzymes which do not legally have to be declared on the label. These enzymes are used in everything from babyfood to blue cheese, from cake to dried egg, from bread to meat, from fruit salad to carrot juice. But should you search for them on the label – and most people don't, since they are not aware of their existence – you won't find a trace.

In the food trade, a 'clean label' has become the Holy Grail. In industry speak, it means a label free of those nasty E-numbers that make consumers so inconveniently suspicious. But a 'clean label' product may have been produced with the help of any number of ingenious enzymes. Indeed, enzymes are explicitly marketed at manufacturers as a way of keeping a label 'clean'. The May 2006 edition of *Food Engineering and Ingredients*, a trade magazine, announced the exciting launch of Accelerzyme CPG, a "pure and label-friendly" cheese ripening enzyme. The website of DSM – an enzyme manufacturer – boasts that MaxiCurd™, another enzyme aimed at cheese, is "a completely clean label technical processing aid." The company Cereform proudly announces that it is "taking the lead" with a brand new range of "clean label dough conditioners" – called Ceretec – for use in morning rolls, burger buns etc., all of which is "e-number friendly."

In other words, the beauty is that, unlike with pesky e-numbers, the consumer doesn't have to know anything about them. The only enzymes which have to be listed on the label are those which are authorised as additives, primarily Invertase (E 1103) and Lysozyme (E 1105). Enzymes used as processing aids do not have to be mentioned at all.

Why don't these substances have to be declared on the label? The answer, says the Food Standards Agency, is that they are processing aids and therefore "not part of the final food." The idea is that whereas additives such as preservatives remain in the food once they are added, these enzymes get used up during production. In many cases, this seems fair enough. A good example would be the enzymes used to peel oranges for fruit salad. Until a few years ago, it was impossible to include oranges in commercial fruit salads, because peeling them was too labour intensive. Then Dutch scientists discovered a way to inject enzymes into the peel, which would make the albedo – the white fluffy layer – fall off. Hey presto! Suddenly oranges could be peeled in volume, without damage to the fruit. None of the enzyme, it seems fair to assume, makes its way from the peel to the fruit, because if it did, it would spoil the flesh, thus defeating the object.

In European law, a processing aid is something that is "present in food in the form of a residue, if at all, and will have no technological effect on the finished product." Or, as a spokesperson for Biocatalysts, one of the leading UK manufacturers of enzymes, based in Cardiff, tells me, "The reason they are not labelled is because they don't really do anything in the final food, if you see what I mean."

When it comes to enzymes for peeling oranges, this argument is probably fine. But many enzymes are used for much more complex culinary actions, such as artificially ripening cheese, predigesting baby food, increasing the volume and shelf-life of bread, creating 'lighter' versions of biscuits and wafers by increasing the amount of air held in the dough, binding together and firming up the flesh of low-quality meat (known in the trade as pse – 'pale, soft and exudative') or making weirdly fluffy cakes with fewer eggs and calories which last for weeks on the shelf. In these cases, the enzyme action is integral to the food as it is eaten, and it seems hard to see how it can be said to have "no technological effect on the finished product." If these enzymes don't "really do anything in the finished food," what is the point of using them?

An enzyme is essentially a catalyst – usually a protein – which speeds up a chemical reaction. There is nothing new about enzymes per se. As enzyme manufacturers are keen to remind us, we already have enzymes in our saliva and in our stomachs to help us digest food. As a spokesperson for Biocatalysts told me, "A lot of enzymes are natural because they are in us, like amylase." Moreover, many traditionally fermented foods such as bread and cheese have long depended on enzymes. Rennet is an enzyme. Yeast is an enzyme. The enzymes in pawpaw and pineapple have long been used as meat tenderisers.

In recent years, however, enzyme use has gone far beyond traditional applications. A 2007 House of Commons report concluded that "the use of enzymes by the food industry has increased steadily over the past 25 years" and noted that the European Commission had pointed out "that, whilst historically enzymes were considered to be non-toxic, the efforts of the food industry to develop new products has resulted in more complex enzymes, which could in turn give rise to a number of other potential hazards." What hazards, exactly? A footnote blandly listed them as "for example, allergenicity, residual microbiological activity and chemical toxicity," but did not elaborate. The trouble is that we still know very little about the effect of these newer enzymes on the human body and the extent to which they remain present in food after processing.

The European Commission is currently looking at enzymes as part of a revision of food-labelling law, due to come into effect in 2010. The Commission has set out requirements for a new Community list of food enzymes to be drawn up, and for food enzymes to be kept under "continuous observation." A two-year risk assessment of food enzymes is currently being carried

out, though it is not clear what this will entail. In the future, only enzymes on the list will be allowed in the food supply, though it is not clear when this will be, since, in a magnificent piece of Brussels finessing, the new law also allows for a non-specified 'transitional period' during which non-listed enzymes may still be used. The new law states that "food enzymes must be safe when used, there must be a technological need for their use, and their use must not mislead the consumer." However, it is hard to see how consumers can avoid being misled, when there is no requirement to include enzymes on the label. The new European Directive states that food enzymes are "required to be indicated as ingredients" on food labels but then adds that this does not apply when the enzyme is used "as a processing aid" – i.e. in the vast majority of cases.

Andrew Whitley, an artisanal baker, author of *Bread Matters* (2006) and leader of the Real Bread Campaign, is extremely concerned by the failure to label processing aids in bread. Whitley is skeptical about the notion that enzymes used as "processing aids" have no "technological effect" on the finished product. "An enzyme is supposed to be just a catalyst," he tells me. "But these baking enzymes fundamentally change the product." In the case of bread, enzymes transform "bread" from something crusty, which gradually and gracefully stales from the moment it is baked, to a thing of "permanent squidginess" with a sappy soft crumb and long shelf life. Whitley suspects that this enzymatic transformation of bread has "tipped it into indigestibility" as well as "distorting public taste to an expectation that all bread will be soft and squidgy."

He is particularly concerned about the enzymes alpha-amylase (an enzyme used in detergent which is also used extensively to speed up bread production) and transglutaminase (which is widely used as a kind of "meat glue" to bind ham together, but also used in baking to make dough stretchier, especially for croissants). Alpha-amylase is an enzyme that occurs naturally in wheat, but which can trigger allergic reactions in some people. This might not be a problem – except for factory workers handling the enzyme – if it were true that no residues of this agent remain in the finished product. But Whitley cites a scientific study from 2000 showing that up to 20% of the allergenicity of alpha-amylase "may survive in the crusts of bread" (Sander, I., Raulf-Heimsoth, M., Van Kampen, V., Baur, X. "Is fungal alpha-amylase in bread an allergen?" *Clinical and Experimental Allergy*. 2000 April: 30 (4): 560-5).

Whitley is even more worried by transglutaminase, whose use in bread he deems "irresponsible" since it may "turn part of the wheat toxic to people with severe gluten intolerance." A 2005 paper by J.A. Gerrard and K.H. Sutton published in *Trends in Food Science and Technology* raised the "disturbing possibility that transglutaminase in baked products may act upon gliadin proteins in dough to generate the epitope associated with the celiac response. Further work is urgently required...In the meantime we do not recommend the use of transglutaminase in baked products."

Bee Wilson is a food writer and historian. She has written the Kitchen Thinker column in the Sunday Telegraph magazine since 2003 and was previously the food writer for the New Statesman magazine. Bee has three times been named Guild of Food Writers food journalist of the year (in 2004, 2008 and 2009) and was also awarded the Radio 4 food writer of the year in 2002. She is the author of two books: *The Hive: the Story of the Honeybee and Us* (2004) and *Swindled: The Dark History of Food Fraud, from Poisoned Candy to Counterfeit Coffee* (2009, shortlisted for the Andre Simon prize).



George Hughes

This being so, it would be helpful to be able to check the label of bread for information on whether transglutaminase and/or alpha amylase were used in its production. (It would also be good to be informed about the origin of the enzymes used – some enzymes are made from GMOS and some derive from animal by-products such as hair, feathers or pig's pancreases though enzyme makers Biocatalysts tell me "we can do kosher, we can do vegetarian, we can do organic"). But the label tells us nothing. The Real Bread Campaign has written on numerous occasions to The Federation of Bakers – whose members include Allied Bakeries, DeliFrance, Premier Foods (Hovis) and Warburtons – asking them to confirm that none of its members are currently using unlabelled processing aids in the manufacture of their bread but they have so far not accepted this invitation. Likewise, I contacted several big food manufacturers in the dairy and baking sectors asking them to talk about their use of enzymes, and received no replies. No one in the business seems to want to own up to enzyme use. No one wants to tarnish those lovely clean labels.

Yet clearly, someone is using them. The global market in food enzymes is estimated at around \$725 million to \$870m a year – and growing. Moreover, the enzyme industry itself – as opposed to the food industry – is glad to speak openly of the varied benefits of its box of tricks. Cut costs! Increase yield! Use our enzyme and differentiate yourself from your competitors! The Biocatalysts catalogue lists amylases for biscuits and crackers, for "French style bread" and for the "full range of activities." It also offers a special Combizyme™ 666P enzyme to improve "the spread of the dough in the griddle cup" during the production of "English style muffins." The DSM website trumpets its special BakeZyme® product range of baking enzymes: amylase for "reduced proof time," hemicellulase for "improved loaf volume," protease for "decreased proof time in frozen dough," phospholipase for "improved crumb softness," glutathione for "mild dough relaxation." It seems fair to suppose that these enzymes are radically altering the food we eat – indeed, that is exactly what the enzyme industry claims for them when speaking to manufacturers. It's just the public who isn't supposed to know.





In many respects, the enzyme manufacturers present themselves as the good guys. In August this year, Peder Holk Nielsen, head of Novozymes – which has a 47% share of the global enzymes market – gave an interview in which he claimed that enzymes had made the food industry more “sustainable.” “On an average, by using one kg of Novozymes’ enzymes, our customers saved 100kg of CO2 in their production.” Use of enzymes is also associated with reduced use of additives, especially preservatives. And an enzyme called asparaginase – marketed by DSM as PreventASe™ – is said to reduce the formation of carcinogenic acrylamides in cereals, crackers, crisps etc.

It would be good for consumers to be able to have an open and informed discussion about enzymes as processing aids – to weigh up these possible benefits against potential harms. But for as long as they are not required to be listed on food labels, such a discussion cannot take place. Enzymes are shadowy phantoms, haunting our food supply, ever-present but never visible.

To what extent do residues of these substances remain in what we eat? The enzyme company Biocatalysts tell me that

they do not specifically test whether traces of their enzymes remain in food, leaving this up to the manufacturers. The Food Standards Agency tells me that in law there “is no specific requirement to test for processing aids” in the food supply, and “no defined list of approved processing aids,” though “food in this country is routinely monitored to ensure it is safe.” The Agency is unable to tell me the last time that food was tested for traces of processing aids, yet retains a faith that these mysterious substances – of which there is still no defined list - “should not leave residues.” As the enzyme industry grows apace, and the use of these products proliferates, it may be time to do more than just hope for the best.

Death in the Pot – Annual Lecture and Awards

The Caroline Walker Trust **Annual Lecture and Awards** will take place on the evening of **November 10th 2009**. This year it is a joint event along with **The Food Commission & The Food Magazine**. Our speaker is Bee Wilson. Bee’s talk will focus on the changing face of food fraud and is entitled *Death in the Pot! Food Adulteration Past and Present*. For more information visit: www.cwt.org.uk.

Know Your Food Enzymes – a list of some of the main enzymes and their application in food

Enzyme	Area of use	Reason for use
Amylase	Baking, Sweeteners	In baking, to catalyse the breakdown of starch in flour into sugar, speeding up the baking process; increases bread volume and gives a darker crust and softer crumb. Also used for turning starch into sugar (as in high-fructose corn-syrup)
Bromelain	Meat	Found naturally in pineapples and used for meat tenderising
Catalase	Egg processing	Removes the hydrogen peroxide used to pasteurize processed eggs
Cellulase	Fruit & Vegetables, coffee	Used to liquefy fruit e.g. apples in manufacture of juice; also used in the commercial processing of coffee
Collagenase	Meat	Meat tenderising
Esterase	Flavour, Cheese	Used in flavour production, e.g. to give a greater piquancy and sharpness to hard Italian cheeses such as Romano
Ferulic acid esterase	Juice	Used in the manufacture of fruit juice to help more juice to be extracted; also used to filter juice
Hemicellulase	Baking	Increases loaf volume (ie ratio of air to flour), thus lowering costs for the manufacturer
L-cystein (a protein rather than an enzyme)	Baking	Delays staling effects in bread. Sometimes derives from animal feathers
Lipase	Cheese, Baking	Speeds up the ripening of blue-mould cheese; and used to make low-fat bread doughs
Maltase	Diet supplement	Digestive supplement, also turns starch into sugar
Naringinase	Citrus	Reduce bitterness in citrus
Papain	Meat, Baking	Meat tenderizing powders; also used in baking to reduce the viscosity of batters
Pectinase	Fruit juice; wine; coffee and tea	Used to speed up the production of fruit and vegetable juice, including apple juice; also used in wine production; and in instant coffees and teas to reduce foaming in the cup
Peptidase	Dairy, Flavour	Flavour production, for example used to intensify the flavour of cheese
Phospholipase A2	Eggs, Baking	Can be used in the production of emulsifiers; or in baking, to increase volume; can be of GM or porcine origins
Protease	Biscuits, Cakes, Dairy	Lowers the protein level in flour; accelerates the development of cheese flavour in cheese making
Transglutaminase	Processed meats, baking	Used to bind together processed meats such as ham; in baking, used to create stretchy dough e.g. for croissants, reduces energy required for mixing, increases absorption of water, thus reducing costs
Xylanase	Baking	Makes dough more flexible and ‘machinable’; also enhances ‘ovenspring’ during baking – ie the amount by which bread rises in the oven, thus increasing volume/air in the loaf and lowering costs

Legal, decent, honest and true?

Misleading food and drink advertisements should be regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority. We report on recent adjudications.

X KFC – when ‘fresh’ chicken is two days old

According to its advertising, KFC would like us to think of its stores as cosy bistros staffed by would-be chefs, and not a global chain dishing up mass-produced fast food by the bucketful.

KFC’s latest TV ad campaign shows a young employee diligently preparing the company’s trademark fried chicken. “The secret to producing the best food is using the right ingredients,” he says. “Like this chicken, came in fresh this morning. Well this is what it’s all about. Preparing a fresh chicken by hand....” And as a bucket of fried chicken pieces is passed through the hatch to the waiting customer, the voice-over tells us: “KFC. Fresh, on the bone chicken, every store, every day.”

Investigating complaints about this ad, the ASA established that chicken on the bone was delivered three times a week, not every day. It ruled that the ad was likely to “give viewers a misleading impression of the frequency of the deliveries,” and therefore in breach of CAP Code rules 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 (Misleading advertising) and 5.2.2 (Implications).

But the ad has continued to broadcast, unchanged except for brief on-screen text declaring: “minimum 3 deliveries a week.” Blink and you’ve missed it. And we did miss it. So a Food Magazine reader has complained again, and now the ASA is obliged to re-investigate. Small-print on-screen messages are used extensively in ads to provide qualifying information such as prices, survey sizes and special offers. This investigation may prove an interesting test of whether on-screen text is a reasonable way to ‘correct’ misleading impressions, or, as we suspect, just another fig leaf from the advertisers.

X Formula companies slammed for immunity boosting claims

Two major formula milk brands were found in breach of the advertising rules recently. In separate rulings, the ASA upheld complaints against magazine advertisements for both Aptamil and Cow & Gate follow-on milks.

Baby Milk Action (BMA), the voluntary organisation campaigning for controls on the promotion of breast milk substitutes, complained about a magazine ad for Milupa’s Aptamil follow-on milk which included claims that its “unique

formulation helps to support your baby’s natural immune system...” and, “Intensive work has shown that immunofortis... supports your baby’s natural immune system.” BMA challenged whether the claims could be substantiated. Other complaints challenged whether the company’s claim that their product was, “the best follow on milk” was misleading.

Despite a dossier of studies and expert testimony provided by Milupa, the ASA upheld all complaints against the advertisement, finding an absence of robust evidence to support the claims for the product. Responding to the ruling, Baby Milk Action told us, “The ASA has refused to even investigate many of the complaints we have registered with it in the past and we hope it is changing its stance. Company promotion undermines breastfeeding and does not provide objective information to those who use formula.” The ad was found in breach of the CAP Code clauses 3.1 (Substantiation), 7.1 (Truthfulness), 19.1 (Comparisons) and 50.1 (Health & beauty products and therapies – General).

The National Childbirth Trust complained about an advertisement for Nutricia’s Cow & Gate follow on milks which claimed to, “support your baby’s natural immune system,” and whether this implied that the product could boost a baby’s immune system. The ASA also challenged whether this claim was misleading and could be substantiated.

The evidence provided by Cow & Gate relied on one study among infants of high risk to allergy using a hydrolysed formula (not as sold) and the ASA therefore judged that Cow & Gate were extrapolating too far to support claims for healthy children using a non-hydrolysed formula. To anyone concerned about the way marketing for follow-on milks is used as a back door to promote infant formula (which cannot be advertised to the public in the UK), note how the manufacturers blur the distinctions when it suits them: in the study used to support claims for follow-on milks, infants aged between 15 to 120 days were given infant formula with immunofortis. Yet the makers say the advertised product, “should only be used as part of a mixed diet and not as a breastmilk substitute before 6 months.”

The ASA ruled there was insufficient evidence to support the implied claims that Cow & Gate follow-on milks available to the public would support all children’s immune systems when used from six months onwards. The ad breached the CAP Code clauses 1.3 (Substantiation), 7.1 (Truthfulness) and 50.1 (Health and beauty products and therapies – General).

X Fruit Shoots shot down for phony recommendations

How much do kids need to drink a day? According to a magazine advertisement for Robinson’s Fruit Shoots, “...kids need plenty of fluids to help them maintain their mental and physical stamina. In fact, they should drink six to eight 250ml glasses a day...” Fact?

In trying to get parents to send their children off to school with more and more juice drinks, it seems that Robinson’s were guilty of rather loosely interpreting nutritional recommendations to arrive at their very specific recommended intake of six to eight glasses a day (calculated in Fruit Shoots, that would be seven to ten 200ml bottles of flavoured water a day).

The ASA noted that there were a range of recommendations from studies and organisations about the amount of fluid children should drink a day. There were varying recommended intake levels according to the age and gender of the child, some of which fell within the 1,500 to 2,000 ml range stated in the ad, some of which were lower, and some again which stated that the total fluid intake should come from both food and drinks.

The ASA ruled that the ad misleadingly implied that it was a generally accepted recommendation that all children should drink 1,500 to 2,000 ml per day solely from drinks. The ad breached CAP Code clauses 3.1 (Substantiation) and 7.1 and 7.2 (Truthfulness) and will not appear again in its current form.

X Lo Salt - Health claims should be taken with a pinch of sense

While the Food Standards Agency (FSA) continues to press home the message that we all need to ditch the salt cellar and choose less salty foods to reduce the risk of raised blood pressure, Klinge Foods, the makers of Lo Salt, have been busy encouraging us to simply switch from regular table salt to their product which they say contains 66% less sodium making it the “healthier alternative”.

A doctor complained about the suggestion on the TV ad that Lo Salt was ‘healthier’ because it contains over 50% potassium chloride. Defending their claim, Klinge Foods quoted information provided to them by the Blood Pressure Association (BPA) which said that the Association preferred that consumers should avoid salt entirely, but that if they had to add it to their food, then Lo Salt was a better choice than regular salt.

The ASA accepted that the healthiest option, according to both the BPA and the FSA, was not to add salt to food at all, and that for some people – including those with renal disease or diabetes - a high potassium salt would not be preferable to regular salt. It therefore ruled that Lo Salt’s claim to be the ‘healthier alternative’ was misleading and breached CAP Code rules 5.1.1 (Misleading advertising), 5.2.1 (Evidence), 5.2.2 (Implications) and 8.3.1 (Accuracy in food advertising).

Gazpacho and coffee

by Guy Watson, founder of Riverford Organic Veg

I recently cooked gazpacho for Armando, whose family grows bio dynamic coffee in northeast Brazil. We were discussing how we could market his small holder, sustainably grown, 100% Arabica coffee beans to our veg box customers. The quality was undoubtedly wonderful, both in flavour and in terms of social and environmental justice, but after six months in the UK Armando had realised this would not sell his coffee on its own; there was a whole industry between him and his potential customers; an industry more interested in using their brands to protect margins than they were in quality; an industry adept at alluding to provenance but with a vested interest in keeping him and his fellow farmers as far from coffee drinkers as possible. He had approached us (a strange choice on the face of it) because we are farmers dealing directly with our customers and have

acquired a reputation for caring about fairness and flavour.

The soup was unsatisfactory: despite being made from ingredients picked from our fields just hours earlier. Annoyingly, after the first mouthful Armando was able to tell me the problem; the tomatoes were not ripe enough. His tone intimated that it was obvious and only a fool would not be able to identify this. Infuriatingly he was right; our pickers had been there before me, leaving only the under ripe fruit, but how could he be so sure?

The answer emerged later in our conversation as he described the food and culture of his home region where the journey from field to kitchen to plate is short and unpunctuated by the interventions of distant food manufacturers, distributors and retailers; brands have no place because everyone has the skill and confidence to recognise

good food, understand that you need good ingredients to make it, and have the confidence to make these judgements without the embellishments that define our food brands. In his view his staff earning £7 a day and growing their own vegetables amongst the coffee ate better than the most British earning 10 times as much. He went on to say, in a bemused way, that our food seemed to be more about consuming adjectives than quality, citing the packaging in supermarkets and the absurdly florid descriptions on restaurant menus.

Armando had been in the UK for several months looking for a market for his premium grade coffee and described a visit to

would only be about 30% more than low grade, non-organic, commodity coffee on the supermarket shelf; perhaps amounting to 2 or 3 pence per cup.

Just as farming can, and should be, a beautiful, humane and harmonious process, so is cooking and sharing food. At their best they both involve passion and love and are central to our health and culture. In 25 years of showing people around our farm, from chefs to amateur cooks to Coke swilling, disaffected youths, I invariably find that the proximity to growing food leads to an interest and enthusiasm for cooking it. Recently we even took a group, including some vegetarians, to our small, local abattoir; to my amazement they all found watching a bullock killed well a very positive experience, adding to their desire to cook respectfully produced meat. On the other hand nothing is more guaranteed to destroy our desire to cook than the sensory deprivation of a sterile

smelling and seeing or physical proximity but the internet has opened up exciting possibilities for farmers across the globe to get closer to their end customers.

Call me a hippy if you like but that transformation is already happening. A staggering 43% (and rising fast) of Riverford customers now grow some of their own vegetables; far from being a threat to our business we find that, once people have had their hands in the soil, returning to the bland predictability of supermarket veg is impossible.

No doubt this is a highly selective sample but the public appetite for shortening the food chain is much broader and can be seen everywhere; from the huge rise in gardening, farmers markets, box schemes and farm shops through our supermarkets' tokenistic, but publicised shows of local sourcing, to the absurd claims of "home baked" or "farm fresh" or the nonsensical "sun blushed" tomato or Columbian Black Tailed hen (seldom black

Riverford grows and delivers affordable organic veg, fruit, meat and more to your door. Choose a seasonal fruit or vegbox, or make up your own order from the full range including milk, eggs, bread, juice and wine. Vegboxes are on average 20% cheaper than supermarkets and delivery is free. www.riverford.co.uk

tailed not from Columbia and known as Babcocks until they got re-branded).

The significance is not in the laughable absurdness of these claims but in the effort that goes in to making them. The marketing agencies and brand consultants, who pride themselves on knowing what we want even before we do, have recognised the gathering desire to connect with how our food is produced. They have responded with their snake oil skills and given us those hundred thousand pies baked in? How can "local seasonal" vegetables advertised on that chain menu include French Beans and broccoli in January. Did those tomatoes really blush?

Were it not for the power of the internet (complete with blogs, Twitter, Facebook and the rest) to provide direct and uncensored communication, it is possible that our food industry would manage to defend their factories, warehouses and global distribution with this smoke screen of marketing led, brand defending drivel. In my travels to suppliers around the world and conversations with cooks at home I have encountered a rising commitment and quiet determination to reclaim a healthy, wholesome and enjoyable food culture which has given me renewed optimism. My experience at Riverford has been that bringing those cooks and farmers together realises a joy in, and enthusiasm for, food that makes change inevitable.

A staggering 43% (and rising fast) of Riverford customers now grow some of their own vegetables.

Any Riverford staff member is welcome to attend regular 'meetings' in the Riverford Field Kitchen restaurant. These events often involve cooking, eating and handling the farm's produce. Staff here have broken up into groups to discuss the contents of the veg boxes, and if they have any new ideas to improve them.

supermarket aisle however many tens of thousands of anonymous, over packaged, cleverly labelled goods are on offer.

If we could just bring the growing and cooking of food together the results would be radical; we would have no need for a 'five a day program' or Jamie's School Dinners; no need for a Food Standards Agency, Food Ethics Council or even for a Food Commission. The transformation of our food, farming and culture would be huge, inevitable and unquestionably for the better. Nothing can beat the touching,

one of the biggest processors of coffee where an impressive machine processed coffee with lightning speed, precision and efficiency; roasting, grinding and firing it into the bags of many of the leading brands including several supermarket own brands. The machine raced on from one brand to the next; premium to commodity with just a change of packaging and adjustment of the roasting and grind. The brand and the adjectives on the packaging changed but the beans were the same; bought as a commodity on the world market.

Not surprisingly they were not interested in Armando's paltry 30 tonnes of premium beans, grown in the small, mixed and sustainably managed fields of his 15 cooperative members. And even less interested that the same picking families sing and dance most evenings and return year after year because of the fairness and respect with which they are treated. I feel sure that many potential customers would be interested, especially as the margins in the coffee trade are so large that, given a more equitable distribution, this biodynamically grown, organic coffee



How climate change is sucking small-scale farmers' livelihoods dry

by Jo Barrett of Progressio, an international charity tackling poverty in 11 developing countries.

Above: Solomon Gomez (50) returns home after working on his small farm in the community of El Paraiso, Intag area, province of Imbabura, Ecuador.
Photo: Santiago Serrano/Progressio

Perched on a steep hillside in the foothills of the Ecuadorean Andes, Carlos Ruiz's farm is thriving. The sizeable plot in the village of El Cristal, which Carlos has helped to care for since he was a boy, provides Carlos, his wife Marta and their three children with more food than they know what to do with.

"We grow tomato, lettuce, beans, banana, pineapple, six varieties of lemon, cabbage, carrot, parsley, yuca," says Carlos (42), pointing to the various trees and plants that are sprouting in the rich soil.

During an average harvest, Carlos is able to sell a lot of his fruit and veg at the local market – he gets about 14p for each lettuce – a good price. On top of that, the Ruiz's are able to keep an additional 40 lettuces for use in salads, along with a range of other home-grown produce which they use in healthy, nutritious meals.

Carlos is fortunate, but he's worried. Although his ancestors have cultivated these slopes for hundreds of years, he says his family's way of life is under threat. Changes in the climate – which are leading to changes in the availability of water used to irrigate his many crops – mean Carlos is having to plan for a future of possible drought.

"The seasons used to be much more regular," Carlos says. "But now everything has totally changed. You don't know when it's going to rain; it's cold when it should be hot..."



Fabiola Quishpe and villagers of Apahua harvesting vegetables in one of the small farms high in the Ecuadorean páramo. Apahua community, province of Cotopaxi, Ecuador.

Photo: Santiago Serrano/Progressio



Photo: Marcus Perkins/Progressio

Betty Mkusa from Chikwawa District of southern Malawi, is growing drought-resistant new breeds of plants, in this case *Jatropha*, which can produce oil and be used to make soap, as a means to improve her livelihood.



Photo: Santiago Serrano/Progressio

Ziola Beatriz Guamán Coronel displays her freshly grown potatoes. Ziola and her husband Olmedo feed their entire family from a small plot of land. Apahua village, Cotopaxi, Ecuador.

"The water level in the rivers has dropped," he continues, pointing to the stream which lies at the foot of his farm. "When it rains very heavily, suddenly the water level rushes up really fast, but then it's all gone again."

Conscious of the devastating effect a long-term drought could have on his family's livelihood, Carlos has decided to take things into his own hands.

"I read about people in Africa using these potatoes to survive very dry conditions," says Carlos, pointing to a field of leafy green plants. "Apparently many people were saved by the papa china (a variety of drought-resistant potato), so that's why I planted them, just in case." He adds: "We are having to learn how to cope with the new climate – we must think ahead and make sure we are prepared."

Carlos and his family are not the only small-scale farmers who are facing a potential water crisis. In other parts of Ecuador, as in other parts of the world, poor and marginalised people are also experiencing the effects of water change as a result of climate change.

A short drive away, another small-scale farmer has a similar story. Maria Gómez Viracocha (73) still works her small plot of land in the village of Azaya. Ever since her daughter left to find a job in the nearby town, she has had to manage the daily upkeep of the farm alone.

It wouldn't be such a headache, says Maria, if only the rains would come. "There used to be so much water, everything used to grow here, there were all sorts of varieties (of fruit and vegetables) enough to eat and to give away, but not anymore," Maria says.

"Without water, we don't have our daily bread and without natural rain, we can't carry on," she adds.

Maria also worries that what little food she manages to grow today is not as healthy as the food she used to eat. Her plants are so weak due to lack of water that she has to rely on pesticides to keep them from dying.

Protecting the grasslands in the Ecuadorean Andes guarantees water for food

by Jo Barrett and Brie O'Keefe of Progressio

"My first thought for the future is about the preservation of the páramo," says farmer-turned-environmentalist Fabiola Quishpe.

Fabiola is from the remote Andean community of Apahua in Ecuador, some 4,000m above sea level. She lives in the páramo, a sensitive area of grassland that acts like a giant sponge, soaking up water and gently releasing it into the valley below.

But despite its vital role, providing water for hundreds of thousands of people, the páramo's delicate ecosystem is under threat. In recent years, 30 per cent of it has been destroyed by burning the land for pasture, pollution and over-grazing which means that water resources for agriculture and consumption in villages like Fabiola's, as well as a vital ecosystem, are at risk.

Fabiola says: "Water is a very important liquid and it is necessary for all human beings, and for all who live and exist on this pachamama (mother earth). We need water in order to be able to improve our lives, for cultivation – we must look after the páramos properly. And that's why we are worried because our páramos, our environment, is contaminated, is not well cared for, and so it's in danger."

As a result, 17 women from Apahua decided to take action to protect their local environment. Working together, they have managed to recover a large number of native seed varieties and protect their water resources. "We have noticed that when women work together the family benefits", Fabiola says.

So popular was the idea of women working together for environmental change, that the villagers decided to form an association. Across the region, 150 women have become involved in the scheme. Already, says Fabiola, they've seen significant improvements.

"Now people don't let their animals graze on the páramo, they don't burn it; we are getting back all the wild grass varieties, and the bushes and native animals we lost. People don't even think about damaging the grasslands anymore, instead, they see it as a source of water and know that it's important to conserve the páramo. If we don't have water how are we going to survive?"

Fabiola hopes that improving the natural water sources in villages like Apahua will mean better living conditions, more crops and improved health.

"Rural people eat, breathe and sleep agriculture," she says. "We depend on and live from our farms. Because of this the environment is necessary. Improving it means that people can live in the countryside, they don't have to migrate to towns, as there is work here for them, and it improves our health too."



Water, climate change and Copenhagen

by Brie O’Keefe, Campaigns Officer, Progressio

The former Head of the UK’s Met Office, Sir John Houghton, once described climate change as a ‘weapon of mass destruction.’ With predictions of increases in both the frequency and severity of major weather events such as hurricanes, droughts and floods, it’s easy to see why.

But climate change is not just about disastrous weather events and sizzling (or soaking) summers here at home. For millions of poor and marginalised people around the world, it’s often about water change: changes in rainfall patterns or unpredictable river levels, accompanied by unpredictable seasons. Changes which are already in full swing.

It is widely accepted that the medium through which our eco-systems and human societies will feel the effects of climate change is water. Almost all human activity is intricately linked with water. Not only do we depend on it for growing food, we also use it for industry and business – meaning our economies are inextricably entwined with water issues.

For 70% of the world’s poor who depend on small-scale farming for food, changes in rain and weather mean the crops they rely on are being put at risk. That’s why this December’s United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) summit in Copenhagen is so vital, particularly for poor people Progressio works with in developing countries like Ecuador and Malawi.

As we approach the summit – which will bring world leaders from 192 countries together to strike a new deal to replace the Kyoto protocol which comes to an end in 2012 – it is vital we call on world leaders not to forget water.

Copenhagen represents our best chance yet to stem the growing tide of carbon emissions and help secure a strong package of measures to help poor countries adapt to the effects of climate change. Although they have done least to cause it, it is the world’s poor who will feel – and are already feeling – the worst impacts of a shifting climate.

So, haven’t we already come too far? Is there really still time to ‘stop’ climate change? According to John Matthews, Freshwater and Climate Change Adaptation Specialist at the World Wildlife Fund, the current debate around levels of carbon emissions – which often overshadows other aspects of climate change discussions – is not so much about putting a stop to climate change, as about slowing it down. “It’s about whether our grandchildren or our great-grandchildren hate us,” he says.

Nonetheless, we do need to curb our emissions as a matter of urgency. Not least because we are already seeing the devastating effects climate change is having, whether in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Canadian Arctic or regions of Northern Europe, changes in seasonality, temperature and precipitation are underway.

Which is why global efforts and agreements that centre on how to deal with the effects of climate change (also called ‘adaptation’) become all the more important – particularly when they relate to water.

So far the UNFCCC has failed to adequately address water related issues in its negotiations. In fact, no outcome documents from any pre-Copenhagen negotiations have mentioned the importance of water at all. Grassroots organisations, charities and water experts alike are worried about this omission and are working hard to change it.

Progressio’s *Just Add Water* campaign centres on that omission. It is a plea for the UK, EU and governments around the world to tackle water issues specifically when they discuss climate change ‘adaptation’.

Not only do those already feeling the effects of climate change need help to tackle their new climatic conditions, governments must also commit to helping them make long-term preparations to minimise the effects of potential changes to come.

Just Add Water asks decision-makers to advocate for a specific focus on water in Copenhagen as a way of gaining their commitment to protect the interests of the poorest people in the world who depend on predictable rainfall and access to water for their livelihoods.

Our biggest weapon is our collective voice. As UK citizens, we have to look to our government to act on our behalf and ensure we are tackling climate change both at home and abroad. It’s an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.



Josefina Guanamarca (43), another small-scale farmer in the region, also worries about the cracked and dried out earth on her farm, which used to produce large quantities of fruit and veg.

“We have no water for irrigation,” she says. “Before we used to plant all sorts of crops, but now the only things we can plant are beans. We had so many types of fruit, but because of the lack of water all of that is gradually disappearing, slowly we are losing everything.”

The situation has become so bad in her village of San Francisco, says Josefina, that people are giving up hope. “Lots of families have left, they have moved to the city because there is no water. If we had water, our crops would be guaranteed. Today, planting your own crops is a risk.”

It’s not only farmers in Ecuador who are having to decide whether the risks associated with growing their own food are worth taking. In Malawi, too, farmers Progressio works with are reporting dramatic changes in the weather and climate, which are affecting how they grow their crops.

“Most years we have drought here in southern Malawi”, says Betty Mkusa from Chilhambi village in the Chikwawa District. “I am trying to grow plants that can survive.”

First-hand experiences like those of Betty, Josefina and others become all the more urgent when they are considered in the global context: small-scale farmers are not a minority group or an outmoded model. The 1.4 billion small-scale farmers on our planet today support almost 2 billion people – almost a third of humanity.



What is Progressio?

Progressio is a progressive international charity with Catholic roots that enables poor communities to solve their own problems through support from skilled workers. And we lobby decision-makers to change policies that keep people poor.

How do we tackle poverty?

- **Changing lives – through 100 highly-skilled people from around the world working with grassroots organisations in long-term projects benefiting hundreds of thousands of poor and marginalised people in 11 developing countries.**
- **Changing minds – by challenging structures and relationships that combine to keep people poor.**
- **Mobilising people – to act, because every step, however small, helps to achieve lasting change.**

Where does Progressio work?

Currently, Progressio works in Honduras, The Dominican Republic and bordering areas with Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru and Ecuador in Latin America. In Africa we work in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Somaliland. In the Middle East we have programmes in Yemen. In Asia, we have projects in East Timor.

How is Progressio different?

- **We believe that imposed solutions, however well meaning, are not the answer – people must have the power to address their own problems. That’s why we don’t simply give money.**
- **We are committed to combining practical long-term work in poor communities with lobbying to change policies to ensure long-term, lasting solutions.**
- **To find out more or to support our work, visit our website: www.progressio.org.uk**

Photo: Santiago Serrano/Progressio



Carlos Ruiz on his farm in the village of El Cristal, Intag, Ecuador.

A staggering nine out of ten poor people in rural areas are smallholders, depending on plots of less than 2 hectares (about 5 acres) for their very survival. And even though small-scale farmers like Carlos cultivate a tiny proportion of the world’s agricultural land, a disproportionately large percentage of the human race rely on them for staple foods.

That’s why changes in water availability, as a direct result of rising average global temperatures due to climate change, pose such huge risks to poor people’s long-term food security, and to their livelihoods.

We must act urgently to support measures to help people adapt to the devastating effects of climate change in Copenhagen this December. That means water must be firmly on the agenda when world leaders meet to discuss how to tackle the effects of a changing climate. As one farmer put it: “For us, water is life”.

Photo: Santiago Serrano/Progressio



Maria Gómez Viracocha is worried about the lack of water on her farm in the village of Azaya, Imbabura, Ecuador.

Want to help put water on the map at Copenhagen?

Worried that water will be forgotten at the pivotal climate change negotiations this December? Here are some easy ways you can tell decision makers that climate change means water change for millions of people in the developing world - and that poor people need the tools to help protect them from a devastating future of torrential rains, droughts, floods and tropical storms. Here’s how you can take action:

- 1) Use the postcard attached to the *Just Add Water* recipe booklet included with this issue of *The Food Magazine* to send a clear message to your MP that water must be a crucial element of the climate deal in Copenhagen this December. The postcard asks MPs to write to the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change on your behalf.
- 2) Join *The Wave* march through the streets of London on 5 December 2009. Organised by the ‘Stop Climate Chaos’ coalition, which represents hundreds of UK organisations, this peaceful event ends up at the Houses of Parliament. More than 30,000 people are expected to take part and it promises to be lots of fun for the whole family!
- 3) Order a free *Climate Change Cocoa Action Pack* from Progressio and find out how you can organise a cocoa-making session with your friends or colleagues. The pack contains everything you will need for lively discussion around water and climate change, email: campaigns@progressio.org.uk for more info.
- 4) Hear Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Mohan Munasinghe – a leading expert on climate change – speaking to Progressio supporters about solutions to climate change on 19 October 2009 at London’s Royal Commonwealth Society. Professor Munasinghe won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for his environmental work, along with Former US Vice President, Al Gore. To reserve your place, email: denise@progressio.org.uk

Book reviews

The End of Food: The coming crisis in the world food industry. Paul Roberts, 2008. Bloomsbury (www.bloomsbury.com) ISBN 978-0-7475-8881-8.

The End of Overeating: Taking control of the insatiable American appetite. David A Kessler, 2009. Rodale (www.rodale.com) ISBN 978-1605297859.

Perhaps it was Fukuyama’s 1993 *The End of History* which has caught so many other authors’ attention. Surely not Greene’s 1951 *The End of the Affair*. But ‘The End’ being such a good way to start a book it could not be resisted, and the last decade has seen a heap of books describing the end of several familiar certainties– poverty, faith, oil, time, and even the world.

Then the author of *The End of Oil* must have decided that one such book was not enough and decided to write another, *The End of Food*, and although the new one is not really about the end of food, of course, it is about the spiralling madness of the modern food and farming business.

And its inequalities. There are now more adults who are obese in the world than there are adults who are underweight. But the distribution of excessive consumption and of desperate starvation is massively uneven. Worse still those very regions where starvation is endemic are ones where food exports to the wealthy are prioritised by governments desperate for ‘hard’ currencies, and increasingly allowing their more fertile lands to be bought by foreign investors for feeding the demands of better-off populations.

Roberts takes us down familiar paths, but ones always benefiting from further exploration. What sort of economic forces leads farmers to supply by volume rather than by quality, to supply cheap produce rather than valuable? Have our diets been degraded because farmers are paid for the weight of their produce, rather than by the nutritional value?

More practically, how do food companies grow new markets, in China for example? One trick, says Roberts, is to cultivate a fear of unsafe, unhygienic food, emphasising the contamination and unreliability, so that a multinational can then market quality and safety: selling reassurance as much as food.

The technologies already developed to supply Western diets are the easiest

to export and implant elsewhere, so that supply chains in India, say, settle into the convenient patterns of dairy, grain, meat and sugar we are familiar with in Europe and America; rather than developing their own processed food industry focussed on vegetables, pulses and spices. Perhaps the latter will come in time, but not before a generation has been weaned onto Western food and has learned to shun the peasant cuisines of their elders.

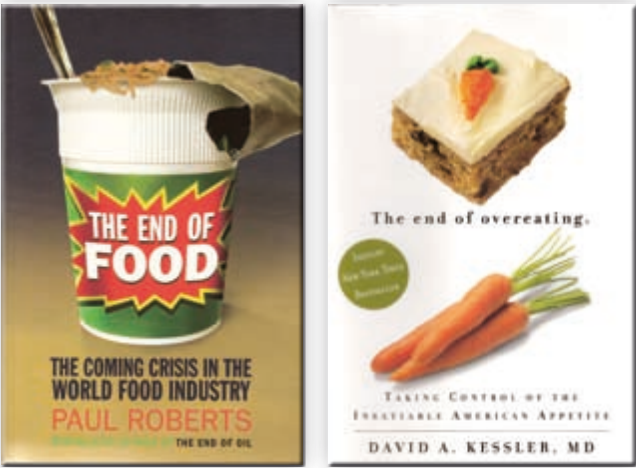
As always with challenging books about the madness of the world, the test is in the final sections where an author sets out a vision of what needs to be done to regain our collective sanity. Perhaps correctly, Roberts acknowledges that the modern industrial production of food is unlikely to change until, as he puts it, the food industry and the farm lobby have “lost the political capacity to kill reform in the cradle.” He suggests that such an opportunity might emerge “after decades of increasingly bad public relations,” but in fact we may not need to wait so long, for the crises in energy supply which he himself has described, and the crisis in global warming, may force change upon us more rapidly.

Whatever the reasons for change, for Roberts the direction of change is clear: the food economy needs to de-globalise and focus on local and regional production, be far less dependent on chemical inputs and be designed in sympathy rather than in conflict with the natural ecology of growth and decay.

This is not mere wishful thinking, for one of Roberts’ strengths is that he can point us towards some excellent examples that already show us how to organise production in a better way. For over a decade, Cuban city-centre agriculture has taught lessons for other cities. In Viet Nam, Hanoi city gets 80% of its vegetables from within the city limits, says Roberts, while Calcutta combines fish farming with water treatment in 13 square miles of local lake-lands. Soon the ‘blue revolution’ could be a practical reality: open water aquaculture without the need for pesticides or veterinary drugs, using multispecies integrated cycles producing copious quantities of fish, shellfish and seaweed.

We need books like these every few years to keep us from despair. It can be done, we can make the changes, and food will not come to an end.

Hopefully, though, overeating will. Roberts himself touches on the subject and hints at the many ways industry has



found to entice us to eat more than we need, and David Kessler has picked up this theme and run rampant.

In *The End of Overeating*, Kessler, a paediatrician and one-time director of the US Food and Drug Administration, makes a strong case to show that the food industry has turned our daily diet into irresistible, even addictive products, which act directly on our subconscious neural processes to elicit one behavioural response: overeating.

Despite being the man who took on Big Tobacco, Kessler admits to finding himself helpless when confronted with a plate of chocolate chip cookies. So he set himself the task of finding out why: and has filled more than half this curious book with a punchy, if rather breathless, journalistic series of descriptions of the methods used to increase the palatability and desirability of a limited set of basic ingredients: fat, sugar and salt, pumped up with flavours, textures and sensory cues to make them hard to resist.

Sophisticated *Food Magazine* readers may not need to read the many and marvellous tricks of the trade, though the book does indeed tell a fascinating tale. The case is unanswerable. The industry admits it does these things. The argument really reverts to the classic one: is the individual to blame for the resulting overconsumption, or the marketers and industrialists that create ever more enticing, seductive products?

Kessler offers individuals a series of techniques for resisting the lure of junk food, and these are helpful for anyone trying to fight their flab: check the cause of your appetites, drink water instead of eating, avoid environments with junk food, find things you want even more than the junk food, and fill up on real food.

Despite making a strong case that individuals are undermined by pre-cognitive, pre-rational processes triggered by the tricks of the food industry, Kessler can only offer some mundane suggestions for changing the environment, and all of these rely on cognitive, rational behaviour. Kessler calls on the industry to display calorie counts at fast food outlets, he says food products should declare their sugar and fat counts clearly on the label, he calls for a major public health education campaign to reinforce the message about healthy eating, and he suggests that “food marketing should be monitored and exposed.”

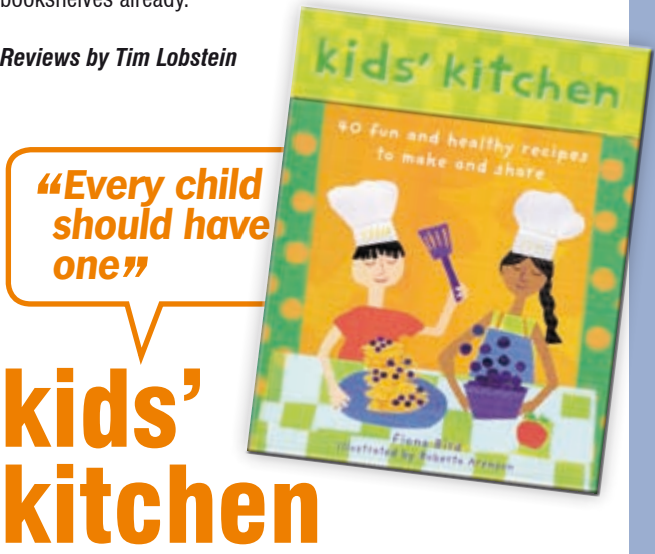
This crucial discussion takes up a mere half a page at the end of the book. The emphasis is on the individual trying to seize control of their life, not the environment being made easier for them to avoid the junk. It is smoking cessation without smoking bans, it is Alcoholics Anonymous without even a group to share the problem. American authors often find the word ‘regulation’ difficult to say, and they find it even harder to countenance serious measures to limit food companies’ right to sell whatever they can, to whomsoever they wish.

These issues are not addressed by Kessler. He stops just at the point where it could get interesting: how should society, government, democracy deal with a company whose ability

to influence consumer behaviour through pre-cognitive neural stimulation undermines the consumer’s free will.

Here’s a thought. In Europe we do at least have a rule that food additives are not allowed into foods without justification. According to the regulations, additives are only permitted if there is a technological need for their use, they do not mislead the consumer, and they present no hazard to the health of the consumer. At present companies can justify colours and flavours and other ‘cosmetic’ additives on the grounds that they provide a technological enhancement by making the food more appealing. As the majority of cosmetic additives are used to make unhealthy foods more appealing, the technological ‘need’ is rather a spurious one, it is a marketing ‘need’, the additives could be considered to mislead us by making the food artificially desirable, and the foods themselves are usually counter to public health. A much tougher barrier on the use of cosmetic additives would undermine many of the industries’ tricks – and would be popular with parents and foodies alike. A review of the law could make a healthier diet much easier to achieve, without any cost to the public purse. I see *The End of Additives* on the bookshelves already.

Reviews by Tim Lobstein



kids' kitchen cookery cards are now available from Barefoot Books. The 40 enticing and nutritious recipes are displayed on laminated, full-colour cards, all stored in a sturdy box. Also contains a booklet with key food facts and guidelines on kitchen safety. In a market that seems saturated with children’s cookery books, the recipes here stand out as tasty, easy to follow, and to use with your kids.

Author Fi Bird also runs cooking classes and demonstrations all over the UK through her organisation Stirrin’Stuff. Prue Leith says “Fi Bird is the most enthusiastic teacher in the world and she’s on a mission to get children cooking. No surprise then that her *kids' kitchen* recipe box is practical, affordable and never patronising. Every child should have one.”



We welcome letters from our readers but we do sometimes have to edit them so that we can include as many as possible (our apologies to the authors).

Write to: The Editor, *The Food Magazine*, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF or email to letters@foodmagazine.org.uk

Who is a child?

I am intrigued by what the industry regards as a ‘child’ when it comes to marketing their high saturated fat, salt and sugar products.

According to company statements, Kraft does not advertise to children under 6 years old, but allows some ‘healthier’ products to be advertised to children under age 12. Coca-Cola says it does not advertise any product to children under 12. Now we see in Australia that McDonald’s will advertise only its ‘healthier’ products to children under 14 years old, and KFC and Pizza Hut are following suit.

The governments of Sweden and Quebec prohibit marketing of any sort to children under age 12. The UK has banned junk food advertisements in TV programmes aimed at children under age 16. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (which includes a government’s duty to protect “against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child’s welfare”) defines a child as up to age 18, while several national legislations have higher age thresholds for particular issues: guns, tobacco, alcohol, gay relationships, marriage, military service, truck driving, electing MPs...

Given the ability of food marketers to appeal to shoppers’ subconscious and irrational urges, one wonders if the age limit ought to be raised a lot higher. No junk food marketing to children of all ages!

T. Jordan, London



Swimming tigers, hidden adverts

I read recently that Kellogg’s had agreed it would not advertise its sweetened cereal products to children.

I thought they would stick to their word. But when I took my son Jack, 8, to the after-school swimming club, he was offered the chance to win badges to sew on his costume and certificates to put on his wall – all emblazoned with Tony the Tiger, the well-known mascot for Kellogg’s Frosties brand products.

I call this advertising. And I consider Frosties (over 35% sugar) and Frosties Milk Bars (over 30% sugar, 8% saturated fat) to be highly sweetened cereal products.

How cynical can they get? The answer, as it turned out, was at the next swimming club where Kellogg’s had their name all over the tiny tots’ Duckling badges and awards.

C. Brocklebank, London



Nutty labelling

The two packets of cashew nuts (photos above) show that the plain ones are from Vietnam, while the salted ones are from... the UK!

Global warming means we can grow them here? I think not. But rules about saying that nuts can be claimed as ‘a product of the UK’ because they have been processed here, surely so!

According to the FSA guidance www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/originlabellingguidance.pdf

“goods shall be deemed to have been manufactured or produced in the country in which they last underwent a treatment or process resulting in a substantial change”.

HOWEVER

If the place that is declared as the of origin of the food (according to the principle of last substantial change) is not the same as the place of origin of its primary ingredients, in order not to be misleading it may be necessary to provide information on the origin of those ingredients. It is recommended that for example:

1. Pork sausages made in Britain using pork from countries outside the UK are not described as “British pork sausages”. Instead they could bear the name “Pork Sausages” and if helpful, a further declaration could be made as described – “Made in Britain from pork imported from Denmark or Belgium (i.e. more than one country)”; or “Made in Britain from Dutch pork”
2. Salmon smoked in Scotland but made from Norwegian salmon is not described as “Scottish smoked salmon” but is described as - “Norwegian salmon smoked in Scotland”, or “imported salmon smoked in Scotland”.

It’s too nutty for words!
T. Lobstein, London

Thanks to Tim Lobstein for his letter reminding us that country of origin labelling here in the UK does more than its fair share to confuse consumers about where their food is from.

Children’s Food Network

Although we found that we didn’t have the space to tell you about this in the last issue, April saw the launch of the Children’s Food Network, a new social networking site developed by the Children’s Food Campaign to help support people concerned about children’s food.

To find out more and join the CFN, please visit the “Register your support” page at www.childrensfoodcampaign.org.uk The Children’s Food Campaign is run by Sustain, with more than 300 organisations in the supporting network, including The Food Commission & *The Food Magazine*.

If you are interested in holding a local screening of Two Angry Moms, please email: Jackie@sustainweb.org

Artificial colours still a problem

Dear Editor,

For 32 years the Hyperactive Children’s Support Group (HACSG) has worked to help families with children who are Hyperactive (also called attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)) to find some answers to their troubled behaviour, much of which is linked to food.

In all the diet-related studies, artificial colourings are the main culprits, closely followed by certain preservatives, artificial flavours and MSG. However, additives are not the only problems. Sensitivity to some fresh foods and beverages is also likely.

Whilst the HACSG is cheered by the Food Standards Agency research, published in 2007, which found artificial colourings and a preservative, Sodium Benzoate, contributed to/caused hyperactivity, we are disappointed that only 6 artificial azo dyes were recommended for the voluntary ban and for the proposed warning labels from Europe.

There are a further 11 azo dyes which continue to be used. Families who think they are avoiding the “only” offending artificial colourings (azo dyes), in the hope of calming their hyperactive (ADHD) child, will be disappointed to discover that after scrutinising ingredient labels to exclude the offending 6 colours, the child is showing no improvement because they are consuming some of the other artificial colourings left out of the research.

All those manufacturers who have no desire to help the children will simply swap colourings and carry on making unsuitable products often promoted especially for children and full of artificial colourings and other additives. Some manufacturers who are genuinely supportive of a ban choose to produce better quality products.

Why the voluntary ban does not extend to ALL artificial colourings is a complete mystery to the HACSG and its members.

Yours faithfully,
Sally Bunday MBE (Founder/Director HACSG)
www.hacsg.org.uk

Organic food and nutrients

Dear Editor,

Papers published in the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* (Vol.55, No.15, 2007) show a marked difference in nutritional values between organically and conventionally grown tomatoes. But neither these tests nor the tests published by the Food Standards Agency* recently, which purport to show no differences, and which had wide publicity, tell us anything about the years the soil was treated organically since conversion. And that is the hub of the matter. If only two years I am not surprised there is little difference, but this is the period that the Soil Association certifies crops as organic. I have been questioning their standards for some years and they tell me this is for the sake of farmers who cannot afford to wait longer. So consumers in our ignorance lose out.

But never mind. As oil becomes scarcer over 20 years or so, chemical fertilisers, made partly from oil, will become more expensive and farmers will return to utilising and recycling their own byproducts. And the soil, rich in untapped minerals will once again have a chance to become rich in earthworms and other soil organisms which help to make minerals available to plants. Proper rotation with nitrogen binding legumes makes use of the nitrogen in the air and then makes it available to the next crop. That’s organic farming eventually, if only by the back door.

Yours sincerely,
H. Lobstein, Brighton

* Dangour A. et al. (2009) Comparison of composition (nutrients and other substances) of organically and conventionally produced foodstuffs: a systematic review of the available literature. Report for the Food Standards Agency.

HELLO!

We need at least another **1000** subscribers if we are going to be able to continue to bring you all of the research, campaigning journalism and interesting articles you see in these pages.

If this is not your own copy of *The Food Magazine*, please consider joining us to help us carry on this important work. It’s only **£28.00** per year, which is around **50p a week**. Included with your subscription to this quarterly magazine is unlimited members only access to our website, where you can download 5 years back issues of the magazine for FREE.

If you are already a subscriber why not recommend to a friend, or give a gift subscription? *The Food Magazine* makes an excellent alternative Christmas present for a food lover with a conscience.

If you are the **parent** of a school aged child or a **teacher**, and think that parents at your school might be interested in the issues covered here, please look out for our **special school deals**, including how to earn money back for your school with every new subscription.

More details coming soon at www.foodmagazine.org.uk or write to anna@foodmagazine.org.uk for more information.



BBC Radio 4's Sheila Dillon and actress Greta Scacchi

Join Us – Subscribe to the NEW all colour quarterly The Food Magazine

Online and Direct Debit subscribers get a 10% discount.

Refund with subscription: If you have purchased this issue of *The Food Magazine* and would now like to become a subscriber, we will give you a **FREE** issue. Please send us your proof of purchase along with this form, or if subscribing online, along with a print out of your online subscriptions receipt, and we will send you **five** magazines for the price of **four**.

The Food Commission, **FREEPOST** KE 7564, LONDON N1 9BR

SAVE 10% Join Online - Please visit www.foodmagazine.org.uk

Alternatively – Cut out or photocopy this form and return to the address above

Standard and Overseas memberships

UK individuals/not-for-profit/schools **£28.00** - Companies/Government departments **£55.00** - **Over Seas** individuals **£36.00** - Companies **£65.00**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to The Food Commission.

☐ Please **invoice** my company/organisation. I enclose an official order.

☐ I would like to pay by Visa, Mastercard, Maestro, Electron or Solo.

(write details below or call on 020 7837 2250 and quote FM6/09.MAG)

Amount £_____ (if applicable)

Card number

Expiry date / Valid from / (if applicable)

Issue No. (if applicable) Security code Last 3 digit number on signature strip

Join Us ONLINE AND SAVE 10% OFF OUR STANDARD SUBSCRIPTION PRICES

Guarantee: If you do not like the magazine, return the first issue within 28 days to receive a full refund. *The Food Magazine* is published four times a year. We will not pass your details on to any other organisation or marketing agency. *The Food Magazine* is published by The Food Commission, a not-for-profit, limited company. Registered office: 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. info@foodmagazine.org.uk