

Run to the shop and get us a chocolate bar will you?

Cadbury plans to recruit 2000 “ambassadors” to stage mini Olympic style events across the UK. The multi million pound 2012 push “SpotsVStripes” will target village fêtes, sports clubs and universities. Official sponsor of London 2012, **Cadbury** will be sole provider of all confectionery and ice cream sold at the Olympic Park in Stratford, London. Helping **Cadbury** with its marketing push will be the charity Groundwork. Groundwork, whose vision is of, “a society of sustainable communities which are vibrant, healthy and safe,” will use its network of contacts to help recruit paid for and volunteer ambassadors. **Cadbury’s** Marketing Director, Phil Rumbol says, “This is all about the ethos of the Olympics. These games can be anything from a five-a-side football competition to people racing to **Costa Coffee** at work to see who gets the fastest time.” Somewhere, on a mountain in Greece, the gods are doing the immortal equivalent of turning in their graves.

World Cup chance to promote booze, soda and hamburgers

The **FIFA World Cup 2010** follows many other prestigious sporting events by linking up with booze, soft drink and fast food companies. Among those involved as marketing partners or sponsors are **Coca-Cola**, **McDonald’s** and **Budweiser**. Such World Cup link ups provide companies with a range of marketing opportunities.

The soft drinks giant has a long-standing association as a World Cup partner – running **Coca-Cola** football camps for kids, **Coca-Cola** World Cup trophy tours, and inviting fans to enjoy “Football on the Coke side of life.”

Other food companies are getting in on the act, not as official sponsors, but with football themed marketing campaigns. For example, **KitKat** is running a £10million World Cup campaign with give-aways, and ads featuring football stars. **Tesco** and other retailers are offering promotions on alcohol – with a recent **Tesco** ad showing a wife stacking up piles of beer to meet her husband’s needs during the tournament. **Kellogg’s**, **Pringles** and **McCoy’s** are also joining in the fun.

The money involved in these sponsorship deals and ad campaigns humbles the amount of government spending on the promotion of healthy eating.



Minister for sugar beets and GM crops

Caroline Spelman, Conservative MP for Meriden, has been appointed as the Minister for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Her website details her career – including listing her as the Director of the food and biotechnology consultancy ‘Spelman, Cormack and Associates’. Previously, she worked as Sugar Beet Commodity Secretary with the National Farmers’ Union, and later as President of the International Confederation of European Beetgrowers. Those beets are not the nice red ones that count towards your five a day – they’re the ones turned into white sugar. Her strong background in agricultural research makes her a Minister with expertise in her field – but deep interests in white sugar and GM foods do not on the face of it cheer *The Food Magazine*. As we go to press it is not yet clear who the appointment will be for Public Health Minister, perhaps an ex Director of a soft drinks company, or someone with experience in the manufacturer of trans fats?

Krass kravings

The recently launched chocolate and hazelnut Krave cereal puts to rest any thoughts that **Kellogg’s** was troubled by campaign groups’ criticisms of the brand’s high profile, and high sugar **Coco Pops** (see *The Food Magazine* issue 87).

At 29 grams (g) of sugar per 100g of cereal, it is high in sugar and high in saturated fat (6g per 100g of cereal) when judged against Food Standards Agency criteria. It invites eaters to unleash their inner predator, and to enjoy chocolate as part of a tasty breakfast.

Looming at you like a swirling chocolate black hole in larger than life advertising hoardings, it is really quite surreal. Krass and cereal.



Pimping calories in the (almost) buff

Many might say it’s the ‘quadruple bypass burgers’ (8,000 calories each) that should be the most alarming sight in this photo from the **Heart Attack Grill** – a ‘medical-themed’ restaurant in Arizona, USA. At around £8.50 each, the burgers are quite a bargain in terms of calories – although admittedly, says the owner, a bit short on vitamins, and a bit long on saturated fat. Get them with ‘flatliner fries’ (crisped in lard) and get it all free if you weigh more than 25 stone.

But, somehow, all that lard pales into the background when faced with the underweight and under-dressed waitresses decked out – just barely – in nurse outfits. Low wages, leering customers, pressure to stay thin whilst spending your days watching people gorge, the constant smell of lard deep frying – surely every woman’s dream job. And what a heady mix of atmosphere for meal out.

Still, whatever *The Food Magazine’s* reservations, the ‘medical disaster’ theme is proving so popular in the USA that Heart Attack Grill owner John Basso has just had to go to court to, successfully, defend it against imitators. Let heart attacks and piss poor sexual politics stand not in the way of commerce. As far as those judges are concerned, imitators will have to find another way to sell ‘meats’.

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Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

published by TheFoodCommission

INSIDE

Salty diets for school kids
Celebrate makeshift landscapes
Canadian style local food
Mad as hell about hunger
Vegan delight

Fishy tales about omega-3 in processed foods

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Change4Life’s mixed messages

Many campaign groups, including The Food Commission, howled in outrage last year when the government launched its £75million public health obesity campaign Change4Life, and announced that private sector organisations, including food businesses, could sign up as partners.

Subsequent months have seen purveyors of soft drinks, sugary cereals, and infant foods involved in Change4Life activities, using their logos alongside that of Change4Life’s. The very idea that our Department of Health allows such companies to be allied to the campaign is an anathema to The Food Commission, and we were sceptical about the DH promise to have strict partnership agreements in place to ensure that all partner activities met the strategic aims of the campaign.

Now, the complexity of controlling the mixed and multiple messages is becoming clearer. Busy Bees, the nation’s largest childcare provider, has written to members of the press letting them know about their work on food with Cow and Gate as part of Change4Life. Busy Bees is a partner of Change4Life, but it is unclear to *The Food Magazine* that the work referred to in the press statement meets the strategic guidelines of the campaign.

According to the press release: “Busy Bees are also partners with the high profile government initiative, Change4Life, and in 2009, worked with Cow and Gate as part of a Change4Life healthy lifestyle campaign. During July, all 16,000 Busy Bees children received free samples from Cow and Gates ‘Baby Balanced’ range and a Change4Life parent pack, designed by Busy Bees.”

In July 2009, Change4Life focused its work on children aged 5-11, whilst the children Busy Bees works with are generally babies up to school age, and the Baby Balance range, by Cow and Gate, is aimed at babies from weaning (the company suggests 4 months+) through to one year+. The Change4Life campaign is now open to working with parents to be, and younger children, through Start4Life, but thanks to campaigning work led by the Baby Feeding Law Group, that campaign has no commercial partners. Campaigners pressed the point that infant feeding companies get around restrictions in the marketing of infant milks by marketing other of their products to parents – including baby foods. This allows them to build a brand relationship, and can lead to an undermining of breastfeeding.

The Food Magazine got in touch with Busy Bees who told us: “The Change4Life campaign was to promote healthy food to our babies and children, and the Cow and Gate ‘baby balance’ products give babies the nutrition’s (sic) they need, are made with the best baby grade ingredients and contain no artificial colourings, flavourings or preservatives. This was given to our babies only, not pre-schoolers, they received vegetable seeds to grow their own product at home during the summer. The Cow and Gate was a Busy Bees initiative to run alongside the Change4Life campaign, Cow and Gate was not endorsed by Change4Life it’s (sic) self, although they are partners. When we did Change4Life last year, Start4Life was not yet launched, and we will be doing an ‘early years’ campaign this year, but not under this sub brand as, like you say, they do not work with commercial partners on Start4Life.”

Which as far as we are concerned, just confuses the issue further. A press officer at the DH has told us that Cow and Gate are not in fact partners of Change4Life but also did not seem overly concerned about or interested in the promotion, suggesting that, “The email clearly states that “Busy Bees children received free samples from Cow and Gates ‘Baby Balanced’ range and a Change4Life parent pack” not with or in the pack.”

Well, I am all at sea here – because, to my mind, Cow and Gate and Busy Bees and Change4Life have been clearly linked up through this promotional work. Surely at least some of those 16,000 parents who received the original promotion or the members of the press who received the statement must have made the same assumptions I did?

Crucially, Change4Life is a social marketing campaign – and its messages are at the heart of what it does. Why ban commercial partners to Start4Life only to have Change4Life partners, such as Busy Bees, sending out commercial babyfood promotional messages to the same target client group as Start4Life? If the message is the message, then I think the DH is onto a loser with Change4Life.

Working in partnership with industry and brands, and voluntary agreements with industry, is a key part of the proposed public health strategy of the new Government. Linking of public health and commercial activities may become more commonplace in these financially difficult times and public health practitioners and campaigners may need to prepare for increasing confusion among the public in the years to come.

Joan Mulcahy



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Food Commission websites

The Food Commission: www.foodmagazine.org.uk

Action on Additives: www.actiononadditives.com

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

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Mad as hell about hunger

Around a billion people worldwide suffer from chronic hunger, and a new campaign wants us all to get, “mad as hell,” about it. The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has launched ‘The 1billionhungry Project’ with the help of celebrities like actor Jeremy Irons, runner Carl Lewis, and footballer Patrick Vieira.

The campaign hosts an online petition calling for governments to make the elimination of hunger their top priority. Over the next several months events will be held all over the world to raise awareness of hunger, including a weekend of anti-hunger football matches this October with top teams from all over the world. People who are interested in getting involved can share ideas and access campaign materials on the website www.1billionhungry.org and keep up to date with progress on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/1billionhungry) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/1billionhungry).

If the world continues at the current pace of hunger reduction, the Millennium Development Goal of halving the percentage of hungry people by 2015 will not be met. Of the one billion hungry people, 642 million live in Asia and the Pacific, 265 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 53 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, 42 million in the Near East and North Africa, and 15 million people in developed countries such as the UK.

The FAO wants to see poverty reduction at the heart of tackling hunger, and calls for action to support small-scale farmers, and an end to gender inequality.

Growing Communities launches search for groups to start community-led box schemes

Pioneering social enterprise Growing Communities from Hackney, north London, is calling for groups and individuals to join their Start-Up Programme this spring to set up new community-led organic box schemes across the UK. They are looking for up to five groups wanting to use the Growing Communities model in their own areas.

Growing Communities has run a community-led box scheme since 1993 and now packs more than 920 bags of fruit and vegetables a week, most of which comes direct from local, sustainable farms. They also run the UK’s only all-organic weekly farmers’ market, the Stoke Newington Farmers’ Market, and have pioneered urban food growing – producing salad leaves for the box scheme on small market gardens in Hackney. Growing Communities estimates that the box scheme and market combined now provide sustainably produced food to more than 3,000 people in Hackney every week. At the same time, Growing Communities’ community-led trading outlets are a key outlet for 30 small-scale, local,



organic producers and processors. The organisation employs 24 people part-time and has a turnover of £348,000. All of that income is self-generated.

“We know there are lots of communities and individuals all over the UK who understand that we need to act now to create the local food initiatives that are going make our food system more sustainable and resilient in the face of the challenges of climate change and resource depletion,” says Julie Brown, Growing Communities’ Director. She added, “We know that our community-led box scheme works and provides sustainably produced food, support for local farmers and jobs in our community – we now want to see how it can work for other communities.”

Bacteria in food resistant to drugs

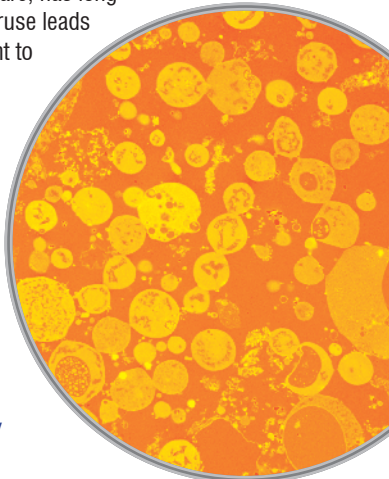
The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a report that says that resistance to antimicrobial drugs (of which antibiotics are one type) is found among the most common zoonotic bacteria originating from animals and food in the European Union, such as Salmonella and Campylobacter. Such bacteria cause zoonoses - diseases and infections that are transmitted between animals and humans either directly from the animal or through a contaminated foodstuff. They can be mild or life threatening. Zoonotic bacteria that are resistant to antimicrobials are of concern since they can compromise the effective treatment of diseases in humans.

During the years 2004-2007, 26 EU Member States sent their data to EFSA’s Zoonoses Unit for the report. Resistance to antibiotics such as ampicillin, sulphonamide and tetracycline were commonly reported as found among tested zoonotic bacteria. In addition, several Member States reported resistance to fluoroquinolones, macrolides or third generation cephalosporins, which are important antibiotics in treating diseases in humans. In particular, high levels of fluoroquinolone resistance were recorded in Salmonella in poultry and in Campylobacter in poultry, pigs and cattle, as well as in broiler meat.

The routine, and ever increasing, use of antimicrobial drugs in intensive animal production, and healthcare, has long been a concern of campaigners. Such overuse leads to the evolution of bacteria that are resistant to commonly used drugs.

The report is available on the EFSA website www.efsa.europa.eu and is called *The Community Summary Report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from animals and food in the European Union in 2004-2007*.

For more information about the dangers associated with the overuse of antimicrobials in farming systems see the Soil Association’s website at www.soilassociation.org/Whyorganic/Welfareandwildlife/Antibiotics/tabid/350/Default.aspx



Growing Communities has been developing the materials, training and web-tools with which to help other groups set up community-led box schemes over the last year. There is now a dedicated Start-Up website to show groups who are interested in joining the programme what is involved and how they can get started. Groups who want to join the Start-Up programme will be required to submit an Expression of Interest form. Growing Communities is looking to work with up to five groups and those groups who are selected will receive detailed training and mentoring, advice on identifying how much Start-Up funding they will need and where this might be sourced.

For more information about how to join the Start-Up Programme go to www.growingcommunities.org/start-ups/

Photo: iFrom bacteria-Mark Leaver Newcastle University



Free school meals pilots to be extended

Five more local authorities are joining the free school meals pilot programmes that started in three regions of the UK last autumn. From the start of the new school year in September, Bradford, Islington and Nottingham will offer free lunches to all primary school students. Cumbria and Medway will target the universal free offer to primary schools in particular areas. The new pilots will last for one academic year.

As with the existing pilot programmes in Durham, Wolverhampton and Newham, the new pilots will study the impact of free school meals on: the reduction of obesity; behaviour and academic performance at school; improvement of school standards; improvement of general health and well-being and the change of eating habits at home.

The previous government invested almost £700 million between 2005 and 2011 in efforts to improve the school meals service.

Nominate campaigners for awards

The annual Sheila McKechnie Campaigner Awards are open for nominations until 28 June. The Awards are for individuals who are new to campaigning or operating with few resources and who show passion, tenacity and the potential to create change – locally, nationally or globally. The person nominated does not need to identify as a campaigner – just to be committed to a cause. Awards are granted to campaigners who work across a wide range of issues.

The awards scheme offers a development package to winners, the aim is to equip campaigners with the skills they need to make a greater impact and achieve real change. The package of support does not include cash prizes but uses a model of action learning to share knowledge and acquire skills. This programme is completely bespoke involving an initial assessment; one-to-one coaching sessions; development workshops; and shadowing or mentoring opportunities. Previous winners include Ben Watson of FairPensions – the campaign for responsible investment and Jackie Schneider for her work with Merton Parents for Better Food in School.

The awards are run by the Sheila McKechnie Foundation – named in honour of the much admired trade unionist, housing campaigner and consumer activist.

For more information see:
www.smk.org.uk/smk-awards-2010

Survey reveals high salt curries

Curry dishes frequently top polls as the UK's favourite meals, but findings from a survey show that lovers of the food may be consuming dangerous levels of salt. Researchers from Consensus Action on Salt & Health (CASH) have examined 784 products, in the largest survey of its kind in the UK, across supermarket shelves, independent shops and takeaway restaurants.

The survey reveals very high levels of salt hidden in bought Indian & South Asian cuisine including: take-aways, ready meals, cooking sauces, chutneys, pickles and side dishes. As well as main curry dishes being high in salt, you can more than double your salt intake with extras such as chutney and naan bread. The lack of clear labelling on the packaging, combined with the spicy ingredients masking the salty flavour, makes it very hard for people to know how much salt they are eating.



Photo: kitchen-delights.blogspot.com

The survey found:

- A curry with all the extras (rice, naan, sag aloo, poppadum and chutney) could provide over 20.5grams(g) of salt, more than three times an adult's maximum recommended intake of 6g a day.
- Iceland's Chicken Tikka Balti, advertised on television as part of the new Iceland Balti range, contains 7.2g of salt per 450g pack. This is more than the daily salt maximum of 6g a day, equivalent to over a teaspoon of salt, without any rice, side dishes or chutney.
- Over half (29 out of 52) of the pickles and chutneys sampled were, weight for weight, saltier than Atlantic seawater.
- Marks and Spencer's Garlic and Coriander Naan bread contains 3.2g salt per portion – over half an adult's daily maximum.
- The highest salt poppadum (Patak's Plain mini Poppadums) contain 1.1g salt per portion, more than two packets of crisps.
- There were large variations in the salt content of the same type curries from different restaurants in London's Brick Lane. The lowest salt takeaway was a vegetable korma (1.37g per portion) and the highest a chicken tikka masala (6.81g per portion).
- Cooking sauces were generally found to be lower in salt, for example, the Co-operative's Healthy Living Rogan Josh Cook In Sauce and Weightwatcher's Korma, both contained just 0.5g per portion. However, one Waitrose product, the Half Fat Jalfrezi Cooking Sauce, contained nearly five times more, at 2.49g per portion.

According to CASH, ready meals and takeaways do not need to be totally ruled out as similar products can vary widely in their salt content. For instance, Sainsbury's Be Good To Yourself Chicken Korma with Pilau Rice contains 0.91g salt per portion, nearly 5 times less salt than the frozen Kan Pur Garden Chicken Korma with Pilau Rice (from Lidl) at 4.50g salt per portion. So, a simple swap could cut your salt intake by around five times in the main meal alone.

"It is the very high levels of unnecessary salt that are added to our food that puts up our blood pressure and leads to thousands of people needlessly dying of strokes, heart attacks and heart failures every year," says Professor MacGregor, of Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, and Chairman of CASH. "The shockingly high levels of salt in many of these products mean that many people in the UK are consuming huge amounts of salt when they enjoy a curry. We urge all these manufacturers and providers to reduce their salt content immediately."

Policy manager at the British Heart Foundation, Mubeen Bhutta, said: "The level of salt in some of these curries is frankly outrageous, but it's often tucked away behind unhelpful food labels where it's difficult to spot. Food manufacturers should give shoppers the whole truth about what they are putting in their baskets. We believe that universal front-of-pack labels, including traffic light colours, the words 'high', 'medium' and 'low' and guideline daily amounts, are key to helping people easily understand what's in the food and drink they take to the tills." Visit www.actiononsalt.org.uk for more information



'Healthy' snacks loaded with sugar

Some processed foods that appear to be healthy actually contain more sugar than is found in chocolate ice cream. Experts from the Faculty of Public Health warn that these sugary snacks and drinks, and the sugar 'hidden' in savoury foods, are contributing to childhood obesity and high levels of tooth decay, especially in the poorest families.

Healthy sounding products such as Fruit Bowl Strawberry Fruit Flakes are actually 69 per cent sugar. Kellogg's Special K Fruits of the Forest bars are 39 per cent sugar, making them more sugary than Coco Pops. By way of contrast, Haagen-Dazs chocolate ice cream contains about 20 percent sugar. The Food Standards Agency defines a high sugar level as 15g or more per 100g and a low amount as 5g or less in 100g. The Fruit Bowl Fruit Flakes have almost 14g of sugar in a 20g bar. Many brands of soups, baked beans and sauces can contain up to 6% sugar.

Health experts want the food industry to be compelled to take action to reduce the amount of sugar it uses in products, much as industry has worked with the Food Standards Agency to make cuts to salt and saturated fat. The Faculty of Public Health's President, Professor Alan Maryon Davis says, "Many people aren't aware of how much hidden sugar there is in cereals, tinned beans, peas and vegetables, and soups and sauces. The food industry should use labelling that children can easily understand, such as the traffic-light scheme, and reformulate their foods to cut right down on added sugar. They've made a good start with salt and fat – sugar is the next logical step."



Unhealthy takeaways surround school gates

Takeaway meals sold near schools could contain over one and a half times more salt and three times more saturated fat than an adult's maximum recommendations for a day. The research, carried out by London Environmental Health Food Teams on behalf of Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) highlights the food danger for teenagers hidden just outside the school gates.

Environmental Health Food Teams in London took a snapshot of popular menu items bought by secondary school children from takeaway shops near approximately 45 schools in 16 London Boroughs. Despite some London boroughs having stay on site policies at lunchtime, fast food meals from local takeaway shops are still popular as after school snacks or as an alternative to school lunches. Meals chosen by secondary school children such as burgers, kebabs, pies, fried chicken and other fast food were analysed for their salt, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat and calorie content by Eurofins, a Public Analyst.

The salt, calories and saturated fat content of the products throughout London were compared to and found to exceed the levels permitted in the average school lunch, as well as alternatives such as packed lunches and meals from national fast food chains. In fact, three in every four meals (54 out of 73) surveyed contained more salt than is permitted under the nutrient-based standards for secondary school lunches, and more than half (44 out of 73) contained more saturated fat.

Helen Clark, Area Manager for Food Team, from the London Borough of Wandsworth said: "It is possible to reduce the amount of salt, saturated and trans fat in these fried takeaway foods by changing the recipes and cooking methods and reducing the portion sizes. Environmental Health Officers across London are developing a London wide Healthy Food award scheme that will identify businesses including takeaways that have improved the nutrition of their food. Without nutritional labelling of restaurant food as proposed by the Food Standards Agency it is very difficult for children to choose a healthier option."

The School Food Trust has consistently supported the use of stay on site policies at lunchtime. The Trust's Chair, Rob Rees, said: "Of course teenagers will want to experiment and hang out with their friends. But times have changed – schools are working really hard to give teenagers a lunchtime experience that can rival the high street whilst still being healthy. It's vital that this isn't undermined by nearby junk food outlets – that's why we support stay on site policies and steps to limit access to takeaway food around schools."

Professor Martin Caraher of City University has called for planning policy to take public health nutrition into account – in order to control the type of restaurants that can open up near schools.



Most children eating too little fruit and veg

Eighty percent of children eat fewer than the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) warns that, with the average down at around three portions, too many children will be at increased risk of a range of cancers in later life.

Nathalie Winn, Nutritionist for WCRF, said, "There are lots of reasons why fruits and vegetables may protect against cancer. As well as containing a variety of vitamins and minerals, which help to keep the body healthy and strengthen our immune system, they are also a good source of phytochemicals. These are biologically active compounds that may help to protect cells in the body from damage that can lead to cancer." She added, "A lot has been done over the last few years to promote the health benefits of eating at least five portions a day. But these figures show that there is a lot of work still to do, both in terms of promoting fruits and vegetables and also making them accessible and affordable."

The charity offers practical help to schools and parents. Its 'Great Grub Club' website, www.greatgrubclub.com, has ideas about how to encourage children to adopt healthy eating habits. It offers recipes, quizzes, growing tips and teaching packs.

Scientists demand ban on BPA

A international group of scientists has called for a ban on the use of the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) in packaging and containers for foods and drinks marketed for babies and young children. The group also called for the use of warning labels on other packaging products that contain BPA.

This spring the Danish government placed an indefinite ban on BPA in products for babies and children up to three. That includes food and drink packaging, along with infant feeding bottles and cups. The ban followed concerns by Danish food safety experts that even low levels of exposure to the chemical could affect infants' ability to learn.

However, the UK's Food Standards Agency says that current levels of exposure to BPA have not been proved harmful. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is reviewing evidence in this area and is due to report in July.

According to Andrew Wadge, the Agency's Chief Scientist, "EFSA is currently reviewing more recent research in this area and the UK is actively involved in this. We keep our advice to consumers under constant review."





The Food Magazine investigates omega-3 fatty acids in your diet

by Anna Glayzer and Jessica Mitchell

Most fats and oils are made up of a number of different types of fatty acids, and the properties of fats and oils, and their impact on health, comes from the combinations and amounts of different fatty acids they contain. Fatty acids can be either saturated or unsaturated, and within the unsaturated group are some fatty acids commonly called omega-3 fatty acids.

This group of fatty acids includes one of the essential fatty acids, **Alpha-linolenic Acid (ALA)** which cannot be synthesised in the body and **Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA)**, and **Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA)** which are present in some foods or which can be made in small amounts by the body. There remains debate over how efficiently humans make these fatty acids: it is likely that premature babies require additional sources of these fatty acids but the evidence for other population groups is not clear. **EPA and DHA are found primarily in fish oils and are very long-chain fatty acids which allow liquids to stay fluid even at very low temperatures. These particular fatty acids have been suggested as being beneficial to adults in protecting against heart disease.**

Do omega-3 fatty acids really benefit heart health?

The benefits of fish oils have been frequently debated. Dr Lee Hooper, Senior Lecturer in Research Synthesis and Nutrition, in the School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice, at the University of East Anglia, has questioned whether oily fish and/or omega-3 fatty acid supplements improve health. At a recent presentation to a meeting of the National Heart Forum, Hooper said that, on the whole, scientific evidence appears to demonstrate beneficial effects of omega-3 fatty acids or fish consumption on total risk of mortality. However, these findings are complicated, as people who eat more omega-3 fatty acids or fish also seem to lead overall healthy lifestyles, eating a better diet and are less likely to smoke.

Hooper told the meeting, “While we can find single studies that show important effects on health, the pooled evidence overall is not strong. Furthermore, fish and omega-3 supplements contain factors other than omega-3 fats such as selenium, iodine, calcium, vitamin D, protein, so, there may be health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids (or fish) in the general population – but it is not clear which these are or how important they are for health.”

Because of studies linking consumption of oil rich fish to better heart health the Food Standards Agency advises people to eat at least one portion of oily fish per week. There is some confusion about omega-3 fatty acids, however, as foods which contain ALA such as some vegetable oils, seeds, dark green leafy vegetables and dairy products are often also suggested as being good for heart health, even though there is no evidence for ALA in this way.



Not eating enough

The amount of omega-3 fatty acids recommended has been determined by the government’s Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition which suggests eating a minimum of 450mg per day (3g per week) of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids. However, information from national dietary surveys shows that the national average is about 250mg/day. There will obviously be considerable variation in intakes, but it is likely that some population groups eat even less. For example, information from the Food Standards Agency’s (FSA) Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that adults in low-income groups have under 200mg/day of these fatty acids on average.

The FSA suggests that one portion of oily fish (such as herring, mackerel, trout, salmon, fresh tuna, sardines) is about 140g, and this alone can provide the minimum 3g of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids that you need a week. However, FSA research also suggests that less than half of men and women consume oil rich fish regularly.

To confuse the issue further, FSA advice also suggests maximum amounts of oil rich fish for some population groups because some pollutants, like dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls, accumulate in oily fish. They can affect the development of a fetus, and so the FSA recommends a limit on the amount eaten from a young age.

Maximum 2 portions of oily fish per week	Maximum 4 portions of oily fish per week
Girls and women who might have a baby one day	Women who won’t have a baby in the future
Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding	Men and boys

It is also difficult to be certain just how much of omega-3 fatty acids there are in different oily fish – this will vary according to their diets, how they are produced (farmed or wild), the type of fish, if they are processed and the time of year. Mackerel, salmon, herring, sardines, trout and fresh tuna are the richest sources of long-chain omega-3. But, other oily fish and some shellfish are also sources including mussels, crab, squid, pilchards and eel. When tuna is canned it reduces the amount of omega-3 content – down to the level of white fish, so it does not count as an oily fish.

For a more sustainable, as well as nutritious, choice, look for oily fish which are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). They will carry the “certified sustainable seafood” label. See www.msc.org for more information on which fish are better to eat from an environmental point of view, and to find out where you can buy them. You can also visit the Marine Conservation Society’s Fishonline site at www.fishonline.org

All of the Young’s seafood purchased for our survey are from sustainable fisheries, as are many of the company’s products.



Making claims on labels

Recent months have seen the culmination of a European level reconsideration of rules around making claims over omega-3 content in foods and drinks. An amendment to the EC Regulation on Nutrition and Health Claims Made in Foods (legislation defining a single list of health claims that can be made on foods applying to all EC countries including the UK) was finally agreed in February 2010. The amendment (EC 116/2010) defined what levels or type of omega-3 content should be used to back packaging claims.

For packaging to bear the claim ‘source of omega-3,’ products must contain

- At least 300mg of ALA per 100g and per 100kcal
- At least 40mg of EPA/DHA per 100g and per 100kcal

For packaging to bear the claim, ‘high in omega-3,’ or ‘rich in omega-3’ products must contain:

- At least 600mg ALA per 100g and per 100kcal
- At least 80mg EPA/DHA per 100g and per 100kcal

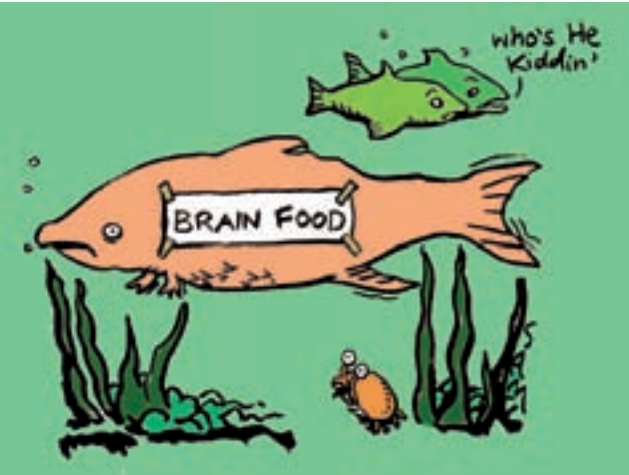
In March 2010, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published dietary reference values for intakes of some nutrients. Dietary reference values (DRVs) represent benchmark intakes of energy and nutrients and should be used for guidance around maintaining a diet for good health. The level of a nutrient required to make “source of” claims is derived from a percentage of the DRV. So, the higher the DRV, the higher the level of the nutrient required for packaging to bear claims. For EPA/DHA, EFSA adopted the draft value of 250mg/day that it had previously proposed in June 2009 (The EFSA Journal (2009) 1176, 1-11), saying: “A daily intake of 250 mg of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids for adults may reduce the risk of heart disease.” ALA was not considered as beneficial as EPA/DHA, so EFSA stopped short of setting a DRV, stating instead: “ALA cannot be synthesised by the body, is required to maintain “metabolic integrity”, and is therefore considered to be an essential fatty acid.” An adequate intake level of 0.5 per cent of total dietary energy was proposed.

The DRV of 250mg per day for EPA/DHA was significantly lower than the UK government recommendation of 450mg per day, and lower than scientists and the omega-3 supplement producers had lobbied for. The rulings also mean that despite there being no set DRV for ALA, claims can be made for products as being a “source of,” or “high in” omega-3, providing they contain at least 300mg of ALA per 100g and per 100kcal or 600mg respectively. Although the regulation says that the type of omega-3 should be stipulated, there is no requirement to do so front of pack. This is a potential source of confusion, argued a group of academics back in September 2009 when the rules were still in proposal form. John Stein, Professor of Neurophysiology at Oxford University said that: “manufacturers would be able pour in cheap plant oils, but imply that they deliver the same health benefits as fish oils. This exploits consumers’ faith in omega-3s”.

The FSA is also at odds with the European legislation. In October 2009, whilst final EC discussions on the “source of” and “high in” claims were taking place, the FSA told an online food business news service: “We want any claims agreed at EU level to be supportive of Government dietary advice, and not mislead consumers into believing they can achieve their recommended dietary intakes of DPA/EHA from foods other than oily fish. Oily fish is the only significant dietary source of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids and consumers are recommended to eat two portions of fish per week of which one should be oily. Plant derived short-chain fatty acids (ALA) offer no significant cardiovascular benefit to consumers.”

Now that EFSA has recommended a DRV for long-chain omega-3 of 250mg/d, the FSA continues to advise a higher intake. The FSA told us: “FSA advice remains unchanged: SACN recommend 2 portions of fish (one oily and one white) per week – this is equal to 450 mg/day of long-chain omega 3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA).” Similarly, the British Dietetic Association told us: “Current UK policy and guidance recommends that people aim for two portions of fish per week one of which should be oily – which would provide 450mg EPA/DHA per day.”

Illustration: © Sam Findley



The packaging on this product notes that it is ‘rich in two types of Omega-3 to keep your heart age young’. This product does meet regulations for making a ‘rich in’ claim about its content of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, but what the packaging does not say so boldly is that, using FSA traffic light criteria, it is also high in fat and saturated fat. The European Heart Network would like to see high fat, saturated fat, salt or sugar products prevented from making health and nutrition claims.



FSA dietary nutrient guidelines

Recommended Daily Intake	Age of person	Amount
Omega-3	All	450mg per day
Salt	Adult	6g per day (2.4g sodium)
Salt	7-10 years	5g per day (2g sodium)
Salt	4-6 years	3g per day (1.2g sodium)
Salt	1-3 years	2g per day (0.8g sodium)
Saturated fat	Female Adult	20g maximum
Saturated fat	Male Adult	30g maximum
Saturated fat	5-10 years	20g maximum
Sugar	5-10 years	Less than 10% dietary energy or about ten teaspoons maximum per day (about 40g)

FSA calculation - Salt = sodium x 2.5 (from FSA website)

Product survey

The Food Magazine did a product survey to see whether it was easy for consumers to distinguish between products containing long-chain EPA/DHA omega-3 from fish oils and shorter chain ALA from plant sources, or whether products bearing omega-3 claims do have the potential to mislead. We were also interested to see whether it would be possible to consume the recommended daily amount of long-chain omega-3 by eating these products, and what the nutritional impact of doing so would be. For the purpose of the survey we have used the UK recommendation of 450mg per day.

We purchased 21 products from major food retailers. Products purchased included margarine, oil, ready meals and fish fingers. All 21 were purchased in the spring of 2010. All 21 products carried front of pack omega-3 claims.

On reading the ingredients labels more closely, we found that:

- 13 of the 21 products contained the more beneficial long-chain fatty acids (specifying EPA/DHA or stating from fish oil sources).
- 7 specified that they contained ALA or omega-3 from plant sources
- One product (Braham and Murray Good Oil), just said omega-3 (we assume this is ALA, a short-chain omega-3 fatty acid, as the product contains only hemp oil).

There is little to distinguish between the claims on the front of pack. For example, we bought three types of Flora margarine. The Flora Omega3plus pack said, “Rich in two types of Omega 3 to help keep your Heart Age young,” and “The spread with the most omega 3(EPA/DHA).” The Flora White pack said, “Helps keep your Heart Age young with Omega 3 & 6.” The Flora Buttery pack read, “rich, buttery taste with Omega 3 & 6.” Only the Flora Omega3plus pack contains long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, the other two contain short-chain omega-3 fatty acids from plant sources. It would take a well informed and sharp eyed consumer to spot the difference. In fact, out of the 8 products that contained omega-3s from plant sources, only one, the Linwoods milled organic flaxseed, sunflower and pumpkin seeds referred to the type of omega-3 on front of pack, in this case by saying OMEGA 3 (ALA).

Of the products that contain long-chain omega-3 (EPA or DHA), you would have to eat an awful lot of many of them to consume the UK government recommended daily amount of 450mg/day. ▶▶



▶▶ You'd need 8 fish fingers, or 6 tins of Heinz mini ravioli (costing you over £4.00), over 23 slices of Kingsmill 50/50, or more than four Young's fish steaks in either butter or parsley sauce, (costing you about £4.00). Not only would this be expensive, when you consider that a 125g tin of mackerel (an oily fish) costs around 70p in most supermarkets and provides over 450mg of long-chain omega-3; it might also involve eating high levels of less beneficial nutrients.

The Heinz products do not quite meet the new requirements for even the basic statement 'with omega-3' and will need to increase the amount of fish oil added to the products if they are to continue to bear such labelling.

Fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt

10 products are high in fat, saturated fat or both when judged against the Food Standards Agency traffic light labelling criteria. Of those, seven contain no long-chain omega-3 fatty acids at all. Yet, those long-chain omega-3 fatty acids are precisely the type that government dietary advice recommends we eat more of. All 5 margarines are high fat and saturated fat, and only two contain the more beneficial long-chain omega-3 fatty acids. The Hellmann's mayonnaise (high fat, saturated fat, and at 1.5g per 100g of product, if it contained anymore salt at all, it would also be classed as high salt) contains no long-chain omega-3 fatty acids at all. All three oils are classed as high in fat and two are high in saturated fat. Yet, only 1, the Sainsbury's Extra Virgin Olive Oil with omega-3, contains long-chain omega-3 fatty acids. The milled seeds are also high fat and saturated fat and contain no long-chain omega-3 fatty acids.

However, it is not just these products that are a concern – if you tried to get your full daily amount of long-chain omega-3 from many products in our survey, you would be at risk of taking in too much fat, saturated fat, or salt – all nutrients the FSA says we need to eat less of.

The European Heart Network (EHN), an alliance of charities working on cardiovascular health, would like to see the EC tighten up its labelling laws to ensure that high fat, saturated fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) products do not bear omega-3 claims, or indeed any type of health/nutrition claim, and that all products, including foods making omega-3 claims, have front-of-pack labelling that would make consumers aware of their HFSS content.

Salt

Five of the products would put you on level, or over the maximum daily recommended adult salt intake of 6g if you tried to get your full daily allowance of long-chain omega-3s from them: Kingsmill 50/50 bread (9.48g); Heinz mini vegetable ravioli (7.8g); Heinz Spiderman pasta shapes with mini sausages (6g);

Good oil

The prize for most confusing and hyperbolic has to go to Braham and Murray's Good Oil. It is hemp seed oil, priced at £5.99 for a 500ml bottle. The side of the bottle reads: "Omega 3 & 6 are essential for immune system, for hair and skin, for joints, for cholesterol balance, for circulation," alongside diagrams of the aforementioned body parts. The nutrition table declares that 10mls of the oil delivers 94% of your daily recommended intake according to guidelines of the European FSA. It does not specify what type of omega-3 the oil contains (which is contrary to EC labelling regulations), but as it is hemp oil, we can assume it is of the less beneficial short-chain variety. EFSA, as discussed above, does not make a recommendation for daily intake of omega-3 from plant sources; nor does the UK FSA. Omega-6s are another family of essential, unsaturated fatty acid that is also beneficial. However, it is widely accepted that consuming high amounts of it can limit the benefits of consuming omega-3s, though the FSA does not specify an optimal consumption ratio.



Heinz mini pasta spirals in cheese sauce (7.5g); Heinz baked beanz with mini pork sausages (7.2g).

Saturated fat

You would need to eat 6 tins of the Heinz Spiderman pasta shapes with mini sausages to get the full recommended daily minimum of long-chain omega-3s. That would provide 17.4g of the saturated fat – only 2.6g under the maximum recommended intake per day for women and children. You would need to eat 4 pouches of the Young's fish steaks in butter sauce to get your daily allowance of long-chain omega-3s – that would also give more than half of the daily recommended maximum saturated fat intake for women and children. If you chose Utterly Butterly to provide the full recommended daily amount of long-chain omega-3, you would also consume around 24g saturated fat- 4g over the maximum recommended amount for women and children.

Conclusions

The FSA's dietary advice is clear – aim for an average of around 450mg/day of long-chain omega-3's from oily fish sources. The UK's experts have not endorsed the lower European recommendation of 250mg/day.

If you are aiming to get your omega-3 intake from processed food sources (including those made with fish not considered oily), and not from oily fish, it can be confusing to tell if you are really managing to meet dietary advice. And, you may be adding unhealthy amounts of salt, fat, or saturated fat to your diet. Our survey showed that even if consumers are aware of which type of omega-3 is most beneficial; often it is only by scrutinising ingredients labels on the back of packets that they can distinguish between products with long-chain and short-chain omega-3s. *The Food Magazine* survey only found three products that specified the type of omega-3 on front of pack. Almost half of the products would be awarded a red traffic light for either salt, saturated fat or fat, and if you tried to get your recommended daily amount of EPA/DHA from some of these products (should they actually contain EPA/DHA) you might have to consume unwelcome levels of fat, saturated fat or salt. Our advice? Stick to the oily fish if you can, preferably certified by the MSC as from a sustainable source.



Product name	Prominently visible front of pack claim wording	Serving size recommended by manufacturer	Amount and type of omega-3 in recommended serving size (as stated on packet) and per 100g	Amount need to consume to get 450mg EPA/DHA*	Amount of salt consumed if you ate enough of the product to get 450mg EPA/DHA*	Target group (if not stated, assumed based on packaging)	Amount of saturated fat consumed if you ate enough of the product to get 450mg EPA/DHA*	Product is High Fat, Saturated Fat, Salt or Sugar per 100g
Products below are judged as specifically targeting children								
Birdseye Omega 3 fish fingers (pollack)	"With extra natural Omega 3" "A rich source of Omega 3"	3 fish fingers (84g)	Omega-3 from fish oil 168mg <i>200mg/100g</i>	8 fish fingers (448mg omega-3)	1.6g	5-10 year olds	2.4g	No
Heinz mini vegetable ravioli	"With Omega 3"	1 x 200g tin	75mg EPA/DHA <i>37mg/100g</i>	6 tins	7.8g	5-10 year olds	4.8g	No
Heinz Spiderman pasta shapes with mini sausages	"With Omega 3"	1 x 200g tin	75mg Total EPA/DHA <i>37mg/100g</i>	6 tins	6g	4-6 year olds	17.4g	No
Heinz mini pasta spirals in cheese sauce	"With Omega 3"	1 x 200g tin	75mg Total EPA/DHA <i>37mg/100g</i>	6 tins	7.5g	5-10 year olds	12.6g	No
Heinz baked beanz with mini pork sausages	"With Omega 3"	1 x 200g tin	75mg Total EPA/DHA <i>37mg/100g</i>	6 tins	7.2g	5-10 year olds	12.6g	No
Products below target all age groups								
Kingsmill 50/50 white medium	"With Omega 3"	Per slice	19mg DHA & EPA <i>47mg/100g</i>	23.7 slices (just over 450mg)	9.48g	All	4.74g	No
Goldenlay Omega-3 eggs (6 per box)	"Omega 3 free range eggs: A delicious source of heart healthy goodness: essential as part of your family's well balanced diet and lifestyle. From hens who enjoy feed rich in omega 3."	100g portion (equal to 2 eggs)	<i>2 eggs = 250mg long-chain omega-3 (DHA/EPA) and 450mg of short-chain omega-3 (Alpha-Linolenic)</i>	4 eggs	3g	All	6g	No
Utterly Butterly Omega 3	"Omega 3"	7g	19.25mg long chain omega 3 (DHA & EPA) <i>275mg/100g</i>	23.3 x 7g servings or 164g	2.58g	All	24g	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Pure dairy free sunflower spread	"With Omega 3 & 6"	10g	400mg omega 3 from plant source <i>4,000mg/100g</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Flora Omega3plus	"Rich in two types of Omega 3 to help keep your Heart Age young" "The spread with the most omega 3 (EPA/DHA)"	10g	300mg Omega 3 fatty acids from plant source per 10g portion and <i>3,000mg/100g</i> 90mg of EPA/DHA per 10g portion and <i>900mg/100g</i>	5.6 x 10g servings or 50g	0.65g	All	4.75g	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Flora White (for shallow frying, pastry making and roasting)	"Helps keep your Heart Age young with Omega 3 & 6"	10g	Omega 3 fatty acids from plant sources 500mg <i>5,000mg/100g</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Flora Buttery	"With Omega 3 & 6"	10g	Omega 3 fatty acids from plant sources 600g <i>6,000mg/100g</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high saturated fat and high salt
Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise	"A good natural source of OMEGA 3"	14g	Omega 3 fatty acids from plant sources 1,176mg <i>8,400mg/100g</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Young's Large Haddock Fillets in a crisp, bubbly batter	"A natural source of omega 3"	1 x fillet (125g)	162.5mg of long chain omega 3 (EPA/DHA) per fillet <i>130mg/100g</i>	2.8 fillets	3.36g	All	7.56g	No
Young's fish steaks in butter sauce (pollack)	"A natural source of omega 3"	1 x 140g boil in the bag pouch	105mg per pouch <i>75mg/100g approx</i>	4.3 x pouches	3.87g	All	12.47g	No
Young's fish steaks in parsley sauce (pollack)	"A natural source of omega 3"	1 x 140g boil in the bag pouch	105mg per pouch <i>75mg/100g approx</i>	4.3 x pouches	3.44g	All	9g	No
Granovita Organic Omega Oil Blend	"A rich & natural source of Omega 3, 6 & 9"	3 teaspoons per day (15mls)	ALA (omega 3) 6,000mg <i>40,010mg/100ml</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Braham & Murray Good Oil (hemp seed oil)	"Very rich in omega 3, 6 and 9"	10mls	1,860mg (Does not specify what kind of omega-3) <i>18,600mg/100ml</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Linwoods Milled organic flaxseed, sunflower & pumpkin seeds	"Omega 3 (ALA)"	30g	3,100mg Omega 3 (ALA) <i>10,400mg/100g</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	High in fat, high in saturated fat
Alpro soya original	"Contains Omega 6 & 3"	250mls	350mg Alpha-Linolenic Acid (OMEGA 3) <i>140mg/100ml</i>	⊖	⊖	All	⊖	No
Sainsbury's Extra Virgin Olive Oil with omega 3 (a blend of 94% olive oil and 6% omega-3 oil)	"Plus omega 3 from fish"	15ml	250mg DHA/EPA (per 15ml serving) <i>1,700mg per 100ml</i>	Just less than two servings (around 28ml)	No salt in the product.	All	Approximately 4g	High fat

*Recommended daily intake of long-chain Omega-3s according to UK Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition 2004 (450mg/day) ⊖ Contains no long-chain omega-3 fatty acids

Plan B – a different food system is possible

Harriet Friedmann, Professor at the University of Toronto, advocates food system change.

Plan B organic farm is less than an hour's drive (outside peak traffic) from the centre of metropolitan Toronto. As its name implies, it intends to be around when everyone understands that Plan A is failing. Plan A is industrial agriculture, whose costs are now exceeding its manifest benefits.

This is the consensus of a UN assessment of agricultural knowledge, science, and technology that is not getting the attention it deserves.¹ The report's assessment of best available evidence concludes that food security, sustainability, and livelihoods are threatened by industrial farming systems; the better direction to support all three goals is to foster farming systems which are knowledge-intensive and which redirect scientific research towards a partnership with farmers, rather than displacing farmers and their experience of adapting to changing conditions with one-size-fits-all systems based on machines and agrochemicals.

Even the benefits of industrial farming are increasingly in question. The industrial system has succeeded, even exceeded, at producing vast quantities of wheat, maize, and soybeans, so much so that efforts to use up the latter two in particular have ended in a spiral of poverty, environmental degradation, risky dependence on a shrinking genetic base for food crops and animals, and chronic diseases. This has made it more rare

for mixed farms to produce nutrient rich vegetables and fruit. Supermarkets have taken over from farmers' markets, and even High Street shops, and find it convenient to source large quantities no matter what the distance. The result is a two-tiered food system, with lots of unhealthy foods available at the lowest prices and healthy foods more and more difficult or expensive to get. Even the cheap food, however, is vulnerable to the complete dependence of industrial farming on fossil energy, not only to drive the machines but also to make the industrial fertilizers and pesticides. Prices of maize, soybeans, wheat and especially rice spiked in 2008, mostly due to financial speculation, but consumer prices have not

fallen in line with prices on international commodity exchanges.

The new issue arising from this new pattern of abundance and scarcity is health, and the new health problem is obesity. In countries like the UK and Canada, the poor, not the rich, are fat, and fat is no longer a sign of affluence (remember the kings of England who died of "surfeits" of various rich or rare foods?) but of poverty. As popular books and films are increasingly making the public aware, excess quantities of maize and soybeans have led to industrial livestock operations, where they are used for feed. These systems degrade the lives of animals, their wastes are unmanageable pollutants rather than lovely fertilizers, and their concentration of animals requires antibiotics and inspires growth hormones. These operations circle back to create ever growing demand for monocultural fields of maize and soybeans.

By-products of animal feeds make sweeteners and fats available in large quantities, and these, plus salt, appeal to the decultured eaters in focus groups for food industries. The result - prepared foods with the new basic food groups: fats, sugars and salt, plus residues of agrottoxins necessary in single crop systems, and various multisyllabic chemicals to keep these edible commodities stable during shipping and storage.

To complete the circle, industrial farming displaces farmers with centuries of experience and practical knowledge, and commitment to a long view: maximizing production and income, even for capitalist farmers of the 18th



century, took second place to "improving" what used to be called "the heart of the soil." As farmers move into other occupations, more steps of transporting, selling, preparing, shopping, cooking and shared meals have become profit centres. The jobs they hire people to do are less rewarding on the whole (even acknowledging the unfair burden on women of doing much of this for no pay at all). Food manufacturing and services offer mostly poor pay and conditions, contributing to the decline of good jobs throughout so-called rich countries. The result: many people have less time and money to shop and cook healthy foods, and buy the edible commodities on offer.

Where do the rich get nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and increasingly, fish? The global South is becoming a "farm" supplying these to the rich of all countries.² This means they have less and less access to these foods themselves. Farmers who used to grow many foods in diverse farming systems are stuck if they specialize in selling one variety of cucumber to a UK supermarket chain, which then for any reason fails to accept or collect them. Cucumbers may

2 McMichael

be rich in nutrients but no one would recommend them as a dietary staple. Even less fresh cut flowers.

People are being pushed off the land in favour of "efficient" farming more or less like that of the North. While most one- and two-dollar a day people targeted for international aid (whether or not it is forthcoming), live in rural areas, they are more likely to be able to access fresh fruits and vegetables directly or through local markets than people forced to enter "the planet of slums."³ As wealth shifts around the world, another force contributes to the "global enclosure" of the remaining small farmers of the world.⁴ Land deals between governments shift huge areas of farmland in South America and Africa away from local markets in favour of export to countries only beginning to source as traditional countries of the North have done, mainly China, India, and the Gulf States.

The "nutrition transition" is the name for an extraordinary shift in human diets brought about by industrial foods across the world.⁵ The image of rich countries getting fat while poor countries stay thin is no longer accurate if it ever was.

3 Davis
4 Arraghi
5 Popkin; WHO, Hawkes

Now equal numbers of people in the global South suffer from "over-nutrition" as "undernutrition." Of course, even more suffer from over-nutrition, now called obesity, in the global North. The South is "catching up" to the North's appalling preventable diets of nutrient poor foods because more people have to shop for foods where price trumps health, and markets are dominated by supermarkets, even in cities of Africa, Asia, and especially South America.⁶

This is where Plan B comes in. Plan B is not alone. Many exciting initiatives are building a new food system in the cracks of the industrial system in Ontario, the largest province in Canada. These include box schemes, creative ways to link aging farmers with young farmers-in-training, and most exciting in an age of cultural diversity, renewal of the crops and cuisines of cultures settling in kaleidoscopic mixes in global cities, and even in small towns, villages, and countrysides. As the cracks widen, policies are coming into focus to shift the whole system towards a tipping point.

Three policy initiatives are beginning in Ontario, focused on the "Golden Horseshoe" – the most densely populated region with the richest farmland and the largest city (Toronto) in Canada. Toronto and Ontario have always looked to Britain, since Tim Lang (then of the London Food Commission) came to talk to the founders of the Toronto Food Policy Council in the early 1990s. Now Sustain Ontario, inspired by Sustain in the UK, is at once the result and the centre of one of these initiatives. Still, every place has a unique social, economic, geographical, and policy context, so there is much to share.

6 Reardon

Plan B Organic Farm is based near Canada's largest city, Toronto. The farm offers an alternative to industrial food production models. It works to provide low cost, organic veg to its local communities through community shared agriculture. It offers training in organic agriculture, and invites people onto the farm to experience how it all works. Our thanks to Plan B for providing us with all of the photographs of their farm, and the people who work there.



Thousands of cattle awaiting slaughter in a feedlot. These systems degrade the lives of animals, their wastes are unmanageable pollutants rather than lovely fertilizers, and their concentration of animals requires antibiotics and inspires growth hormones.

A new dawn in Toronto

Clockwise from top left:
1. Fall Greens 2. Weeding 3. Future farmer 4. Dundas Farmers' Market table September



Below:
Bringing in the potato harvest



The top official in the Toronto Public Health department, Dr. David McKeown, plans to present to Toronto City Council, in June, a Food Strategy, which will embed food system thinking throughout municipal government. After almost two decades of work by Public Health staff and volunteer members of the Toronto Food Policy Council, all sorts of initiatives are suddenly coming into view and into mutual connections. The Food Strategy focuses on healthy citizens and healthy communities. Its proposals range from municipal organic waste recycling, to making healthy food available to all regardless of income, to making "food friendly neighbourhoods", to creative food economies, to food literacy in the schools. The Food Strategy builds on existing initiatives in public, private, and social sectors, showing how to leverage them to fill in the policy cracks through which food often falls, and to join up to work towards a tipping point for healthy food policies.

'Menu 2020' is the result of a sustained effort by the charitable Metcalf Foundation to support food system change. It sponsored a report called "Food Connects Us All" in 2008. Based on that overview of issues and initiatives, Metcalf created a new organization, Sustain Ontario, and made a call for proposals to study specific obstacles and opportunities for food system change. Those studies in turn are now being integrated into the Menu 2020 report, which is subtitled "Ten Good Ideas for Ontario." This study is not restricted by the jurisdictional boundaries of Toronto. Its findings complement the Food Strategy, widening it to emphasize the farming part of the food system. It suggests ways to recreate local infrastructure of vegetable and fruit processing and abattoirs, which have been displaced by supermarket supply chains reaching towards large suppliers; to make supply management accessible to small farmers and local markets; to support sustainable farming by paying farmers for environmental services; and to encourage urban and peri-urban agriculture. On the community side, it suggests ways to educate for food literacy; to create

Community Food Centres modelled on a successful pioneer CFC; to expand public procurement; to relink food with health, and to plan for these and other changes that will arise as these are implemented.

FoodShare Toronto, the oldest social venture in food security in Canada, is leading a campaign among a wide alliance of private, public, and social groups for food education in the schools. Called 'Recipe for Change,' it seeks to make food literacy mandatory at all levels in the public schools, and to make this

practical as well as abstract. Gardens and cooking will be part of this. The efforts of community gardeners, chefs and others, including FoodShare, to pioneer school programmes, have built examples and allies within schools and communities. Obstacles related to land, kitchens, teacher training, and of course, funding, are many, but the time is right. This initiative makes space for initiatives like Plan B to deepen their educational activities.

A different food system is possible.

Photo: Tim Waygood

Health claims and free speech

by Phil Chamberlain



Pity the poor food manufacturer. All they want to do is suggest to consumers that a particular product might have some health benefits. But their right to free speech, the consumer's right to weigh information and different products, this tussle in the marketplace of ideas which tests what products should succeed and which ones should fail – all these are being held back by new European regulations.

At least that is how the manufacturers see it.

The object of their ire is the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) set up in 2002 following a series of food scandals. Its objective is to be an independent source of scientific advice, ensure consumers are protected and maintain confidence in the food chain.

An increasing number of processed foods have nutrition and health claims and the EFSA regulates their use so that they are consistent across the European Union (EU) and backed by scientific evidence. A nutrition claim is one that suggests that a product is beneficial because it is "low in fat", has "no added sugar" or is "high in fibre". A health claim is any statement that health benefits can result from consuming a given food, for instance that a food can help reinforce the body's natural defences.

The EFSA's work in this area began when a review was launched in 2004 and really took off when regulations about what could constitute a health or nutrition claim were published in 2008. It is a huge job. So far it has published 125 opinions providing scientific advice for more than 900 health claims, out of the draft list of 4,185 submitted, by the food industry, for evaluation.

Without approval, a product cannot use a claim as part of its marketing. It doesn't stop it being sold, but if its unique selling point is a particular health benefit then it is a limitation.

Dr. Juliane Kleiner, Co-ordinator of EFSA's Panel on Dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA), says: "For the first time, EU industry will have certainty regarding the scientific evidence needed for claiming health benefits for their food products. It is important to know that criteria are applied in a uniform way with no distinctions, this also contributes to ensure market competition."

According to Kleiner, "EFSA is not depriving the public of scientific knowledge, the opinions are published on EFSA's website. Each opinion explains clearly the reasons at the basis of the favourable or unfavourable evaluations."

However, according to one lawyer expert in this area, the EFSA system is precisely set up to deprive the public of their right to know and of companies' rights to freedom of speech.

Jonathan Emord has led a number of court actions against the US Food and Drug Administration on similar grounds and has just had a book published called *Global Censorship of Health Information*. It devotes large chunks to taking a swipe at the EFSA.

Emord suggests that the problem with the EU approach is that it will only allow a health claim to be made once near conclusive proof has been made. He says the bar is set far too high, acting to exclude potentially helpful information, and does not allow for the common sense of the purchasing public.

"The sad lot of Europeans presently is that they are distrusted to such an enormous degree by the European Union that they are not allowed the basic elements necessary to be sovereign in their choice. There is a gross restriction of information and deprivation of information at the point of sale." Emord argues, "The debate over the evolution of nutritional science is limited to an elite in the scientific community and to politicians in EFSA and the EU."

The new European regulations on nutritional and health claims are in response to the huge growth in food products specifically created around promoting the clear impression that they offer health benefits. For instance, the market in pro and prebiotic foods – the yoghurts and drinks which introduce 'healthy' bacteria to the body or support those already there - barely existed a decade ago. According to data from RTS Research, sales in Europe are currently around 2billion euros a year.

Many manufacturers say the principle of standardising health claims labelling is a good one.

Peter van Doorn, Chairman of the European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers, said: "The nutrition and health claims regulation is of crucial importance for our member companies as food supplement products need to indicate their effect and intended use in order to allow consumers to make an informed choice."

However, the way health claims are being assessed is seen as increasingly opaque and inflexible by many in the food industry. Some of the criticism echoes the concern raised by Emord that commercial free speech and the public's right to make a judgement are being restricted.

Célia Martin, Regulatory Affairs Manager at Institut Rosell-Lallemand in France,

told the news website

'nutraingredients.com':

"Medium and small size

companies which don't

have structure and budgets

to build clinical trials to

substantiate health claims won't be able to communicate on

their products."

However Dr Kleiner says that the EFSA's work does not impede innovation.

"Sustainable innovation and consumer confidence can only be maintained if health claims made on foods represent a real benefit for consumers and are backed by robust science," she says. "Furthermore, EFSA's evaluations of claims can support industry in establishing the future directions for innovation, again based on sound science."

Last year three European trade associations asked for the European Commission to reassess the process for developing health claims under article 13 of the new regulations. The European Responsible Nutrition Alliance and the European Botanical Forum said that it had serious doubts about the process.

There have been, though, successes for food manufacturers.

"low in fat"
"no added sugar"
"high in fibre"





UK company Provexis won approval for its product 'Fruitflow' to claim that it does contribute to healthy blood flow round the body. The product, a tomato concentrate, helps maintain normal platelet aggregation and prevents clumping. It is derived from the gel around tomato seeds.

Provexis is added to other products by manufacturers, rather than sold by itself, and so will allow those to use the health claim as part of their marketing.

The company's boss, Stephen Moon, said: "The EC's decision means we can ensure Fruitflow is understood by consumers as a product that can help maintain a healthy blood flow around the body and therefore a healthier cardiovascular system."

However, the vast majority of similarly-marketed products have fallen at the EFSA hurdle. So far pre- and probiotic foods, for instance, have had no luck in getting their health claims approved. Despite submitting data from various trials manufacturers have failed to impress the EFSA scientists.

Instead, companies have found different ways to promote their products. They have relied upon other sources to make the link between a product and a healthier outcome, such as in press. Alternatively, they can use channels outside of the

Patti Rundall, Director of charity Baby Milk Action says, "In my view health claims should never be allowed because they idealise and distort public perceptions of highly processed and packaged foods. Can a highly processed food really have a health advantage over fresh fruit and veg or breastmilk? No. So most health claims are essentially misleading and deceptive. They are also based on dodgy industry funded research which is geared to gaining a competitive edge - often with risky ingredients."



The Fruitflow website ►



The EFSA's terms

Companies make applications for approval of health and nutrition claims under different headings. It is up to them to supply the EFSA with the necessary evidence. The EFSA's scientists then evaluate the data and judge whether the claims are justified.

A health claim

This is any statement used on labels, in marketing or in advertising, that health benefits can result from consuming a given food or from one of its components such as vitamins and minerals, fibre, and 'probiotic' bacteria. There are so-called 'general function' claims, such as calcium being good for bones or that a food can help reinforce the body's natural defences. There are 'new function' health claims. These are based on new research evidence or apply to new products developed by a company. There is also a section for those products claiming to reduce the risk of a particular disease or improve a child's health.

A nutrition claim

This states or suggests that a food has particular beneficial nutritional properties. Examples include "low fat", "source of omega-3 fatty acids" or "high in fibre."

control of the EU such as offshore web sites, viral messaging and twitter – all methods of making a link in the minds of consumers.

Lawrence Mallinson is owner of James White Drinks, one of whose products is BeetIt – a beetroot juice. After he started making it, food scientists tested it and he says there is evidence it can have a positive impact on blood pressure. However, EFSA hasn't allowed any health claim to go on to a label because it doesn't believe the evidence is strong enough.

For Emord this sums up the faulty system at the heart of the EFSA process which restricts free speech and consumer choice.

"It is a conundrum of modern science that methods of testing are grossly imperfect," he says. "Those double blind placebo controlled clinical trials that are preferred yield results that may in some instances be correct and in others be incorrect. Nonetheless the emerging science is just as valuable, if not more valuable to consumers than, the government's approved nutrient disease or nutrient health relationship.

"That is the fundamental error in this system. This system presupposes that consumers are too ignorant to understand inconclusive information. Over and over again this is not the case in studies of consumer perception. To lock some segment of science out of the market place of ideas and information is a gross offence to freedom."

The EFSA decision hasn't stopped James White Drinks from using a clever marketing campaign to promote its product. The HeartBeet website is carefully worded to keep within the rules and the links to research institutes for further information adds to the impression of sound scientific basis in health benefits.

Mallinson told Radio 4's The Food Programme that there are few avenues open to companies wishing to talk about health issues. He says that as labelling rules are prescriptive some companies use the media but this has its own problems.

"The consumer finds it very difficult to understand the difference between one health claim that comes out and another which is more tenuous," he says. "The press is a very bad source in terms of reliable information because there is no weight put upon it."

EFSA admits that it is difficult to police claims in forums outside of its control but says that is up to the requisite regulatory authorities to take action as they see fit.

Interestingly this is where it agrees with Emord who says: "A far better approach is not to condemn the innocent with the guilty but to focus your enforcement actions with laser-like precision against precisely those you can prove with clear and convincing evidence are defrauding the public."

There has been some success in America in free speech court cases and there is a lobby group, Stop FDA Censorship, championing this particular avenue.

Owen Warnock, from law firm Eversheds, and an expert in this area, says that at this stage an appeal in Europe under rules backing freedom of speech is some way off. It needs a case to have gone through the whole process before it can be taken for judicial review. And while speech, including commercial speech, is protected there is a proviso that allows for it to be curtailed in order to protect public safety or health. That would suggest any case would have a tough legal hurdle to surmount.

Warnock says companies are still "feeling their way" through the EFSA process and working out how trials might be designed to meet the regulator's expectations.

Emord believes that a legal case is inevitable unless the regulator relaxes its stance. "I am being consulted about the situation in Europe but I can't reveal for whom," he said. "In the long run the European Court for Human Rights must come at some point to recognise the harms the deprivation of information causes."



◀ The HeartBeet website

Company spin on health claims and free speech

According to some of the most eminent public health nutrition campaigners in the UK, the controls on how companies can market their products are nowhere near strong enough.

High fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products are not barred from bearing health and nutrition claims – giving a healthy halo to products that can lead to excess consumption of those nutrients.

UK labelling laws allow companies to bury specific nutrition details on the back of pack while boasting of healthy attributes on the front.

The majority of evidence submitted to EFSA by companies, in support of health claims, is in the form of food industry funded research. And, you do not see health claims on fresh, unprocessed foods, and yet dietary advice recommends those as the best for us.

As our reporters found in the survey for our article on Omega-3 and health/nutrition claims (pages 4–7) it is very confusing for consumers to separate fact, fiction and hyperbole from a simple reading of product labels. We found that products boasted of containing omega-3 on front of pack – only to find upon closer reading, of the rest of the packaging, that the type of omega-3 many contained were of the less beneficial short-chain type, not the long-chain type from fish oils that the government is so keen that we get more of. Companies did not seem keen to boast of that on the front of label. Many products that did contain the long-chain type contained so little that if you were looking to eat the daily recommended amount, you would also consume high levels of salt and saturated fat. The European Heart Network, an alliance of charities that work on cardiovascular health, says that many would like to see the EC tighten up its labelling laws to ensure that HFSS products do not bear any type of health claim, and that all products, including foods making omega-3 claims, have front-of-pack labelling that would make consumers aware of their HFSS content.

According to Dr. Helen Crawley, Director of charity The Caroline Walker Trust, "The use of health claims on foods does not help the consumer to eat better. All the evidence about what constitutes a healthy balanced diet comes from surveys of food intakes, and most public health advice is to eat a variety of real foods - most of which would not come with any health claim. If health claims are allowed on food products, then to avoid confusing consumers these should be on the back of packets near the ingredients list and nutritional information rather than as a flash on the front which is likely to mislead shoppers."

Patti Rundall, Director of the charity Baby Milk Action says, "In my view health claims should never be allowed because they idealise and distort public perceptions of highly processed and packaged foods. Can a highly processed food really have a health advantage over fresh fruit and veg or breastmilk? No. So most health claims are essentially misleading and deceptive. They are also based on dodgy industry funded research which is geared to gaining a competitive edge - often with risky ingredients. In the infant feeding world, companies have the nerve to claim that formulas 'protect' babies when in fact they place children's lives at risk. New designer formulas are touted about as 'closer to breastmilk' - hiding the inherent risks and the fact that breastmilk is a living, constantly changing product that is impossible to match and which provides optimal, unique, perfectly balanced and safe nutrition for babies."

For more information about the work of Baby Milk Action visit: www.babymilkaction.org
For more information about the work of The Caroline Walker Trust visit: www.cwt.org.uk

What is a supply chain and how does it work?

Photo: Sverrir Thor val Flickr



The ash-cloud disrupted the importation of some foods into the UK for several days. The breakdown of transport impacted most seriously on farmers who supply the UK supermarkets with delicate produce that demands the speed of air freight. But, the whole situation highlights how our modern system has made us, and farmers in the South, vulnerable to high-tech, de-localised, non-diverse ways of producing food and earning a living off the land.

Ben Raskin, Learning Manager and Horticultural Advisor at the Soil Association, clarifies some of the issues surrounding supply chains and highlights the madness of centralised systems and why supermarkets selling 'local' produce may be bending the truth...

Unless you are producing your own food, it has to get from the farmer to you. This process is known as a supply chain. The length of this chain varies: fresh, unprocessed food bought through a box scheme or at a farmers' market, for example, involves a short supply chain. Add a process, such as baking, and there is a further link in the 'chain'. Add a wholesaler or retailer into the equation and the chain becomes longer still.

Before the invention of the internal combustion engine and refrigeration, most distribution for fresh produce was limited to perhaps 30 miles (or one day's travel by horse). Moving food was expensive and the risk of it perishing usually made it more economical to sell at local markets. There was still trade, of course, but the supply chain was generally limited. Butchers bought meat from farmers and greengrocers bought vegetables from market gardeners, so it was easy to trace where your food came from.

Technology and the drive for efficiency

Technological and infrastructural developments resulted in efficiencies, bringing advantages – but also profound implications. As outlets grew, farmers found it easier to sell all their produce to

one customer – for instance, a supermarket or school caterer. Today, this system has become so specialised that many supermarkets actually deal with a handful of processors, which source and supply most of their food.

Take the case of the Director of the Soil Association, Patrick Holden's, carrots: after the closure of the local packer, Patrick had to transport his Welsh grown, organic, carrots to Lincolnshire. Here, the carrots were scrubbed, a process that was required by the supermarket but which removed the natural protective skin. By the time the carrots returned to Wales for sale as 'local produce' they were often in a poor condition. Although Sainsbury's sought a solution, the system itself was beyond fixing. Mr. Holden no longer produces carrots: he says, "the supermarkets are preaching localism but it's just tokenism; their systems are still going in the opposite direction, and it's disastrous."

Many people make a living from the food 'industry' now – but who are they?

Many farmers have little idea where their produce ends up and are often tied into a relationship with one buyer and at their mercy. Many do not have a fixed price contract or even a binding agreement.

Whilst the fierce price battles between supermarkets and their suppliers mean cheaper

products on shelf for cash strapped consumers, these prices belie the real cost of cheap food and the devastation these bully-tactics have on the livelihoods of British farmers and growers who are often forced to accept prices which barely cover costs. Smaller businesses that do not have the power to stick up for themselves are especially affected.

John Davenport, an organic grower in Herefordshire said, "I'm getting less for my potatoes and carrots than I did 20 years ago. Although I've reduced some costs through more efficient production and bigger machinery, generally my costs have increased. As a result, I've had to drastically cut production." John no longer supplies the larger markets and is establishing a Community Supported Agriculture scheme, believing that the future lies in a closer connection with his local community.

The supermarkets are making large profits – and continue to expand – so the system clearly works for them. Similarly, the main processors and largest producers have the necessary scale and power to do well. Very small farmers can bypass the national supply chain and sell locally; by removing the middle men, they can still make a living.

It is the medium sized businesses, however, that are probably the hardest hit. Too big to sell everything locally and too small to compete with the 'big boys', they are caught in the middle and often end up leaving the industry with their house and 10-acres sold to a retired banker, the rest of the land sold to larger farming businesses.

How does our centralised system affect choice? Some people still have access to local producers, many can only shop at supermarkets. But as the Oscar nominated film Food, Inc. powerfully points out, although the supermarkets appear to offer a wide choice, most of the food comes from a small number of companies.

Diversity of animal breeds can also suffer. For instance, the drive for cheaper milk has led to

the dominance of the high performance Holstein cow, which requires large amounts of protein (often imported soya) at the expense of more hardy native breeds that are better at converting grass into milk.

Resilience

Today's distribution systems did not develop overnight and can be linked to plentiful supplies of cheap oil, allowing affordable large storage facilities and long distance transport. So while they are 'efficient' in monetary terms they are also highly vulnerable.

Most supermarkets operate a 'just in time' distribution system, ordering replacement products just before they run out. This saves on storage and waste, but relies on rapid delivery. It is estimated that it would only take three days without fuel before the supermarket shelves were empty. Going back along the supply chain, most farms have diesel storage and could last a while before their tractors ran out. But what if the electricity went down for more than a day? How would dairy farmers keep their milk chilled? How long would the apples last in unventilated stores? What would happen to the frozen food waiting for distribution? The list goes on...

The Future

As business and government keep pushing for more centralized, 'efficient' systems, the public appear to be going the other way. At the Soil Association, we've seen a staggering level of interest in our Organic Apprenticeship Scheme and Community Supported Agriculture project. People are desperate to reconnect with where their food comes from.

Perhaps it is time to simplify supply chains again. In our drive for efficiency, we have driven people off the land and into factories to build farming machines and computers. Farms that once employed 20 or more are now managed by one tractor driver. Is this really the future of farming in the UK? Or does the future lie with the myriad of small diverse farms that are beginning to enjoy a come back? The crisis in the dairy industry sparked by foot and mouth resulted in a resurgence of artisan cheese makers. We now have more different cheeses produced in the UK than in France. Do we really want to wait for another crisis before we build resilience, choice and security into our farming system?



Automated production line in modern dairy factory

Almost all of the milk supplied in the UK is processed through fewer than 10 bottling/ container plants and with the closure of the last Welsh plant in 2009 most milk sold in Wales now has to be put into containers in England. Supply chains have become even narrower in the pig and poultry industry, with around 95% of organic pork being processed at three abattoirs and 80% of organic table birds going through just one abattoir. Similar examples can be found in most organic and non organic food sectors.

Election news

As *The Food Magazine* goes to press the new coalition government is putting plans and Ministers in place. There are ominous warnings of billions in cuts – and little mention yet of plans for furthering the development of a socially just, sustainable food system.

In a 'Memo to new Secretary of State' published in *The Grocer*, Professor Tim Lang, a trustee of The Food Commission, suggests priorities: continued support for improvements to school meals including the new nutrient standards; action to tackle inequalities; planning for how to increase UK food production sustainably and for its associated, local, delivery mechanisms; continued engagement with consumers about the need to change how and what we eat; and support for stronger controls on the ways companies market and advertise products.

His colleague, Professor Martin Caraher, in a recent lecture on Food Poverty and Inequality, mentioned some similar points – and reminded listeners that the suffering of the poor in our society is real, and can be solved, and is expensive. More expensive than solving poverty. Unhealthy diets cause ill health and ill health costs the treasury billions. Caraher's analysis was not at heart so baldly calculating, his humanist views spoke more of lost potential, of a society lessened and weakened by its failure to value all of its citizens. He spoke of a need to move away from individualistic approaches, of making people feel bad or guilty for how they eat, and for a refocus onto changes to our systems.

The Food Magazine is warmly supportive of these two great thinkers and campaigners. We write in the hope that the new government takes active, positive notice of their work.

Volcanic ash and food safety advice

At the urgent request of the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has issued advice on the short-term risks to public and animal health posed by possible contamination of the feed and food chain from ash-fall following the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland.

Due to lack of time, and information about the exact composition and quantity of the ash-fall, the EFSA safety review focused upon flouride. This is because most information about volcanic eruptions has identified it as the most critical compound related to health effects in both humans and animals. Dietary exposure to fluoride in volcanic ash for humans is usually through drinking water, and for grazing animals, such as cattle and sheep, through eating ash deposited on grass and soil. Acute fluoride intoxication can have severe effects on humans and animals, however, such intoxication, related to consumption of volcanic ash, is very rare.

EFSA has concluded that the potential risk to health posed by this volcanic ash-fall through contamination of drinking water, vegetables, fruit, fish, milk, meat and feed is negligible in the European Union as it is outside the immediate proximity of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano. However, as further EU monitoring data becomes available about the ash-fall, EFSA may conduct a further review.



The Soil Association is a membership charity campaigning for planet-friendly food and farming. They believe in the connection between soil, food, the health of people and the health of the planet. For more information about the Soil Association's work and how you can help in their fight for a healthier planet please visit: www.soilassociation.org

Vegan – for people, animals and planet

The 'green manure' - crimson clover - on Iain Tolhurst's farm in the Thames Valley.

Photo courtesy of Tolhurst Organic Produce

Amanda Baker of The Vegan Society tells *The Food Magazine* about what it means to be vegan...

The Vegan Society is a charity. We give advice on living well without using animals, because this is good for people, animals and the planet. Vegans avoid using animals for food, clothes or anything else. This is good for animals – they would not choose to be farmed!

Good vegan food is great for caterers, helping you to please customers, and meet diversity and climate targets. Vegans enjoy foods from plants – e.g. fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices, fungi (mushrooms, yeasts), and bacteria (making soya yoghurt, tempeh). Good vegan diets are healthy at any time of life – for mothers, children, and top athletes. These healthy diets, which tend to be low in saturated fat, salt and sugar, and high in micronutrients and fibre, are good for people.

A shift to a vegan diet would cut the use of land, water and energy used for food production by two-thirds. This would help us to tackle the global climate and food crises – good for people, free-living animals and the planet.

The Global Picture

One in six people will go to bed hungry tonight. But three billion more people could live on the grain crops now wasted by animal farming. Farmed animals create more of our climate change emissions than transport. Harmful climate change is already hitting the poorest countries. We can tackle these problems with 'stock-free' agriculture – farming without animals.

The Global Food Crisis

More than one billion people in the world are starving. Living in poverty, these people cannot obtain or produce a nutritionally adequate food supply. Yet, we feed nutritious crops (e.g. wheat, soya) to farmed animals, who use up over half the food energy in such crops for moving, warmth and so on.

Global demand for animal feed is set to rise by 50% by 2050. This loss of human food could eclipse climate change-induced crop failures.

Population growth makes the 'food crunch' even worse. There are nearly 7 billion humans now, and over 20 billion farmed land animals. By 2050, there will be about 9 billion humans – and perhaps 40 billion farmed animals.

We can help to solve the food crisis if we stop breeding farmed animals, and shift our land to production of crops for humans to eat.

Global Climate Change

In the poorest countries, climate change is already making people hungry. Animal farming also destroys food indirectly, by emitting powerful greenhouse gases like methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). The UN says: "The livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions measured in

CO₂ equivalent." (World transport creates 13.5%.) So, stock-free farming can cut our greenhouse gas emissions. Good choices (e.g. avoiding out-of-season produce) can help vegans each save 0.8 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year.

What is Stock-free Farming?

Stock-free farms run without any farmed animals – no 'livestock'. Crops are grown without 'domestic' animals – no animal manures, no animal bone nor blood powders. There are animals living free on the farms – such as pollinating insects, herbivores, and predator mammals and birds.

Iain Tolhurst, a leading British stock-free farmer, works 18 acres in the Thames valley. He uses field-scale, intensive garden and protected cropping. His successful business supplies 400 families with vegetables ranging from asparagus and carrots to squashes and tomatoes, and some fruit.

Why Stock-free?

- Human and farmed animal populations, and meat and dairy-based diets, are straining Earth to the limit. Healthy diets using plants 'first hand' can make best use of fertile land and fresh water.
- Animal farming also threatens food security globally via climate change.
- Stock-free farming can help overcome hunger, and combat the climate crisis.

These are just some of the urgent reasons for stock-free farming.

The table below shows: Land and water use, and greenhouse gas emissions, produced by three sample diets in the UK. It also shows the percentage of calories derived from animals in each case.

	Typical British diet	Example Vegetarian diet	Example Vegan diet
Land use (hectares)	0.20	0.10	0.07
Water use (litres/year)	535,000	347,000	140,000
Greenhouse gas emissions (kilograms per year of CO ₂)	1,588	1,334	322
Calories from animals	30%	30% (from cow's milk)	Nothing from animals

Tolhurst builds soil fertility with 'green manures' – crops such as clover and lucerne grown to care for the soil between vegetable crops. He also practices crop rotation. Soil analysis reveals steadily improving phosphate and potash levels on his farm.

In the UK, stock-free farming offers an alternative to the tight margins and low farmer confidence currently placing many dairy farmers in a precarious situation. Stock-free farms avoid the worry of animal diseases such as BSE and foot-and-mouth.

The UK Government has estimated that existing UK arable land can comfortably feed our own population. Some land which is currently used for pasture could be planted with trees, for leisure, fruit and nut production, and woodland habitat.

Stock-free farming also offers significant advantages for farmers in the developing world.

Animal Farming and Water

Even when water is scarce, the rich rarely thirst – it is the poor who suffer. Water shortages can also trigger violence.

The UN predicts that: "By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population could be under stress conditions." Water shortages are set to hit hard in vulnerable regions of South America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Stock-free farming can relieve pressure on water resources. Good choices (e.g. drink less coffee) can help vegans cut our food water use by two thirds.

Social Justice and Land

People can secure their own food supply with good access to fertile land. About 70% of the world's farmland is used for animal farming. People can 'use' up to a hectare of land by what they choose to eat. Good choices can help vegans to cut our food land use by two thirds. 'Green manure' plants can replace animal

manures to feed even poorer soils. So, stock-free farming can help everyone to grow their own food.

Why Vegan?

People from all walks of life choose to become vegan, and for a myriad of reasons. The key for many vegans is a positive moral choice to live without exploiting other animals in any way. For example, vegans do not take milk or eggs. This is because the female adults (cows and hens) are exploited, and male young (calves and chicks) are killed in those industries. The Vegan Society works constructively for the abolition of animal exploitation.

For other vegans, the basis may be personal health, or respect for the natural environment, or concern for hungry people. Vegans with well-planned lifestyles can be healthy at every life stage, and can have much smaller 'eco-footprints' than the British average. Many vegans say that all the benefits of plant-based lifestyles – to people, other animals and the planet – are important to them.

There are some cultures whose people share strong plant-based ethics. The Rastafarian principle of 'Ital' living, emphasising 'naturalness', leads some followers to adopt plant-based diets. The Jain principle of 'Ahimsa', doing no harm to any living thing, aligns closely with veganism and there are numerous Jain vegans. Buddhists also embrace 'Ahimsa', and many are vegan. Countries with significant Rastafarian, Jain or Buddhist communities include Jamaica, the USA, England, Kenya, India and China.

But what can vegans eat?

Clear your mind of preconceptions: vegans eat normal food – cakes, casseroles, curries – made our way!

Anything made using animals – meat (e.g. red meat, poultry, fish, seafood etc.), milk (cows', goats', cheese, cream, etc.),



Poet Benjamin Zephaniah is a self-described 'passionate vegan'.

The Little Book of Vegan Poems by Benjamin Zephaniah

22 poems from the radical rapper and people's laureate. For the caring, dedicated young vegans of the world. "Those vegans who will not stand for any exploitation whatever the species, and who are fighting racism and sexism with all the strength they get from what the earth provides."

Published by AK Press ISBN: 1902593332



eggs, honey, animal-derived additives and processing aids etc. – is not suitable for vegans.

Healthy, tasty, and ethical good vegan food can meet the needs of almost anyone: meat-reducers, healthy eaters, religious diets, vegetarians, vegans and others. This helps chefs to plan menus, and cater to all. The ingredients can also be local, seasonal and affordable.

We can support vegan pupils, and their families and schools, to benefit from vegan catering. We wrote to every secondary school in the UK in 2007, offering free school visits.

Please get in touch if you are interested in any aspect of vegan lifestyles, see www.vegansociety.com



A booklet for chefs produced by The Vegan Society



They taste much better if you let them run around

Legal, decent, honest and true?

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

X Soft sell

When you go shopping for bread, do you seek out the softest loaf? Bread companies certainly seem to think so. Claims made by Hovis in a recent advertising campaign that their Soft White loaf had been, “voted Britain’s softest white,” drew complaints from rival bread companies on the grounds of being misleading and unsubstantiated. The claims were based on a taste-test survey in November 2008.

The complaints were upheld by the ASA on the grounds that the recipe for one of the branded breads involved in the taste test had been changed in February 2009, and that at the time the ad appeared in October 2009, all three breads were made using the new 2009 harvest flour. Further to this, although Hovis received a better average softness score than the other two products in the taste test, when respondents were directly asked, after trying all three products, which they liked best for the softness of the bread, the majority of respondents had not chosen Hovis.

The ASA judged that the ads breached CAP Code clauses 3.1 (Substantiation), 7.1 (Truthfulness) and 19.1 (Other comparisons)

X Kill me: “topical” references to assisted suicide fail to result in Peperami ad ban

A Peperami ad featuring, “infamous sadist,” the Peperami Animal character, was deemed not likely to cause distress or serious or widespread offense by the ASA. The internet banner ad, for Peperami salami, appeared on Brand Republic’s website and stated “\$10 000 TO KILL ME IN THE MOST CREATIVE WAY”. A cartoon Peperami Animal character was shown holding a sign that said “ASSISTED SUICIDE”. Entrants to the competition would get \$5,000 dollars if their idea was used. The complainant objected that the ad was likely to cause distress and serious offence, in particular to those who had related personal experiences, in light of recent public debates about assisted suicide.

Brand owner Unilever argued that, “the concept was suited to the brand because its creative format was well established; Peperami advertising was known for the ever-more creative ways in which the character, the Peperami Animal, harmed or killed himself in preparation to be eaten. To that end, the audience was invited

to submit their ideas for the most creative way in which to kill an infamous sadist, i.e. they were invited to assist his suicide.” Unilever also said that the Brand Republic website that carried the ad was a, “media specific to the ad industry, which was selected to ensure the ad reached a highly creative audience, rather than the general public,” and that viewers were likely to, “understand the humorous tone of the ad as well as the deliberate and topical play on words.”

The ASA accepted Unilever’s defence: “We considered viewers were likely to find the concept of assisting the suicide of an item of food ridiculous rather than offensive or distressing. We noted some might find the ad distasteful but concluded it was unlikely to cause distress or serious or widespread offence.”

The ASA investigated the ad under CAP Code clauses 5.1 and 5.2 (Decency) and 9.1 (Fear and distress) but did not find it in breach.

X Follow-on formula under fire again for suspect claims and insufficient evidence

The ASA has upheld a complaint against Heinz over claims made in a television ad for its follow-on formula, Nurture, and partly upheld a complaint against a magazine ad for SMA. This follows rulings against Aptamil and Cow and Gate last year on claims that their products supported babies’ immune systems (see *The Food Magazine* Issue 86). Viewers complained that the Heinz Nurture TV ad, which describes the product as, “an advanced complete follow-on formula to help nourish, protect and develop your baby,” implied health claims with regard to children’s immunity and development which could not be substantiated.

The ASA found that the claim, “help nourish, protect and develop your baby,” constituted a specific health claim which did not have approval under EC health claim regulations. Furthermore, the evidence that was submitted by Heinz to substantiate the claim was found to be insufficient. Studies that reported positive results in many cases were not conducted using Nurture Follow-On Formula or a formula of substantially similar constitution and, in many examples, were carried out on children from birth to 12 months or, in one example, on pre-term infants, not the group aged six months to one year targeted in the ad.

The ASA considered that the claim in the ad implied a benefit to a general population of

children, not a specific group, and noted one study was carried out on children in a developing country who potentially experienced a high level of microbiological contamination in their environment. They concluded that it was not possible, therefore, to determine whether the results of the studies could be applied to the targeted age group - babies aged only over six months - nor was it possible to translate the results of the studies to mean that any clinical benefit had been demonstrated in well-nourished infants or those who received an adequate nutritional intake as a result of weaning as well as follow-on formula.

That Heinz submitted evidence pertaining to babies under six months could suggest some deliberate confusion over the difference between follow-on formula and breast milk substitute. Despite Heinz’s own apparent confusion the ASA did not uphold viewers’ complaints that it was not clear that the product was follow-on formula and related exclusively to older babies or that the ad did not adequately clarify that the product was not a replacement for breastfeeding. On these points the ASA accepted Heinz’s defense that the ad was not misleading because it contained on-screen text stating, “Complete Follow-On Formula to be used in conjunction with a balanced weaning diet from 6 months...” and “Not intended to replace breast feeding”.

On the point relating to claims, the ad breached (old) CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rules 1.1 (Complying with the law), 5.1 (Misleading advertising), 5.2.1 (Evidence), 5.2.2 (Implications), 8.3.1(a) and 8.3.1(b) (Food and dietary supplements - accuracy in food advertising). The ad must not be broadcast again in its current form.

SMA brand owners John Wyeth & Brother Ltd also fell foul of the ASA. Their magazine ad for SMA follow-on-milk showed a picture of a baby pulling himself up on an armchair under text that stated “SAY MAMA” + {xxxxx KISSES} + ... SMA GOLD SYSTEM WITH OMEGA 3 + 6 + IRON + “SAY MAMA” ... = “DADDA” !!! Text beneath stated “The right nutrition is critical in a child’s development. SMA follow-on-milk part of the SMA Gold System contains Omega 3+6 and an improved protein balance. It also includes iron to help support brain development”. The tagline stated “For every stage, a formula”.

The ASA did not uphold a complaint that the ad contained an unsubstantiated health claim for Omega 3 or 6. They did not accept SMA’s rather tenuous argument that the ad made a

nutrition claim rather than a health claim. The ASA concluded instead that the claim: “The right nutrition is critical in a child’s development” was likely to be read in conjunction with the claim: “SMA follow-on-milk part of the SMA Gold System contains Omega 3+6 and an improved protein balance.” The ad was thus deemed likely to be interpreted as positing a relationship between omega 3 and omega 6 in SMA follow-on formula milk and the development of a child. In this instance, however, the ASA noted that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) had approved the claim “Essential fatty acids are needed for normal growth and development of children” for products that contained specified amounts of omega 3 (ALA) and omega 6 (LA) fatty acids. They considered that the words “critical” and “needed”, in the context of child development, were analogous and considered that the claim was consistent with the permitted conditions of use.

SMA had less luck refuting the second aspect of the complaint received by the ASA; that the tagline, “For every stage, a formula,” was indirectly promoting the use of infant formula. SMA said the phrase related to the overall theme of the ad which was based on the creation of a fictional mathematical formula between the parent and the baby to encourage the baby to reach the next stage. SMA argued that it was common to refer to early child development in terms of stages and believed that the ad clearly focused upon the stages experienced by babies over 6 months.

Quite reasonably, the ASA did not agree that the claim “For every stage, a formula” was likely to be interpreted by most readers as relating to a mathematical formula representing the child’s cognitive development. Rather, they considered that the claim “For every stage, a formula” in conjunction with the pack shot of the product that stated “2 Follow-on Milk from 6 months” implied that SMA products could be used for the entirety of a child’s development which included the period from birth. The ASA concluded the ad indirectly promoted infant formula and was therefore irresponsible.

The ad breached CAP Code clause 2.2 (Social responsibility) and must not appear again in its current form.

X Flora boy to man TV ad “did not imply Flora had a long term beneficial effect on heart health”

The ASA reached this baffling conclusion regarding a TV ad for Flora that showed a boy eating toast in the family kitchen, leaving the house then jumping over the garden wall. He was shown jumping over the wall at various ages up to adulthood. A male voice-over stated, “when I was little I had a theory, if I jumped the garden wall every day, I’d stay young forever, because there’d never be a day when I couldn’t do it. I’d be 80, still leaping over the wall. These days, the theory goes that your heart age is what matters, and while my garden wall theory didn’t quite go to plan, something helped keep my heart in

shape over the years.” Next, the ad showed a man jumping over the garden gate and taking a bite of toast. On-screen text stated “As part of a healthy diet and lifestyle.” A female voice-over stated “Flora helps maintain a healthy heart with its unique blend of omega 3 and 6, how young is your heart?” On-screen text stated “Flora HEART AGE www.floraheartage.com”.

One viewer challenged whether the claim “Flora helps maintain a healthy heart with its unique blend of omega 3 and 6” was misleading and could be substantiated, because he believed recent research cast doubt on the heart health benefits of omegas 3 and 6, particularly of alpha-linoleic acid (omega 3 mainly found in plant sources) and polyunsaturated fats. The ASA acknowledged this view, but considered that the prevailing scientific view, as stated by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), was that saturated fats could raise cholesterol and lead to an increased chance of heart disease and should, where possible, be substituted for polyunsaturated fats and unsaturated fats. Moreover, the ASA noted the EFSA had recently concluded, in its first batch of “general function” health claims, that a cause and effect relationship had been established between the dietary intake of omega 3 and 6 from plant sources and the reduction of blood cholesterol levels.

The ASA also overruled complaints that the “boy to man” theme of the ad, combined with the claim “something helped keep my heart in shape over the years”, misleadingly implied that Flora had a long-term beneficial effect on heart health. In reaching its judgement, the ASA considered that the on screen text specifying “as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle” did not imply a long-term improvement in heart health, but that Flora could help maintain heart health when combined with a healthy lifestyle, and that this effect could be consistent over a number of years.

The ASA went on to add, “Because the claim, “Something helped keep my heart in shape over the years” did not appear in isolation, and because we did not consider the ad showed a long-term improving effect, we concluded the ad did not imply Flora had a long term beneficial effect on heart health and was not misleading.”

It makes you wonder why Flora bothered really doesn’t it?

X For Goodness Shakes! That’s a tall claim

Drinks company My Goodness received a rap on the knuckles over an email and magazine campaign featuring claims that their sports product For Goodness Shakes! sports supplement was better than water or isotonic sports drinks. The email read “...sports drinks are NOT EQUAL. A recent clinical trial found athletes who used For Goodness Shakes! after training recovered more power and did 40% more at their next session than those that used water or isotonic sports drinks.* ... WANT THE POWER TO DO 40% MORE?...”.

Isotonic sports drink manufacturer GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) challenged whether the claim in both ads that For Goodness Shakes could recover the power to do 40% more than water

or isotonic drinks, was misleading, and could be substantiated.

My Goodness said that their claims were backed by a study, which proved significance at a 95% confidence interval, was managed independently for the purpose of an academic paper; and that aside from providing the product free of charge, My Goodness were not involved in the study or its publication. The ASA, however, found the claims to be unsubstantiated by the study, which consisted of 24 people split into four groups of only six people each. The tests were conducted over three days and allowed the participants to do 40% more work on day three compared to those who consumed a carbohydrate sports drink. The results of the study were based on participants having consumed a total of 1000ml of the drink, which equated to two standard servings of 500ml, within two hours after exercise.

The ads each included an image of a bottle of the drink, and the ASA considered that the images, in conjunction with the claim, were likely to be interpreted to mean that drinking one bottle of For Goodness Shakes could help consumers do 40% more. The ASA concluded that they had not seen robust evidence to support the implied claim that one bottle of For Goodness Shakes could help athletes of all ages do 40% more whenever they next chose to participate in any form of training. They concluded that the ads were misleading.

The ads were found to breach CAP Code clauses 3.1 (Substantiation), 7.1 (Truthfulness), 19.1 (Other comparisons) and 50.1 (Health and beauty products and therapies). The ad were banned from appearing again and My Goodness were told not to make claims for which they did not hold robust substantiation in future.

X Old El Paso

And finally, a complaint was made following a TV ad for the Old El Paso fajitas kit, on the grounds that the fajitas shown in the advert were larger than those which actually came with the kit. Despite on-screen text stating, “Kit contains smaller tortillas than shown,” the ASA agreed with the complainant, that the ad was misleading.

The ASA was unmoved by General Mills’ defense, that the ad was originally shot in Australia where the tortillas in Old El Paso fajita kits were about two inches larger in diameter than those sold in the UK kit. They concluded that, although it was acceptable for on-screen text to clarify or expand on claims in ads, it should not contradict claims made in the ad. They considered that the more prominent visuals were not merely incidental and clearly showed tortillas larger than those supplied with the Old El Paso Fajitas Kit and thus the ad was likely to mislead viewers about the contents of the product.

The ad breached CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rules 5.1.1 (Misleading advertising) and 5.4.2 (Superimposed text) and was banned from being broadcast again in its current form.

www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/Advanced-Search.aspx?Start=23/12/2009&Sectors=9&End=31/03/2010#results

Anarchist seeds beneath the snow



Colin Ward, 1924-2010, in the kitchen of his home

Ross Bradshaw, of Five Leaves Publications, celebrates the life of anarchist and 'utopian dreamer' Colin Ward (1924-2010)

We do journey through a small planet. My friend (and hero, though he would have been embarrassed to be so described) Colin Ward knew Rudolph Rocker, who was the leader of the mass Jewish anarchist movement in London prior to the first world war. Rocker in turn knew Peter Kropotkin, the "anarchist prince". And Colin, who died recently, was the great advocate of Kropotkin. Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*; and *Fields, Factories and Workshops of Tomorrow* were as influential on a previous generation of anarchists as Colin Ward was on a much wider constituency of anarchists, housing specialists, teachers, environmentalists, allotment holders and those who (returning to Kropotkin) argued for small scale industry, and small scale agriculture leading to self-sufficiency.

Both Kropotkin and Ward of course were 'utopian dreamers', but saw what Colin Ward described as – the anarchist seeds beneath the snow – in what people did together, rather than what they might be for or against. He was not saying that everyone who is a member of a food co-op, or who spends Sunday mornings in their allotment, or who subscribes to modest sized magazines, is some kind of unconscious anarchist, but he felt that people were naturally co-operative, constructive and performed best when working for themselves and their community.

Colin Ward's book *The Allotment: its landscape and culture*, which he co-wrote with David Crouch, was hugely influential. In those fairly recent days when allotments were rather looked down on, that book gave allotment holders an intellectual reason for their activities and a connection to a shared past of a right to a patch of land to produce food. It is something of a 'classic' now but not that long ago it was still being quoted in Government reports on allotments.

The Allotment was certainly influential on our small press. Faber had originally published

it in hardback. I was too broke to purchase it for myself then but it never appeared in paperback. Eventually, fed up waiting, I rang Faber and offered to buy the paperback rights to do it myself, and hey presto, I was a book publisher. Colin and David wanted no fees, no royalties, and were only pleased to see the book available more generally. For years it kept Five Leaves afloat, going into a second edition and five printings. Colin never regretted the offer to do without royalties, and over the years a few more of his titles appeared on Five Leaves' list. These included another book we took over from a bigger publisher, *Arcadia for All* (jointly written with Dennis Hardy) about the plotlands of South East England, my favourite of all his thirty or so books, and *Cotters and Squatters*, which he wrote for Five Leaves.

I'm sure Colin would be chuckling at the amount of coverage his death had in the

broadsheets, both from left and right, and in specialist magazines in areas as diverse as architecture, transport and food. Though none of his books became bestsellers, he had a close following and a wide influence. The forthcoming memorial/celebration of his life* will be attended by hundreds of people from many different interest groups.

One of his most influential publications was the monthly magazine *Anarchy* which he edited for ten years throughout the 1960s. *Anarchy* rarely sold more than a couple of thousand copies. You can still buy the odd back copy at Housmans or Freedom bookshops in London. Despite its small circulation it pioneered ideas such as adventure playgrounds and alternatives to prison.

Two issues would be of particular interest to readers of this magazine. *Anarchy* 86 was

devoted to "Fishermen and workers' control". The magazine describes the terrible conditions the workers had to endure, as well as discussing overfishing and the history of fishing communities in Scotland. Workers' control? Colin quotes a Basque fisherman as saying "We own our fishing boats in common, and whenever the weather is uncertain our captains meet together to decide whether it is safe for the town to fish. That way no crazy individual can risk the lives of his crew and anyone who follows him."

Anarchy 41 was devoted to "The Land". The magazine included material on anarchist approaches to land holding, drew on people's experience of working the land and of course discussed Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops of Tomorrow*. That issue of the magazine advertised the book *Food Production and Population*, published by Freedom Press,

indicating general anarchist interest in the subject.

Colin Ward's ideas are often directly referred to in the modern magazine *The Land* which above all reports on the consistent attempts of some people to live outside of agribusiness and to combat planning laws which happily allow parts of Britain to be covered in sterile, fertiliser-drenched prairies, but make it hard for those who wish to live lightly on the land in appropriate dwellings.

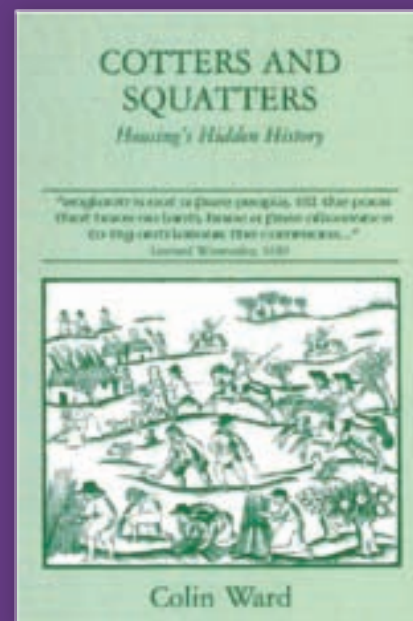
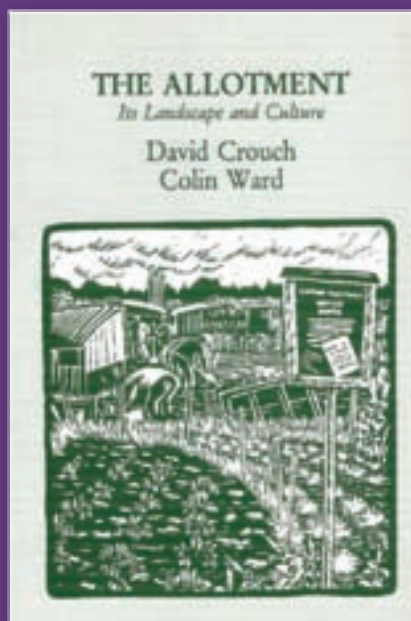
Aside from Kropotkin, Ward drew on the ideas of William Morris and Ebenezer Howard, author of *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. They, and he, tried to answer the question "how could we or should we live?" His ideas were and are central to the anarchist movement but he had no time for what he described as "tittle tattle" or a life solely focused on continuous protest, preferring to accentuate the positive.

Colin said he was personally too busy to grow anything, too busy writing to practice what he preached. Not that he was averse to eating large meals, with food grown and cooked by others!

He lived in Suffolk, for many years much of his own food coming from the nearby smallholding of his fellow anarchist (and editor of Freedom Press), the late Vernon Richards. Vernon ("Vero") was also of that generation of anarchists whose roots stretched back into a different past, but who always tried to make anarchism relevant to the present and the future.

Ross Bradshaw is the publisher at Five Leaves www.fiveleaves.co.uk

***A celebration of the life of Colin Ward will take place at Conway Hall in London on Saturday 10 July 2-5, with music, speeches, exhibitions and stalls. All are welcome.**



Cotters and Squatters – Housing's Hidden History

This book explores the story of squatter settlements in England and Wales: from our cave-dwelling recent ancestors to the Diggers and on to the industrial revolution; and from twentieth-century mass squatting to modern claims that "The Land is Ours". Ward's book is full of anecdote and glimpses of surviving evidence about the unofficial ways in which people have housed themselves.

Arcadia for All – The Legacy of a Makeshift Landscape

From Canvey Island to Jaywick Sands, from Peacehaven to Pitsea; in the first 40 years of last century, thousands of families made their own place in the sun, without benefit of councils, planners, architects, building societies, or even builders. Were they, as many planners and environmentalists suggested, making rural slums and seaside eyesores, or were they providing a unique example of unaided self-build housing, with lessons for us all today? The authors uncover the history of the "plotlands" of South-East England, telling the fascinating detail of the places people built for themselves on the coast and in the country, and of what happened to them since, drawing parallels with similar developments in other parts of the world.

Five Leaves

Five Leaves is a small publisher based in Nottingham, publishing 15 or so books a year. Its roots are radical and literary. These days its main areas of interest are fiction and poetry, social history, Jewish secular culture, with side orders of Romani, young adult, Catalan and crime fiction titles. You can find their latest and forthcoming books, and information about how to buy the books, on their website www.fiveleaves.co.uk. In London, you will find most of their books in stock at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, five minutes from Kings Cross.

Reviews

Jessica Mitchell has been spring cooking

Madhur Jaffrey:
Various widely available including 'Indian Cooking'

National Trust's Good Old-Fashioned Jams, Preserves and Chutneys: Sara Paston-Williams, The National Trust, 2008. ISBN 978-1-905400-70-6

Persia in Peckham: Recipes from Persepolis, Sally Butcher, Prospect Books, www.prospectbooks.co.uk ISBN 978-1903018514

Hsa ba Burmese Cookbook:
Tin Cho Chaw, 2008, Grassblades Ltd. ISBN 978-0-9559374-0-8

The New Tastes of India: Das Sreedharan. ISBN 0-7472-7148-8, 2001

Spending too much time on the computer is surely no way to live - it is much nicer to open the window, let in the breeze, and have a bit of fun with cooking. I am sure we would all cook more if we had a bit more time. I have been trying to find some space to do just that - and generally can wangle some time on the weekends and early mornings.

I have been having a lot of fun with the National Trust's *Good Old-Fashioned Jams, Preserves and Chutneys* book. I was always keen to try preserving but had the idea that it was very difficult. Actually, it is quite a relaxing way to while away a Sunday in the kitchen - throw a load of laundry in, turn on the World Service, and keep a close eye on the jam pan. So far, even my mistakes have tasted pretty good.

In fact, homemade lime marmalade does not taste anything at all like what you get in the shops. The book's recipe has just 3 ingredients (sugar, limes and water) and involves nothing much more complicated than boiling limes, warming sugar and some stirring. No thermometers or fancy gadgets necessary. And it is just lovely - not too sweet, lovely and fragrant. It is cheaper than the shops too.



Photo: © 2010 blog en.chateleine.com/tag/freezer-jam/

Quince cheese was quite rough - as it involved a good hour of frequent stirring, and has subsequently set like concrete into the storage jars. It is delicious, but quite how we will be able to extract it is not yet clear. I have been experimenting with gouging out chunks with a spoon heated up in boiling water. I am still awaiting a taste of Granny's Hot chutney - which needs to mature for about 6 months. A word of warning - my family did not appreciate the smell produced by 3 hours of boiling malt vinegar. Maybe one for a weekend spent alone. We do not have a larder, so I just store the stuff on the bedroom or closet floors - and they make good presents. If I can get to the Dorset hills for some sloes I will have a go at sloe gin this autumn.

The book's recipes are really tasty so far - but, there is not a huge amount of trouble shooting advice. I wish I had been forewarned about the possible consequences of over-reducing the quince and setting it to store in jars with somewhat narrow openings. One batch of lime marmalade had quite chewy peel even when boiled for ages, and I am not sure why. But, so far these variations are part of the fun - it does help that I have willing, and not hugely fussy eaters, here in the house who are happy to gouge if need be, and who just chew harder on the peel.

The jam and marmalade recipes use a phenomenal amount of white sugar - equal weight to the fruit pulp in the quince recipe. I wondered how useful this method

of preserving could have been to poor people before refrigeration, as white sugar was a luxury. The National Trust book is not much use on this point, as it talks a lot about 'the lady of the house' and historic homes - places where white sugar could be afforded.

Tom Jaine of Prospect books told me, "Sugar was dear and no-one made sugar-based preserves until the great drop in sugar's price in the later 19th century. No-one, that is, except the wealthy or the comfortable. Hence the lady of the house: she secured for herself control of the closet where she made medicinal and drinkable waters and preserves from sugar. Cooky was not let loose there."

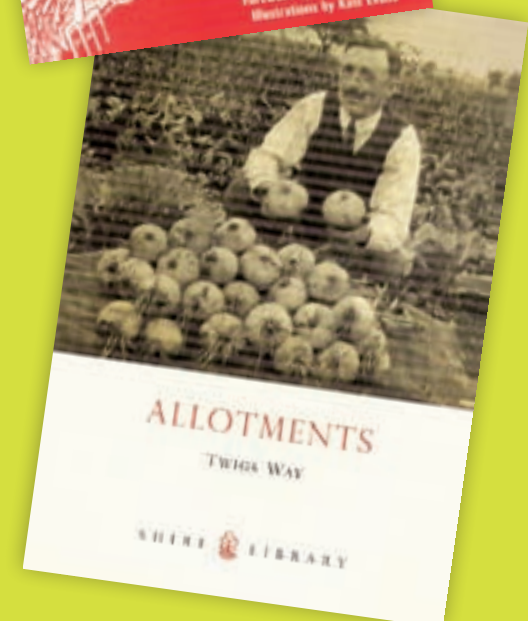
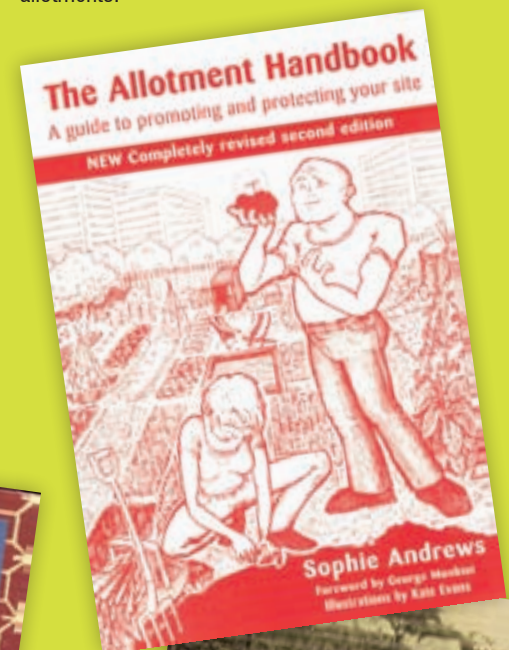
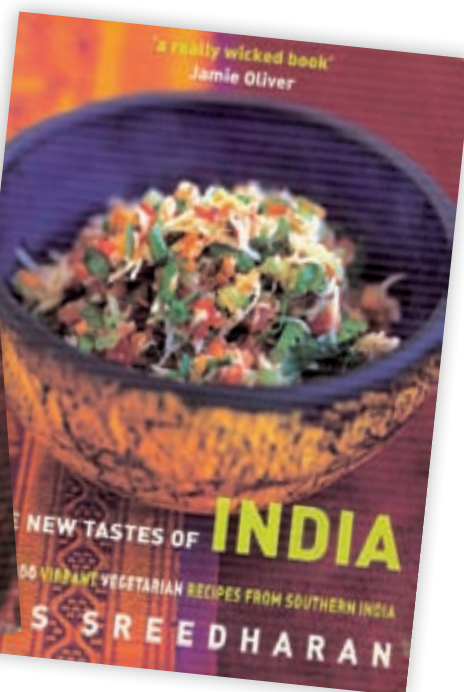
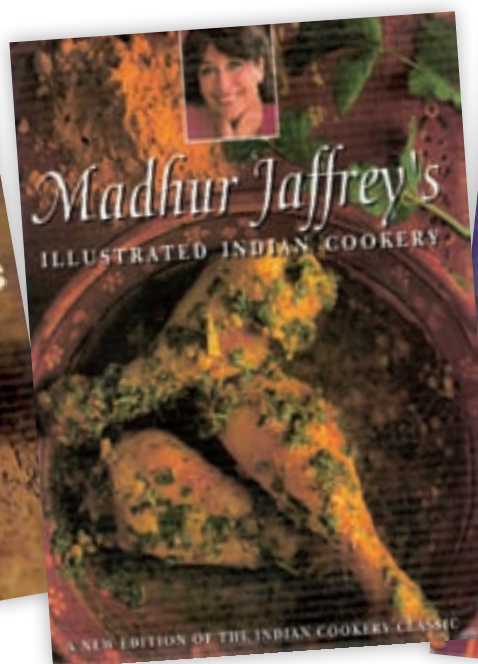
The Food Magazine has previously mentioned *Persia in Peckham*, published by Jaine's excellent, smallscale, independent, Prospect Books, but can I just say again - what a good book. I have been trying some of its cold salads - grilled aubergines with prunes, chilli, and sesame seeds and one with spinach, herb leaves, feta cheese, homemade croutons, olives and walnuts. The book is full of stories, so it is great to read, and it is also one of those books where everything tastes better than you think it will from just reading the recipe. Some of the recipes are tough, or require ingredients that are not that easy to access in my local shops - but, there are plenty of everyday recipes too.

I have also been having a go at different kinds of curries. I have to admit - I like

Madhur Jaffrey's meat dishes more than her veg so far. I made a chicken korma the other night that was umm delicious - and incredibly filling due to the grounds nuts it contained. My children liked that one - but suggested that perhaps I needed to add more sugar (in fact, the recipe contains no sugar) - as they have only previously had korma from the local takeaway. *Hsa ba* is a Burmese cookbook - also with some tasty curries, but even more delicious fresh salads - green mango, roasted eggplant and egg. How did anyone ever figure out just how delicious fermented fish sauce could taste?

Das Sreedharan's *The New Tastes of India* is a southern Indian, vegetarian cookbook which I also enjoy. Cucumber curry is unexpectedly nice, as is the chickpea curry. I find some of the recipes go wrong though. For example, the cauliflower and potato curry suggests that you add large chunks of raw potato and cauliflower florets at the same time to (too little!) liquid - result - sludgy cauliflower and raw potato! And, confusion over where you went wrong with the liquid base.

I am not sure what next - but think I will be trying to get better at fish cooking, and taking advantage of summer berry picking to make some more jam!



The Allotment Handbook - A Guide to Promoting and Protecting Your Site, Sophie Andrews, Eco-Logic Books. ISBN 1-899233-10-5

Allotments, Twigs Way, Shire Publications. ISBN 978-0-74780-681-3

The Museum of Garden History has a small but interesting bookshop (and a very nice veggie cafe). *The Allotment Handbook - A Guide to Promoting and Protecting Your Site* offers some interesting history of allotments, but is especially valuable for its discussions about how to create thriving sites, well integrated into the community - and how to protect such sites from development threats. *Allotments* by Twigs Way charts the historical rise and fall - and rise - of allotment use over the past hundred years or so. It is not a patch on Colin Ward's book *The Allotment: its landscape and culture* (see page 20) but it is an easier read and it has many lovely, and funny, images - photos, cartoons, posters, postcards - all about allotments.

A farmer's diary –

Ploughing on Regardless

by Tim Waygood

Homemade cider on Church Farm

About Tim Waygood

Tim Waygood is from a farming family, whilst studying agriculture at Reading the farm was set-aside. For the past two years, Tim has worked solely on creating a complete alternative to corporate supermarket consumerism, based on Church Farm - a prototype, mixed farm, producing food, and acting as multi service centre. Together with others he is plotting the Agrarian Renaissance - an umbrella movement and alternative brand to unite conscious customers and farm based enterprises offering an alternative.

www.churchfarmardeley.co.uk
www.peopleandfood.co.uk

your letters

We welcome letters from our readers but we do sometimes have to edit them (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

Enjoying hospital, but not the antibiotics

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Alex Jackson's piece about hospital food in your last issue. I was in hospital for two weeks a little while ago with a broken ankle and could not have asked for better food.

Considering that this is said to be a cash strapped NHS the care and attention from both nurses and doctors could not have been better. I had clean sheets every day, more than I get at home, and three meals a day with three choices each time. How can they do it?

One nurse washed my back while I had a shower and I said: "This is the first time for many years that I have shared a shower." She laughed. Later, when I said this to a visiting friend, "I had a shared shower with nurse Fifi this morning," she shouted: "but I had my clothes on!" "Yes," I said, "I know, but I didn't."

Just one thing worried me. They seem to use large doses of antibiotics as a prophylactic to prevent infection rather than to fight it when it may have taken place, as was originally intended. I used to work with penicillin more than sixty years ago when it was still grown as a mould in large glass vats. One of the batches was flown over to Egypt where Churchill had contracted pneumonia and it saved his life. I still pride myself on this contribution to the war effort.

Yours sincerely,
Hans Lobstein, Brighton.

Thank you to our readers for their wonderful letters and donations

Dear Editor,

A quick note to include a small donation and to say that I think you are producing a fabulous and essential magazine. The stories are always compelling and seem thoroughly researched. I've particularly enjoyed reading about bread – the historical context gave tremendous insight into the subject. Keep it up!

All the best.
S Newman, Kent.

Nonsensical portion information

Hello,

I read *The Food Magazine* at work and wanted to share with you something that drives me mad. I have enclosed the label for a product which is two individual sachets of noodles, 2x150grams, so it is clear that you are going to eat a 150g as a portion. But the portion size on the nutrition panel is per 120g – how ridiculous is that? To make matters worse the pack says on the front, serves 2-3. If it serves 2 the portion size is 150g, if it serves 3 the portion size is 100g, so where do they get the 120g from?

I have seen this sort of thing on many foods, for example, a small 50g bag of mini cheddars where the portion size suggested is half a bag – ie 25g – when it is blatantly obvious the pack is intended for one person in one sitting – does anyone else object to this?

Yours sincerely,
K. Holme, Hampshire

Fizzy drink portions annoy us – clearly those 500ml bottles of Coca-Cola, or energy drinks, sold with so many lunch deals, are meant for one person at one sitting. The two portions suggestion just allows companies to gloss over how much sugar you are getting when you drink the stuff. Nutrition panels can be difficult to understand, especially as manufacturers do often give nonsensical portion sizes. Thank goodness that 100g or ml portion nutritional information now has to be given on products even if manufacturers also offer information about their own portion sizes. At least this does offer some standard basis for comparison.

The past months have been about surviving, surviving the winter and surviving financially - the farm has been dancing on a cash flow knife edge. Farming sucks-in capital and equipment like you would not believe. We have probably had to spend 50% more than originally budgeted although a lot of this is due to the syndrome of 'another thing we never thought of is' – a poultry slaughterhouse, incubator for hatching eggs, mixer for our own food, vacuum packer (£4,000!). That and mistakes. Many!

However good you are, it takes two and a half years to produce a prime beef animal, so the cattle born here in May 2008 will yield cash in October 2010! This is good compared to the cash flow on the orchard. Spending only (no income!) for half a decade, as it takes 5 years from planting for the orchard to reach full production. The walnut plantation is even longer, a seven year wait. Now, in the meantime, we run courses on pruning and tree care, breed ducks, geese, and house our laying flocks amongst the trees so there is the possibility of some early returns this way. People come and pay for chicken food and feed the chickens in the orchard for us, this is currently bringing us at least £50 a week, so a little lateral thinking is needed to bring some money in in the meantime.

In time, the orchards will also be great places for weddings, funerals, parties and celebrations. Having financed this venture with borrowings, low interest rates have enabled us to survive this long. Still, the good news financially is costs are down and revenues rising. The ambition this year is for the enterprise to break even.

Trade at the Farm Café and Store has grown 35% over the past month, recovery from winter lows, we are attracting all sorts of people, walkers, locals, young, old, and loads of cyclists who come from as far afield as north London and Bedfordshire. Judging by dress last

weekend there were Hindus, Muslims and Church of England vicars spotted walking the footpaths. For many reasons, I now say "come on my Land" rather than "get off" as the signs used to say. A happy coincidence and necessary if a farm is to produce food for customers.

People coming for a walk here can see their food growing, and the way we look after the countryside and the many benefits of a mixed farm. Buying food from us they help to create this unspoilt countryside. I reckon there are over 5,000,000 people in the UK who pay subscriptions to organisations to protect the birds, bees, trees et al. Those people spend over £10 billion on food each year. So, the idea here is to say to local members of such organisations come on my land, see how we farm and buy your food directly from us.

The farm is, of course, the ideal 'wild camping' site. This is where the 20 acres of new woods can pay their way. 'Wild camping' means you are allowed to camp anywhere on the farm within reason, on your own, rather than crowded with others. A different experience. Campers have included private parties including a hen night. I resisted the temptation of watching the goings on in the woods that night. Water, fuel and food can all be sourced from the farm and after people leave there is no impact on the environment. From the financial point of view, these are all good income streams. The happy co-incidence is this ecological mixed farming creates a countryside people would like to visit and spend time in.

We are on track to grow over 100 varieties of vegetables and herbs this year, and have completed planting 2,000 soft fruit canes this winter. This and the 'forest garden' – edible borders and boundaries – are also long term investments. However, we have again managed to get some earlier returns through running courses on 'How to plan and grow a forest garden.'

Local people have been tremendously supportive and we have created a dozen or so jobs. So, to survive and thrive our task is to continue steadily growing this year, and get better at running each of the myriad of ventures going on here.

Farming Politics

The scary thing is that all three of the main parties promise to introduce GM crops and it looks like we are in for more of the same industrialised, monocultural, supermarket food system, where added value means packaging and brand image.

Now, pigs might fly and farming be taken seriously again, they may continue flying and real reform take place but until there is a spontaneous outbreak of common sense across government and corporations then I believe we need to do 'cosa nostra' our own thing, create our own food security, community, local enterprises, create our own jobs, build our own homes in our local areas. Politicians should be there to help us do it, there is no sense relying on them to do things for us.

I agree with Colin Tudge (see "The Campaign for Real Farming") when he says that we can no longer hope for governments to reform themselves and we the people should take our food and farming in hand. It's not impossible and seems to me is happening all over. People are creating food coops, growing food in skips near Kings Cross, creating community farms and gardens. If we want to be free we need to take control of our food supply. The good news is that we can create a better life for less, by abandoning consumerism and adopting a richer local life. It ain't easy and in my case the sports car, the savings and the holidays all had to go, but hey it's really worth it. Jeffersonian freedom.

We do all farm three times a day – everytime we eat, either consciously or unconsciously, we vote for a farm somewhere and a production method. We can choose to be conscious customers rather than mindless consumers. Each of us spends thousands on food each year. It's not just what we buy but who from that will shape the future.



A Church Farm tour

What has driven me to risk all and create a new local food and farming enterprise here, and develop a rural hub for enterprise and employment, is to get free of government, corporations and the supermarkets and create an alternative. Is it better? Well, email me and come and see for yourself. Happy to take any *Food Magazine* readers on a guided tour on Saturdays at 10.30am.



Happy coincidence – mixed farming benefits the birds

These are the results of two 30 minute bird spotting walks in the first week of April.

Wednesday 7th April

1. Grey Heron
2. Canada Goose
3. Mallard
4. Red Kite
5. Pheasant
6. Moorhen
7. Herring Gull
8. Wood Pigeon
9. Collared Dove
10. Green Woodpecker
11. Great Spotted Woodpecker
12. Swallow
13. Pied Wagtail
14. Wren
15. Dunnock
16. Robin
17. Blackbird
18. Blackcap
19. Chiffchaff
20. Goldcrest
21. Long-tailed Tit
22. Blue Tit
23. Great Tit
24. Nuthatch
25. Rook
26. Carrion Crow
27. Jackdaw
28. Magpie
29. Chaffinch
30. Greenfinch
31. Goldfinch
32. Chaffinch
33. Greenfinch
34. Lesser Redpoll
35. Yellowhammer

Saturday 10th April

1. Grey Heron
2. Canada Goose
3. Mallard
4. Red-legged Partridge
5. Pheasant
6. Moorhen
7. Wood Pigeon
8. Collared Dove
9. Green Woodpecker
10. Great Spotted Woodpecker
11. Pied Wagtail
12. Wren
13. Dunnock
14. Robin
15. Blackbird
16. Fieldfare
17. Song Thrush
18. Garden Warbler
19. Blackcap
20. Chiffchaff
21. Willow Warbler
22. Long-tailed Tit
23. Blue Tit
24. Great Tit
25. Treecreeper
26. Magpie
27. Jackdaw
28. Rook
29. Carrion Crow
30. Starling
31. House Sparrow

