



Sex sells

The Food Magazine gets dozens of press releases every week – mostly about the latest launches of unnecessary and unhealthy food products. These are churned out by an industry full of companies that exist to do nothing other than to create demand for foods that no one really needs, and probably don't even really want. But, with hefty advertising budgets it is possible to build a market for all kinds of things – to distract us from plainer truths – our common humanity, how good it feels to wake up without a food or drink hangover, the happiness of making a meal with friends, that none of us really want to eat foods made out of animals that have only suffered and died, that sneaking suspicion that we are being played for suckers by an industry that debases us while it debases the planet in search of corporate profit.

Lately the magazine seems to have been inundated with PR that seems to think we might be interested in products that exploit women in order to promote foods that are industrially produced and full of fat, sugar and salt. A reader complained in the last edition when *The Food Magazine* referred to 'piss poor sexual politics.' around such food promotions. Let's say then that – cold fury is a better phrase. **Rustlers** burgers and subs, **Big D** bar snacks, **Red Bull**, to name a few, want their promotions to seem like one big, fun joke – but, honestly, there is not one thing funny about how our society often treats women, or how casually the junk food industry endorses that treatment.



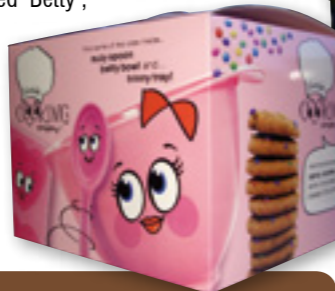
Here's p*** in your eye

A recent edition of Piers Morgan's 'Lifestyles of the rich and famous' showed footage from a 'champagne spray party' in the Spanish resort of Marbella. Paul Gascoigne's daughter Bianca, and other happy-go-lucky rich folk, explained how a wonderful night out could be had if you had €120,000 to splash out on Bollinger – not for drinking but for spraying on your mates. *The Food Magazine* heard recently from a reader in Nice who said that yachts are still moored by the dozens off the Mediterranean coast – chock full of wealthy Brits partying as if they hadn't a care in the world.

While successive governments fail to back a living wage for our lowest paid, while the public sector cracks under the pressure of cuts by the new coalition government – while politicians fail to describe just what all of us who cannot hope to 'enjoy' champagne spray parties are going to be doing with ourselves in the future – remember not everyone is suffering. And, no, that is not champagne in your eye...

Add a heaped tablespoon of stereotype

There must be better ways of getting children to cook than these sets from **The Kids Cooking Company**. At £14.99 for a box containing a plastic bowl, a plastic spoon, a small silicone bun tray and a laminated recipe card they are surely aimed exclusively at those with more money than sense. The bowl in one of these heavily gendered sets is called 'Betty', the spoon 'Suzy', and all of it is cloyingly pink. We think readers can guess what colour the boy's set is. And don't worry, the blue set makes sure to call the spoon 'Sammy' and the bowl 'Bertie'.



Kellogg's morning, noon, and night

Kellogg's continues its high sugar assault on the nation's diet with its endless churning out of foods for every possible daily meal occasion. Their nutri-grain 'morning bar' has 33grams (g) of sugar, more than 8 teaspoons, per 100g. The Elevenses oat cookie choc chip has 31g and the Elevenses raisin bake has 34g. All are high sugar products, per 100g, as defined by the Food Standards Agency. They join **Coco-Pops** for after school, **Special K** for dieting, **Fibre Plus Milk Chocolate Bar** for cravings. No sign yet of Kellogg's for dinner but it can only be a matter of time.



RIP FSA?

Reports suggest that health secretary, Andrew Lansley, plans to abolish the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA was set up in 2000 in the wake of the BSE scandal, when the interests of food producers were deliberately allowed to take precedence over measures to protect public health. Although far from radical enough, it has spent the past ten years working on research and projects to ensure the longterm health of the British public. For example, it ran salt awareness campaigns and worked on the inside with the food industry to ensure salt reduction in thousands of food and drink products. It ran projects that enabled the involvement of many of the UK's poorest citizens in food policy making. It is likely that much of this work would go if the FSA is abolished – with some responsibilities being divided between the Department of Health and the Department for Food Environment and Rural Affairs. The FSA employs 2,000 staff and has a budget of £135 million a year.



Tinned tourist meat

The Food Magazine found this rather amazing product in a shop on a tourist resort in Cuba. Produced in Poland exclusively for the Cuban market, it contains a heady mix of pork meat and mechanically separated poultry. This product, aimed separately at tourists, sold in a specifically tourist shop and charged for in tourist currency is quintessentially Cuban. For more on food in Cuba, see our feature on page 8.

The Food Magazine

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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Listen to Bert and not the bankers

25 years after the end of the miners’ strike, many of the communities where thousands of miners were put out of work by Thatcher’s government are still some of the poorest in the UK. Easington Colliery, in County Durham, is one of those places. High unemployment, poor housing stock, and a lack of transport infrastructure mean very difficult times for many. On a recent visit to the Seascape Primary School in the area – I was told that 80% of children were on free school meals as their parents were out of work. The high street is what Bert Moutter, former miner at the local colliery, calls a, “ghost town.” Bert is now a now senior support worker with the charity, Developing Initiatives Supporting Communities (DISC), and he works with 16-25 year olds in the area to help them to get housing, find jobs, and build their self-esteem.

Successive governments have failed to help this community to put things right. Yet, the vibrancy in the area is clear. As Bert says, “These are good people but there are no jobs, no good jobs.” Seascape Primary has one of the nicest lunchtime services I have ever seen – the meals are freshly cooked and delicious and the staff are wonderful at supporting the children to try out new foods. All children get the meals free, as the school was one of the first tranche of free meal pilots in the Labour government’s programme. Bert toured me around the organic allotments he uses in his support work with young people. The idea is his own – to combine his support work to young people around jobs and benefits with involving them in organic food growing. A young mother I met on my visit spent months working with Bert, and said, “He is great. I come here a lot and love growing the food and then experimenting with cooking it.”

Miners traditionally kept allotments in the area – the settled communities found time for work, and then weekend growing. As Bert says, “I hate supermarkets. My dad was a gardener and I was brought up on it. The knowledge was passed down the generations – those are things you can’t get on video or in books. But, now it is being lost.” Across from where Bert works is a landscape of abandoned allotment plots. Loss of skills, long hours in low waged jobs, lack of care by local authorities, some hopelessness in the younger generation are maybe to blame. Bert misses the, “comradeship of the mines, our lives depended on one another, it was a great community round here.” Sadly, young people are not even able to commit to formal, skilled apprenticeships at the allotment – they would lose their benefits as they would be regarded as making themselves unavailable for work.

The experience of Easington Colliery is echoed in communities, and individuals around the UK. So much potential, so much knowledge, so much love of intelligent work hanging in there in the midst of relentlessly grinding daily circumstance. Stories

in *The Food Magazine* regularly show the spirit and imagination of such communities and how they are using food and agriculture to sustain their communities and to build quality livelihoods. But, where are the new ideas and support from government – where is the imagination? If this coalition has any answers they have been lost on me in the midst of their austerity measures and promises that an incentivised private sector will rescue us all somehow. Perhaps they should listen less to bankers and more to Bert.

As for me, I am off to try new things after four wonderful years at The Food Commission and *The Food Magazine*. Since handing my notice in in February I know the Board has been making plans for the way ahead in difficult economic circumstances. So many thanks to them and to all of the wonderful people like you who are a part of this place.

James M. A.

Bert Moutter on his allotment in Easington Colliery

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Editor: Jessica Mitchell	Campaigns Coordinator: Anna Glayzer 020 7837 2250
Design & Artwork: Graham O'Connor 078 7509 6625	Cartoonists: Sam Findlay www.samcity.co.uk
Trustees and Advisors: Peter Koenig, Jane Landon, Prof. Tim Lang, Dr. Tim Lobstein, Prof. Aubrey Sheiham, Hugh Warwick, Simon Wright.	
Contributors Anna Glayzer, Dr Anne Brunton, Dr Tim Jackson, Dr Angela Druckman, Dr Naomi Salmon, Andy Walker, Dr David Ryde, Sally Bunday MBE, Sarah Pitt, Charlotte Cooper, Sean Roberts.	

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

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

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Help protect free school meals for some of England’s poorest children

The government has announced that it is dropping plans for primary school children from low income working families to receive free school meals. This breaks a commitment from the new government to protect the poorest from cuts to government spending, and is very likely to discourage parents from finding work.

Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove also announced cuts to pilot projects to provide free school meals to every primary school child in five local authorities.

The Children’s Food Campaign is calling for people to write to Mr Gove now, asking him to reconsider these cuts, saying, “For years, campaigners including the Children’s Food Campaign have

been highlighting the injustice that many children living in poverty fail to qualify for free school meals. The decision to extend eligibility for free school meals to primary school children from low income working households, announced by the previous government in December 2009, went some way to addressing this. This change in policy represents a backwards step.”

Poverty in working households is a big problem: currently, 60 per cent of children living in poverty have at least one parent in work. Abandoning plans to provide free school meals to these children, which were due to start from September, represents an effective ‘tax’ on parents moving into work of around £300 per child each year.

Now that school meals meet new nutritional standards, ensuring that children eat them has a number of health and education benefits. These include improving classroom behaviour, helping develop healthy

MEPs choose GDAs over traffic lights

On 16th June, members of the European Parliament voted on amendments to proposed food information regulations intended to introduce a Europe-wide food labelling system for processed foods. MEPs had three options for front of pack labelling. They were: traffic light colours with guideline daily amounts (GDAs and the words high, medium or low in salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat); GDAs alone showing salt, sugar, fat and saturated fats per 100g; or calories alone. MEPs voted in favour showing GDAs alone.

The GDA system gives nutrients per portion as a percentage of a recommended daily intake either for adults or children – but the system relies on industry based interpretations of recommended intakes, and companies manipulate the presentation of information, for example, by putting information relevant to adult intakes on products, such as sugary breakfast cereals, more likely to be consumed by children.

The vote came just after Brussels based NGO, Corporate Europe Observatory, reported that pro-GDA industry lobbyists, the Confederation of the food and drink industries of the EU (CIAA), had waged a €1billion campaign opposing traffic light labelling. The vote has been met with disappointment by consumer groups and health campaigners across Europe.

Chief Executive of the British Heart Foundation, Peter Hollins, said: “The European Parliament should be ashamed of putting the interests of the food lobby ahead of the health of the people they represent. Thousands of people across the UK have taken action to ask their MEPs to back traffic lights because they want help to make healthy choices. But the food industry has spent millions of pounds lobbying to block this improvement in food labelling. David has been no match for the industry’s Goliath.”

A statement from the European Parliament said that no quick agreement is expected with the European Council, so the draft legislation is likely to return to Parliament for a second reading. Once the legislation is adopted,

food businesses will have three years to adapt to the rules. Smaller operators, with fewer than 100 employees and an annual turnover under €5 million, would have five years to comply.

A second reading represents a chance for MEPs to change their minds. Hollins added: “The European Council and Commission

it if you can, for example using experiences from your own local area, as this will make it much more effective.

You can send your message by email to: ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk, or by post to:

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Govt slash and burn on benefits and schools - pregnant women also in new government’s firing line

Chancellor George Osborne will abolish the Health in Pregnancy Grant from April 2011. The grant is a £190 award paid to all women in the final trimester of pregnancy that was introduced by the last government to ensure that all mothers could afford to eat healthily in the run-up to giving birth.

In response to criticisms of the cut, Ian Duncan-Smith, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, said: “the reality is that the grant came far too late and had no effect on improving women’s health, which was its original target. It was actually paid after the child was born, so the whole grant was a nonsense from start to finish. Getting rid of it has affected nothing out there and there are far better uses for the money.” The decision has also been defended by health minister Anne Milton.

The new government has produced no well-researched evidence to back its suggestion that the grant made no difference to health. Nor did it decide to have the grant paid earlier in pregnancy if it considered that payment was tending to come too late.

Quickbites

BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards

Now in their eleventh year, the prestigious BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards return to celebrate the best of British food and, for the first time, British drinks producers have their own dedicated category.

Jamie Oliver describes these Awards as the, “Oscars of the food world,” and this is the public’s chance to nominate the people, businesses and organisations making a difference to what we eat in Britain. *The Food Programme* needs your entries by August 15th 2010.

“Food and farming have the potential to become important drivers of our future economy,” says Sheila Dillon, presenter of BBC Radio 4’s *The Food Programme*, host of the Awards and one of its judges. “These awards, celebrating the best of Britain’s food producers, farmers, retailers and markets have never been more important.”

Chair of judges, chef, Angela Hartnett, says, “We know there are businesses out there changing the direction of food and farming in this country, it’s now down to the public to make sure we hear about them. The new drinks category is going to be an important way of recognising the dedication of a much neglected group of producers. Not only are drinks a crucial part of any meal, they can be the end product of someone determined to keep a tradition alive, or guarantee the future of an orchard. That’s what these Awards offer, a chance to celebrate something delicious that’s also part of our social fabric.”

The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony in November.

Send your nominations for:

BEST FOOD MARKET

Where is Britain’s best food market? It can be a regular street, WI or farmers’ market, but what we’re looking for is the market that best serves its local community providing fresh, high quality and affordable food, particularly in areas neglected by other retailers.

Winner in 2009: *The Goods Shed, Daily Market, Canterbury, Kent.*



Sheila Dillon presenter of BBC Radio 4’s The Food Programme

BEST TAKEAWAY

Whether it’s good old fish and chips, Middle Eastern falafel or an inspirational curry, judges want to celebrate the people taking takeaways and street food to a whole new level. And it’s more than just great taste, judges want to hear about excellent, freshly made meals that use carefully sourced ingredients and provide value for money.

Winner in 2009: *Thali Café, Bristol.*

BEST FOOD PRODUCER

Open to anyone who produces food – whether it’s cheese, meat or pies, salads, cakes or chocolate. Nominate companies and individuals using the best, carefully sourced, ingredients and a lot of expertise to create an excellent, fairly priced, finished product.

Winner in 2009: *Trealy Farm Charcuterie, Mitchel Troy, Monmouth.*

BEST DRINKS PRODUCER (new category)

Do you know of an inspirational brewer, wine maker, distiller or juice-maker, using carefully sourced ingredients and skill to produce an outstanding drink? Nominate the people bringing new ideas to the world of drinks, as well as those keeping traditions alive.

BEST LOCAL FOOD RETAILER

This award celebrates all those local shops that make our lives more delicious, from butchers and farm shops to bakers and delis. Tell *The Food Programme* about the retailer near you not only selling delicious fresh produce but also making a difference to the community – and to the producers who supply it.

Winner in 2009: *A Ryan butchers, Much Wenlock, Shropshire.*

BBC FARMING TODAY, FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The award for someone who has risen to the challenges of sustainable farming in



Raymond Blanc was honoured to chair the judges in 2009

the 21st century and who has been a source of encouragement and inspiration to others interested in food production and the countryside. Winner in 2009: *Andrew Dennis, Woodlands Organic Farm, Boston.*

BEST “DINNER LADY”/ PUBLIC CATERER

Judges are looking for cooks who make mealtimes in our hospitals, care homes, schools or workplaces a delight. Nominate those who prepare tasty and healthy food prepared on the premises with fresh, carefully sourced ingredients, particularly in our less celebrated institutions.

Winner in 2009: *John Rankin, Penair Secondary School, Truro, Cornwall.*

BEST RETAIL INITIATIVE

Judges are interested in an innovation that’s improving the way good quality food is sourced and sold. It could be an initiative by a national supermarket, a wholesaler, a website, or a chain of food shops – any imaginative idea transforming your access to great produce with an original idea.

Winner in 2009: *Growfair - Pride of Cornwall, Bodmin, Cornwall.*

DEREK COOPER AWARD

Named after *The Food Programme*’s first presenter, for the individual or organisation that has done the most to bring about real change in our relationship with food. From grass roots community projects to academic research and campaigns, this award aims to recognise the unsung heroes whose work has increased our knowledge and appreciation of good food.

Winner in 2009: *The Food Ethics Council.*

BBC FOOD CHAMPION 2010 (formerly BBC Food Personality)

Who has inspired you to think differently about food? It could be a writer, broadcaster, blogger or television chef; any commentator who in the past twelve months has used their work to give us fresh insights into the food we eat. So tell judges about the person you believe has helped bring about a wider passion for good food, demystified great cooking or the food world in general.

Winner in 2009: *Nigel Slater.*

How to nominate

Send your name, address, phone number (and email if possible). Please include as much information as you can about your nominee, their contact details and why they best demonstrate that category’s criteria. The more you write about why they are so special, the more you’ll help judges.

See the website www.bbc.co.uk/foodawards for more information, including entry rules and previous winners. Closing date for entries – August 15th 2010

Nominate by:
Email: foodawards@bbc.co.uk

Post: BBC Food and Farming Awards, Room 6045, Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

This year’s winners will be featured on BBC Radio 4’s *The Food Programme* and *Farming Today*, as well as on BBC Local Radio. The awards ceremony will be broadcast in a special awards edition of *The Food Programme* in November.

The Food Programme is on BBC Radio 4 every Sunday at 12.30pm and repeated on Mondays at 4.00pm. Farming Today is on BBC Radio 4 every weekday morning at 5.45am and on Saturdays at 6.35am. You can listen again online at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4

New index highlights most overpopulated countries

Singapore is the world’s most overpopulated state, followed by Israel and Kuwait, according to a new league table ranking countries by their degree of overpopulation. The UK is 17th in the table.

The Overpopulation Index, published by the Optimum Population Trust to mark World Population Day, July 11, is thought to be the first international ‘league table’ to rank countries according to the sustainability of their populations – the extent to which they are living within their environmental means.

It examines data for over 130 individual countries and concludes that 77 of them are overpopulated – they are consuming more resources than they are producing and are dependent on other countries, and ultimately the Earth a whole, to make good the difference.

Middle Eastern and European countries dominate the index, with nine and eight respectively among the 20 most overpopulated. China and India, despite being bywords for overpopulation, rank lower, at 29th and 33rd respectively. The world as a whole, meanwhile, is overpopulated by two billion – the difference between its actual population and the number it can support sustainably, given current lifestyles and technologies.

The calculations have been made possible by advances in the methodology of ecological footprinting, which measures the area of biologically productive land and water required to produce the resources and absorb the waste of a given population or activity and expresses this in global hectares - hectares with world-average biological productivity.

The index uses data contained in the latest Ecological Footprint Atlas, produced last year by the Global Footprint Network and based on figures for 2006. Data

was available for over 130 states. The atlas assesses the ecological footprint and biocapacity (renewable biological productivity) of a country on a per capita basis. The index measures the proportion of a country’s average per capita footprint not supplied from its own biocapacity to determine how dependent it is on external sources.

A UK citizen, for example, has an average ecological footprint of 6.12 global hectares but because of the size of the population, their ‘share’ of national biocapacity is only 1.58 global hectares. This gives the UK a self-sufficiency rating of 25.8 per cent – the proportion of its footprint it derives from its own resources –and a corresponding dependency rating of 74.2 per cent. If it had to rely on its own biocapacity, the UK could therefore sustain only a quarter of its population – around 15 million – and, at current consumption levels, is ‘overpopulated’ by more than 45 million

OPT chair Roger Martin says: “Some people may argue that in a world of international trade, national self-sufficiency doesn’t matter. We think that’s a very short-sighted view. You don’t have to be a little Englander or an eco-survivalist to conclude that in an era of growing shortages - food, energy, water - being so dependent on the outside world puts us in a very vulnerable position. With the rest of the world, including many countries much poorer than the UK, supplying three-quarters of our overall needs, it’s also morally questionable.”

Of course, the problem of defining an average citizen is also difficult – in the UK the richest citizens have ecological footprints many times larger than poorer citizens. *The Food Magazine* suggests that any solution to tackling over-consumption of resources should put the first burdens upon those consuming most grossly.

For further information: www.optimumpopulation.org

Government gives junk food companies easy ride on regulation

The UK’s new health secretary, Andrew Lansley, has called for further cash investment from food and drink manufacturers in the **Change4Life** campaign. Companies that sell booze, crisps and sweets will be welcomed as partners of the campaign – which aims to tackle diets that lead to chronic diseases - so long as they stump up some funding. In exchange for their ‘support’ the government has promised a hands-off approach to the regulation of high fat, salt and sugar foods.

Lansley says that the, “non-regulatory approach,” is necessary because companies are worried about their products being, “stigmatised as junk food,” when, “It’s perfectly possible to eat a bag of crisps, to eat a Mars bar, to drink a carbonated soft drink, but do it in moderation, understanding your overall diet and lifestyle. Then you can begin to take responsibility for it.”

This emphasis upon individual responsibility has angered many public health campaigners who note that businesses selling unhealthy foods already operate with considerable freedom. Alan Maryon-Davis, the outgoing president of the Faculty of Public Health, said that legislation had worked in the case of cutting back smoking and, “saved us from ourselves.”

“Personally, I mistrust the notion of seeing public health campaigns being sponsored by companies that clearly sell products which are not the healthy option.”

The food industry is thrilled with the talk of partnership. “We agree that in complex debates, such as obesity, the best solutions will be delivered through a shared social responsibility and not state regulation,” said Julian Hunt, the Food and Drink Federation’s director of communications.



Europe blew its annual budget for fish on Friday 9th July

New research has revealed that Europe cannot feed itself on fish from EU waters for more than 189 days a year, and from July 9th was dependent on fish caught elsewhere.

Consuming far more than our depleted European seas can produce is making the EU increasingly dependent on fish from elsewhere, according to a new report from independent think-tank nef (the New Economics Foundation) and OCEAN2012.

The report, *Fish Dependence: The increasing reliance of the EU on fish from elsewhere*, provides a clear demonstration of this unsustainable trend by mapping resources onto a calendar year and then finding the day when the EU effectively starts to live off the rest of the world. It shows that:

- If the EU were only to consume fish from its own waters, it would effectively run-out of fish on 8 July 2010, making it wholly dependent on imported fish from around the world from 9 July onwards, based on current levels of consumption.
- Since 2000, the EU’s Fish Dependence Day has occurred earlier and earlier in the year and is now nearly a month sooner, revealing an increasing level of fish dependence.
- Growth in fish farming has failed to halt our increasing dependence on fish from elsewhere.

With 72% of assessed fish stocks in European waters overfished, it is clear that a more alternative sustainable and fairer model of fishing and consumption is needed.

The report points to the upcoming reform of the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy as a unique opportunity to turn this situation around and provide a policy framework that will restore marine ecosystems to healthy levels and deliver a fair allocation of resources internationally.

As a minimum the report calls for the following actions.

- Reduce fishing capacity to bring it in line with available resources by improving data collection, transparency and reporting; and by prioritising scientific advice in determining catch quotas.
- Make conservation profitable, by making access to resources conditional on social and environmental criteria.
- Promote responsible consumption among all EU consumers, and implementing measures that are conducive to more responsible fishing outside EU waters.
- Use public funds to deliver social and environmental goods by investing in environmentally constructive measures, research, and stakeholder involvement, as well as enforcing sustainable quotas and practices. These aims contrast with the current funding of overcapacity in the fishing fleet, through modernising vessels, and failure to control overfishing, such as access to fisheries stocks.

Further information at www.neweconomics.org

Quickbites

More pupils opt for school meals

The TV chef Jamie Oliver’s campaign for healthier school dinners is proving popular with pupils, figures show. More than four out of 10 children in primary schools (41.4 per cent, up from 39.3 per cent last year) are eating the new healthier school dinners introduced as part of Oliver’s campaign. In secondary schools, the figure is up from 35 per cent to 35.8 per cent, a survey by the School Food Trust and the Local Authority Caterers Association revealed. It means an extra 320,980 pupils in England are eating school dinners. Oliver said he was, “massively encouraged,” by the figures.

Write to your MP and ask them to sign the Soil Association’s parliamentary petition to protect the school lunch service from Local Authority budget cuts. For more information www.soilassociation.org/Takeaction/Schoolfood/tabid/237/Default.aspx

Food and Fairness

Our food system faces serious challenges. We need to ensure food security at home and abroad, we must consume and produce our food more sustainably, and our government’s food policy must promote public health. We can only meet these challenges by making sure our food system is fair.

Last month, the Food Ethics Council published the findings of the Food and Fairness Inquiry, which was set up to remedy the relative neglect of social justice in public debate about food policy. The report reveals the worrying extent of social injustice in the food system within the UK and around the world, and shows how this unfairness blocks progress towards sustainable food and farming.

The problems are profound – but the report also points towards a sustainable, healthy, and fair food system. It provides a roadmap for making better food policy, highlighting the roles of government, businesses, and civil society in that process.

Food security

Global food production and productivity is increasing, but over one billion people are hungry worldwide. Most live in poor countries, but food poverty is also prevalent in the UK.

Increased agricultural productivity has itself pushed people into poverty, with industrialisation in agriculture benefitting larger-scale producers, and undermining the livelihoods of small-scale subsistence farmers.

These farmers face problems accessing the resources they need to farm, and in gaining access to markets at home and abroad. They have little or no say in decisions about food policy that directly affect them.

Sustainability

Poor people and countries are more vulnerable to climate change, water scarcity and biodiversity loss. They are often forced to use up scarce natural resources, making it harder to farm successfully. And the measures we put in place to address those problems can in themselves push food prices up – hitting the poorest hardest.

Health

Many poor people can’t afford a healthy diet, and that makes them ill. But other social and cultural factors play a part too. Some workers in the UK’s food sector face harsh employment and health and safety conditions. The trend towards casual work and migrant labour makes agricultural workers vulnerable. Often workers in poor countries experience unfair working conditions too.

So social injustice is prevalent in our food system. As the Food and Fairness Inquiry discovered, the ‘rules of the game’ – the factors that shape how we produce, sell and consume our food – need to be changed to alleviate these pressures.

Agriculture

Agricultural employment around the world is dominated by three trends: fewer farmers and landowners; a growing share of the work done by landless labourers; and increasing flexibility in employment.

Poor die ten years younger than rich

A National Audit Office report has revealed that the life expectancy gap between rich and poor people in England is widening. Efforts have failed to reduce the wide differential, which can be 10 years or more depending on socio-economic background. Life expectancy has risen generally, but it is increasing at a slower rate for England’s poorest citizens.

In Blackpool, for example, men live for an average of 73.6 years, which is 10.7 fewer than men in Kensington and Chelsea, who reach 84.3 years. Similarly, women in the Lancashire town



Consolidation in food retail means large businesses place pressure on producers to satisfy a range of customer demands for quality, safety, price, volume and year-round availability. Producers who depend on contracts with these retailers often transfer the risk onto their workers through less favourable conditions.

Processing and retail

Supermarkets attract consumers by making sure their products meet standards on quality, safety, fairness and the environment. But standards are expensive for producers, and can freeze smaller players out of the market.

Retailers must also meet their shareholders’ needs, whose expectations and interests can clash with other stakeholders, from corporate social responsibility departments, to producers and workers, who might favour longer-term investments in environmentally and socially responsible business activity.

Consumption

As individual consumers our influence on retailers is limited, and our choices are constrained by their decisions on stocking, prices and promotions.

‘Ethical consumption’ has grown in recent years, and reflects shoppers’ desire to take ethics and politics to the checkout. This improves the lives of many farmers and communities in poor countries. But ethical shopping isn’t an option for many consumers, including the 20% of poor households who regularly reduce or skip meals because of financial constraints.

Responsibilities

Everyone – citizens, consumers, retailers, producers, government and civil society - needs to recognise that food justice is central to meeting the environmental and health challenges we face today. We can’t just tackle these problems by changing how we shop. We need wider social and economic policy solutions that are made for and by society.

typically die at 78.8 years – 10.1 years earlier than those in the London borough, who reach an average 89.9.

Professor Alan Maryon-Davis, president of the UK Faculty of Public Health, said the life expectancy gap showed the inequality of English society. “If we see ourselves as a civilised society, these gaps are an indication of unfairness, which shouldn’t be there, and is an unfairness which costs lives, damages people’s health and will eventually be a huge burden on the NHS if they aren’t



We’ve got to change our mindset about cheap food – it’s not acceptable to drive down prices and ‘outsource’ social injustice. We’ve got to change our behaviour, which means addressing the inequalities that underpin that behaviour. And that isn’t just consumers’ behaviour, but that of financial markets and governments.

Our government can lead by example, making their procurement processes fair and sustainable, and lobbying at EU and international levels for a more just trade regime.

The UK is an unfair society in a deeply unfair world. The Food and Fairness Inquiry has shown how all of us are to some extent implicated. We all have responsibilities for doing something about it, and we should all be doing more.

The Food Ethics Council works towards a fairer future for food and farming. To find out more about their work go to: www.foodethicscouncil.org

By Sean Roberts, Policy Manager of The Food Ethics Council

tackled,” he said. He urged the new government not to cut spending on programmes to reduce health inequalities.

Tammy Boyce, of the King’s Fund health thinktank, said, “The first test of whether the coalition government is likely to succeed where the previous government failed will come in this autumn’s spending review. It is vital that cross-cutting issues like health inequalities are not overlooked in the scramble to deliver spending cuts on a department-by-department basis.”

Sociologists talk inequality, public health and future food

The Food, Society and Public health conference (which The Food Commission helped to organise) was a fantastic success. The conference is a bi-annual event of the food study group of the British Sociological Association.

Participants came from all over the world to hear papers and discussions on the following themes:

- Food security and sustainability
- The regulation and editing of ‘choice’
- Constructions of risk and meaning
- Children, food and institutions
- Methodological challenges and innovation

The wonderful array of speakers within each theme showed just how much original thinking is going into how to reform our food system so that it can bring well being to us all. It was a shame not to see more food campaigners at the event as most of the papers at the sessions were absolutely political, and full of ideas about how to change the world. The sessions asked us to think about where the power lies in our globalised food system, and how we can challenge those power systems that alienate people from the land, impoverish so many, deskill populations, and impose processed food diets whilst degrading our environment.

Dr Rachel Butts made a moving presentation about the collapse of the economy in Detroit, Michigan that has led to vast inner city food deserts in an urban landscape with no shops, little transport, terrible poverty, and collapsing buildings. Her work considered what is being done to challenge those terrible problems. Laura Davies did a fabulous presentation about 15 years of community agriculture in Sandwell. The midlands borough is one of the poorest in the country – but community activists have transformed land and diets with the support of public health professionals. A new community agriculture strategy for Sandwell - *Growing Healthy Communities 2008-2012* has now set out further plans for the regeneration of derelict land for mixed-use food and therapeutic horticulture initiatives. Dr Harriet Friedmann followed up her wonderful article in *The Food Magazine* (FM88) with presentations about how lessons can be learned from Ontario’s efforts to: reskill farmers; reconnect rural and city areas; fight the takeover of farm land for housing development; support low income people to reconnect to the land and to access affordable, healthy food; and to create decently waged employment opportunities on farms.

A final debate session brought ideas together, with the marvellous Geoff Tansey (author *The Future Control of Food*) reminding us to look to power and to history for lessons about what to research, and where to focus action. In these scary times – it felt very positive to be with so many people who are thinking about how to meet challenges positively.

New conference!!

The Food Study Group now invites submissions to its session at the BSA’s Annual Conference to be held at the London School of Economics April 6th-8th 2011. The group wants your ideas for papers, themes and speakers. Send your ideas for speakers to Wendy Wills by 15th September (there will be funds available to attract distinguished scholars). Send your ideas for specific food themes to Wendy Wills by 3rd September. Paper abstracts will be subject to a submission deadline of 15th October. For further details on how to submit your ideas contact Wendy on w.j.wills@herts.ac.uk or 01707 286 165.

Local sandwich bars unsustainable says new report: unjust system forces sustainability off the menu

Local independent cafés and sandwich bars are struggling to survive despite the public spending over £10 billion per year on casual food when out and about, according to *An Inconvenient Sandwich* a new report from independent think tank the New Economics Foundation.

While DEFRA claims that it wants to ensure that consumers, “can choose, and afford, healthy, sustainable food,” independent sandwich bars and cafés are facing increasing pressures that prevent them from providing either healthy or sustainable products. This is down to their reliance on a very small group of major wholesalers, combined with competition from fast food giants who are able undercut costs throughout their supply chains.

Rosalind Sharpe, author of the report said: “Our small independent cafés and sandwich bars are finding themselves locked into a vicious cycle where they can only survive by buying unsustainable supplies and employing cheap labour. There might have been a massive growth in consumers choosing ethical options, but that is not being reflected when we purchase our daily sandwich or kebab.”

The report highlights the hidden costs of the cheap takeaway sandwich: Heavily processed food from unsustainable sources; food loaded with calories, fat and sugar; poor working conditions throughout the supply chain, and the lack of realistic options independent sandwich bars and cafes face even if they want to provide healthy and sustainable products.

“This report is really about the throw away economics of takeaway food,” says Rosalind Sharpe, “our hectic consumerist lifestyle depends on the quick, portable, cheap food we buy from cafés and takeaways. But this casual food requires cheap raw materials, a cheapening of the value of life and labour, and a disregard for harmful knock-on effects in the present and the future. We want to get discussion going on how our local independent takeaways and cafés can both survive and give their customers real choice and sustainable options.” From the New Economics Foundation, Rosalind Sharpe, www.neweconomics.org

Non-sporty types drive sports nutrition market

Sales of so-called sports nutrition products are soaring globally – with people who do not take part in sport as the key driver of the market. Market research firm Datamonitor identifies four main categories of consumers of sports drinks, sports confectionary and energy bars: bodybuilders, athletes, sports hobbyists, and lifestyle users not interested in sport.

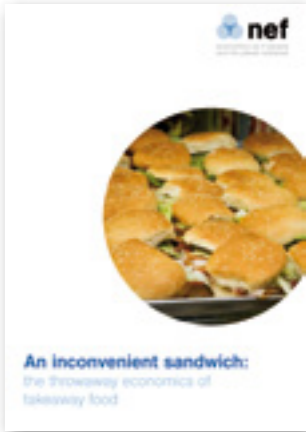
These so-called lifestyle users are a growing contributor to a market worth more than \$700 million in western Europe. According to Richard Parker of Datamonitor, “People within this group mainly consume sports nutrition products in order to provide a refreshing beverage, a quick meal replacement or simply a healthy snack. Consumers within the group may also use sports nutrition products to provide an energy boost during illness, or even when feeling tired.”

The concern over this is that *The Food Magazine* has regularly reported about the high sugar, caffeine and calorie levels in many sports nutrition products. Others are full of artificial colours, flavours and

sweeteners. Such products are marketed in ways that give them a healthy halo – for example, using famous footballers in promotions. So, that energy boost from products comes not from health giving properties but from sugar and caffeine hitting the bloodstream in large quantities. Even if you are taking part in sport – you do not need such products. Stick to water or fresh juice to keep hydrated and eat a banana for an energy boost.

A problem for lifestyle consumers

For example, Lucozade Sport Body Fuel Jelly Beans come in a 30g packet. The company website recommends that you eat a packet of these every 30 minutes of intense activity such as running. The problem is that the product is very high in sugar. Per 100g it contains 75.8g of sugar – that is 22.7g (just under 6 teaspoons) per 30g packet. One packet contains 111 calories – around a third of what a 10 stone person might burn off in half hour of running at a speed of about nine minutes per mile. If that same person walks for half an hour they might just burn off around half the calories in the packet, and if they are sitting just 20% of the calories in the packet.



Delicious tree foods in Africa

In Britain, most people's idea of a tree food would be an apple or perhaps hazelnuts, but for many people living in Africa, tree foods can mean the difference between life and death. In Burkina Faso, for example, UNICEF figures state that nearly 40% of children under five are malnourished. The country suffers from the same problems of drought, the effects of climate change and increasing demands upon the land for food that characterises so many African nations. For the rural poor, tree foods can play a vital role in sustaining the family throughout the dry season and food shortages.

In Burkina Faso, 90% of the population makes a living from agriculture, with the majority of villagers working at subsistence level. This means that food security throughout the dry or 'hungry' season alone is precarious for a large proportion of the population, even without considering the periodic severe droughts and the effects of encroaching deserts. When drought does strike it is the 'conventional', often imported, crops, which have high water demands, that wither and fail. When food stores run out, it is tree foods that can provide local, sustainable and effective relief.

Trees, like the familiar mango, as well as the less familiar baobab and shea, have the advantage over 'conventional' crops because they are much more able to survive dry periods and drought. Evolved to thrive in semi-arid climates, they are an important feature of the rural landscape, and are essential in not only providing food themselves, but also protecting the delicate drylands soils and farmed areas from desertification and long term damage. For the people that live on these lands, the trees provide a dependable safety net for when the rains fail and last year's harvest doesn't stretch far enough.

Arzouna Thiombiano, from Fada N'Gourma in Burkina Faso, recalls, "Twenty years ago a big famine came, but people escaped starvation by eating the leaves and fruit of the baobab tree. Now we rely on trees more." For Arzouna and his neighbours the baobab survived the drought and helped alleviate the effects of famine.

Arzouna's daughter, Nassouri Thiombiano, is a beneficiary of the work done by the charity TREE AID. As the UK's leading forestry focused development charity, TREE AID helps African



The Baobab – The pulp from the fruit of the baobab can be made into a drink, popular with children, and the protein-rich seeds can be ground into flour and used in cooking. The shell can be ground and used as a condiment (a salt substitute), while the leaves are used to make a vitamin rich sauce. So many of its parts are also used as ingredients in medicines that it is also known as 'the nurse'.

villagers like Nassouri unlock the potential of trees to increase their self reliance and improve their environment. She tells us about the role that tree foods play in her family's diet throughout the year.

"We eat such foods almost every day, usually in a sauce to go with our grain porridge. February and March we eat the leaves of the Balanites tree with millet. In May, there are lots of leaves and ripe fruits to sustain us through to the end of the wet season in September. After that we collect the fruits of the Saba tree and in the first months of the year we harvest Tamarind fruits and the sepals of the Bombax tree. In April we pick the guava and mango fruits, which we can eat straight away or dry to eat later in the year. But the most important tree for us is the shea tree. We use it not just for food but for wood, medicine, fertiliser and so many other things. The seeds of the Parkia trees are one of the most nourishing of tree foods. I



Nassouri Thiombiano cooking kapok sauce (from the kapok tree) in Burkina Faso.

also sell these seeds for around 35p a bag, and I use that to buy other foods to vary our diet."

Nassouri is one of the many women that TREE AID is supporting through training on good management of the existing trees that they depend upon for food, and on planting and growing seedlings to conserve and develop these tree food sources for future generations. TREE AID's work particularly encourages the involvement of women, as they are most often the guardians of the household diet. Given the right training and access to resources they can make tree foods work as a local, long term and sustainable tool to reduce hunger and malnutrition.

Tree foods contain high levels of essential vitamins and minerals which make a big difference to the nutritional value of a diet when added to staple grains and carbohydrates like millet. Take the Moringa tree (*Moringa oleifera*). Its leaves alone have;

- 🌿 more beta-carotene than carrots,
- 🌿 more protein than peas,
- 🌿 more vitamin C than oranges,
- 🌿 more calcium than milk,
- 🌿 more potassium than bananas,
- 🌿 and more iron than spinach.

They can be dried and stored until the hungry period, and when nursing mothers add Moringa leaves to their diet they produce more milk.

It is no surprise that these tree foods are becoming increasingly important as the rural environment is put under more pressure, but this



Siebata Ouadraogo is selling flour made from dawadawa fruit which is rich in vitamin A. Dawadawa seeds are used as Africa's Bisto, an ingredient in gravy. These seeds are high in protein, a lack of which can cause serious illness visible through bloated bellies and blotchy skin.

pressure is also threatening the trees that play such a big dietary role.

Burkina Faso's population has the 11th highest population growth in the world, at 3.1 percent, and a high urbanisation rate. Price rises are also playing their part in placing food sources under stress. Mrs Sawadago, Co-ordinator of TREE AID project partner ADECUSS (Association pour le Développement Economique, Culturel et Social du Département de Séguénéga) told us that, "high food costs are affecting people's health. A tin of tomatoes can cost three times as much as it did a few months ago." Food, fuel and building materials are in ever higher demand. Rural areas are vulnerable to overgrazing and soil degradation, and there is growing pressure to fell trees for firewood and building poles. All of these things are making life for the rural poor even more precarious: you can eat a tree's fruit and leaves indefinitely if responsibly managed, but you can only burn it once.



Monique Kiema sells papaya, each one worth nearly 15p. This fruit aids digestion and is a good source of antioxidants, vitamins A, B and C, potassium and magnesium. These promote the health of the cardiovascular system and may also provide protection against colon cancer.



Pauline Koudougou sells dried baobab leaves. These are rich in iron, which helps prevent anaemia, and are a good source of calcium, zinc, and A and B vitamins. Lack of B vitamins can affect the nervous system and cause dry skin and digestive problems. The fruits of the baobab are rich in vitamin C and stave off scurvy.

TREE AID is working with villagers in projects across Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana and Ethiopia to support villagers to use the knowledge they already have, to learn how to protect established trees, and how to grow more. This means a greater availability of tree foods in the long term. It also protects and improves soil quality for conventional food crops. Nassouri's husband talks about how he uses trees, "as a guide to where to plant my Sorghum and maize. The Camel's Foot, Silcoana or Ficus tree tells me the soil is good. We have also been trained through the TREE AID project to compost our household waste, and along with the leaves and inedible fruits that fall from the trees the soil is enriched."

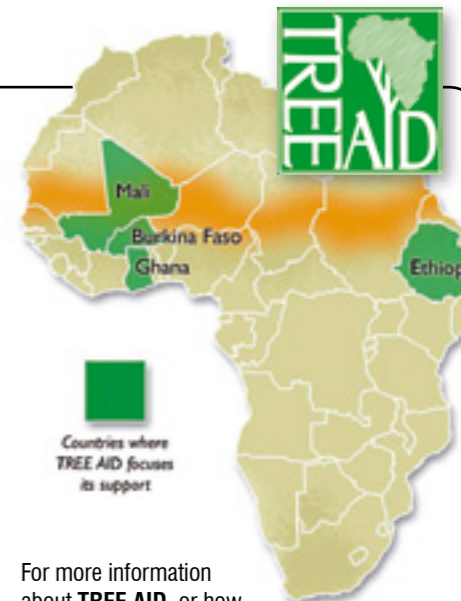
It is not just the villagers who are recognising the importance of tree foods. In Burkina Faso the Secretary General of the Ministry for the Environment announced recently that, "In Burkina Faso, as in other countries in the sub region, Non Timber Forest Products [of which food



Mariam Sandwidi sells mangoes. These are rich in vitamin C and contain eight times the vitamin A of a banana. Lack of vitamin A can cause severe eye problems, including night blindness in pregnant women.

products are an important part] are of paramount importance for the survival of populations, especially rural ones." She added, "I congratulate the British charity TREE AID and its partners in Burkina Faso, Mali and Ghana in sharing their innovative and multifaceted contribution to the sustainable management of forest resources." The Ministry has now established a dedicated Agency for the Promotion of Non Timber Forest Products, which is a positive commitment to the future of people like Nassouri Thiombiano and her family.

Tree foods are a lifeline for rural African families. They are not only a local relief during drought periods, but with the right training and support can make a significant contribution to long term food security and the fight against malnutrition.



TREE AID has a vision of thriving, self-reliant communities in Africa's rural drylands. Working with local partners, we help alleviate poverty and improve the environment in some of the poorest areas of Burkina Faso, Northern Ghana, Mali and Ethiopia.

Through an established combination of training and funding, **TREE AID** helps to:

- 🌿 plant new and protect existing trees
- 🌿 integrate trees into the agricultural system
- 🌿 support village communities to set up small scale businesses based on tree products
- 🌿 empower villagers to secure access to their wooded areas

TREE AID was founded in 1987, and is supported by donations from individual supporters, company sponsors, charitable trusts and institutions, including DFID, the EC and the FAO. Charitable Number: 1135156

For more information about **TREE AID**, or how you can get involved, please visit our website: www.treeaid.org.uk and check out the insert with this edition of *The Food Magazine*.

Cuba's food production revolution

Reporter Anna Glayzer visits Cuba....

Since the 2006 film directed by Faith Morgan, “*The Power of Community: How Cuba survived peak oil,*” Cuba has been heralded as an example of how to respond to a sudden and severe shortage of resources. Aficionados of permaculture and urban agriculture look to Cuba as a source of ideas to replicate when the oil runs out for good.

The break-up of the USSR in the early 90s signalled the beginning of a time in Cuban history that is referred to as the ‘special period’. Cuban agriculture was highly industrialised and had relied heavily on USSR oil for farm machinery, fertilisers and pesticides. Cuba lost more than 50 percent of its oil imports, much of its food and 85 percent of its trade economy when the USSR collapsed. Transportation systems ground to a halt and people went hungry.

The United Nation’s Food and Agriculture (UNFAO) food balance sheets for Cuba illustrate the extent of the crisis. Food balance sheets provide an estimate of a country’s total food imports, exports, food production and daily calorie availability per head of population. Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba’s total daily calorie availability plummeted from 3,012 to 2,325. In comparison, the UK’s calorie availability in 1993 was 3,216. In 2007 (the latest available data from UNFAO) Cuba’s calorie availability was back up to 3,274 and the UK’s was 3,458.

The Cuban response to the crisis included a series of major shifts in the way food was produced. According to Morgan’s film: 50% of Havana’s 2.2 million population is now supplied by urban agriculture, in which 140,000 people are employed. Lack of access to fertilisers and pesticides means that 80% of Cuba’s production is organic. Whereas in the 1980s Cuba used 21,000 tonnes of pesticides, it now uses 1,000 tonnes. Use of oxen has increased in place of petrol fuelled farm vehicles. Large state run farms have given way to smaller co-operatives, with 10,000 acres leased

rent free by the state. State regulations have been relaxed and 12-15% of Cuba’s total arable land is now in private hands.

The *Vivero Organipónico Alamar* is a flagship for the urban agriculture movement, frequently shown to visiting foreign academics, journalists and organic farming specialists. The 11 hectare farm in an outer neighbourhood of Havana is run as a co-operative by a 164 strong team of workers. The farm is highly diversified. The 2 hectares of vegetables produce 200 hundred tonnes of vegetables per hectare. The farm also produces herbs, spices and fruit, as well as organic fertiliser and ornamental plants. The produce is sold from the farm to the local community and to hotels and restaurants across Havana. The co-operative’s management estimates that 32,000 people benefit from the produce in one way or another.

An internet search for *Vivero Organipónico Alamar* brings up swathes of glowing articles. There is little doubt that it, and other farms like it, represent truly innovative and sustainable alternatives to the intensive, commercial, oil heavy agriculture that dominates much of the world. That said, Cuba still imports a massive 70% of its food. In 2008, Cuba spent \$2.2 billion on food imports including \$700 million on rice and beans and \$250 million on powdered milk.

During my recent visit it was clear that food shopping, and indeed daily life, in Cuba is hard work, made harder by a bafflingly complicated dual currency system. Most markets and certain shops that sell staples like fruit and vegetables deal in ‘national money’. Shops that



In hot months, farming work stops in the early afternoon

sell anything considered more luxurious, like cheese or beer or clothes, take the Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC), also known as ‘tourist money’. About 25 times more valuable than the peso, one CUC is worth roughly the same as the American dollar, and was introduced in 2004 to replace the US dollar as an alternative currency. If you consider that the average Cuban wage is between 15 and 20 CUC a month and a beer costs around 1CUC, you can start to see how Cuba is renowned for its thriving black market economy.

Fruit and vegetable market in Vedado, Havana. Staples like this are sold in ‘national money’



Sowing seeds on a Havana city farm

Kath Taylor, a British student living in Havana, told me that shopping was a very lengthy affair: “When I first got here it was really hard. I’d find myself trawling the streets for an hour trying to buy a bottle of water. Shops are very few and far between and you never know what they’ll have in stock and when. Eggs seemed to be virtually non-existent and even buying bread or rice was a challenge. Some shops are only for rations, but it wasn’t entirely clear which ones they were. If I went into the wrong shop I’d be shot a dirty look. I now know where to buy what and how to get black market eggs and if I see somewhere open and selling bread at any time of day or night, I make sure I get some.” Kath’s experience is not exclusive to foreigners. Cubans can be frequently overheard asking each other what is on sale in the market today, or where did you get that chicken?

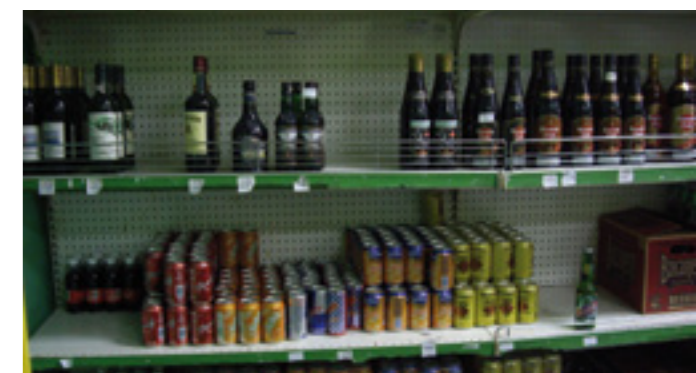
That said, Cuban food production continues to increase. Reuters recently reported that Cuban rice production increased by 44.6% from 2008 to 2009, from 207,500 to 300,000 tonnes. Since

Raul Castro took over as president from his brother Fidel in 2008 the state has increased what it pays for crops; decentralised agricultural decision making and distribution; and leased 50% of vacant state lands to 100,000 individuals and private and state co-operative farms. Investment continues in agricultural alternatives to fossil fuelled farming. State run Cuban national newspaper *Granma International* reported in May that the production of bio-pesticides saved the Cuban economy \$15 million annually.

Part of the state’s strategy to increase food production also includes the development of genetically modified (GM) crops. Cuban developed GM corn has been planted across an area that totals over 1,000 hectares across 14 provinces. The objective for the corn was to develop a variety that is resistant to the palomilla moth. According to *Granma International*, the corn has been developed under strict measures of biosecurity and subjected to rigorous eco-toxicologic studies. I asked a young Cuban academic if he was concerned about the biodiversity

implications of planting GM crops. He told me: “No. The main problem with GM crops in other parts of the world is their development and ownership by multi-national companies. In Cuba that won’t be a problem.”

Cuba’s embracing of GM seems less likely to sit as well with environmentalists as its organic production methods. It does not quite fit with the slightly romanticised image of Cuba presented by Morgan’s film. It can perhaps be seen as symptomatic of an intensely pragmatic and very Cuban approach to food production that will certainly be watched with interest by the rest of the world.



This is a relatively well stocked luxury shop in central Havana. Goods are paid for in CUC



Produce from the UBPC co-operative is sold directly from the farm



Nanofoods: Coming to a supermarket near you soon?

Dr Naomi Salmon, of the Department of Law, University of Aberystwyth

‘Nanotechnologies’ are technologies that involve the manipulation of matter at the atomic and molecular level. The unusual properties exhibited by materials engineered at the nano-scale, such as altered chemical reactivity, or changed electronic, optical or magnetic behaviour, are already being exploited across a wide range of sectors including the electronics, construction, pharmaceutical and textiles industries. The global market in nanotech products is growing at an incredible rate and is expected to be worth \$81 billion by 2015.

In the agri-food sector, major industry players such as Heinz, Nestlé, Unilever and Kraft, are now busy exploring the (profitable) possibilities of ‘the nano’. But here, in the most sensitive of market arenas, industry enthusiasm is necessarily tempered with caution. The road to a bright (and profitable) Nanofood Future must be traversed with care: past experience (particularly with GM foods) warns corporate promises of healthier food products with reduced salt, fat or sugar content, or increased levels of key vitamins and nutrients may not be enough to convince the public that the benefits of ‘the nano’ outweigh the risks. Nonetheless, whilst this emergent sector lags some way behind those producing less controversial hi-tech consumer products, it is currently enjoying a period of rapid growth. In 2006, the nanofoods market was worth a mere \$410 million. By 2012 its value is likely to have grown to a massive \$5.8 billion.

Nanotech and food: Current and future delights!

The presence of nanomaterials in our food is not, of itself, an entirely new phenomenon. There are various traditional manufacturing processes – such as those employed in the manufacture of ricotta cheese, chocolate and ice cream - that involve changes to food structures at the molecular level. Historically, of course, such processes have exploited the properties of the ‘very small’ without any real understanding of what is going on within the structure of the food. ‘Nanotechnologies,’ in the contemporary sense of the term, are concerned with a much more deliberate or, “*active manipulation of food*,” at the nano-scale designed to produce desirable novel effects.¹

Estimates of the number of nanofoods now commercially available vary widely but somewhere between 150-600 nanofood products may already have reached the global market.² There are certainly many more in the R&D pipeline. So far as EU and UK authorities are able to determine, there is currently very little use of nanotechnologies in the European food chain and, according to the Food Standards Agency (FSA), there are no ‘nanofoods’ as



such on sale in the UK. However, with Big Business investing so much energy and money in nanotech R&D, there can be little doubt that the situation is set to change; it is very likely that the next generation of novel foods will be coming to a supermarket near you, very soon!

In the shorter term, at least, it is in the food packaging and food contact materials (FCM) sectors that nanotech seems set to make the greatest impression. This is, perhaps, unsurprising: being one step removed from food, such products are likely to prove less controversial (and less commercially risky) than those intended for direct human consumption.

A plastic beer bottle impregnated with clay nanoparticles – designed to extend the shelf life of the beer inside - is one of a handful of nanotech FCMs that are already commercially available within the EU. Following positive evaluations by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), two new types of nanotech packaging are likely to hit the EU market soon. Many more are certainly on the way here from

the American and Asian markets. Future innovations currently under development include so-called ‘intelligent’ packaging capable of telling the consumer whether or not the food inside is spoiled.

Further up the supply chain, R&D is progressing on ‘smart’ nanoscale agro-chemicals. Here nanotech promises ‘novel’ products that will enable farmers to use smaller and less frequent applications of agricultural chemicals which will, in turn, reduce human exposure to potentially harmful chemicals and contamination of local environments. As is the case in respect of both food and FCMs, work on the next generation of agro-chemicals is more advanced elsewhere around the world. In the USA, for example, three applications for new pesticides manufactured using nanotechnologies are currently being considered for approval by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). So far as the authorities can ascertain, there is currently no use of nanotech pesticides or insecticides in UK agriculture, but the UK and EU markets in nanotech agro-chemicals should also see rapid growth over the next few years.

Developing a nanotech policy for the UK

The task of developing a coherent and effective national and regional (EU) nanotechnology policy is now underway. In January, the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee (STC) completed the first official investigation

of the potential implications of nanotechnology for the UK’s agri-food sector. Reflecting the wide-ranging impacts that nanotech is expected to have across the whole of the food production and distribution chain – from farm to table - the Inquiry’s remit was set in the broadest possible terms. The Committee was tasked with considering the possible implications of both direct ingestion of engineered nanomaterials (via foods containing or consisting of such materials), and indirect ingestion resulting from use of these technologies in agricultural products such as pesticides and fertilisers. Their final report - *Nanotechnologies and Food*³ - identifies various areas of concern and makes a number of recommendations to which the UK Government has since offered a response.⁴

The remainder of this article reviews some of the issues raised by the STC and summarises the Government’s responses to some of the Committee’s key recommendations.

Addressing uncertainty: Filling the ‘knowledge gaps’

Similarly to biotechnology, the commercialisation of nanotechnologies brings (un)certain regulatory challenges. Whilst the fruits of the nano-harvest may offer society many benefits, they may also give rise to new and unexpected risks; risks that are not easily mediated by existing (technological and regulatory) risk assessment and risk management strategies. Crucially, the novel (and commercially valuable) changes wrought at the molecular and atomic level through the application of this latest generation of new technologies are not yet fully understood.

Confronting the taxing issue of ‘knowledge gaps’ head on, the STC report reiterates the urgent need for more work to be done on the effects of ingested nanoparticles on the human gut and - due to the ability of non-biodegradable nanoparticles to leave the gut and accumulate in organs such as the spleen, liver and bone marrow - their effects on the body more generally. To date, the majority of research that has been conducted into the health impacts of nanomaterials has concentrated on the effects of (inhaled) nanomaterials. Such studies, of course, can tell us little or nothing about the consequences of ingestion of such substances via our daily bread.

The Government’s response to the STC’s recommendations on such matters is generally very positive. Significant public resources are now being directed at addressing knowledge gaps in this field. Major research councils (such as the EPSRC and the MRC⁵) are funding a number of projects looking into the mechanisms of toxicity and the development of methods to detect and characterise the effects of nanoparticles within the body and the environment. The Health Protection Agency has established a National Nanotechnology Research Centre and the EFSA has recently commissioned two projects to investigate the oral toxicokinetics of nanoparticles. The Government is also cooperating with other EU Member States and organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to coordinate research efforts at both the European and international levels.

Since 2006, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has run a voluntary reporting scheme, with a view to building a database of information about nanomaterials being researched by stakeholders within the agri-food sector. In an ideal world such a scheme would have helped Government streamline its research strategy and strengthened the (scientific) knowledge base. This, in turn, would have facilitated a more timely development of effective risk assessment procedures and regulatory oversight. As it is, industry’s pre-disposition toward secrecy has ensured its failure.

The STC’s solution to this particular problem was to recommend that the FSA should now take steps to develop, in collaboration with industry, a confidential database of information

Friends of the Earth Australia nanotechnology update

by campaigner Georgia Miller

Nanotechnology coatings found on US fruit and vegetables

Without mandatory labelling of nano-ingredients used in foods and packaging, it is impossible to make informed decisions about whether or not to eat nano-foods. There are only a handful of food manufacturers internationally willing to acknowledge that they use nano-ingredients in meal replacement milkshakes, tea, cooking oil and body building products. But the paucity of known commercial uses of nanotechnology doesn’t mean that the technology is not making its way into a wide range of foods.

According to a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientist interviewed for a recent story by America Online reporter Andrew Schneider, some fresh fruits and vegetables sold in the United States and Canada are now sprayed with a wax-like nano-coating to extend shelf-life and improve appearances. A group of USDA researchers found the coating on apples, pears, capsicums, cucumbers and other produce sent from Central and South America. The scientist told Schneider that the coating was manufactured in Asia. The USDA found no indication that it had ever been tested for health effects. It is unknown whether edible nano-coatings are applied to fruits and vegetables sold in Europe and elsewhere.

Problems with food industry secrecy in relation to nanotechnology use have also been highlighted in the United Kingdom. A House of Lords Inquiry into *Nanotechnologies and Food* backed a mandatory public register of foods and food packaging that contains nanomaterials, and criticised strongly food industry efforts to evade public scrutiny. Nonetheless, to the great disappointment of consumer advocacy groups, the Inquiry explicitly rejected calls for mandatory labelling of nano-ingredients used in foods.

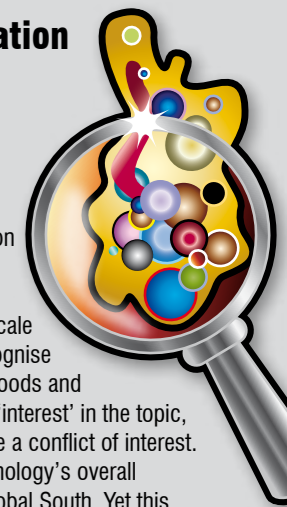
UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization to focus on nano

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) last year, along with the World Health Organization, held an ‘experts’ meeting to discuss nanotechnology’s new health and environmental risks. However, although held during the world’s worst food crisis, the meeting excluded consideration of broader social and economic issues and implications for already struggling small scale farmers. The meeting was closed to non-technical ‘experts’, did not hear from small-scale farmers’ groups such as La Via Campesina and did not recognise the right of communities to reject nanotechnology’s use in foods and agriculture. 12 of the 17 participating ‘experts’ declared an ‘interest’ in the topic, but that this was considered by the meeting not to constitute a conflict of interest.

This June, the FAO held its first conference on nanotechnology’s overall implications for food and agriculture, with a focus on the Global South. Yet this meeting also focussed on promoting nanotechnology’s ‘benefits’ for the South. Papers were invited to address toxicity risks, but social and economic costs were not mentioned. Friends of the Earth Australia (FOEA) and UK consumers group Which? have been invited to speak. FOEA’s presentation will be on the social costs of nanotechnology’s use in agriculture and the need for public and farmers’ participation in decision making about if, where and what types of nanotechnology get used in agriculture. Which?’s presentation will focus on regulatory measures to address consumer concern.

If you would like more information about Friends of the Earth Australia’s work on nanotechnology, please visit <http://nano.foe.org.au> or email Georgia Miller georgia.miller@foe.org.au

Thanks to Georgia Miller of Friends of the Earth Australia for updating *The Food Magazine* on their ideas about nanotechnologies.





about nanomaterials being researched by stakeholders within the food sector. In order to ensure the success of the new scheme, industry participation should be rendered mandatory.⁶

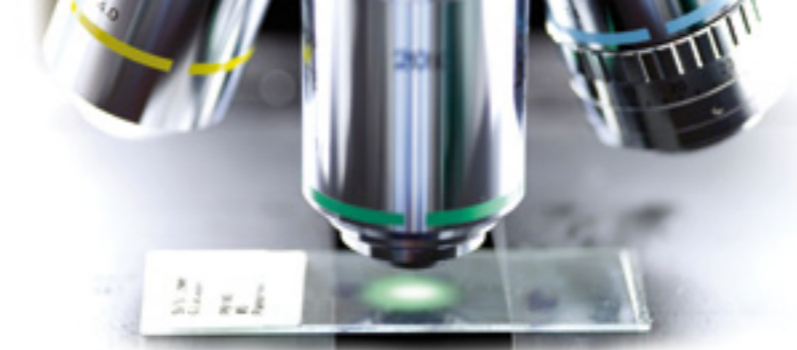
Sadly, whilst the FSA recognises the need for government to know what is going on in the field of commercial nanotech R&D, the idea of a mandatory reporting scheme has been rejected. Basically, whilst acknowledging that, “horizon scanning and information about current and future technological developments are essential,” the FSA’s view is that businesses would be very “wary” of releasing commercially sensitive information, even to a government department. The fear is that any attempt at coercion might simply discourage investment in UK based R&D and the relocation of lucrative nanotech research to jurisdictions with a more relaxed (and business friendly) approach.

The question of safety and regulatory coverage: Mind the gap?

The prevailing (official and industry) view is that existing legislation governing food products, additives and packaging should provide a generally adequate basis for the governance of new nanotech products. Current safeguards should at least ensure that where knowledge gaps render a full risk assessment impossible, new (and potentially unsafe) nanofoods will simply be denied market authorisation. Whilst the STC report does not challenge these basic assumptions, it does raise concerns about a number of “grey areas” in regulatory coverage warning that, as things stand, there is a risk that some engineered nanomaterials might, “*slip through the regulatory net*,” and into the food chain.

There are a number of factors that led the Committee to this conclusion but one of the key barriers to proper regulation is the absence of universally agreed and authoritative definitions of ‘nanomaterials’ and related concepts. For example, although a (particle) size of 100nm is commonly cited as the threshold below which the ‘nano’ label should be applied, reliance on such an arbitrary cut-off point could prove problematic, from a regulatory perspective. Inconvenient though it is, the novel (and potentially risky) characteristics and properties generated by engineering at this level are not exclusive to (nano)materials falling within the 1-100nm range; early evidence suggests that particles significantly larger than 110 nanometres (nm) may well present size-dependent toxicity risks.

Consequently, the STC recommends that the Government should work with the European Union to develop workable



regulatory definitions; definitions capable of ensuring that all engineered nanomaterials - including those created from natural foods that have been chosen or engineered to take advantage of their nanoscale properties – are subject to regulatory oversight. Rather than establishing a standard size limit for 100nm, the STC suggests that regulatory definitions should simply refer to the ‘nanoscale’. This looser definition would encourage a primary (regulatory) focus on functionality (i.e. how a substance interacts with the body) over particle size. This advantage of this approach is that it would ensure that any materials with a dimension of under 1000nm, displaying altered characteristics or properties would, where necessary, be subjected to (additional) pre and post market controls.

As the Government noted in its response to the STC, amendments have already been made, or are in progress, in number of legislative areas. For example, the revised text of the Novel Foods Regulation - which subjects all ‘novel’ foods to an EU level risk assessment before they can be marketed in the EU – is currently under review. By including an express reference to nanotechnology, and including the ‘functionality’ concept as a trigger for mandatory pre-market safety assessment, the updated Novel Foods Regulation should go some way toward addressing the concerns of the STC when it finally becomes law.

In relation to REACH - the over-arching legislation regulating the manufacture, placing on the market and use of chemicals within the EU - the STC report stresses the urgent need to revise the one-tonne regulatory threshold for considering the potential toxic effects. Due their size, nanomaterials are likely to be produced and marketed in quantities significantly smaller than one-tonne. This being the case, despite reassurances that the regulation is applicable to, and will allow for the capture of information about nanomaterials, the reality is that the current trigger for mandatory assessment under REACH could act against the proper evaluation of at least some nano-scale chemical substances. The Government appeared to be fairly confident about the coverage of the Regulation. It did, however, acknowledge that some, “implementation issues,” could arise and committed to review the need for further revisions to the legislation as the new regime beds in.

Environmental and consumer NGOs believe that official confidence in the ability of current controls to protect consumers is misplaced, particularly in the absence of reliable methods for (nano) hazard characterisation, exposure assessment and risk and impact assessment. Some – such as Friends of the Earth - have gone so far as to call for a moratorium on the use of engineered nanomaterials in food and food related products.⁷ At present it is simply not possible to determine whether or not existing (or tweaked) regulatory safeguards will offer adequate protection to consumers and the environment as the rush to market gathers pace over the next few years. As has been seen in the case of GMOs, once industry’s novel creations have entered the food chain, they can very quickly become pervasive; it has taken little more than a decade for low level contamination of food chain with GM material to become endemic.

Consumer choice: How will we know what’s on the menu?

It is widely recognised that transparency and effective communication with consumers are crucial if a wholesale rejection of nanofoods is to be avoided. A number of the Committee’s recommendations relate to facilitating public engagement and understanding of the emergent nanotech sector, and ensuring that consumers are equipped to make informed choices about the consumption and use of nanotech food and food related products.

At present, industry is free to use the term ‘nano’ very selectively - or not at all - as commercially expedient. Evidence submitted to the STC Inquiry does not inspire confidence that business will voluntarily move to a general policy of openness. It seems that the fear of a consumer backlash against nanofoods and related products is encouraging companies to err on the (safe) side of secrecy; though this is an assertion that has been strongly contested by the UK industry body, the Food and Drink Federation (FDF).

There is some support amongst consumer groups for mandatory labelling of foodstuffs containing engineered nanomaterials. However, whilst the Committee supports the consumer’s right to make informed consumption decisions

in the end it concluded that a ‘blanket’ labelling policy would be impractical.

The information gap left by the absence of ‘nano-labels’ could, to some extent at least, be filled by the publicly accessible register of food and food packaging materials containing nanomaterials that is to be established by the FSA. In addition to listing products that have been approved by the European Food Safety Authority, it seems likely that the register will also contain information about, “materials that may, rightly or wrongly, appear to have nanoscale elements.” Though currently at the planning stage, once up and running, this register will be a valuable resource for those consumers who are keen to avoid food products containing nanomaterials.

Beyond the ‘front-line’ question of product information, the STC Report recognises the citizen’s right to be informed about, and to be involved in, the development of the UK’s nanotech policy. Thus, the Government’s decision to commission a ‘nano’ website designed to provide the public with “a balanced source of information” on nanotechnologies has been welcomed by the STC. The new site (which will probably be hosted on Directgov) will offer access to information about Government departments’ activities relating to nanotechnologies via a single portal and will include a section dedicated to use of nanotechnologies in the food sector.

The Government also made a commitment to commission a survey of public attitudes towards nanotechnologies, and to set up a public engagement group or ‘Stakeholder Forum’ and ‘open discussion group.’ Participants would be drawn from government, academia, industry, consumer groups and other NGOs. Such initiatives could prove useful – if they are driven by a genuine desire to develop some sort of consensus on the role nanotechnologies should play in our Food Future. Hopefully, they will prove more meaningful than the rather disappointing GM-Nation? debate run by the Government in 2002!

The STC Inquiry Report and the Government’s response to it (as well as the Government’s general UK Nanotechnologies Strategy⁸) offer some reassurance. Still, despite the apparent good intentions of policy-makers, all is certainly not rosy in the garden. Industry enthusiasm combined with the rapid speed at which new products are being developed ensures that another game of regulatory catch-up – similar to that witnessed for GM foods - is inevitable. The more frightening predictions made for agri-food biotechnology have, so far, failed to materialise. In light of our current state of ignorance about nano-risks, we can only hope that we will be similarly fortunate as the fruits of an industry driven nano-harvest begin to find their way onto our tables.

- 1 House of Lords Science and Technology Committee (2010), note 4, below.
- 2 Cientifica 2006; Daniells 2007; Helmut Kaiser Consultancy Group 2007a; Helmut Kaiser Consultancy Group 2007b; Reynolds 2007. All cited by Friends of the Earth (Australia, Europe and USA) in their 2008 Report, *Out of the Laboratory and Onto Our Plates: Nanotechnology in Food and Agriculture*. Report accessible online at www.foeeurope.org/activities/nanotechnology/Documents/Nano_food_report.pdf
- 3 House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, 1st Report of Session 2009-10, *Nanotechnologies and Food*, HMSO, 8th January 2010. This two volume report can be accessed online via www.parliament.uk/hisience/
- 4 The Government’s Response to the Lord’s Science and Technology Select Committee Report into

Nanotechnologies and Food was published on the 25th March, hot on the heels of the long awaited Nanotechnologies Strategy document UK *Nanotechnologies Strategy: Small Technologies, Great Opportunities* that was released a week earlier on the 18th March.

5 Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council; Medical Research Council

6 Other countries have also had problems with voluntary schemes. The USA’s EPA is now considering moving to a mandatory scheme, as are Canada and France.

7 FOE (2008), note 2, above.

8 UK *Nanotechnologies Strategy: Small Technologies, Great Opportunities* is available online at <http://bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/n/10-825-nanotechnologies-strategy>

NICE guidance on saving lives with healthier food

Tens of thousands of lives could be saved, and millions of people spared the suffering of living with the effects of heart disease and stroke, simply by producing healthier food says new guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). The guidance calls for the food industry to further reduce the salt and saturated fats in the food it produces, building on the good work already started. Trans fats, which have been shown to increase the risk of heart disease and are classified as toxic by the World Health Organization, should be eliminated from the food we eat, say the NICE recommendations.

This new guidance focuses mainly on food production and its influence on the nation’s diet. This is the first time that all of the evidence has been brought together in one place on what works in improving food production, together with the figures showing how much health improves as a result. The NICE recommendations are aimed at making small changes across the whole population, because these will translate into very big improvements in health overall. This guidance sets out very clearly what the government and industry should do to make it easier for people to make healthy choices and thus improve the health of the whole nation.

Professor Mike Kelly, Public Health Director at NICE, said: “This guidance aims to save lives and reduce the terrible toll of ill health caused by heart disease and stroke. Making the simple changes recommended could prevent around 40,000 premature deaths in people aged under 75 each year. Taking action now will also save many millions of pounds every year. The guidance focuses on what government and industry can do to make it easier for people to make healthy choices, by producing food in a healthier way as standard. This isn’t about telling individuals to choose salad instead of chips - it’s about making sure that the chips we all enjoy occasionally are as healthy as possible. And the best way to do this is to encourage the companies who provide our food to build on the good work they’ve already done. That means making further reductions in the salt, trans fats and saturated fats in the food we eat everyday.”

The guidance recommendations include:

- Speeding up the reduction in salt intake in the population, aiming for a maximum intake of 6g per day per adult by 2015 and 3g daily by 2025
- Encouraging manufacturers to substantially reduce hidden saturated fat in all food products, and considering supportive legislation if necessary
- Ensuring low salt products and low saturated fat foods are sold more cheaply than their higher content equivalents
- Eliminating industrially-produced trans fats from processed food and take-aways.

The NICE guidance also considers the evidence on wider policy actions that can support a healthier food environment. Clear, colour-coded food labelling is recommended as an effective way to help people understand what is in their food. This specific system is proven to help shoppers make a healthy informed choice about what they and their families eat. Along with changes to food production, importantly this guidance also calls for more action on regulating the way food is marketed to children. Further recommendations include:

- Extending restrictions on TV advertising for foods high in saturated fats, salt and sugar to 9pm to protect children
- Establishing the Food Standards Agency’s front-of-pack traffic light labelling system as the national standard for food and drink products in England, and considering using legislation to ensure universal implementation
- Encouraging local planning authorities to restrict planning permission for take-aways and other food retail outlets in specific areas.

It is unclear what the new government will make of the NICE recommendations, in light of health secretary Andrew Lansley’s confirmation of a hands-off approach to regulating the food industry.

The NICE guidance, ‘Prevention of cardiovascular disease at population level’, is available at www.nice.org.uk/PH25



Minimum needs, minimum carbon?

Exploring the carbon footprint of minimum income diets

Dr Angela Druckman and Dr Tim Jackson report on their study that looked into how much carbon we need for a decent life.

Current lifestyles in the UK are unsustainable and policy-makers are struggling to find ways to shift society to lower carbon modes of living. Although technology will certainly play a role, changes in behaviours and lifestyles will also be required. A key question is, **can carbon emissions be reduced without jeopardising our quality of life? If so, what might lifestyles look like, and what contribution, if any, would diets make to cuts in carbon emissions?**

To answer these questions we set up a study to explore how carbon emissions due to UK lifestyles might be reduced while maintaining a decent life. The study took its starting point from some work carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) which established the basket of expenditures deemed necessary to enjoy a minimum acceptable standard of living ¹. The JRF research defined a minimum acceptable standard of living to include, 'more than just, food, clothes and shelter. It is about having what you need in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society.'

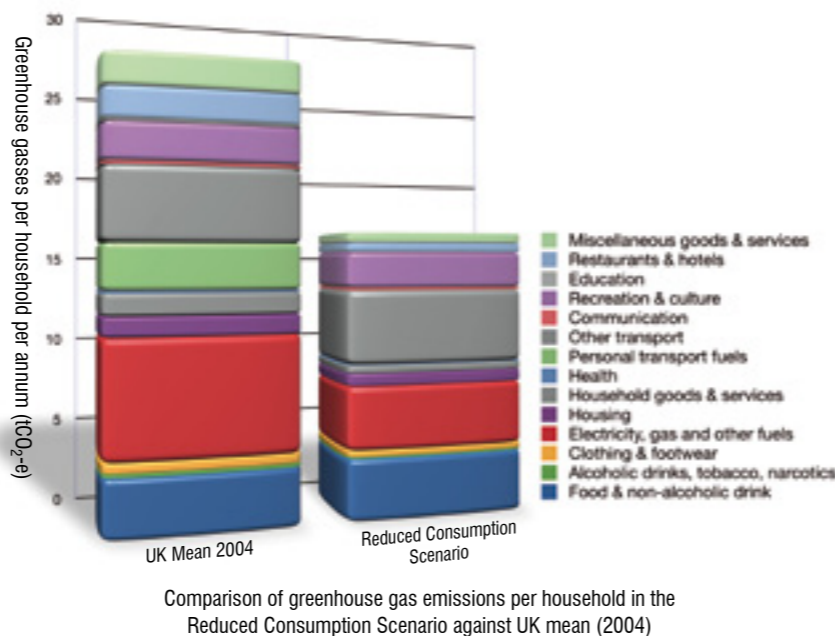
The JRF expenditure budgets indicate which normal UK household expenditures we should aim to protect if we want a decent life and which might be considered 'unnecessary' and could be eliminated. Based on these budgets, we drew up a *Reduced Consumption Scenario* in order to estimate the carbon emissions that would arise in the production and distribution of all the goods and services itemised in the budgets, assuming that every household in the UK abided by them.

The budgets give precise details of all expenditure items. Food menus were checked by a nutritionist to ensure they met current government guidelines for healthy eating. An example of the weekly meat allocation for a lone parent with one child (toddler) is: 150g stewing steak; 400g beef mince; 62g bacon; 128g pork sausages; 175g chicken breasts; and 34g cooked chicken. All budgets contain some alcohol, the majority to be consumed at home. For example, a couple with one child is allocated 4 cans of Fosters' lager; 4 cans of Thwaites' Draught; and one bottle of Chilean white wine per week (presumably for the parents not the child). In addition to this, all other items of expenditure are provided in precise detail, from the purchase of cookers to the number of pairs of socks required each year.

We found that overall carbon emissions would be around 37% lower in the *Reduced Consumption Scenario* than average household emissions in the UK in 2004. As illustrated in the chart (right), carbon emissions would be reduced in twelve out of the fourteen categories of expenditure. Only one category significantly defied this trend. Rather than decreasing, overall emissions across the nation due to food and non-alcoholic drink increase in the *Reduced Consumption Scenario* by around 7%.

It is worth noting here some of the assumptions and limitations of the study, to understand what we can and cannot learn from it. Our study assumes that all goods and services in the *Reduced Consumption Scenario* are produced using the same industry structure, carbon intensity of production, and mix of imports as the UK in 2004. So, for example, the same percentage of fresh fruit and vegetables are assumed to be air-freighted to the UK in the Scenario as in 2004. The results therefore show what changes in carbon emissions would be brought about through the different basket of goods and services identified in the JRF budgets, but do not take account of technological changes, such as reductions in fertiliser usage, different trade patterns or a shift to low-carbon electricity supply. Furthermore, the study does not take into account wider considerations such as the bio-capacity of the Earth to produce sufficient food to feed growing future populations.

The study shows that, if we stay true to the JRF expenditure budgets, changes in the composition of the weekly food basket would increase carbon emissions. However, if the JRF's remit had been to reduce environmental impacts it is probable that they would have made different choices with regard to food. In particular, a diet with less meat and dairy foods would result in lower emissions, as livestock have been shown to account for a significant proportion of carbon emissions ^{2,3}. Such a change need not jeopardise nutritional standards. For example, in a study which compared meals with comparable nutritional values, a meal made from potatoes, carrots and dry peas was estimated to have nine times lower emissions than a meal with tomatoes, rice and pork ⁴. In addition to changes in menus, changes in production methods and, for example, ensuring supply of locally produced fruit and vegetables in season to replace imported goods could reduce carbon emissions



Dr Angela Druckman is Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Energy & Climate Change Mitigation, in the Centre for Environmental Strategy at University of Surrey, and a member of the ESRC Research Group on Lifestyles, Values and Environment (RESOLVE) at the University of Surrey. Professor Tim Jackson is Director of RESOLVE.

You can read more about their study which is called 'The bare necessities: how much household carbon do we really need?' at www.surrey.ac.uk/resolve/Docs/WorkingPapers/RESOLVE_WP_05-09.pdf

The paper is also published in *Ecological Economics* (Volume 69, Issue 9, pp 1794-1804) available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2010.04.018>

further. There is therefore scope for overall carbon emissions to be reduced well beyond the 37% indicated.

In contrast to food and non-alcoholic drink, our study showed significant reductions in carbon emissions in most other categories of expenditure. Although the JRF study did not target environmental aspects, in fact many of the expenditures reduced or eliminated were those that have high energy intensity. For example, the study assumed insulation levels in homes above the current national average and so consumption of gas for central heating is lower in the *Reduced Consumption Scenario* than mean 2004 UK levels. The Scenario also assumes that cars are not necessary, and instead provides for purchasing bicycles and bus passes, along with taxi hire once a week for journeys that could otherwise be problematic. Furthermore, it was assumed that holidays would be taken in the UK, and therefore leisure aviation emissions would be eliminated.

So what might life be like in the *Reduced Consumption Scenario*? The JRF budgets are carefully planned to avoid many of the traps that modern consumers fall into. For example, everything in the budgets was considered to be 'necessary' whereas in our current culture we buy many things that we never use. This phenomenon of 'over-consumption' is illustrated by the plethora of unused items advertised on websites such as Freecycle and Ebay. Similarly, provision of goods which serve the purpose of 'positional goods' or 'status markers' are excluded in the Scenario. Therefore carbon emissions that arise in the production and distribution of these goods are eliminated in the Scenario.

For a fuller discussion of what life may be like under the *Reduced Consumption Scenario* the reader is referred to the papers listed to the right.

We close by commenting only that the conclusion from our study is optimistic. It highlights that a shift towards a society less focused on showing status

through materialistic means is not just essential but potentially positive in terms of health outcomes and quality of life. It also identifies the need for substantial investment to reduce emissions from housing and transport. All in all, our study suggests that significant reductions in carbon emissions could be achieved without jeopardising either nutritional standards or social well-being.

Contact details:

Angela Druckman
ESRC Research Group on Lifestyles, Values and Environment (RESOLVE)
University of Surrey (D3),
Guildford GU2 7XH, UK
Email: a.druckman@surrey.ac.uk;
Tel: +44 (0)1483 686679;
Fax: +44 (0)1483 686671
www.freecycle.org

Dr Angela Druckman and Dr Tim Jackson ESRC Research Group on Lifestyles, Values and Environment (RESOLVE), University of Surrey, UK

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- 3 Garnett, T. 2009 Livestock-related greenhouse gas emissions: impacts and options for policy makers. *Environmental Science & Policy*: 12(4): p. 491-503.
- 4 Carlsson-Kanyama, A. 1998 Climate change and dietary choices -- how can emissions of greenhouse gases from food consumption be reduced? *Food Policy*: 23(3-4): p. 277-293.

Quickbites

Talking Food: Taking Action

North West wellbeing and health campaign group, Our Life, has kicked off its Talking Food: Taking Action campaign with the first two of seven inquiry events to be held across the region over the coming months.

The first event, a *Food Insiders Inquiry* on 16 May, was organised for those who are on the inside of the food system in the North West but who have minimal power and few opportunities to have their voices heard.

Food cooperatives, supermarket workers, allotment holders, school dinner managers, food factory workers, butchers, take-away owners, lunch club coordinators, mums and many others gathered in Skelmersdale to have their say about the food industry and the food system in the North West and how it could be improved.

Those present discussed a wide range of issues during the day and debated how it can be made easier for the people of the North West to get hold of healthy food that is sourced and produced in a way that is fair to both those that work in food and to the environment.

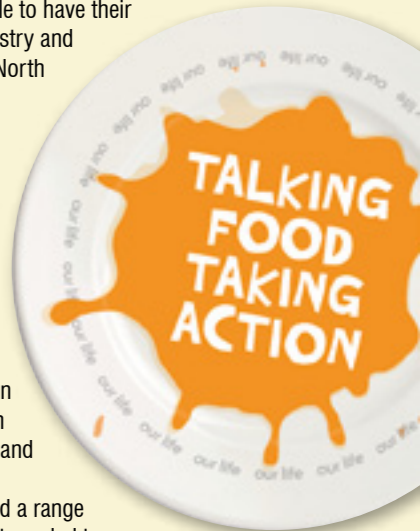
Participants identified a range of issues which they felt needed to be discussed including supermarket power and the ingredients in the food people buy. Throughout the day the participants expressed how much they were learning from each other and the activities. The day brought ideas for campaigns that will be built upon through the next inquiries that are due to take place over the coming months.

Our Life's head of public engagement Peter Bryant said: "Bringing together in one room a group of people whose voices are rarely heard but who have a real impact on our food system was absolutely crucial in developing our Talking Food project. We are now reviewing all the feedback from the day and we'll be using this to inform the other food inquiries we are organising across the region."

The second event, *The Lancashire Inquiry*, was held in Blackburn on 14 June and saw members of the local community discussing the things that prevent them from accessing healthier food. Those attending also worked together to prioritise the barriers they face around food. At subsequent sessions participants will hear from 'commentators' on the subjects they have prioritised so they can learn about how to campaign for change.

The Lancashire Inquiry was supported by Our Life's local partner, Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living. Healthy Living manager Abdul Mulla explained why his organisation are keen to be a part of 'Talking Food: Taking Action': "I believe in the model. It is a refreshing way of taking an issue to the community but putting them in the driving seat. I like the idea of 20 people from the community questioning a commissioner or an academic. It's an empowering way of getting people to talk to the people in power," he said.

For further information on Our Life's 'Talking Food' campaign contact Our Life's head of campaigns and advocacy, Calum Irving, at calum.irving@ourlife.org.uk



Brown crab fishing in south Devon, just how sustainable is it?

The Food Magazine's reporter Sarah Pitt heads down to south Devon to check out their brown crabs...

The sun comes out as we head out of Dartmouth harbour on board the crabbing boat, the Pisces. At the helm is Nick Hutchings, who makes his living from hauling pots in this corner of the south Devon coast.

Our destination is a patch of water just to the right of the harbour mouth. Each crab fisherman has his own pots, in areas handed down from father to son.

"Families tend to have their own areas," says Nick, whose own family have fished crab out of the coastal village of Beesands for hundreds of years. "We know all the nooks and crannies where you can find a crab."

Are there ever potting wars? Nick laughs. "No, well, sometimes. But it all gets sorted out in the end."

He has come up close to a marker on one of his pots. There is much splashing at the stern of the boat, and out swings the basket-like cage containing three live brown crabs.

The biggest, a fine male, wiggles his large claws at us, which are filled with white meat – "the fillet steak of crab meat." He'll fetch a high price, when dispatched back in port.

Nick removes the crab from the pot, with the skill of someone who knows how to avoid being bitten. His main boat, the Britannia of Beesands, regularly hauls from 690 pots.

He eats crab every day. "You can't beat a crab sandwich for breakfast," he says. "Not with mayonnaise though. With just a bit of black pepper and salad cream."

Also on board is Dawn Spencer, of the Blue Seafood Company in Paignton. Her company processes 400 tonnes of south Devon crab a year – buying from small boats in Kingswear and Dartmouth, along with the same tonnage from elsewhere, Scotland, Bridlington on the east Coast of England and even Norway this winter.

"Hand on heart, south Devon crab is the sweetest," she says.

Fishermen like Nick insist that their crab is the most sustainable UK crab you can buy, because of the potting agreement on this part of the south Devon coast which means that trawlers are banned from potting areas during the winter. This allows female crabs to lay their eggs undisturbed.

Strict rules on size mean crabs can only be taken when they are at least 140mm for females and 160mm for males, above the EU minimum. And smaller crabs can be thrown back unharmed, because unlike fish, they don't die when they are brought to the surface.

The fishery does not, however, have certification from the Marine Stewardship Council; the distinctive MSC label on fish is an easy way for shoppers to know that the fish they are buying

is sustainable. According to Nick Hutchings, it is as unnecessary red tape. "South Devon crab is lovely crab and it is sustainably fished," he says.

Up until now, this verdict has been shared with the Marine Conservation Society, which rated the brown crab from south Devon as sustainable in its 'fish to eat' guide. Just this June though, it has changed its mind, after noting a decline in the number of brown crabs caught between 2008 and 2009.

"We can no longer rate the brown/edible crab as sustainable on our 'fish to eat' list due to worries about the recent decline in crab catches," said MCS fisheries policy officer Melissa Pritchard.

She said the MCS "applauded" the imposition of crab size restrictions, and "had no issue with the method of catching at all," but that, "the MCS has looked at the landing per unit effort to judge the stock levels because that is relative year on year, and that number has declined - generally a signal that stocks are reducing."

This 'eat with caution' designation, though, is confusing. What does it actually mean?

"This rating urges people to eat less frequently or consider alternatives when choosing," says the MCS. "In the case of brown crab, someone that eats this three times a month, we'd urge them to experiment and eat spider crab at least one of

those times. It doesn't need to be avoided, but people shouldn't eat it all the time."

The MCS verdict on brown crab is, though, vehemently disputed by the fishermen, who insist they are not over-fishing these waters.

David Morgan, chairman of the South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen, the crab fishermen's association, says: "If they are going to form an opinion on annual variations in catch rates, they will be changing the designation every year. It is more complicated than that."

"To say that the crab catches are declining is just not accurate. Yesterday, on my boat, we caught ¾ tonne of crab from 350 pots, which is a good catch, and that demonstrates that the crab is still there."

"We don't know what the Marine Conservation Society is basing this decision on. Certainly there has been no dialogue with us."

The Marine Conservation Society's suggestion is that people should eat spider crab, which is also landed in south Devon, instead.

This, though, is dismissed by the fishermen and processors in south Devon, who catch and sell a tiny proportion of spider crab compared with brown crab.

"We do some spider crab for Jamie Oliver's Italian restaurants, but it is a very small amount," says David Markham, from the Blue Sea Food Company.

"We are cooking 36 tonnes a week of brown crab, and may be we do 500 kilos of the spiders, absolutely nothing in comparison. It is ridiculously expensive to get the meat out. We have offered spider crab to a lot of our customers and a lot of them prefer the brown crab."

Currently, some 30 boats fish the south Devon crab, with the largest quantity landed in the autumn, when the crabs are full of brown meat after a summer's feeding. It is the whole male crabs which have the bigger claws full of sweet white meat, fetch the highest prices, particularly on the Continent. Two thousand tonnes of brown crab are landed in the Start Bay area every year yet more than 60 per cent of the catch is exported to France, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

Chefs and fishermen want more of it to stay in south Devon, launching a campaign to tempt more people to sample it this summer.

Mitch Tonks, who in June opened his second harbourside restaurant in Dartmouth, is its enthusiastic ambassador. The campaign is primarily though about luring foodies to south Devon, to stay, spend money and sample the crab.

"South Devon crab is without doubt the finest in the world – an unsung hero and a joy to eat," says Mitch. "If I could get everyone that comes to south Devon to share the experience of eating freshly boiled crabmeat with mayonnaise I know they would absolutely love it, and that would be my job done."

Later, in The Seahorse, his restaurant on Dartmouth harbour, we get to try just that. Fresh white crab meat juxtaposed with a blob of homemade mayonnaise, and a spoonful of richer brown crabmeat. Delicious, and surely tasting even better for being eaten right beside the sea.

But at the back of my mind is that niggle - 'eat with caution' - a designation which puts the ball back in the consumer's court, and leaves him or her just as confused as ever.

Perhaps the answer lies in the fishermen getting Marine Stewardship Council accreditation.

"There is a difference of opinion within our ranks as to whether it would be beneficial - as a group of fishermen were are not rich and it is something that would cost thousands of pounds," says David Morgan, of the South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen. "It is, though, something we have considered before and it is on the agenda currently."

"We are meeting for an informal chat with the people from the Marine Stewardship Council, to try to bring us on board."

David Markham, of the Blue Sea Food Company, is one of the sceptics.

"The costs are horrendous," he says. "For a little fishery like ours, which we consider to be inherently sustainable, it is just too expensive to make any sense."

But in the absence of any clear Government guidance on the issue, the the MSC logo is the clearest indicator to shoppers that seafood is fished in a way that is safe to eat.

Meanwhile, there are some chefs making the most of the spider crab landed in south Devon, which the Marine Conservation Society endorses as sustainably fished.

Another is Tim Bouget, chef-proprietor at Ode restaurant at Shaldon on the River Teign uses spider crab landed in the nearby port of Teignmouth, on his menu.

Spider crabs are fiddly to process. All the meat in the long thin legs has to be extracted by hand. But, says Tim, it is well worth the effort for a special dish.

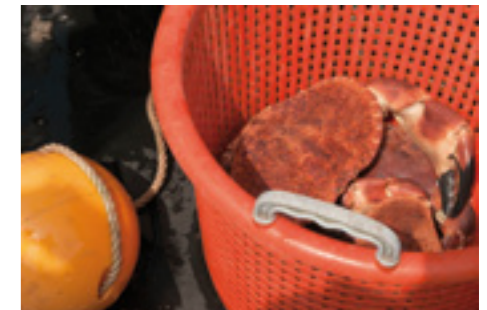
"We use both brown and spider crab, but if I have got a premium dish and I want to showcase the local crab, I use spider, as it has a different texture. It has a longer grain and is sweet and very moist," he says.



"You pay a premium for it, but the end result is such a gem," he says. "People rave about crayfish and lobster, but this is just fantastic. We are very fortunate to have this supply on our coast."

For more information about sustainably sourced and produced fish visit the website of the Marine Stewardship Council (and check out their logo on products). See www.msc.org.

The Marine Conservation Society has a website detailing 'fish to eat', 'eat with caution' and 'fish to avoid'. They can send you a handy wallet sized guide. See www.fishonline.org



Is food really the problem?

Dr Anne Brunton, associate lecturer, London School of Economics, discusses the rights and responsibilities agenda with particular reference to food, but drawing on similar ideas in the drugs and alcohol field...

Rights and responsibilities means the degree to which someone has a right to services or benefits. The responsibility is the amount to which someone is responsible for their own behaviour. This idea of responsibility may extend to responsibility for your current position (e.g. unemployment) or the extent to which you can utilise personal autonomy to make things right (getting a job).

My own background is in social policy and considering the way agencies such as the NHS and the police engage with communities (however 'community' is defined). For example, I worked for some time with street drinkers and saw the damage alcohol caused and witnessed the consequences of lack of regulation in supply with a simultaneous lack of investment in treatment. Someone who believed in personal responsibility would start with choice and abstinence whereas someone more familiar with the rights debate would focus on the drinks industry, supply, licensing, pricing and addiction. With reference to food it is interesting to try to assess to what extent efforts to tackle 'behaviour' fit in with the old and new government's agenda to focus on the individual and whether we have significant evidence to suggest this approach might work.

Moreover, Jessica Mitchell's last editorial for *The Food Magazine* discussed the potential problems associated with the government's decision to include partners in industry in the new anti-obesity Change4Life campaign. Her exasperation mirrored my own reaction to the 2004 Alcohol Strategy where the drinks industry was moved centre stage in our attempts to combat alcohol abuse – whilst also acknowledging that many people use and enjoy alcohol sensibly. When this stance is compared to the Drugs Strategy (1998) we can see that the approach is much more hard line. At no point does the government suggest that we should work with the providers of illegal drugs. This is contrary to the evidence from research in to drug use that shows that many people use drugs recreationally and sensibly. In addition, most users remain for much of the time risk averse. Expenditure on alcohol in terms of policing, health care, addiction and cleaning up our town centres

most Monday mornings massively outstrips spending on drugs. At the same time expenditure on obesity and its related conditions continues to spiral upwards whilst we face punitive cuts in public services.

These examples serve to illustrate that our attitudes towards substance abuse are chaotic and it still remains extremely controversial to include food in a category with 'drugs' although we are aware that it can be consumed (or deprived) to alter mood and its over consumption by users (all of us) is subject to fashion and change. In addition many of us manage to use food – sensibly – although increasingly, many of us do not.

Firstly, then if we look at food we now know a surprising amount about its composition, our patterns of consumption and its effects. Over consumption can make us fat, many of us eat fewer calories than we used to but we're getting fatter, tackling obesity is much more difficult than we imagined. Encouraging people to eat less of certain types of foods, fostering good eating habits, paying people to lose weight, shaming and stigmatising people do not seem to result in any long term concerted weight loss. In terms of choosing food we know that there are quite complex processes at work; biological need, socialisation, memory, pleasure and comfort.

There have been suggestions that there should be a 'fat tax' on those foods that contain high levels of fat or particularly 'trans' fats, salt and sugar should be subject to a premium. We know that food producers 'bung' supermarkets money to place certain goods at eye level to catch shopper's eyes. We are aware that supermarkets wage a war against consumers to influence their purchases and finally we know that bad food costs less. *The Food Magazine* highlighted this in an earlier issue. If you want crisps, pop and choc then you're 'quids in' if you want a plate of steamed broccoli, grilled chicken and polenta chips then you're looking at an entirely different shopping budget.

Is it the responsibility of the consumer to read labels to ensure healthy eating or should manufacturers be compelled to make reductions in ingredients such as fat, sugar and salt?

**Eat well,
take exercise,
don't take drugs**

There has been a sea change in the way food is treated; it has been fetishised and put centre stage – it has become a celebrity. Our shelves are full of food 'porn' in the form of endless glossy pictures from numerous cookbooks we never cook from. In addition, we are bombarded with images of food in the form of television programmes and advertisements and our children are primed ready to begin consuming at an earlier and earlier age. At the same time a generation have been subject to a disinvestment in what we called home economics – but was in fact 'cookery class'. As such your chances of being able to leave school and produce a good plate of cheese on toast have rapidly diminished let alone identify the major food groups and forage for five portions of fruit and veg a day.

It was with interest and trepidation that I noted the current government's decision to bring the Labour MP Frank Field back into the decision-making fold. In his new role, he and Ian Duncan Smith have returned to the individualist behaviour model to try and assess the 'problem' of poverty. This is familiar ground to me as it is what previous governments have tried to do with the 'problem' of crime. It now also looks like we're facing a 'problem' of health care, elderly care, social services and education. All of these arguments use the 'rights and responsibility' agenda to foster their point – but governments are at pains to point out the 'responsibility' element. Eat well, take exercise, don't take drugs, don't take risks, do challenge youths/criminals. At the same time government will increasingly licence fast food establishments by schools, sell off playing fields, allow food advertising of sporting tournaments (see the Olympics sponsorship article in the previous edition of this publication) and fail to enforce food labelling rules, allow the food industry to take advantage of every loophole it can find and for it to be self 'regulating'. The new government's 'bonfire of the Quangos' might even include the Food Standards Agency.

Once again the position of this government has swung back to ask how we can change the 'culture of poverty'. It suggests that there is something inherent within the poor that makes them that way. They have a 'culture' that must be broken or changed. Field has now suggested that the government's target on child poverty was always unachievable. However, Danny Dorling, a professor at Sheffield University, argues that this is simply wrong. Other European countries have managed to meet this target – unfortunately it now seems that there is insufficient will to make it happen.

Field's approach is to bring the voluntary sector centre stage and to change the definition of poverty from one that is currently relative (a proportion of average salaries) to one that is absolute (people below this income level are poor people above are not). This strategy is rather like the redefining of 'unemployed' the most famous of which we saw under the previous Thatcher government where those aged 16-18 were no longer part of the work force and merely requiring income support. These types of social policy changes mean you can slash poverty and unemployment figures at a stroke.

We've seen a focus on the individual as responsible for their own poverty before, rather than, for example market conditions or an unregulated banking sector. In the 17th and 19th Century we had the Poor Laws and the poor house (residualised social housing), work house (hostels, Drug Treatment and Testing Orders, Probation Orders, Work Fare) and the house of correction (Prisons) depending on the level and seriousness of your poverty. Poverty once again has become a crime.

So what might this look like today and what does it mean for the food debate? What I have been arguing is that there are some aspects of the list presented above which could largely be laid at the door of the individual. However, they have become indivisible from those that are about context, regulation, governance, socialisation and

...there should be a 'fat tax' on those foods that contain high levels of fat...

above all – poverty and inequality. As such, trying to disentangle which of them sit within a rights agenda – the right to be able to choose what you eat in full knowledge about what you're eating. The right not to be influenced by advertising, the right to be able to purchase fresh foods at affordable prices etc are juxtaposed by the rights of big business – which is an extremely powerful food industry with one of the strongest lobbies in government.

So the question is what will work? Will a focus on the individual, teaching them to cook, making them food aware, teaching them to 'grow their own' in window boxes and balconies – turn back the tide. Or is it too little too late. The economist Richard Wilkinson, author of *The Spirit Level - why more equal societies almost always do better*, suggests that inequality is a much bigger factor in these debates than we are prepared to acknowledge. Illness, heart disease, trust, levels of dissatisfaction, depression and obesity all increase when you have a society that is very polarised between the rich and the poor. As such the relative poverty measure is the right one. Absolute poverty may be very real but will only ever represent those who have become residualised at the very bottom. What Marx might term the economically inactive lumpen proletariat. This group is only an indicator of how very bad things have become and not how extensive poverty is.

Wilkinson's extensive research shows that those who are in the lowest economic decile will suffer as a result of this position. No amount of education and cookery classes will impact on the knowledge that in a capitalist society being at the bottom is the last place that you want to be. The policy movements that are likely to really

tackle these social problems rely on a robust and comprehensive redistributive and progressive welfare state.

I am aware that people do not wish to hear this. They want instead to hear that high levels of services can be achieved with low taxation and a largely unrestrained private sector. This cannot happen and if we needed evidence of this then a quick glance across the pond would educate us on the results of this strategy: Soaring levels of poverty, child morbidity, obesity, homelessness, imprisonment and unemployment – to name a few. To believe that the market will alleviate these problems is extremely old fashioned. Wilkinson suggests that redistribution is not necessarily necessary – the rich just need to have less. The less they have and the flatter society is the better the rich and poor feel about themselves and most social problems start to diminish. So is food really the problem? Not really – the rich are just too rich and the poor are just too poor.



Legal, decent, honest and true?

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

✗ Monkey business – Coco Pops better than a banana?

A poster for Coco Pops featuring a picture of the cartoon character ‘Coco the monkey’ dressed in school uniform caused 26 complainants to contact the ASA. The ad stated “Ever thought of Coco Pops after school?” The complainants challenged firstly whether the ad was irresponsible, because they believed it directly targeted school children and encouraged them to eat a snack that was high in sugar, and secondly because they believed it encouraged children to eat two bowls of breakfast cereal a day.

Neither of the complaints was upheld by the ASA, who noted the ad referred only to specifically consuming Coco Pops after school and did not refer to other times, such as breakfast, when the cereal might be consumed. They therefore considered, “it was unlikely that readers would infer from the ad that it was appropriate to eat two bowls of Coco Pops a day.”

Kellogg’s displayed a remarkably selective attitude to the nutritional advice of the Food Standards Agency by stating, in response to the complaints, that, “there was no current UK or EU definition of “high” in relation to sugar content but that, in comparison to other snacks such as bananas, fruit yoghurt and toast and jam, Coco Pops contained a lower amount of sugar.” Kellogg’s also stated that, because Coco Pops were a source of iron, B vitamins and calcium, when eaten with milk, they had fewer calories and a greater nutritional benefit than the snacks it sought to replace. Kellogg’s also cited the Food Standards Agency recommendation that the inclusion of milk and fortified cereal could form part of a healthy balanced diet for a child and did not consider the ad to be irresponsible.

The ASA noted: “A 30g serving of Coco Pops contained 10g of sugar and were classed as high in sugar according to Food Standards Agency guidance because they contained 34g of sugar per 100g; it was therefore advisable to eat them in moderation. However, we noted that this did not account for that fact that Coco Pops were usually eaten in a 30g serving and understood there were no recognised guidelines as to what could be classed as “high” in sugar in smaller quantities.” Both Kellogg’s and the ASA appeared oblivious to FSA research showing that people often pour themselves something closer to twice the 30g recommended serving size. 50g of Coco Pops, at

34g of sugar per 100g, would provide 17g of sugar, and 60g would provide 20g of sugar. The ad was investigated under CAP Code clauses 2.2 (Responsible advertising), 47.6 and 47.7 (e) (Food and soft drink product advertisements and children) but was not found in breach and no further action was deemed necessary.

✗ Nestlé give two fingers to Father Christmas

The ASA have upheld a complaint about a TV ad for Nestlé Kit Kat. The ad showed Father Christmas (from the TV animation film, ‘Father Christmas’) landing his sleigh next to his house in the snow. He went into the house and rubbed his large stomach. On-screen text stated, “May aid weight control within balanced, calorie controlled diet.” Father Christmas said, “Too many blooming mince pies this year me lad, those last few chimneys were a bit of a squeeze.” He was then shown looking at a Kit Kat and said, “Oh let’s see now 107 calories just the ticket. Mmmmm lovely. Ah we’ll that’s it for another blooming year.”

The ASA agreed with a viewer who objected that the reference to 107 calories implied a Kit Kat was a healthy snack. The ASA noted that a two finger Kit Kat provided 510 calories per 100g and said, “We concluded the claim, “107 calories just the ticket,” in the context of the ad as a whole, in which Father Christmas discussed having put on weight after eating too many mince pies, gave the misleading impression a two-finger Kit Kat was low in energy when that was not the case.”

The ASA also received another complaint from a viewer who objected that the ad was targeting children through the use of Father Christmas, which they believed was a breach of the rules on advertising foods with a high fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) content.

Nestlé said the ad campaign was not directed at children but at adults. They said they had measures in place to ensure that where any HFSS products were identified in their



portfolio, they would not buy TV media space against programmes where the majority of the audience was made up of people 16 or under. Nestlé also said other companies had also used representations of Father Christmas to advertise HFSS foods. They said the concept of calories would hold very little appeal for children, whereas adults would also be able to identify with Father Christmas in relation to the effort involved in organising Christmas. They believed the message of having a cup of tea, sitting down with a sigh and taking the weight off ones feet was adult orientated and was not something that children in general would tend to empathise with.

The ASA did not uphold this complaint, stating: “We recognised that Father Christmas was a well-known and generally fondly regarded seasonal character for both children and adults. However, no children were depicted in the ad and Father Christmas was shown taking the weight off his feet with a cup of tea and a biscuit, which we considered to be principally an adult pleasure.”

On the first point the ad breached CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rule 8.3.1(a). The ad must not appear again in its current form.

On the second point the ASA investigated the ad under CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rules 7.2.4 (Children: use of licensed characters and celebrities), 8.3.1(c) (Nutritional claims), 8.4.1 (Slimming and weight control: people under 18), but did not find it in breach.



✗ ASA: Red Bull ad showing young boy in gentleman’s club dubious but not irresponsible

A video-on-demand ad for the energy drink Red Bull caused one complainant to object that the ad was irresponsible and offensive because it showed a young child in a sexual situation.

The ad, which appeared on the online service Demand Five during the programmes ‘Neighbours’, ‘Home and Away’ and ‘The Mentalist,’ was in the style of a cartoon and showed a young boy feeding pigs Red Bull by pouring two cans of it into their trough. He walked into a house and said, “Please mum, I really really want to go to the Gentlemen’s Club.” His mother replied, “When pigs fly young man.” She then exclaimed, “Oh my!” as pigs with wings flew past the kitchen window. The ad ended with the young boy watching a woman in fishnet stockings who danced on a podium and draped her feather boa over him. A voice-over stated “Red Bull gives you wings.”

Red Bull Company (Red Bull) said their ads did not convey a serious message, and featured fantastical situations, such as people or pigs with wings. Red Bull said they were of course not advocating that children attend gentlemen’s clubs, and were merely delivering the “Red Bull gives you wings” message via a humorous cartoon. They had not intended to portray the boy in a sexualised manner; he was a caricature of a rebellious and cheeky young man.

The ASA were sympathetic, stating that: “Although the notion of a child asking to go to a “Gentleman’s Club”, and then apparently attending one, was incongruous and slightly unsettling, the cartoon depiction and ‘flying pigs’ scenario rendered the ad unrealistic, and too whimsical to cause mental or moral harm to children. We considered that the ad seemed to be more about the portrayal of a child’s instinctive curiosity and mischievous nature than a child in a sexual situation. Although the creative idea might be seen as dubious by some, we concluded that the ad was unlikely to be seen as irresponsible or to cause serious or widespread offence.”

The ASA investigated the ad under CAP Code clauses 2.2 (Responsible advertising), 5.1 (Decency) and 47.2 (Children) but did not find it in breach. No further action was required.

Red Bull nevertheless withdrew the ad from all VOD channels in response to a direct complaint from a consumer.



✗ Codswallop – Young’s Chip Shop ad misleads on saturated fat

A TV ad for Young’s Chip Shop cod fillets, stated in both voice-over and on-screen text, “Still below 5% saturated fat.” A viewer challenged whether the ad misleadingly implied that the product was a low fat food.

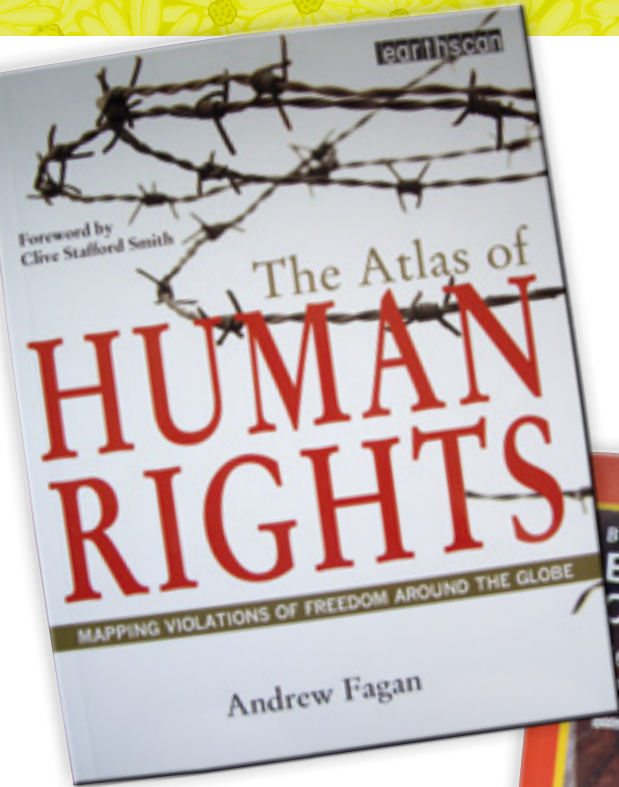
Clearcast, the broadcast industry body that gives pre-transmission clearance to advertisements, said the intention of the claim, “Still below 5% saturated fat,” was to inform viewers that the saturated fat content of Chip Shop Fillets had not changed since it had been reduced in the product a few years before. They explained, however, that, due to an error, on-screen text explaining that the claim was based on a comparison with the product’s previous saturated fat content was inadvertently left out of the finished ad.

The ASA upheld the complaint. It considered that the claim, “Still below 5% saturated fat,” would be understood by consumers to mean that Young’s Chip Shop Fillets were low in saturated fat. For a product to be able to make a claim that it was low in saturated fat under EU Regulation 1924/2006 on Nutrition and Health Claims Made on Foods, it should contain no more than 1.5 g of saturated fat per 100g. The ASA noted Young’s Chip Shop Fillets contained 4.6 g of saturated fat per 100g, and therefore considered that the ad misleadingly implied that the product was low in saturated fat. They also considered that on-screen text alone would not have been sufficient to counter the overriding impression created by the claim, “Still below 5% saturated fat,” and the ad as a whole, that Young’s Chip Shop Fillets were low in saturated fat.

The ASA therefore concluded that the ad was misleading. The ad breached CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rules 5.1.1 (Misleading advertising), 5.2.2 (Implications) and 8.3.1 (a), 8.3.1 (b) and 8.3.1 (d) (Accuracy in food advertising).

The ad must not be broadcast again in its current form. Youngs Seafood (Youngs) said they did not plan to use the ad again.

Reviews

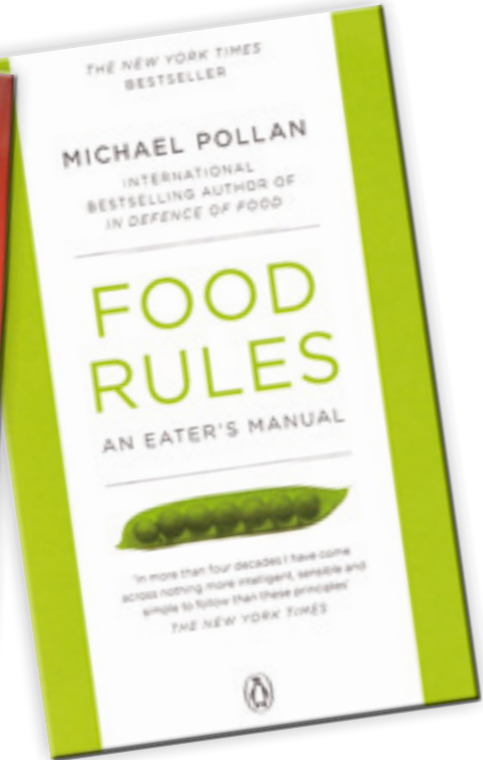


▲ **The Atlas of Human Rights, Andrew Fagan, Earthscan, 978-1-84971-146-3**
This atlas compares the level of human rights abuse in countries around the world, and reveals the consequences of such abuses. Inspired by the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, author Andrew Fagan considers fundamental issues including: child mortality and health; wealth and inequality; discrimination against minority communities, those with mental health problems and disabilities; communications censorship; women’s rights; judicial violations, including torture; and access to education.

Each of the topics is illustrated with full colour maps, photos, graphs, data tables, and country profiles. There is information about human rights, and documented cases of violations, in more than 150 countries. The book reminds us of our common humanity – and of the importance to all people of working globally to ensure that human rights are defended, and extended.



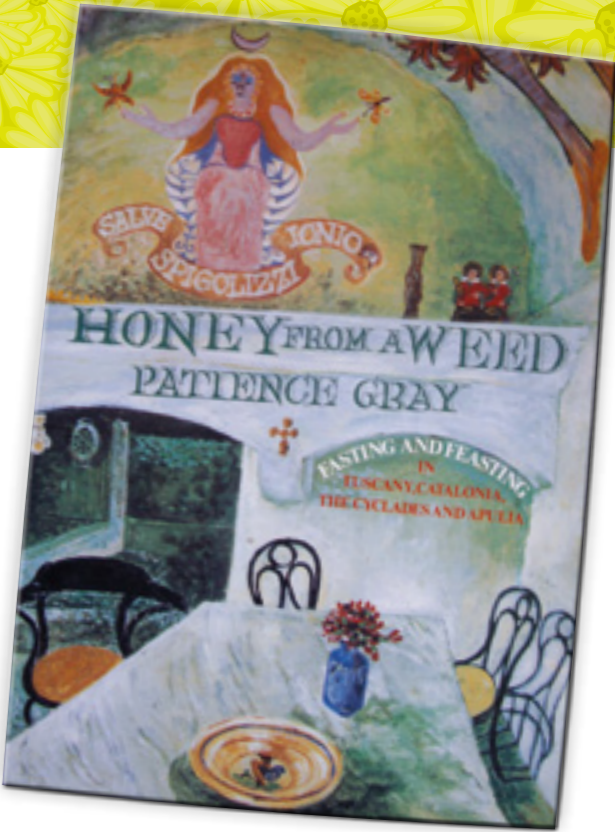
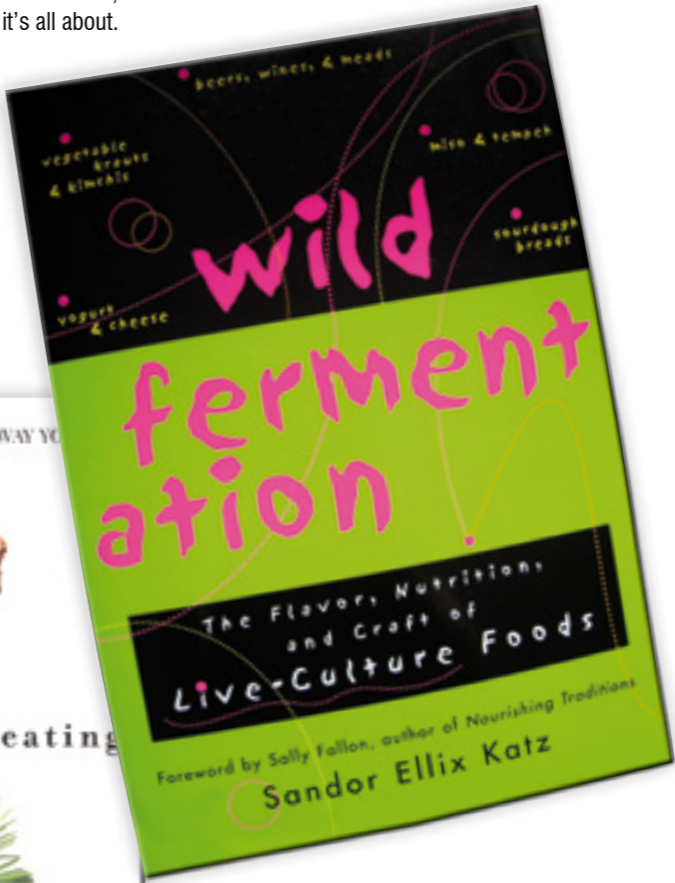
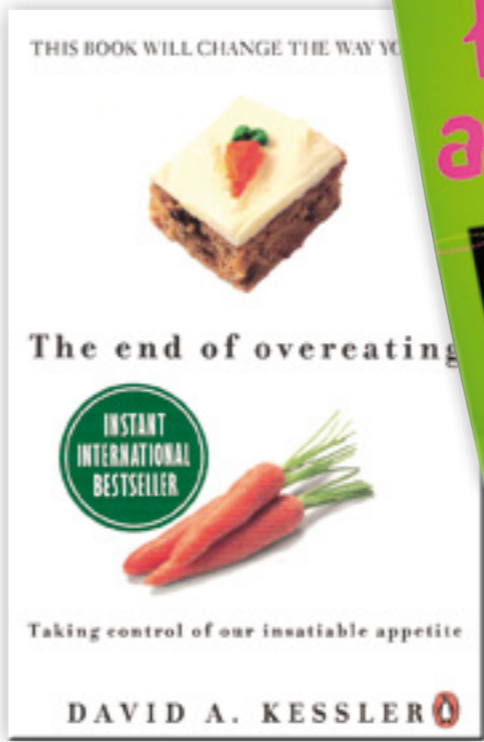
▲ **Build your own earth oven, Kiko Denzer with Hannah Field, Handprint Press, 978-0-9679846-7-4**
This brilliant book is the best guide to making your own oven out of earth. The instructions are simple to understand, and the illustrations are very helpful. It also offers basic recipes to get started making your own breads. It is full of photos of earth ovens from around the world, and stories from the people who made them. Earth ovens are fantastic for cooking, use cheap, local, readily available materials – and they bring us together because you need a willing group to mix and mold clay, sand and straw, and then to eat the lovely food you cook. The ovens make great bread, fantastic pizzas in two minutes, and when the heat is waning are wonderful for roasting veg or slow cooking stews.



► **The End of Overeating, David A. Kessler, Penguin, 978-0-141-04781-2**
This book is not that great. It is alarmist about obesity, liberally strewing the text with words like timebomb, hijacking, addicts. It somehow claims to be about societal problems that can lead to diets that are linked to ill health, but the author writes endlessly about personal food rehab. It is a guilt stew for those worried about what they eat, and wildly overblown with random conspiracy theories about how we are all victims of the food industry. Give yourself a break and don’t read it – go for a walk, spend the hours cooking your own dinner from scratch, chat to your kids.....Remember there is probably more to life than being paranoid about how much you weigh and how mysterious forces are collaborating to MAKE YOU FAT.

▼ **Wild Fermentation – the flavor, nutrition, and craft of live-culture foods, Sandor Ellix Katz, Chelsea Green, 1-931498-23-7**
Hardened cynics should pick up this wonderfully unexpected and uplifting book. Katz’s, “song of praise and devotion to fermentation,” gives recipes for sourdough breads, yoghurt, cheese, miso, tempeh, beers, wines, meads, vegetable krauts – all foods that are produced through the transformative properties of microscopic bacteria and fungi.
For Katz (nicknamed Sandorkraut for his love of sauerkraut), fermentation is: a health regime, a gourmet art, a multicultural adventure, a spiritual path and a form of activism. Fermenting foods brings taste, but is also preservative and can aid digestibility. Such ‘living’ foods are created by artisans, in a spirit of adventure and fun – in marked contrast to what Katz refers to as the canned, pasteurized, embalmed foods in supermarkets. He lives in rural Tennessee, on a communal homestead of, “queer folks who call ourselves faeries.” And what a place it must be – not least for Katz’s rows and rows of crocks full of his latest food ‘experiments’.
He acknowledges that fermented foods are generally an acquired taste – and in all honesty, in the hands of a less convincing and enthusiastic author, some of the recipes would have the taint of a brutal health regime. But, such is Katz’s warmth and conviction, you will want to have a go at them all.

His friend Nettles – a fellow fermenter – wrote this song for Sandorkraut...
Come on friends and lend me an ear,
I’ll explain the connection between wine and beer,
And sourdough and yoghurt and miso and kraut,
What they have in common is what it’s all about.
Oh the microorganisms,
Oh the microorganisms...



▲ **Honey from a weed – fasting and feasting in Tuscany, Catalonia, The Cyclades, and Apulia, Patience Gray, Prospect Books, 9-781903-018200**
Honey from a Weed is not only a wonderfully delicious, practical cookbook, but also a history, an autobiography of a fascinating woman, and an affirmation of life. It is Mediterranean through and through – in it Gray shares with us her life in rural communities in Tuscany, Catalonia, the Cyclades and Apulia. She learns how the people cook, grow, and preserve their traditional foods. You can read and cook from this book for years, and still find fresh inspiration every time you go back. The way Gray writes is so full of rich detail, joyously interesting diversions, and respect for people. You want to be right there with her and in some ways you are when you pick up this book. Buy it for the recipes – and the stories.
Prospect Books is a small, independent publisher of books about cookery, food history and the ethnology of food. You can find it at www.prospectbooks.co.uk



Health at every size



By Charlotte Cooper

I have been fat all my life, though a fat activist for the past twenty years of it. To me, this involves thinking about, organising and working towards fat liberation, even though it's unlikely to happen in my lifetime. 2008 marked the tenth anniversary of the publication of my book, *Fat & Proud*, the debates therein are as relevant now as ever, and I continue to be involved in many fat lib initiatives.

My activism concerns civil rights and social justice, of developing fat culture and community. I'm also interested in the nascent Fat Studies discipline. So it's weird talking about food, that's rarely what it's about for me. I expect this might come as a surprise because we all know that fat and food are central, right? Well, it depends on your model.

The way that most of us understand fat in 21st Century Western society is through what I call 'The Model With No Name'. It's what we think of as truth, common sense and 'just the way it is'. Typically, fat people are contextualised as pitiful, lacking in moral fibre, diseased, greedy and lazy, not just ugly but disgusting, pathetic, underclass, worthless, a repulsive joke, a problem that needs to be eradicated. Remember the faceless, nameless pictures of fat people used for illustrating such stories in the news? Or loveable Jamie Oliver lumbering around in a fat suit, clutching chips and burgers to his chest? That's what I'm talking about.

Historical and cultural perspectives, not to mention the work of fat activists, prove that The Model With No Name is only a model and that there are other, sometimes more compassionate, ways of addressing fat. I'd argue that this model has become 'the truth' because it is underscored by two important sites of power: medicine and the media, and the industries connected to them, for example health insurance, or advertising. It is also influenced by trades that have a commercial interest in the hatred of fatness, including drugs companies, diet food producers and retailers, and diet businesses in general, to name but a few. Some theorists suggest that fat hatred is formed or influenced by other forces of oppression, for example misogyny, racism, or fear of disability; it's debateable.

But back to 'the truth'. Under this model, fat is caused by eating too much of the wrong stuff. Interventions designed to get rid of fat –

diets, drugs, surgery – inevitably focus on food too, namely restricting its passage through the body, or replacing it with 'food' of questionable nutritional quality.

These interventions are clearly problematic at best and health-destroying at worst. Dieting compromises physical health through the inevitable weight regain and yo-yo cycle, and it creates a misinformed and fretful relationship with food, contributing to and normalising the psychology of eating disorders. With well-documented and consistently high failure rates, diets do not deliver on their promises. Weight loss drugs and surgery, to a greater extent, carry significant health risks that are frequently underplayed by their providers, yet they are presented as the only solution to the problem of fat.

Unfortunately, these unpopular realities are being ignored by public health agencies who are currently fixated on eradicating fatness, especially in children, under the false rhetoric of a 'global obesity epidemic'. Even my local authority has had a contract with Slimming World – funded by my council tax!

Aside from promoting poor health, there are other high costs associated with this hate and ignorance-fuelled thinking regarding food and fat. It perpetuates fatphobia, not just amongst fat people but anyone who has ever worried about the size of their bodies, it means that few of us live freely and happily in our own skins. Fat-hating initiatives must surely be contributing to future generations of kids who are likely to grow up with significant problems regarding eating and body image. The irony is that, throughout this, fat people remain beleaguered, because, of course, no one is ever going to get rid of us, we are part of the fabric of humanity.

If I was in charge I would think about instigating projects that focus on rehabilitating diet and weight loss surgery survivors. I would ensure that all public health initiatives subscribe to a Health At Every Size ethos. I would fund programmes which recognise that fat people are often of the lowest socio-economic strata, which address inequalities of class, gender and race and seek to provide high-quality food for everyone, not just the Waitrose set. These could be projects like Plaistow World Food Festival in East London, or the Cass Corridor Food Co-Op in Detroit, which

Health at Every Size (HAES)

The not for profit organisation **HAES UK** promotes a health at every size approach to public health nutrition interventions. **HAES** is an approach to health that does not pursue the goal of a particular body weight, but rather concentrates on what health benefits and improvements can practically be achieved for individuals. Key ideas include: size acceptance, listening to internal body signals and taking care of the body with nutritious, varied eating and enjoyable exercise.

According to co-founder, academic and NHS dietitian, Lucy Aphramor: **HAES** advocates generally do not believe that the same narrow weight range is maximally healthy for every individual. Rather, the **HAES** approach is that as individuals include physical activity in their lives, and eat in response to physical cues rather than emotional cues, they will settle towards their own, personal ideal weights. These weights, however, can be higher or lower than those described by standard medical guidelines. Crucially, **HAES** emphasises the benefits of sound nutrition, active living and body confidence as ends in themselves, not as a route to weight management. Adopting a **HAES** approach may or may not result in a weight change, but that is not the point. The point is that **HAES** improves health outcomes long-term and dieting doesn't.

encourage community involvement and access to culturally diverse fresh food and eating habits, that are fun and engaging for everyone, irrespective of size. More imagination and less investment in fat hatred could really make a difference to everyone's health.

Want to know more?

Big Fat Blog

News and comment in the world of the rotund <http://bigfatblog.com>

Fat Studies

Forum for this new academic discipline <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fatstudies>

Health At Every Size

www.healthateverysize.org.uk/launch.html



Building an earth oven at the Cherry Wood Project

Leading the way on low impact living and skills for life

There are some wonderful projects in the UK if you are interested in finding out more about traditional crafts and skills, and low impact living. Two of the loveliest are the Cherry Wood Project and the Magdalen Project.

Cherry Wood is a 40 acre sustainably managed woodland in a beautiful valley filled with wild garlic and comfrey branching from St. Catherine's Valley, five miles to the north east of the City of Bath. Tim Gatfield, his family, and willing apprentices live there in yurts, with outdoor showers, no electricity, compost toilets, and an outdoor kitchen with an earth oven fired by charcoal made from their woodland. The centre runs courses on everything from green woodworking to traditional building skills to earth oven building to coracle making. All courses use wood coppiced on site – Tim Gatfield is bringing back traditional woodland management skills – these bring diversity back into the woodland whilst providing useful materials for living in a low impact way.

The Magdalen Project is an environmental education centre, and a charity, caring for people and the land in the heart of a 132 acre organic farm on the Somerset/Dorset border. A diverse range of managed and natural habitats provide the basis for a wide range of courses about farming, land management and food. For example, you can try cheese making, bread making, meat curing, preserving, dry stone walling, poultry keeping for beginners, lambing or moth identification.

Both centres run friendly and expert courses. Without preaching that we all must want to learn 'traditional' skills, they offer us a vision of co-operative living, in a reskilled agricultural environment, and they show us a way of thoughtful living that is a partnership between people and land.

See page 22 for our book review on building your own earth oven.

For more information www.themagdalenproject.org.uk or www.cherrywoodproject.co.uk



Tim Gatfield smoothing out sand while building an earth oven

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

Vegan GP questions need for fish oil

Dear Jessica Mitchell,

Concerning the article Fishy Business in the last issue of *The Food Magazine*: may I make a comment?

When I qualified as a doctor in 1952, nutrition was not a part of the curriculum, although we did study the biochemistry of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

I've been a keen vegetarian most of my life (now aged 81 years) and went vegan in 1987. Presumably I consume less omega-3 fatty acids than average yet most friends and family say that I look in my sixties. Every day I walk and jog 3-4 miles and finish up with a work-out on the cycling machine and with a 30lb weight.

I do take daily several walnuts, a spoonful of linseeds and some avocado. Although many acquaintances still say that a vegan diet is 'stupid' I recall from my practise days that vegans lived nine years longer than average, had just 20% of the hospital bed occupancy rate over the age of 65 years and about half the incidence of cancer of the rest of the population.

Biologically I believe humans are designed as herbivores, ie alkaline rather acid saliva, bowel length approximately 10 times trunk length as opposed to 3 times in carnivores etc. Having written so far, I've just read the vegan article in the magazine which confirms the health (and agricultural) benefits I've mentioned.

The question that really needs further research is 'How important are the omega-3 oils and how much do we need?' By the way I come from a very extensive family of uncles, aunts, cousins etc. and so far I've almost outlived them all, so I do think genetics don't play a part here.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Ryde, London

Artificial flavourings and colourings can affect behaviour and mood

Dear Food Magazine,

One of my grandsons, aged 17, had a really horrible day recently. He was restless, spiteful and aggressive to his brothers, and nasty and very rude to his mother. All of this is generally out of character, but days like this have been experienced before.

The whole family was upset by this particularly awful behaviour. His mother decided that a 'talking to' was needed. It transpired that very unusually, my grandson had purchased several Powerade 'sport' drinks on a 'buy one get one free' offer. These drinks contain artificial sweeteners, flavours and artificial colours. E122 Carmoisine in the cherry and E133 Brilliant Blue in the berry and tropical fruit flavour.

E122 Carmoisine is one of the list of colourings found to cause hyperactivity in recent Food Standards Agency research. The E133 Brilliant Blue Azo dye was not included in the studies and as one of the 11 Azo dyes not included, regrettably it will not be part of the European awareness labelling coming into place in July 2010.

Why all artificial colours (Azo dyes) cannot be included in this warning label scheme is beyond me.

My grandson usually drinks only water or tea. He admitted to feeling very irritable, bad tempered, restless and almost spaced out. We then remembered that as a pre-schooler, he went 'up the wall' on the 'delightful' blue icing on a biscuit made at nursery.

Fortunately, we were able to identify the likely cause of the upsetting behaviour. Just think of the problems in families where there is no awareness of these additive effects, because the reactions are very disruptive and unpleasant. Our experience is generally a rare occurrence, but what happens in households where these artificially coloured products are regularly consumed.

Of course, our experiences could be considered as anecdotal and do not prove anything as far as the additives are concerned, except for the fact that research over many years does find artificial colours cause hyperactive systems.

I am sorry that despite the research, products like Powerade, which support sporting events, still choose to use artificial colours or other additives.

The 'blue' berry flavoured Powerade is chosen by FIFA for World Cup players. The 'red' cherry flavoured Powerade supports Team GB, 2010 Olympics, England Rugby, etc.

Your sincerely,

Sally Bunday, MBE