

THE FOOD MAGAZINE

Incorporating London Food News ♦ Issue 7 Volume 1 ♦ Oct/Dec 1989 ♦ £2.50

*'LOW-ALCOHOL'
MISLEADING
LABELS*

*THE FOOD BILL
- SPECIAL
REPORT*

*FISHY FISH
FINGERS*

*READING
SYMBOLS ON
PACKAGES*

*PESTICIDES -
ALAR IN YOUR
SHOPPING*

*NUTRITIONAL
LABELLING*

AIRLINE MEALS

*COOK-CHILL
GUIDELINES*

*DANGERS IN
MICROWAVE
TAKE-AWAYS*

*TEACHING HOME
ECONOMICS*

*IRRADIATION
BAN IN USA*

*CAT PARASITES
IN VEGETABLES*

*FOOD
INTOLERANCE*

LETTERS

BOOK REVIEWS

RECIPES

*CAROLINE
WALDERGRAVE'S
DIARY*



HAZARDS FOR COCOA WORKERS

PHOTO: ALASTAIR HAY

ISSN 0953-5047

The Food Magazine Co-editors
Sue Dibb
Tim Lobstein

Subscriptions/production
Sharon Smith

London Food Commission Director
Tim Lang

PA to Director
Gabrielle Jones

Administration Officer
Keith Dickenson

Associate Staff
Eric Brummer
Issy Cole-Hamilton

Sara E Hill
Adriana Luba
Melanie Miller
Peter Snell
Tony Webb

Designed by Artworkers, 402a St John
Street, London EC1V 4NJ.
Printed and despatched by Spiderweb,
14-20 Sussex Way, London N7

Subscription Rates:
UK
£12.50 individuals/small groups
£25 organisations

Overseas
£20 individuals
£30 organisations

Bulk orders: prices available on request

Retail distributor: Central Books, 14 The
Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER.
01-407 5447

The London Food Commission is a voluntary
organisation providing an independent source
of research, information, education and
advice on food.

Its membership represents London's
community and voluntary groups, food
sector trade unions, statutory bodies and
interested individuals and professionals.

MEMBERS

Voluntary organisations:
Action and Information on Sugar*
Action Research on Multiple Sclerosis
Age Concern Hammersmith and Fulham
Asian Women's Network
British Diabetic Association
British-Turkish Committee
Catholic Aid for Overseas Development
Cooperative Retail Services
Cooperative Retail Society London Political
Committee*
Coronary Prevention Group
Croydon Friends of the Earth
Disability Resources Team
Friends of the Earth
FoE Muswell Hill
Glydon Health Project
Hackney Council for Racial Equality*
Health Rights

THE FOOD MAGAZINE

The Food Magazine is published quarterly by the London Food Commission,
88 Old Street, London EC1V 9AR. Telephone 01-250 1021

CONTENTS

TAKE-AWAYS

Microwave heating fails to kill food bacteria 2&3

PESTICIDES

We found Alar in everyday products 4&5

FISH FINGERS

Still waiting for action after government promises 9

LOW-ALCOHOL DRINKS

Low-alcohol wine can be stronger than full-strength lager 11

THE FOOD BILL

Our Special Report examines what should be in the Bill 12-15

SYMBOLS FOR SELLING

We take a look at the signs on the packets 16&17

NUTRITIONAL LABELLING

Still confusing and unhelpful 20 & 21

COCOA HAZARDS

The pesticides can kill plantation workers 19

CATS' PARASITES

Uncooked meat and vegetables are a hazard in pregnancy 23

FOOD INTOLERANCE

We review the poorly-recognised catalogue of problems 24&25

Editorial	1	Book Reviews	29
Airline meals	7	Letters	30
Teaching Home Economics	22	Caroline Waldegrave's Diary	32
US Irradiation Ban	6	Recipes — Lifesaving food	33
Caroline Walker Trust	26	What the Journals Say	34

United Response
Vegan Society*
Vegetarian Society*
Women's Health Information Centre*
Women in Medical Practice

Trades union/workers representatives:
Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union*
Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union
Council*

General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied
Trades Union*

GMB Essex Branch
GMB London Branch
Health Visitors Association*
Institution of Professional Civil Servants*
Manufacturing, Science and Technology
Union*

National Union of Public Employees*
Royal College of Nursing
South East Region Trades Union Congress*
Transport and General Workers Union*
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied
Workers*

Statutory/local authority bodies
Ealing College of Higher Education
Ealing Community Health Council
Enfield Community Health Council
Greater London Enterprise
Hackney Food Policy Group
Healthshare
Heart Disease & Stroke Programme
Institute of Trading Standards
Administration, Greater London Branch*
Islington Health Education Department
Kentish Town Health Centre
Kingston and Esher Health Authority
Lambeth Consumer Services
London Borough of Ealing
London Borough of Haringey
London Borough of Islington*
London Borough of Greenwich
London Borough of Southwark*
Metropolitan Chief Officers for Trade and
Consumer Services
Middlesex Polytechnic*
Popular Planning Project
Riverside Health Authority
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Reference Library
Southwark College
Toxic Chemicals Information Centre
Wandsworth Health Authority

Associate Members represented on
Council of Management
Deborah Beswick*
Dr Michael Joffe*
Usha Prashar*
Kiran Shukla*
Glenys Thornton*
Kathryn Webster*
Jack Winkler*
Mary Whiting*
Faustina Williams*
Malcolm Williams*
Simon Wright*

*indicates elected member of the Council of
Management

Indian Cultural Association
Islington Friends of the Earth
National Council for Voluntary
Organisations*
National Eczema Society

National Housewives Association*
Pensioners Link
South London Jewish Family Heritage
Tower Hamlets Health Campaign*
Transnationals Information Centre London

You can't eat public relations

Over three years ago the London Food Commission became concerned at government and food industry (in)action on food poisoning. Our projects on irradiation, cook-chill and food additives all pointed to the need to tackle food poisoning and food safety.

Because we, and a handful of other brave souls, dared to speak out for the public interest we have been accused of wanting to bring the government down or to destroy the food industry, when all we argue for is good quality food for all.

It happens to be the law already. Now that law is up for revision with the proposed new Food Bill. In the LFC's view the spirit of the law is being broken as it stands. The law does need tightening up, does need modernising and does need to regain public confidence.

Public confidence is at an all-time low, but the industry has reacted as if media reports on food scandals are simply a matter of poor public relations.

A recent issue of *Chemistry and Industry*, the venerable organ of the food and chemical industry, commented: 'The ultimate issue is not whether the public understands the industry but whether the public trusts it.' The article was entitled 'Restoring the image of the chemical industry'.

I would be the last to deny them that image.

Confidence and trust are essential components in a food policy. But to argue, as many seem in danger of doing, that all that needs changing is the image, is to dig deeper into the hole rather than to climb out. *Farmers Weekly* recently carried a piece calling for 'a propaganda outfit to project the right image to the rest of the country'.

And Sir Hector Laing, Chairman of United Biscuits, speaking on the marketing of



Hobnob biscuits, said 'I think perception is very important, more important than fact'.

I despaired when I read the government's Food Safety White Paper. I expect White Papers to have some punch, state a clear assessment, outline an option or two and indicate government thinking. The White Paper did the latter but none of the rest.

The thinking was PR. 68 pages in total, 63 pages of self-congratulation—of the 'everything is just fine' variety—and five pages of very brief suggestions for action. We can be positive about the one or two shifts in the right direction. I am delighted to

see an acknowledgement that more training is needed. But who is to do this? Who will pay? By when? To what standard? Silence. No wonder Egon Ronay in the *Sunday Times* called the White Paper 'whitewash'.

That is why, in this issue, *The Food Magazine* offers its own suggestions for positive change.

The way to win public confidence is not through public relations with a touch-up of image or a photo-opportunity for a Minister, but by tackling the problems at source. Was I alone in believing that the senior minister was responsible for food policy? Surely designating a junior Parliamentary Secretary, Mr David Maclean, as Minister of Food is something

of a demotion of the importance of food, and the announcement was a PR exercise which verged on contempt.

We wish Mr Maclean well, but we urge him to brush up his policies and put some teeth into the Bill. Now is the time to evaluate the policy options, prepare the round tables and put public health, environment and consumer protection before party political ideology.

Thank you to all our readers who completed our questionnaire with the last issue. All your comments and suggestions were extremely valuable and we look forward to incorporating them in future issues.



Although we need cholesterol, an excess in the blood can cause arteries to "thicken" and lead to a heart attack. While a low-fat diet can go some way to controlling the problem it can be considerably more effective if you use oat bran as well.

Oat bran contains a high concentration of soluble fibre—very different from the insoluble fibre or roughage we need for our digestive systems.

In fact, current research in the UK and America shows that a regular intake of soluble fibre can reduce cholesterol levels and, in so doing, the chances of a heart attack.

That doesn't mean we have discovered a magic cure.

Oat bran can only do its job if you do yours—your heart needs servicing with regular exercise and a healthy diet.

But it's a breakthrough and one you can enjoy to the full with new Kellogg's Common Sense Oat Bran Flakes.

Not only are they a good source of soluble fibre, they're a treat for your taste buds too.

The flakes are delicious on their own and there's a raisin and apple variety for those who prefer a fruitier taste.

Take your pick and try one. You'll thank us from the bottom of your heart.



After 1,000,000,000 beats it needs regular servicing.

On average, the human heart beats 70 times every minute. Which means that by the time you have reached your thirtieth birthday, this small but vital machine somewhere in the region of 1 billion times. Without a break, your heart is on your last legs.

And many of these deaths happen prematurely—between the ages of 35 and 65.

So why is it that whole heart disease is falling in the USA? It's down in the gut. Studies in the UK show that increased fibre intake is linked to a lower risk of heart disease.

One of the new releases is a...

Kellogg's ads for their Common Sense Oat Bran Flakes have been criticised by the Coronary Prevention Group. CPG's Mike Rayner has complained to the IBA and the ASA about the ads' health claims that the breakfast cereal will lower a person's risk of heart disease and prolong life. Under the 1984 Food Labelling Regulations products cannot make health claims without a product licence.

According to press reports, Van den Berghs, the manufacturers of Flora margarine are unhappy about the Kellogg's ads. Flora were banned from advertising the link between polyunsaturated fat and health in their ads.

The Coronary Prevention Group is concerned that at a time when consumers need factual information, some advertisers are pushing at the bounds of acceptability by their use of health claims in food advertisements.

Microwave safety cover-up

The government was aware of the potential dangers of microwave ovens long before it warned consumers this summer. But government departments and the industry tried to block publication of two government reports.

It was left to the Consumers' Association to insist that consumers be fully informed and warnings be issued to the public.

The first report showed that microwave ovens failed to kill *Listeria* in over a quarter of ready-made meals and was available to ministers in January. The second confirmed previously published evidence that microwave ovens heat unevenly and fail to reach temperatures needed to kill food poisoning bacteria.

This reluctance to give information to the public once again questions the credibility of MAFF statements that they are putting consumers' interests first.

Meanwhile food manufacturers have also been accused of failing to warn consumers that some cook-chilled ready meals were unsuitable for microwave cooking. Rather than labelling their products with appropriate warnings, companies including Sainsbury's and Marks and Spencer simply removed microwave cooking instructions from some of their own-label cook-chill and ready-made meals.

WARNINGS

A spokeswoman for Sainsbury's admitted that no warning to avoid microwave cooking had replaced the instructions on packages and no explanation for their withdrawal had been given to customers.

The Consumers' Association has warned consumers not to cook ready-made or cook-chill foods and meals in a microwave oven.

Despite the fact that its own research shows it is impossible to heat some meals to high enough temperatures to kill harmful bacteria, MAFF's advice is 'foods are safe if piping hot right through'. A MAFF press release fails to give advice as how consumers should measure these temperatures.

Fungus fears

Weather conditions have meant that last year's and this year's wheat harvests have been particularly susceptible to contamination by the ergot fungus and there are fears that some millers could be accepting substandard grain.

The fungus develops within the grain of wheat which becomes blackened and distorted. Several toxic alkaloids are produced whose symptoms, if consumed in sufficient dose, include effects on the circulatory system, abortion and gangrene. Normal fungicides do not protect against ergot.

There have been cases of poisoning amongst farm animals and in response to calls for higher standards,

particularly from the British Poultry Federation, animal feed manufacturers have agreed to cut the level of ergot that is acceptable in animal feeds from 0.05 per cent to 0.001 per cent.

HUMAN CONSUMPTION

But there are no statutory controls over the amount of ergot that is permitted in milling wheat for human consumption. A new International Standard lays down minimum standards for wheat intended for human consumption and which is the subject of international trade. It includes a maximum permissible level of 0.05 per cent which is higher than the new guidelines for animal feed!

The Ministry of Agriculture allows millers to set their own standards and does not know what standards they use. According to the UK Agricultural Supply Trades Association, their standard contract for millers and their suppliers says that milling wheat should be free from ergot. However a spokesperson told *The Food Magazine* that millers can set their own standards and were free to strike out that part of the contract. Similarly the millers trade association, the National Association of British and Irish Millers, were unable to say what standards individual millers worked to.

STRICT TESTS

According to two of the largest UK millers, Allied Mills and Dalgety, they would not accept grain containing ergot. A spokesperson for Spillers Milling, a subsidiary of Dalgety, Britain's third largest miller, told *The Food Magazine*

that they carried out strict tests and reject any lorry load containing ergot. He was unable to say what would then happen to that lorry but thought it might return to the merchant. Another source said he had heard of lorries driving from one mill to another in search of a buyer.

WHOLEMEAL BREAD

Ergot may be cleaned from the wheat but at an additional cost. There are no tests to detect traces of ergot in foods such as wholemeal bread at present but investigations are beginning in some public analyst laboratories following complaints by consumers. Without statutory controls or tests for detecting ergot in a food, there is growing concern that unscrupulous millers may be allowing small quantities of ergot to pass into products for human consumption.

Food poisoning risks in microwave take-aways

Take-away meals heated by microwave ovens carry a high risk of listeria food poisoning, says a new survey from environmental health officers.

Caterers are using inappropriate microwave ovens, food handlers are untrained and do not understand how microwaves work and most foods surveyed do not carry instructions for microwave cooking time. Even those with instructions failed to reach temperatures sufficient to kill listeria.

The survey by Southwark Public Protection in September sampled thirty meals from fifteen take-aways, cafes and pubs in south-east London.

Environmental health officers measured temperatures in dishes with a high risk of food poisoning, such as steak and kidney pie, pasties, chicken, burgers and sausage all re-heated by microwave ovens.

They found half the meals failed to reach 70°C throughout the food, the Department of Health's guideline temperature for ensuring harmful food

poisoning bacteria such as listeria are killed. In the worst case a temperature of 36°C was recorded in a steak and kidney pie from a national self-service take-away chain.

Separate studies have shown that up to one in five pre-cooked foods contain listeria. Listeriosis can be a serious illness for pregnant women, the very young or old or those with suppressed immune systems.

Environmental health officers measured the temperature of the food immediately the cooking time had finished and then two and a half minutes later to allow for standing time. In cases where the temperature continued to rise the highest temperature reached was recorded. Temperatures were measured at three points in the food – in the centre and at the edges.

COLD SPOTS

Temperatures at different points within the food varied as much as 30°C. The lowest recorded was in the centre of the food in all cases except four samples.

The table shows the maximum temperature that the coldest part of the food reached. Half the samples failed to meet the Department of Health's guidelines*.

But customers may be at even greater risk of food poisoning than this startling picture shows. Temperatures were often lower when the food was removed straight from the oven before standing time, yet the food is usually given straight to the customer. Two-thirds of foods failed to reach 70°C immediately after cooking. Even more worrying is that many customers actually requested that the food is only warmed rather than made hot.

The majority of foods were stored in a fridge but eight foods were stored at higher temperatures – half of them at room temperatures – including chicken known to be a high-risk source of food poisoning bacteria. A survey earlier this year by Southwark Public Protection found over 75 per cent of foods were stored above temperatures recommended to prevent the growth of listeria.

More than half of the caterers were

using unsuitable domestic quality ovens rather than catering ovens. If used continuously, domestic ovens lose the capacity to heat food to the correct temperature.

The worse outlets in the survey were two branches of a national self-service chain where customers reheat food in microwave ovens following written instructions. Temperatures as low as 36°C were found. None of the four burgers and pies sampled from this chain passed the acceptable temperature test.

Dave Denton, an environmental health officer for Southwark said: 'Our survey shows that many caterers are using microwave ovens inappropriately and may be putting the public at risk. Microwave ovens may appear convenient but are in fact potentially dangerous if not properly used.'

* The Department of Health guidelines state that food reheated in a microwave oven should reach 70°C throughout for at least two minutes to be safe



Southwark Public Protection are calling for:

- Licensing of food premises
- Training of food handlers
- Better information on food products eg cooking time, standing time and whether suitable for reheating in a microwave oven
- Better information on safe use of microwave ovens for food handlers
- Foods to be appropriately shaped to ensure even cooking and packaged to prevent contamination by food handlers
- Standardised settings for microwave ovens

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON MICROWAVE OVENS SEE THE FOOD MAGAZINE ISSUE NO 6

Type of Outlet	Food	Cooking time	Temperature of coldest part(°C)	Pass/Fail + or- 70°C
Hot bread and take-away	Southern fried chicken	1min	48	Fail
Caribbean take-away	Jerk chicken piece	1min	52	Fail
	Spare rib BBQ	30 secs	47	Fail
	Chicken leg BBQ	1 min	50	Fail
Take-away cafe	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	75	Pass
	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	67	Fail
Restaurant & Sandwich Bar	Steak & kidney pie	2 min	97	Pass
	Cheeseburger	1 min	88	Pass
Restaurant and Take-away	Cornish pastie	1 min	88	Pass
	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	90	Pass
Restaurant and Take-away	Cornish pastie	1 min	43	Fail
	Beef & onion pie	1 min	75	Pass
Restaurant and Take-away	Steak & kidney pie	2 min	75	Pass
	Cornish pastie	2 min	72	Pass
Public house	Jumbo sausage	50 secs	78	Pass
	Chicken curry	3 min	77	Pass
Cafe	Steak & kidney pie	1.5 min	88	Pass
	Mince beef pie	1.5 min	73	Pass
Delicatessen	Cornish pastie	1 min	63	Fail
	Chicken samosa	1 min	65	Fail
Self-service take-away/grocers	Steak & kidney pie	40 secs	36	Fail
	Kingsize beefburger	39 secs	53	Fail
Confectioner/newsagent	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	53	Fail
	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	64	Fail Self-
service take-away/grocers	Kingsize beefburger	40 secs	48	Fail
	Steak & kidney pie	40 secs	47	Fail
Cafe	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	74	Pass
	Steak & kidney pie	1 min	70	Pass
Fish and chip shop	Mince beef & onion	2.5 min	55	Fail
	Steak & kidney pie	2.5 min	74	Pass

* indicates commercial rather than domestic microwave oven

PESTICIDES

Growing safer apples

After the concern about Alar some supermarkets are selling organic apples but the image of the once healthy apple has been dented. Kim Wilson-Gough, an organic apple grower from Devon, describes his experiences.

Many apple growers are locked into intensive systems, chemical regimes and huge co-operative packing and marketing

houses. There are European standards for size, colour and the extent to which even the smallest blemish is permitted.

In the west, glutted with food in and out of season, advertisers and managers of each foodstuff fight to secure and enlarge their markets. Last February the Apple and Pear Development Council rejected a small grant application for a report on what apple farmers abroad were doing to grow apples organically or near organically. Mainstream apple farming tends to hope that this 'organic nonsense' will blow over!

The organic movement is equally confused. Standards as to what is permitted seem to vary between

organisations and countries. What do we mean by 'organic'? The Soil Association lays down rigid standards but has few dedicated apple farms on its list. Apples for juice or cider where skin finish is unimportant, are picked over and the better fruit sold as organic. Other organic fruit is from growers where the orchard is only a side line. Thus a lot of

enhancers of growth, set or colour. However, we have conflicting advice and end up as pioneers trying to grow our apples to a proper standard and survive financially.

So, we have a dilemma. On one hand the consumer wants to be sure that the apples they buy are healthy and on the other how does the apple grower get

Baby food industry turns on government

Baby food manufacturers have expressed anger at the government's recent report on pesticide residues* which recommended 'that efforts be made to reduce residue levels in infant foods as much as possible'.

Heather Paine, of the manufacturers' Infant and Dietetic Food Association, has written in the trade press: 'The levels of pesticide in commercially prepared baby foods are of the lowest quoted in the report and are well within maximum residue levels set by government...In passing all responsibility to the baby food manufacturers, government is ducking its own responsibility to ensure that the food supply is safe.'

She claims that the present use of pesticides prevents food companies from eliminating residues altogether and adds: 'At the present time organically produced crops are not a viable alternative for the manufacture of infant foods.' However, Heinz USA required its suppliers to ban the use of a reported 12 common pesticides in all its foods three years ago.

At that time the British National Farmers Union commented 'We have never heard of any specific problems with residues affecting babies. It is probably Heinz's excuse for adding

another 1p to the price of its baby food.'

Heinz UK told *The Food Magazine* they have not followed their sister company in the USA but have voluntarily banned captafol, dinocap and daminozide (Alar). Otherwise Heinz UK says it accepts government advisory service assurances that residues from the remaining pesticides are not a cause for concern.

RECENT SURVEY

Despite Heinz's assurances, a recent survey showed that one of Heinz UK's products did contain daminozide (see table opposite). There is evidence that at least five of the pesticides Heinz banned in the USA, but continue to allow in the UK, have been associated with carcinogenic, mutagenic or allergenic problems in laboratory animals. And then there are the other 400-plus active pesticides...

Heinz's statement to *The Food Magazine* added the claim: 'Controlled use of pesticides is necessary to produce sufficient quantity and quality of raw materials at acceptable costs.' Perhaps it is time that they were more imaginative and — at the cost of the extra 1p — took the bold step of becoming the first major food manufacturer to use only organically-grown food. Such a move might do more than any government gesture to stimulate organic farming methods in Britain.

* Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment, Appendix 1 to the Report of the Working Party on Pesticide Residues: 1985-88, HMSO, 1989.



Mechanical weeding can replace herbicides in organic apple orchards

the organic apples eaten in this country come from the continent where organic standards can vary from our own.

Organic sprays are broad spectrum, and if mistimed, can result in a wave of pest insects. The winter tar wash on trees has helped the rise of the pest red spider mite. There is concern that the organic sulphur spray against fungal attack may not be totally benign to insects. Some apple farmers concentrate not so much on organics but on trying to balance predator insects against pests. There is little relevant Government research and advice comes from as far afield as California.

sADVICE

Amongst the confusion are a few apple farmers who, like myself, are trying to grow apples in harmony with the environment. Instead of pesticides (even organic ones) we try to carefully balance the pest and predator insects. Rather than herbicides, we use machinery and time to remove the water competing weeds around the trees. To avoid nitrates, seaweed and manure are applied to feed our trees. Labour has replaced sprays to thin the apples to ensure a steady yield and fruit set. We have never used Alar or other chemical

such apples to the consumer? Most apple farmers trying to farm 'organically' tend to be too small to fit into the modern high volume food supply system. Surely the answer is to bring the farmer and consumer directly together as in America. There some farmers undertake to grow food for a number of people in an agreed way. Those buying food from the farms know exactly how their food is grown, are not fixed to a set quantity, can visit the farm and the food is delivered straight to the household.

Therefore, if the reader wants to buy apples from a specific farm where they can have a say in how the fruit is being grown, let's make a start. With today's delivery systems it's about time the grower and consumer dealt face to face to save money and by-pass the wholesalers, advertising agents, market researchers and hyper-markets.

So, do apples today scare shoppers away? I hope not. Least ways not the apples that a few of us are trying to grow.

■ Readers who are interested in buying organically grown apples direct should contact Kim Wilson-Gough at Whitestone Farm, East Cornworthy, Totnes, Devon. Tel. 080 422 400

PESTICIDES

Alar poses cancer risk

One in a thousand children may develop cancer from Alar, the cosmetic pesticide spray used on apples. Tests on apples bought in the UK by Parents for Safe Food found levels of Alar higher than in US apples, and which pose a cancer risk considered unacceptably high by US Federal Government Standards. The results also showed that some products which have been publicised as being Alar-free by retailers and manufacturers still contain Alar.

Daminozide, the active ingredient in Alar which cannot be washed or peeled off the fruit, breaks down into a potent

carcinogen when the apples are cooked, processed or made into juice. Five out of six apple juices, five out of twelve samples of eating apples, both samples of cooking apples and two out of three samples of ready-to-eat baby food contained detectable amounts of daminozide.

UNACCEPTABLE RISK

According to the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC), an independent US public interest research group, children in the UK may be exposed to an unacceptable cancer risk due to consumption of apples and apple products sprayed with Alar.

Twenty five samples of apple products were analysed in May for daminozide residues. Products with less than 0.1 mg/kg (<0.1) were either free from daminozide or contained levels less than the detectable level of 0.1 mg/kg.

PRODUCT	SUPERMARKET WHERE PURCHASED	DAMINOZIDE CONTENT(mg/kg)
New Zealand Cox	Marks & Spencer	<0.1
Sturmer Apples	Marks & Spencer	<0.1
USA Red Delicious	Marks & Spencer	2.3
Chilean Granny Smiths	Marks & Spencer	<0.1
Italian Golden Delicious	Marks & Spencer	0.3
Fresh English Apple Juice	Safeway	1.0
New Zealand Red Premier	Safeway	0.4
Apple Juice	Safeway	0.4
English Bramley	Safeway	0.4
S African Granny Smith	Safeway	0.3
Morton Apple Pie Filling	Safeway	2.3
S African Golden Delicious	Safeway	0.2
English Apple Juice	Waitrose	0.4
Delmonte Apple Juice	Waitrose	1.4
Coniflux Chunky Apple	Tesco	<0.1
English Apple Juice	Tesco	<0.1
Chilean Granny Smith	Tesco	<0.1
Bramley Cooking Apples	Tesco	3.0
USA Red Desert	Sainsbury	<0.1
New Zealand Gala	Sainsbury	<0.1
Apple Juice	Sainsbury	0.8
Apple Slices	Sainsbury	<0.1
Heinz Pure Fruit Baby Food	Sainsbury	0.4
Heinz Apple Sauce	Sainsbury	<0.1
Chilean Granny Smith	Sainsbury	<0.1
Cow & Gate Apple Dessert	Local pharmacy	0.9



PHOTO: ANNA DALGLEISH

'If, for example, a child drank an average of one glass of apple juice each day from birth through age five containing 0.66 mg/kg daminozide, the average level found in the apple juice survey, he/she could face an estimated risk of approximately one in a thousand to almost one in ten thousand of contracting cancer sometime during life as a result solely of this pre-schooler exposure to daminozide. This risk is a hundred to a thousand times greater than the cancer risk level considered unacceptable by the US Federal Government following a full lifetime of exposure to a pesticide from all commodities on which it is used.'

Supermarket giant, Tesco, who announced back in April a ban on Alar in all the apples they stock, registered the highest level of Alar residue (3.0 mg/kg) in the tests with their Bramley Cooking Apple.

The NRDC report that the daminozide levels found in UK apple

products are consistent with or higher than the levels that prompted the US government to propose banning all food uses of daminozide. Parents for Safe Food, The London Food Commission and the Pesticides Trust are calling for an immediate suspension of the use of Alar.

Pamela Stephenson of Parents for Safe Food says: 'When there is any doubt at all over the safety of a particular pesticide, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the consumer.'

CALL FOR EUROPEAN BAN ON ALAR

The Bureau of European Consumers Unions (BEUC) has called for an immediate EC-wide ban on Alar following tests by the French consumer organisation, Union Federale des Consommateurs, that found Alar in apples, fruit juices and babyfood.

Gripe victory

Our campaign to expose the high alcohol levels in gripe waters has succeeded in getting the government to recommend cuts of 600 per cent in the alcohol content.

Jack Ashley MP took up the campaign and asked the health minister Roger Freeman to make a statement. After some delay Mr Freeman announced a review of new product licences and implied that hence forth only levels of alcohol below 0.8 per cent would be allowed, compared with present levels of 4.5-5.0 per cent.

Manufacturers have claimed that the alcohol is necessary in the product, although they have given differing reasons as to why. Dinnefords claim that the alcohol is only there as a preservative and at 0.8 per cent would not be effective. Woodfords, the market leader with annual sales of five million bottles, states that alcohol is present because it is used to extract the dill oil and ginger tincture from dill seeds and ginger root. These extracts, they say, release the pressure on the stomach and achieve the required 'burp'.

Health workers have expressed concern that the alcohol is largely unnecessary and potentially hazardous. Mr Freeman admitted to 'around 50

reports a year' of accidental overdoses of gripe water.

It is not clear whether the requirement to cut alcohol levels will apply to brands already on sale. Mr Freeman has acknowledged only that the licences for existing products are due for review by the Committee on the Review of Medicines.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

In a statement by the Department of Health's Medicines Control Agency to *The Food Magazine*, they said they did not wish to pre-empt the committee's decisions. 'In any case', they added, 'any details and facts emerging from the meeting are strictly confidential between the Companies and the Medicines Control Agency.'

The author of the original survey into the levels of alcohol in gripe water, Tim Lobstein of the London Food Commission, said:

'Despite the evidence of alcohol problems being caused among babies, the government is giving the benefit of the doubt to the companies and letting them set the rules. Why are we parents and consumers not invited to submit our concerns? Why do they keep their decisions a secret? Companies made over £50m on gripe water last year. They have access to government and we parents don't. What sort of priorities are these?'

Illegal irradiation trade alleged



From: DIE VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE

In August, another scandal involving irradiated prawns was revealed. *The Sunday Times* of 6 August 1989 reported that a consignment of Indian prawns, rejected as being contaminated with salmonella in the USA, was being offered for sale in the UK.

The Sunday Times alleged that a dealer 'offered to send the prawns "on holiday to Holland", a trade expression for diverting them to an irradiation plant in the Netherlands, before importation to Britain'.

MEP Glyn Ford fears there has been a failure of European controls and is asking the European Commission to institute an enquiry into this and other allegations — notably that of loop-holes allowing fraudulent by-passing of Customs and Excise duty.

The company concerned is quoted as saying: 'We tell our customers it (the consignment) has been rejected. What they do with it then is entirely up to them. We would place them through irradiation for customers.' Such comments do little to reassure the public that irradiation can be adequately controlled.

Irradiation banned in US states

The UK government is continuing to legislate for the introduction of irradiation. Later this year the new Food Bill will begin the legal process of removing the current ban. But the legalisation of food irradiation need not be a foregone conclusion.

In New York State, the USA's second most populous state, Governor Mario Cuomo this summer banned the sale of irradiated food except spices. The new law has all-party support and follows a similar ban by Maine.

In the UK, a letter to Dame Janet

Fookes MP from David Maclean, the new Minister of Food, claims that three in ten consumers would now buy irradiated food. He implies that the government has weathered the irradiation storm. 'Since John MacGregor's announcement to the House on 21 June we have received a mere fraction of the volume of correspondence sent in following the publication of the ACINF Report in 1986.'

But rather than indicating acceptance, Tim Lang of the Food Irradiation Campaign says: 'People have not lost interest. Rather they have lost patience making their views known to a government with hearing difficulties. As people become aware of irradiation two things happen: the more they know, the more unhappy they are. And then they start thinking what can they do.'

David Gee, Director-Designate of Friends of the Earth, said: 'Our local

groups are coming to us asking for action. Irradiation could be a test case for government greenery.'

Public concern may well turn to retailers and manufacturers. 'If the government won't listen to opinion polls, or to the British Medical Association, the Retail Consortium, the Consumers' Association, the National Consumer Council, the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the Trades Union Congress to name but a few, perhaps the market-place will have to be the ultimate arbiter', says Lang.

The London Food Commission and Friends of the Earth are gathering information on retailers' and food manufacturers' policies towards irradiation. You can help by writing to your local supermarket or favourite food manufacturer. Please send your replies to The Food Irradiation Campaign, 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9AR.

Poisons in the air

Airline meals could give you food poisoning because caterers are reluctant to adopt government guidelines. A survey by environmental health officers earlier this year found that these meals hold a high risk of bacterial contamination, yet officers have no powers to prevent this.

The study found that nearly a quarter of over 1,000 meals sampled from ten airline caterers had excessively high levels of potentially dangerous bacteria.

The survey revealed many instances where surface bacterial contamination was in excess of the Department of Health's Pre-Cooked Chilled Foods guideline levels. But airline caterers argue that theirs is not a cook-chill operation and are reluctant to adopt a formalised system of cook-chill as specified within the guidelines.

The survey sampled food before despatch but in many cases many hours would elapse before serving the meal to passengers. Environmental health officers are concerned that once food is on board an aircraft bacteria may multiply because of poor handling and temperature control. The Food Hygiene Regulations do not cover aircraft so environmental health officers have no control over hygiene once food is on board.

FOOD POISONING RISKS

MP Ann Clwyd and environmental health chiefs are spearheading a campaign to tighten up regulations on airline meals. Stan Moreland, head of environmental health for Hillingdon, one of three boroughs covering Heathrow, told *The Food Magazine* 'Present regulations and statutes are out of date with modern air transport. Seventy airlines operate out of Heathrow, each with their own standards and different equipment. The time lag between meal production and consumption and flight delays, long flying times and poor temperature control can potentially lead

to rapid bacterial multiplication within the food and the very real risk of food poisoning.'

Heathrow is covered by three different local authority environmental health departments, with Terminal 4 alone split down the middle between two departments. The study, jointly carried out by the three boroughs, calls for quality control of food ingredients, effective temperature control of food at all stages of production, storage and service, prevention of cross-contamination from raw to cooked foods and hygiene training and supervision of food handlers.

Mr Moreland says this can be achieved only by updating UK legislation and with international action to police food hygiene standards on aircraft throughout the world. His department is taking part in a follow up survey of the ten Heathrow caterers which will also include sampling for *Listeria*.

GUIDELINES IGNORED

Another borough carrying out routine sampling is Crawley where over 20 million passengers pass through Gatwick airport each year. Local environmental health officer Graham Forbes believes that deliberate under-cooking, high ambient temperatures and lack of on-board monitoring are critical areas to which more departmental and national resources need to be targeted. He reaffirms that guidelines are being ignored and quotes temperature monitoring of food production at Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton and Stansted as averaging about 18°C, when the maximum laid down by the guidelines is 10°C. As the legislation stands he is powerless to take action.

This summer, Junior Health Minister Roger Freeman said that he was considering new codes of practice but not until next spring. Ann Clwyd says that more urgent action should be taken to safeguard airline passengers.

Airlines will have to decide for themselves whether or not to offer irradiated food to their passengers, the Minister for Agriculture told the House of Commons on 29 June.

Mr MacGregor said: 'It will be for the industry involved, in this case the airline, and for the consumers themselves to decide whether they wished to make use of irradiated food.'

Cook-chill guidelines criticised

New guidelines on cook-chill food were published in July. Professor Richard Lacey still has his doubts.

The most significant innovation in the Department of Health's new guidelines on cook-chill catering concerns reheating. It is stated that 'for reasons of safety the centre temperature of the food should reach at least 70°C and be maintained at not less than 70°C for two minutes'.

The implications of this are dramatic. Not only does this admit an inherent risk in the earlier stages of the system, but for the first time puts almost impossible pressure on the reheating arrangements. Presumably food that is cooked, chilled and eaten cold is no longer acceptable.

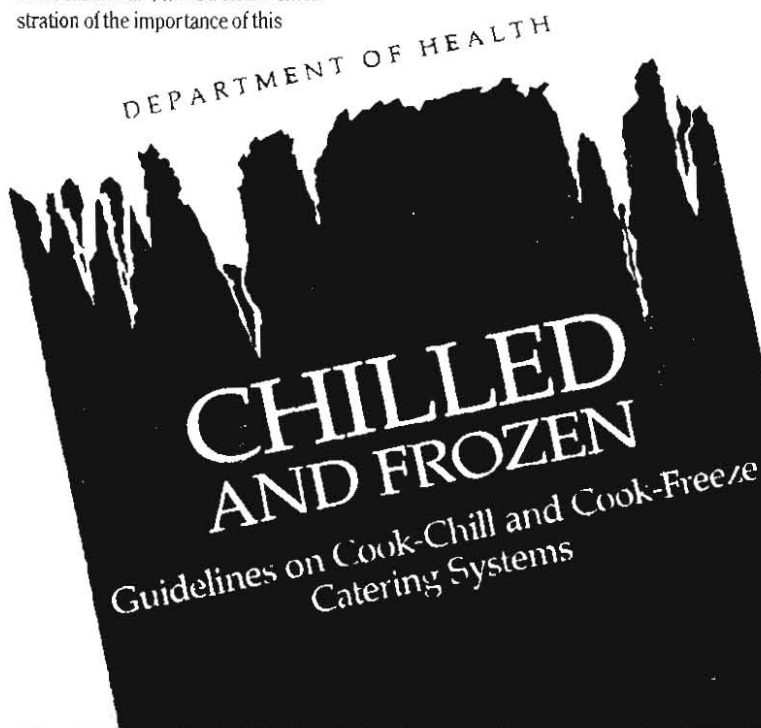
The reason for these stipulations is the belated awareness of the importance of psychrotrophs such as *Listeria monocytogenes* that is both tolerant of heat and able to flourish under refrigeration temperatures. Recent surveys have shown 10 per cent of commercial pâté produced by the cook-chill method to contain *Listeria*. This is a clear demonstration of the importance of this

organism in this system.

The new guidelines optimistically specify that *Listeria monocytogenes* should not be present in 25 grams of such food sampled just before reheating. There is of course no prospect of this being achieved in practice, hence the requirement for reheating to provide safety. Under operational conditions, how can maintaining a temperature of 70°C for two minutes in the centre of food items be ensured? Should thermocouples be inserted into every potato? No oven heats uniformly, so any general temperature setting would have to be about 80°C. However, even with this figure, uncertainty remains because of the lack of published evaluation of the microbiological safety of any reheating oven. Food will be either burnt or dangerous!

It is interesting to read that distribution times of reheated food must be less than 15 minutes, an admission that the initial proposals at Wakefield, and operations in about half of NHS hospitals, are unsatisfactory since central reheating is being used. Surely the implicit message is that it is time to limit further cook-chill introduction. If cooking of food must be remote from its serving, then cook-freeze, mentioned apparently as an afterthought, is preferable.

Professor Lacey is Professor of Clinical Microbiology at the University of Leeds.



NEWS IN SHORT

ILO praises larger food companies

The International Labour Organisation has found multinational food companies operating in underdeveloped countries to be generally more progressive and more generous employers than their local counterparts.

The largest 100 food companies — predicted to control 75 per cent of global processed food production by the end of the century — tended to be favoured by trade unions for their better wages and fringe benefits and greater stability of employment. The unions' main grievance was their lack of access to the multinationals' head offices.

Food poverty report published

Starvation may be rare in Britain, but a report from the National Food Alliance, a grouping of voluntary sector bodies concerned with food issues, reviews the mounting evidence linking poor health with food poverty and examines the shortcomings of various charitable, food-donation schemes aimed at relieving this poverty.

Food banks and Second Harvest schemes in the USA and the recent experiences in the UK of handling EEC surplus foods are compared, and concerns over food safety, food quality and poor nutritional balance are raised. Doubts are also expressed about the wisdom of creating institutional means of relieving food poverty without addressing underlying causes of poverty and low benefit levels.

Food Provision for People with Low Incomes in the UK: What Role for Voluntary Organisations? Discussion Paper by the National Food Alliance Low Income Working Party, available from the NFA, c/o the NCVO, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1, price £2.50.

Boost for organic farming

A report from the US National Academy of Sciences shows that chemical fertilisers and insecticides do not necessarily result in better crop yields than organic methods. The report, *Alternative Agriculture*, which was part-funded by the Kellogg Foundation has been greeted enthusiastically by the US Department of Agriculture which is seeking 'to put US farming on an eco-sensitive basis within the life of the Bush Administration', according to a report in *The Guardian* (9/9/89).

New consumer reports

The National Consumer Council has published two new discussion documents. *The genetic manipulation of plants, animals and microbes* investigates the social and ethical issues of genetic engineering for consumers. *The future of food regulation* examines the food regulatory system and the role of the Food and Drug Administration in the US. The report makes recommendations for an independent UK food agency.

Copies cost £2.50 each and can be obtained from The National Consumer Council, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH (01-730 3469).

School meals down

The October 1988 census on school meals showed a 31 per cent decrease in the number of children taking school meals, Baroness Ewart-Biggs told the House of Lords in July. She blamed this on the low take-up of family credit.

Action on healthy food

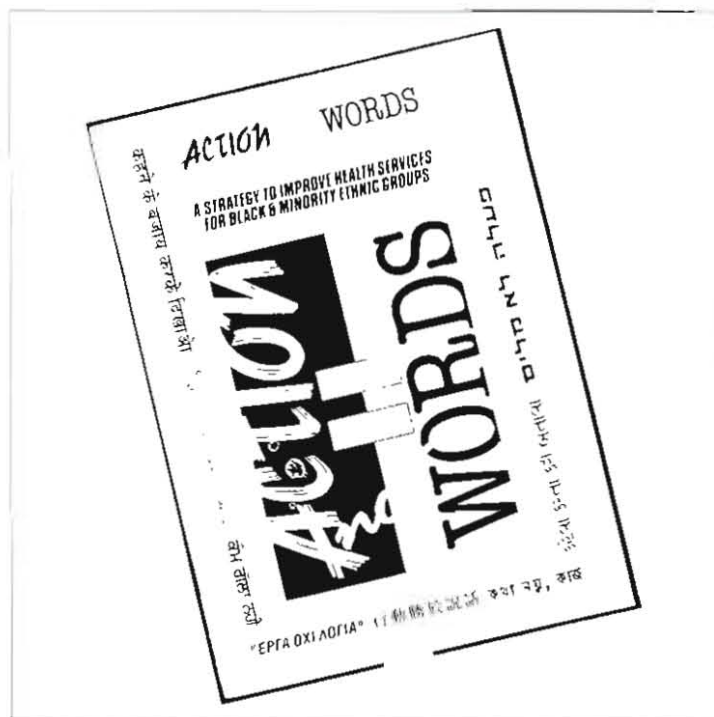
The Social and Liberal Democrats have launched their Campaign for Healthy Food (CHEF) with three practical action packs covering food irradiation, food labelling and food safety. As part of their 'People First' campaign the packs offer an easy-to-use guide for anyone concerned about improving the quality of safety of the food they eat. For details contact ASLDC, The Councillors and Campaigners Association, The Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 8DG (0422 845190).

Saccharin secrets

Alarming reports in the media concerning the unacceptable amounts of saccharin in some people's diets turned out to emanate from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. A press release from MAFF acknowledged that two reports had been done by the Ministry 'which indicate some people consume above the Acceptable Daily Intake of saccharin'.

The reports have not been made public. The only indication of the source of the problem given in the press release was a reference to 'certain kinds of soft drinks and/or table top sweeteners'. The Minister, David Maclean, has called for advice on 'what, if anything, should be done' and will make an announcement early in the New Year.

In the USA products containing saccharin must carry a warning that saccharin has been found to cause tumors in laboratory animals.



A late mention for the National Association of Health Authorities (NAHA) publication *Action Not Words* published late last year.

The document offers 'a strategy to improve health services for black and minority ethnic groups' and lists a series of objectives. One is on diet aims to ensure the 'availability in hospitals and clinics of foods appropriate to black and minority ethnic groups'. Suggestions are given in brief form for dietary guidelines for institutional caterers that are available to all patients and staff, and ensuring this availability is published.

The London Food Commission's Guidelines on Food Provision for Black and Ethnic Minorities crystallises this advice in an extensive report. Publication has suffered some delays but is expected later this year.

Action Not Words - A Strategy to Improve Health Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Groups is available from NAHA, Garth House, 47 Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2RS.

FISH FINGERS

A Load of cod

When consumer groups criticised fish fingers for their lack of fish the government announced that labels would have to bear a 'fish content' declaration. That was in 1987 and we are still waiting.

The government has decided that manufacturers should show on the labels details of the minimum fish content and type (ie minced or fillet) of fish used in fish products. .' announced the then Parliamentary Secretary, Donald Thompson, in December 1987.

This statement followed a government Food Advisory Committee report strongly critical of the apparent decline in the quality of fish products. The lack of fish in coated fish products had been exposed in 1984 by Shropshire trading standards officer David Walker and led to consumer organisations calling for a change in the law.

According to a 1988 Euromonitor market report, the 1980s saw a reduction in average fish content to 45 per cent, down from 60 per cent or more in previous decades. Surveys by trading standards officers in 1983

found samples as low as 34 per cent fish when none had been below 56 per cent in 1970.

The government's announcement in 1987 promised that all coated fish products 'should bear an indication in close proximity to the name of the food of their minimum fish content'.

So *The Food Magazine* scoured the supermarket freezers looking for such a declaration. We found none on the front of a pack where the government proposed it should be placed, next to the name of the product. We found only one declaration (on a pack of Findus Cod Fillet Fish Fingers) in small print, on the back of the pack, with a declared minimum 60 per cent fish. Findus have informed us that the declaration will shortly be removed.

We rang the Ministry to ask what had happened over the last two years. 'It has been out for consultation,' they said. 'Proposals are now being drafted.' They assured us a content declaration regulation would be introduced, but the spokesperson did not know when.

In 1970 — nearly twenty years ago — the then Food Standards Committee expressed concern about fish fingers, and recommended that the government of the day should consider 'compositional standards and/or special labelling requirements'. We are still waiting.

Sources

Institute of Trading Standards Administration *Fish Technology — Its Uses and Abuses* by David Walker, 1984

Consumers Association *Which?*, September 1986

MAFF Food Advisory Committee *Report on Coated and Ice-glazed Fish Products*, HMSO, 1987

MAFF Press Release FF 21/87 *Fish Fingers to have Minimum Fish Declaration*, 10 December 1987.

Euromonitor *Frozen Fish Products*, April 1988

Where's the fish in the fingers?

Shoppers in the UK bought some £300m worth of fish fingers last year. They offer a relatively inexpensive and attractive way of encouraging reluctant fish-eaters to eat a highly nutritious food. But for the amount of fish you find in some fish fingers you might get a better bargain buying fresh salmon.

The measurement of fish content is complicated. Simply stripping off the coating and comparing its weight with that of the 'core' of fish is open to error: some of the batter sticks to the fish and the fish itself may have been massaged in a solution of polyphosphate salts to increase its weight with ten to twenty per cent extra water. This can lead to an over-estimation of the total fish present.

Biochemical methods rely on measuring protein content of the whole product and adjusting for the assumed amount of protein in the coating. Extra protein in the batter coating — from milk powder, say, or egg (though this is rarely used) — could also lead to an inflated estimate of the fish content.

The Food Magazine did a crude measure of coating weight compared with core weight on five samples purchased from local shops. Our products had thawed when they were analysed and some 'juice' would have been absorbed by the coating. None the less the results were surprising.

Our analyses showed that, for the purchase price, shoppers appeared to be getting poor value in terms of fish for their money. Products appeared to be between 40 and 50 per cent fish, and that buying fish in this form could cost over £6 per pound weight.

These figures suggest that fresh salmon would cost little more than the average fish finger, on a fish per penny basis. Products such as tinned sardines or mackerel represent better value and so does much fresh or frozen white fish such as cod or coley.

Fish is perceived by shoppers as a nutritious food. It is rich in vitamins, minerals, trace elements and protein and low in saturated fat. We are concerned that people may be buying fish fingers as the 'fish' part of their meal and getting much less than they expected.



Fish figures fingered

Product	Fish in a finger*	Fish content*	Fish cost per lb.*
Happy Shopper fish fingers	12.5g	49%	£2.00
Findus Cod fillet fingers	11.5g	40%	£4.18
Findus Crostinos cod fillet	22.5g	42%	£6.31
Birds Eye Value fish fingers	12.5g	45%	£2.07
Birds Eye cod in wholemeal	11g	44%	£4.54
Fresh salmon fillet			£4.25
Tinned sardines (drained)			£1.50
Frozen white fish			£1.80

* Figures for coated products are based on strip testing of thawed product

Retailers Euro link-up

Getting information about the market share of Europe's big food retailers is very difficult. One retail analyst told *The Food Magazine* that broadly the north of Europe has a concentrated food retailing system, and the south of Europe are nations of small shopkeepers (see table). In the 1980s the big northern European retailers have been preparing to go continental.

Companies like the German Aldi are already crossing borders. Aldi is interesting because it has a modern version of the old Tesco 'stack it high, sell it low' big turnover, low price policy. Aldi's plans to come shopping in Britain are currently being scoffed at by UK retailers and analysts. But do you remember people being arrogant about Japanese 50cc motor-bikes? Look at the UK motor-bike industry now. Aldi has entered Denmark in a big way, and no-one is laughing at them in Denmark any more.

Food shops per 1,000 people;
Europe - north and south

Portugal	4.4
Spain	3.1
Italy	2.7
France	1.3
Germany	1.2
UK	1.0

source KPMG 1989

Recently, it has been fashionable to under-rate the bottom end of the UK's big food retailers. Analysts predicted just two or three big players left by the mid 1990s. On 4 September this confidence must have been shaken a little when a new link-up of some of Europe's smaller big retailers was announced.

Argyll of the UK, Koniklijke (Royal) Ahold of the Netherlands and Groupe Casino of France have set up a new European Retail Alliance (ERA). Each has a third stake in the ERA. They have taken small defensive share holdings in each others' companies (a tiny £35 million's worth each) and are exploring marketing, distribution, production, development and the exploitation of store formulae. The ERA three are also talking with four other European retailers: Dansk Supermarked (Denmark), La Rinascente (Italy), ICA (Sweden) and Migros (Switzerland).

Naturally misleading

Manufacturers are being advised that claims such as 'full of natural goodness', 'naturally better' and 'natural choice' should be restricted following complaints from trading standards officers and consumer organisations that such claims are meaningless and misleading. Trading Standards Officers in 1988 judged 79 per cent of claims to be unacceptable in a survey of over 670 products, while a mere nine per cent of product labels and six per cent of adverts were probably legitimate. (see *The Food Magazine* Issue No.1).

The Ministry of Agriculture (MAFF) hopes that in future manufacturers will abide by a set of voluntary guidelines drawn up by its Food Advisory Committee (FAC). The Committee suggests that manufacturers should use 'natural' only to describe single foods, of a traditional nature to which nothing has been added and which have been subjected only to such processing as to render them suitable for consumption.

so-called natural additives made synthetically or from non-food sources. However their guidelines still permit solvent extraction for 'natural' additives.

The FAC suggests that claims that a food is 'free from x' if all similar foods are free from x, and statements which say that a product is free from certain non-natural additives, when the product contains other non-natural additives, should not be used.

MAFF expects these guidelines to be accepted voluntarily by the food industry and believes regulations will be unnecessary. But a MAFF spokesperson told *The Food Magazine* that they had no plans to conduct a follow-up survey to monitor whether the guidelines were being followed.

However, there is some concern that these recommendations fail to tackle the fundamental problem. Dr Melanie Miller of The London Food Commission says: 'Use of the word "natural" amounts to a health or quality claim that is meaningless or misleading in almost every case. All claims should be minimised. Information, such as accurate names, descriptions, full ingredients lists and nutritional data, should speak for itself.'

Milk hormone

Consumer resistance to the milk-boosting hormone Bovine Somatotropin (BST) has led the five largest supermarket chains in the USA to declare a ban on selling BST-produced milk.

The US agriculture secretary has assured consumers that there is no risk to the quality of the milk, and that decisions to ban the hormone should be based on scientific evidence. The European Commission has proposed a 15-month temporary ban while the evidence is assessed. Consumer groups, including the London Food Commission, have called for independent scientific research to be undertaken, along with evaluations of the economic impact and the effects on the welfare of the cattle to be taken into account.

The London Food Commission has also called for a re-appraisal of the data submitted by Monsanto, the company manufacturing BST, including the pooling of data from separate trials to increase the chance of detecting statistically significant effects.

CATTLE DISEASE

The cattle disease bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE) may still be getting into our food.

Over six months after the report of the Southwood Committee warning about the dangers of BSE, and over three months after the announcement of a ban on certain cattle offal, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has not yet put the necessary regulations on the statute book. As we go to press, in mid-September, there has been no follow-up to the promise to issue detailed proposals for consultation in June.



The Committee considers freezing, concentration, fermentation, pasteurisation, sterilisation, smoking (without chemicals) and traditional cooking processes such as baking, roasting or blanching to be examples of processes which would be acceptable. Bleaching, oxidation, smoking (with chemicals), tenderising (with chemicals) and hydrogenation and similar processes would not be acceptable.

NATURAL ADDITIVES

Additives and flavourings can only be described as natural if obtained from recognised food sources which excludes

Trading standards officers say that MAFF's reluctance to define clearly the use of 'natural' with strict regulations has left grey areas where interpretation will be difficult. They fear that manufacturers may wait to be challenged rather than voluntarily adopt the new guidelines.

If you see products misusing a 'natural' claim then contact the Trading Standards Department at your local town hall. In addition you can send examples of misleading labels to us at *The Food Magazine*.

Low alcohol hazards

Labelling on low alcohol drinks can be confusing and dangerous. Before buying, read the small print.

Drivers who want to avoid alcohol should beware. Low alcohol wine can be stronger than full strength lagers.

A survey of alcohol drinks by Lambeth and Southwark food inspectors found a bewildering variety of products

de-alcoholised wine containing nearly 0.5 per cent alcohol. This is ten times the strength of typical alcohol-free products and stronger than some 'low alcohol' drinks.

Low alcohol means low — but how low is low? Manufacturers take it to mean lower than their regular products. For beers and lagers this usually means under a fifth of the normal strength of around four per cent.

For wines, though, it can mean as much as half strength, with levels approaching 5 per cent alcohol. This level of alcohol is higher than typical full strength beers and lagers. We are not

cent alcohol, and a Lambrusco Light wine came in at 3 per cent alcohol.

Whilst this chaotic situation continues consumers are advised to look carefully at the label before drinking. This might be easy to do in the supermarket, but it is not so easy at a busy party, and well-nigh impossible in a pub.

The government announced a year ago that they were proposing to limit the use of the phrase 'low alcohol' to

products containing less than 1.2 per cent alcohol. No limits were recommended on the other terms found on labels. Since then the proposals have been shelved on the grounds that the European Commission is making proposals of its own. At present most low alcohol beers and lagers come below the 1.2 per cent level, but low alcohol wines are frequently far in excess.



and a range of alcohol strengths. The confusion lies in the use of the various labelling terms which can mean very different things.

Alcohol-free should, of course, mean what it says: no alcohol. But manufacturers can include up to 0.05 per cent (by volume), which is certainly low but not zero. People with a special dietary or cultural need to avoid all alcohol should beware — there may be some alcohol present.

De-alcoholised describes the process a product has been through this process, but it does not necessarily mean that the product has had all the alcohol removed.

One of the products analysed was a

suggesting that low-alcohol wine will be drunk in beer quantities, but several glasses could put an unsuspecting driver over the legal limit.

Reduced Alcohol has no specific meaning, nor does **greatly reduced**. **Light** and **Lite** are loosely applied terms, and mean much the same as low. But there is a further confusion possible — a **low calorie** product might also be labelled as light but still be normal strength.

The survey found **Swan Light** with 0.9 per cent alcohol but **Miller Lite** with 4.2 per cent alcohol, one of the stronger lagers on the shelves! **Slightly Lightly**, a wine which claimed to be both low alcohol and low calorie, contained 2.8 per

Product	The label says	Alcohol found %
Wines		
Rosso Vivace	Partially fermented, low alcohol	4.5
Masson Light	De-alcoholised	0.46
Vin sans l'alcool (Vignerons Uncoar)	De-alcoholised	0.4
Slightly Lightly	Greatly reduced alcohol content	2.8
Medem Light, wine with juice and water	Reduced alcohol blend	3.8
Petulant de Listel	Less than 3% alcohol	2.6
Eisberg	Alcohol-free	<0.05*
Landi Lambrusco	Light	3*
Beers and Lagers		
Safeway Low Alcohol Lager	Low alcohol	0.3
Sainsbury Low Alcohol Bitter	Low alcohol	0.4
Sainsbury Low Alcohol Lager (cans)	Low alcohol	0.8
Sainsbury Low Alcohol Lager (bottles)	Low alcohol	0.5
St Michael Low Alcohol Lager	Low alcohol	0.3
Prostel Burgerbrau lager	Special low alcohol	0.4
Kaliber	Alcohol free lager	0.02
Swan Light	Low alcohol lager	0.8
Miller Lite	(reduced calorie)	4.2*
Tennents L.A.	Low alcohol lager	0.9
Smithwicks A.F.B.	Alcohol free bitter	0.04
Clausthaler Special	Low alcohol lager	0.5
Barbican	Alcohol free lager	<0.05*
Strongbow Low Alcohol	Low alcohol cider	0.9*

Source: Southwark Public Protection except for * manufacturer's data

The Food Bill

NATIONAL CONSUMER COUNCIL

We now have an opportunity to lay the foundations for new food laws that will take us not only towards the completion of the internal European market in 1992, but also into the next century. Food technology is changing so rapidly that the legal framework will have to be sufficiently flexible to cope with the challenges of ensuring that consumers are properly protected, as well as enabling the food industry to develop in a way which will benefit all.

Even the best piece of legislation will have its limitations if it cannot be properly enforced. This means that there will have to be the appropriate structure to implement the provisions of the Food Bill, as well as adequate resources devoted to enforcement. The National Consumer Council (NCC) has long argued that the enforcement of food safety should be the task of an independent regulatory agency, which has the status, powers and resources to do the job in a way which will command the trust of the public and the respect of the industry.

There are many provisions in the new Food Bill which we welcome, but which will prove worthless unless there is a real commitment from the government to invest properly in enforcement. An example is the introduction of factory inspection, which will be required to comply with the EEC Official Control of Foodstuffs Directive. This will be an additional safeguard in ensuring food safety standards, but it will be effective only if there are sufficient, properly trained enforcement officers to do the job. The government cannot expect the existing enforcement service to undertake these important tasks in addition to its current workload. We must know what additional resources the government intends to make available for the effective implementation of the Food Bill.

There are aspects of the Bill which we welcome,

At the end of July the Government published its White Paper, *Food Safety – Protecting the Consumer* outlining its broad intentions for the new Food Bill to be published in November.

The proposals cover tighter controls on unfit food, registration of food premises, training for food handlers as well as changing the law to allow food irradiation.

Announcing the Government's intentions, John Gummer MP, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said 'The proposals in the White Paper demonstrate the Government's commitment to food safety. We are always ready to consider adaptation when needed. We believe that our proposed legislation will provide the right framework for protecting consumers now and in the future'.

But not everyone agrees. In this special Food Bill supplement *The Food Magazine* asked the other political parties, consumer organisations, food law enforcement agencies and the food industry what they would like to see in the forthcoming Bill.

such as the new offence of being in possession of unfit food. We are also pleased to see the disappearance of the warranty defence. For far too long food retailers have been able to deny their responsibilities by using the warranty defence to shift blame onto their suppliers. The proposals also make reference to the need for training of food handlers for the first time.

We are, however, disappointed at the omissions in the Food Bill. There is no proposal to extend the product liability provisions to primary agricultural produce. This means that farmers are still not going to be strictly liable for the safety of their produce. In the wake of the salmonella in eggs affair this is an amazing omission, all the more so because of the compensation package of £19m which the government was able to put together almost overnight. If only the same concern could be shown for the innocent victims of unsafe food.

The next session of Parliament is going to be a busy one for all those with the desire to have safer foods on our shelves. During the negotiations and the arguments which will inevitably dominate the next 12 months, none of us should lose sight of the fact that the prime function of the Food Bill is to protect the consumer.

INSTITUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS

Environmental Health Officers, who are employed in local authorities to inspect food premises and enforce all relevant food legislation, will be awaiting with interest the Queen's speech this November. It has been assumed that it will contain the new Food Bill which will be the first major change in food legislation since World War II. As enforcement officers, EHOs wish to see major changes to the existing legislation.

We believe that there should be a complete review of UK food legislation and that there should be a new philosophy towards food legislation. There should be a holistic approach taking into account not only food quality but diet, nutrition and food safety.

We wish to see food legislation controlled by a Food Executive, run

along similar lines to the Health and Safety Commission. The Food Executive would include representatives from government, enforcement authorities, consumer groups and industry all working to ensure the quality of food within the nation.

Within the legislation we wish to see general duties clearly stated. The Food Executive would be required to legislate on food matters. In addition it would be required to report to parliament annually on current developments in food, food poisoning within the community and other food related matters.

Local authorities would have a duty to inspect their food premises. This would help to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to sampling and food inspections.

Persons owning or controlling food premises would have a duty to ensure that the food they prepared was safe and not detrimental to the health of the consumer.

Finally, those employed in food premises would have a duty to cooperate with their employer to ensure that the legislation was complied with and that food had not been tampered with.

Within the main body of any of the legislation we

SPECIAL REPORT

would wish to see two fundamental changes. The training of food handlers and the licensing of food premises.

All persons in control of food businesses or managing them should have received suitable adequate training to ensure that they are competent in the way they run the business and that the risk of food poisoning is reduced.

This training should not merely be the attendance of a course but should involve some form of assessment to ensure that any training given has been assimilated and

INSTITUTE OF TRADING STANDARDS ADMINISTRATION

We welcome the White Paper as a step in the right direction, but the test of the government's resolve is whether it is prepared to make available the necessary increase in local authority enforcement resources.

Besides additional resources, key ingredients in a new Food Bill will need to be:

would require two major ingredients:

- a sponsoring ministry with sufficient resources and experience to handle food safety, food standards, food science and food labelling within the overall framework of consumer protection

- a close working relationship with existing enforcement agencies, which inevitably would require improved resources if the success of any such organisation is to be assured.

It will need to take into account the European dimension and, in particular, the likely effects of



is going to be used in the kitchen.

The requirements for licensing premises goes beyond the government's existing proposals for registration. The Institution would wish to see food premises licensed with the owner being required to obtain a licence prior to opening. The requirement for an inspection prior to opening would ensure that the premises were structurally sound and had the correct equipment for the business that was being run from them and that the person in charge had suitable training and knowledge of food and food practices to minimise the risk to the consumer.

It would ensure that resources were directed to resolving potential hazards before the public were put at risk and would result in business owners fitting out the premises correctly from the outset. This would avoid the need for costly alterations

- Additional powers for trading standards officers to carry out their enforcement functions in the factory and throughout the food distribution chain

- removal of the current warranty provisions in compliance with the European Food Directive and an extension of the Consumer Act putting a duty on food traders to trade safely

- introduction of an effective due diligence and reasonable precautions defence

- tighter controls to prevent misleading labels and advertisements

- making an offence of having in possession for sale food which is not of the quality, substance, nature or composition described.

ITSA also calls for the formation of a new Office of Food Standards and Safety, modelled on the successful Office of Fair Trading. For such a body to be effective it

implementing the Food Inspection Directive.

Whatever the outcome of the discussions leading up to the publication of a new Food Bill and the parliamentary procedures thereafter there is no doubt that trading standards officers, with their immense knowledge and comprehensive experience of enforcing food laws in conjunction with trade descriptions, weights and measures, fertilisers and feeding stuffs, animal health and, most important of all, consumer safety legislation, are uniquely suited to ensuring that any new food legislation will be properly and vigorously enforced.

If the above ingredients are mixed into the new Food Bill consumers can look forward to better food standards and enforcement.

SPECIAL REPORT

DR. DAVID CLARK, FOR THE LABOUR PARTY

I read the government's White Paper on Food Safety with disbelief. After months of intense media exposure of so many problems with our food, four years of consultation and the government's trailing of their proposals in the press, we expected much more.

The proposals for food safety look pathetic when compared with other proposals on the government's agenda: changing the health service, privatisation of electricity and water and the poll tax. But on reflection, perhaps we should not be surprised. The government has a poor record on imposing necessary regulations, wants to cut back on staffing and research, and has failed to listen to consumer interests.

The Minister of Agriculture's priorities were exposed when I asked him a question earlier in the year. His answer revealed that during 1989 he had met the National Farmers' Union (NFU) on as many as 37 occasions, but the National Consumer Council (NCC) only twice.

The salmonella affair gave us an insight into the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's (MAFF) conspiracy to protect the egg producers for some months before taking action to deal with the salmonella contamination of poultry. It took measures only when the media spotlight kicked it into action. This is a pattern we find in many other areas. The Ministry is operating on a short term 'crisis management' approach, hoping problems will go by unnoticed or will just go away.

The Labour Party believes that MAFF should become the Ministry of Food and Farming so that food has a much higher profile within the Ministry. We also want to set up a Food Standards Agency. This would be an independent body which would carry out the regulatory functions of MAFF and the Department of Health, with consumer interests as its primary aim. This principle itself should not be alien to the government. It is one they accepted in setting up the National Rivers Authority to regulate water quality.

While some of the regulations are necessary, they must be matched with financial and staff resources to ensure their implementation. The beleaguered professionals responsible for enforcing the food legislation on the ground will need to increase. Already we know that there are vacancies of 430 environmental health officers, and the number of veterinary officers employed by MAFF has declined by 25 per cent since 1979. The chances of more central government funding being made available to carry out this work are remote. But they can find money if they need to: they found £19m for the poultry industry at the end of last year, and as much as £379m were saved in agricultural spending.

The government's proposals are a small step forward, but what is needed is a fundamental change in approach to food with a shift of emphasis in favour of the consumer and greater openness. It will require more

effective regulations, more government funded research, more resources for staffing and a strategic, long term approach.

So far the signs are that the government has not grasped these nettles.

Dr Clark is Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

ARCHY KIRKWOOD, FOR THE SOCIAL AND LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Have you ever been drawn to a restaurant by its attractive exterior, gone inside to note with approval its luxurious surroundings, then sat down, expecting a culinary delight ... only to receive baked beans on toast?

So it was with the government's White Paper on food. It has a no-expense-spared glossy front, with carefully chosen and reassuring pictures. It's a pity the report itself is almost content-free.

The White Paper is an exercise in self-congratulation and self defence. For 'Protecting the Consumer' read 'Protecting our Backs'.

The long review of government 'action' to date fails to mention the criticism from the Commons Agriculture Committee (CAC) that the government had badly mishandled the salmonella in eggs episode, or the closure of several food research establishments, or the failure to warn pregnant mothers of listeria dangers, or the failure for years to take swift action on BSE, mad-cow disease, or the failure to face up to the anthrax outbreak in Wales earlier this year.

So what does this glossy White Paper propose? Precious little, considering a review of food legislation was begun in 1984.

The crumbs offered by the paper seem all right as far as they go, which isn't far. But it is unclear whether local authorities are to be given extra funding to discharge their new responsibilities properly. I think we can guess the answer to that one.

At a time of unprecedented public concern about food quality and food safety, the government has thrown away a golden opportunity to clean up the food industry even though the public is crying out for comprehensive reform.

The Social and Liberal Democrats have launched a Campaign for Healthy Food (CHEF), which examines every aspect of the food chain, from farm to table, and presents a comprehensive and cohesive programme of reform.

Incentives would be given to farmers to go organic, and measures enacted to protect diversity of life in the countryside.

Pesticides would be subject to immediate stringent review and much more closely controlled, and manufacturers would have to pay an environmental levy. Hitherto secret research data would be made publicly available. Those pesticides not currently governed by the EC Maximum Residue Levels, like tecnazene, would be brought into line immediately.

All additives would be reviewed and purely cosmetic additives outlawed.

Food irradiation would not be permitted and other novel food techniques would have to justify themselves in dietary or nutritional terms before being legitimised.

Labelling of food and drink would be tightened up with a requirement introduced to provide understandable nutritional information and to end to misleading words and phrases like 'traditional' and 'farm fresh eggs'. Flavourings would have to be individually listed.

Packaging would have to be reduced to the minimum necessary for strict food hygiene.

Food bodies would have to include more consumer representatives, and be much more publicly accountable.

More funding would be provided for those working to protect our food, such as Trading Standards Officers.

Research cuts would be more than reversed.

This is just a taste of the holistic approach outlined our Campaign for Healthy Food. We intend to table a Bill in the next session of parliament.

Archy Kirkwood is SLD Spokesperson on Health & Social Services.

THE GREEN PARTY

The Green Party is committed to the production of fresh, wholesome and nutritious food which excludes processes damaging to the environment or human health, or which cause any kind of suffering to animals. This can be achieved only by adopting organic fertilisers, pesticides, growth hormones and preservatives. As far as possible, food production should be locally based to minimise transportation and



SPECIAL REPORT

to get food to the consumer in the freshest condition. The Green Party is convinced that while these conditions are not met, the interests of the consumer and the planet are not being served.

The recent spate of food-related illnesses is indicative of the deteriorating quality of food production and processing in this country. So what action does the White Paper propose to rectify this? Frankly, not a lot. Of the 36 pages of text (minus appendices), 30 are given over to self-congratulatory discourse on how well the current legislation is working, and six to insubstantial new proposals. Also, the report is expensive at £6.90 and so restricts public access to vital information on the basis of cost.

The new proposals, such as they are, aim to place more controls on food quality largely at the retail and consumer end of the food chain. Farmers and food processors are scarcely touched, yet the greatest problems lie here, for example salmonella in eggs, BSE in cattle, listeria in cheeses, steroids in meat, pesticides in vegetables, etc. Once again food irradiation is supported. Even if labelled properly in the shop, how can the consumer be sure when eating out that the food s/he is eating is not irradiated?

The imbalance of interests involved in the regulation of food quality is worrying. The Food Advisory Committee is comprised of eight representatives of the food industry versus five from medicine and local government, one from the National Federation of Women's Institutes, plus the chair. These advisory bodies to government also suffer from being largely reactive to food crises rather than anticipatory and protective in their functioning. Finally, the attitude of government is revealed in the Minister's statement of the need to gain the 'consumer's confidence' rather than protect the consumer's health and safety. Thus this White Paper makes very little change to the existing unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Euan McPhee

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

The National Farmers Union (NFU) welcomes the publication of the government's White Paper on food safety, which foreshadows the Food Bill to be introduced in the autumn.

NFU Deputy President David Naish said: 'The White Paper underlines the stringent regulatory controls which already exist to safeguard the consumer. The Food Bill is designed to strengthen consumer confidence in the quality of British food.'

This is a most important piece of legislation, following as it does a period of increasing concern about the safety of food.

We are pleased with this clear statement of the government's intent, and look forward to progressing these issues with the new Minister for Food.

'Farmers and growers are determined to do everything in their power to ensure the safety and quality of food.'

THE LONDON FOOD COMMISSION

This Autumn's Food Bill is the opportunity for government to respond to public concern and to break with the laxity of post war food policy.

The 1984 Food Act contains a statement of principle: that food shall be 'of the nature, substance and quality demanded.' Producing food is not enough, it has to be what the consumer expects and wants. Quality and satisfaction are essential.

As European food markets are opened up in 1992, so consumer protection must be given high priority. The new Food Bill is the opportunity to provide that protection and to restore consumer confidence and trust.

Below we suggest a series of measures the London Food Commission would like to see included in the new Food Bill and other legislation as appropriate.

1. A new philosophy

Practices and decision-making at all levels of the food chain should emphasise openness of information and education, improve public health, show due care for the welfare of humans, animals and the environment and ensure access to an enjoyable, good quality, uncontaminated diet for all.

2. Democracy

Representatives from consumer, environment and public health organisations, together with trades unions, should constitute 50 per cent of the places on government committees and working parties.

3. Information

There should be a policy of positive disclosure of information. Hearings for new product or process licences should be taken in open session.

4. Reorganisation of MAFF

There should be a new Ministry of Food (a reconstituted Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) with a new Consumer Affairs Division.

5. Quality Standards

A new system of quality standards should be set up in conjunction with a new, independent Food Standards and Safety Executive (FSSE) which works with local authority food inspection departments.

6. Resources

There should be a duty on central government to ensure that local authorities have adequate funding for proper monitoring and enforcement of food legislation in the UK and the EEC.

7. Research

Levies on the food and chemical industries should be raised and used to contribute to independent research

by the FSSE and the Consumer Affairs Division of the Ministry of Food, focusing on food safety, quality and availability.

8. Organic farming

The aim of UK food policy should be to reduce the production of foods containing unwanted residues and to promote ecologically sustainable production methods. There should be substantial conversion grants and incentives and training opportunities to encourage farmers to develop organic and environment-sensitive production systems.

9. Impact Statements

All new foods, technologies and processes submitted for approval to government should be the subject of impact statements which evaluate the impact on consumer protection, employment practices, public health, economic strategy and environmental protection.

10. Product Liability

Food products should be subject to the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) and product liability legislation. Legislation should be amended to enable prosecution and class actions (for instance, for food poisoning) to be more easily brought against food producers and traders.

11. Complete labelling

All foods would show on the package or display in close proximity to the point of sale, for unwrapped products, details of all ingredients used in the production of the food, including details of processing and chemical treatments (e.g. pesticides), and full nutritional labelling.

12. Licensing and Certification of Food Premises

All commercial food premises should be licensed. Food handlers, processors and retailers should be trained and required to hold certificates of fitness to handle food.

13. Microbiological Standards

There should be high standards set by FSSE for microbiological safety of food, including strict temperature controls and monitoring throughout the food chain.

14. Cost of food

The amount of money estimated to be allocated for food in welfare benefits should be published annually, based on a new retail price index which should reflect variations in diet.

15. Monopolies and Mergers

An annual Food Industry Concentration Review should be published by the Ministry of Food with the Department of Trade and Industry reviewing competition and domination of food markets and activities on a regional, national, European and international basis.

16. Advertising and consumer education

There should be a new levy on food advertisements allocated to health and consumer education. There should be greater controls over the claims made on labels and in advertisements.

We asked the Retail Consortium and the Food and Drink Federation for their views but they were unable to provide a statement.

Adapted from a London Food Commission briefing paper on the forthcoming Food Bill, available from the London Food Commission, 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9AR, price £2.50 (including p&p).

Symbols are assumed to serve a useful purpose to the average shopper. They also serve commercial interests. Manufacturers see a competitive advantage in conforming to a standard and then ensuring a prominent display of the fact that they have done so.

Some markings must be applied in accordance with legislation, others provide valuable information allowing customers to select essential items (eg the gluten-free symbol) and yet more display signs of quality, perhaps suggesting social concerns(eg organic symbols).

Proving the truth of claims can be a nightmare. Establishing a set of standards or list of approved producers is relatively easy compared with the problem of enforcement. Trading Standards departments should have a role here, but in reality there are major problems with a lack of staff to sample the products and resources to pay for the expensive analysis required as evidence.

Conforming to specific standards is difficult to monitor and enforce, yet these standards are essential if symbols are to be trusted by consumers

SYMBOLS FOR

SOIL ASSOCIATION

The logo may be used at a number of points in the food production chain, such as the growers, farmers, processors and distributors, so long as they follow the organic standards laid down by the Soil Association. The logo may soon be on packaging and promotional material and imported food may also display it if it has been produced to approved standards. Established in 1946, the Soil Association is a registered charity with a committee comprised of farmers, grower, manufacturers, scientists and consumers.

FARM VERIFIED ORGANIC

Farm Verified Organic is an alternative symbol showing that the production of the food has been 'independently inspected and verified as conforming to internationally recognised organic standards'.

ORGANIC FARMERS AND GROWERS

Found on some products, this is another organic symbol representing a 'group of environmentally minded producers' who, amongst other things, aim to ensure 'that the living organisms with which they work become allies rather than enemies or slaves'.

UKROFS

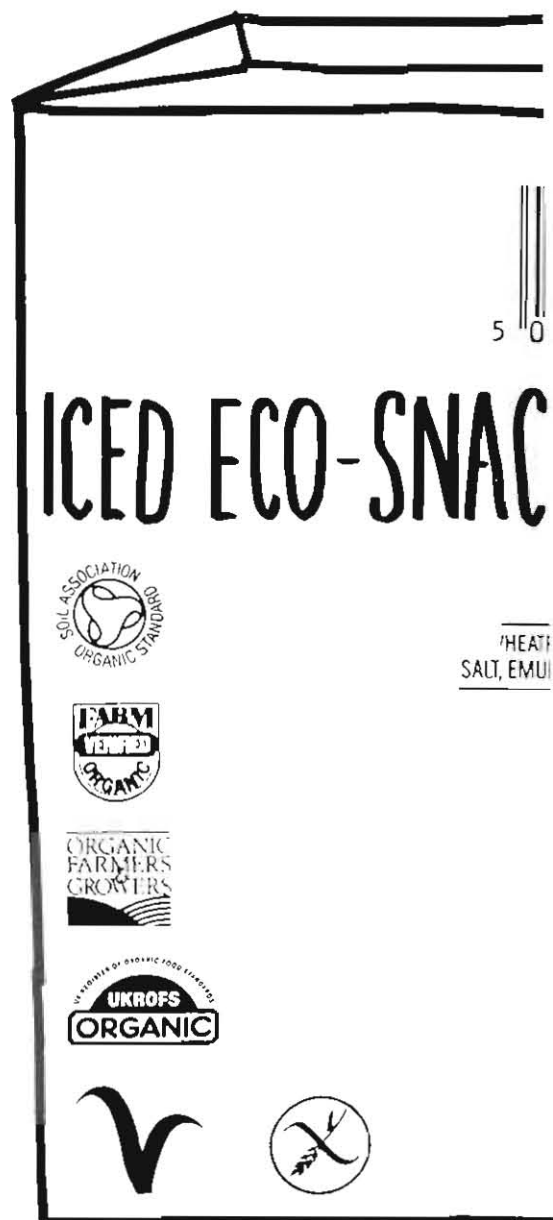
Normally printed with green ink it advertises and promotes products produced to certain organic food standards. UKROFS is part of the Food From Britain group.

VEGETARIAN SOCIETY

The green 'V' symbol is the widely recognised emblem of vegetarianism. The seedling logo is promoted by the Vegetarian Society and can be applied to a variety of products, although it is most commonly seen on food and drink items. Other goods to which it has been applied, because they are entirely free of slaughterhouse products, are toiletries, cosmetics and clothes.

GLUTEN-FREE PRODUCTS

Those who care and cook for people with Coeliac disease will recognise this symbol. It is vitally important that the logo is applied only to products without gluten — a vegetable protein found in the cereal products of wheat, barley, rye and, it is thought, oats. The Coeliac Society publishes a list of products which are gluten free. BBC Ceefax transmissions update this list.



An increasing number of symbols and logos adorn our products. The author is a senior officer and organiser of the food section of National Consumer Council.

OR SELLING



BAR CODES

Scanners in supermarkets are now commonplace and have apparently reduced the queues at checkouts. The block of black and white lines of varying thicknesses are read by laser scanners. The information translated from the electrical signals generated by this 'laser morse code' tells the shops' computers what the product is and who manufactured it. In the very near future additional information will be contained in the bar code which will be able to check the sell by date, batch numbers etc. Not much use for the consumer perhaps, but it will assist retailers with ordering and stock rotation.

THE 'E' MARK

Probably not a symbol which affects consumer choice, but nevertheless evident on many thousands of products. The 'e' mark is a European indication that the weight or volume of a product has been determined by an average quantity system. The system allows for tolerances.

E NUMBERS

Despite several books on the matter we have not necessarily understood which E is good or bad for us. The idea of applying E numbers to the additives used in food and drink products was to ease the importation of products from other member states of the EEC. The E number merely replaces a chemical name, such as sorbitan tristearate (E492) or the name of a natural source additive like pectin (E440a). Not all E's are nasty, but consumers may feel they need a reference book or a chemistry degree to go shopping.

NON-IRRADIATED FOODS

This logo might in future depict foods that have not knowingly been subjected to irradiation treatments which extend shelf-life. An internationally recognised symbol for irradiated food has not been agreed although the logo shown without the 'strike through' will probably be selected.

RECYCLABLE MATERIALS SYMBOLS

It is encouraging to see these types of symbol on materials. Packers, manufacturers and retailers may use containers, usually secondary layers, which can be saved and taken to collection points operated by retailers, local councils, local environmental groups or waste material companies. There are problems using recyclable materials which are in direct contact with food because there are regulations which control such things as migration of inks from the packaging to the foods.

TIDYMAN SYMBOL

Judging by the supermarket shelves, this is the symbol we are most likely to see on food and drink packaging. It may have little to do with influencing choice of one product over another, but is an attempt to show consideration for the environment, particularly as we throw away more food packaging than anything else!

ICE CREAM MADE WITH DAIRY CREAM

Milk Marketing Board has a trademark which is intended to promote the production and sales of ice cream, as distinct from the bulk of ice cream consumed which is manufactured from vegetable and non dairy fats. The use of the trademark indicates to consumers that a minimum amount of milk fat (at least half from double cream) is used in the manufacture of the ice cream.

packaged food. Sandra Carr, trading standards technical
al Consumer Week, reviews a selection of them.

Consensus against mass cholesterol screening

Mass cholesterol testing is not justified. This is the conclusion of the Kings Fund Consensus Conference, held this June in London to consider the role of blood cholesterol measurement in the prevention of heart disease.

The expert panel took the view that coronary risk can be assessed simply by checking blood pressure, smoking habits and family history of coronary heart disease (CHD) in most cases. 'Over the counter' cholesterol testing was condemned as unacceptable in the absence of proper advice and an overall assessment of other risk factors. Drug companies are promoting rapid screening tests, priced around £6 in some chemist's shops. According to the Coronary Prevention Group this is intended to stimulate growth in the market for cholesterol lowering drugs. The conference panel considered that such drugs were not effective in reducing overall mortality, and new products, such as simvastatin, had not been shown to be safe.

The conference statement reasserts that CHD prevention requires a national strategy linking food supply with health. The aim of this strategy would be to obtain an overall reduction in blood cholesterol levels in the whole population by dietary means. Without a health promotion programme of this type, the conference was warned of an increasing reliance on medical intervention to seek a reduction in the death toll from CHD in Britain. If, as some conference participants claimed, ten per cent of middle-aged men might benefit from drug treatment, then the NHS drugs bill in England and Wales would be increased by 20 per cent, or £400m.

Eric Brunner

Polyunsaturates Defended

Recent press reports of 'free radicals' in polyunsaturated oils are misleading and potentially dangerous says Professor Micheal Crawford, a leading specialist on fats.

A *Sunday Times* (3/9/89) headline claimed that scientists 'do an about turn on polyunsaturates'. This is puzzling. Who are these scientists? Where is the evidence?

Concerned about the serious detrimental effect of an article like this on the public, I phoned the Cambridge laboratory cited as the source of this story. The person to whom I spoke could give me no reference to any peer reviewed publication which supported any of the claims made.

Nor do I myself know of any accredited publication. Indeed the opposite is the case. Researchers have reported long term multi-generation studies showing that animals on high

polyunsaturated diets lived longer, have less spontaneous cancer, have better vision and higher performance in intelligence tests.

If polyunsaturated fatty acids were dangerous you would expect nature to protect the delicate, human foetus from them. Research has shown that to the contrary, the human foetus is bathed in levels of polyunsaturated fatty acids that were far higher than those in the mother. This is explained because they are essential for development. It would seem odd indeed if nature had designed a system which caused us to swim in a 'surge of (dangerous) free radicals' at the most critical and vulnerable period of our very formation!

The truth of the matter is the polyunsaturated fatty acids are, like protein, essential for our reproduction and needed for the construction, function and health of vital systems such as the brain, blood vessels, skin, kidney, testicles and the female reproductive system. Indeed, free radical oxygen is used to form substances from polyunsaturated fatty acids which

regulate the immune system and blood flow. The free radical scavengers that both protect and mop up any excess are made in the body and are always found in foods associated with the polyunsaturated fatty acids. Nature is not as stupid as the journalist implies. To try to frighten people into not having proper sources of essential polyunsaturated fats in their diets is to threaten people with serious health problems, to say nothing of the impact it would have on foetal

If the *Sunday Times* story were true, humans with the largest brain and most complex networks of blood vessels could never have evolved. Equally, the Japanese (with one of the most polyunsaturated diets in the world) would have a high death rate from heart disease — in fact they have one of the lowest.

Perhaps the *Sunday Times* should now repair the very serious damage done by publishing a front page distortion of the truth and an attack on public confidence in science.

1990: The Year of Sugar

A new decade will bring a new focus for public concern about food. An official government report, expected shortly before the end of the year, will concentrate attention on the health problems of sugar, re-igniting a long-running controversy.

The Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA), the nutritional advisory body to the Department of Health, is expected to re-confirm that sugar causes tooth decay and to review the scientific evidence on medical problems.

Coinciding with the COMA Report will be a new book *Toward a Sugar Policy: A Model for Food and Health* by M E Sanderson and J T Winkler, published by John Libbey, which analyses practical options and presents a case study for a national nutrition policy.

Also expected to follow immediately after COMA is a substantial advertising campaign in support of sugar, jointly mounted by the two refiners, Tate and Lyle and British Sugar. The public health group, Action and Information on Sugars (AIS), will be monitoring the campaign and challenging any violations of the advertising codes of practice.

AIS has also just published the proceedings of its conference held last May, *Sugars: The Current Debate and Future Action*. Scheduled for this autumn is the third edition of the Health Education Authority's consensus statement *The Scientific Basis of Dental Health Education* which advises limiting the amount and frequency of sugar consumption.

Expected later are the rather different conclusions from a rival

conference held during July in York, organised by a group of dissident dentists with the financial backing of the sugar industry.

In the real world of foods, important developments are in prospect during the 1990s. The European Commission is now drafting directives on nutrition labelling and nutrition claims, which may just lead to more information and less hype. Artificial sweeteners will expand their applications into many other foods beyond diet colas. And within a few years, we will see a new generation of reduced-sugar chocolate confectionery.

In the decade ahead, sugar will establish itself as a centre of nutritional attention and change in the way that fat became during the 1980s.
Jack Winkler

CHOCOLATE'S DARK SECRETS

Earlier this year a conference in Brazil, organised by the Dutch-based Transnationals Information Exchange, brought together workers from all parts of the cocoa chain throughout the world. Plantation labourers, small farmers, and workers in the processing and production industries came together to look at the developments of the multinationals that dominate the whole chain. They were aiming at preventing small farmers from being marginalised, preventing the use of hazardous pesticides and strengthening the links between workers around the world, to make production safer.

Brazil, along with Malaysia, Ghana and the Ivory Coast, produces most of the world's cocoa. In the remote region of Bahia in the north of Brazil cocoa is virtually the only crop grown on large privately owned plantations. Unemployment is high and, with no alternative employment prospects, cocoa workers live and work in very poor conditions.

The conference heard of low pay for Brazilian workers often forced to bring their families including young children to work on the plantations in order to meet quotas. There is no job security — if workers complain they can easily be replaced. Housing is often two to three hours walk away from the plantations, with no transport, schools or hospitals. The local trade union is popular but with high unemployment is powerless to take action.

PESTICIDE HAZARDS

Apart from the appalling conditions the workers face a possibly even greater danger from the uncontrolled use of highly hazardous pesticides. These include lindane, paraquat and aldrin, all of which are banned or severely restricted in other countries, as well as many other highly toxic insecticides, herbicides and fungicides.

Workers are often illiterate, receive no training and may understand little of the hazards they face. They often mix pesticides with their bare hands or are splashed when pouring the mixtures into open containers. Sprayers are given little or no protection and often spray whilst other workers are still harvesting on the plantations. Dr Alastair Hay of Leeds University visited the plantations in May this year and found sprayers working in choking conditions with no protection whatsoever. Some had been issued with new masks but these were found to be dust not fume masks, providing little protection. Highly toxic chemicals were freely on sale in shops. In one shop he visited the proud shopkeeper held up a packet of biscuits in one hand and a container of aldrin in the other.

The toll on workers' health from these conditions is enormous. According to Barbara Dinham of the London Transnationals Information Centre mortality rates are high. 'The effects may not be immediate, but people get ill, go blind, tremble and they lose their jobs if they can't

Next time you munch your favourite chocolate bar spare a thought for the workers who produced the cocoa. Sue Dibb reports on a conference held earlier this year in Brazil which highlighted the problems faced by cocoa plantation workers.

work. One doctor who tried to document the problems of pesticide deaths and incidents of babies being born deformed lost his job and the records were altered to show death from other illness or natural causes.'

No-one knows the full scale of the problem. Alastair Hay reports that the only records available in the region are in Salvador where 300 pesticide poisonings and 14 deaths were reported between January 1986 and June 1988. 'But', he says, 'this is just the tip of the iceberg. The majority of people in this region have no access to a doctor and no transport to get to a hospital, and chronic effects such as cancer will never get traced back to pesticides — people just die in their homes. These figures are a gross underestimate of the problem.'

WORLD COCOA GLUT

Increasing intensification of world cocoa production has been encouraged worldwide by the World Bank and the big multinational companies controlling the world market. The resultant high yields, dependent on

large quantities of chemical inputs, have led to the world glut and collapse of cocoa prices that exist today.

Research from Ghana suggests that similar yields can be achieved with good husbandry, integrated pest management and minimal use of pesticides. Yet Ghana, which has a history of smaller scale production is now under pressure from manufacturers and the World Bank to go the way of Brazil and Malaysia with intensive estate-based production.

Overproduction may suit the large processors and manufacturers, as it keeps the price of cocoa down, but given such a glut, the gross overuse of pesticides in much cocoa production seems pointless.

RESIDUES

Not only may workers' health be affected by the indiscriminate use of highly toxic pesticides but there is growing concern that residues of these chemicals remain in the cocoa. UK and European manufacturers buy their cocoa mainly from West Africa and Malaysia with most Brazilian cocoa going to the US. Figures released by the UK trade association, the Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance show that minute traces of controversial pesticides including lindane and dichlorvos are turning up in the beans.

In the mid 1980s UK chocolate companies stopped testing for pesticide residues because they felt the figures were low and of little concern. But last year they reinstated their testing programme, reputedly under pressure from the supermarkets. However UK limits for pesticide residues do not match the strict standards to which manufacturers in Switzerland must adhere.

Five companies dominate the world chocolate market — the Swiss-owned Nestlé and Jacob Suchard, the giant US companies Mars and Hershey, and the UK's Cadbury's. The conclusion of the Brazilian conference was that the big multinationals should take a lead by putting influence on growers worldwide to use less pesticides, by outlawing the most dangerous practices and improving conditions for their workforce. Only then can we be assured that chocolate, often given as a symbol of our love, has been safely produced.

If you would like to add your voice to reinforce the conclusions of the conference, here are the addresses of the major companies. We would be grateful to receive copies of any replies you receive.

■ Cadbury's
14 Connaught Place
London WC2 2EX

■ Hershey
PO Box 814
Hershey
PA 17033 USA

■ Nestlé SA
Vevey
Switzerland

■ Mars Inc
6885 Elm Street
McLean
Virginia 22101-3883
USA

■ Jacob Suchard
Sectfeld Quay 17
PO Box 147
8034 Zurich
Switzerland



PHOTO: ALASTAIR HAY

An unprotected worker sprays fungicide on a cocoa plantation in Brazil

INSIDE STORY

SECRET -

It is now several years since the government set out its proposed guidelines for nutritional labelling. In this article, nutrition researcher Robert Hare argues that the consumer still has little information to help choose a healthy diet.

The right of people to know what is in the food they buy has lagged far behind their need to know. Regulations to prevent abuses have come slowly, often long after

knowledge of a problem was available, and sometimes only after deaths and public outcry. It is now nearly 140 years since the first Food Act but is our food better regulated than it was in the 19th century?

Today, it is possible to eat an unhealthy diet unintentionally through lack of information. Knowledge of what is in food is essential if people are to be able to choose healthy diets.

Most UK adults could list several concerns over food such as the nutritional balance of foods or the amounts of total fat, saturated fat, sugar, salt and fibre. Coronary heart disease (CHD), and bowel and breast cancers are chief among a number of diseases linked with diet. In the UK, CHD is the biggest single cause of death. Around 180,000 people die of CHD each year.

In 1984, the government's Committee on Medical Aspects (COMA) concluded that improving the UK's diet was a key step towards reducing CHD. The same dietary improvements were also likely to reduce the incidence of the other diet linked diseases.

The COMA committee recommended changes in five key nutrients in the UK diet: less fat, less saturated fat, less salt, no increase in sugar, and more fibre (see Table 1). It also recommended that all packaged foods should be labelled with their contents of total fat and saturated fat. Nutritional labelling was essential if consumers were to be able to choose foods which made up healthy diets the committee said. In the consultations which followed, the government decided to set rules for labelling a number of other nutrients in addition to total and saturated fats.

At present, packaged foods are by law labelled with their ingredients. This is useful and means you can avoid additives or check for ingredients which cause allergy. However, it does not allow the calculation of nutritional contents. In January 1988, the UK government published its voluntary guidelines for nutritional labelling. Of course, with a voluntary scheme 'no information' is one option! and not surprisingly, for manufacturers of confectionery and high fat foods

it is the preferred option. Alternatively, a selective, and more flattering, declaration may be made.

The guidelines state that as long as no claim such as 'high fibre' is made a manufacturer may just give information on energy, protein, carbohydrate and total fat — the 'Big Four' — which include only one of the five key nutrients identified by COMA. The most complex of eight suggested forms of declaration is for the Big Four nutrients plus starch, sugars, saturated fat, monounsaturated fat, polyunsaturated fat, sodium and fibre. Minerals and vitamins may be declared with any format.

Not surprisingly, this range of options has meant that a wide variety of formats has been used by manufacturers. A recent Consumers' Association investigation found that about a quarter of the 422 foods they looked at carried no nutritional information. A further quarter gave information just on the Big Four. Only 15 of the 422 foods were labelled with all of the five key COMA nutrients. The Consumers' Association survey showed that the voluntary approach has not made it possible for consumers to compare foods and to choose healthy diets.

Europe is discussing nutritional labelling guidelines. At present, like the UK guidelines, the rules will be volun-

TABLE 1: DIETARY RECOMMENDATION

UK average consumption and COMA (1984) recommendations

	UK	COMA	
Total fat	42	<30	per cent energy
Saturated fat	18	<10	per cent energy
Salt	7	<5	grams per day
Added sugar	20	*	per cent energy
Fibre (Englyst method)	12	>18	grams per day

< means 'up to' and > means 'at least'.

* 'no increase'. NACNE (1983) recommended ten per cent energy

WHO's eating healthily

The World Health Organisation has published recommendations for 'an ideal nutritional pattern for the prevention of non-communicable diseases' applicable to all of Europe.

Nutritional guidelines recommended by the WHO Regional Office for Europe are shown in the table. Additional points include: alcohol intake should be limited; iodine prophylaxis should be applied when necessary; nutrient density should

be increased; and a body mass index (BMI — weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres) of 20-25 is the desired goal (intermediate and long-term) although a BMI of 18 may be appropriate for less developed countries.

KEY TO TABLE

^a values refer to alcohol-free intakes

^b these figure are implied by the other recommendations

^c the ratio of polyunsaturated to saturated fatty acids

^d values based on measuring non-starch polysaccharide and enzyme-resistant starch produced by food processing or cooking methods

INTERMEDIATE GOALS

Percentage of total energy ^a from:	General population	Cardiovascular high risk	Ultimate goals
complex carbohydrates ^b	>40	>45	45-55
protein	12-13	12-13	12-13
sugar	10	10	10
total fat	35	30	20-30
saturated fat	15	10	10
P:S ratio ^c	≤0.5	≤1.0	≤1.0
Dietary fibre (g/day) ^d	30	>30	>30
Salt (g/day)	7-8	5	5
Cholesterol (mg/4.18MJ)	—	<100	<100
Water fluoride (mg/litre)	0.7-1.2	0.7-1.2	0.7-1.2

Source: *Healthy Nutrition*, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 1988.

The facts that help you choose a healthy diet

tary, with all the disadvantages the UK experience has shown. If a food carries a nutritional label, two basic formats are recommended. One is for the Big Four only, the alternative is for eight nutrients including the COMA key five.

Several UK organisations including the Coronary Prevention Group and the Consumers' Association fiercely oppose the present European labelling guidelines. They believe that the voluntary nature of the present proposals, the option of the 'Big Four' label, and the non-standard amount for declarations, will make it impossible for consumers to compare foods and make healthy choices.

The minimum information which a nutritional label should supply is the key five nutrients identified by COMA and the World Health Organisation (WHO). However, even then the government guidelines recommend that the information is given on a weight basis, ie grams of nutrient per 100 grams of food. It is not always easy to relate such information to the COMA or WHO recommendations. For fat and saturated fat, for example, the recommendations are in terms of energy, which is not a calculation that can be done while shopping. What is needed is a simple means of relating a food to the recommendations.

One way of doing this is to classify

the contents of the five key nutrients as high, medium or low in comparison with the recommendation. Then, if you eat several foods which are high in fat for example, then you know that you should balance your diet with some which are low. Overall, your diet should average out at medium for the key nutrients.

Some large retailers already mark foods in this way. The Coronary Prevention Group has shown that a simple universal scheme which relates to existing food law rules for claims for high and low can be applied to the five key nutrients. The CPG scheme covers three and four band options. Table 2 gives an example of this sort of label.

Most European countries permit voluntary nutrition labelling and the Big Four are usually given. Sweden recently adopted a keyhole symbol to indicate low fat and high fibre foods (see Box below). In Denmark, protein, carbohydrate and fat may be given both as the per cent energy and the recommended per cent energy. This immediately shows the consumer how a food compares with the recommendations. However, this scheme includes only one of the five key nutrients.

The USA is famous for its long labels! Nutrition labelling is voluntary but, if present, must follow a defined format. The minimum declaration is for the Big Four in grams per portion, plus eight minerals and vitamins as percent RDAs. Other nutrients are optional. This label looks good but is not compulsory, is not based on standard weights of food and does not necessarily cover the key five nutrients. Information overload can be a problem.

With good nutritional labelling on all foods, there would be pressure on manufacturers to develop new products and to modify existing products. The potential is for healthier foods to gain popularity. What seems likely at present however is that the best packaging and the cleverest advertising will hold more sway than the best nutrition.

Sources
COMA (1984) *Diet and Cardiovascular Disease*. HMSO, London.
WHO (1988) *Healthy Nutrition: Preventing Nutrition-related Diseases in Europe*. HMSO, London.
Coronary Prevention Group (1989) *Nutritional Banding: A Scientific System for Labelling the Nutrient Content of Foods* (C1 from CPG, 60 Great Ormond Street, London, WC1N 3HR).

TABLE 2: A FOUR-BAND LABELLING SYSTEM

Food	Total fat	Sat'd fat	Added sugars	Total salt	Fibre
Wholemeal bread	Low	Low	Low	High	High
White bread	Low	Low	Low	High	Med-low
Wheatbix	Low	Low	Low	Med-high	High
Rich Tea biscuits	Med-low	Med-high	High	Med-high	Low
Jacket potato	Low	Low	Low	Low	Med-high
Cheese (hard, full-fat types)	High	High	Low	High	Low
Pork sausage	High	High	Low	Low	Low

Notes:

1. Bandings could be shown in a graphical form eg *, **, ***, ****
2. Bandings would be shown in addition to the weight based declaration

Misleading claims

Consumers are to be protected from misleading nutritional claims on food labels and in advertising according to MAFF. New proposals for consultation will be issued in late autumn with the intention of introducing legislation in 1990.

Claims such as 'no added sugar', 'high fibre', 'slightly salted' and 'half the

fat' abound on labels and adverts but may often be misleading. MAFF's Food Advisory Committee has looked at controls to cover this area but have been criticised by consumer groups for not going far enough to provide consistent nutrition information that consumers can understand. Loopholes will still allow misleading claims to be made.

Copies of the FAC's final recommendations may be obtained free of charge from Mr RA de la Mothe, Room 306a, MAFF, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR.

Key to healthy foods in Sweden

On 1 July this year, the Swedish government launched a new labelling system to encourage healthier eating. Foods which are either high in fibre or low in fat may display a green or black keyhole symbol.



How good is the Swedish scheme? If only fat and fibre are labelled, then foods can receive the keyhole stamp of approval even if they are high in sugar and salt and low in other nutrients. The best way for most people to improve unhealthy diets is to include more fresh vegetables and fruit, yet these will not display the symbol. On the other hand the scheme should raise awareness and encourage manufacturers to develop reduced fat and increased fibre products.

Home Economics in the curriculum

Home Economics at school may bring memories of cooking and sewing, but things have changed, writes Diane McCrea. Home Economics can contribute much more to the curriculum and to the education of young people in preparation for adult life.

Never before has it been so obvious that everyone needs the knowledge and skills to make sound decisions about the foods they buy and their storage and preparation in the home. Just as important is knowing how to choose a nutritious diet from the vast array of foods available. The relevance of a thorough education in food aspects alone cannot be underestimated.

With the introduction of GCSE examinations and the setting of National Criteria, Home Economics (HE) was recognised as contributing to the total curriculum. It develops the skills of

managing resources such as energy, effort, money, time, space, foods, textiles, materials and equipment. 'It helps students of both sexes to lead effective lives not only as individuals but also as members of a family and community' (National Criteria, GCSE).

Home Economics has been able to pride itself upon a central concern for the meeting of human needs. The accepted definition of HE emphasises the inter-relationship between the provision of food, clothing and shelter, and people's physical, economic, social and aesthetic needs within the context of the home.

Surely then HE must be central to an education that sets out to prepare young people for adult life in our complex and rapidly changing society?

The Education Reform Act 1988 is beginning to revolutionise the school curriculum. Changes are being introduced from the ages of five to sixteen. For the first time ever there will be a compulsory national curriculum laid down by Parliament in England and Wales.

The curriculum will comprise ten foundation subjects. Three core subjects, English, Mathematics and Science will be complemented by Art, Foreign Language (from age eleven),

Geography, History, Music, Physical Education and Technology including Design. So what about Home Economics?

It is recognised that HE can make a valuable contribution to the curriculum. To this end it is envisaged that HE will contribute to design and technology as a foundation subject. Government proposals on Design and Technology published in June 1989 do not initially lead one to think of HE as an integral part. However if the report is considered further, common elements and principles between design and technology and home economics emerge.

ATTAINMENT TARGETS

The capability to investigate, design, make and appraise is recognised as important as the acquisition of knowledge. Aspects of home economics will be used in programmes of study to achieve the attainment targets set out by the report. In local education authorities, teachers from art and design, business education, CDT, computer studies and home economics are trying to bring their experience and expertise together to meet the challenge of design and technology activities in the curriculum.

Design and technology attainment targets are to be met by an integration of

previously separate subjects. Cross-curricular activities and integrated projects will evolve. Here the HE teacher can use the strength of studying familiar materials and activities based around the home to make tasks interesting and relevant.

Home economics will yet again have to demonstrate its strengths and contribution to the curriculum. The fight is on to demonstrate that this subject can and does contribute much to the achievement of yet another set of goals and targets.

There is no time to be complacent. Many home economics organisations have lobbied to keep HE within the curriculum. It has not been an easy fight. Now the challenge is on to integrate HE teaching into the new framework of design and technology.

The changes will be demanding for the planners and hopefully exciting for future pupils. There is still however a long way to go. It is up to all of us with a keen interest in education to protect and promote home economics principles and practice. By doing so, attainment targets in design and technology will be met in a way which is relevant and vital for the future health and well-being of young people.

Food Hygiene Training

A little knowledge may be a dangerous thing, writes Liza Ackerly.

As part of the government's attempt to strengthen and streamline food safety legislation, in their white paper *Food Safety — Protecting the Consumer* it is stated that ministers will be able to set training requirements for those handling food commercially. As yet there is no clarification of the extent of training, or its means of regulation, if any.

In the light of the impending legislation, where there will be an

increased demand for food hygiene training, perhaps some consideration should be given to the quality of training and its assessment.

Why should this be of concern? Surely any training at all is better than none?

This is not the case. Poorly trained individuals may actually pose a greater risk to food safety than those who have received no formal training. There are many reasons for this — the main two being that first, the training may actually give misleading or false information, and second, the trainee may be lulled into a false sense of security and take unnecessary risks, believing that s/he knows enough to be able to cut corners.

Trainers must consider that their trainees are not completely void of information, like empty vessels, waiting to be filled with food hygiene facts. They may have experienced many years practising their own particular version of food hygiene based upon tradition and self taught customs.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Every individual will have their own perceptions about food hygiene. For example the definition of 'clean' and 'dirty' or the origins, and even definition, of food poisoning. Misconceptions may be harboured such as the notion that foul smelling drains outside the kitchen may cause food poisoning, whilst storing raw meat so that it can drip onto cheese may be believed to be beyond risk. Cultural background and experience will affect perceptions. Some cultures have taboos about certain foodstuffs, whilst others define certain food handling practices. Age may also be a factor.

Unless these perceptions, and misconceptions, about food hygiene are considered, they may survive training and seriously hinder the assimilation of knowledge. Trainees may accommodate new information within an existing framework of food hygiene perceptions.

There are learning packages available in food hygiene using videotapes and workbooks to replace traditional methods. This would provide the food industry with the cheapest and most convenient method of providing the impending mandatory training.

But beyond cost, to be successful food hygiene training must address existing misconceptions, provide facts about hygiene, and modify behaviour to improve food safety. I doubt whether this can be achieved with a leaflet or videotape alone, and the chances of a little knowledge being potentially dangerous could become a very real risk.

Parasite problems in pregnancy

Mother-to-be Chris Alderton thought she was doing the right thing eating pesticide-free fresh vegetables from her own garden. Then she became infected with a parasite. Her subsequent experiences have led her to start campaigning for better health education and a full screening programme for pregnant women. She writes:-

I am the mother of a congenitally infected infant. Before he became ill I had never heard of Toxoplasmosis. I read all the pregnancy books, read the otherwise excellent Health Education Authority literature for mums to be, but not found a mention of Toxoplasmosis.

I believe my infection resulted from eating home grown vegetables in a neighbourhood infested with cats. Had I known about Toxoplasmosis I would have taken more care. None of the books I read mentioned the disease or warned me that the infection can be transmitted by handling cat litters, by eating infected meat containing Toxoplasma cysts or by eating garden vegetables from soil which has been contaminated by cats.

Surveys show that up to 50 per cent of adults have evidence of past infection with toxoplasma parasites. Healthy people who catch the infection may not even be aware of it. Flu symptoms may ensue in some, and in a very small number an acute infection may resemble glandular fever.

Toxoplasma infections in the immune compromised person, such as an AIDS sufferer or an organ transplant recipient on immunosuppressing therapy, can result in serious complications because of the nature of the protozoa. According to Dr David Joynton of

Swansea Public Health Laboratories infection during pregnancy is likely to occur for 1,200 women each year in the UK. French research shows a 40 per cent risk of infection of the foetus.

In early pregnancy this may mean miscarriage, foetal death, stillbirth or, if the baby survives, a child with water on the brain (hydrocephaly), brain calcifications or eye damage (chorioretinitis).

Infection later in pregnancy carries additional risks. The baby may be born blind or there may be fairly mild symptoms like convulsions. Alternatively there may be no symptoms initially but neurological problems (epilepsy, psychomotor problems, even hydrocephaly) may develop in the first ten years of life. Long term studies show that even in children who show no symptoms at all, chorioretinitis may develop in one or both eyes up to the age of 20.

SCREENING IN PREGNANCY

In the UK we screen women routinely for syphilis and rubella — affecting ten and 24 babies each year respectively. By comparison nearly 500 pregnancies are likely to lead to foetal infection with Toxoplasma. It would be ideal if

of screening outweigh the costs of caring for such children.

I believe it is important to create public awareness about Toxoplasmosis. Pregnant women tend to become very health conscious during their pregnancy, and if there is a risk, even a very small risk, from raw vegetables, from unpasteurised milk or from eating undercooked infected meat, then women should be aware of the facts and assess the risks accordingly.

Stillbirth caused by Listeria has received a tremendous amount of publicity and many women now know about soft cheeses and kitchen hygiene. The risk of Toxoplasma infection from food may be small but if it is there the public should be told.

Do any of your readers know of studies which have looked at the quality control of food in respect of Toxoplasma cysts in infected meat? Is such meat passed for human consumption? Have any studies looked at Toxoplasma trophozoites in unpasteurised milk or yoghurts — not apparently subject to any sort of control? *

If your readers have any evidence or know of any such studies I would be pleased to have this information.



Pregnant women may be at risk of Toxoplasmosis

The parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* is widespread among the cat population and can be spread to other animals. Farm animals — and hence milk and meat — can carry the parasite, as can soil infected with cat faeces.

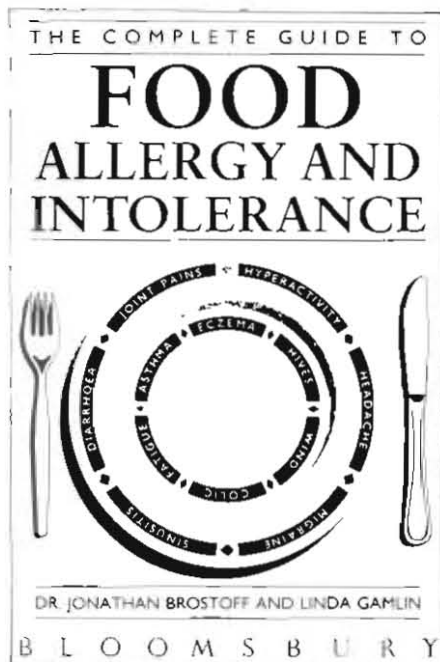
The parasite is destroyed by pasteurisation and adequate cooking. Risks in food include vegetables grown in cat-contaminated soil and eaten raw, milk such as goats or sheep milk which has not been pasteurised and meat which is raw or undercooked. Until proper screening can indicate who is at risk, all pregnant women should take care with these aspects of their diet.

A fact sheet on Toxoplasmosis is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Bea Teuten, The Toxoplasmosis Trust, 46 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London SE10 8UG.

To help Chris Alderton's research, write to her c/o *The Food Magazine*.

pregnant women could be screened for Toxoplasma so that special precautions could be taken for those who have no signs of previous infection. The government says it is currently seeking evidence to determine whether the costs

Sick of Eating



Food contaminated with salmonella will make anyone ill, and saturated fat increases the risk of heart disease for all of us, even though individual susceptibility varies. But, writes Linda Gamlin, there are some forms of food related illness that are far more individual than this. They are quirky, idiosyncratic reactions to particular foods.

Individual reactions to food can be described as 'food allergy' or 'food intolerance', depending on the type of symptoms. The first is largely recognised by the medical professions, and its cause known, whereas the second is still highly controversial.

There is no clear dividing line between food allergy and intolerance, and some patients show a mixture of the two. Even so, it is vital to distinguish between them. Much of the dispute that bedevils food intolerance arises from the casual use of 'food allergy' to describe it. This immediately alienates conventional doctors, who use 'allergy' in a specific way, to mean a reaction involving the body's immune system. While the immune system may play some small part in food intolerance, it is certainly not the sole cause of the symptoms. Food allergy is caused by the body's immune system mistaking particular foods for invading parasites and launching an all-out attack. The same type of reaction occurs in hay-fever, where pollen grains are attacked, or asthma, where house dust or feather particles may be the problem.

According to the medical textbooks, food allergy is a prompt and often devastating reaction, in which the tongue and lips swell up within minutes of touching the food. The patient may collapse and die unless there is speedy medical attention. Fortunately, this condition is relatively rare, but those who are afflicted have scrupulously to avoid the culprit food, usually for their whole lives.

Within the past decade, doctors have gradually come to accept that not all food allergy conforms to the textbook description. Other types of allergic illness, such as asthma, can be triggered off, or simply made worse, by certain foods. There is some reluctance by doctors to apply the term 'food allergy' to such problems, but most now accept that food can be important in asthma, eczema, perennial rhinitis (constant runny or congested nose) and urticaria, known collectively as the 'classical allergic diseases'.

RANGE OF SYMPTOMS

Food intolerance is a far more variable illness than food allergy, and a topic of heated debate, with some doctors claiming that it affects less than one per cent of the population, while others put the figure as high as 20 or 30 per cent. The range of symptoms attributed to it is staggering, as the illustration shows. No single patient suffers all these symptoms, but most have two or more. Every patient is different, both in the type of symptoms and their severity. Some sufferers may be so badly affected that any sort of normal life is impossible, while those in the early stages may be unaware that they are even ill, with little more than tiredness and irritability in the way of symptoms.

All this makes 'food intolerance' look distinctly dubious to the orthodox doctor. Worse still, all the symptoms listed can be caused in other ways, and many are typical of psychosomatic illness, in which an unhappy mind takes out its problems on the body. Small wonder then that most patients with food intolerance have been dismissed as 'neurotic' by their GPs.

ELIMINATION DIET

Many such patients have found relief through an elimination diet, which is the only reliable way to

diagnose food intolerance. All everyday foods are avoided to see if the symptoms disappear. If they do, then foods are reintroduced one-at-a-time to discover which ones produce a reaction. (Although it sounds simple, no-one should attempt this without further information.)

Thereafter, the culprit foods have to be avoided — but not forever. Unlike food allergy, food intolerance usually clears up after a few months or years of avoidance.

Any food can be the cause of food intolerance, although the staples such as wheat and milk are the most common offenders. In the Far East, rice and soy sauce are the usual culprit, so it seems that eating a food regularly and in large quantities is the crucial factor, not the foods themselves. But sometimes foods that are only eaten occasionally cause trouble. Most patients react to two, three or more foods, and some are also sensitive to additives.

The question of what causes food intolerance is a difficult one. Research costs money, and dubious illnesses do not readily attract grants. From the little research that has been done, it seems likely that there are multiple causes, all fairly minor in themselves, but with effects that add up to make the patient ill. More than one thing probably has to 'go wrong' for food intolerance to occur, and this may explain the variable symptoms — perhaps the cluster of things 'going wrong' is slightly different for each patient.

Some research has suggested that patients with food intolerance have a minor form of allergic reaction to the food, which is made worse by other malfunctions. If that allergic reaction occurs in the stomach or intestine, it could, among other things, make the gut more leaky so that more undigested food molecules get through to the blood.

Tests show that people with food intolerance do tend to have more leaky guts than healthy people. Although the body is equipped to dispose of undigested food molecules in the blood, they may cause problems if they are too numerous, or if the body reacts inappropriately to them.

Bottle feeding or early weaning may lead to such inappropriate reactions for some babies. Those who are not breast fed for long enough miss out on a vital 'learning period' early in life, when the immune

system should discover the difference between food molecules and harmful bacteria, and learn not to react aggressively to food. If they fail to do this, then symptoms such as colic and eczema may follow. Breast feeding for as long as possible is of proven value in preventing food allergy and may also be helpful for food intolerance.

ENZYME DEFICIENCY

The most intriguing discovery about patients with food intolerance is that they are more likely to be deficient in certain enzymes than healthy people. Enzymes do a great many different jobs in the body, but one important task is to act as a 'rubbish disposal team', breaking down the toxins in food. Most of us are unaware of these toxins because the healthy body deals with them so efficiently, deploying thousands of different enzymes for this vital task.

Minor enzyme deficiencies could be the key to several puzzling features of food intolerance, particularly the link with chemical sensitivity. A proportion of those with food intolerance is also made ill by everyday chemicals, such as exhaust fumes, perfumes, solvents and tobacco smoke. This link cannot easily be explained, except by minor enzyme defects, which may leave the body unable to cope with a whole range of toxins.

Enzyme defects could also answer the most common objection of sceptical doctors: If ordinary foods make so many people ill, surely it would have been noticed long ago? They suspect that food intolerance is a passing fad, or a convenient explanation for psychosomatic problems. While this is undoubtedly true for some people, doctors working in this field interpret the 'fad' differently. They believe that there has been a steady increase in the incidence of food intolerance in recent years, which is only now being widely recognised. And they see a possible explanation for this phenomenon.

People with minor enzyme defects have probably been present in the population for a long time — such defects are likely to be inherited. But before the advent of the 'chemical age' most of them would not have experienced any problems. The wholesale introduction of synthetic chemicals into air, food and water, may put intolerable pressures on these people, overloading or damaging their enzyme systems, and leaving them unable to cope with certain toxins found in foods.

CHEMICAL EXPOSURE

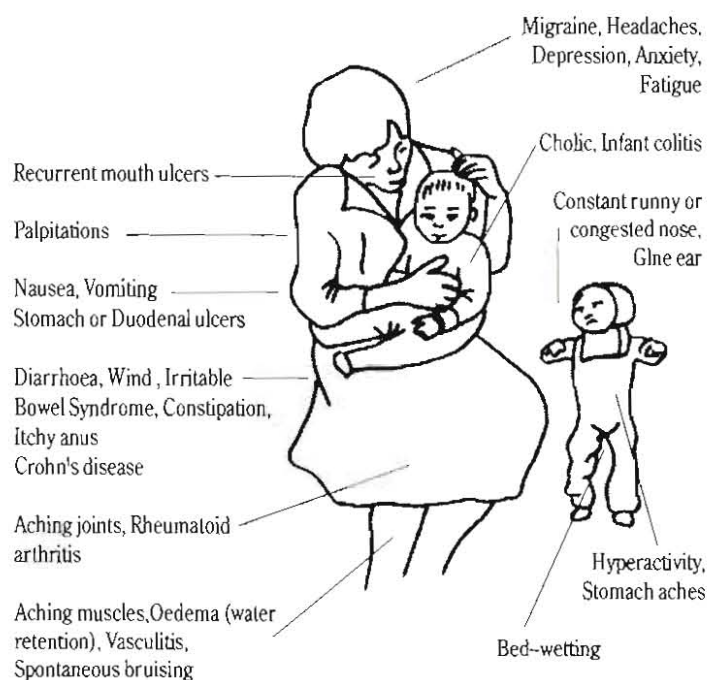
Various pieces of circumstantial evidence support this idea. Some of those with severe food and chemical intolerance date the onset to a massive exposure to chemicals — being soaked by a crop spraying plane, for example, or a factory accident. Perhaps this massive

exposure caused some lasting damage to their detoxification systems. Small but sustained exposure could have a similar effect. In recent studies on pesticides bound to cereal grains, the contaminated grains were fed to rats. The researchers found that the rats' livers showed reduced enzyme function. A further piece of evidence concerns hyperactive children, who are commonly sensitive to food additives. Research shows that such children are likely to be deficient in a key detoxification enzyme, and that some additives prevent this particular enzyme from working. A normal child would not be harmed, unless a very large amount of the additive was eaten, but one whose enzymes are already below strength would be badly affected by a small amount of the additive.

Patients with food and chemical intolerance have been described as the 'canaries of the chemical age' — the vulnerable ones, whose ill health we should see as a warning to the rest. Unless the majority of doctors can be convinced that food intolerance and chemical sensitivity are genuine illnesses, this timely warning will go unheeded.

■ **The Complete Guide to Food Allergy and Intolerance**, by Linda Gamlin and Dr Jonathan Brostoff, is published by Bloomsbury at £9.95.

The main symptoms seen in food intolerance



Most of the symptoms shown for adults can also occur in children

Everywoman

THE current affairs magazine **FOR** women, **BY** women.

Politics. Social issues. Equal opportunities. Jobs and training. Health. Relationships. New books. The arts. Humour.

"I can't tell you what a relief it is to finally get a magazine that is about and for REAL women!"

"Finding you on my door mat each month really helps to cheer me up."

"I'd like to thank you for a magazine which is open, critical, honest and enjoyable to read."

At monthly in good newsagents and bookshops. You can place your order in any newsagent, or subscribe.

Organisations £18, individuals £12 per year, £6.52 for 6-month gift trial subscription.

NAME

ADDRESS

Cheque/PO with order, payable to Everywoman.

Return to Everywoman, FREE POST, London N15BR (no stamp needed).

Mrs Thatcher's Children

The *Good Fight* is a new book by Geoffrey Cannon about the life and works of Caroline Walker. Here he gives an abridged extract.

One sure sign of the integrity and good sense of any government is its record on public health. Nineteenth century revulsion against contamination of food and water, inevitable when private industry is unregulated, led to enlightened laws designed to protect the public against rapacity, fraud and disease. Good public health is in the national interest. People who enjoy clean air, safe water, a pleasant environment and food that is healthy as well as safe and clean, are more productive.

Mrs Thatcher and her advisors and ministers seem not to understand public health but an increasing number of traditional conservatives have turned away from the Thatcher government because its enthusiasm for unregulated business ignored the public interest.

Caroline Walker's commitment as a nutritionist was always to public health. She was therefore bound to contradict the rhetoric of Thatcherism, just as Victorian reformers collided with the government of their day.

CHILDREN

Above all Caroline's commitment was to child health. In her ten years of public life she showed again and again that government policy was breeding not a rising but a falling generation; that the food and therefore the health of the nation's children was — is — unprotected and deteriorating.

Her academic training as a nutritionist coincided with the beginnings of a revolution in thinking about children's food and health. In the 1970s official policy was the same as that of the 1920s: go for growth. Big, heavy, 'bonny, bouncing' babies were defined as healthy, because the most serious public health problems of British children half a century ago were those now seen in the Third World: emaciation and stunting.

'I have a photograph of the first school meals' Caroline wrote in 1986. 'The rows of puffy-faced children stare so solemnly up from their wooden benches, in front of them is a bowl of soup and a hunk of coarse bread, which they are no doubt itching to get their teeth into. The sequence of photographs in this East London school in 1900, 1925 and 1950 is remarkable and revealing.'

'In 1900 the boys sit, gormless and boss-eyed, rachitic and with the despair that comes from chronic under-feeding and infection. In 1925 they are more cheerful; many of the boys are fit and strong, but still there are many sunken-eyed weaklings. In 1950 the school had gone co-ed. Perhaps that had something to do with the cheeriness of the boys; but there is no mistaking the improvement in physical condition.'

The same school is still doing business today, and a photograph would also show boys and girls of Asian,

Caribbean and Mediterranean extraction. In an area like the East End of London in the 1980s we see a curious mixture of health problems. Some children are still too thin and shorter than their chums. But some are fat and are useless at games.'

What Caroline saw, working in the community in Cardiff, Cambridge and then for City and Hackney Health Authority, were the ill effects of a child health policy that had gone too much for growth, by means of fatty, sugary food, heavy in calories but short of nourishment.

Working with the Coronary Prevention Group, as she did from 1980, and then as an advisor to the London Food Commission from its foundation in 1985, Caroline encouraged mothers to introduce their babies, after weaning, to the food that is best for all the family and therefore to avoid fat and sugar.

A month later, in July 1984, the government published the report of its COMA panel on Diet and Cardiovascular Disease, recommending that everybody will do well to cut down consumption of fats, especially hard and hardened saturated and hydrogenated fats. Everybody, that is, but children under five. Why the exception? Caroline discovered that a small group of health professionals, led by Dorothy Francis of the Hospital for Sick Children in Great Ormond Street, had persuaded the Department of Health to insert the recommendation that young children drink full-fat milk. There was no scientific debate and no evidence was produced to show that milk fat is essential for children.

'When questioned about this [by Caroline] a member of the COMA child health sub-committee [Dorothy Francis] replied "I've signed the Official Secrets Act. I cannot comment".' Caroline encouraged Parliamentary Questions on the issue, and invited Dorothy Francis to debate the issue. There was no satisfactory response.

In the 1970s Mrs Thatcher, then Education Secretary, earned the name 'Thatcher the milk snatcher' as she withdrew free milk from schools. As Prime Minister she became Thatcher the meal snatcher. In 1986 the government announced plans to prohibit local authorities from offering free school meals to poor children. Sir Douglas Black, a former Chief Scientist at the Department of Health and later President of the Royal College of Physicians, wrote: 'This constitutes too great a risk for the nation's children. The government should abandon the proposal.'

Caroline wrote in *The Daily Telegraph*: 'Without the discretion to provide a free meal to a poor child what is a school to do? Throw a child out in the street? Chuck away the left-over food? Any responsible government would never dream of privatising public health. But that is what this govern-

ment seems set to do. Good school meals are vital to raising the new generation. How many people would refuse a meal to a poor child? Would you?'

Since 1986 nothing has changed for the better, and a national campaign for school meals of guaranteed high quality is needed now just as much as it was in 1986, 1979 or indeed the 1930s.

Caroline Walker Awards

Starting this year, the Caroline Walker Awards will honour the leaders who are working for good food and good health, to be announced at the Royal Society of Arts on 11 October.

The Awards are in four categories: consumer, media, science, and industry. In the consumer category, the work of Parents for Safe Food, founded by Pamela Stephenson, has been recognised. Other short listed entries include Tony Webb of the London Food Commission's food irradiation campaign; Patti Randall, of the Baby Milk Action Coalition's boycott of Nestlé; and Mrs Edwina Currie for heart disease prevention.

Dr Gail Vines of *New Scientist*, Dr Tim Lobstein and Sue Dibb co-editors of *The Food Magazine*, and Dr Oliver Gillie of *The Independent*, are all short listed in the media category, along with the editors of *Today* and the *Daily Mail*. David Montgomery and Sir David English.

In the science category, the work of the Public Health Laboratory Service is short listed, along with Professor Richard Lacey; Dr Helen Grant, the consultant neuropathologist who has warned against the dangers of 'mad cow disease'; and Alan Gear of the organic gardening organisation, the Henry Doubleday Research Association.

The short list from industry include Quaker Oats and Kellogg for their oat bran campaigns; Sir Ian McLaurin of Tesco for pioneering nutritional labelling; Tony O'Reilly of Heinz for high quality tinned food; and Geoff Harrington of the Meat and Livestock Commission for the promotion of lean meat.

Judges are Simon Coombs MP, chair of the Parliamentary Forum on Food and Health; Vanessa Harrison, producer of the BBC Radio 4 Food Programme; Dr Kenneth Heaton, chair of the Royal Society of Medicine Forum on Food and Health; and Geoffrey Cannon.

■ **Order Form:** Please send me *The Good Fight*. I enclose a cheque payable to the Caroline Walker Trust. Send your order to: 6 Aldridge Road Villas, London W11 1BP.

Name (capitals) _____	Telephone _____
Address _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hardback £10.70 incl p&p <input type="checkbox"/> Paperback £5.50 incl p&p	
I also wish to support the work of the Trust by an additional donation:	
£5 <input type="checkbox"/> £10 <input type="checkbox"/> £25 <input type="checkbox"/> £50 <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
Total cheque enclosed £ _____	

Porritt on politics and food

'Food in the body politic' is the title of the first Caroline Walker Lecture, given this year by Jonathon Porritt, Director of Friends of the Earth, and leading speaker for the Green movement in Britain and Europe.



In 1989 leaders of the environmental and new public health movements, have joined forces in a common cause. 'Our environment starts with ourselves and with our own wholeness and health' says Jonathon. 'We can begin to clean up our own act by eating good, fresh food and by working for a high quality, environmentally benign food supply.'

Jonathon is not only concerned about the ill effects of Western food on the health of people in Europe. In his lecture he points to the literally devastating result of exporting highly processed, chemicalised food and agriculture to developing countries, in the name of trade and aid.

'The integrity of food and farming in the poor countries of the world is the key to their future' he says. 'But

traditional food and farming systems are being destroyed all over the world, not only to make profits for multinationals, but also on the advice of United Nations and other aid agencies.

'Now we know that British food is just about the worst in the world. How ironic it is that we and other rich nations are exporting fat and sugar to starving people in Africa and Asia. Early colonialists ravaged native populations with syphilis and typhoid. Now it's heart disease and cancers.'

He believes we have little to teach and much to learn from people all over the world whose food has an authentic tradition. 'Our task now is to fight for high standards for food, public health and the environment in Europe' he says.

Support the LFC and subscribe to The Food Magazine

Send off today, you don't even need a stamp to:

The Food Magazine (subscriptions)
London Food Commission,
FREEPOST, London EC1B 1FX

Please tick relevant box(es)
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

UK

☐ £12.50 individuals

☐ £25.00 organisations

Overseas (airmail)

☐ £20.00* individuals

☐ £30.00* organisations

*payment in sterling only

Donations

☐ I enclose the amount £ _____ as a donation to the work of the London Food Commission.

☐ I enclose a cheque/p.o. for £ _____ made payable to LFC Publications

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

CUT OUT NESCAFÉ AND JOIN THE BOYCOTT



I pledge not to buy Nescafé until Nestlé abides by the spirit and letter of the WHO/UNICEF code on the marketing of baby milk. ☐

I enclose £5 cheque/P.O. for a boycott pack. ☐

Name _____

Address _____

Every three minutes a Third World child dies from unsafe bottle feeding. Breast milk is free and safe.

But unless companies like Nestlé get babies hooked on the bottle, they don't do business.

Don't let them get away with it.

WAKE UP TO THE FACTS. NOT NESCAFÉ.

Baby Milk Action, 6 Regent Terrace, Cambridge, CB2 1AA. Tel: 0223 464420

FOOD FROM THE PAST

..Shoot straight, Lady



You've got a fighting job on hand, too. These are significant days and anyone — man, woman, or child — who is less than fighting fit is a pull back on the total war effort.

FOOD is your munition of war. The Government sees that you get the right stuff and it's vital that you should know how to use it to full advantage . . .

There's cheese : it makes muscle and bone.

There are potatoes : they give energy and warmth.

Carrots, that give vitality and help you to see in the dark.

Green vegetables, with their valuable salts and vitamins, which are so very important for clear complexions and sound teeth.

Did you know that 5 quarts of summer milk — milk at its richest and when it is most plentiful — go to the making of 1 lb. cheese?

Or that swedes, the juice of which you used to give to babies because of its valuable Vitamin C, are now to be had at most greengrocers cheap enough and in big enough quantities for you to serve as a second or third vegetable to the entire family?

All good live stuff. And you need them all : every day. Serve everything appetisingly as you so well can do. Then you can be proud of your vital, active part in the drive to Victory.

Nutrition education, women's roles and patriotic fervour combined to encourage readers to eat swedes during wartime. Further encouragement came in the form of Woolton Pie, a recipe named after the Minister of Food, Lord Woolton:

Take 3-4 lb diced vegetables according to season (potato, swede, cauliflower and carrot are recommended), three or four spring onions if available and one teaspoon each of vegetable extract and oatmeal.

Cook together for ten minutes in enough water to cover. Cool, put in a pie dish, sprinkle on parsley and cover with a crust of wheatmeal or potato pastry or mashed potato with a

little grated cheese. Bake until nicely browned and serve with a hot brown gravy. Serves four - five.

If you are short of fat, make a pastry with 8 oz wheatmeal flour, a teaspoon of baking powder, a pinch of salt and a pinch of powdered sage. Stir in nearly a quarter pint of cold milk or milk and water. Roll out the mix and use it as pastry.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE DRIVING FORCE - FOOD, EVOLUTION AND THE FUTURE

Michael Crawford and David Marsh.
William Heinemann, 1989, £14.95

Can the diet of one generation lead to evolutionary adaptation in the next?

Traditional Darwinists might argue not. Cutting off rats' tails does not lead to inherited taillessness in the progeny, so how could food cause changes in genetic structure?

No-one denies the notion that diet might affect the expression of genetic potential. The rise in average height of our population over the last century, shows how the presence of adequate nutrients allows a greater expression of 'true' height.

But to suggest that a genetic code might itself be altered by the nutritional conditions surrounding the chromosome is a far more startling proposition.

Crawford and Marsh argue that the nutritional environment can effectively suppress or release genetic information. Cats, for example, have 'lost' their ability to synthesise vitamin A from vegetable beta-carotene because their diets have been almost exclusively animal matter with ready-made vitamin A in retinol. The lack of betanin has 'suppressed' the appropriate genetic code, and the unused segment of DNA can be turned to other uses. Those other uses, argue the authors, can be more than just random and may actively respond to the prevailing nutritional substrate.

Whether or not the reader accepts this last proposition, with its implied nutrient-gene interactive design to evolution, *The Driving Force* offers plenty of ammunition to encourage healthier diets.

For humans, the nutritional evidence suggests that the brain

evolved when the human diet contained a lot of fish and high quality vegetable matter. The margins between land and water offered the optimum diet for the creation of brain tissue and a similar diet would still be appropriate for optimum brain development today.

But the present average diet, the book argues, is encouraging the development of quite different forms of growth - the atherosclerosis and carcinomas that now kill the majority of us.

It would not be enough to add appropriate supplements to an otherwise poor diet, as the resulting nutrient mixture will be new to the organism and will have unknown consequences. As long as a sub-optimal mix of nutrients is present, so a sub-optimal or even degenerative development may be encouraged.

But with sufficient understanding we may yet define the constituents of the optimum diet, encouraging growth and development beyond our present levels. As primitive algae became multi-celled organisms in the presence of sufficient oxygen, and as apes' brains became human brains in the presence of sufficient essential fatty acids, so the realm of further evolution can open before us.

Nutrition, the authors argue, is the means by which we take control of evolution's driving force.

Tim Lobstein

ECONOMICS AND THE CRISIS OF ECOLOGY

Narindar Singh, 3rd edition, Bellow £7.95

A classic now in its third edition. Now everyone is green, it is refreshing to read a book which socks it to us. This is a book from the

Third World experience. Narindar Singh tells us starkly of the choices which lie behind the ecological depravity which results from conventional economics.

As one who is concerned about the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) current role in food policy, I turned to the chapter 'The Appian Way to Disaster' with some relish. (The FAO is based in Rome where the Appian Way is.) A great chapter but no dissection of the FAO - that one must wait. Meanwhile do read this book. It's lively, it tackles the hard economics with some guts, and it's not written by some Johnny-come-lately. This is one of the pathfinder books, written ten years ago, which helped shift the goalposts.

Tim Lang

C FOR CHEMICALS - CHEMICAL HAZARDS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Michael Birkin and Brian Price, Green Print, 1989, £4.95

This useful little book sets out to help us avoid the harmful health and environmental effects of frequently encountered chemicals, other than food additives and pharmaceuticals.

It contains three sections: a short introduction on properties of chemicals which steers a careful path between complacency and needless anxiety; a 'topics' section with information on such things as packaging, chemical fertilisers and pesticides; and an A-Z listing of chemicals which the reader is likely to encounter. The latter two sections are cross-referenced so that one can easily start with a topic such as pesticide residues in food, then find further information under the specific chemicals named such as tecnazene and dimethoate.

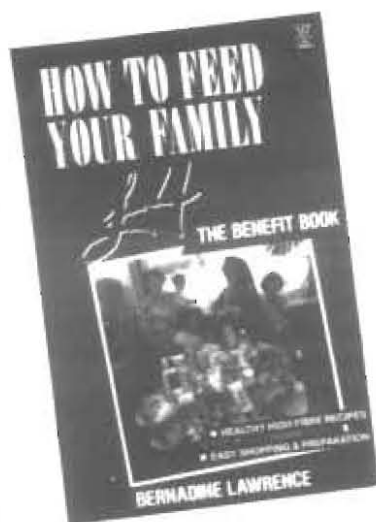
The authors are refreshingly sceptical, for example in discussing phosphate-free detergents. Although aimed at helping us to help ourselves, the authors rightly point out in several places that many of the problems would be better dealt with at source.

Michael Joffe

HOW TO FEED YOUR FAMILY FOR £4 A DAY

Bernadine Lawrence
Thorsons, 1989, £3.50

Chelsea resident Bernadine Lawrence spends £28 per week on food for her family of five, providing them with a well-balanced, healthy diet.



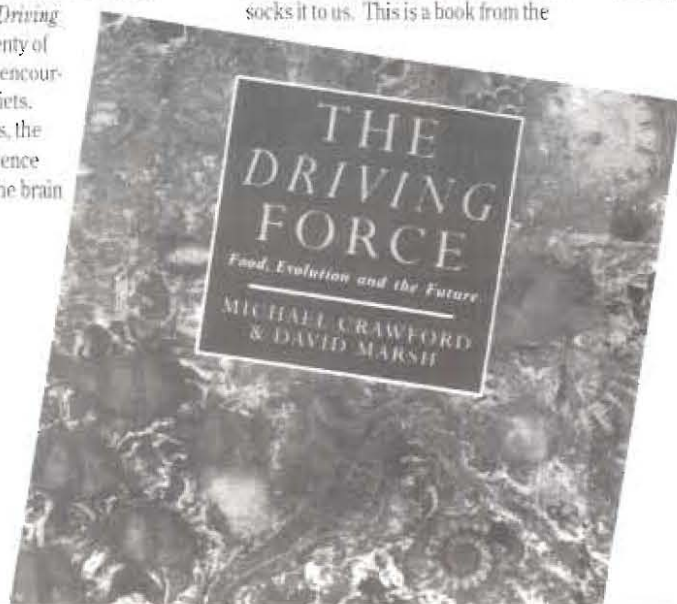
She bakes her own bread, makes breakfast cereals and yoghurt, and enjoys spending up to two hours each day cooking lunch and a main evening meal. The main meals are often pulse-based but occasionally feature meat, fish or dairy foods.

This book is her recipe book. It has been used by some people to support the view that benefits do not need to be raised. To eat healthily people with low incomes do not need more money, the argument runs, they just need more information.

Ms Lawrence feels this is a misinterpretation of her book. 'I have a question to ask of any smart politician who may wish to wield the Benefit Book in such a way, and that is, quite simply, do you and your family manage on £28 per week? For any man who quoteth the Benefit Book should live by the Benefit Book.'

The book is jam-packed with interesting recipes and tips, and can be recommended to everyone who enjoys cooking and following recipes and wants to eat a healthy diet, whatever their income.

Issy Cole-Hamilton



LETTERS

The perfect product

In Issue 6 of The Food Magazine you printed a letter from a mother concerned about the aluminium content of the soya formula she was giving her baby. She asked if it would be better to use ordinary soya milk and you responded only in terms of finding out about the aluminium content. I am

concerned that if parents did find an ordinary soya milk low in aluminium they might use this instead of formula for an infant.

Most soya milks are low in calcium and often contain sugar. They are not specially formulated and are not intended as breast milk substitutes and should be regarded — as is 'doorstep' milk — as an item of diet for older children and adults.

Soya formula feeding, aside from aluminium levels, results in poor antibody responses to the common childhood immunisations (polio, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccines). It can also be as allergenic as cows milk. For anyone worried about these aspects of soya formulae as well as those mentioned in the letter, there is an excellent 'product' on the 'market'. This is as free from additives as can be managed, given environmental levels, it is specifically tailored to infant requirements and has been extensively consumer tested.

In addition it is cheap, hygienic and has valuable antibiotic properties. Of course I am talking about breast milk. Breast feeding can supply all of a baby's requirements until 4-6 months and can remain an important part of the diet for much longer.

Magda Sachs
Ilford

squash that could make eight litres often costs less. I am sorry to say that the general attitude of Sainsbury's was 'let the buyer beware'.

I hope that pressure from you or the Office of Fair Trading will make shops separate 'juices' from 'squashes' and give the public the fair deal so many supermarkets like to advertise.

Robin Cameron
London W14

Back issues - a few still available!

There are still a few copies left of the celebrated first six issues of The Food Magazine

Issue 1 includes

- ★BST - what are they doing to our milk?
- ★Jumping on the bran waggon - the inside story on added bran in our diets
- ★What's in canned meat - we take the lid off the canned meat industry
- ★How natural is natural - are misleading labels a trading standards concern?

Issue 2 includes

- ★8-page Food Quality Supplement - the hidden hazards of eating healthy food
- ★Soft-serve ice-cream - the inside story
- ★Homeless and hungry - preview report
- ★Chernobyl after effects - the world trade in contaminated foods

Issue 3 includes

- ★6-page Fast Food supplement; the missing labels revealed at last
- ★School dinners and the launch of the FEAST campaign
- ★The costs of eating healthily: we look at inner city shopping
- ★1992 - what might it mean for UK consumers?

Issue 4 No longer available

Issue 5 includes

- ★Premium sausages - are they just a prime rip-off?
- ★Boozing babies: we look at the alcohol in gripe water
- ★Food Safety: a ten-point action plan to improve our food
- ★Aluminium in baby milks
- ★Alternatives to third world exploitation Part 1: Traidcraft

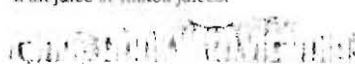
Issue 6 includes

- ★Hygiene hazards of microwave ovens
- ★Fruit juice drinks: mostly water?
- ★Pamela Stephenson's pesticide protest
- ★Super food or super con? Vitamin enriched junk food

£2.50 inc p&p per copy, cheques payable to LFC Publications. Order from Subscriptions Dept, The Food Magazine, 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9AR

Juice confusion

I was interested to read the report in the Sun about 'fruit' drinks. Some months ago I wrote to Sainsbury's in the Cromwell Road (West London) to complain that, as far as I could establish, Libby's Vit C was only a squash with added vitamin C and should be sold as such, and not mixed in with the other cartoned drinks, most of which are pure fruit juice or mixed juices.



NUTRITION INFORMATION	
Typical values per 100 ml	
Energy	162 kJ/ 38 kcal
Protein	0.2 g
Fat	0.1 g
Carbohydrate	9.7 g

Libby's Orange 'C' contains not less than 26 mg of Vitamin 'C' per 100 ml and so a 115 ml (4 fl oz) serving will supply 100% of your recommended daily amount of Vitamin 'C'. This pack contains 8 servings.

LIBBY'S
10 MARK STREET,

Under 25% juice here

The same probably applies to Ribena, whole orange drinks etc, all of which are marketed and priced as if they are pure fruit juices. 76p for a litre of diluted squash is far too much, especially when a bottle of undiluted

Nice ice

I made the fresh fruit ice cream (see last issue) with my own, home-made, Greek yoghurt, taking it from the freezer at half time and beating it, and it was excellent.

Bobby Freeman
Newport

School meals matter

I am delighted to see so many comments from The Food Magazine picked up in the national press. It does mean that much of what you print gets to a wider readership, although by precis and further editing the thrust of the article can be distorted.

I was dismayed to find the valuable work undertaken by the School Meals Service (SMS) left out of the chain of catalysts cited in Food Production (Editorial, Issue 6). The SMS has reacted very positively to healthy eating and the dietary recommendations to improve pupils' health. The health of the adult is determined in childhood. Many authorities not only provide healthier lunches, but teach nutrition too so that pupils select with knowledge why some dishes should be reserved for occasional treats, a system preferable to colour coding as the information is retained. I provide cookery demonstrations for governor, parents and other interested bodies. The dishes are then eaten by the audience to prove just how the SMS has adapted to the healthy approach.

You covered the release of the Department of Health report on the diets of British school children. You could have linked it in your editorial. The final paragraph concerning the report could have strengthened the food and health link. Pupils may be passive

LETTERS

consumers at school level but grow to become active, voting citizens.

A S Carter
Education Officer (Catering)
Nottinghamshire County Council

Menu labels

Like most people, I am totally opposed to irradiated food and would never knowingly purchase it. However, I am concerned to know how one would know if restaurant food contained any irradiated items. While supermarkets can easily label their products, I can hardly imagine 'freshly irradiated garden peas' appearing on any menu!



Made with 25% fresh whole eggs.

To retain freshness once opened, biscuits should be kept in an airtight container.

Product of Holland

INGREDIENTS: SUGAR, WHEATFLOUR, WHOLE EGGS, NATURAL FLAVOUR, SALT, EMULSIFIER: E322

J. Sainsbury plc Stamford Street London SE1 9LL

On a lighter side, I thought you might be interested to see that the eggs in these sponge fingers are apparently only 25 per cent fresh (or may be only 25 per cent of the eggs are fresh)!!

I think your magazine is great — keep up the good work.

Coral S Burrows
London E17

Reheating nightmare

I am writing to you because I know from your excellent book, *Children's Food*, that you are concerned about the quality of food served to children.

Many eating places are now using a method of serving food whereby it is prepared in advance, put in the fridge and reheated on demand. During the summer holidays in London my children have been served three such dishes,

from Pizzaland (a pizza), from Garfunkels (tagliatelle with prawns), and from The Place to Eat in John Lewis, Oxford Street (a children's crockpot). In each case the food was served so that the outside edges were bubbling and the dish itself was so hot that oven gloves were required, whereas the centres were still at fridge temperatures. Each establishment attempted to reheat the dishes, but the centre temperatures only ever reached blood heat with the food on the outside becoming burnt and dehydrated.

The nutritional content of these dishes must be very poor. In the case of the children's crockpot, there must have been virtually no vitamins before it was reheated several times anyway.

I do not think that any of these dishes should be pre-assembled. They are unsuitable for reheating in a pre-assembled state, either conventionally or by microwave. They are, of course, imitations of traditional dishes which are actually fairly easy to produce on demand if prepared to a certain stage.

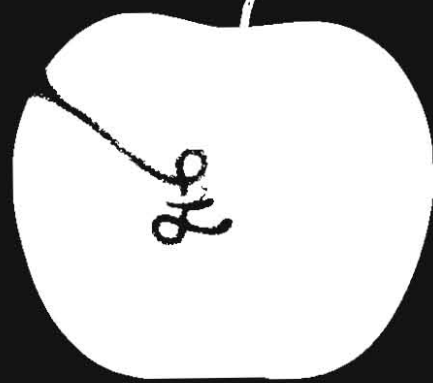
In John Lewis' The Place to Eat the staff seemed to think that microwave ovens have some kind of magic germ-killing property, regardless of temperatures achieved. I have written a letter to the Westminster environmental health office regarding this incident because the dish was specifically aimed at children, and the staff, including the catering manageress whom I asked to see, were quite unable to understand that a bowl of baked beans had to be heated all the way through evenly and that the way they were using the microwave oven meant this would not occur until the outside was charred. Speaking as a lay person, it seemed to me that they needed a spoon — for stirring (no magic!)

Many people eating in these places are not from London and could be hundreds or thousands of miles away when they become ill from these bad practices which I won't call cooking — they are like a science fiction bad dream of cooking.

There are places producing freshly cooked good food in London and I think they should be protected from being driven out of business by these big businesses.

Ms M Batley
Stockport

THIS FOOD BUSINESS



CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION

SOCIETY STATESMAN

Now available: the new booklet which accompanied the Channel Four series.

- food quality standards and public health
- the impact of the food technology revolution
- monopolies and mergers; towards a Euro food trade?
- food decision-making; Denmark's or Britain's?
- facts and figures on pesticides and new fat substitutes
- diet on a low income

Written by Tim Lang, Sue Dobb, Issy Cole-Hamilton and Tim Lobstein *This Food Business* outlines a sane approach for UK and European food policy.

Includes 'To eat or not to eat' an at-a-glance consumer guide on how to walk through the food and health minefield!

ORDER FORM

Please send me _____ copy/copies of *This Food Business* at £1.75 (including 25p postage and packaging).

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £_____ made payable to LFC Publications

Name _____

Address _____

Send to: Publications Department, London Food Commission, 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9AR



Caroline Waldegrave's Diary

Food writer and principal of Leith's School of Food and Wine, Caroline Waldegrave contributes a personal view of school holidays.

I have always believed that it should be perfectly possible to give children food they like which is also healthy, but as my family grows it has got more difficult. When we had one child it was simple, with two it was OK, with three I was managing, and now with four (ages nine, five, four and eighteen months) I'm finding it much harder.

During term it is fine, the elder two have good healthy packed lunches and the younger two obediently eat what they are given. I am not around to hear the whingeing when my two schoolgirls compare their lunch boxes with those of their friends — filled with hula hoops, crisps and 'health crunch bars' available from those so-called health food shops stuffed full of honey and overpriced nuts and pulses. Even if we go to the park after school and see an ice cream van I've persuaded my children that a cornet is enough of a treat without the ice cream.

Come the long summer holidays and I'm finding everything much more difficult. I don't think there are many foods that all four of the children like — and if there is then either William or I won't like it much. Breakfast is fine, sugar free cereals, skimmed milk, yoghurt, fresh fruit, orange juice and delicious bread baked from the village. Lunch can be OK, fish or chicken with vegetables and a salad. However if I try to make something (low fat naturally) like shepherd's pie, fish pie or spaghetti Bolognese, there is bound to be a child complaining. My son despises anything with sauce, my second daughter dislikes meat, my eighteen month old spits most things out. Thank God for Katie, aged nine, she'll eat

anything I give her, though since Jonathan Porritt visited her school she asks difficult ecological questions, eg about whether hamburgers come from South American ranches carved out of rain forests.

Puddings are simple. Usually we have fruit, if not we have fruit jellies made from fresh fruit juice (no added sugar) or yoghurt based, sugar free ice cream — easy if you have an ice cream machine and always popular. Certainly we have convenience foods. There is little wrong with pizza or fish fingers and pasta, all of which they like, and they all love the wonderful, locally made sausages from truly free range pigs. Tea again is fine. Plain yoghurt with lots of fresh fruit, delicious breads, glasses of fruit juice, bowls of cereals and, if it's hot, home-made ice lollies, ie frozen fruit juice. So at the cost of some extra work, on the whole I manage to give them a good diet: that is plenty of fruit, vegetables, fish and chicken. I give them relatively little red meat and cheese and no cream, butter or sugar.

The difficulty is when we go out. They never lose the taste for sweet things. They eat other peoples' puddings like there is no tomorrow and hunt for sweets and biscuits. If we go to the seaside, for example Weston-Super-Mare with its donkey rides and candy floss, I can say no to the requests for the ice creams when the van comes by for the first time. I might manage to say no to the second lot of requests, but when it stops by our sandcastle for the third time and a mass of children run towards it I feel too mean to say no yet again. And as the holidays go on there always seems to be some reasonable excuse for yet another treat. I almost long for term time when normal routine returns — though then there is a problem of school meals. I'm already worrying about my son who is about to go to 'big' school and has to eat school dinners — packed lunches are not allowed. So, dear headmistress, a frustrated health food campaigner is nearly on your doorstep.

RECIPES

Richard Dover suffered three major heart attacks before he was 35. His blood cholesterol was four times normal levels, his heart was enlarged, a valve leaked and he had advanced atherosclerosis with angina. Heavy doses of medication were failing to halt his decline and gave terrible side effects.

That was 1976. The pain was so great he could barely walk. He was due for a by-pass operation but doctors delayed, assuming he would not live long enough to benefit from it.

In 1987 Richard and his wife Gwyneth received the first Here's to Health Award from *Here's Health* magazine. The secret for his return from death's door was Gwyneth's insistence that they change their life-style and chief among the changes was a switch in diet.

Out went much of their meat, processed food and dairy produce and in came fish, skimmed milk, polyunsaturated margarine and high fibre foods.

Richard's blood cholesterol levels dropped to normal and he is, according to Gwyneth's book, 'as fit as a lop' (a flea).

Her recipes are achieving national fame. Here are two of them:



Chick Pea Moussaka

- 2 tbsp sesame oil, cold pressed
- 2 aubergines, in quarter inch thick slices
- 1oz polyunsaturated margarine (unhydrogenated)
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 6oz mushrooms
- 2tbsp wholemeal flour
- 10fl oz soya milk (sugar free)
- 5fl oz vegetable stock
- 14oz cooked chick peas
- zest from a well-washed lemon
- black pepper

Topping:

- 10fl oz plain yoghurt
- 2 egg whites
- 2oz low fat vegetarian cheese, grated
- 2oz low fat soft cheese

Lay the aubergine slices on oiled baking trays and bake until soft. Melt the margarine in a pan and add the onion. Fry for about five minutes and add garlic, frying the mix for a further minute. Add mushrooms, fry for two more minutes, stir in the flour and cook for a minute. Add soya milk and stock gradually, stirring all the time, and simmer for three minutes. Stir in chick peas, lemon rind and pepper.

Place half the mix in an ovenproof dish, cover with a layer of aubergines, add the remaining mix and top with the rest of the aubergines.

Beat the yoghurt with the egg whites and half the grated cheese, add the soft cheese in bits and pour the mixture onto the aubergines. Sprinkle on the remaining grated cheese. Bake in the oven (190°C/375°F, gas mark 5) for about 50 minutes until the topping is golden brown.

Serve hot with a large mixed salad.

* Gwyneth Dover's *A Diet for Life* is published by Sidgwick and Jackson, 1989, £4.95.

Apple Scone Ring

- 1 large cooking apple
- 8oz wholemeal flour
- 3tsp baking powder (low sodium)
- 2oz polyunsaturated margarine (unhydrogenated)
- 1oz honey
- 3fl oz soya milk (sugar-free)

Peel, core and finely chop the apple — grated apple gives a smoother texture and uniform flavour, chunky pieces make the texture and flavour more varied. Sift together the flour and baking powder, rub in the margarine and add the honey and chopped apple. Add enough milk to form a soft dough. Roll it out to a large round shape about half an inch thick, and put it on an oiled baking tray.

Brush the top with a little milk and sprinkle on a little raw brown sugar. Bake in a pre-heated oven (200°C/400°F, gas mark 6) until risen and golden brown, about 25 minutes.

Lifesavers

WHAT THE JOURNALS SAY

Polluted breastmilk, bread additives, yoghurt concerns and food policy – Eric Brunner reviews the journals.

PESTICIDES LINKED TO DISEASE IN INFANTS

Exposure to pesticides may be the cause of a new rare bleeding disease in newborn babies. In the past breastfeeding had been blamed as the cause, with a suggestion that breastmilk is a poor source of vitamin K, which is important for blood-clotting. Cows milk formula was advocated as a good source of the vitamin. In Britain, the rate of the disease was 1 in 1200 in a series of deliveries in Devon, despite the policy of injectioning the newborn with vitamin K. Attempts to prove that mothers' dietary deficiency was the cause of the disease have not been successful.

Now a paper from Amsterdam proposes that industrial pollution is the problem, through contamination of breastmilk with a variety of polychlorinated organic compounds derived from food, water and the air. The herbicide 2,4,5T, pentachlorophenol wood preserva-

tive, and the notorious polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's), until recently used in transformers and carbonless copy paper, are identified as some of the sources of the contamination. Dioxins and furans are produced by low temperature incineration of these and other products in domestic and industrial waste. PCB's, dioxins and furans have been detected in breastmilk fat in recent years in several industrialised European countries at levels of one part per million for PCB's, and ten parts per trillion for dioxins. High levels of breastmilk contamination were associated with brain haemorrhage (bleeding) in four of a group of 14 babies, though the statistics were not reported in the paper. The authors suggest that PCB's, etc may cause vitamin K deficiency by stimulating the production of liver enzymes which break down the vitamin. Koppe JG et al, 'Breastmilk, PCB's, dioxins and vitamin K deficiency: discussion paper.' *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. 82, pp. 416-419, 1989.

PRODUCTIVITY ADDITIVES CAUSE BAKERS' ASTHMA

Bakers inhaling enzymes are exposed to a new asthma risk. Up to 24 per cent of bakers with asthmatic wheezing are sensitive to enzymatic 'improvers' in bread making. Enzymes derived from *Aspergillus* mould, especially amylase, and soybean flour used as a bleach, are the worst culprits. Bakers quite often become allergic to flour, but in this study bakery workers showed symptoms and sensitivity to additives, without always responding to tests with flour allergens. Baur X et al, 'Baking additives as new allergens in baker's asthma'. *Respiration* 1988, vol. 54, pp. 70-72.

OVARIAN CANCER LINK

A study of 474 white women in the Boston area has shown that consumption of galactose, from milk sugar, may be a cause of ovarian cancer. Eating two pots of yoghurt per month, as opposed to none or less than two per month, increased the risk of cancer by 70 per cent in cases compared with healthy controls. The risk was adjusted to take account of potentially confounding factors including age, number of pregnancies and oral contraceptive use, but not social class which could explain the results.

Risk of ovarian cancer also appeared to be dependent on a genetic factor: the level of an enzyme, galactose phosphate uridylyl transferase, important in the conversion of galactose to glucose. Women who had ovarian cancer were likely to have consumed more galactose relative to their ability to metabolise it than healthy women.

Other dairy products were found to be safe. The fermentation processes used to make yoghurt and cottage cheese produce large amounts of predigested milk sugar, singling these products out. Milk, cream cheese and ice cream were found to be harmless. Many adults have lost the ability to digest lactose, and galactose is only absorbed in quantity when present in the food itself.

World wide, ovarian cancer is related to milk consumption levels. If these study findings are confirmed, avoidance of some dairy products may be a means of prevention, particularly in women who

have low transferase enzyme activity. The balance between the sex hormones produced by ovaries and pituitary gland is implicated. Could these findings be connected with the present increase in testicular cancer rates?

Cramer DW et al, 'Galactose consumption and metabolism in relation to the risk of ovarian cancer'. *Lancet* 1989, vol. 2, pp. 66-71.

CALL FOR CAP HEALTH OBJECTIVES

The Common Agricultural Policy 'is a food policy that inevitably affects health, and as such it needs dietary objectives based on overt consideration of health' says a recent *Lancet* editorial. Old news, you may say, but with the approaching harmonisation of food markets and the Eurocrats' emphasis on consumer choice, i.e. labelling but not standards, food quality will be at the mercy of the industry and supermarkets unless we are careful. The editorial argues that we must push our MEP's to promote a coherent European food policy, and to monitor its implementation.

'Agrobureaucracy vs. health' *Lancet* 1989, vol. 2, pp. 425-26.

HEALTH CLAIMS ON US FOOD

Final agreement on the control of health-related claims on American food labels has not yet been reached. But, says a review of the US regulations, the latest version of the Food and Drug Administration proposals would limit health claims to five areas: calcium and osteoporosis, sodium and high blood pressure, fats and heart disease, fats and cancer, and fibre and cancer. These claims are considered to be valid since current scientific evidence supports a relation between the specific ingredient and a disease.

The current proposal would allow only messages sanctioned by a new Public Health Service committee.

Kessler DA, 'The Federal Regulation of Food Labelling' *New England Journal of Medicine* 1989, vol. 321, pp717-25.

COMING SOON IN THE FOOD MAGAZINE!

Future issues of The Food Magazine will include:

- ★ Fresh fears over food irradiation
- ★ Privatising plants – who controls biotechnology?
- ★ Fats - is margarine healthier than butter?
- ★ Prison food - we look behind the bars
- ★ Plus: your letters and questions, science round-up, recipes, guest writers and news.