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THE FOOD MAGAZINE

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Lean pickings

Shoppers are hungry for healthy, low calorie, convenience meals say food manufacturers. But just how 'healthy' are these ready meals? In an exclusive survey for *The Food Magazine*, the Coronary Prevention Group found all were high in salt, many were low in fibre, and overall they were only marginally lower in fat than regular ready meals.

When Nestlé launched its Findus Lean Cuisine range and Heinz introduced a range of frozen ready meals under the Weight Watchers label they took a gamble. Would health conscious customers be prepared to pay over the odds for the 'lean' image? They were, but complaints that the portions were too small led Lean Cuisine to be dubbed 'mean cuisine'.

Now Birds Eye have joined the fray with its Healthy Options range and Findus has responded to its critics by offering larger portions of its Lean Cuisine range under the Healthy Appetites tag. Supermarkets too, have jumped on the bandwagon with Sainsbury's, Tesco and Boots all offering their own 'healthy' or 'low calorie' ready meals. Last year spending on these meals soared to £90 million according to the industry.

But what is in these 'low calorie' and 'healthy' ready meals? In an exclusive *Food Magazine* survey, the Coronary Prevention Group looked at 75 such ready meals, comparing them to healthy eating recommendations and where possible making a comparison with ordinary ready meals.

The results were surprising. While the 'healthy' meals were slightly more likely to meet nutritional targets for fats than regular ready meals, many of them failed to reach dietary fibre targets or contained recommended levels of carbohydrate. And all were high in salt.

All brands offered a range of meat, fish and vegetable dishes, with curries, pasta dishes, Chinese and Mexican style meals popular choices. These ready meals offer convenience over home cooking but at a price.

The healthy image often used to sell these meals disguises the fact that they are highly processed foods. Recent research suggests that food processing destroys essential fatty acids, necessary for healthy metabolism, and it is likely that levels of some of these nutrients may be lower in ready meals than in home-made foods.

Although these products are sold as complete meals we suggest it's a good idea to balance meals with a serving of fresh vegetables, salad and bread. In this way you're more likely to be eating a healthier meal.

For full details see pages 8 and 9.

Scrap the rule

The EC rule that organic food must not be presented as being superior in any way to commercially produced food is arrant nonsense.

Being poison-free makes organic food healthier in itself, since pesticides harm the liver and pancreas, and at least 49 of them are known carcinogens. Just as importantly, it is grown on naturally fertilised soil which contains — in the right proportion — the necessary vitamins, enzymes, minerals, and trace elements which chemically fertilised soil does not contain.

Furthermore, anyone with healthy tastebuds only has to compare a fresh organic lettuce or apple with their commercially grown counterparts to tell which one tastes better (and stays in prime condition longer).

What can we as conscious consumers do to have this unenlightened regulation scrapped?

B Bishop, London W4

Unnatural sugar

I have seen the claim on several of Whitworths cane sugars that their products are 'natural and unrefined'.

When beet sugar is processed about 23 chemicals are used and even though the sugar crystals are probably pure and free of contaminating chemicals, this sugar cannot be called either natural or unrefined.

I am told that with regard to cane sugar, the cane is harvested, cut up in the country of origin and a thick liquid is sent to Britain. From that point on the processing is identical to that used for beet sugar. So how can Whitworths claim be justified? If sugar was natural and unrefined it would be offered for sale in the form in which it was grown, as sugar cane.

Natalie Wing, Ravenfield, Rotherham

We're not sure that 23 chemicals are used to refine sugar, but we do agree that the word natural should only be used when a product is 'subjected only to such processing as to render it fit for human consumption'. Not our words, in fact, but the government-appointed Food Advisory Committee. Nothing has yet been put into law defining exactly what this means, and until it is, the food companies can carry on spinning their yarns.

Bias at school

We are wholly with you regarding educational material from vested interests being distributed in schools.

The principal of Lincolnshire College of Agriculture said the college had an excellent relationship with schools 'but even so, some anti-attitudes are met,' and he suggested poultry companies should adopt schools in their area and ply them with promotional literature, an idea which was being developed in Lincolnshire.

The Meat and Livestock Commission has published 20,000 free information packs for teachers and has an 'Adopt a Butcher' scheme in which butchers give talks and demonstrations to local schools. Any attempts by vegetarian groups to give information to schoolchildren are met with outraged protests by industry.

Last year it was announced that youngsters and parents would be encouraged to collect lions from egg packs in a bid to raise money for local hospitals. This was the centrepiece of the British Egg Industry Council's £250,000 promotional drive for Lion eggs in 1991. Teachers and pupils were also to receive an 'egg education' pack with recipe ideas for parents — and within a week 49,000 requests were received.

This is a very serious situation. Lindy Williams (*Food Magazine* 16) suggests an independent body to give advice, an excellent plan, but it is difficult to know how it would operate. It might be a good idea to arrange a meeting with head teachers and various campaigning groups for an initial discussion on how to protect children from insidious propaganda produced by vested interests. (Perhaps heads of agricultural colleges should not be invited in the first place!)

Joanne Bower, Hon Secretary, The Farm and Food Society, London NW11

We agree. See the back page for another example of schools being targeted by industry (agrochemicals, this time).

Please note, we love getting letters and try to print all we can. But long letters may have to be cut — if so, we will try to keep their flavour.

Dear John Gummer



Welcome back to MAFF. It is going to be quite a summer for you. You have the hardest task of any minister as the UK takes over the EC Presidency in July for its six month stint.

According to one MAFF memo, you have given yourself the task of pushing through all the legislation you can prior to the end of the year, the deadline for the start of the single market. At the top of your list is food irradiation, a technology we believe will lower food quality for everyone but especially for those on low incomes.

And then there is the EC's 'lowest common denominator' policy of allowing low-quality food to be sold in all countries if it is permitted in any one country. It affects us all: the new list of EC approved additives (published in the booklet free to subscribers with this issue) allows many previously not permitted in other countries. Meanwhile agricultural negotiations over CAP stalling and those who benefit most from over-production continue to hamper sensible farming policies.

But while all the talking goes on, the realities of the food supply system continue to cause alarm. Take mad cow disease, BSE. Far from showing the decline in numbers that the ministry vet predicted, the number of cases of BSE has been rising faster than ever. Food poisoning cases, too, are still running at high levels despite the Food Safety Act — with delay after delay in making hygiene regulations requiring proper training for people handling food for public consumption.

There is a lot to be done. It will be a hot summer, Mr Gummer, but we have no intention of making it any cooler for you.

Sue Dibb and Tim Lobstein

The Food Commission is your consumer watchdog on food. We are independent of the food industry and government and rely on subscriptions, donations and grants for our funding. We aim to provide independently researched information on the food we eat to ensure good quality food for all.

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EC set to increase number of additives

From next year shoppers will find more 'E' numbers on food labels thanks to EC legislation which is set to increase the number of 'Es' in our food by over a third.

EC harmonisation plans will ensure that the same additives are permitted in every EC country. At present different countries have different rules and regulations — the UK allows the most 'E' number additives in food (about 300) while other countries such as Germany and Greece allow only half that number.

Consumers say they want fewer additives in their food but the EC is combining the lists of every country to produce a super list of 411 'E' number additives.

Dr Erik Millstone, additives expert at Sussex University and member of the Food Additives Campaign Team, is concerned that by increasing the number of additives the EC has bowed to the pressure of the food industry and additive manufacturers and ignored consumer demands for safer,

less processed food. 'The vast majority of additives are cosmetic. They are frequently used to mislead and to disguise food and some are probably hazardous particularly to sensitive individuals,' he says.

Many additives will still not be listed on food labels. Flavourings account for over 3,700 different chemicals yet the only identification of these substances is the generic word 'flavouring'. Hardly any flavourings have yet been tested and approved as safe by the EC and so do not have an E number. Indeed the EC has only just begun to find out what flavourings are used, let alone whether they are safe.

Other additives such as solvents, enzymes and other 'processing aids' still need not be listed on the label at all.

One additive that the EC is putting on its approved list is the artificial sweetener cyclamate. Cyclamates were banned in the USA, Britain and in many other European countries in 1970. Now they are back with EC approval, despite the fact that last

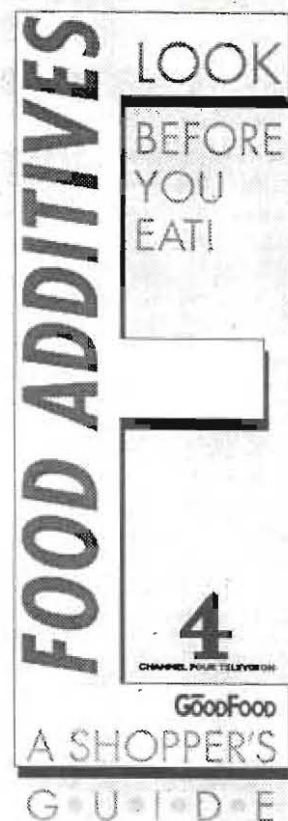
year the UK government's expert Committee on Toxicity confirmed new evidence linking cyclamates with testicular atrophy in rats. The Food Additives Campaign Team say that the EC's Scientific Committee for Food appears either unwilling or unable to acknowledge the importance of this evidence.

Chewing Gum Loophole

Another consequence of EC legislation is that chewing gum base will no longer be considered a 'food'. Therefore it can cleverly sidestep the legislation which bans mineral hydrocarbons — a known toxin — from foods.

Euro-consumers join campaign

Consumer groups from seven European countries will be campaigning to reduce the number of additives in food. Organisations from the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Portugal and Italy attending the meeting of the European Ecological Consumers Co-ordination in April, agreed to distribute copies of the EC new additives list in their countries.



Free to subscribers with this issue:
For additional copies send £2 to The Publications Department, The Food Commission, 102 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3DA.

Recycled paper can harm food

Packaging made from recycled paper and board should not be used in direct contact with fatty foods according to the Swedish National Food Administration. The agency warns that the recycled packaging can cause migration of harmful chemical substances, bacteria and mould into hot fatty foods. Toxic de-inking chemicals may also be used in the recycling process.

The NFA recommends that a protective layer of plastic or aluminium foil should be applied inside the packaging — paper is not considered sufficient protection.

■ Source: *Food Packaging Bulletin* Vol 1, No2, February 1991

Orange juice companies face prosecution over adulteration

Eleven leading supermarkets and fruit juice manufacturers are facing prosecution for selling 'pure' and 'unsweetened' orange juice adulterated with added sugar and water.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has confirmed that it has summonsed the companies under the Trades Descriptions Act and the Food Safety Act following ministry tests last year which found that the majority of pure orange juices were adulterated with added water, sugar and fruit acids against regulations (see *The Food Magazine* 13).

The 11 companies facing prosecution are: Sainsbury's, Safeway, Tesco, Asda, Express Dairies, Superdrug, Princes, Healds Juices, Cima Foods, Gerber Foods Manufacturing and Gerber Foods International.

Of 21 brands tested by MAFF, two-thirds of 'unsweetened' orange juices tested contained added beet sugar or corn syrup above the legally permitted limit of 1.5 per cent. Sainsbury's Jaffa Orange Juice was the worst offender with over a third of the sugar in the juice from beet sugar.

Ten of the samples also contained added water in the form of pulp wash which is produced by soaking already squeezed oranges in water then giving them another squeeze. The resultant orange-flavoured water is added to the juice.

Fruit acids were also used to disguise the taste of the added sugar and water. The MAFF tests found ten out of 17 samples adulterated in this way, some with apple acid (malic acid) rather than citric acid.

It is unusual for MAFF to

prosecute the companies directly as local authority trading standards officers normally handle such offences. It is thought this reflects the severity of the alleged fraud. However at least one company thinks there is a possibility that the prosecutions will not proceed.

We spend at £350 million a year on fruit juices with orange juice alone netting a quarter of a billion. In a magistrates' court the maximum penalty under the Trades Descriptions Act is £2,000. Similarly making false descriptions under the Food Safety Act carries a maximum fine of £2,000. But the more serious offence of selling food, 'not of the nature, substance or quality demanded' has a maximum fine of £20,000. If companies were found guilty in a Crown Court, unlimited fines could be imposed.

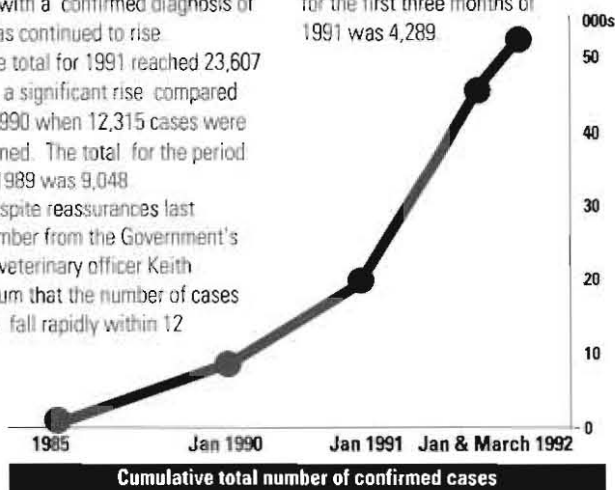
BSE figures continue to rise

Despite making continued reassuring noises about the safety of beef and beef products, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has revealed that the number of cases of cattle with a confirmed diagnosis of BSE has continued to rise.

The total for 1991 reached 23,607 cases, a significant rise compared with 1990 when 12,315 cases were confirmed. The total for the period up to 1989 was 9,048.

Despite reassurances last September from the Government's chief veterinary officer Keith Meldrum that the number of cases would fall rapidly within 12

months, week by week figures show no apparent decline during early 1992. A further 6,631 cases were reported up to the end of March this year, whereas the equivalent figure for the first three months of 1991 was 4,289.



Campaigning to stop BST in Australia

With a two-year ban on the introduction of the controversial milk-boosting hormone bovine somatotropin (BST) in the EC and a three-year delay on its introduction in the USA, the drug's manufacturers are now applying for licences to market BST in Australia.

Although Australian legislators may be reassured by a US Food and Drug Administration report saying BST poses no health risk to consumers, the Australian dairy trade are fearful that consumer resistance would damage their markets. The Australian Dairy Farmers' Federation are already concerned that they are losing their export markets in the face of EC surpluses. They now estimate

that a further 20 per cent of export earnings may be lost if BST is permitted in Australia.

If you want to influence the argument, write to the Australian High Commissioner, Australia House, The Strand, London WC2B 4LA.

14,000 farmers go

The numbers of farmers in England fell by 7.4 per cent during the ten-year period 1981-1991.

According to MAFF the total numbers of farmers, partners and directors, taking minor holdings into account, fell from 193,900 to 179,500 over the decade.

Meat and dairy show most contamination from dioxins

Dioxin levels in food are 'low' according to government figures, but the unwitting consumption of these extremely toxic chemicals deserves more attention. Ann Link, of the Women's Environmental Network, reports.

The long-awaited Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) report, *Dioxins in Food*, published in January, is based on a surprisingly small sample of foods. Due to the expense of dioxin analysis, there are only two samples of meat, which means that MAFF's figure is derived from an average between a very rural area and an urban area. This average is unlikely to reflect the actual intake of most people in the UK. Dioxins accumulate in fat, and animal fat is likely to contribute to levels of dioxin in oils and fats from animal sources and cereal products such as biscuits which use animal fats.

Milk has been much more extensively analysed. As well as the extremely high levels on farms near

the Coalite plant in Derbyshire, it is also clear that the dioxin intake from average dairy milk is more than double the intake from rural milk. This reflects higher levels of dioxins near urban areas and incinerators.

The intake from fish is stated to be small, however this is based on consuming 40z fish per week. And, like all the other estimates of intake, the figure is based only on food eaten within the home.

Nearly all of our dioxin intake comes from our food. MAFF's intake figures may appear 'low', but since they determine our bodyfat levels, which are among the highest in the world, this is not the point. The accumulation of these chemicals in bodyfat means that our intakes may well be much too high.

As well as dioxins and furans, we have PCBs and other similar compounds in our bodyfat. Many of these act in the same toxic way as dioxins although they are not considered by MAFF. The Women's Environmental Network estimates that the levels of dioxin-like compounds in a woman's bodyfat are likely to cause damage to the nervous system of her baby before birth, in a small percentage of the UK population.

In the UK dioxins in food come mainly from the burning of wastes containing organochlorine compounds like PVC plastic and treated wood. Although organochlorines occur naturally in small quantities, the vast majority are produced by industry and

released from municipal and hospital waste incinerators. These airborne dioxins fall on fields and are concentrated by animals such as cows, which is the reason for high levels in animal fat.

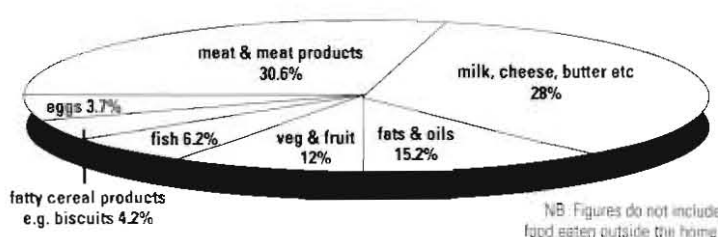
MAFF offer no guidance on reducing intakes. Their view that present intakes are safe may well be shown to be wrong in the future. A precautionary approach would be wise at this stage rather than attempts to play-down the problem. Consumers should campaign for reduction of the sources of dioxins. They also deserve clear information on how to reduce intakes: cutting down on animal fats, drinking less full fat milk and eating only moderate amounts of fish since these are also a major source of PCBs.

The Women's Environmental Network is calling for the phasing out of organochlorine production, beginning with PVC packaging. It is campaigning for minimum packaging and for the ending of incineration, especially near to farm land.

■ *Dioxins in Food* Food Surveillance Paper No 31, HMSO, 1992.

■ *Chlorine: Pollution and the Parents of Tomorrow* Women's Environmental Network, Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA. Tel 071 354 8823.

Sources of dioxins in our diet



Labels confuse shoppers

Food labels do virtually nothing to help people eat more healthily says a report from the Coronary Prevention Group, as consumers cannot understand the nutritional information given on packs.

Shoppers are baffled by numerical information which they cannot interpret. For example 1g per 100g is low for fat but high for salt. Consumers often made inaccurate assessments of the nutritional value of foods from such data. The research, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, found that consumers would prefer the words 'high' 'medium' or 'low' printed next to the numbers. Other visual formats including bar charts and words were also considered more helpful.

With labelling and nutrition claims currently being discussed in Brussels, the Coronary Prevention Group is calling on the government to promote its own scheme, which is based on World Health Organisation dietary targets. It sees this as the best way to encourage healthy diets throughout Europe.

■ *Just Read the Label*, by Alison Black and Mike Rayner for the Coronary Prevention Group is available through HMSO (071-873 9090) or through booksellers, price £15.25.

Co-op backs labelling scheme

The Co-op has announced that it will be adapting its labelling to reflect

Coronary Prevention Group's recommendations

Bill Shannon, Marketing Manager at the Co-operative Retail Society says 'This research confirms what we've been saying for years. Consumers need help in understanding the nutrition labelling and words are the best way of doing that.'

The CPG are hoping other retailers will follow the Co-op's lead.

nutrition information	
100 GRAMS OF THIS PRODUCT TYPICALLY PROVIDES	
Energy Value (Calories)	805 kJ (191 kcal)
13.2 grams of Protein	HIGH
21.7 grams of Carbohydrate (of which 1.5 grams are Sugars)	MEDIUM LOW
6.3 grams of Fat (of which 3.1 grams are Saturates)	MEDIUM MEDIUM
0.3 grams of Sodium	HIGH
0.9 grams of Fibre	MEDIUM

Diet chocolate is 'too good to be true'

Chocolate for slimmers sounds too good to be true and ... yes, it is too good to be true.

The Food Magazine looked at three different brands of slimming or low calorie chocolate and found that ounce for ounce they were not significantly lower in calories than ordinary chocolate confectionery.

Lo and Slim & Fit bars both appear to offer fewer calories (at 99 Kcals and around 95 Kcals respectively). But this is mainly because you're buying a very small bar. As the table shows, weight for weight, these products are virtually no different from chocolate coated Swiss roll in the number of calories they contain.

And weight for weight a Boots Shapers Fruit and Nut chocolate bar actually contains more calories than Cadbury's Fruit and Nut.

We think these products are misleading – something that the Trades Descriptions Act is designed to prevent.

Product	kcal/100g
Slim & Fit White coated lemon chewy bar	343
Slim & Fit Chocolate coated banana chewy bar	376
Lo Lower calorie milk chocolate bar	331
Boots Shapers Diet Chocolate	
Hazelnut	542
Fruit & Nut	504
Cadburys Fruit and Nut	495
Individual chocolate swiss roll	337
Milky Way	397
Cadburys Creme Egg	385



Anti-cholesterols linked to suicides

The increase in suicides and violent deaths reported in studies of the treatment of heart disease may be due to the drugs used to lower cholesterol, not the effects of a low-cholesterol diet.

Studies of groups at risk of heart disease find a lower risk of heart attacks among those being treated to lower their cholesterol compared with control groups left untreated. But the groups being treated also show higher rates of suicide and death from violence, leading some researchers to suggest that cholesterol-lowering diets, which form part of the treatment, may be linked to adverse neurophysiological and psychological effects.

However, these suggestions fail to distinguish between dietary intervention studies and drug intervention studies, say a group of researchers at University College and Middlesex School of Medicine. Separating drug and diet intervention factors showed that cholesterol-lowering diets increased the risk of death by injury by some 20 per cent — not statistically significant — while cholesterol-lowering drug treatments increased the risk of a violent death by a highly significant 75 per cent.

■ E Brunner, G Davey Smith, J Pilgrim and M Marmot. Low serum cholesterol and suicide, *The Lancet*, Vol 339, pp1001-2, April 1992.

Cholesterol confusion

Confusion exists between cholesterol-lowering diets and low-cholesterol diets. The first is a diet low in fats, especially saturated fats, designed to lower the level of cholesterol in the blood (serum cholesterol) associated with the risk of heart disease.

Low cholesterol diets are ones where the dietary cholesterol — the amount of cholesterol in the food (eg from eggs, liver, shellfish, cheese etc) — is restricted. Limiting dietary cholesterol may have little effect on lowering blood cholesterol as the body manufactures its own blood cholesterol from saturated fats.

UNICEF launches 'baby friendly' hospital scheme

A world-wide scheme to designate maternity wards as 'baby friendly' if they comply with ten criteria for promoting breastfeeding has been launched by UNICEF. And UNICEF have for the first time acknowledged the role of boycotting campaigns against baby milk companies which break the WHO marketing code.

In response, the infant baby-foods manufacturers' association have said they agree in principle to UNICEF requests that the baby milk companies will cease to offer free supplies of baby milk to hospitals. This would remove one of the biggest temptations from post natal wards, but in practice manufacturers are continuing supplies unless local legislation forbids it.

UNICEF's Baby Friendly Hospital initiative is an attempt to reverse the decline in breastfeeding over the last few decades. The steps to be taken include:

- giving information on the advantages of breastfeeding to all pregnant women
- helping mothers to initiate breastfeeding within half an hour of birth
- show mothers how to maintain lactation even if separated from their infants
- not to offer newborn infants any food or drink except breastmilk unless medically indicated
- allow infants to remain with mothers 24 hours a day

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) has been asked to help with the assessment of hospitals, and the UK Department of Health has expressed support. Although Britain is one of the first countries in Europe to participate in UNICEF's Baby Friendly award scheme, it is unlikely to rival Sweden and Czechoslovakia where many hospitals already meet the criteria.

Lead in bottle milk

In a warning from the *New England Journal of Medicine* (9/1/92) parents who bottle feed their babies are advised to avoid using water drawn first thing in the morning and not to boil the water excessively before use.

The measures are advised in order to minimise the risk of lead poisoning. Bottle-fed babies drink the largest quantities of water for their body weight and so are at greatest risk of consuming excessive amounts of lead. At levels of 50 µg per litre, the maximum level of lead allowed in UK water supplies, a baby drinking three bottles (600ml) of formula in a day would consume 30 µg of lead, an amount sufficient to result in a 'positive lead balance' and an accumulation of lead in the body

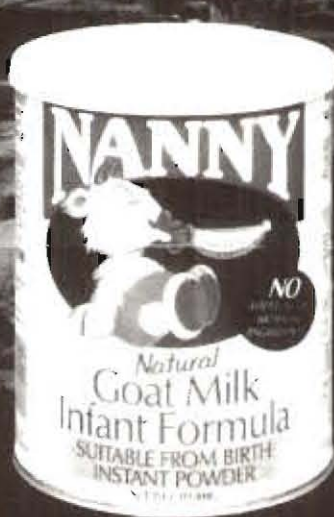
Victory on EC baby milk directive

The campaigning group Baby Milk Action won a welcome victory in April over European Commission proposals controlling the export of commercial baby milk products.

The EC has now accepted that baby milk products exported to non-EC countries must show suitable instructions in local languages and include warnings about the hazards of bottle feeding. The change occurred after lobbying of MEPs resulted in a European Parliamentary vote rejecting weaker proposals from the Commission.

Infant Formula from Birth

NANNY GOAT MILK INFANT FORMULA



Pure and Natural

MARKETED UNDER LICENCE BY FRONTIER MARKETING

Frontier Marketing Ltd., The Business Centre, 758-760 Great Cambridge Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 6BT
Tel: 081-807 7626 Fax: 081-86 5376 Telex: 2675024 QUONOT ENFIELD

No added sugar or glucose syrups

No artificial additives

Grazing on verdant pasture 52 weeks per year

No artificial feeds

Organic pasture land

Product of New Zealand

Member of Infant Dietetic Food Association and I.D.F.

Manufactured to meet World Health Organisation standards

No nuclear power stations or fall-out

No acid rain

Kids' stuff

Commercial baby milk derived from goats' milk is now being promoted in health food stores. Made by Anchor and imported from New Zealand, the product, called Nanny, sells itself on a pollution-free, nuclear-free image. But the UK importers, Frontier Marketing, have been criticised for ignoring Department of Health guidelines on using goats milk, ignoring MAFF Food Advisory Committee guidelines on the use of words such as natural, contradicting a forthcoming EC Directive on baby milks which does not accept goats milk instead of cows milk, and blatantly violating the WHO Code of Marketing through its promotional activities. The UK manufacturer's body, the Infant and Dietetic Foods Association, appears to have given remarkably poor advice to Nanny's importers.

Bottle-fed babies worth £18 to hospitals using Farley's Ostermilk

Cash-starved hospitals seeking self-generated income may be tempted to discourage mothers from breastfeeding and do more to push the dreaded bottle, if the latest baby milk promotion effort takes off.

In a document entitled *Hospital Income Generation Opportunity* a Farley's Ostermilk saleswoman offered hospitals £18.83 for every baby fed on Ostermilk in the hospital, and more than £24,000 if all the mothers use Ostermilk while in

hospital and continue to buy it from the local health centre.

Farley's head office denies that the proposals are company policy, but admits that their sales rep had been promoting the scheme to hospitals in south London.

The campaigning group Baby Milk Action, reporting the disturbing incident, expressed disbelief that an employee could offer such large amounts of cash without the knowledge and support of senior company staff.

Milupa give away free sweet drinks for babies

Baby food company Milupa is continuing to give away free samples of sweetened baby herbal drinks in Bounty packs given to new mothers.

Complaints by midwives and dentist's in the North Western Region Health Authority have already led to Robinsons and Cow & Gate removing sweetened syrup and juice drinks from the packs. But sachets of Milupa camomile and fennel sweetened herbal baby drinks are still being given away in Bounty Progress Packs which are intended for older babies.

Ailsa Marrant, one of the dental public health professionals spearheading the campaign reports that most mothers pick up the Progress packs from Boots within weeks of their baby's birth. 'In one case a midwife recommended the use of one of these products for a ten day old baby. We are very

concerned that Bounty Services are promoting sugar-containing infant drinks to new mothers with the assistance of NHS maternity units. Unfortunately the mothers whose children are most at risk of developing dental disease are those who benefit most from these free packs.'

The Food Commission is supporting the North Western Region's request to Bounty to withdraw the Milupa drinks.

■ To add your voice of support write to Mr A J Haines, Managing Director, Bounty Services Ltd, 3 Theobald Street, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 4BJ and Miss R Ashton, General Secretary, The Royal College of Midwives, 15 Mansfield Street, London, W1M 0BE.

More bread, fruit & sweets, say infants

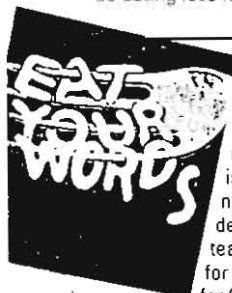
We ought to be eating more bread, potatoes, fresh fruit ... and sweets, said a group of primary school children in a Nottingham University survey.

Questioning nearly 140 infants on their nutritional awareness, the researchers found that the majority of older infants believed they should be eating less fat, salt, sugar and

sweets, while younger infants were less certain, with the majority saying less fat and salt but more sugar and sweets. For both groups of children, many from low income households, the majority said they should be eating more meat, fish, dairy products, bread, potatoes and, highest of all for both groups, fresh fruit.

The survey calls for more analysis of the changes in perception that occur within a relatively short age span. They also suggest that, since young children are motivated by pleasure, there are opportunities for new product developments in the confectionery industry to produce nutritionally improved products without destroying the enjoyable experiences of childhood.

■ Food awareness of primary school children in Nottinghamshire, GH Tilston, RJ Neale, K Gregson and CJ Douglas, Food Marketing Research Group, University of Nottingham, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough LE12 5RD.



Encouraging children to look critically at the messages they receive about food is the aim of this new teaching pack developed by teacher Cathy Hulme for the National Forum for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention.

The pack has been piloted among nine to eleven year olds in 13 north London schools and is being evaluated before nationwide distribution later in the year.

Nutritional case for school meals

School meals play an important role in children's diets says a new report from the School Meals Campaign.

The report provides evidence that many children's diets are too high in fats and sugars and too low in fibre and some essential vitamins and minerals. It argues that school meals produced to good nutritional standards are vital to encourage

the kind of healthy eating habits that will ensure better childhood diets and benefit health in later life.

The School Meals Campaign, which is supported by over fifty national organisations is calling for the government to introduce nutritional standards for school meals.



■ *The Nutritional Case for School Meals*, by Issy Cole-Hamilton, Joanne White and Susan Dibb costs £2.50 from The School Meals Campaign, 102 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3DA.



'Fruit time' at Old Moat Children's Centre, Manchester, where a healthy eating policy has been introduced. 'I am convinced nutrition has a profound effect on development, including intelligence,' says the Co-ordinator, Greta Walker. 'Eating food is also an important part of the educational process in the Children's Centre. We believe it is essential that children eat in small, home-like groups to maximise conversation and share the enjoyment of the occasion. We wanted children with cultural or dietary needs to avoid feeling isolated, so we asked all parents if they minded their children being served mainly vegetarian food plus fish, and no-one objected.'

Nursery Food, a new book by Mary Whiting and Tim Lobstein of the Food Commission, is due to be published in May. Full of ideas for making food a fun and educational experience, plus over 50 nutritious, multi-cultural recipes, the book is an excellent handbook for nursery staff and a valuable resource for trainees. For full details, see the next issue of *The Food Magazine*.

How healthy meals shape up

'Healthy' ready meals are a popular choice for growing numbers of health conscious consumers wanting to watch their calories and eat healthily. But as the results of our survey show not all products are as healthy as they could be.

Healthy eating advice for us all, including slimmers, is to cut back on fats and salt and increase consumption of complex carbohydrates (starches) and fibre. For our survey, The Coronary Prevention Group compared 75 'healthy' and 'low calorie' ready meals with 35 similar ordinary ready meals to see if they really had benefits for healthier eating.

Each meal was then compared against Coronary Prevention Group criteria for total fat, saturated fat, sodium and fibre targets and with recommended levels for carbohydrates (see box *How the targets are set*).

The results show that some product ranges scored better than others, but on average the healthier meals scored only marginally better than their ordinary counterparts and a substantial number of meals fell short of meeting Coronary Prevention Group targets for healthy eating (see *Which products met the healthy targets and How the brands rated*).

Total fat

All the 75 meals gave nutritional information on

total fat content and on average 83% of meals met healthy eating targets, providing less than 33% of their calories from fat. This compared slightly more favourably with regular meals where only 74% met the target.

All the Findus Lean Cuisine range and Birds Eye Healthy Options met the targets. Boots Shapers scored the worst with only half of their eight products meeting targets for total fat.

Forty-two 'healthy' meals claimed to be 'low in fat' but only 7 products would meet the proposed government criteria of less than 5g per 100g fat and less than 5g per serving.

Saturated fat

Only 53 of the 75 meals gave nutritional information on saturated fat but of those giving information 82% met nutritional criteria of less than 10% of energy from saturated fat. With only 9 of the 35 regular ready meals giving information on saturated fat it was hard to make a comparison but on the limited data available it seems that many more healthy ready meals met targets for saturated fat.

Salt

All of the products in the survey scored high for salt. None of the 69 meals that supplied data met dietary targets (less than 2.36g/100MJ) for sodium. Neither did any of the similar meals.

All Findus Lean Cuisine meals were labelled on the front of the box 'Controlled sodium' and carry an endorsement by the Family Heart Association. Yet every one of these products contained high levels of salt. 'Controlled sodium' is a meaningless term. None of the Findus products would meet MAFF's criteria for a low salt food.

An increased intake of salt is known to increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Most salt in the diet comes from processed foods where consumers have no control over the amount of salt in the product. Manufacturers need to do more to cut salt in products.

Fibre

Sixty-one out of the 75 'healthy' meals gave information on fibre content of the meal, but less than half of these — 25 — met dietary targets of more than 30g per 10MJ. Sainsbury's Healthy Cuisine and Boots Shapers (with the exception of one product) failed to provide information on dietary fibre.

Two Tesco meals made with quorn described themselves as a good source of fibre yet the Tikka Masala and the Kashmiri Korma scored below the target in our survey.

Findus Lean Cuisine for Healthy Appetites was the only range of meals where all products met Coronary Prevention Group targets for dietary fibre.

Although these meals are generally sold as complete meals it would be advisable to eat a portion of salad or vegetables and/or wholemeal bread with these meals to increase the amount of fibre. We suggest that this could be indicated as a serving suggestion on packs.

Carbohydrate

One of the healthy ways to cut back on fats is to increase the amount of starchy carbohydrate foods such as rice, pasta, potatoes and bread in the diet. However, only 44 of the 75 meals (59%) met recommended levels for carbohydrate. The carbohydrate figure given on packs will also include sugars. In most cases this consisted of vegetable and milk sugars but a few meals also contained added sugar — somewhat surprising in savoury meals.

Counting the calories

The picture on the packet shows a generous serving on the plate but a common complaint of such ready meals is that portions are small. 'Lean Cuisine' in particular became known as 'mean cuisine' prompting Findus to introduce its alternative range of meals 'for healthy appetites'.

Slimmers may welcome smaller portions, but it may be at a price. As the table below shows, less calories doesn't necessarily mean less cost and you could pay more for a 'healthy' meal than ordinary ready meals.

Product	Calorie range	Average price of product range*
Heinz Weight Watchers	157 - 286	£1.71
Findus Lean Cuisine	208 - 296	£1.94**
Boots Shapers	254 - 299	£1.79
Tescos Healthy Eating	250 - 400	£1.61
Sainsbury's Healthy Cuisine	255 - 405	£2.01
Birds Eye Healthy Options	305 - 490	£1.64
Findus Lean Cuisine for Healthy Appetites	332 - 422	£1.99**

*Figures based on supermarket prices

** Manufacturer's recommended retail price

How the targets are set

The dietary targets used to assess products in this survey is based on the Coronary Prevention Group's banding scheme which uses World Health Organisation and UK government COMA recommended daily intakes. The banding scheme classifies products into four categories: low, medium low, medium high and high.

In the case of fats, sugar and sodium, products rated as low or medium low were considered to meet targets. For fibre, products that rated as medium high or high were considered to meet targets.

Researched by Suzanne O'Brien,
The Coronary Prevention Group.
Written by Sue Dibb

Which products met the healthy targets

	No of products in range	Total fat Target <33% energy	Saturated fat <10% energy	Total sodium <2 36g/10MJ	Fibre >30g/10MJ	Total carbohydrate > 47% energy
Findus Lean Cuisine	18	18 out of 18	18 out of 18	0 out of 18	10 out of 18	11 out of 18
Findus Lean Cuisine for Healthy Appetites	4	4 out of 4	4 out of 4	0 out of 4	4 out of 4	4 out of 4
Birds Eye Healthy Options	12	12 out of 12	10 out of 12	0 out of 12	2 out of 12	10 out of 12
Heinz Weight Watchers	14	9 out of 14	11 out of 14	0 out of 14	6 out of 14	10 out of 14
Sainsbury's Healthy Cuisine	7	5 out of 7	3 out of 5 ¹	0 out of 7 ²	no data given	2 out of 7
Boots Shapers	8	4 out of 8	0 out of 1 ³	0 out of 1 ³	1 out of 1 ³	1 out of 8
Tesco Health Eating	12	10 out of 12	7 out of 11 ⁴	0 out of 12 ⁵	3 out of 12	6 out of 12

Notes:

1 Only 5 products gave nutritional data for this nutrient

2 Based on total salt rather than total sodium figures

3 Only one product gave nutritional data for this nutrient

4 One product failed to provide nutritional data for this nutrient

5 Two products gave nutritional data for added salt

Every effort has been made to use up-to-date information, but manufacturers may change their products.

How the brands rated



★★★★

Findus Lean Cuisine

All products met targets for total fat and saturated fat but nearly half failed to meet dietary fibre targets. 7 out of 18 fell short of recommended levels of carbohydrate and none met targets for salt

★★★★

Findus Lean Cuisine for Healthy Appetites

All products met dietary targets for fat, saturated fat, fibre and recommended levels for carbohydrate, but all were high in salt.



★★

Birds Eye Healthy Options

All products met targets for total fat and ten out of the twelve meals met saturated fat targets and recommended levels for carbohydrates but this range of products had one of the lowest fibre scores in the survey and none met targets for salt.



★

Sainsbury's Healthy Cuisine

Many dishes failed to meet the targets and not all products gave full nutritional data. All products were high in salt



★

Tesco Health Eating

10 out of 12 products met total fat targets but only half met recommended levels for carbohydrates and only 3 out of 12 dishes met fibre targets. All were high in salt

★

Heinz Weight Watchers

Only two-thirds of dishes in the range met total fat targets. All were high in salt.



Boots Shapers

Only half the products met total fat targets and only one out of 8 products met carbohydrate targets. Seven out of the eight products failed to provide any nutritional information on saturated fat, sodium and fibre



Shaping world food policy

The agenda for world food and nutrition policy will be set in Rome this December, at a gigantic UN conference. The National Food Alliance is involved in its organisation.

The NFA's Chairman Geoffrey Cannon travelled to Copenhagen in early April as part of the UK government delegation to an international four-day meeting on nutrition policy. Until now such delegations have been from government and its agencies together with industry. This time the government representation included the NFA and also the Consumers' Association.

The purpose of the Copenhagen meeting was to prepare for an International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) to be held in Rome this December. A further preparatory global meeting will be held in Geneva this August. The purpose of the ICN, like the previous World Food Assembly held in Rome in 1974, is to set the global agenda for nutrition policy. The conference will be attended by top ministers from over 150 countries affiliated to the UN, and is being organised by UN agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the World Health Organisation.

But there is every chance that the ICN will send all the wrong messages to the world food and farming industries and so turn the clock back on nutrition and food policy. The two UN agencies, FAO and WHO, are currently on a collision course. The agenda for the ICN itself is being set by FAO in Rome, whose position seems to be that malnutrition and starvation throughout the world means that there is a global shortage of fat and sugar. In sharp contrast WHO points to the appalling global spread of epidemic disease like heart disease, stroke, cancers, tooth decay, and gut and bone disease in part caused by a fatty, sugary diet. WHO acknowledges that starvation is an appalling global problem but believes that the answer is nourishing food, not just calorie-packed fat and sugar.

The clash between FAO and WHO amazed delegates in Copenhagen, and the head of a strong delegation

from the US government demanded that FAO and WHO issue a joint statement on dietary guidelines and goals in time for the August meeting in Geneva. In Copenhagen, industry-friendly organisations such as the International Life Sciences Institute, which has close connections with Coca-Cola, lobbied energetically to get any reference to sugar off the UN agenda, and the FAO representative repeatedly stated that the WHO report *Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases* with its targets for cutting fat and sugar consumption, was a shoddy document, not based on science.

Commenting, Geoffrey Cannon says that non-government organisations affiliated to the UN, including the International Organisation of Consumer Unions and leading development agencies, must work together in time to make a major contribution in Geneva and Rome. 'There's still a lot to play for' he says. 'We must make sure that the global Plan of Action agreed in Rome is in the public interest.'

Meanwhile in Britain, the NFA is urging new Health Minister Virginia Bottomley to give the government's Green Paper *The Health of the Nation* official White Paper status, and to incorporate goals for increased consumption of vegetables and fruit, bread, potatoes and other starchy foods, and for cuts in sugar in salt.

Surviving Agriculture Minister, John Gummer, appears to be taking on board the message. At a recent meeting, Gummer said that the case against fat as a cause of cardiovascular disease 'is manifestly true' and that the health case against salt is 'very strong indeed' while that against sugar is only 'slightly less important.' Perhaps the British food and farming industries may now be given a push towards good public health, by the Minister with the job of protecting the interests of industry.

New members of the National Food Alliance

The Royal Society of Medicine

The august Royal Society of Medicine set up its Food and Health Forum during the mid-80s at a time of great food scandals. The task of the RSM forum is to bring together experts from science and medicine together with others from industry and government, and some organisations working in the public interest, to debate topical issues.

The first Chairman of the Forum, the distinguished gastroenterologist Sir Francis Avery Jones, was succeeded by Dr Kenneth Heaton and now by Dr Anthony Leeds. The Forum is now associated with the Alliance as an Observer organisation.

Henry Doubleday Research Association

The organic movement gained an influential friend in January 1989 when Prince Charles became Patron of the Henry Doubleday Research Association. Founded in 1954 by Lawrence Hills, the membership organisation for organic gardeners now operates from a 22-acre site at Ryton-on-Dunsmore near Coventry.

The two ITV series *All Muck and Magic?*, filmed at Ryton have, says Jackie Gear of HDRA 'generated enormous interest in organic gardening and helped to spread the Association's ideas'. Membership has increased from 6,500 in 1985 to over 15,000 today. HDRA's scientific research programme is designed to support organic methods of cultivation all over the world.

For more details about HDRA and how to join from the National Centre for Organic Gardening, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry CV8 3LG. Telephone 0203 303517.

■ The address of the Alliance is

102 Gloucester Place,
London W1H 3DA

Telephone: 071-935 2889

Fax: 071-487 5692.

Organisations wishing to apply for membership of the Alliance should please write to the secretary, Jeanette Longfield, at the above address.

*This page has been contributed by
the National Food Alliance*

Aims and membership of the NFA

The National Food Alliance is an association of voluntary, professional, health, consumer and other organisations. Its purpose is to develop food and agriculture policy in order to benefit public health, the environment, trade, employment, the economy, and the common good, nationally and internationally.

Members of the NFA include:

Action and Information on Sugars
Baby Milk Action
Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union
British Organic Farmers and the Organic Growers' Association
Caroline Walker Trust
Catholic Institute for International Relations
Children's Society
Christian Aid
Common Ground
Coronary Prevention Group
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Elm Farm Research
Food Additives Campaign Team
Food Commission
Friends of the Earth
GMB
Green Alliance
International Institute for Environment and Development
McCarrison Society
Maternity Alliance
National Community Health Resource
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Farmers' Union
National Federation of Consumer Groups
National Federation of Women's Institutes
National Forum for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention
National Federation of City Farms
OXFAM
Parents for Safe Food
Pesticides Trust
Rural, Agricultural and Allied Workers' Union (TGWU)
Soil Association
Vegetarian Society
Women's Farming Union
World Cancer Research Fund

Observers of the NFA include:

Consumers' Association
Consumers in the European Community Group
Guild of Food Writers
Health Education Authority
National Consumer Council
Royal Society of Medicine Food and Health Forum
Scottish Consumer Council
Welsh Consumer Council

Officers:

Professor Philip James (President)
Geoffrey Cannon (Chairman)
Jeanette Longfield (Secretary)
Suzanne May (Treasurer)

Supermarkets give veggies the V sign

Food companies have been quick to cash in on the growing interest in vegetarian food. But, asks Tim Lobstein, do the claims on the labels all meet the Vegetarian Society's strict criteria?

Shoppers searching for genuinely vegetarian food on crowded supermarket shelves are being offered a bewildering variety of signs and symbols

claiming to show that a product is animal-friendly.

But be warned: few of the symbols being put on products conform with the Vegetarian Society's criteria for approved foods. In particular, few of the alternative symbols now being used on products specify the use of free-range eggs despite the Vegetarian Society's belief that only free-range eggs should be approved.

The Food Commission quizzed the promoters of 12 different symbol schemes which claimed to show that a product was suitable for vegetarians. The Commission also checked to see if the symbols were being used on products containing Quorn, a

myco-protein produced using egg white from battery hens. The Vegetarian Society does not endorse Quorn for that reason.

The results showed that most products claiming suitability for vegetarians appeared to be conforming with the strict criteria for animal, fish and insect-friendly ingredients and additives set by the Vegetarian Society in all but one respect: they did not use free-range eggs. Several leading companies refused to disclose what sort of eggs they allowed — but it is reasonable to assume they would promote the fact if they were using free-range eggs. Some also used their symbol on products containing Quorn.

In several cases manufacturers may have been using the Vegetarian Society symbol but had now switched to their own symbol. The companies were reluctant to say why they had switched to their own labelling schemes, but one reason may be the obligation to use free-range eggs. The other may be the royalty charge made by the Vegetarian Society, which one company said would add two per cent to the price of each item.

Where they stand on battery eggs in vegetarian products

Birds Eye

'Our supplier cannot guarantee free range eggs.'



Findus

Spokesperson believed that eggs were not used in their vegetarian foods, but that if they were then they might be free range.



Sainsbury

Information 'not available' but symbol is used on Quorn products.



Marks & Spencer

Not free range.



Dalepack

Not free range, and symbol used on Quorn products.



Safeway

Not free range.



Iceland

Not free range.



Co-op

Free range 'not guaranteed' and symbol used on Quorn products.



Ross Youngs

'Lynda McCartney' range
Not free range



Tesco

Free range not likely: Quorn products carry symbol.



Swissco

Not free range.



Ginsters

Not free range.



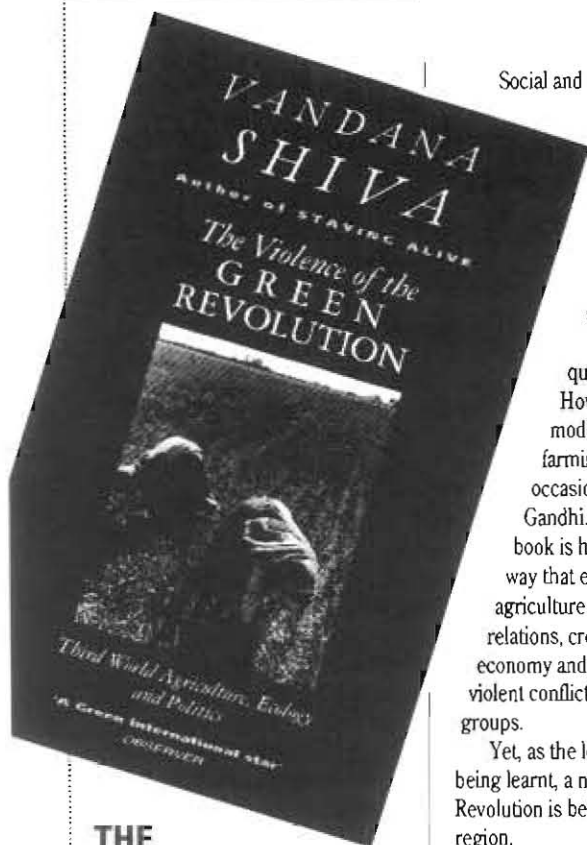
Cruelty-free eggs

Even free range eggs may not be humanely produced. Readers of *The Food Magazine* issue 15 will remember Alan Long's article denouncing the cruel practices and poor conditions that are permitted under the general term 'free range'.

Now the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is planning a cruelty-free labelling scheme for meat and animal products which it wants to see adopted across the UK food industry.

The symbol — still being designed — would be applied if animals are reared on the basis of five freedoms: freedom from hunger, freedom from physical discomfort, freedom from injury or disease, freedom from fear, pain and stress, and freedom from any constraint to normal patterns of behaviour.

Researched by Earthling McDermott and Liz Cloud



THE VIOLENCE OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Vandana Shiva
Zed Books/Third World Network, 57
Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU
£10.95 pb, 1992, ISBN 0862329655

Another book condemning the Green Revolution? Yes. Another book generalising from a case study in one region? Yes. Dry, academic and predictable? No, not at all, for the author is one of the world's foremost radicals, a feminist and philosopher and a leading critic of Western science and its irresponsible solutions for poorly understood problems.

It is a case study book, but one of the best, in which the single grain of sand can truly reflect the beach — or in the case of the Green Revolution, the desert. The Indian Punjab was to be held up as the model for Western technology's answer to mass hunger and swelling impoverished populations. A decade of agricultural intensification was to lead to peace and prosperity.

Instead, the region has seen unprecedented social and political upheaval, costing 15,000 lives in violent conflict, while food scarcity and an overall reduction in fertile land threatens the future of agriculture.

Social and agricultural factors are intimately linked — yet these links were tragically neglected by the Green Revolution's international sponsors.

Shiva is partial to quoting Sir Alfred Howard ('the father of modern sustainable farming') and an occasional lesson from Gandhi. But the thrust of the book is her own analysis of the way that external inputs into agriculture have disrupted social relations, creating a cash crop economy and, more seriously, violent conflicts between social groups.

Yet, as the lessons are slowly being learnt, a new phase of the Revolution is being proposed for the region.

It goes by the name of The Pepsico Project. Sponsored by the soft drinks multinational it includes a genetic engineering laboratory to 'improve' crops, food processing plants and a soft drinks plant. Land currently used for cereals for the home population will be replanted with fruits and vegetables for processing into exports. It is called a 'programme for peace' but in reality, says the author, it is another technological fix for a political crisis, with 'the potential to aggravate the crisis by introducing new vulnerability in agriculture'.

This is an excellent book to be savoured both for its highly readable text and its occasional jaw buster like 'the political ecology of technological change' (oh yes, and for a lovely misprint on page 253, a European biotech company by the name of Cuba Geigy).

TL

THE DEBT BOOMERANG — HOW THIRD WORLD DEBT HARMS US ALL

Susan George
Pluto Press/Transnational Institute,
345 Archway Road, London N6 5AA

£7.95 pb, 1992, ISBN 0745305946

While first world taxpayers subsidise commercial banks to the tune of over \$20 billion annually those same banks are extracting huge interest and debt repayments from third world countries. Yet those same countries are nearly twice as deeply in debt as they were a decade ago.

This deepening debt is not just a problem for poorer countries: it profoundly affects the first world — and not only because of the hidden subsidies that protect the banks from their irresponsible loan policies. Debt leads to deforestation, to cash cropping and to the destruction of biodiversity and sustainable eco-systems. Debt leads to cocaine plantations, international crime and drug dependence. Debt leads to a loss of markets and jobs, to first world economic depression, to civil wars and political repression, to arms sales, refugees and mass emigration.

Debt negotiations are a farce. The banks all collude while the country negotiator faces them alone as a pauper — not quite a true pauper though, as negotiators are usually drawn from the indebted country's privileged classes, whose own interests may be well-served by devaluations, cash cropping and IMF adjustment programmes.

The resulting deals have, for more than a decade, made the world a harsher place for the rest of us.

The book finishes with an appeal to readers to endorse the book's principles and to help build coalitions among 'the natural opposition' by sending your name (or that of your organisation) to the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam.

TL

FOOD FIT FOR THE WORLD?

Tim Lang
SAFE Alliance/Public Health
Alliance, SAFE Publications, 21
Tower Street, London WC2H 9NS
£7.50, 1992, ISBN 1873514077

'Competition is a form of controlled warfare' quotes Tim Lang from financier Sir James Goldsmith. And 'the GATT is a disarmament treaty for mercantilists' he quotes from a Financial Times editor.

Starting with these military

metaphors Lang's paper seeks to show that the underlying purpose of the current round of GATT negotiations is to set out the rules under which international food and agriculture corporations can continue their 'controlled warfare'. Without such rules the companies are exposed to the fluctuating political needs of individual governments and, God forbid, popular democratic demands. With rules to protect them, the companies can hide behind their rule-making committees and carry on unimpeded. The best rule of all, from their viewpoint, is global free trade, allowing purchases at the cheapest rate and sales at the dearest they can find worldwide. No wonder some third world countries have doubts.

Lang's paper documents the arguments that are currently being voiced by consumer and public interest groups in opposition to the GATT steamroller. The document highlights GATT's lack of concern for environmental issues, its tendency to make decisions behind closed doors, and its reliance on regulating bodies that are weighted heavily with representatives of commercial interests.

The GATT negotiations represent the last great opportunity for a shift in the balance of power from commerce to public service, from maximising profit to the fulfilment of need, from corporate decision making to citizens' participation... The evangelism is infectious. The graphics are good, too!

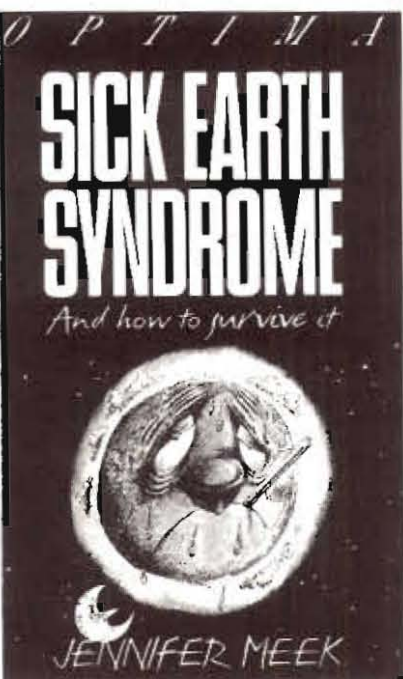
TL

Food fit for the world?

How the GATT food trade talks challenge public health, the environment and the citizen



Tim Lang
A Discussion Paper
March 1992



SICK EARTH SYNDROME, AND HOW TO SURVIVE IT

Jennifer Meek
Optima/Macdonald, 165 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YA
£6.99 pb, 1992, ISBN 0356196720

Depressing reading, this — an encyclopaedia of miserable facts about our deteriorating world, including our food supply, and how it all affects our health. The section on food lists a lot of the bad news that FM readers will know all too well!

The biggest problem comes when you look for guidance on surviving the environmental hazards she documents. Apart from sensible advice about minimising risks there is little more: the philosophy is at the level of 'There is hope for the future as long as we all care enough'. The only section offering a prescription to improve our lot was that on food supplements — substances which Meek endorses without criticism as a means of protecting ourselves from a wide range of pollutants.

And that's it. Ms Meek's answer to the sick earth is summarised in the last sentence: 'There is a lot we could do to improve our resistance to disease and quality of life if only we all knew

how to avoid, or minimise the effects of, so many of the things that are causing sick people and a sick earth.'

Protecting ourselves from the effects is not enough, I fear. The earth will need more, much more, than a vitamin pill.
TL

GROWING DIVERSITY — GENETIC RESOURCES AND LOCAL FOOD SECURITY

Edited by D Cooper, R Vellve and H Hobbelink
Intermediate Technology Publications, 103 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH
£9.95, 1992, ISBN 1853391239

This book arrived the week we went to press so it has had a quick skim only. Nonetheless it looks an excellent compilation of case studies showing how agricultural technology can undermine, and in some cases destroy, farmer's practices based on genetic diversity. It shows how the introduction of genetic uniformity can disrupt the sophisticated biological



chains which form the basis of traditional sustainable agriculture. And it shows that farmers are not so stupid as to sit back and let their knowledge and livelihood disappear in a generation.

The contributors show how conservation through farmers' groups, aid workers and NGOs has helped to resist the technological tide and maintained and developed the traditional systems.

The book is another well-deserved feather in the cap of the Barcelona-based group Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN). For more information on their work contact them at Jonqueras 16-6-D, E-08003 Barcelona, Spain.
TL

THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF BOTTLE FEEDING

Andrew Radford
Baby Milk Action, 23 St Andrew's Street, Cambridge CB2 3AX
50p, 1992

In this paper by Andrew Radford of Baby Milk Action, to be presented to the Global Forum in Rio de Janeiro in June, the environmental impact of processing, transporting and using baby milks, bottles, teats and sterilising equipment is compared with the use of human breastmilk.

Radford considers the pollution caused by the dairy industry, the wasted, non-renewable resources used in making commercial substitutes and the issue of dioxins found in breastmilk. He notes ironically that a decision to avoid dioxins by using commercial baby milks in place of breastmilk will ultimately lead to greater levels of dioxin in the environment as a side effect of the production of commercial milk and feeding equipment.
TL

FOOD AND HEALTH: THE EXPERTS AGREE

Geoffrey Cannon
Consumers' Association, PO Box 44, Herford X, SG14 1SH.
£29.95

This document reviews 100 scientific reports on nutrition and public health published over the last thirty years, and concludes that experts worldwide now agree that the typical diet of industrialised countries is a major cause of many common diseases. Yet the UK government has consistently failed to update its food and agriculture policies in line with this scientific agreement, says author Geoffrey Cannon.

PRODUCT RESEARCH REPORTS

The Food Commission publishes detailed product research reports examining leading brands and their markets, consumer perceptions, product claims and current legislation on product standards and marketing.

Bio-yogurts

Nine leading brands
30 pages
Price £125
October 1991

Meal Replacement Slimming Products

Twelve leading brands
32 pages
Price £125
February 1992

Available now from
The Publications Department
The Food Commission
102 Gloucester Place
London W1H 3DA
Tel: 071-935 9078

Animal genetics conference

The charitable wing of Compassion in World Farming, The Athene Trust, is organising a two-day conference entitled: 'Animal Genetics - Of Pigs, Oncomice & Men' at the Royal Geographical Society in London on 29 & 30 October 1992.

Speakers will include Christopher Polge from Animal Biotechnology, Cambridge, Professor Derek Burke, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes, Tim Lang of Parents for Safe Food and Sue Mayer from Greenpeace.

For further details contact The Athene Trust, First Floor, 20 Lavant Street, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 3EW. Tel: 0730 68070.

New organic food market

England's first Organic Food Market will be held every Sunday from 10am - 4pm at Tobacco Dock, The Highway, London E1.

The market which has the backing of the Soil Association is modelled on the French Marché Biologique now regularly selling organic produce in Paris and other major French cities.

Organic fruit and vegetables, cheese, yogurt, fresh and dried herbs, eggs and mineral water will be on sale, with stalls also selling quality health foods, crafts, antique and bric-a-brac.

'The market will give people the opportunity to buy their weekly groceries, knowing that they are fresh from the farm and still full of flavour and nutritional value', says market organiser Elizabeth Taylor.

For further information telephone 071-286 9204.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIC FOOD AND WINE FAIR 1992

Sponsored by
SAFeway

*Organised by the
Henry Doubleday
Research Association
at Ryton Gardens*

Tickets: £4.00 (£3.50 if purchased in advance)

For further information please contact Chris Devon, HDRA, Ryton Gardens, Ryton on Dunsmore, Coventry CV8 3LG. Tel 0203 303517. Fax 0203 639229.

Saturday 11 July

Wide range of organic produce to sample, cookery demonstrations and talks from Paul Heiney, presenter of BBC 2's Food and Drink Programme, Shaun Hill, top chef from the Gidleigh Park restaurant, Linda Brown cookery writer and TV gardener, Jackie Gear organic expert and Jerry Lockspeiser, organic wine connoisseur, plus a programme of entertainments to suit adults and children alike.

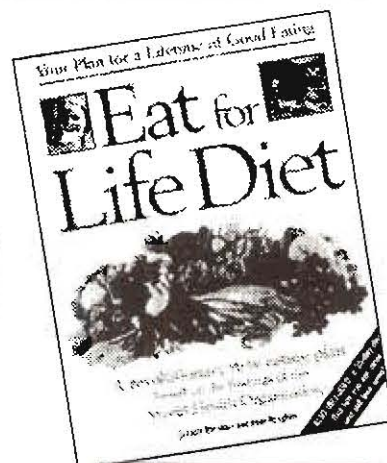
BOOKS

Eat for Life Diet

Whether you want to lose weight or just be sure you are eating healthily, the answer is the same: follow the World Health Organisation's recommendations. And if you want them translated into everyday language, with a range of menus and recipes to try out, then you will want this book. Written by dietitian Anne Heughan and journalist Jeanette Marshall.

160pp ISBN 009-175342-2

£9.99 including post and packing.



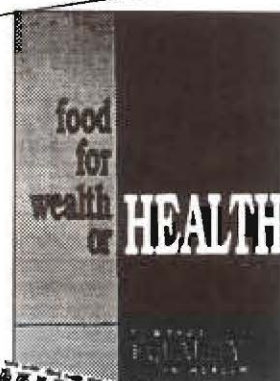
Food for Wealth or Health

Agricultural policies pollute our water, silence our wildlife, send cows mad and poison our eggs. They cost British tax payers £6bn each year. The quality of the food that our farmers produce encourages obesity, heart disease, diabetes and rotten teeth - costing the NHS a further 2bn each year to treat.

Written by Robin Jenkins for The Socialist Health Association

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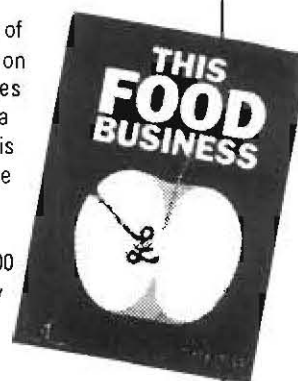
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Children's Food

■ Teething rusks sweeter than a doughnut?

■ Fish fingers less than half fish?

■ Beefburgers can be up to 40% pig fat?

The book offers ways of judging what is good or bad on the shelves of our shops and gives sound advice on how to ensure our children eat healthily.

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Fast Food Facts

■ Chips coloured with textile dyes

■ French fries cooked in beef fat

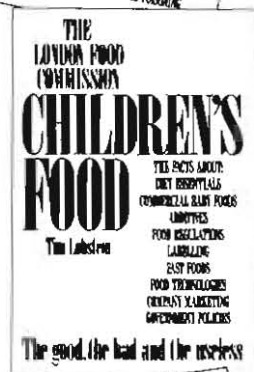
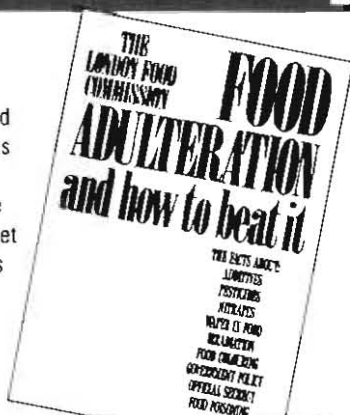
■ Batter made without eggs or milk

You don't have to avoid fast foods.

But you do need to know what is in them. With comprehensive tables of nutrients and additives this book is a unique look into the secretive world of fast food catering.

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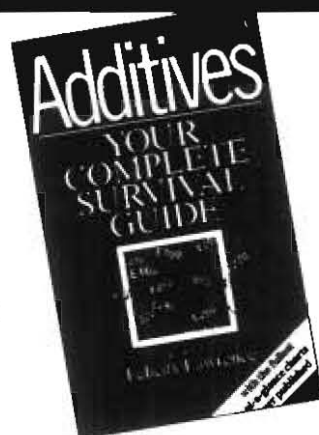
Additives - Your Complete Survival Guide

What can you do about additives? Which are dangerous and which are safe?

With comprehensive charts, the book explains 'E' numbers and examines the evidence on each food additive. It tells you everything you need to know, but industry would prefer you didn't ask, about the chemicals added to your food.

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but for Food Magazine readers just £3.50 including postage and packing.



Safe Food Handbook

The key facts to help you understand current issues such as the use and misuse of pesticides. Plus an A-Z shopper's guide to the most commonly bought foods, pin-pointing risks and recommending alternatives. Edited by Joan and Derek Taylor, with an Introduction by Pamela Stephenson.

256pp ISBN 0-85223-823-1

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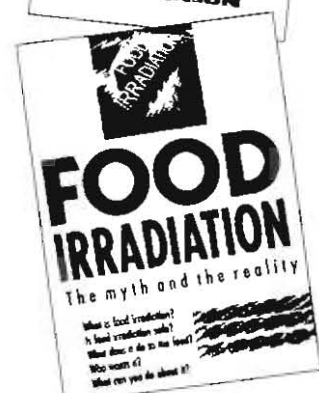


Food Irradiation

Good food doesn't need irradiation. If food had to be irradiated then ask 'what was wrong with it?' With the UK government permitting food irradiation in 1991 this book is essential reading.

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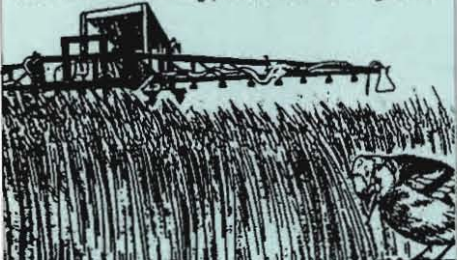
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Tall tails

Farmers who may feel they already spend too much on agrochemicals are being urged to send a further £7.50 to ICI.

What do they get? Nothing, but a good feeling perhaps, knowing that ICI will send to a school of their choice a teaching pack called *Farming Tales*.



This turns out to be a story of jolly animals and happy ladybirds living exciting lives while the crop sprayer passes harmlessly overhead, plus an activity book based on the story material.

Despite the combined efforts of York University, the Chemical Industry Education Centre and ICI, the pack is unlikely to succeed with teachers — the story is too long (at nearly 10,000 words) for younger children and too

Charitable advice



Here's another one for caring farmers.

Use a five-litre pack of Panther herbicide and you get a free token

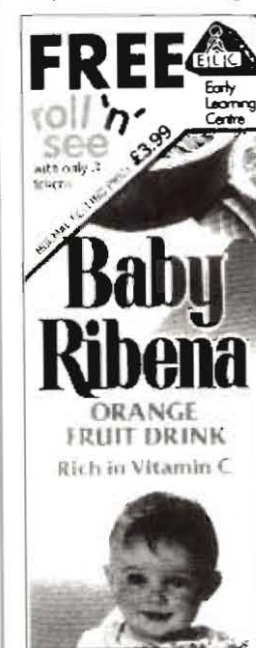
Collect five tokens and you can send off for a free copy of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (registered charity, number 326348) booklet on environmentally responsible farming. What is FWAG? Their publications give thanks to support from the agrochemical company Monsanto inside the cover, but feature a big promotion for a company called Rhone Poulenc on the cover. What does Rhone Poulenc make? Panther herbicide, no less!

PS If you collect just two tokens you can get a free gift: a packet of assorted wild flower seeds — ideal for the bits you didn't spray

Early drinking

A year or so ago the reputable retailer of toys for young children, the Early Learning Centre, was looking for some mutual marketing tie-ups. They had seen how the Body Shop had received shoppers' approval for its animal welfare and environmental concerns and support for campaigning groups. They knew that baby nutrition was at the front of parents' minds and a good platform on which they could be seen to be acting 'responsibly'. And so, quite sensibly, they talked about possible projects with the Food Commission.

In the end they backed out — and instead appear to have knocked at the door of SmithKlein Beechams, purveyors of Ribena to the Queen, and the target of a flurry of lawsuits from parents who believe Baby Ribena has damaged their children's



John Menzies — will always be more answerable to shareholders than parents.

teeth. Rather than go to court to defend Ribena, Beechams has offered out-of-court cash payments in return for the parents' silence. Beechams chairman, Henry Endt, is among the highest-paid businessmen in Britain, earning some £2m per annum in salary and stock rights.

Perhaps the Early Learning Centre — a subsidiary of

White wash

Well known as a man prepared to help the food industry, Professor Vincent Marks of Surrey University has now sprung to the aid of the nation's white bread makers. Quoted in *The Federation of Bakers* so-called *Medical Bulletin* he invites us to believe that children would starve rather than eat brown bread. Children, he says, 'will fail to eat enough calories if they do not enjoy their meal ... the most important thing is that they like white bread — so why shouldn't they have it?'

Marks rushes on to dismiss parents' 'erroneous' ideas that brown bread is healthier. He claims 'No one who knows anything about nutrition has ever argued that high fibre diets are good for children.' And just in case you miss the point, he finishes with these courageous words: 'None of my colleagues in the nutrition department have voiced any discomfort about white bread. We are not worried that some people say it is not good for you. No one takes that seriously!'

What's in a name?

When is a yogurt not a yogurt? In France and many other European countries a yogurt must contain sufficient quantities of live bacterial cultures. But in the UK we don't mind whether it is dead or alive. It's all yogurt to us.

The same for vinegar. The rest of Europe considers vinegar to be a double fermented product, made from such ingredients as wine, cider or malt. But what passes for vinegar in the UK is often a pale imitation — watered down acetic acid produced by a chemical process.

Now, under EC harmonisation rules, any product legally sold in one country can be sold in any other, but the product's name should not mislead consumers as to the nature of the product.

So to solve this sticky problem the EC has issued an 'interpretative communication'. Rather than extending quality standards throughout the whole of Europe, the EC has agreed that the UK can carry on calling its dead cultured milk yogurt, and watered-down acetic acid vinegar at home. But if the foods are exported to France or elsewhere with higher food standards that country can insist on a name change.

A neat compromise for manufacturers — but UK consumers will still have no easy way of telling which are better quality products.

Infant shoppers

Parents who gratefully let their children push the trolley round the supermarket will be keen to hear of a new initiative in the USA: junior trolleys, designed for children as young as four years old

The companies are well aware of the influence that TV-watching youngsters have on the family shopping, to say nothing of the disputes between parent and child about what goes in the trolley

No doubt with only the purest of intentions to encourage greater democratic consumer choice, kids will now be free to grab what they want unimpeded.

Till they reach the checkout, that is. But as supermarket managers know well, when the parents get to the till they will find it hard to make a fuss and won't want to lose their place in the queue. They will hear the impatient mutterings of customers behind them ... and will give in