

The

FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food

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The saccharin generation

With government advisors worried by the amount of saccharin being consumed by young children and calling on soft drink companies to put warning labels on saccharin-loaded drinks, an exclusive Food Commission survey finds a wide range of products are replacing sugar with saccharin and other artificial sweeteners.

De-regulation of the soft drinks legislation, and the low price of artificial sweeteners compared with sugar, has led to a leap in the quantities of saccharin being consumed by children — a group already at high risk of over-consuming the chemical — and a call by the Food Advisory Committee to label soft drinks with a warning that they may need extra dilution.

Figures released by MAFF, based on a survey of young children conducted before the de-regulation of soft drinks*, showed an average of one child in eighteen exceeding the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for saccharin, rising to one child in 13 exceeding the ADI among children aged around two years old. The ADI is 5mg a day saccharin per kg of the child's weight, but this level was doubled five years ago from a more cautious 2.5mg/kg. If the earlier figure had been used then an estimated one third of two-year-old children would be exceeding the acceptable limit.

Last September MAFF's Food Advisory Committee called on manufacturers of concentrated soft drinks — squashes, barley water, blackcurrant cordials etc — to add a warning that extra dilution of the drinks was recommended for younger children if the product contains saccharin. Manufacturers have been slow to respond, with most still not showing the warning yet, and none appear to be prepared to add a similar warning to ready-diluted drinks and carbonated drinks which contain saccharin.

A Food Commission survey of products has found

a massive rise in the availability of synthetically-sweetened soft drinks since the requirement to use a minimum amount of sugar was removed in May 1993. We found many well-known children's brands like Robinsons, Kia Ora and Rowntree's fruit drinks, and Tango and R Whites pop, using artificial sweeteners in both their regular and their reduced-sugar products. And a new range of brands from less familiar company names, are offering artificially sweetened drinks at prices as low as 16p a litre. Similar drinks sweetened only with sugar would cost 30p a litre or more. Many brands contain both sugar and saccharin, and can be just as damaging to teeth as sugar-only versions.

But it isn't only soft drinks that contain artificial sweeteners. The Food Commission survey found artificial sweeteners in children's jellies, ice lollies, trifles and rice pudding as well as pickles, sauces, crisps, baked beans, and tomato soup (see table, pages 10-11). MAFF's survey of children's consumption of sweeteners excluded many of these products.

A European proposal to force companies to declare added sweeteners on the front of a product has been opposed by the UK food industry — claiming that it would 'clutter' the label and confuse shoppers. In September the proposals failed to make a qualified majority in the European Parliament and have been referred to the Council of Ministers who must reach a decision by March 1996. Unless they find a compromise the proposals will be adopted, despite manufacturers' objections, but to the benefit of UK consumers.

Saccharin does not have a clean bill of health, having been found to cause bladder tumours in laboratory animals. In the USA a warning is put on saccharin-containing products. Other artificial sweeteners have also raised health questions: aspartame (NutraSweet) contains phenylalanine (a problem for sufferers of phenylketonuria) and has been linked anecdotally to neurological problems and migraines, though this has not been proven



Leading brands... but are they leading children to consume large amounts of artificial sweeteners while still damaging teeth?

Neither sugar-laden drinks nor artificial sweeteners are necessary for health. Encouraging an expectation that a wide variety of foods and drinks will taste intensely sweet is irresponsible. The Food Commission is calling on manufacturers to reduce their use of these ingredients for children and to label the presence of added sweeteners clearly on the front of the product.

* National Diet and Nutrition Survey of children aged 1½ to 4½ years, conducted June 1992-June 1993, published 1995, HMSO. The de-regulation of minimum sugar levels in soft drinks occurred in May 1993.

■ See Sugar gets cut - but at what cost? on pages 9-11.

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THE FOOD COMMISSION

Publishers of The Food Magazine

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We aim to provide independently researched information on the food we eat to ensure good quality food for all.

The Food Commission Research Charity aims to relieve ill health and advance public education through research, education and the promotion of better quality food.

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Using a bank holiday to announce changes in food laws looks a little mischievous. Tim Boswell, the 'MAFF Deregulation Minister' (to use MAFF's own words), chose New Year's Day to 'welcome the simplified food regulations' — but what did he really mean?

He meant that fish cakes no longer need to contain a minimum amount of fish, for a start. Pubs will no longer have to show the alcoholic strength of their drinks on a wall display. A malt loaf need no longer be made from malted flour but can use cheaper malt flavouring chemicals instead. And he meant that a range of artificial sweeteners, the cyclamates, which had been banned in Britain and the USA for their links to bladder cancer and testicle disease, would henceforth be permitted for use by manufacturers.

He claimed that consumers will 'benefit greatly' from the revoking of some 25 regulations, while admitting: 'by scrapping arbitrary rules we give greater freedom to those seeking to develop new products...'. Presumably products such as low-fish fishcakes and watered-down beer.

To say nothing of the newly-allowed cyclamates. Our main investigation in this issue concerns the massive and massively expanding use of artificial sweeteners in our food — and especially our children's food (see pages 1 and 9-11). So how valuable is yet another chemical sweetening agent? Its main purpose is to turn low-nutrient food into sweeter-tasting low-nutrient food — and what good does that do?

One thing it does, is to help create the new wave of so-called functional foods such as the fibre-enriched Ribena Juice & Fibre, which uses two artificial sweeteners. Ribena, along with fish-oil-enriched Pact spread, and bacterially-enriched Gaio yogurt, have found that advertising their self-awarded health-giving benefits is leading to complaints against them being lodged with the advertising regulatory authorities (see page 3), and the first of these has been upheld.

The other main story this winter has been the enormous interest in mad cow disease (see pages 6-8). It is no doubt to MAFF's great relief that the numbers of cattle suffering the terrible illness are on the decline, but the government's ability to turn good news into terrible public relations continues. Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell announced there was 'absolutely no risk' as his advisors admitted there could be one. MAFF introduced a ban on the use of cattle vertebrae for extracting mechanically recovered meat 'even though there is no evidence of a risk'. And MAFF also admitted there had been no prosecutions of the many slaughterhouses they had inspected and found to be failing to comply with the BSE regulations.

So, dear MAFF, please make your New Year Resolution 'consumers matter more than commerce'.

Sue Dibb
Tim Lobstein

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Ribena health claims slammed by ASA



In a set back to manufacturers of so-called functional foods, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has ruled that adverts for Ribena's Juice & Fibre Drink 'exaggerated the drink's likely health benefits'. Last year high profile advertisements for the product claimed that Juice & Fibre could 'help lower your cholesterol level'. But following a complaint by the Health Food Manufacturers' Association the ASA announced in December that it considered the implication that the product could lower plaque build-up on artery walls was not supported. The Authority asked the advertisers to moderate their claims.

Last year the Food Commission criticised the

newly launched drink for being a silly and expensive way to try and improve health (see *Food Magazine* 30). We said it would be better named 'Water, juice and additives' and that one orange or a slice and a half of wholemeal bread would give you just as much fibre as a glass of Juice & Fibre.

Functional foods have become the latest buzz word among food manufacturers seeking to profit from the growing interest in health. Last year, Danish company, MD Foods, launched Gaio yogurt (which also claims to lower cholesterol) and Pact margarine (a low fat spread containing fish oils which claims to be good for the heart). In a separate complaint to the ASA, the Food Commission has challenged Gaio's claim that it will lower cholesterol and objected to an exaggeration of likely benefits in its advertising and promotional literature (see *Food Magazine* 31).

The ASA's ruling on Juice & Fibre and the anticipated ruling on Gaio will undoubtedly be seen as a victory for consumer groups wanting to see

proper controls on the use of health claims by food manufacturers. The Food Commission believes that manufacturers are taking advantage of the lack of rules on acceptable claims. Both MAFF and the European Commission have shied away from introducing these under pressure from the food industry. But the reluctance by the industry to accept controls could now backfire and undermine consumer confidence in all claims by manufacturers. As Roger Clarke, MD's UK commercial director told the *Financial Times* last year: 'One spurious claim would undermine the lot of us.' Now that his fears may be coming true, it time for the industry to face up to what consumer groups have long been demanding — clear rules would benefit both consumers and responsible food manufacturers.

■ The Food Commission is currently undertaking a survey of health claims made for foods, scheduled for our next issue.

Infant soya milk update

The debate over the safety of soya milk for babies intensified this autumn with Cow & Gate, manufacturers of Infasoy, publishing a leaflet which was circulated in the journal, *Health Visitor*. The leaflet, which was intended to reassure health professionals over the use of infant soya formula, included claims that phytoestrogens are present in human breast milk. However new research from New Zealand challenges this claim, finding that human breast milk does not contain phytoestrogens.

Phytoestrogens, found in high levels in soya, are naturally occurring hormone mimics which

some researchers claim could have detrimental effects on babies' development. Research presented by Professor Clifford Irvine, a reproductive endocrinologist at New Zealand's Lincoln University, to a US Food & Drug Administration conference on phytoestrogens at the beginning of December showed no detectable levels of genistein and daidzein (the two main phytoestrogens found in soya) in human breast milk. None of the eleven samples of human breast milk or milk-based infant formulas contained detectable levels of phytoestrogens. Only the soya

formula (Isomil) and the two infant foods (Heinz Chicken & Vegetables and Watties Chicken Dinner) were found to contain phytoestrogens. Professor Irvine will be following up this research with an investigation into the quantities of phytoestrogens in infants' blood and their effects on hormonal balance.

■ For more information on phytoestrogens in baby milk, see previous issues of the *Food Magazine* and send a stamped addressed envelope for our information pack.

■ See Feedback page 19



High fibre yogurt?

Both Sainsbury's and the product above from Pro-fibre Nutrition are now offering a sweet, oat-enriched product, the Pro-fibre version claiming 'at least 20 times the fibre content of ordinary yogurt'. It also claims to be 'nature's way of reducing cholesterol' — a claim we are questioning.

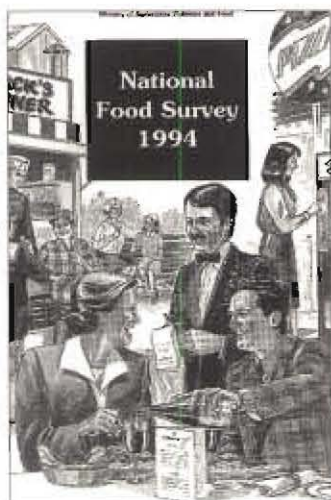
The Labour Party is committed to setting up an independent Food Standards Agency whose prime concern will be for the protection of the consumer, Dr Gavin Strang MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs told the Environmental Health Congress in September.

The first UK Body Mass Index (BMI) charts for children are now available. These will help health professionals identify children who are over- or under-weight and will be used by those caring for obese or anorexic children. It is anticipated that they will replace the weight centile charts currently used to assess the growth of all British children. An early rise in BMI rises in children is a risk factor for obesity in adulthood. (Details from the Child Growth Foundation, 2 Mayfield Avenue, Chiswick, London W4 1PW.)

Even supermarket managers are confused between free range eggs and eggs labelled as 'farm fresh' or 'country fresh'. Compassion In World Farming (CIWF) has found that 28% of local managers did not know the difference and 35% did not know that 'farm fresh' or 'country fresh' eggs were from battery kept hens. Over half agreed that this type of labelling of battery eggs could be confusing to many shoppers. CIWF want to see all battery eggs labelled as 'eggs from caged hens'. (Details from CIWF, 01730 233904.)

The controversial fat substitute, Olestra, could soon be approved for use in the US despite concerns about its negative effects on nutrition, says the Washington-based consumer group, Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Olestra can deplete the body of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K and carotenoids known to protect against some cancers and heart disease. Even modest consumption can cause gastrointestinal problems including nausea, bloating, diarrhoea and so-called 'anal leakage'. Yet despite this evidence, manufacturers Procter & Gamble are confident that Olestra will soon be approved for use in crisps and other savoury snacks. The CSPI, backed by the Chairman of Harvard's nutrition department, says: 'Olestra is an unfit substance for human consumption.' (Details from Art Silverman, CSPI, Washington (202) 332 9110 x370.)

Over 10% of food is eaten out



The latest National Food Survey from MAFF shows that food bought and eaten outside the home accounts for more than ten per cent of total food eaten.

MAFF's survey has long been criticised for not including food eaten away from home when assessing the nation's eating habits. In a special extension to their usual monitoring, the Ministry looked in detail at food eaten away from home and found 12 per cent of calories, 13 per cent of fat and 11 per cent of non-milk extrinsic sugars came from non-household foods.

Foods eaten outside the home

included meals, snacks and drinks eaten out, including take-aways and canteen meals, but excluded food eaten by children aged 11 and under.

The proportion rose with the number of children in a family: couples with no children ate 10 per cent of calories, 11 per cent of fat and 10 per cent of NME sugars away from home, while couples with four or more children ate 15 per cent of calories, 17 per cent of fat and 24 per cent of NME sugars away from home.

The proportion also rose with increasing household income: members of households with earned income less than £140/week ate 11 per cent of calories, 10 per cent of fat and 9 per cent of NME sugars away

from home compared with members of households earning over £560/week who ate 18 per cent of calories, 19 per cent of fat and 20 per cent of NME sugars away from home.

This is the first time MAFF has surveyed non-household food in such detail and little can be said about trends in consumption. Family Expenditure Surveys indicate an increase in the amount being spent on food eaten outside the home, from 16 per cent of total food spending in 1984 to 22 per cent in 1994.

■ *National Food Survey 1994*, MAFF, £26, HMSO 1995 (ISBN 0 11 2430007).

According to the UNICEF-sponsored Baby Friendly Initiative, if all babies were breastfed the UK would save £35m per year in gastroenteritis treatment, £10 per mother in reduced costs of diabetes, and prevent 400 deaths per year from breast cancer. Details from BFI, 20 Guilford Street, London WC1N 1DZ. The picture shows an engrossed reader in a demonstration against the baby milk company Nestlé last autumn.



Photo: Elaine Kennedy

Proposal weakens additive standard

In 1991 the *Food Magazine* warned of the possible adulteration of the common food additive, gum arabic, when the regulatory body charged with setting specifications failed to set stringent enough standards to prevent adulteration with other, untested gums (see *Food Magazine* 13). Now, nearly five years later and despite protests from consumer groups, including the Food Commission, and some responsible food manufacturers, the WHO/FAO Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) has recommended that its 1990 specification for gum arabic should be revised to delete the key analytical tests of purity and identify.

Gum arabic (E141) is an emulsifier derived from *Acacia senegal* trees, and used widely as an additive in soft drinks and as an ingredient in confectionery, foods often consumed by children. In making this recommendation, JECFA has departed, not only from its original mandate of ensuring food safety for consumers, but also from its own published guidelines that stipulate a toxicological basis for any reconsideration of specifications. Pressure for weakening the specification has come from gum traders.

There are over 1,000 similar species whose gum could be used to

adulterate gum arabic, yet none has been toxicologically tested for consumer safety. For the leading world regulatory body to recommend a specification that would permit adulteration with these untested gums, is in the Food Commission's opinion, irresponsible.

The Food Commission will be urging MAFF to oppose the JECFA recommendation. In a recent letter to the Food Commission, MAFF made clear the principal that 'specific purity criteria... should relate solely to the material which has been toxicologically tested and found acceptable for human consumption'.

A diet of junk food advertising

Food manufacturers are targeting children with unhealthy foods, says a new report from the National Food Alliance (NFA). The report, *Easy to Swallow, Hard to Stomach*, found that youngsters watching children's afternoon ITV or Saturday morning TV see three to four times as much advertising for fatty, sugary and salty foods per hour than adults viewing during the late evening.

The survey compared adverts during programming aimed at children and adolescents (after-school ITV, Saturday morning TV and the Big Breakfast) with adverts aimed at an adult audience (late evening ITV). Monitoring was carried out during one week in June 1994 and repeated during one week in May 1995.

Seven out of ten adverts during Children's ITV were for food products compared to only two out of ten during programming aimed at adults. Yet although government guidelines for a healthy balanced diet recommend that 'fatty and sugary' foods such as confectionery, crisps, soft drinks and ice cream should make up no more than 7% of our diet, the survey found advertising for these kinds of foods accounted for up to three-quarters of all food advertising. Out of 549 food adverts monitored in the survey only two were for fruit or vegetables.

'The foods we should eat least are the most highly advertised, while the foods we should eat most are the least advertised,' said Sue Dibb, the NFA's Food Advertising Project Officer. 'This not only encourages and reinforces children's consumption of foods which do little to contribute to a healthy diet, it also undermines the efforts of parents,

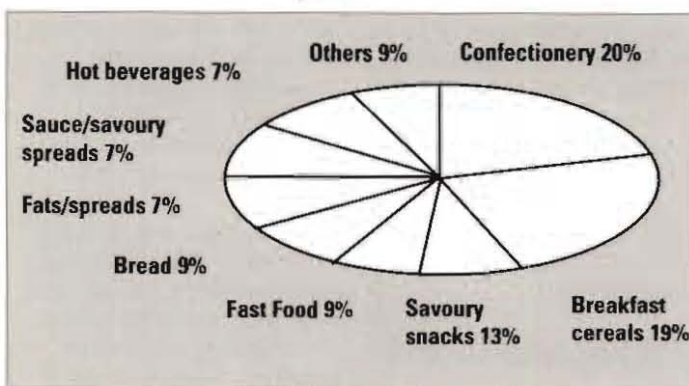
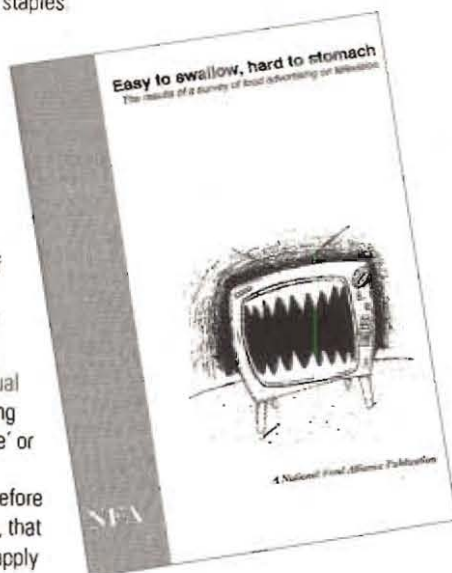
and others to encourage healthier eating.'

The report makes a number of recommendations to redress the imbalance in advertising messages. These include the prohibition of adverts for fatty and sugary foods when a large proportion of the audience are likely to be children, and encouraging the effective promotion of healthier foods such as fruits, vegetables and starchy staples.

The NFA is also proposing that the Independent Television Commission (ITC) (the body which regulates TV advertising) should be obliged to consider the cumulative effect of advertising when drawing up its codes of practice. The ITC rules already prohibit individual adverts from 'disparaging good nutritional practice' or promoting 'excessive consumption'. It is therefore logical, the NFA argues, that such rules should also apply

to the accumulation of advertising messages which achieve the same effect.

■ *Easy to Swallow, Hard to Stomach*. The results of a survey of food advertising on television by Sue Dibb and Andrea Castell, available from the NFA, 3rd floor, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH. Price £25 (£7.50 for non-commercial organisations). For more information on the NFA's Advertising Project contact Jenny Smith on 0171-628 2442.



Food advertising on children's ITV during 1-6 May 1995.

The importers of baby feeding bottles emblazoned with advertising for Pepsi and 7-Up, the Jumbo Distribution Company, have bowed to pressure from protesters including the Food Commission (see *Food Magazine* 31) and agreed not to re-order further stocks from the US manufacturers Munchkin.

In a survey of diabetic food products by Cheshire trading standards officers, many were found to be contravening the labelling regulations which forbid the claim of suitability for diabetics if the product has a higher calorie or fat content than a conventional equivalent. Sixteen out of 23 products failed to comply with the regulations and two were not assessable. (Further details from Cheshire County Council Trading Standards Dept, 01244 603906.)

The artificial sweetener cyclamate is to be permitted in UK foods. MAFF sneaked in a set of food regulations just before the Xmas break, including one which permits the use of cyclamates, currently banned in Britain but permitted in some other European countries. In 1991 government ministers said the ban on cyclamates should not be lifted following research that cyclamates damage the testes in male rats and possibly men.

European proposals to set a limit on the amount of nitrates permissible in lettuce and spinach have been vetoed by MAFF. Why? Because, says MAFF — the self-proclaimed defender of consumer interests against the excesses of the food industry — the proposed limits could not be met by UK growers. Growers routinely exceed the proposed limits and making the necessary changes would present 'a serious economic challenge to our industry'. High nitrate levels may be linked to cancer. The main source in food is from the overuse of agricultural fertilisers.

Substantial doubt has been cast on the ability of follow-on milks to justify their claims for being a superior source of iron in a baby's diet. Research from Gloucestershire Royal Hospital found no significant difference in the amount of iron in a baby's bloodstream after feeding with follow-on milks rich in added iron and those containing no added iron. Few infants developed iron deficiency. The authors suggest that iron added to follow-on milk is not an important source of dietary iron, at least for the infants in the study. (*Arch Diseases in Childhood* 73, 1995, p216-220.)

Salt intake has a direct effect on the blood pressure of primates, research published in *Nature Medicine* last October has confirmed. Despite food industry denials of salt being linked to human hypertension, strokes and cerebrovascular disease, the researchers found that a colony of chimpanzees fed a diet with salt levels equivalent to those commonly eaten by humans showed a highly significant rise in blood pressure, though this was more marked for some animals than others. The effect disappeared within months of the cessation of the salty diets. (*Nature Medicine* 1, 10, 1995, p1009-1016.)

A seven-country study of the consumption of flavanoids, the naturally-occurring anti-oxidants found in foods of plant origin such as apples, onions, tea and red wine, has found a remarkably strong link with coronary heart disease. About a quarter of the variation in heart disease rates could be explained by low flavanoid intakes, and together with saturated fat intake and smoking, could explain 90% of the disease variation. There appeared to be no link to cancer rates. (*Arch Internal Medicine* 155, 1995, p381-386.)

Beef watch

With consumer confidence in British beef hitting an all-time low, the government has now admitted that possibly contaminated cattle vertebrae can still be used to make suet and gelatine.

Tim Lobstein reports.

Following the realisation that slaughterhouses were flouting the regulations requiring the removal of spinal cord from cattle vertebrae, the government slapped an order prohibiting the use of vertebrae in the production of mechanically recovered meat. They did not, however, ban the use of vertebrae in gelatine and suet production.

As we go to press we have yet to see any prosecutions by the Government of the large number of slaughterhouses – 48% in one survey – found to be failing to remove spinal cord from cattle vertebrae, in clear breach of the Government's own regulations. Their poor policing of the Regulations, which were introduced in 1990, was attacked by the Food Commission as inexcusable during MAFF's consumer briefing on December 18. But Chief Veterinary Officer Keith Meldrum said the fault lay with local authorities who had been responsible for meat inspections until 1995.

A few days earlier the Government's Chief Medical Officer, Kenneth Calman, admitted that mechanically recovered meat (MRM) had been allowed to include cattle vertebrae. MRM is made by putting carcasses into a giant washing machine where all shreds of edible tissue are removed from the bones and the resulting grey mass coloured with additives and added to pies, sausages and pâtés.

This admission surprised consumer groups who had assumed that material made from cattle vertebrae had been banned from all human foods for several years. What about products already on the

market? Were these to be withdrawn? There was, MAFF admitted, no requirement to withdraw anything.

From December 15 MRM cannot be made from cattle vertebrae. Indeed, cattle vertebrae are banned from all foods, except for the production of gelatine and suet. 'Gelatine and suet can use cattle vertebrae, because the processing is assumed to kill the BSE agent,' they stated, but offered no evidence that this assumption was true.

Meanwhile, the quick reaction of Bovril to insist that the beef stock used in their products was made entirely from Argentinian sources is indicative of the divided concerns of the food industry over BSE, denying they have any hazardous ingredients (such as bits of bones from old British cows) on the one hand, and telling us that there is no hazard (with bits of bones from old British cows) on the other.

Inadequate labels

The Food Commission has found how difficult it is for consumers wishing to reduce the chance of eating material that may come from BSE-contaminated cattle to find out what products contain beef or the source of the beef. There is nothing on a Bovril label to tell us where the beef comes from, and nothing in the legislation about product ingredients to require companies to make its products from non-English beef. Other companies, such as OXO, Knorr, Bisto and Goldenfry also sell gravy and stock cubes etc, and many of these contain beef stock, beef extract or beef fat in

various forms, yet once again we cannot tell, as consumers, what this might mean in terms of bits of old bones from a cow.

Even seemingly non-beef products might come under suspicion. The first ingredient of OXO's Chicken Gravy Granules is beef bone stock. Safeway's Chicken Stew with Dumplings includes beef fat, as does Wilson's Chicken Casserole and Dumplings. (See table for several more examples). There is nothing about beef on the front, but beef is there all the same. The Food Commission is not claiming that the beef in these products is necessarily British or would contain any contaminated material. But we are saying that it is difficult for consumers to make a well-informed choice about the products they purchase.

The problem is even worse with ingredients such as 'meat' or 'meat extract', 'animal fat' and 'gelatine'. Meat extract is an ambiguous term, perhaps because manufacturers change their sources frequently, or

perhaps because the extract is made from a multi-species blend. Either way, there is a good chance of finding beef in some products declaring only the word 'meat'. Animal fats may be lard (pig fat) or tallow (beef fat) or suet (also beef fat). And gelatine is defined in the Food Industries Manual as '...made from collagenous materials such as pigskin, cattle hides or bones' and is still permitted to include cattle vertebrae in its production.

Some composite ingredients are even less well-defined. Cans of beans with sausages may only say on the ingredients 'sausages' with no indication of any of the meats contained. Even if the sausage is declared as pork sausage, the law allows up to 20% beef in a pork sausage without any other indication than the phrase 'other meat' on the ingredients list.

As our tables show, there are plenty of products which, even if perfectly safe, nonetheless contain beef where you might not expect it, or include unspecified meat ingredients.



Beef ingredients in products where you might not expect them

Beef where it might not be expected

Non-beef products which include beef-derived ingredients

Canned meat e.g. Grant's Haggis, Wilson's Chicken Casserole, Safeway Chicken Stew with dumplings	suet
Dumpling mix e.g. Goldenfry Original Farmhouse	beef fat
Frankfurters e.g. Kwik Save	beef, beef extract
Pasta e.g. Princes canned Ravioli	beef
Pasties e.g. Ginster's Cornish Pastie	beef
Puddings e.g. Safeway Traditional Style Christmas Pudding	beef suet
Ready meals e.g. McIntosh Chicken Bacon and Mushroom Roll	suet, gelatine
Salami e.g. Peperami, Safeways German Salami, Bierwurst	beef
Soups e.g. Baxters Royal Game	beef, beef bouillon
Spreads e.g. Heinz Sandwich Fillers Bacon and Tomato	beef extract
Stock and gravy e.g. OXO Chicken gravy granules	beef bone stock
Knorr Lamb stock cubes	beef stock
Knorr chicken flavour stock powder, Goldenfry Onion Gravy Granules	beef fat
Stuffing mix e.g. Paxo Garlic and Mushroom, Safeway Parsley and Thyme	beef suet

Unspecified meat ingredients

The species of animal is not declared

Pork Pie e.g. Melton Mowbray	animal fat, gelatine
Biscuits e.g. Wagon Wheels, McVitie's Digestive and Ginger Nuts	animal fat
Cakes e.g. Lyons Iced Dundee Cake, Seghers Christmas Log	animal fat, animal oils
Capsules and tablets e.g. Haliborange, Seven Seas Cod Liver Oil	gelatine
Confectionery e.g. Bassett's Liquorice Allsorts, Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles, Maynard's Wine Gums	gelatine
Chilled desserts e.g. St Ivel, Shape fromage frais, Hippo-Pota Mousse, Nestlé Milky Bar, Cadbury's Milk Chocolate Trifle	gelatine
Frozen cakes e.g. Sarah Lee chocolate gateaux	gelatine
Pudding mixes e.g. Royal lemon pie Filling Mix	gelatine
Jellies e.g. Rowntrees, Chivers Fruit Jellies	gelatine
Mixes e.g. Baker's Own Shake a Cake muffins	animal fat
Tinned puddings e.g. Heinz sponge puddings	animal fat



Just the word 'sausages' on this ingredient list, which might mean beef or might not



Gelatine in children's sweets, desserts and pudding mixes – made using cattle vertebrae but assumed to be safe

If you're in two minds about serving beef, a chance to digest the facts.

The Food Commission is lodging a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority against this full page advertisement published in the national press by the Meat and Livestock Commission. The ad counters so-called fiction with its version of the truth labelled as 'fact'.

Whether or not it proves to be correct, the ad is breaking the British Code of Advertising Practice which states that where there is 'significant division of informed opinion' ads should make it clear that they are expressing an opinion rather than stating a fact.

Organic cows dispute

Both the Soil Association and organic dairy farmers are claiming there have been no cases of BSE on organic farms, with the possible exception of some cases where the calves were purchased from other (possibly non-organic) sources.

However, the Government's deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Kevin Taylor, said there had been many cases on organic farms, and that two thirds of these were in home-bred calves, a similar proportion as found in cattle herds generally. "We can only assume that some organic farms were using animal-protein ruminant feeds," he said.

Beef hidden in baby foods

A review of the ingredients list in a range of popular babyfoods shows that several products contain beef, or unidentified meats, even though the word 'beef' or 'steak' is missing from the name of the food.

Babies are usually regarded as especially vulnerable to outside infections, and more likely to absorb strange proteins through their immature gut walls. They also have a lifetime of BSE-avoidance to consider, if it turns out that beef is the problem that some scientists fear. Parents wanting to be ultra-cautious and avoid any risk of giving their baby beef with BSE contamination may already be avoiding baby foods with the words 'beef' or 'steak' in the title. But, unfortunately, that will not be enough.

We found several products with ingredients which, because of the loose labelling regulations, are permitted to contain beef even though they may not say so in the name of the food, or, in some cases, explicitly listed in the ingredients list (see table).

Told you so?

'If any human cases (of BSE-caused CJD) do ever occur, the first are likely to be among children and young adults, as the evidence on Kuru suggests that the incubation period may well be shorter during childhood... The other group who might be expected among the early cases would be those exposed by virtue of their occupation, as their absorbed dose of agents is likely to have been higher than the general population of beef-eaters.'

Evidence submitted by the Food Commission to the Parliamentary Agriculture Committee, June 1990.

1993 and 1994 saw the first cases of CJD in young people recorded in the UK. 1990-1994 also saw four cases of CJD in dairy farmers, a number far exceeding the levels for the population generally.

You can't always judge from the label

The baby foods which may contain hidden beef

Company	Product	Ingredient
Boots Instant	Farmhouse/Vegetable Chicken Casserole	meat extract
Boots Toddlers Healthy Ready Meals	Shepherds Pie	minced beef, beef bouillon
Boots Toddlers Healthy Ready Meals	Beans, Burgers and Sausages	sausages, burgers
Cow & Gate Olvarit	West Country Casserole	beef stock, beef
Heinz cans	Spaghetti Hoops and Sausage	pork sausage, gelatine
Heinz jars	Spaghetti and Sausage	pork sausage, gelatine
Milupa	Vegetables with Golden Chicken	meat extract
Milupa	Country Vegetable and Chicken Casserole	meat extract
Milupa Junior	Harvest Vegetable and Chicken	meat extract
Milupa Junior	Chicken à la King	meat extract
Milupa Baby Sauces	Tomato Sauce	meat extract
Safeway	Mixed Vegetables and Chicken	meat stock
Safeway	Mixed Vegetables with Ham and Pasta	meat stock

NB (1) Please note that we are not claiming these products contain beef contaminated with BSE.

(2) These ingredients were taken from company listings of products available during the spring of 1995 and may be subject to change at any time

The long wait for MRM

Complaints from consumer groups that there is no requirement to label Mechanically Recovered Meat (MRM) were met by Keith Meldrum, MAFF's Chief Veterinary Officer, with the wonderful phrase 'If there was significant consumer demand for MRM labelling I'm sure the Minister would consider it.' He might like to note:

- 1980 Food Standards Committee report called for labelling of MRM if it exceeded 5% of the product.
- 1983 Parliamentary Committee of the Federation of Meat Traders calls for labelling but overruled by the Pork

and Bacon section of the Federation.

- Winter 1985-86: MAFF sends a 'formal view' to British Meat Manufacturers Association saying that new meat labelling regulations mean MRM should be separately labelled. MAFF's view is ignored.
- 1986 *The Meat Machine* book by consumer journalist Jan Walsh calls for MRM labelling.
- 1988 *Food Adulteration and How to Beat It* book by The London Food Commission calls for clear meat labelling in its consumer's charter.
- 1988 Bernard Matthews successfully prosecuted by

Shropshire Trading Standards for not labelling MRM. Because the trial was in a magistrates court, the result does not create a legal precedence. Bernard Matthews said he would appeal.

- 1989 *The Food Magazine* calls for MRM labelling, following requirements in the USA.
- 1989 Bernard Matthews drops appeal and starts to label.
- 1995 Tesco, Kwik Save and some other companies start to label some products voluntarily.

CHECKOUT

If you don't want artificial sweeteners in your children's diet, you're in for a surprise. Checkout finds they are invading the shelves faster than the speed of 'lite'!

Sugar gets cut – but at what cost?

The popularity of artificial sweeteners has never been so high — among food manufacturers, at least. Among the public there is considerable confusion, as a survey of shoppers' understanding of labels shows (see box). Many failed to realise how frequently artificial sweeteners are added to products. Such confusion

is not surprising. Manufacturers have loved to tell us the good news on the front of labels: 'no added colours', 'no preservatives' and 'no artificial flavours'. But they don't want to admit 'with artificial sweeteners' and are resisting moves by the European Commission to have that phrase put clearly on the front of all products that include artificial sweeteners.

As our survey of products found (see pages 10-11) a wide range of regular and reduced-sugar drinks now rely on artificial sweeteners for their taste.

Manufacturers like to declare 'low sugar' on the front of the pack, but they don't like to say that the full sweetness is still there, replaced by saccharin, aspartame or acesulfame K, or a combination of these sweetening agents. A typical bottle of fruit drink concentrate, such as Robinsons or Kia Ora, has added sugar plus artificial sweeteners. Some 60% to 80% of the sugar is replaced by cheaper chemical sweetening agents, but the presence of sugar, even in reduced quantities, combined with the acidity of the drink can be just as damaging to teeth.

Other products — from desserts to savoury dishes, soups, crisps, chewing gum and toothpaste — are all adding to our consumption of these chemicals.

Both the regular and the reduced sugar versions use aspartame and saccharin for most of their sweetness. Both contain some sugar and so might be harmful to teeth.

Sweet surprises

Parents searching for healthier products might choose brands with reduced sugar for their children in preference to regular brands, but a survey of shoppers for BBC 2's *The Money Programme* found that many were unaware that 'reduced sugar' was likely to mean the addition of artificial sweeteners. In data released exclusively to the Food Commission, the survey found substantial number of shoppers did not expect to find artificial sweeteners in their drinks. Many would be reluctant to buy the drinks if they were clearly labelled 'with sweetener' as proposed by the European Commission.

Not expecting to find artificial sweeteners in an orange drink	% (n=121)
Regular orange drink	50
No Added Sugar	53
Reduced Sugar	40
Sugar Free	44

Unlikely to buy if marked 'With Sweetener'	% (n=121)
Regular orange drink	53
No Added Sugar	29
Reduced Sugar	32
Sugar Free	31

Source: BBC2's *The Money Programme*



CHECKOUT

All sweetness

When the Food Commission started searching for artificial sweeteners in everyday products, we were astonished by the number of products that made use of these chemicals.



Designed especially for children, with cartoons and a built-in straw. But although Captain Cool boasts no artificial colour on the front of the label it admits to artificial sweetener in the list of ingredients in tiny white print on the back.

Popular drinks with artificial sweeteners		Sweetener used
Regular versions: sugar and chemical sweeteners		
Robinsons apple and blackcurrent concentrate		Aspartame, Saccharin
Robinsons Lemon Barley Water concentrate		Saccharin
Kia Ora Whole Orange concentrate		Saccharin, Aspartame
Vimto concentrate		Saccharin
C Vit concentrate		Aspartame, Saccharin
Sainsbury apple and blackcurrent concentrate		Saccharin
Sainsbury Whole Lemon Drink concentrate		Saccharin
Rowntree's High Juice Fruit Drink		Aspartame, Saccharin
Sainsbury Ginger Beer		Saccharin
Sunkist Mixed Citrus Drink		Saccharin
Tango Sparkling Orange		Saccharin
R Whites lemonade		Saccharin
Orangina Sparkling Orange		Saccharin
Ribena Juice & Fibre		Aspartame, Acesulfame K
Low sugar versions: natural sugars plus chemical sweeteners		
Robinsons apple and b/c/currant concentrate No Added Sugar		Aspartame, Saccharin
Sainsbury apple and b/c/currant concentrate No Added Sugar		Aspartame, Saccharin
Sainsbury Lemon Drink concentrate No Added Sugar		Aspartame, Saccharin
Rowntrees High Juice Fruit Drink No Added Sugar		Aspartame, Saccharin
Ribena No Added Sugar		Aspartame, Acesulfame K
Ribena Lower Sugar		Aspartame, Acesulfame K
Other foods where you may not expect artificial sweetener		
<i>Jellies:</i>	Chivers	Saccharin
	Mace	Saccharin
	Kwik Save No Frills	Saccharin
	Rowntrees Sugar-free	Aspartame, Acesulfame K
	Birds Sugar-free	Aspartame, Acesulfame K
<i>Custard:</i>	Ambrosia Low-fat Custard	Acesulfame K
<i>Ice lollies:</i>	Treats Rocket	Saccharin
	Munch Bunch Freeze Pops	Aspartame, Acesulfame K
<i>Packet puddings:</i>	Birds Trifle mix	Saccharin
	Angel Delight no added sugar	Aspartame, Acesulfame K
<i>Tinned rice pudding:</i>	Happy Shopper, Ambrosia Low Fat	Saccharin
<i>Bag snacks:</i>	most makes of Prawn Cocktail crisps	Saccharin
	Red Mill Tomato corn snacks	Saccharin
	Walkers Monster Munch spaghetti sauce flavour	Aspartame
	Walkers Crisps Worcester sauce flavour	Saccharin
	KP nuts Jalapino Spice	Saccharin
<i>Soup:</i>	Happy Shopper Tomato	Saccharin
<i>Baked beans:</i>	Tesco Economy Beans with Sausages	Saccharin
	Kwik Save No Frills Beans with Sausages	Saccharin
	Tesco 50% less sugar Sainsbury Reduced Sugar	Saccharin
<i>Pasta:</i>	Heinz Weightwatchers No Added Sugar Spaghetti	Saccharin
<i>Pickles:</i>	Mrs Elmswood Gherkins	Saccharin
	Haywards Picalilli	Saccharin
<i>Sauces:</i>	Branstons Fruity Sauce	Saccharin
<i>Sugar-free chewing gum:</i>	Orbit, Extra, Dentyne	Aspartame
<i>Toothpaste:</i>	Most popular brands, eg Colgate Total	Saccharin

CHECKOUT

and lite!

The Food Commission's survey of products found a wide variety of soft drinks and other foods containing artificial sweeteners. Yet none admit to using artificial sweeteners on the front of the pack and it takes a careful reading of the small print to reveal their true nature.

Not only do the 'low sugar' and 'lite' versions of products make use of the artificial sweetening agents, but increasingly the regular versions of the same products do as well.

In addition a wide range of products, including snacks and crisps, soup and toothpaste, were all found to contain added chemical sweeteners.

The Food Advisory Committee, alarmed at children's consumption of saccharin, has called for warning labels to be put on squashes and other concentrated juice drinks. But they did not take into account the massive increase in the use of saccharin in ready-to-drink products, including cartons and fizzy drinks, as well as the huge number of products containing saccharin.

We urge manufacturers to act responsibly and cut back on their 'sweeten everything' approach to processed foods.

Research: Jane Bradbury

A new range of cut-price soft drinks have taken shelf-space from conventional products. All rely on artificial sweeteners to keep their prices low.



Identical looking Ribena cartons, until you read the small print. The raspberry flavour is sweetened with added sugar, the orange-apricot has added sugar and artificial sweetener.

How the companies love saccharin

Artificial sweeteners have never been more popular. Their use in the UK has risen dramatically for all three types.

UK market (tonnes)	1988	1993
Acesulfame K	28	120
Aspartame	215	801
Saccharin	400	1000

A food company sweetening its drinks with saccharin will save itself considerable costs. Current costs of sweeteners for a typical 2-litre polybottle of ready-to-drink orange pop are:

Sugar/syrup	12p
Acesulfame	6p
Aspartame	4p
Saccharin	0.2p

Sources: Zenith International, Heasman and BBC2's *The Money Programme*.

Jellies and rice pudding, crisps and even tomato soup and beans with sausages — all with artificial sweetener and needing a careful reading of the small print.



CHECKOUT

Voting with your purse

Instant coffee is worth over £500 million in sales in the UK and the slightest gain in market share is worth a fortune. As shoppers we can influence company policies using our purses to show our favour. In this issue we focus on environmental aspects of products, looking at the choices available in instant coffee, and ask which ones deserve our support.

Research: Diane Brockbank

Until genetic engineering delivers a cold-climate coffee bean, we cannot expect to produce coffee beans on UK organic farms but instead must rely on commercial enterprises to grow the coffee overseas, process it and deliver it to our shops. These activities can be more or less destructive to the environment. For example, some companies ship the beans to Europe instead of using local firms to process the beans into soluble powder and freeze-dried granules, while some companies not only process the coffee beans locally but use the waste husks, produced when processing the beans, as fuel. Similarly, some retailers specify pesticide-free growing methods while others use recycled or re-useable packaging.

We took a range of nationally-available products and challenged the manufacturers on environmental concerns. We narrowed our questions down to three: Do the coffee growers avoid the use of pesticides and support organic production methods? Are the coffee beans processed into instant coffee in the country of origin helping the local economy and saving on

unnecessary transport costs? Is the product transported and sold using recycled packaging?

The Best Environmental Buy...: Oxfam's Mexicafé available at Oxfam shops.



Company	Organic?	Local processing?	Recycled packaging?
Kraft (Kenco, Birds, Maxwell House, Lyons Instant, Café Hag)	No	No	Some
Unilever/Van den Bergh (Brooke Bond, Red Mountain)	No	Some	No
Nescafé*	No	No	Some glass
Douwe Egberts	No	No	Some glass, some card
Café Direct Instant	Aiming, some organic now	Not yet	Some card, minimal packaging
Traidcraft (Campaign Coffee)	Aiming	Yes	No but minimal packaging
Oxfam Mexicafé	Yes	Yes	Some
Oxfam Africafé	Aiming	Yes	No but minimal packaging
Waitrose own label	No	No	Some glass, some card
Safeway own label	No	No	No
Co-op own label	No	No	Some glass, some card
Sainsbury own label	No	No (possibly some powders)	No
Tesco own label	No	Some	Glass
Marks & Spencer own label	No	No	Glass, some paper

* Nestlé are currently the target of a boycott campaign for their promotion of baby milk products.

✓ Our BEB award (Best Environmental Buy) for instant coffee goes to **Oxfam Mexicafé**. If you can't get to an Oxfam shop then look for **Traidcraft's Campaign Coffee** (which is the same as Oxfam's Africafé) or **Café direct Instant** which is now selling in many supermarkets.

MAFF closes a window



Photo: Roderick Field

MAFF's closure of its food surveillance committee passed unnoticed by the media. But, argues committee member Suzi Leather, consumers have lost a valuable friend.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of SGCAFS, the Steering Group on Chemical Aspects of Food Surveillance, last November. News of its death may not bring a wailing or gnashing of teeth among the populace, and it certainly passed unnoticed by the nation's political commentators, but it would be wrong to think that little had happened.

SGCAFS enjoyed a remarkable degree of obscurity, despite being the committee charged with monitoring matters of considerable public concern. I was the first and only consumer representative on the committee — an unusual concession to openness made by MAFF. Before my time the committee was largely composed of civil servants and academics: a toxicologist from ICI used to be the main industrial interest, then he was replaced by a professor from United Biscuits and another from British Nuclear Fuels.

We had a series of working groups looking into a host of important issues: pesticide residues was one of our most publicised research areas, but veterinary residues, food additives, packaging materials (such as cling film), nitrates in food, mycotoxins such as patulin in apple juices, heavy metal contamination: there was hardly an area we did not survey at one time or another. In recent months we discussed environmental oestrogens — an issue in which the *Food Magazine* has taken a leading role.

We published our findings in two ways: the headline results were reported in MAFF's *Food Safety Information Bulletin*, and the detailed

findings were published in a series of reports with covers of such lurid green they must have been above an acceptable daily intake. These reports were not exactly Jeffrey Archer airport reading, but they were an indispensable and definitive guide to what was getting into, or being put into, our food. They will no longer be published.

The committee was axed without public consultation or even a warning to the committee members. We simply got a letter thanking us for our work. Food surveillance is to be 'streamlined' presumably to save money — though MAFF has not given its reasons nor stated how any money might be saved.

The working parties under SGCAFS will continue, but how their results are published, and the decisions over research priority (is cling film contamination more or less important than pesticide residues? Is mercury in food more or less important than aflatoxins and patulin?) will change considerably. Decisions over research spending will be taken by the Food Advisory Committee (FAC) which is much more tightly managed by MAFF with less opportunity for open debate.

There are already too few of us involved in decision-making. Killing off SGCAFS will concentrate responsibility (and power) still further. Putting the responsibility for deciding these priorities onto the FAC will blur the distinction between surveillance and policy. FAC is a policy advisory group (with only 3 of its 15 members declaring they have no food industry interests) and it should not be expected to perform food monitoring functions.

The changes will mean less money being put into surveillance, and they will mean that the detailed results will not be published for the public but will probably emerge slowly as learned papers in professional and academic journals.

But it isn't just the changes but the manner of their happening that worries me. In the last few years certain parts of MAFF have done much to counter the criticism that the Ministry is secretive, high-handed and uninterested in consumer views. Now the Ministry's handling of SGCAFS suggests that this period of reform may be over.

Suzi Leather is an independent food policy consultant.



The end of the line for the lurid green reports from SGCAFS.

Trawling for essential oils

Fish oils are the new flavour of the month for food manufacturers wanting to add healthy ingredients to their products. Miriam Jacobs looks at the evidence behind the claims.

Fish oil is an important source of food in many areas of the world and the food industry has long used fish oil, particularly in its partially hydrogenated form, in the baking and margarine industry. Although deodorised to remove any of its fishy flavour, labels tended to use the catch-all term, animal fat, on ingredients lists. But now manufacturers are becoming less secretive and declaring the addition of fish oils to foods, such as the recently launched Pact margarine, and claiming a health benefit as well.

This reason for this new interest in fish oils is due to research showing that fish oils can play a significant role in the treatment and prevention of rheumatoid arthritis and cardiovascular disease. While government advice is that we should decrease our overall intake of fat in

the diet, it also recommends that we should increase our intake of fish oils relative to other oils and fats.

So what makes fish oils special? There are two families of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs):

1) The omega-6 (or n-6) family which includes linoleic acid found in vegetable oils such as sunflower oil.

2) The omega-3 (or n-3) family which includes alpha-linolenic acid, found in oily fish, marine algae and some vegetable oils (eg linseed, walnut, rapeseed, soybean). N-3 fatty acids are essential in the diet as they cannot be made within the body. They are important for normal growth and development, particularly brain development and visual acuity.

Fish oils contain polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs) but what makes them different from other PUFA-rich oils such as sunflower oil, is that fish oils have a high content of a fatty acid

called eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and a smaller amount of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) (see table 1).

N-3 and n-6 fatty acids have different metabolic pathways in the body and produce different prostaglandins and thromboxanes (involved in inflammation reaction and hormone and cellular metabolism). Put simply n-3 fatty acids reduce platelet aggregation and reduce cholesterol and other fats in the blood, preventing their build up on blood vessel walls. N-6 fatty acids are also essential for health, but over-consumption can increase the risk of furred arteries and inflammatory reactions, such as arthritis.

Dietary recommendations

While a general reduction in fat overall is recommended, this should include a relative increase in the proportion of n-3 fatty acids to n-6 fatty acids. The balance between the dietary n-6 and n-3 fatty acids is very important because they compete for the same enzymes. The western diet typically contains more n-6 than n-3 fatty acids, and excessive quantities of n-6 fatty acids can inhibit synthesis of n-3 fatty acids.

The most recent FAO/WHO recommendation¹ suggests that the ratio of n-6 to n-3 fatty acids should be between 5:1 and 10:1. N-6 fatty acids should make up at least 1% of the daily energy intake². Optimally, intakes should be between 4 and 10% of our energy¹. Current average intakes in the UK are around 5% and COMA recommends that there should be no further increase.³

The COMA dietary reference value for n-3 fatty acids recommends a minimum of 0.2% of total energy, and the current average adult intake is 0.7%. More than the bare minimum is considered to be beneficial for the cardiovascular system as it lowers blood cholesterol

levels, and helps relieve some of the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, though it is unclear what the optimal daily intake of n-3 fatty acids should be. COMA recommends a doubling from the current average consumption from about 0.1g/day to about 0.2g/day of long chain n-3 PUFA (as can be found in fish oils)³. Good sources are mackerel, herring, pilchard, sardine, trout and salmon.

Too much or too little n-3 fatty acids can be detrimental. High levels of intake of fish oils have been observed among Inuit people with traditional fish-rich diets. Extremely high levels of intake can lead to blood clotting problems and suppression of the immune system but this is not a problem with a more balanced Western diet. Similarly, too low levels of n-3 can suppress the immune system.

Pregnancy

During pregnancy higher levels of n-3 are need for fetal development. As the maternal fat store at conception provides the basis for fat storage and utilisation during pregnancy, a balanced fatty acid diet rich in n-3 fatty acids is important prior to conception.

Approximately 2.2g of essential fatty acids are laid in maternal and fetal tissue daily. During breast feeding, the mother's diet should provide an addition 3-4g of essential fatty acids. After three months the maternal fat stores become depleted, and dietary requirements increase to 5g/day. This can be achieved by the mother increasing normal food intake.

FAO/WHO suggest that new born babies should be provided with (per kg of body weight) 600mg of linoleic acid, 50mg of α -linolenic acid, 40mg arachidonic acid and its associated n-6 fatty acids and 20mg of DHA for optimal brain, neural and visual development. Breast milk provides all these fatty acids. However most formula milks do not provide the full quantity range.

Table 1. Polyunsaturated fatty acids. (PUFA's)

Group	Fatty acid	Dietary Source
Omega-3 (N-3)	α -Linolenic acid	Nuts and vegetables, (linseeds, walnuts, purslane, some pulses, lupins, marine algae), rapeseed & soyabean oil.
	Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)	Fish, especially fatty fish eg mackerel, herring, pilchard, sardine, trout & salmon.
	Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)	Fish, especially orbital oil (from the eye of the fish).
Omega-6 (N-6)	Linoleic acid	Vegetables and vegetable oils and spreads such as sunflower oil. fruits, nuts and cereals
	Arachidonic acid (AA)	Meat & dairy products.

Environmental contamination of fish oils

Tests by Greenpeace⁵ last year on fish oil supplements found detectable levels of organochlorine and other toxic chemicals such as DDT, lindane, PCBs and hexachlorobenzene in nine out of ten top UK brands of fish oil supplements.

Such contamination arises because chemicals from the environment accumulate in fish oil. Organochlorines which do not occur naturally, cannot be broken down or detoxified in living creatures and are thus deleterious to health.

Processing of the fish oil can reduce contamination but with varying degrees of efficiency. Neutralisation can remove a significant quantity of organophosphorus pesticides but this also reduces the vitamin A and E levels. Active carbon treatment in the steam distillation process can remove contaminants such as organochlorine pesticides. These processes are used by some manufacturers. However there are no maximum residue limits for PCBs in food in the UK although in the USA the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) impose tighter constraints.

The high levels of PCBs found by Greenpeace in Solgar's Salmon Oil capsules may well be due to the increasing practice of feeding farmed fish with meal enriched with up to 30% fish oil which itself may be contaminated with PCBs.

Are vegetable sources as good as fish oil as a source of n-3 fatty acids?

There is some controversy over whether n-3 rich vegetable oils, such as linseed oil, can be used as efficiently as fish oils in the body. In recent clinical trials, fish oils have been found to yield higher levels of usable n-3 derivatives more quickly than vegetable oils. However it is not clear whether these results are influenced by the fact that more trials have been carried out on fish

oils (largely sponsored by the fish oil manufacturers).

It is known that the conversion of α -linolenic acid, found in vegetable oils, to their long chain derivatives takes longer and consequently these products take longer to appear in the blood. However many of the trials have not allowed for this time lapse.

For maximum benefit it is also known that cold pressed n-3 rich vegetable oils are more beneficial than more processed oils. Processing, for example by hydrogenation or heat treatment, including cooking, means oils start to lose their beneficial effects as they become oxidised or converted to trans fatty acids.

Do we need to take fish oil supplements?

Fish oils are now the largest dietary supplement sub-sector with sales valued at £50 million in 1992 accounting for 39% of the UK vitamin and dietary supplement market.⁴

Studies using fish oil supplements have shown that 3g of EPA with DHA daily can be of value in the treatment and prevention of coronary heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, dermatitis, and as an anti-inflammatory agent and for other medical conditions.

With rheumatoid arthritis, for example, fish oil supplementation has been observed to increase the production of less inflammatory agents with varying degrees of benefit to sufferers.

However care must be taken with n-3 rich fatty acid supplements as there are potential hazards of high intake. This can include vitamin A toxicity which can cause fetal damage during pregnancy (though some supplement manufacturers remove some of the vitamin A), impaired glucose homeostasis in non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, and increased requirement for anti-oxidants. 0.4mg of vitamin E per gram PUFA n-3 is recommended to reduce the oxidation and free radical activity of n-3 PUFA's on cellular membranes. Some supplements have vitamin E added but others don't. Always read the label!

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4 Euromonitor (1994) *Market Focus: Dietary Supplements*. Market Research GB.

5 M.N. Jacobs, P.A. Johnston (1995) *Organochlorine pesticide and PCB residues in pharmaceutical and industrial grade fish oils*. Greenpeace Research Laboratories, University of Exeter. Technical Notes 05/96.

Promoting fish

A change in legislation will allow companies selling oil-rich fish to promote their products as high in polyunsaturates. Previously only products such as margarine and other spreads and oils could make such claims

One heart that won't be left on the shelf.



New Pact has everything you could desire in a reduced-fat spread. Not only is it made with buttermilk for a delicious buttery taste, but it's also enriched with Omega 3, the same essential nutrient that's found in fresh fish. A recent report from the Department of Health & coronary care recommends we increase our intake of Omega 3. Just two slices of toast with Pact is enough to meet their daily recommendation. All the more reason to take Pact to your heart. For further information, call 01601 330 5554.

PACT, THE SPREADABLE SOURCE OF OMEGA 3.

Pact, launched last year, is a reduced-fat spread enriched with n-3 fatty acids. With its heart-shaped design and references to 'heart & mind' the manufacturers, MD Foods, make an implied claim for Pact's benefits for the heart. It has been reported that Pact has been refused permission to advertise its claims on television leaving doubts over the acceptability of such health claims. In the USA, the Food and Drug Administration has rejected the use of health claims for n-3 fats.

However in Japan school children are the target for the promotion of DHA-fortified vitamin health drinks which claim to improve learning ability. DHA has also been added to a wide variety of other foods including confectionery, miso, bread, hamburgers, yogurt and canned foods in Japan.

School meals – eat your heart out!

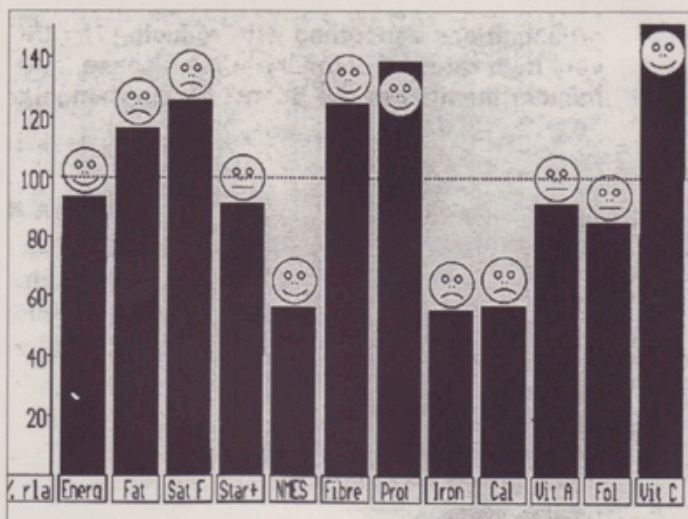
A new computer programme from the National Heart Forum paves the way for monitoring the nutritional quality of school meals — both at the level of the school's weekly provision of meals, taken as a whole, and at the level of an individual child's selections over the week.

The School Meals Assessment Pack (SMAP) provides the assessment programme on 3.5 inch disk with a well-designed 68-page user's manual and a 72-page teacher's guide which turns meal assessment into a classroom activity. Funded by the Health Education Authority and supported by the British Dietetic Association and the then Hampstead Public Health Department and Health Promotion Department, the pack sells at just £40, substantially less than the price of more sophisticated dietary analysis tools such as Compeat and

Microdiet.

Dietary analysis is based on the ingredients and recipes of 400 school caterers' dishes, with variations allowed in terms of the recipes used. Non-standard foods are assessed as the nearest standard equivalent, and portion sizes are those used for secondary schools. The programme asks a series of questions about each of the food items entered, and then computes a nutritional analysis: the amounts of energy and 11 nutrients are shown as columns, with each of the menu items stacked to show how they contribute to each nutrient, and the columns topped with a face showing how well the nutrient meets the recommendations for healthy eating (based on the Caroline Walker Trust's *Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals*, 1992).

The programme is friendly and quick to learn. Its limitation is the



School Meals Assessment Programme: the output showing nutrient levels

narrow range of foods and the neglect of certain menu items, such as soups. The healthy eating targets are those for a lunch-time meal, so although the programme might analyse non-lunch items, such as snacks and breakfast bar meals, the columns and the smiling/sad faces would not be relevant. The authors warn that the programme should not be used for legal evaluation — such as testing the caterers for contract compliance — as the precise levels of nutrients cannot be relied upon. But it does indicate how changes can be made to best advantage: it can show, for example, that much of the fat is coming from a pastry dish, and changing this single item would bring the menu up to target.

■ SMAP, price £43.50 (inc £3.50 p&p). Please make cheques payable to BSS, and send your order to SMAP, P O Box 7, London W5 2GQ.

Another dietary assessment tool available at low cost is the commercial package Diet Expert for Windows, being promoted by Radio Rentals for around £10. It has excellent tools for analysing an individual's diet and weight and offering healthy targets. Its main drawback is that it is entirely an American product, using US RDAs for the recommended nutrient levels.

The quantity of each nutrient is presented graphically as a proportion of the target RDA, but is also presented numerically so that comparisons with, for example, UK DRVs can be made outside the programme. The database has 2400 foods — many of them US commercial products — and allows the user to add more foods to this list and to alter those already there.

NFA launches Food Poverty Network

With over a thousand groups and individuals buying the National Food Alliance (NFA) pack *Food and Low Income*, and a series of regional conferences on food projects already under their belt, the NFA is launching a network to co-ordinate information on local projects tackling healthy

eating on a low income.

The move follows the award of over £60,000 to the NFA from the National Lottery Charities Board to help set up a database of local initiatives, a newsletter, regional meetings and the development of a more detailed 'toolkit' to elaborate and refine the original pack.

Besides fulfilling the role of network co-ordination, the NFA has a working group on low income which will advise the NFA on responding to government consultations on low income policies. The working group includes representatives from national charities and professional bodies involved in low income initiatives and health promotion, and is keen to recruit more members with experience of community development projects.

■ For more details contact Becki Fancini, National Food Alliance, 0171-628 2442.

LET US EAT CAKE!

Newsletter of the Food Poverty Network
National Food Alliance, 5-11 Woodside, London E10 6NR
Tel: 0171 628 2442 Fax: 0171 628 2442

Issue 1: Autumn 1995

Welcome to the National Food Alliance's Food Poverty Network!

As many of you will recall, we made a commitment to you back in March at the end of our series of Food and Low Income conferences, to keep you all in touch with what's going on in the world of food poverty information in developments which you may find useful.

Although this is your first newsletter, we haven't been idle since March. After several months of carefully preparing, we're now ready to publish the first issue of the Food Poverty Network newsletter. It's a pleasure to announce that the first issue of the newsletter has been received from the National Lottery Charities Board, and we are now in the position to deliver what we promised in the Spring.

- a quarterly newsletter;
- a comprehensive database of contacts for you to tap into for advice and support;
- occasional regional meetings of the type we had in March;
- a "toolkit" of detailed information which will help you develop a successful project.

But we need your help. The Network will only be of use if we give you what you need.

We are committed to producing the four newsletters for disabled clients that we need you to tell us what they should include. Do us the favour, please, to fill in a short questionnaire which we would like you to complete and return to us as soon as you can.

For the first time, of course, we have had to use a 300 word questionnaire, as well as the questionnaire on food included.

The Poverty Network's new newsletter

The New Food Basket

1995

■ For more details contact Becki Fancini, National Food Alliance, 0171-628 2442.

It took nearly a decade, but Europe's longest-running food budget standard, produced by the Swedish Board for Consumer Policies, has been accepted by virtually all of Sweden's social assistance agencies, responsible for setting local benefit levels.

■ Photocopies of their 28-page report (in English) are available from the Food Commission for £3.30 to cover costs.

Food poverty is linked to poor birth outcome

Eating food of poor nutritional quality during pregnancy, and frequently missing meals, are linked to the probability of a low birthweight baby and poor long-term health outcomes for the child, according to a joint report by the charities Maternity Alliance and NCH Action For Children.

A survey of 120 women who were pregnant or who had recently given birth, and who were living on low incomes, found the majority to be missing five or more meals a week. Most of them were eating little or no fruit, vegetables, lean meat or fish, but instead were eating sugar-rich foods, soft drinks, fatty foods, snacks and processed meats.

Fatty diets may represent good value-for-money in terms of not going hungry, but the survey found they were leading to a shortfall in the consumption of many vitamins and minerals. A third of the women appeared to be getting less than their LRNI amounts — a level

considered seriously deficient — for five or more of the ten vitamins and minerals measured, including calcium, iron, zinc, vitamins A, C and folic acid.

The frequency with which a woman missed meals, and the inadequacy of her diet in terms of vitamin and mineral intakes, were both closely linked to the amount of money she had available for food spending. On average women were spending around £10-£13 per person in the family each week on food, compared with a national average of over £21 per person.

In a second part of the survey, a menu designed to meet pregnant women's nutritional needs and to be a realistic adaptation of their current eating patterns was priced around the country and found to cost an average of over £18. This figure represents nearly 40% of a single woman's Income Support benefit. For women under the age of 25, the healthy menu would represent nearly 50% of their Income Support, and for women aged 16-17 it would represent an impossible 65%.

Fifty-one women in the survey had recently given birth. More than two-thirds of the babies were under the national average birthweight. The full-term babies were typically 7oz lighter than the national average. Maternal smoking could only account for 1oz of this.

Small babies are more likely to

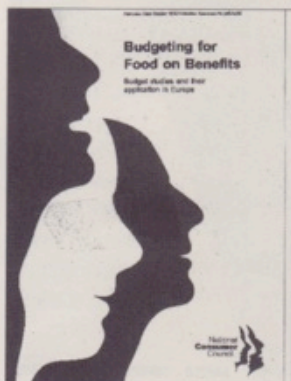
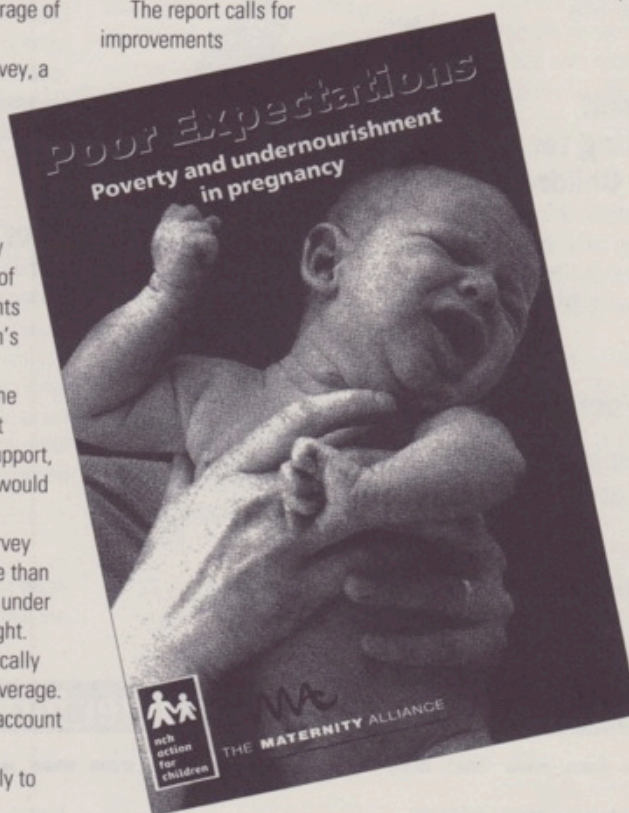
die in infancy. If they survive, they are more likely to suffer high rates of childhood illness, disability, behaviour disorders and possibly adult diseases including heart disease, diabetes and raised blood pressure.

Evaluation of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) health education and food supplement scheme in the United States has found that for every \$1 spent on the programme, \$3.50 was saved in health costs of low birthweight babies.

The report calls for improvements

in benefit levels, especially for those aged under 25, and for a review of the food benefits available to pregnant women on low incomes, such as milk vouchers and vitamin supplements.

■ *Poor Expectations: Poverty and Undernourishment in Pregnancy*, by Julie Dallison and Tim Lobstein, published jointly by NCH Action for Children and The Maternity Alliance. Copies are available from the Food Commission price £5.50 (includes 50p p&p).



The UK government refuses to provide estimates of how much a person on Income Support is expected to spend on food. As a result, the levels of benefits rarely permit a recipient to eat a healthy diet (see, for example, the report on food poverty in pregnancy above).

The National Consumer Council have now published a review of budgetary standards, using examples

in the Netherlands and Nordic countries as well as Ireland and the UK Family Budget Unit, arguing that the development of agreed budgets is the only way that the UK's benefit levels will ever be linked rationally to living standards.

■ *Budgeting for Food on Benefits* is available by request from the National Consumer Council, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH. tel 0171-730 3469.

European Food Poverty Network

Suzi Leather and Liz Dowler are keen to develop a European network of groups involved in food and low income initiatives.

For more information contact Suzi Leather, c/o the National Food Alliance, 3rd Floor, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH.

The Nursery Food Book

A lively and practical book exploring all issues relating to food, nutrition, hygiene and multicultural needs, with tips, recipes and sample menus along with cooking, gardening and educational activities involving food. Excellent handbook for nursery nurses and anyone caring for young children. £9.99 including p&p.

Food Adulteration

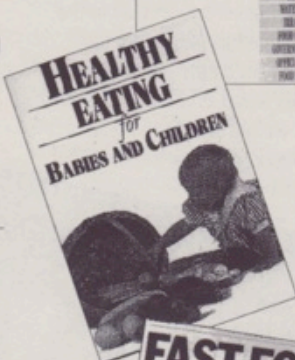
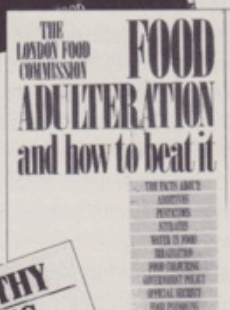
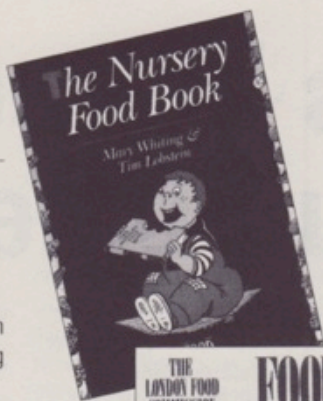
A penetrating expose of the shocking state of food quality in Britain, revealing the facts on additives, pesticides, food poisoning and irradiation. £5.95 inc p&p.

Teach Yourself Healthy Eating for Babies and Children

An authoritative yet down-to-earth guide giving you the information you need to feed your family. Includes over 60 pages of excellent recipes. £5.99 inc p&p.

Fast Food Facts

Full of useful tables of nutrients and additives, along with a unique look into the secretive world of fast foods. £5.95 inc p&p.



Additives - Your Complete Survival Guide

Still the best reference book with comprehensive tables and summaries of the evidence on the safety of each additive. Special price only £3.50 inc p&p.

Food Irradiation

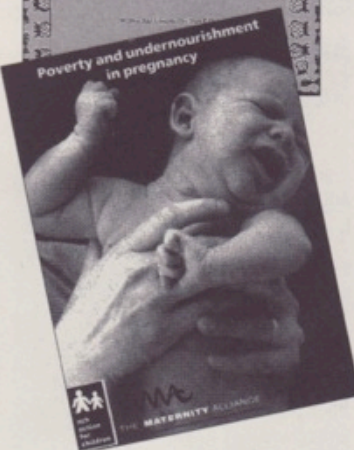
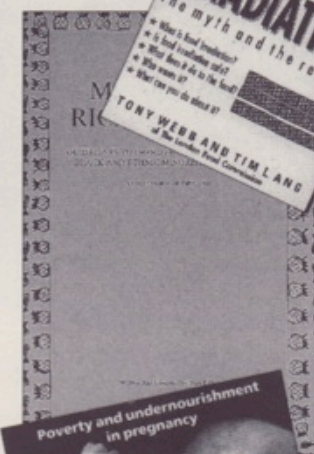
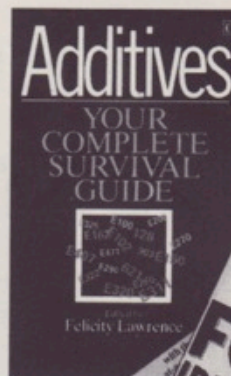
Good food doesn't need irradiating yet the UK has now legalised the process. £6.50 inc p&p.

More than Rice and Peas

Essential guidelines for multi-cultural catering. Includes over 90 pages on specific cultural beliefs and practices, and 40 pages of local projects and initiatives. £17.50 inc p&p.

Poor Expectations

Written by with The Maternity Alliance and NCH Action for Children. A devastating report on under-nutrition among pregnant women on low incomes, showing the poor diets being eaten at present and the difficulty of affording a healthy diet on Income Support. £5.50 inc p&p.



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news stories and features in past issues. Stocks are limited and some issues are already out of stock. Please use order form below.

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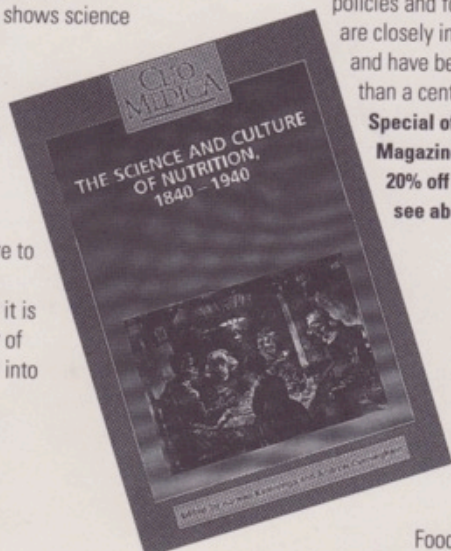
Our Ecological Footprint

Reducing Human Impact on the Earth
M Wackernagel & W Rees.
New Society Publishers
c/o Jon Carpenter Publishing, P O
Box 129, Oxford OX1 4PH, £9.99,
ISBN 0-86571-312-X, 1996.

Good planets are hard to find, and if we are to survive on Mother Earth we need to find not just a technical solution to escalating ecological destruction, but a behavioural and social one, too. So argue the authors of this readable and well-illustrated guide to assessing the environment and the amount of exploitation it can bear.

Social and behavioural solutions can come through the finding of attractive ways of reducing our material wants, which in turn may mean finding attractive ways of reducing perceived inequalities. The authors opt for a brief discussion giving support to the ecologist Hardin's suggestion that common resources should be controlled through '...mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon...' although observation of the fishing fleets around the Irish box might expose the holes in that particular argument.

The book shows science at its best, providing the tools and methods of observation that we will need if we are to preserve our planet. Then it is only a matter of putting these into practice...



The Science and Culture of Nutrition, 1840-1940

H Kamminga & A Cunningham.
Publishers: Editions Rodopi BV,
Keizersgracht 302-304, 1016 EX
Amsterdam, Holland, £21.75 (but if
you say you are a reader of the Food
Magazine you need to send only
£17.40). ISBN 90-5183-819-0, 1995.

In a series of chapters from international authors this book deals with the influence of nutrition on society during a century of biochemical discovery. It is no dry account of scientific 'progress' but a sociological and even political discussion of the impact of a science on society, and to some extent the shaping of that science by society.

It touches on such matters as Lankester's 1860 pronouncement that 'those races who have partaken of animal food are the most vigorous, most moral and most intellectual races of mankind', supporting the marketing of Liebig's Extract of Meat, and leading to such nice reversals of cause and effect as 'forty thousand beef-fed British govern and control ninety million rice-eating natives of India' (from a contemporary cookery author Sarah Hales). And it explores attempts in 1911 by Sir Oswald Mosley (the infamous fascist's grandfather) to encourage the use of wholemeal flour though a campaign sponsored by the *Daily Mail*, as well as suggesting that British nutritionists' awareness of class and poverty issues helped ensure more successful food rationing in Britain than in Germany during the first War. A solid and stimulating book,

showing that nutrition, food policies and food politics are closely interwoven, and have been for more than a century.

Special offer to Food Magazine readers:
20% off list price —
see above.

Meaty matters

James Erlichman (*Food Magazine* 31), attacks 'vegetarian hypocrisy' with criticisms that are too simplistic.

He divides consumers into carnivores, vegetarians and vegans but what about those omnivores who demand higher standards of quality and welfare for meat, milk and eggs? Professor Webster (of Bristol University's Department of Veterinary Science) believes that real improvements in welfare for the majority of farm animals are most likely to come from the pressure exerted by these consumers.

Mr Erlichman says that 'adding relatively minor transport pain to their short, nasty lives, is almost neither here nor there'. But what of Irish beef cattle, many of which will have led a pleasant enough existence on pastures, and are then shipped for ritual slaughter in the Middle East, unless they die in storms in the Bay of Biscay? On one journey alone, in February 1995, 138 out of 1000 died in transit between Greenore and Egypt.

Death is the inexorable price we all pay for life. It is up to us, who deem ourselves the most intelligent of sentient creatures to strive to make sure the quality of life, for every animal, justifies the price.

(Ms) J. H. Smith, Witney, Oxon

Come on James — stop being holier than everyone else!

People don't know about the horrors of pigs born to imprisoned mothers, reared on concrete in darkness, or the overweight broiler chickens struggling to walk on flimsy legs. They don't know that those placid cows face the annual calf kidnap and have to haul their overburdened and often infected udders into the milking shed for some temporary relief.

At Compassion in World Farming we do our best to disseminate this information — but we haven't reached everybody yet. Until we do, James, please just keep on spreading the word in your world (as you do so well) and we'll do the same in ours.

Joyce D'Silva
CIWF, Petersfield

Keep on writing but keep your letters short! You can fax us on 0171 628 0817
We love getting letters but we may need to cut them to fit.

James Erlichman rants rightly: a hunk of 'approved' 'vegetarian' cheese is as objectionable as a steak.

But he is hard on customers unversed in the facts of farming and manufacturing, and who are easy prey for misleading symbols and logos, especially when such logos have been so corrupted by the Cheesytarian Society's latter-day complement of milksop 'lovies' (lacto-ovos)!

They have disbanded or expelled researchers and campaigners who have tried to reverse the slide with headlines such as *Meat and Milk — Foods that Cry* and with demos at London's Royal Smithfield Show. Instead the Society has cashed in by 'selling the symbol' and 'leasing the logo' and with dubious commercial sponsorships. The Consumers' Association and the Food Commission have wisely disdained such involvements and compromises.

Alas, the once-venerable Vegetarian Society is ending the century in disarray and unworthy of its splendid cause.

Alan Long

VEGA — Vegetarian Economy
and Green Agriculture

Solely soya

You call for withdrawal of soya baby milk until further research is done (*Food Magazine* 30). But what do you expect vegans to do if the sale of soya formula milk is stopped? Some vegan mothers can't breastfeed and rely on bought soya formula for their babies, since only babies who are cow's milk allergic can get it on prescription.

I am all for removing the phytoestrogens from soya to improve it's safety, but you are totally ignoring the needs of vegans by calling for its withdrawal from sale, with no recommendations of alternatives for vegans (I believe none exist).

Would you support allowing it to vegan families, on prescription? We have the right to have our ethical beliefs respected, just as religious and other minorities do. Improve the soya formulae, don't withdraw them.

Lesley Dove, Harrow

Fat chance

One of the few Health of the Nation nutrition targets that was not already on the way to being met at the time it was set was the target for reducing obesity. Realising that the targets — cutting obesity rates from 8% of men and 12% of women (1986 figures) to 6% and 8% respectively — might prove difficult to meet, the document set a date of the year 2005, five years beyond the date set for most other targets.

Anyone who has tried to lose weight could have warned HM Government to set a date a good few years later still. More recent surveys have found UK obesity rates of 13% men and 16% women, with predictions that the level may reach 18% men and 24% women by 2005.

The Nutrition Task Force's Obesity report points out that people tend to overeat during and following fatty meals rather than those rich in other sources of calories, and that eating fatty food in the evening particularly encourages excess calorie consumption.

Meanwhile the food industry, fond of selling us fatty snacks and chocolates, deep-fried food and lard (we are Europe's largest importer of pig fat to add to the great British diet) is telling us to take more exercise.

Foot-in-mouth disease

A hastily-convened meeting between government-appointed BSE advisers and a smattering of consumer representatives allowed a glimpse of one such adviser, Richard 'Dr Kildare' Kimberlin.

Asked if he accepted money from the beef industry he replied: 'I'm a consultant. I take money from petfood companies, pharmaceuticals, Brussels, MAFF, the meat industry... It's my living.'

Asked whether the measures taken in the 1980s to limit the spread of BSE were enough, he said 'We didn't know then if there was a risk to humans, and we still don't know now.' And referring to the first suspicions that scrapie from sheep might somehow pass to cows, he added the immortal 'which did worry some of us *in the field*.'

And prompted by colleagues over the advisory committee decision not to ban cow vertebrae from gelatine manufacture, he admitted: 'If I was there I must have been asleep at the time.'



This luridly-branded beast is the logo used at the top of the fax paper from none other than MAFF's own BSE office.

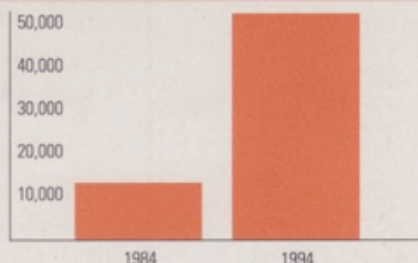
Tummy bugs

It's now seven years since salmonella in eggs knocked Edwina's career, and flocks of hens were slaughtered to try to cut infection levels. It's five years since the government brought in a Food Safety Act and promised a series of hygiene regulations to deal with salmonella, and the scares about listeria, campylobacter and E coli.

The result? Figures for confirmed formal notifications of food poisoning for 1994 were published last October, showing that for the first time the number of cases passed 50,000, having risen more than 15 per cent from the previous year, and a figure of around 10,000 per year during the early 1980s. Additional cases, not formally notified but nonetheless recorded by public health authorities, brought the total to nearly 82,000, up from 65,000 the previous year.

What has our Government done? Abolished meat inspectors, slashed budgets for environmental health inspectors and public analysts, cut training places for vets, cut food hygiene research budgets, failed to insist on tough chilled food transporting, failed to introduce hygiene training for food handlers, failed to require food premises to be licensed before they can trade, and wholeheartedly encouraged privatised, cost-cutting caterers for schools.

Oh yes... and issued a flood of leaflets telling us to clean the fridge and wash our hands, and we've only ourselves to blame if we don't.



Food poisoning: the result of the government's campaign.

I know what I like and I like what I know

A three-year study from Goldsmiths College, funded by the government's special food research programme, has found 'widespread distrust of expert advice' about what food is good for you, with both government and scientists treated with scepticism by those questioned.

Unfortunately, the research itself must be treated with scepticism. Only 134 people were interviewed, but according to the report only 13 of these were from lower-income groups (occupational classes III Manual, IV and V). Confirming the bias towards better-off families, the report found that more of the participants used olive oil for cooking than used all other vegetable oils put together.

But perhaps without meaning to, the researchers were following the advice of Susan George (author of *How the Other Half Die*) when she said on political priorities in academia: 'Don't study the poor. Study the rich'.

Lessons in logic

A statement saying 'there is no evidence of a link' between BSE and CJD is the one that government are standing by, and is, of course, very different logically from one which says 'there is evidence of no link' (a very hard matter to prove), let alone 'there is no link' (a silly assertion by government ministers).

Yet what do we get in a press release from Sir David Nash, President of the National Farmers Union? 'What we need are clear cut statements based solely on the scientific evidence,' he pontificated, and immediately contradicted himself. 'And that evidence shows that *there is no link* between BSE and any human health disorder.'

Clarke's budget hits support for school milk

One barely-noticed feature of Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's budget in November was his removal of support for school milk.

Since the days when Margaret Thatcher earned the nickname 'milk-snatcher' by cutting the subsidies for school milk as Education Secretary in the early 1970s, the provision of low cost milk for school children has been a political issue of greater complexity than might appear.

One might be forgiven for assuming that cheap milk for schools was a product of the welfare state, with the idea of nourishing the children of the poor and preventing rickets in the slums, and that almost by definition it is something the Tories would want to slash.

But life is never so simple. For a start, the Tories' traditional friend, the farmer, is very upset. 'We are appalled,' said the National Farmers Union. The NFU claims the loss of subsidies will

put up the price of school meals, 'a move which can only be counter-productive in the campaign to improve child nutrition.'

We are not so sure. Far from being a welfare measure, the initial idea of giving milk to school children was introduced to help off-load surplus milk production in the 1930s and has continued with EC subsidies for full fat milk and cheese for social purposes (e.g. schools) as part of reducing the EU milk lake. The EU subsidy is not available for skimmed milk or even semi-skimmed milk.

The result of Clarke's removal of the UK contribution to school milk support is to leave the EU element (some £2.5m out of £6.5m) looking rather paltry. In turn, low-fat dairy products may be seen as more attractive to school caterers, to the benefit of the children of the poor. Especially if they can claim free meals.

National Food Alliance Update

Winter 1996 ♦ Number 17

Easy to Swallow, Hard to Stomach

The National Food Alliance's Food Advertising Project has once again received much positive media coverage with the launch of a new report in December. The report, **Easy to Swallow, Hard to Stomach**, is based on the results of a survey of food advertising on television.

Anyone who has sat and watched the adverts during children's television programming will not be surprised by the familiar names on the screen, McDonalds, Kelloggs, Cadbury's, Coca Cola to name but a few. But what is shocking is the sheer volume of advertising for fatty and sugary foods – the NFA's survey found that up to three-quarters of all food adverts were for fatty and sugary foods. The government's National Food Guide recommends that fatty and sugary foods such as confectionery, soft drinks, crisps, ice cream, cakes and biscuits should make up no more than 7% of a total balanced diet. The report argues that this gross imbalance between government nutrition recommendations and the advertised diet of unhealthy foods is creating a conflict and undermining progress towards achieving the government's Health of the Nation targets.

Welcoming the report, Michael Lean, Rank Professor of Human Nutrition at the University of Glasgow said: –It is difficult to see how children can be expected to improve the nutritional quality of their diets when faced with the current intensity of television advertising campaigns predominantly designed to encourage children to eat high fat, high salt and sugary foods. The overall balance of food advertising on television should be directed towards achieving national dietary targets and children in particular need to be protected against unscrupulous advertising policies.'

Children have increasingly become a target for food advertisers. The survey found that youngsters watching children's weekday ITV or Saturday

morning TV see three to four times as much advertising for fatty, sugary and salty foods per hour than adults viewing after 9.30pm in the evening. Such food messages not only encourage and reinforce children's consumption of foods which do little to contribute to a healthy diet, but it also undermines the efforts of parents and educators to encourage healthier eating patterns.

The report identifies considerable scope for increasing the amount of advertising for healthier foods. Out of 549 adverts monitored only two were for fruit and vegetables. One of the report's major recommendations is that government should support and encourage effective ways of promoting healthier foods, such as fruit, vegetables and starchy staples. The argument that is often used to justify the low level of such promotion is the lack of money that such producers have compared, for example, to the £100 million spent each year by the confectionery industry on advertising. This is a real problem and one that the NFA has sought to address with practical proposals for funding such promotions. But without the political will to back such proposals it will be an uphill struggle. The demise of the Nutrition Task Force and the failure of the NTF's informal group on food advertising to meet more than once, do not bode well for the future.

In view of children's inability to comprehend fully the nutritional consequences of their food choices, the report further recommends that advertisements for fatty and sugary foods should not be transmitted when large numbers of children are likely to be viewing. This would in effect direct advertising for these foods towards parents, who can more appropriately assess their suitability.

Last year the Independent Television Commission (the body that regulates TV advertising) introduced new rules that placed greater emphasis on advertisers to consider the nutritional implications of their advertisements. The NFA welcomed new rules for food advertising as an important step in the right direction but this new survey shows that the rules have no effect on

the cumulative message of food advertising. Logically, the report argues, rules which prohibit individual adverts from –disparaging good nutritional practice' or promoting –excessive consumption' should also apply to accumulation of advertising which achieves the same effect.

Easy to swallow, hard to stomach: The results of a survey of food advertising on television, by Sue Dibb & Andrea Castell, is available from the National Food Alliance, £25.00 (£7.50 to voluntary and public interest groups)

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Food Policy: Making a feast of it

The NFA celebrated its 10th anniversary in style and kicked off the process of developing rational and progressive food policies to boot! After months of careful preparation our national conference *Food Policy: Making a feast of it* was a great success.

Nearly 200 people heard Professor Philip James, the NFA President and Director of the Rowett Research Institute, give an inspired introduction to the day before delegates split up into workshops to discuss the role of various government departments in developing future food policies. We were fortunate to have a host of eminent speakers to present the workshops' conclusions in the afternoon, and Professor Tony McMichael from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine gave a magnificent summary of the entire day's proceedings.

And we're not just patting ourselves on the back. Evaluation forms, given to all delegates on the day, are still being returned with glowing praise – plus useful suggestions for any future events. The next step is to prepare a conference report which will form the basis of a draft NFA food policy statement. This will be further developed in conjunction with NFA members and observers and with the extraordinarily wide range of people and organisations represented at the conference. The aim is to present this food policy document to all the main political parties in the run up to the next general election. Contact Peta Cottey on 0171 628 2442.

Nutrition Task Force

The final report of the Nutrition Task Force (NTF) is in preparation and the NFA has made detailed comments on several drafts. At the NTF's last meeting on 12 October it was agreed that a self-congratulatory tone for the final report would be inappropriate, given that much remained to be done to improve the British diet in the coming years. Nonetheless, the NTF was not

without modest achievements and these are suitably noted in the draft report. At time of writing, the draft report was due to go to Ministers and should therefore be published shortly.

The key question now is what will happen to the ambitious plans outlined in the NTF's document *Eat Well!*, now that the NTF no longer exists? It seems that there is a commitment, by both the Department of Health (DH) and the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF), at the very least to monitor developments. Another proposal (to be confirmed) is for an annual conference to note progress – or the lack thereof – on the main issues identified by the NTF.

Government commitment seems less firm on the issue of intersectoral collaboration: in other words there is a danger that government and/or industry may feel able to pursue initiatives without involving public interest organisations and health groups. The NFA will, of course, be keeping a close eye on developments. Contact Jeanette Longfield on 0171 628 2442.

Fat in the food chain

One of the early NTF tasks was to identify where all the fat in the food system, or chain, comes from and where it all goes. There is no point, for example, in reducing the amount of fat on cuts of meat, if the fat is then put into meat products and hence back into the national diet.

A study funded by MAFF has now been completed and it concludes that lower intakes of fat from dairy products, red meat and fish have been almost balanced out by increases in fat intake from vegetable fats and oils.

MAFF is keen to explore what more work may need to be done in this area and those interested should contact 0171 238 6244/5.

Members' events and publications

Chris Haskins, chief executive of Northern Foods, gave the address at the Caroline Walker Trust (CWT) Evening of Celebration. The title of his talk was *Food in the Public Interest*,

and its provocative content led to a lively discussion. This year's Caroline Walker Awards were presented to the Barri Grubb Food Project for their work in deprived areas of Edinburgh, Martin Pitt for making his **genuine free range eggs** a national brand, Dr Erik Millstone for promoting social responsibility in science and *Vegetarian Good Food Magazine* for proving that meatless meals are delicious. Professor Michael Marmot was presented with a special award, and the overall winner was Bill Shannon from the Co-operative Wholesale Society for ensuring that the Co-op backs the *Health of the Nation* initiative. Contact the CWT on 0171 727 6751.

The GreenHouse, a National Federation of City Farms (NFCF) Resource Centre, was officially opened in October by **David Bellamy**. Meadwood Valley Urban Farm in Leeds are hosting a northern regional conference on 3 February and the Lawrence Weston Community Farm in Bristol are holding one for the south west and Wales on 10 February. Contact NFCF on 0117 923 1800.

A discussion paper on **small farms** which examines their social, economic, and environmental importance is about to be published by the SAFE Alliance. It will be launched in January at a seminar attended by farmers, farming groups, representatives from MAFF and agricultural researchers. SAFE have also recently launched their *Food Miles Consumer Survey* and are now set to produce a campaign pack to enable local groups to lobby successfully in their area to reduce food miles. Contact the SAFE Alliance on 0171 823 5660.

The Nutrition and Health of Children: A Global Responsibility is the title of a conference held by the McCarrison Society and the University of North London on 11 January. The conference focused on recent evidence on nutrition and early development, providing lessons that should be shared world-wide to improve **child health**. Contact the McCarrison Society on 0171 739 8422.

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The Health Education Authority (HEA) is working with the Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to raise awareness of the **National Food Guide: The balance of good health**. Early this year workshops for health professionals will be held to promote local activity. Contact Healthlines on 0171 413 1920.

Other news from the HEA includes details of some new research on **healthy eating** being undertaken in Leicester. It notes that people are well informed about the official messages on healthy eating, but their responses to the information are determined by a variety of economic, social and cultural factors. Contact Jackie Goode on 01509 263171. The Organic Food Club was launched

by the Henry Doubleday Research Association at Ryton in December. By buying in quantity from a UK organic growers' co-operative the Club offers **organic vegetables at lower prices** than are often found in supermarkets for conventional produce. The Association has also been presented with a special award for helping to preserve British culinary heritage. Contact HDRA on 01203 639229. *Poor Expectations* is the title of a new

Maternity Alliance and NCH Action for Children publication which examines poverty and **undernourishment in pregnancy**. It reports that more than two thirds of the full-term babies born to women living in poverty had a birthweight below the national average. Contact the Maternity Alliance on 0171 588 8582. The use of hormones in the production

of livestock and the use of biotechnology have been under scrutiny at the National Farmers' Union. Seminars to discuss the relevant issues with consumer organisations were held in November. The future of the use of **hormones in meat** may be partly determined by an international conference about the subject, instigated by the European Commission. Contact the NFU on 0171 331 7250.

Feeding bottles featuring the **Pepsi Cola** and **7-Up** logos distributed by Jumbo Distribution are soon to disappear from the UK market thanks to a campaign initiated by Baby Milk Action (BMA). The next step is to get these bottles removed from the market world-wide. Please write to Munchkin Bottling Inc. at 7535 Woodman Place, Van Nuys CA 91405, USA to add your voice to the campaign. Contact BMA on 01223 464420.

November saw the launch of the *School Meals Assessment Pack* (SMAP) by the National Heart Forum (NHF). SMAP is a quick and simple computer-based method of assessing the nutritional quality of **secondary school meals**. The pack costs £43.50 and is available from SMAP, PO Box 7, London W5 2GQ. Contact NHF on 0171 383 7638.

Improving Oral Health: The contribution of others was the title of a British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCOD) conference held in November 1995. Delegates heard talks on the roles of various health professionals, the food industry and food retailers in **promoting oral health**. Contact BASCOD on 01734 562988.

The Splice of Life (aka Splife), the newsletter of the Genetics Forum (GF), reports that when Safeways and Sainsbury's launch their new own brand tomato puree made by Zeneca using **genetically modified tomatoes**, it will be labelled as such. GF welcome Zeneca's openness but don't welcome the product, not least because there is no convention determining safety guidelines and procedures on international trade of foods made with GMOs. Contact GF on 0171 638 0606.

Budgeting for Food on Benefits was published by the National Consumer Council in October. The report argues the case for the use of **budget studies** to inform government decisions on benefit levels. It explains what budget studies are and how they are used in some European countries. Contact the NCC on 0171 730 3469.

Add Life to Your Years is a guide to **healthy eating and active living** in later life published by the World Cancer Research Fund. It provides the reader with guidelines on healthy eating, taking exercise and some of the most important vitamins and minerals. Contact WCRF on 0171 828 3232. If you're worried about **peanut allergy**,

the British Dietetic Association have recently published a statement outlining the facts. It provides information on what peanut allergy is, its incidence, how it can be tested for and avoiding peanuts. Contact BDA on 0121 643 5483.

New members

Welcome to the Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards (LACOTS) and UNISON, they the newest NFA members.

LACOTS was established in 1978 by the local authorities Associations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to co-ordinate the enforcement of food safety and trading standards laws. It is funded by these Associations and is managed by a Management Board of elected members appointed by them. Inter alia, LACOTS:

- provides a uniform interpretation of legislation;
- is a centre of conciliation and information exchange;
- promotes good enforcement practice;
- liaises with trade and consumer organisations; and
- advises government and European institutions.

UNISON was formed in 1993 following a merger of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO), the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE). Thus UNISON members will be involved in, for example, providing school and hospital meals. UNISON has 1.3 million members and is governed by an elected committee and General Secretary, with funding from being provided by membership subscriptions, sales of publications and so forth.

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NFA project news

Advertising

During the autumn it was announced by the trade body, the Advertising Association, that it has set up a Food Advertising Unit, in response to the success of the NFA's project. We are flattered by this implicit praise for the project's effectiveness, but saddened that the industry's response has been a defensive one, rather than to engage in constructive and positive debate. Nonetheless, the NFA's project will continue to promote positive proposals including, for example, in the project's latest report *Easy to swallow, hard to stomach* (see cover page).

The project has also published a briefing paper *How to complain about food advertising* in response to requests for information from individuals and organisations who considered they lacked the knowledge and confidence to have their say about food advertising. Copies are available free of charge (with a SAE) from the NFA.

Most recently, following the December working party meeting, the project has written to the ITC to express its concerns about proposals to relax the rules on the advertising of vitamin and mineral supplements on television. These proposals may allow producers to, for example, imply that supplements are essential for so many sub-sectors of the population that, in effect, the entire population appears to require supplements!

The next publication from this project will focus on slimming advertising and will be published early in 1996. Contact Jenny Smith on 0171 628 2442.

Codex

It has now been confirmed that Grant Meekings is the new MAFF official with responsibility for Codex issues and he has kindly agreed to meet a small NFA delegation early in 1996 for an informal discussion. Contact Jeanette Longfield on 0171 628 2442.

Food and Poverty

1996 will definitely see -lift-off- of our Food and Poverty project, not least

due to the success of the NFA's funding application to the National Lottery Charities Board which will be providing the project with £66,000 over the next two years to develop the Food Poverty Network. Since receiving the good news we have not been idle:

- the working party has met to confirm the programme of work, and make a number of proposals for new members to expand the expertise available to the project;
- a new project officer, Jacqueline Webster, has already been appointed and we look forward to welcoming her to the office on 15 January;
- Suzi Leather and Tim Lobstein will continue as consultants to the project;
- the first issue of the Food Poverty Network newsletter, *Let Us Eat Cake!* was distributed before Christmas to 1200 individuals and projects.

Responses to the first newsletter were very positive and the second issue will be circulated in Spring. Let us know if you would like to receive a copy and be kept up to date with developments. Future work will include:

- a national database of projects, to be developed in collaboration with the Health Education Authority;
- a "toolkit" of detailed information for project development, for which we are aiming to raise further funds to allow work with an academic institute;
- occasional regional and national meetings.

The Network also aims to provide its members with a campaigning voice and it has already made a submission to MAFF on the EU's proposed reform of the fruit and vegetable regime. The project considers that these reforms do not go far enough to tackle the high prices, over-production and quality restrictions endemic in the EU's existing policy, thus perpetuating the situation which restricts poor people's ability to afford vegetables and fruit. Contact Becki Fancini on 0171 628 2442

Functional Foods

This new working party met, as planned on 3 October and representatives from the NFA have

participated in two consultative meetings with MAFF.

The first, on 9 October, was between civil servants and the heads of consumer groups. The meeting aimed to establish consumer concerns about functional foods and five key issues emerged:

- consumers need assurance that claims made about functional foods are true, and Trading Standards Officers and advertising regulatory authorities need a central referral and assessment mechanism for scientific evaluation of these foods and their ingredients;
- a framework of rules to guarantee the accuracy of claims is vital;
- rules on efficacy or claims are of no value unless they can be effectively enforced, so a systematic review of the adequacy of existing enforcement mechanisms is required;
- regulation on the fortification of foods will influence the development of functional foods and the UK should make representations to the EU on this issue;
- functional foods could distract consumers' attention from the need to improve their diets as a whole, so it is important to identify and communicate the role of functional foods in nutrition policy.

For the 10 November meeting at MAFF, which this time included representatives from the food industry, the NFA co-ordinated a 12-strong consumer delegation. The purpose of this meeting was to reach a common position which would then be presented to the Minister. The NFA made it clear that the optimum course of action would be legislation at EU level. However, in the absence of European law, it was agreed that voluntary guidelines on claims would be helpful and should be developed as soon as possible.

The NFA's working party meets again at the end of January, when it will discuss how we should proceed with the project. Contact Clair Harris on 0171 628 2442.

Get Cooking!

November saw the launch of a redesigned Get Cooking! newsletter, which has been well received. The next big event in the Get Cooking!

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calendar is its third conference which is being held on 20 February in the Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne. The event, supported by the Northern and Yorkshire Regional Health Authority, aims to celebrate and promote Get Cooking! activities in the region, and speakers include Bronwyn Hunton, Nicola Lambert, Jean Bolton and Mo Dobbie, all of whom run innovative projects in the area. Contact Diana James on 0171 628 2442.

Growing Food in Cities

The first draft of the planned report has been written and discussed in detail by the working party at its December meeting. SAFE and the NFA plan to publish the final document in June and so far the report contains over fifty examples of exciting and unusual food growing initiatives. Each day brings more news of activities from all over the country and widespread enthusiasm for the project – tomato growing octogenarians and energetic young local government officials alike have been very keen and feel that there is a real need to promote more food growing in cities. Media interest has already been high, including a *Guardian* article in December and a conference in Cardiff – planned for March – should generate more interest, as well as funds, courtesy of Cardiff City Council.

The project budget can just about stretch to the publication of the report but we are still looking for funding to continue to develop the project over the next few years. A number of funding applications have been put in and fingers are tightly crossed.....Contact Tara Garnett on 0171 628 2442.

Department of Health news

Health of the Nation

In October, the Department of Health finally published the long awaited report from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Task Forces: *Obesity: Reversing the Increasing Problem of Obesity in England*. It revealed that obesity levels in the UK are rising fast and if current trends continue will reach

33% by 2005. The report makes two key recommendations: people should be encouraged to be more active and average fat intake should be reduced. Despite the key recommendations the report gives no advice either to the public or to food manufacturers on how those who are already obese can lose weight, and how the rest of the population can cut down on fat to avoid gaining weight. For a copy of the report contact the Department of Health on 0171 210 3000

Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA)

A new working group of COMA met for the first time in October to review the **nutritional status of the population**. The group will be reviewing dietary intakes and nutritional status by looking at the data derived from Government sponsored surveys of diet and nutrition. The first nutrients to be studied are iron, calcium, thiamin, niacin, vitamin A, vitamin D and folic acid. Inter alia, the review will include an assessment of the role of diet in the prevention of osteoporosis. Contact the Department of Health on 0171 210 3000.

The 1994 Annual report of COMA's work has now been published and makes reference to COMA's other new working group (on **nutritional assessment of infant formula**) as well as existing work on:

- child nutrition
- novel foods
- cardiovascular disease
- diet and cancer
- the weaning diet

Copies of the Annual Report are available on 0171 972 5106.

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

ACMSF has set up a working group on foodborne viral infections with the following terms of reference:

- to assess the extent of viral foodborne infection in the UK;
- to describe the epidemiology, sources, and mode of transfer of foodborne infection;
- to identify the practical options that exist or might be developed for prevention and control of foodborne transmission;
- to assess the implications of the

new technologies for public health;

- to identify research priorities where it would be valuable to have more information.

The Committee met in September and discussed:

- mycobacterium paratuberculosis
- microbial antibiotic resistance
- the Public Health Laboratory Service report
- the working group on foodborne viral infections.

The next meeting will be held in January and will again discuss foodborne viral infections and antibiotic resistance, together with foodborne illness linked to food prepared in private houses for functions. Contact G M Robb on 0171 972 5049.

Food Hygiene

The latest in the series of voluntary **industry guides to good hygiene practice** has been produced. The Catering Guide is available (price £3.50) from HMSO on 0171 873 9090. This and future guides for other sectors of industry are produced with an advisory panel comprising representatives of industry, consumers and enforcement agencies. Contact Ian Aldis on 0171 972 5072.

The European Commission is considering the possible need for microbiological standards for foods under the aegis of the **EC Food Hygiene Directive**. A discussion document is available and comments are required by 15 January 1996. Contact Alistair Edwards on 0171 972 5071.

MAFF news

Minister's meeting with consumer organisations

Heads of consumer organisations had their first meeting with Douglas Hogg on 21 November and discussions covered:

- breast milk substitutes, where it was agreed that issue of health warnings on labels should be pursued outside this meeting;

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- functional foods, noting that the Minister will be responding shortly to the reports from earlier meetings with MAFF (see Functional Foods above);
- the EU's proposals to reform the fruit and vegetable regime, based on an excellent paper prepared by Consumers in Europe Group;
- the future of the Nutrition Task Force, responding to another excellent paper, this time by the National Consumer Council;
- shelf-life treatments for food.

The next meeting will be held on 13 February. Contact Jeanette Longfield on 0171 628 2442.

BSE

The NFA put together a small delegation for a meeting called hurriedly by MAFF for 18 December to discuss BSE. It aimed to counter some of the details in the media at the time and offer public interest groups the chance to question Government scientists and advisers. No new information was available, but it was useful to be able to emphasise to Government representatives some basic consumer principles, such as:

- the importance of having consumer representation on all advisory committees, including scientific and "specialist" committees – there is no such representation on the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee;
- the right of consumers to have information about the food they are eating – those present repeated the long-standing demand for labelling of mechanically recovered meat;
- the need for consumers to have confidence not only in food law, but in food law enforcement – this has been further undermined by the recent discovery of lax standards in some abattoirs.

Contact Jeanette Longfield on 0171 628 2442.

Consumer Panel

The Consumer Panel had its 24th meeting in October where topics under discussion included:

- bovine immunodeficiency virus (BIV);
- a meeting with the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland;

- possible hazards from chemicals;
- the *Health of the Nation* initiative and its obesity targets;
- functional foods;
- labelling of breaded scampi.

In addition, the Panel was given presentations by English Apples and Pears Limited and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau. Contact Gary Beckwith on 0171 238 5957.

Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD)

The European Commission are about to issue a further joint proposal for two Directives to set maximum residue levels (MRL) for a fourth list of compounds. The Commission's proposals for the third list of active ingredients were adopted in July and will be implemented in the UK next year by amendments to the UK legislation on pesticides residues.

The proposed fourth list amends Directives 86/362/EEC on cereals, 86/363/EEC on products of animal origin and 90/642/EEC on products of plant origin including fruit and vegetables. The proposal covers the following active ingredients: trifluralin, endosulfan, fenitrothion, phorate, dicofol, chlorexiquat, propoxur, propoxur, disulfoton, fenbutatin oxide, triazophos, diazinon, mecarbam, glyphosate in soyabean and fenarimol in bananas. It also aims to amend existing MRLs for iprodione in rhubarb and benomyl for rhubarb and courgettes. Responses to these proposals were required by 8 December. Contact Richard Mascall on 01904 455 759.

Government has accepted the advice of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides to reduce or remove long term exposure to carbamyl, as new research means it is now considered a potential human carcinogen.

The pesticide has been used for some 40 years in domestic gardens as well as in agriculture, and is also used in human medicines (e.g. headache shampoo) and the Committee on the Safety of Medicines recommends that this should continue as there are few available alternative treatments for lice.

Carbamyl is also used in pet products (e.g. dog and cat flea collars) and the safety of these products is currently

being considered by the Veterinary Products Committee.

Advice has been given on safe disposal of carbamyl containing products. Contact Miss M Swanson on 01904 455705.

Working party on Pesticide Residues

This working party's Annual Report for 1994 is now available and has the results from tests of over 3,700 food samples for various residues, including:

- organochlorines in milk and chocolate
- organophosphorous in carrots
- pesticides in Chinese rabbit meat, lettuce, crisps and honey.

Results from testing on UK winter lettuce were excluded from the report to avoid prejudicing the outcome of legal proceedings against one grower. These results are available from Miss K Griffith on 01904 455756.

Overall, 31% of the samples in the Annual Report contained detectable residues, with 1% having residues above the maximum residue level (MRL). The report is available, price £27, from HMSO on 0171 873 9090.

Veterinary Medicines Directorate

News from the Medicines Act Veterinary Information Service (MAVIS) included a reminder of a three day conference held in Brussels at the end of November to consider all aspects of hormone use in meat. As mentioned in previous *Updates*, the conference was arranged following agreements reached under the GATT Uruguay Round which concluded that barriers to trade, such as the EC ban on the use of hormonal growth promoters since 1988, can only be maintained if they can be justified on scientific grounds. As a result a challenge could be mounted on the grounds that the current ban on the import of meat products from animals treated with hormones was not scientifically based. Contact David Lewsey on 01932 336911 ext. 3044.

Proposed amendments to the **Animals, Meat and Meat Products (examination for residues and maximum residue limits)**

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Regulations 1991 were circulated in November. Comments were required by 4 January 1996. Contact David Lewsey on 01932 336911 ext. 3044.

Following the introduction by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), on the advice of the Veterinary Products Committee (VPC), of a Certificate of Competence when using **organophosphorus (OP) sheep dips** in 1994, the VPC are being asked to provide further advice early this year. As a result, the VMD are seeking views on the effectiveness of the Certificate of Competence Scheme by 30 January 1996. Contact John Horton on 01932 336911 ext. 3030.

Following consultation on **The Meat (hygiene, inspection and examination for residues) (charges) Regulations 1995** (SI 1995 No 361), Ministers have proposed a 5% reduction to the existing charges which came into effect on 24 November 1995. Contact David Lewsey on 01932 336911 ext. 3044.

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

The Committee met in September and December and discussed:

- the joint report from the COMA Panels on Novel Foods and Child Nutrition. The report concluded that they had "...no objection to the use of interesterified fat in formulae for pre-term infants, but that further clinical data was needed before a decision could be reached concerning the use of the fat in formulae for term infants."
- food safety data on oil made from genetically modified (GM) oil seed rape and seed crosses between the GM line and both the initial GM line and conventional oilseed rape varieties. The Committee concluded that there were no food safety concerns;
- concerns that some strains of novel starter culture for fermented dairy products might be resistant to antibiotics. However, they were now satisfied that the particular strain involved was not pathogenic and was susceptible to antibiotics;
- data provided on GM tomato lines, which were considered adequate for recommending food safety clearance of some lines, but more information was necessary before clearance could be given on all lines.

Other issues covered in the two meetings were:

- infant formulae
- guarana
- products derived from GM maize
- GM tomato to be eaten fresh
- glyphosate tolerant oilseed rape
- lupins
- soluble fibre obtained from enzyme action on guar gum
- enzymes for use in bread making
- a novel, low calorie fat replacer
- green tea extract
- operating criteria of the ACNFP and FAC
- report of a meeting between the ACNFP and the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment to compare approaches to risk assessment.

Contact 0171 238-6380.

Food Advisory Committee (FAC)

The FAC met in September, November and December and discussed:

- the joint FAC/Nutrition Task Force (NTF) report on consumer understanding of nutrition labelling. A market research company was commissioned to survey consumer understanding of current nutritional labelling. As a result of the survey, the Committee recommended that some sectors of the population needed "further non-label information on use of nutrition label information" and "other sectors would benefit from supplementary label information". In other words - as consumer organisations have long argued - current nutrition labelling is inadequate.
- proposals to amend and revoke certain food compositional regulations and agreed to revoke the Ice-Cream Regulations 1967, simplify Cream Regulations 1970, revoke the remaining provisions of the Skimmed Milk and Non-Milk Fat Regulations 1960, revoke the Food Standards (Fish Cakes) Order 1950 and the Food Standards (General Provisions) Order 1944, simplify the Bread and Flour Regulations 1984 and revoke the Soft Drinks Regulations 1964.
- sweetener intakes by young children. Intakes of aspartame and acesulfame K were found to be within their respective acceptable

daily intakes (ADI), but saccharine intakes by 'high level' consumers exceeded the ADI by 30%! The Committee noted that "...ADIs were a measure of the acceptable daily intake of an additive over a lifetime and that the Committee on Toxicity (COT) did not consider that occasionally exceeding this figure would be likely to have any adverse effects on the health of consumers...". However, the Committee did decide it would be prudent to provide advice to carers "...that concentrated soft drinks.....should be diluted more than they would normally for themselves...".

- patulin in apple juice. Despite advice from COT setting an advisory level for patulin in apple juice of 50µg/kg in 1992, 6% of samples tested in 1995 contained more than this.

Other issues discussed by the three meetings include:

- the deregulation of controls on enzymes
- metals in food
- hydrogenated poly-1-decene
- sweetener intakes by diabetics
- food surveillance
- GM tomato paste, GM tomato to be eaten fresh and oil from GM oilseed rape
- advice from the COT on hemicellulases
- the -grey area- between additives and novel foods
- the development of a new -whole food- approach to risk assessment of natural toxicants.

Contact 0171 238 6267.

Food irradiation

The UK's only food irradiation plant has been granted a three year extension to its licence to irradiate a specified list of herbs, spices and other seasonings. Contact Mrs S Lamont on 0171 238 6380.

Microbiological Food Surveillance Group

The new MFSG met for the first time on 28 November. It has been set up as a result of the merger of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food and the Steering Group on the Microbiological Safety of Food

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and will co-ordinate Government's microbiological food surveillance programme. For details of the terms of reference of MFSG and of the membership of the group, contact 0171 238 6101.

Consultation documents

Animal/Public Health Certificates

New animal/public health rules covering a number of products of animal origin are due to be implemented in February 1996. Any comments on the new rules were required by 3 January. Contact Richard Harris on 0181 330 4411.

Spreadable Fats (Marketing Standards) Regulations 1995

New regulations came into force on 1 January which:

- lay down enforcement and penalty provisions for Council Regulation (EC) No 2991/94;
 - revoke existing UK compositional and labelling regulations for spreadable fats – the Butter Regulations 1966 and the Margarine Regulations 1967;
 - retain the requirement from the Margarine Regulations to fortify margarine with vitamins A and D.
- Copies of the new Regulation cost £1.55 from HMSO on 0171 873 9090.

Funding of the enforcement of statutory controls on specified bovine offal in fresh meat pies

In December MAFF proposed Regulations under the Food Safety Act 1990 enabling the Minister to levy charges on the meat industry to recover the cost of enforcing in fresh meat premises the statutory controls on specified bovine offals (SBOs) and mechanically recovered meat (MRM) contained in the Special Bovine Order 1995. Comments are required by 2 February and should be given to Mrs S Sadowski on 0181 330 8335.

European Commission proposal for a regulation to set limits for nitrate in lettuce and spinach

Negotiations on the above proposal

have been underway at EU level since 1993. The UK has been arguing against its introduction considering it unjustified "... in scientific terms". Now that the Commission have produced revised proposals which according to MAFF adopt a more "...sensible approach...", they were seeking views by 10 January. Contact Mr J Bates on 0171 238 6337.

Reform of the EU Fruit and Vegetable Regime

In October MAFF sought views on proposals produced by the European Commission for a reformed fresh fruit and vegetable regime. Comments were required by the 24 November and the NFA's Food Poverty Network made a submission, the outcome of which is not yet known. (See Low Income project report for more details). Contact Mark Bush on 0171 238 6491.

The plastic materials and articles in contact with food (amendment) regulations 1996

Directive 95/3/EC introduces an incomplete list of additives and amends the monomers and other starting substances that may be used in the manufacture of food contact plastics. The regulations are now out for consultation and comments are required by 26 February. Contact Iain Renovoize on 0171 238 6000.

Compliance Cost Assessment (CCA) on natural mineral water regulations 1985 (SI 1985 No 71) – Proposal to amend 80/777/EC

The conclusion reached by the draft CCA was that natural mineral water producers were unlikely to incur any significant additional costs as a result of the proposed regulations. The position is not so clear for spring water producers. Comments on the proposal are required by 24 January. Contact Ms J Wrenn on 0171 238 6763.

The fresh meat (hygiene and inspection) (amendment) regulations 1995 (SI 1995/3189)

New regulations came into force on 1 January 1996. Copies of the regulations are available from HMSO on 0171 873 9090.

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council regulation laying down a procedure for flavouring substances used in foodstuffs

Agreement was reached on the above proposal at the Internal Market Council meeting in November. Contact Dr C A Lawrie on 0171 238 6000.

Proposal for a directive amending European Parliament and Council Directive 94/35/EC on sweeteners for use in foodstuffs

A formal proposal has now been circulated for consultation which takes into account recent technical developments in the use of sweeteners. Comments were required by the 8 December 1995. Contact Keith Butler on 0171 238 6267.

Commission proposal for a regulation to set limits for lead and cadmium in food

Member States agreed that only foods which contribute significantly to dietary exposure, either through their inherently high lead content or through high levels of consumption should be included in the legislation. Comments on the proposals were required by 24 November. Contact Mr J Bates on 0171 238 6337.

Deregulation of food compositional legislation: bread and flour regulations 1984

The compositional requirements for most types of bread and flour will be revoked and the 1995 regulations will retain reserved descriptions only for wholemeal and wheat germ bread. Comments on the proposal were required by 17 November. Contact Miss Barrett on 0171 238 6702.

Miscellaneous MAFF

Latest in the Food Surveillance Paper series are:

- **Authenticity of Dried Durum Wheat Pasta** in which one of the 249 samples surveyed was

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misdescribed (price £12.50).

- **Flavourings In Food**, which presents the results of two major UK surveys on artificial flavouring substances and natural flavouring source materials and preparations (price £15).

Copies of the reports are available from HMSO on 0171 873 9090.

Food Surveillance Information Sheets are now available on:

- dioxins in cows' milk
- sweetener intakes by diabetics
- single seed vegetable oils

They are available from 0171 238 6244.

The data on household food consumption, expenditure and nutritional intakes in 1994 is now available. Amongst other things, expenditure on home consumption of soft and alcoholic drinks and confectionery is up, there is a continued rise in the consumption of convenience foods, **total consumption of vegetables has fallen by over 3%**. Energy intake from total fat and saturated fatty acids remain unacceptably high at 40.5% and 15.7% respectively, hardly surprising given that in the third quarter of 1995 energy intake from total fat had declined a whole half per cent since 1994 and by 0.1% for saturated fatty acids!

Average intakes of iron, zinc, magnesium and potassium are below the reference nutrient intake (RNI) but rise above the RNI (except for potassium) when food eaten outside the home is taken into account. No details are given about what happens to fat intake when food eaten out is included. The report *National Food Survey 1994, Annual Report on Household Food Consumption and Expenditure* priced £26 is available from HMSO on 0171 873 9090.

A project undertaken at Bristol University has estimated average **nutrient intakes** for particular types of people and for varieties of households using National Food Survey data. The full reports are in the MAFF library and 24 hours notice is needed to consult the copies. Contact 0171 238 6575.

November saw MAFF launch **Food Safety Plus**, an electronic database of

information on food law, food safety and food related consumer protection matters. The product costs £595 from Silver Platter Information Ltd on 0181 995 8242.

UK expenditure on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is expected to rise to £3000 million in 1996/7. Despite this increase, the UK will be withdrawing from the discretionary elements of the **EC School Milk Scheme** which subsidises catering milk for schools and milk in secondary schools. Contact MAFF on 9171 270 8973.

Extensive new information on the nutritional value of over 400 **meat, poultry and game** products eaten in Britain has recently been published in the McCance and Widdowson series, *The Composition of Food*. The book is £25.95 and available from Turpin Distribution Services Ltd, Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1HN.

MAFF's biotechnology unit has been **disbanded** with responsibilities now divided between the various commodity or subject areas in MAFF. If in doubt who to contact, call Mr N Tomlinson on 0171 238 6377.

An information sheet is now available summarising the results of a study into the main methods for analysing **dietary fibre**. For 9 out of 10 food groups analysed the Association of Official Analytical Chemists method gives higher values than the Englyst method. Contact 0171 238 6244.

Following protests from industry Government has **abandoned** proposals for **fat content labelling of cheese and cream**. Composition requirements for 12 British territorial cheeses have, however, been retained. Contact 0171 238 6272.

The 1994 annual report of MAFF's Terrestrial **Radioactivity** Monitoring Programme has now been published, with the results of analyses of over 6,000 food and environmental samples. The report is available (price £11 re. PB 2369) from 0645 556000.

MAFF's Consumers and Nutrition Policy Division has issued a summary of all current **Food Law**. Contact 0345 573012 (all calls local rate) or 0171 238 6335 for your copy.

Other news

Parliamentary Food and Health Forum

The report of the Forum's July meeting, *The Prevention of Spina Bifida: A National Priority*, is now available. Details of the October and December meetings, which covered nutrition labelling and school meals respectively, should be available shortly. In January coronary heart disease and diet is the subject for discussion with talks by Dr Kenneth Calman (Chief Medical Officer) and Imogen Sharp (Director, National Heart Forum). Contact the Parliamentary Food and Health Forum on 0171 222 1265.

The Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) has published a list of its senior members who are willing to act as **Food Science and Technology Consultants**. The list has been cited by the Department of Health, among others, and copies of the list are available free from the IFST on 0171 603 6316.

The **Glenfiddich Awards** are made for excellence in writing, publishing and broadcasting on food and drink and nominations for this, the 26th year of the awards, should be made by 31 January. Each of the 12 category winners receives a case of whisky and £800, with an additional £3,000 for the overall trophy winner. Contact Lindsay Stewart on 0171 383 3024.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) was funded by the Flora Project for Heart Disease Prevention to hold a conference on 14 November to present interim results from the ESRC's wide-ranging research programme on **The Nation's Diet**. A pack is now available containing summaries from all the presentations at the conference, including those on eating out, food choice in later life, and sharing food at home and at school. Contact the ESRC on 01793 413000.

The National Dairy Council (NDC) held a conference on 15 November to discuss a variety of aspects of the links between **nutrition and women's health**, including bone health, cancer,

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coronary heart disease and the particular needs of women in poor families. Conference proceedings may be available so contact the NDC on 0171 499 7822.

The British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) and the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) co-hosted an event on 4 December examining **Health of the Nation: Catering Initiatives**. Hospital catering, school meals, contract catering were among the subjects presented. Contact the HCIMA on 0181 672 4251.

The National Association of Master Bakers has asked the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to consider the effects on consumer choice of supermarkets' policy of constant "loss leading" on bread. In the **bread wars** some 800g loaves have been sold for as little as 19p. This kind of pressure, coupled with rating disadvantages and parking restrictions, may drive more independent high street bakers out of business. Contact Mary Rance on 01920 468061.

Information from Europe

Recent reports from **Fair-Flow Europe** include work on:

- improving mushroom quality;
- understanding the sweetness response;
- the European Forum on Meat Research;
- the health benefits of increased vegetable and fruit consumption;
- dietary carbohydrates and colon function;
- second generation functional foods;
- virgin olive oil;
- defining allergenic potential;
- models for food safety evaluation;
- barrier properties of recycled/re-used plastics.

Contact Suzanne Emmett on 01372 376761.

The **European Heart Network** continues to report regularly on EU developments which may affect cardiovascular disease including:

- the European Statistical Office's first yearbook of facts about European citizens' everyday life and habits;
- the EU's Action Programme on Health Promotion, Information and

Training, its 13.8m ECU programme to monitor health trends in Europe, and the EU's Social Action Programme;

- the implications for health of the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Conference;
- reform of the CAP, including of the fruit and vegetable regime;
- a new EU Agency for Health and Safety, based in Bilbao in Spain;
- and controversy of manufacturing standards for chocolate!

Contact the EHN on fax: 00 322 512 6673 for more details.

The **European Commission** is also proposing:

- a five year extension for patent rights for insecticides;
- the elimination of the ozone-depleting methyl bromide by 2015;
- to publish reports on veal crates and battery cages;
- a new directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions, following the European Parliament's earlier rejection of a similar proposal on biotechnology patenting.

More details are available on 0171 973 1992.

The EU's **Scientific Committee for Food (SCF)** met in September and discussed:

- monomers and plastics additives
- mineral hydrocarbons
- nitrate and nitrite
- starch sodium octenyl succinate
- potassium level in products

The SCF Working Group on Food Contact Materials is examining plastics additives and the Working Group on flavourings has finished a report which summarises its conclusions on 148 flavouring substances. Contact 0171 238 6244.

BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation, discovered **something fishy** when it collaborated with International Consumer Research and Testing (IT) to survey fish and fish products sold to consumers across the EU. A worrying 4% was unfit for human consumption, and some breaded fish products – like fish fingers – contained as little as 37% fish. In addition, some frozen fish products are being sold fraudulently, with cheaper fish being substituted for the cod proclaimed on the label. For more

details about the report, including IT and BEUC's recommendations to the EU, contact Kees de Winter on fax: 00 322 735 7455.

International News

Consumers International (CI) has raised funds for a new study to examine the regulations governing **TV advertising of food to children** in 12 EU countries, and to look at the nature and quantity of food advertising on children's TV. For more details contact Lucy Harris on 0171 226 6663.

The Australian Eco-Consumer newsletter continues to act as a vigilant watchdog over Australian, and indeed international food standards. Recent issues of the newsletter have covered:

- cadmium residues;
- the UK's McLibel trial;
- lack of choice of organic food in supermarkets;
- country of origin labelling;
- genetically engineered pigs;
- hazards from imported cooked chicken meat;
- a Charter for Fair Trade.

Contact Dick Copeman on fax: 00 617 3229 7992.

"Japanese diet changes worry nutritionists" is one of the headlines in *Revealing Japan*, a regular digest of health and environmental news from Japan. The article goes on to describe "the onslaught of American fast food" which is leading to worrying increases in the fat content of the average Japanese diet. Better news elsewhere in *Revealing Japan* notes an initiative which links organic farmers with 11 out of 12 primary schools in one area of Tokyo to provide organic produce for school meals. Contact the Ohdake Foundation on fax: 00 813 3278 1380.

Of 13 current trade disputes 9 relate to food and agriculture, according to the summary in *Focus*, newsletter of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Scallops, alcoholic beverages, cereals, salmon, rice, bananas, grains, shelf-life, and testing and inspection of agricultural products all feature in the list of pending and concluded complaints brought to the WTO by one or more countries against other trading nations. For details of some of these cases contact the WTO on fax: 00 41 739 5458.

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Publications

The Child Growth Foundation has published the UK's first **Paediatric BMI Charts**. Measurements from some 30,000 children have been used to compile the charts and can be used by health professionals to identify obese or anorexic children. The charts can be purchased (no price details given) from Harlow Printers on 0191 455 4286.

Biotechnology and Food Production is a recent report by a working party of the National Council of Women which aims to widen debate on this new technology and to suggest possible safeguards for consumers. Contact 0171 354 2395.

The latest issue of *PHS News*, newsletter of the Public Health Alliance, has a lively exchange of letters about **This BSE Business**. Following on from the conference of the same name (organised with NFA support) correspondence by Ken Bell and Ray Bradley leave the reader in no doubt that the gulf of trust between Government and some independent scientists remains as large as ever. A conference report is due shortly so contact the PHA for details on 0121 643 7628.

Diet, choice and poverty examines social, cultural and nutritional aspects of food consumption among low-income families and has been published by the Family Policy Studies Centre (FPSC) with support from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Copies are available (price £7.50 + £1.50 p&p) from the FPSC on 0171 486 8179.

Another aspect of the same subject is covered in **Modest but adequate** which has produced summary budgets for 16 households plus 18 detailed tables covering the costs not only of food but other household essentials such as fuel, clothing and household goods and services. The report has been published by the Family Budget Unit with the assistance of the National Consumer Council and is available, price £20 incl. p&p, from the NCC on 0171 730 3469.

Concepts of healthy eating presents the results of a three year research project investigating why people choose the food they do, and their

ideas about the relationship between food and health. Based mainly on in-depth interviews with a cross-section of a community in SE London the report is available, price £8.50, from Goldsmiths College 0181 692 7171.

The **School Milk Campaign** has produced a report following a national survey of LEA school milk provision in June to September 1995. Entitled *The Sins of Omission*, the report details anomalies in the range and quality of entitlements to milk in schools in different parts of the country and makes recommendations to the Department for Education and Employment. Details of how to obtain the report are available from the Campaign on 01785 248345.

Rob Silverstone, formerly representative of the Hospitality Management Learning Consortium to the NFA, has produced **Application of the new nutritional consensus to the catering industry**. The report gives 25 catering recipes which, while traditional and inexpensive, conform to healthy eating guidelines. It is available, price £7, from Brighton University's Department of Service Sector Management (01273 600900).

The winter edition of the Food and Drink Federation's magazine *Feedback* looks at issues such as diet and cancer, functional foods, and biotechnology and announces the **FDF's new Lifestyle Campaign** to promote more physical activity. For details contact the FDF's Dietitian/Lifestyle Co-ordinator, Karen Barber, on 0171 836 2460.

Do you STILL believe all you read in the newspapers? is the provocatively titled second report from the European Commission which aims to lay to rest new Euro-myths such as the EU ban on traditional pizzas, Brussels being to blame for increasing the price of a bag of chips, and Eurocrats prosecuting shops selling bananas which are too curved. For your copy contact Jacqui Rowland-Hughes on 0171 973 1992.

Still in Europe, the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) has produced a report of a seminar in May 1995, **Sustainable or Bankrupt? The Common Agricultural Policy**. Priced at £4.50 + 36p p&p, contact CIIR on 0171 354 0883 for a copy.

Food Irradiation: A Guidebook has been published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and, as well as covering the science of irradiation, looks at consumer objections to the technology. For further details contact Technomic Publishing on fax: 00 41 61 381 5259.

Correction! The Green Guide for West London, published by the Women's Environmental Network (0181 752 1947), costs £2.50 and not £1 as stated in the last issue of *Update*. Our apologies for the error.

Events

The third **Get Cooking!** conference will be held in Newcastle on 20 February (pancake day!). For more information contact Diana James on 0171 628 2442.

Body weight and health is the subject of a British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) conference being held near Belfast on 29 February, and another event - this time on **Nutritional Concerns for Older People** - will be held in London on 6 March. Contact the BNF on 071 404 6504.

Reading University's Centre for Agricultural Strategy is hosting a conference on **Biotechnologies in Agriculture and Food** at the Royal Society in London on 5 March. Contact the conference office on 01734 318152.

Derek Cooper, Tim Lang and Suzi Leather are running a one week course at the Schumacher College on **Food for the future: Global or local?** from 10 to 15 March. Contact the college administrator on 01803 865934.

The sixth annual public health forum will focus this year on **Diet, nutrition and chronic disease: Lessons from contrasting worlds**. Hosted by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine the event will run from 31 March to 3 April. Contact the conference organiser, Alice Dickens on 0171 927 2314.

Inequalities in health: Bridging the gap is the subject of a two day conference at Leeds University on 15 & 16 April being run by the Association for Public Health. Contact them on 0171 413 1896.

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Members

Action and Information on Sugars
 Association of School Health Education
 Co-ordination
 Baby Milk Action
 British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry
 British Dental Association
 British Diabetic Association
 British Heart Foundation
 British Organic Farmers and the Organic Growers' Association
 Campaign for Real Ale
 Caroline Walker Trust
 Children's Society
 Common Ground
 Community Nutrition Group
 Coronary Prevention Group
 Council for the Protection of Rural England
 Diet Breakers
 Elm Farm Research Centre
 Food Additive Campaign Team
 Food Commission
 Friends of the Earth
 GMB (Britain's General Union)
 Genetics Forum
 Green Network
 Health Education Trust
 Henry Doubleday Research Association
 Hospitality Management Learning Association
 Hyperactive Children's Support Group
 Institute of European and Environmental Policy, London
 Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards (LACOTS)
 Maternity Alliance
 McCarrison Society
 National Association of Teachers of Home Economics and Technology
 National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations
 National Dental Health Education Group
 National Farmers' Union

National Federation of City Farms
 National Federation of Consumer Groups
 National Federation of Women's Institutes
 Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke Association
 Pesticides Trust
 Rural Agricultural and Allied Workers' Union (TGWU)
 Scottish Federation of Community Food Initiatives
 Scottish Food Poverty Network
 Society of Health Education and Health Promotion Specialists
 Soil Association
 UNISON
 Vegetarian Society
 World Cancer Research Fund
 Women's Farming Union

Observers

British Dietetic Association
 British Medical Association
 Christian Aid
 Consumers' Association
 Faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians

The National Food Alliance

represents national public interest organisations including voluntary, professional, health, consumer and environmental bodies working at international, national, regional and community level.

aims to enable the people of the UK to fulfil their potential through food policies and practices that enhance public health, improve the working and living environment, and enrich society.

Registered Charity Number 1018643

Health Education Authority
 Institute of Food Research
 National Consumer Council
 National Heart Forum
 Royal Society of Health
 Royal Society of Medicine Food and Health Forum
 Scottish Consumer Council
 Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment Alliance
 Trades Union Congress
 Vega Research
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 Becki Fancini
 Tara Gamett
 Suzi Leather
 Dr Tim Lobstein
 Diana James
 Jenny Smith
 Jacqueline Webster

Publications

Easy to Swallow, Hard to Stomach: The results of a survey of food advertising on television. £25 (voluntary & public interest groups £7.50)

Children: Advertisers' Dream, Nutrition Nightmare? The case for more responsibility in food advertising. £25 (voluntary & public interest groups £7.50)

Responsible Food Advertising: Proposals for the review of advertising codes of practice. £25 (voluntary & public interest groups £7.50)

NFA response to the draft proposals for the Code of Advertising & Sales Promotion Practice, September 1994. £5 (voluntary & public interest groups £1)

NFA comments on ITC consultation over rules governing food advertising, November 1994. £5 (voluntary & public interest groups £1)

NFA comments on ITC consultation over rules governing slimming advertising, November 1994. £5 (voluntary & public interest groups £1)

NFA comments on MAFF funded literature review on the effect of advertising on children's dietary choice, November 1994. £5 (voluntary & public interest groups £1)

MORI Survey results on parents' attitudes towards children's food advertising. £5 (voluntary & public interest groups £1)

Adwatch - issues 1-5. £5 (voluntary & public interest groups £1)

How to complain about food advertising: A National Food Alliance Briefing Paper (send s.a.e.)

Get Cooking! pack, to help you teach or learn how to cook. £14

Get Cooking! newsletter. £5 for annual subscription for 3 newsletters

Food and Low Income: A practical guide for advisers and supporters working with families and young people on low incomes. £9.95

Food and Low Income - A conference report. £5

Cracking the Codex: An analysis of who sets world food standards. £35 (voluntary & public interest groups £7.50 or £10 overseas)

All prices include postage and packing.

FOOD COMMISSION CAMPAIGNS

Write a letter
today telling
the companies,
politicians or
civil servants
your views.

Help us campaign for the labelling
of the hidden ingredient

MECHANICALLY RECOVERED MEAT

— the carcass scrapings used in
sausages, pies, pâtés and cheap
meat products. See *The Food Magazine*, 32 page 8.

To: MAFF, Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2HH

Dear Douglas Hogg.

I believe your department is
responsible for food labelling
regulations, including the labelling
of ingredients such as mechanically
recovered meat.

Your Chief Veterinary Officer, Keith
Meldrum, has said that you would
consider requiring the labelling of
mechanically recovered meat as an
ingredient if there was any consumer
demand for such labelling.

Please note that I am a consumer and
I am demanding that the ingredient
be labelled.

PS I have sent copies of this letter
to my MP, MEP and to the Food
Commission.

**DON'T GET ANXIOUS
GET ANGRY!**

**THEN GET
ACTIVE!**