

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food

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Putting sports drinks to the test

An incredible 19 level teaspoons of sugar in this sports drink.



£1.50 for a soft drink with a vitamin pill.

In this issue we take a close look at so-called sports and energy drinks. We look at what you get for your money and investigate whether products really do provide the benefits they claim for people playing sports, working out or training, or for those seeking an extra boost of energy.

Fruit for schoolchildren fed to animals

The Food Commission has unearthed evidence that enough apples and pears to give one each free to every schoolchild in the country — and to which they are entitled under EU support schemes — were instead pulped for animal feed and turned into industrial alcohol.

	Amount withdrawn from the market	Amount given to schools etc
Apples	2,232,000kg	0kg
Pears	2,022,000kg	0kg
Cauliflowers	13,726,000kg	0kg

Source: Intervention Board correspondence with the Food Commission

In a little-known regulation from the EU, the UK Intervention Board is able to support fruit and vegetable growers' organisations to distribute surplus crops to schools hospitals and institutional homes. The surplus — apples, pears and cauliflowers last year — had been withdrawn from the market because of over-supply (i.e. the growers had feared the price would have tumbled below profitable levels). The Intervention Board has compensated farmers for the lost income. But when it came to handing out the surplus, no action was taken.

Full fat milk is given a premium discount for schools. Beef is available for charities. But the surplus fruit and veg is sent for pigswill or into industrial vats.

■ More details — see page 8.

We found:

- virtually all products were high in sugar (up to fifteen level teaspoons in a serving) - yet only 5 out of the 22 stated how much sugar they contained;
- most came with a cocktail of additives including flavourings, colours, preservatives and artificial sweeteners;
- the boost some claim to provide is largely from caffeine, sometimes in the form of guarana. A number of caffeine-containing drinks carried warnings about their suitability for children or people sensitive to caffeine.
- they are generally expensive. A number of products cost over £1.50 a serving.
- some made claims which we doubted could be substantiated.
- despite endorsements and the availability of many 'sports' products in health and fitness centres, sports dietitians do not recommend high energy drinks as a regular part of the diet of someone training or doing sport recreationally.

Details of our survey on pages 9, 10, 11.

Get the facts with The Food Magazine

The Food Magazine is published quarterly by The Food Commission, a national non-profit organisation campaigning for the right to safe, wholesome food. We rely entirely on our supporters, allowing us to be completely independent, taking no subsidy from the government, the food industry or advertising.

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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editorial

On vegetables and fruit

Suddenly everything points to fruit and vegetables — or vegetables and fruit to keep the reader awake.

Cut the meat and go for a plant-based diet, says COMA (see page 16). Cut the meat even further, says a report from the World Cancer Research Fund, and go for more vegetables and fruit.

And yet, as our front-page article shows, the practical means to encourage more fruit consumption are not being used. Schools could have received large quantities of free apples and pears. Instead the produce went off to be fed to animals or processed into industrial alcohol.

One of the dilemmas of our modern food supply is that fresh food — like the apples and pears denied to our children — is in direct competition for our shopping baskets with processed food. In days gone by, processed foods were the standby when fresh was unavailable. Tinned food, dried food, smoked and cured food helped see us through the lean months.

Now the technology for storing and shipping fresh produce allows us a greatly extended season. At the same time, the technology for processed food — apple pies, pear-flavour instant whips, cherryade drinks, with all their clever tricks of enhancing the flavours and colours, — makes processed food appear as attractive as fresh food, perhaps even more attractive.

The two are in constant competition. The budgets for promoting and advertising processed food, like soft drinks, snack foods and confectionery, far outweigh the budgets for promoting fruit. Why? Because there is not enough profit in fruit and vegetables — the profit comes from processing them.

If unprocessed foods are to stand a chance then we need to review the production and marketing of processed foods, as well as boost the promotion of fresh. Should we be giving approval to artificial flavours and flavour boosters when these discourage healthy eating? Should we give approval to colouring agents if these help sell cherryade in place of cherries?

Rash is the person who tries to deny children their junkie diets. Yet surely it is time to add nutritional criteria to the safety criteria used when giving approval for processed food's cosmetics?

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Support The Food Commission's campaign for safer, healthier food

If you are not a regular subscriber to the *Food Magazine* why not take out your own subscription and help support The Food Commission's work? We are a national not-for-profit organisation campaigning for the right to safe, wholesome food and are completely independent, taking no subsidy from the government, the food industry or advertising. The *Food Magazine* is published four times a year.

Turn to page 18 for subscription details.

Advertising Policy

The Food Magazine does not accept commercial advertising. Loose inserts are accepted subject to approval — please contact Ian Tokelove at The Food Commission for details

Monsanto is costing me £6000 a year!

Mr Pierre Hochuli,
Chairman, Monsanto Europe SA
Avenue de Tervuren 270-272
B-1150 BRUXELLES

Dear Sir,

I am enclosing an account for your personal attention, showing the immense trouble, inconvenience and expense in terms of time and money, that is being inflicted on unwilling people like myself by Monsanto's unwelcome inclusion of GMOs in the world's food supply.

My monthly shopping bill has increased two and a half times due to Monsanto's unsolicited meddling with my food, and I seek compensation not only for extra expense, but also, at modest rates, for my time employed in preparing foods by hand from carefully selected raw ingredients, as well as other demands on my time detailed in the enclosed list.

It is totally wrong for a massive organisation such as yours to force these genetically manipulated foods onto the general public in such a way that it is extremely difficult, if not virtually impossible, to avoid them.

I object most vehemently to this tampering with my food, and I certainly intend to make every attempt to avoid any product containing GMOs, at the same time complaining to every supplier, manufacturer, supermarket, etc possible. I will assist in all campaigns in every possible way against inclusion of GMOs. The general public may well be complacent at the moment, but as they become more well informed, as they will do, then the companies to whom Monsanto off load these doubtful products will feel their resistance and will cease to accept them.

There are no benefits for the consumer by the inclusion of GMOs, only greater profits for Monsanto.

I insist on full recompense for the trouble and expense your company is causing me, and expect to hear from you without delay, together with your company's cheque for £6,418.82.

Yours faithfully
Lynette Anderson

Monsanto's heavy-handed introduction of unlabelled genetically modified ingredients into our general food supply has upset many people. *Food Magazine* reader Mrs Anderson of the Isle of Wight has sent Monsanto a furious letter — and a bill for repayment of the money which their actions have cost her.

Genetically modified soya beans made up two per cent of the US crop last year, but a massive 15 per cent this year. The company responsible for developing and marketing these beans, Monsanto, have insisted that it is impossible to separate the modified from the regular bean, and that consumers will not therefore be able to avoid eating their modified beans. Soya oil, and soya flour are used in a wide range of products, and soya lecithin and other derivatives in a large number more.

For Mrs Anderson, the cost of researching a range of acceptable products, the cost of making her own bread and other foods and the time she spends travelling to suitable shops (she lives on the Isle of Wight) are making a huge hole in her purse.

Extra shopping costs	per month	1st year
Replacing bakery items with ingredients for home-made bread, cakes etc	£27.22	
Purchasing organic soya milk instead of regular	£3.40	
Using organic soya oil for cooking	£10.00	
Substituting primary protein foods in place of processed foods	£41.20	
Replacing breakfast cereals with organic oats	£4.04	
	£85.86	£1,030.32
Additional costs		
Fuel for extra cooking	£30.00	
Water for extra cooking, washing up	£10.00	
Time spent cooking etc, 2 hrs/day @ £5	£300.00	
Travelling to find ingredients needed (from Isle of Wight)	£20.00	
Time spent travelling and shopping	£40.00	
Time spent reading ingredients lists	£10.00	
	£410.00	£4,920.00
Ancillary costs		
Time spent enquiring which companies can guarantee GMO soya free products @ £10/hr		£100.00
Postage and telephone		£60.00
Time spent writing to MPs to urge better labelling		£20.00
Time spent on checking nutritional information to ensure a balanced diet free of GMO soya		£20.00
Time spent researching Monsanto products to maintain boycott		£100.00
Purchase of cookery books and subscription to the <i>Food Magazine</i>		£118.50
Time spent preparing this invoice		£50.00
TOTAL		£6,418.82

Food risks - whose liability?

Who is liable for compensating CJD victims? And who, asks Tim Lobstein, will take responsibility for the safety of GMOs?

History is littered with mistakes. Some are forgivable: by definition when a new technology is first developed there will be no evidence of its long term effects. But some are not, and the failure to proceed with great caution is a political and legal problem of some magnitude.

Until Stephen Dorrell admitted in Parliament last year that BSE could be the cause of new cases of CJD, the government had denied the link: not because they were in league with the meat industry but because they were afraid of it. As Angela Browning pointed out at the time, a minister who claimed a link without having adequate evidence could be threatened with prosecution for damaging the commercial interests of beef producers. Edwina Currie had faced the same with egg producers, and lost the battle.

To admit the possibility of a link is to damage the interests of a powerful industry, one that can prosecute governments and destroy careers. But to deny the possibility of a link opens up the opposite problem: that the relevant department failed to act to prevent a risk and can be held liable for negligence by the families of victims. This is just the case that may emerge if the families of CJD sufferers get the Public Enquiry they want.

Now genetic engineering looms. The best we can hope for is labelling, but the food industry hates labelling,

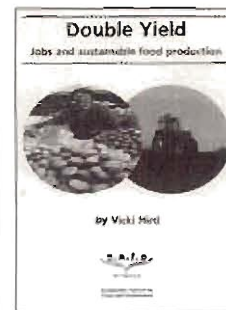
remembering the case of food irradiation, which, though legal in the UK, virtually died a death when irradiated foods had to be labelled as such. No manufacturer thought they could sell food with such an unfriendly label.

But labelling has an enormous attraction for the authorities because they can offload some of their responsibilities and legal liabilities — labelling means that shoppers can decide whether to expose themselves and their families to risk. But would labelling alone be enough to discharge a legal liability? A statement that a product contains genetically modified material is not providing information about risks to a consumer — it is not a health warning.

One of the oddities of consumer law at present is that farm produce is exempt from the requirements of the 1987 Consumer Protection Act, the legislation which makes producers liable for any damage caused by defects in their products. The Act does not apply to 'any produce of the soil, of stock-farming or of fisheries' unless it has undergone an industrial process. Beef is exempt, though beef burgers may not be. Soya beans may be exempt, though soya oil or flour may not be.

This is a nonsense. As farming has become a science-based industrial activity, so farmers must be held to account. A farmer considering growing a genetically engineered crop should be directly liable in law for the decision to grow that crop and put it on the market, just as processors are liable if they take the crop and make veggie sausages for sale.

If farmers feel uncomfortable with that liability, then let them demand indemnity from the seed provider. Farmers should not be exempt, and the chain of liability must be clear for all to see.



Two reports from the SAFE (Sustainable Agriculture, Food and the Environment) Alliance. *Abusing Our Loaf?* is a ten-page romp through the production of wheat, the poor support given to organic grain production, the decline of the local baker and local varieties of loaf — and some tips on how to fight back, including a recipe for spelt bread.

Double Yield is a 50-odd page examination of the benefits of redirecting the £4 billion spent on farm subsidies towards the development of sustainable, people-intensive farming. Over a thousand jobs a year are currently being lost in British agriculture, but the report's author, Vicki Hird, argues that 60,000 jobs could be created through smaller-scale farm and food-based rural industries.

Details from SAFE Alliance, tel 0171 823 5660, fax 0171 823 5673, Email <safe@gn.apc.org>.

The well known team from *The Ecologist*, Nick Hildyard, Sarah Sexton, Tracey Clunies-Ross and Larry Lohmann, have moved to set up a new organisation called The Corner House. They plan to publish bi-monthly briefings, the first of which, *No Patents on Life!* looks at the proposed EU directive on biological inventions.

Editorship of *The Ecologist* now reverts to founder Edward Goldsmith helmed by his nephew Zac and a team from the International Society for Ecology and Culture.

■ Details from The Corner House, PD Box 3137, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1YJ, tel 01258 473795, fax 01258 473748, Email <cornerhouse@gn.apc.org>.

The parallels between BSE and genetic engineering, and how scientists evaluate risks are highlighted in a new report by Julie Sheppard for Greenpeace.



First they tell us...

In 1945 the organochlorine insecticide DDT was registered and used widely. Scientists declared it perfectly safe if used properly.

In the 1950s the UK government introduced subsidies to encourage farmers to use nitrogen fertilisers. They were harmless, we were told.

Also in the 1950s it was considered safe to stand and watch nuclear tests. The fallout landing on crops and fishing catches was not considered harmful.

The 1960s saw new strains of rice to feed the starving of India and Africa. Unsuitable for peasant production, the crops needed mechanisation and agrochemicals.

In the 1980s saw the use of meat protein in ruminant feedcake. Farmers were told it was safe. When cows started to go mad, consumers were told the beef was safe to eat.

In the 1990s we are told that genetic engineering, using antibiotic resistance markers, spliced genes from different species, and genes for surviving a dose of the weed-killer Roundup are all perfectly harmless.

Then we find...

Evidence gradually accumulated of links to cancer and foetal abnormalities. The US EPA cancelled its license in 1972, the UK withdrew it in 1984.

In the 1990s water companies are facing high bills to remove excessive nitrate levels from water drawn from agricultural land.

Evidence gradually accumulated showing cancer from radioactive toxicity. A test ban treaty was agreed in the 1980s.

The varieties showed poorer nutrient content and gave rise to nutritional deficiencies.¹ Much traditional African farmland has been lost to soil erosion.

165,000 diseased cows and twenty human victims have led to a change in the safety evaluations.

Antibiotic resistance is escalating rapidly in farm animals (see page 8), and Roundup has been suggested as a possible agent affecting foetal development.²

¹ J Seymour, 'Hidden Hunger in the Green revolution' *New Scientist*, pp34-37, 30.3.1996.

² Dr V Howard, Liverpool University Foetal and Infant Toxicology Pathology Group, writing in *Science in Parliament*, 54, July/November 1997.

New research questions safety of soya baby milks

Research published in *The Lancet* this summer shows that babies fed soya formula milks are getting even higher doses of isoflavones (phytoestrogens) than was previously thought. One of the world's leading researchers into phytoestrogens, Prof Kenneth Setchell, has found that infants fed soya baby milks get 6 to 11 times greater amounts of phytoestrogens on a body weight basis than the dose that has hormonal effects in adults consuming soya foods. The researchers found that blood levels of phytoestrogens in babies fed soya formula, which they measured from birth to 4 months, were 13,000 to 22,000 times higher than normal. This, says Prof Setchell, may be sufficient to exert biological effects, whereas the contribution of phytoestrogens from cows milk or from breastmilk, even from mothers consuming soya foods, was negligible.

Soya formula manufacturers, seeking to play down concerns about the suitability of soya formula, have claimed that breast milk does contain phytoestrogens. Cow and Gate, manufacturers of InfaSoy, in its

briefing document, *Phytoestrogens in Soya Infant Formulas*, circulated widely to health professionals, categorically states this. The Food Commission will be asking the company to correct its error and inform all those it has previously circulated.

As well as being oestrogen mimics, phytoestrogens, can inhibit certain enzymes and interfere with cell signal transduction pathways, according to Prof Setchell. The ingestion of high concentrations of phytoestrogens has adversely affected reproduction in several animal species. In pre-menopausal women, soya protein affects reproductive hormone levels. Much research is now looking at the role that phytoestrogens may play in preventing hormone-dependent diseases, including some cancers, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease but little money is going into investigating the risks to infants.

Last summer the Department of Health issued advice that soya formula milks should only be given to babies on the advice of a health professional and called for high

priority research to determine the risks to infants. Swiss health authorities advise that in early infancy soya formula should only be used for precise medical conditions, where there is a proven inability to use formulas based on cows or goats milk, and it should not be used for 'ecological' reasons such as the avoidance of animal proteins.

The New Zealand Soy Information Network, whose scientists first raised concerns about soya infant formulas, is calling for soya formula milks to be restricted to sales in pharmacies says 'There is no excuse for permitting normal children to be subjected to these unknown risks with no compensating medical benefits.'

The research also raises questions about over-the-counter supplements containing isoflavones. 'The potential dangerous effects from self-induced mega-dosing are a concern' say the authors. Last year the Food Commission reported that men undergoing sex changes were developing breasts after consuming supplements containing large doses of phytoestrogens.

Now there are also warnings that a new bread, Burgen Bread, made by Allied Bakeries which contains phytoestrogens from soya and linseed, could lead to lowered sperm counts in men. The company, which claims the bread may help stave off menopausal hot flushes and protect against osteoarthritis in women, was asked to tone down its claims that it could protect against some cancers, heart disease and hormone related disorders by the Ministry of Health in New Zealand following its launch there earlier in the year.

■ Setchell, K et al, Exposure of infants to phyto-estrogens from soy-based infant formula, *The Lancet* 350: 23-27, July 5, 1997

■ The Soy Information Network can be contacted at PO Box 32236, Devonport, New Zealand Tel: +64 9 445 8721 Fax: +64 9 445 9834

Congratulations...

to the Food Commission's Sue Dibb who has been appointed as a consumer representative to MAFF's Working Party on Chemical Contaminants in Food. The remit of the Working Party covers naturally-occurring toxicants (including phytoestrogens) and organic and inorganic contaminants in food. If you wish to raise any such concerns please contact Sue at the Food Commission.

Brazil's veterinary authorities have long resisted permitting anabolic steroids in beef production, largely under pressure from local consumer groups but also to allow themselves access to European markets.

With the World Trade Organisation now declaring that EU resistance to imported hormone-reared beef is illegal under the GATT treaty, Brazilian officials are changing their position. 'Who wouldn't prefer to slaughter a cow at 15 months rather than wasting time and money waiting for the animal to reach four years old?' asked an Agriculture Ministry official. A senior Brazilian vet added 'Allowing anabolics could mean an increase of up to 20% in beef production. The result would be more meat for the home market and higher international competitiveness.' *Animal Pharm*, 377, 15, 18.7.1997.

■ See comment on red meat, cancer and hormones, page 16.

BSE - stunning news

Alarming evidence that parts of the brains of cattle can get into their lungs during stunning, possibly spreading prion agents throughout their body, was dismissed by the advisory committee SEAC as not posing a risk.

There are two ways to stun an animal so that it is unconscious while being bled. One is to apply electricity, the other is to use a heavy captive bolt which strikes or penetrates the skull under pneumatic pressure.

Evidence presented to the US Department of Agriculture in 1996 showed how the use of a stunning bolt that strikes the skull (percussive bolt) can force pieces of brain tissue as large as several inches across down into an animal's lungs. In the UK, the bolt usually penetrates the skull,

followed in some cases with a rod to pierce the brain stem.

MAFF is aware that percussive bolt stunning may present a hazard, but SEAC is understood to have concluded that UK methods were unlikely to lead to brain material entering the lungs. There appears to have been no follow-up research into whether brain tissue enters the lungs following stunning and rodding in normal practice. Furthermore, MAFF keeps no records of which stunning method is used by an abattoir. Captive bolt stunning and rodding is considered to be widely and routinely used for cattle.

Although much offal has been banned in the UK, the lungs are permitted for human consumption and may be minced and put into meat

products such as sausages. The US study found that brain tissue may also be found in the pulmonary arteries in up to five per cent of cattle after percussive bolt stunning. In addition, brain proteins are known to enter the bloodstream after head trauma, and the prion protein is relatively small, and could be transported throughout the carcass as the animal is being bled.

In its latest report, SEAC says it held 30 meetings in the four years 1993-96, at a cost to the taxpayer of £39,931.

■ T Garland et al. Brain emboli in the lungs of cattle after stunning, USDA Scrapie/BSE Consultants Group Meeting, Ames, Iowa, June 10-11, 1996.

Food supplement claims –

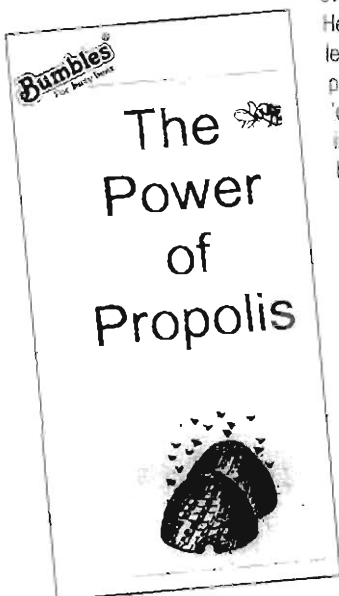
Our report on the misleading and illegal claims being made for food supplements sparked off some early fireworks.

The last issue of the *Food Magazine* showed how dozens of manufacturers of food supplements were making claims implying that their products could cure, treat or prevent ill health, contrary to the Medicines Act and the food labelling regulations. We showed how leaflets, labels, press releases and advertorials were making claims that supplements could 'cure HIV', 'treat hardening of the arteries' or 'possessed potent anti-cancer effects'.

One of the first responses we had was from an industry organisation, the Health Food Manufacturer's Association, asking to see the evidence. This we welcomed, and their response was to issue a message supporting our position to all their member companies, shown on the right.

We must apologise to Neuner's Herbal Products. We mistakenly attributed a leaflet promoting propolis to that company when in fact Neuner's does not manufacture or distribute propolis.

It turns out that the leaflet came from Bumbles, owned by Power Health products. The leaflet claimed that propolis was 'extremely effective in its ability to fight bacterial and fungal disease... found to be effective in treating hardening of the arteries, hypertension and coronary heart disease...' and other such medicinal claims. Tut, tut, Bumbles.



HFMA

HEALTH FOOD MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION



To all members

...Last Wednesday I met Dr. Lobstein, Co-Director of the Food Commission, to discuss the Survey and see for myself the material on which its findings are based.

Unfortunately, the problems with the health and medicinal claims highlighted in the Press Release are only too real, and the full Survey greatly expands the number of companies who publish or make available material that makes such claims. (This includes not just packaging, leaflets, and advertisements, but also books, advertorials, Press Releases, and leaflets which are apparently intended for professional use, but have been found in the retail chain.)

It is equally distressing to find that some of these companies are HFMA members.

One of the main criteria for HFMA membership is that companies with relevant products have their labels, leaflets and advertising pre-vetted and approved for compliance with the terms of the HFMA CAP Code.

Yet none of the material I saw had been HFMA CAP approved — and its content was quite indefensible.

As a 'damage limitation exercise', I shall be contacting the companies concerned individually to ensure that all offending literature is removed from the marketplace, and in future receives HFMA CAP approval prior to print/publication.

In addition, I understand that some companies are likely to be contacted directly by one, other or all of the regulatory/self-regulatory bodies active in this area: MCA, Trading Standards, ASA.

These actions may deal with the immediate problem. However, the knock-on effect of reports such as that of the Food Commission are much more far-reaching and threaten both the future of self-regulation and of the industry itself.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the seriousness of this threat: either we tidy up our own marketplace and do it soon — or it will be tidied up for us, whether we like it or not.

Advice for consumers

If you come across marketing/advertising/labelling for food products which appear to make medicinal claims — i.e. mention an ailment or disease or imply that the product can help prevent, treat or cure it — which you think may be misleading, then you can complain to the Advertising Standards Authority (details from 0171 580 5555 and www.asa.org.uk) and to your local authority Trading Standards department. And send a copy to us.

the story continues

The makers of **Hawaiian Pacifica Spirulina**, Naturo-pathic Health & Beauty Co, were furious that we had attributed a claim that Spirulina could treat mumps, measles and 'flu, cancer and HIV to a leaflet distributed by the company. In fact, said NHBC, the claims 'were extracted from an article written by an independent journalist in an independent magazine' called *Health Advisor*, and they kindly sent us a copy to prove it.



In reply, we pointed out to the company: *'The leaflet as distributed contains no reference to being a reprint from a magazine, and bears no page numbers nor magazine title nor date of publication; it is on heavier grade paper and is printed back to back where the original magazine article was printed on facing pages. It has all the appearance of a stand-alone leaflet used as promotional material for your products. The leaflet contains pictures of the Hawaiian Pacifica Spirulina product as sold by your company and refers readers for more information to your company. Presumably your company specially*

commissioned these leaflets/reprints from the publishers of Health Advisor for promotional purposes. In our view the leaflet constitutes promotional material used by your company, and as such we feel that it was fair comment to take quotes from the leaflet and ask whether manufacturers are acting responsibly by distributing such promotional material.'

We are happy to accept that the company does **not** support the claims for their product contained in the article they themselves distributed! Perhaps that puts the record straight.

Lastly comes the case of olive leaf extract, which a leaflet claimed could cure HIV, dengue fever, malaria, shingles and common colds. The leaflet said it was from a company called Tigon (Biocare). We have been asked by another company, BioCare Limited, to note that Tigon (Biocare) changed its name in June to Tigon (GB) at the request of BioCare Limited. Our criticism of the leaflet was not, of course, a criticism of BioCare Ltd. But it certainly was a criticism of Tigon (GB).



A reader says

There are some companies, especially those involved in multi-level marketing, who are making outrageous claims, medicinal and otherwise for their products, but your position seems to resemble that of the MCA: all products are tarred with the same brush and must be regulated.

There are a large number of reasons why the current MCA position, requiring these products to be regulated under the Medicines Act, is untenable. Unlike pharmaceuticals, vitamins, minerals and herbs cannot be protected by patent, and the high licensing costs (about £100,000 per product) cannot be recouped in the same way. The MCA Licensing committee is composed of orthodox scientists, hardly familiar with or sympathetic to such products, and conventional research into product efficacy is often lacking — the research having been performed "in the field" through, in the case of many herbs, traditional usage.

If some form of regulation of food supplements is going to be acceptable, the MCA criteria will have to change, otherwise useful products will disappear or become black-marketed.

Roger Groos, Devon

And still the companies persist...

A leaflet for Solgar's Omnium, a multivitamin formula states that it contains 'sophisticated antioxidants' and 'well known and studied isoflavones ... (which)... have anti-angiogenesis activity and cardiovascular health benefits.' We phoned Solgar to ask what they meant by 'anti-angiogenesis' and were told that it prevents cancer! Other ingredients include a 'detoxifying agent', a compound 'known for its strong anti-inflammatory activity' and another with 'powerful cholesterol-lowering properties'.



'Probably the best business opportunity you will ever see,' claims this leaflet for Klamath Lake

Blue-Green Algae from Aqua Source. The market for their 'weight-loss' product is enormous, they say, and includes 'every man, woman, child, cat, dog and racehorse in the UK.' The algae 'is said to improve sleep, reduce allergies, stop migraines, reduce stress, alleviate PMT and boost the body's immune system,' claims the leaflet, citing as its scientific source an article in the *Sunday Times*.



HealthAid's Immutone (shark liver oil) 'contains 20% Alkyoxgcerols, the active ingredient that helps boost the immune system and increase production of white blood cells... Beneficial for



people undergoing radiation treatment and those having persistent fungal infections, or feeling 'weak and lethargic'.

HealthAid's LadyVital is a preparation of vitamins, minerals, honey and malt, 'ideal for grown up



ladies ... A good supplement when recovering from illness, surgery, generally feeling run down, going through the menopause, or PMT problems.'

Meanwhile complaints against advertisements continue to arrive at the Advertising Standards Authority. In August alone, two more companies were asked to withdraw medicinal claims for food supplements:

- There was insufficient evidence to support claims made by Harpwell Marketing Service for their Selenium supplement, which referred to cardio-protective properties, that it prevents cancer and can help delay ageing.

- The available evidence did not support the claim made by Nature's Best Health Products' Ginkgo Biloba, that it helps to keep blood vessels dilated, helping to maintain a healthy circulation.

Antibiotic resistance – the rising threat

There are increasing numbers of articles in the press linking farming practices to the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Here are some clippings from the journals.

A fork lift truck worker in a chicken packing factory near Birmingham was admitted to hospital in September 1996 with a broken leg. Five days after surgical treatment the patient was feverish and a foul-smelling discharge from the wound was noted. Cultures from a swab found *Enterococcus faecalis*, which was ampicillin sensitive but vancomycin resistant. Nearly half of 22 swabs taken from chicken carcasses and the factory environment found vancomycin-resistant, ampicillin sensitive *E. faecalis*. This is believed to be the first reported case of a vancomycin-resistant infection in a patient where the probable source is animals colonised with the resistant bacteria. *The Lancet*, 349, p998-9, 5.4.1997.

A survey of 10 farmers in Norway who had been users of avoparcin antibiotic in poultry feed until its ban in that country in 1995, found that five were carrying bacteria resistant to glycopeptide antibiotics (avoparcin and vancomycin). Of five other farmers who had not used avoparcin, none carried resistant bacteria. None of the farmers were ill. It is thought that the affected farmers had inhaled avoparcin from feed dust, or ingested resistant intestinal bacteria from their flocks. *Animal Pharm*, 373, p7, 25.5.1997.

Dr Bernard Rowe, head of the UK's public health laboratory service, warned last May that about 80% of cases of human infection with *Salmonella typhimurium* DT 104 were resistant to a wide variety of antibiotics, including ampicillin, chloramphenicol, streptomycin and tetracycline. This strain of salmonella is the second most prevalent salmonella affecting humans in the UK. He believed the problem lay with farming practices, not overuse of

antibiotics in hospitals. Human infections had increased from 71 cases in 1990 to 4006 in 1996.

Dr Rowe was also concerned that strains were becoming resistant to fluoroquinolone. Before 1993, when this antibiotic was licensed for use with livestock, resistance to it was rare in humans. Now resistance at rates up to 60 per cent being seen. *Farmers Weekly*, p9, 30.5.1997 and *Fanners Weekly*, pS12, 14.2.1997.

Pigs showing chronic dermatitis, with thick crusting on all limbs, the perineum and around the base of the ears, with acute lesions along the abdomen, neck and jaw, were found to have a infection with a parasite followed by a secondary infection with *Staphylococcus hyicus*. These bacteria were found to be resistant to antibiotics lancomycin and spectomycin. Veterinary inspectors said this was unusual and explained the failure of in-feed medication with these antibiotics. *Veterinary Record*, p238, 6.9.1997.

Meanwhile, vets in Australia have found a solution to the fermentation problems encountered when sheep are fed large quantities of wheat in their diet. The wheat ferments and builds up high levels of lactic acid in the rumen, which in extreme cases can cause death. Neither bicarbonate of soda nor a dose of bentonite clay could help, but the antibiotic avoparcin did the trick. As Australian grass dries up and sheep are put on wheat diets, avoparcin will be needed on a routine basis. C L McDonald et al, *Feed antibiotics and buffers to control rumen lactic acid*, Western Australia Dept of Agriculture.

"The first batch of 43 bull calves are now well settled in... The settling in period following their arrival was not straight forward, with a number of calves throwing a temperature, together with the early scours (diarrhoea) that inevitably arise with the stress of movement and change".

"It took quite a few days to find an antibiotic that was responded to, trying a variety of drugs before discovering that Baytril was the particular one that gives us a consistent response this season." Farming lives in *Farmers Weekly* 12.9.1997.

Salmonella in eggs continues to be a problem. Buried at the end of a press release from the Department of Health's Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food comes the comment that a recent survey of egg contamination found no improvement since the last survey in 1991. They urged the Department to seek 'new and additional means for disseminating the warning against preparing raw egg dishes'.

'...we wish to alert microbiologists to resistance to quinupristin / dalbapristin in four isolates of vancomycin resistant *E. faecium* ... three of these isolates were from samples of raw chicken and one was from a hospital patient.' *The Lancet*, 350, p738, 6.9.97.

A skin abscess disease of dolphins in captivity, caused by bacteria *Streptococcus iniae*, is also found in farmed fish. Now, for the first time it has been reported to cause skin infections among people handling fish from fish farms.

New England Journal of Medicine, 337, pp589-594, 28.8.97.

No fruit for schools

From page 1

The right of schools to receive surplus fruit is buried in a 25-year-old EC Regulation 1035/72 which permitted certain 'Approved Outlets' for the disposal of fruit and vegetable produce withdrawn from the market. Outlets include

- Processing into animal feed
- Processing into alcohol
- Free distribution to charities and to persons receiving public assistance
- Distribution to prisons, children's holiday camps, hospitals and old people's homes — provided the

quantities are in addition to the amounts normally bought by those institutions

- Free distribution to children in schools provided the quantities are in addition to the amounts normally bought by the schools

Meanwhile the promotion of full fat milk in schools continues, with subsidies worth 14 pence per pint for full fat milk, 9 pence per pint of semi-skimmed and no subsidy for skimmed milk. Full fat yogurt gets a subsidy worth about 3 pence per pot, but low fat yogurt gets none.

School purchases of full fat cheese bring a subsidy of 75 pence per kilogram, but no subsidy for low-fat cheese.

Denmark, Sweden and Finland have complained that these promotions ran counter to their nutritional policies and the Danes have readjusted the system to ensure all types of milk receive similar subsidy levels, though they have done this without official permission. Finland and Sweden have received an official temporary derogation to allow lower-fat milk to have full subsidies.

CHECKOUT

Checkout takes a look at what you get for your money when you buy so-called sports and energy drinks.

Putting sports drinks to the ultimate test

What drinks are available in sports centres?

Besides looking at what you get when you buy a so-called sports drink, our researchers visited a number of sports centres in the London area to check out what drinks are available.

Drinks in most centres were sold from vending machines but a few also have a cafe or a bar.

Coca Cola was the most widely available drink along with other soft drinks. Pure fruit juice and mineral water were not always available and when they were tended to be more expensive than soft drinks.

Of the twelve centres visited, six did not have pure fruit juice available, and one only had it available when the bar was open. One sold fruit juice for £1.60 a serving.

One of the ironies of modern life is that at a time when young people are becoming less active, they are increasingly acquiring sports 'lifestyle' paraphernalia - the expensive trainers, football shirts and tracksuits and now, it seems, the right drink. As sports personalities have become heroes to the young, so manufacturers have recognised that sport sells, even in the world of breakfast cereals, crisps and fizzy drinks. But do such products offer genuine benefits or are they just a marketing hype cashing in our desire to appear healthy and fit?

The 1990s have seen a huge growth in the market for sports drinks, with SmithKline Beecham, the manufacturers of Lucozade, estimating that we'll be spending around £100 million this year on sports drinks. Such drinks are mainly aimed at the male 'youth' market. 'Energy', 'power', 'endurance', 'performance' are the buzz word of this new generation of drinks, and with names like Red Bull, Carbo Power, High Energy, Power Horse, Red Kick and Ultra Fuel, manufacturers hope that youngsters will identify with the macho image.

But do these drinks live up to their image and claims? In our special survey of sports or energy drinks we examined twenty-two different products.

The vast majority claimed to offer some kind of energy boost — something that any product containing calories would do — while a handful (including so-called isotonic drinks) emphasised their ability to replace lost fluid quickly. Many were aimed at those engaged in sporting activities, workouts or fitness programmes, and came with instructions for use before, during or after physical

activity. Others were obviously aimed at a broader market of young people who like the association with fitness and health.

As our analysis overleaf shows, we found the majority to be little more than highly priced soft drinks, with a cocktail of unnecessary additives, and several containing caffeine — a diuretic that actually removes fluid from your body.

Fluid replenishment drinks

During strenuous or prolonged exercise it is important to keep up fluid levels to prevent dehydration. Yet most of the drinks in our survey were unsuitable as fluid replenishment drinks for those engaged in physical activity. Drinks with high levels of sugar are inadvisable as the fluid is absorbed into the body more slowly than from drinks with little or no sugar.

For speedier rehydration, drinks should contain only small amounts of carbohydrate (3-8%) and should include some sodium (0.4-1.1g/litre). This

is the principle on which so-called 'isotonic' drinks are based. This scientific sounding jargon actually means that the drink has the same osmolality — that it is at the same concentration as blood plasma. Its advantage is that fluid is absorbed more quickly into the blood stream than by drinking plain water so rehydration is more efficient.

Our solution

You can make up your own rehydration drink much more cheaply by mixing 50-50 fruit juice with plain water, and adding a small pinch of salt.



CHECKOUT

A champion ri

Our survey of 22 popular sports and energy drinks found problems in several areas.

Sugar: The sugar content of the drinks in our survey varied from virtually zero (though these retained their sweetness but using artificial sweeteners) to over 18 per cent (Lucozade Energy) which is more than 13 level teaspoons in a 300ml bottle.

Many products were likely to mislead users about their high sugar content by calling sugars 'carbohydrate'. Only 5 out of the 22 products actually stated how much of the carbohydrate was sugar and some companies refused to tell us when we asked.

SmithKline Beecham, manufacturers of Lucozade products told us that this information was 'confidential'.

We are all recommended to eat more complex carbohydrates — that's the starches generally found in foods such as rice, pasta, potatoes, bread and other cereal-based foods — and to reduce the amount of simple carbohydrates or sugars. For those engaged in sports, higher levels of carbohydrates may be needed for extra energy but unless you are an elite athlete, sports dietitians don't recommend high levels of sugar (simple carbohydrates). Yet a bottle of Carbo Cooler for example contains 80g of carbohydrate of which 76g are sugars. It claims that the product provides 'carbohydrates which your body

needs' during and after workouts. As it also claims to contain 'no sucrose', it is unlikely that users will realise that this product is mainly sugar.

In products which did contain some complex carbohydrate it was mainly maltodextrin, a compound half way between sugar and starch. One product, Energy Source, claimed that 3 servings would supply the user with 'more carbohydrate than two and a half large tins of spaghetti without the bulk' giving the impression that the product contains the kind of starches found in spaghetti. We believe this could be misleading as the carbohydrate in the product comes from maltodextrin and sugar.

The high sugar content of many of these products could be a problem for diabetics. Five

Sports and energy drinks - sports and energy drinks

Product	Claims	Sugar	Added caffeine	Additives
Carbo Cooler (Sport Beverage Co)	Providing explosive energy, strength and intensity ...provides carbohydrates your body needs for energy during your workouts, it also provides carbohydrates necessary for recuperation after your workouts. Ideal for before, during or after exercise.	16%	✓	preservatives, colours
Carbo Power (Nature's Best)	Energy drink. Use: 1 bottle daily between meals. Drink providing your staple diet with a supplement of carbohydrates.	12%*		preservatives, colours
Dexters Low Calorie (Orchard Drinks)	Formulated for fluid and mineral replenishment without replacing hard lost calories. The ideal after exercise drink for complete refreshment.	0.6%		artificial sweetener (aspartame)
Dunns River Nurishment Light (Enco Products)	Can be consumed as part of an overall sports training programme to maintain fitness and energy.	11.5%		colours, thickener, flavouring.
Energy Source (High Five Performance Nutrition Sport)	For power and endurance. Adding three 500ml servings of EnergySource to your daily diet will supply you with more carbohydrate than two and a half large tins of spaghetti without the bulk.	1.7%		flavouring, artificial sweetener (aspartame)
High Carb (Eclipse 2000)	Take one bottle before or during each workout.	13%*		colours, flavours, preservatives
Hi Energy (Virgin Cola Company)	High intensity energy drink.	12%	✓	flavourings, colour, sweetener (inositol)
Hype energy mfp (WWB Inc)	Energising body fuel. The worlds ultimate energy drink.... providing vitamins and natural restoratives.	10%	✓	flavourings, colours, stabiliser.
Isostar (Wander Ltd)	The fast acting isotonic thirst quencher. Isostar is a non-carbonated isotonic drink, which has been specifically developed for use before, during and after sport.	6%		colour
Lipovitan B3 (Taisho foods)	The original energizer from Japan. Thiamin B1, riboflavinB2 and vitamin B6 work in synergy to help release energy from protein, fat and carbohydrate.	10%*		flavourings, sweetener (inositol)
Lucozade Energy (SmithKline Beecham)	Specially formulated with glucose syrup to provide glucose, the body's preferred source of fast effective energy.	18%*		preservatives, flavourings, antioxidant, colour.
Lucozade Sport Low Calorie (Smith Kline Beecham)	Great tasting hypotonic drink which quenches thirst fast. Lucozade Sport is the Official Sports Drink of the FA Premier League, British Athletic Federation and England RFU.	0.1%*		artificial sweeteners, (aspartame, acesulfame K), flavouring, stabiliser, preservative, colour

CHECKOUT

p-off?

products (Power Horse, Carbo-cooler, Lipovitan, Virgin Hi Energy and Red Bull Stimulation) warn that they are not suitable for diabetics but other products with a high sugar content failed to do so. The British Dental Association have also warned against frequent consumption of high sugar drinks.

Caffeine: Eight of the products we examined contained added caffeine, some in the form of guarana. Caffeine may give a kick and thus the feeling of more energy but it doesn't provide 'energy' in a nutritional sense (only calories can provide this). Caffeine can also have a powerful diuretic effect and therefore any drink containing a significant amount will dehydrate the user - making

the products unsuitable as sports drinks.

Tests of caffeine levels in 'energy' drinks by MAFF published earlier this year¹ found caffeine levels were on average three times higher than levels in ordinary cola drinks with concentrations often exceeding 300 mg/l.

Only three out of the seven drinks with added caffeine stated the amount they contained. A number of products (Power Horse, Lipovitan and High Energy) warn that they are not suitable for people sensitive to caffeine.

Additives: Many products contained a cocktail of additives, including colours, flavourings, preservatives, stabilisers and sweeteners. None of

these additives have any value in enhancing sporting ability.

Extras: Adding vitamins and minerals, herbs, and other ingredients such as taurine and glucuronolactone aim to impress the user that these drinks contain special ingredients to help enhance performance. Carbo-cooler claims that it is 'fortified with high performance herbs'. Red Bull and Lipovitan contain taurine which the manufacturers of Red Bull claim 'serves as an energy transmitter and detoxifier'. Taurine is an amino acid which is found in food or can be made in the body. There is no scientific evidence that adding it to drinks can improve performance.

Researched by Rachel Sutton and Claire Harris.

¹ Survey of caffeine and other methylxanthines in energy drinks and other caffeine-containing products, **MAFF Food Surveillance Information Sheet, No 103**, March 1997.

ks - sports and energy drinks - sports and energy

Product	Claims	Sugar	Added caffeine	Additives
Lucozade Sport Still (Smith Kline Beecham)	Thirst quencher. ...isotonic to promote fast rehydration....delivers a boost of carbohydrate energy to your working muscles. Lucozade Sport is the Official sports drink of the FA Premier League, British Athletic Federation and England RFU.	4%*		artificial sweeteners (aspartame, acesulfame K), flavouring, stabiliser, preservative, colour.
Mars (Mars UK Ltd)	Active energy drink.	13%		flavouring, stabiliser, emulsifier.
Nutrament (Mead Johnson Nutritionals)	Nutrament's unique formulation provides sustained energy to keep you going, during sport or training. The original energy and protein drink.	12.8%		stabiliser, flavouring, colour, emulsifier
Power Horse (S.Spitz Ges m.b.H.)	Liquid energy for winners. Designed to revive body and mind during strenuous times after high activity. Circulation and the central nervous system is stimulated promoting rapid recovery with elevated psyche.	10%*	✓	flavouring, colour, sweetener (inositol).
Purdey's Gold High Energy (Orchid Drinks)	The healthy and immediate way to feel rejuvenated at work or play. Contains a unique formula of revitalising herbal extracts and multivitamins with a blend of complex carbohydrate for a sustained energy boost	18%		flavours
Red Card (Britvic Soft Drinks)	Extended energy drink. Being lightly carbonated it can be easily drunk before, during or after sport... at times when endurance or stamina is needed.	5%*		flavourings, preservative, artificial sweetener (aspartame), antioxidant, colour.
Red Bull Stimulation (Red Bull Co)	With taurine. Vitalizes body and mind...especially developed for times of increased stress or strain. Stimulates metabolism, increases physical endurance, improves and increases concentration and reaction speed.	11%	✓	sweetener (inositol), flavours, colours.
Red Kick (Multipower Fitness and Nutrition)	...dynamic drink containing guarana and caffeine designed to help fight the effects of tiredness. Use Red Kick as a stimulating drink prior to training	4%	✓	flavourings, artificial sweeteners (aspartame and acesulfame) preservative, colour.
Rio Amazon Guarana Breeze (Rio Trading)	Rio Amazon Energy drink. If you work hard and play hard, get going with Guarana! It's the life-force of the Amazon.	9%	✓	flavourings.
Ultra Fuel (Twinkl)	The ultimate carbohydrate energy and recovery drink. For maximum results, drink immediately prior to exercise, during exercise or after physical activity to promote recovery. Replenishes vital fluids and electrolytes lost during physical stress and exercise.	12%*		flavours.

* Where the information was not available, the figures are Food Commission estimates.

CHECKOUT

Loopy labels

Another look at label loopiness sent by our eagle-eyed readers

They aren't content with showing calves born from eggs on their TV adverts. They aren't content with claiming their butter is 'free range' when no such category exists (it does for eggs, not for butter — but if they had said the cows ate organically, that would be much more interesting).

Now the folk at Anchor must have hit on a way of recycling their product. The storage instructions on their Pure Anchor Butter reads 'Refrigerate after use'.

Personally, we recommend refrigeration before use. Don't even think about trying it afterwards!



How to discourage label-reading. Thirty three ingredients listed in tiny four point bold on a Tesco sandwich wrapper. Yet the sub-listing for mayonnaise omits several main ingredients, such as oil, egg yolk and salt, and the listing for the low fat spread forgets to mention water, vegetable fat and salt. And the nutrition box omits the salt/sodium.

We give it a Beta Minus, for an unfinished job, badly presented.



INGREDIENTS: Hard Boiled Egg, Wheatgerm Bread (Wholemeal Flour, Water, Constat Wheat, Yeast, Preservatives: E200, E201, E202, E203, E204, E205, E206, E207, E208, E209, E210, E211, E212, E213, E214, E215, E216, E217, E218, E219, E220, E221, E222, E223, E224, E225, E226, E227, E228, E229, E230, E231, E232, E233, E234, E235, E236, E237, E238, E239, E240, E241, E242, E243, E244, E245, E246, E247, E248, E249, E250, E251, E252, E253, E254, E255, E256, E257, E258, E259, E260, E261, E262, E263, E264, E265, E266, E267, E268, E269, E270, E271, E272, E273, E274, E275, E276, E277, E278, E279, E280, E281, E282, E283, E284, E285, E286, E287, E288, E289, E290, E291, E292, E293, E294, E295, E296, E297, E298, E299, E300, E301, E302, E303, E304, E305, E306, E307, E308, E309, E310, E311, E312, E313, E314, E315, E316, E317, E318, E319, E320, E321, E322, E323, E324, E325, E326, E327, E328, E329, E330, E331, E332, E333, E334, E335, E336, E337, E338, E339, E340, E341, E342, E343, E344, E345, E346, E347, 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We need a food safety agency!

As we go to press the government's White Paper on the proposed Food Standards Agency is due for release. Sussex University's science policy analyst Dr Erik Millstone explains why it is long overdue.

At the end of January this year, when Douglas Hogg announced that if the Conservative Government was re-elected, it would establish a new Food Safety Council with a new Chief Food Safety Officer, a complete consensus was at last achieved. Everyone then accepted that the *status quo* in food policy making was unsustainable. Hogg was the last to admit that MAFF needed to be reformed, even though he must have been one of the first to know.

MAFF has been fatally flawed by a crucial contradiction at the core of its mandate. MAFF is supposed simultaneously to protect consumers and to look after the commercial interests of the food industry, in other words to sponsor and to regulate the food industry at the same time.

The consequence of trying to meet two incompatible goals is that it has done neither job properly. MAFF almost destroyed both the egg and beef industries, while failing to protect the public from salmonella or BSE. This should not be thought of as incompetence on the part of officials, but as the inevitable consequence of a profoundly flawed political regime.

For too long, a concern for public health and consumer protection has been subordinated to the perceived short term commercial interests of food producers, processors and distributors. If MAFF had been a victim of 'regulatory capture' it was a willing and enthusiastic victim. The British population has consequently paid a heavy price in terms of public expenditure, sickness and death.

When Mr Hogg gave his announcement about a new Food Safety Council to advise ministers on all aspects of food safety, he let a very important cat out of the bag. Mr Hogg

highlighted a crucial innovative feature of the proposed new arrangements when he explained that the proposed council and its independent chairman *would* be allowed to criticise the Government's policy. His remark acknowledged that, until now, the members of MAFF's numerous expert advisory committees have *not* been permitted to criticise departmental policy.

This highlights a fundamental weakness in current arrangements. The numerous committees which have provided advice and recommendations to MAFF ought to have been independent of ministers and the food industry, and demonstrably so. For at least ten years however, scholars and analysts have been explaining how these committees have functioned, and how little independence they had from commercial organisations, but Mr Hogg made it clear that their freedom of action was being tightly circumscribed by ministers too.

The subordination of what should have been a consumer-oriented food safety policy to the commercial interests of the food industry was achieved by several mechanisms. As Owen and Braetigam¹ have explained:

'Regulatory policy is increasingly made with the participation of experts, especially academics. A regulated firm or industry should be prepared whenever possible to co-opt these experts. This is most effectively done by identifying the leading experts in each relevant field and hiring them as consultants and advisors, or giving them research grants and the like. This activity requires a modicum of finesse; it must not be too blatant, for the experts themselves must not recognise that they have lost their objectivity and freedom of action.'

Ministerial influence has been exercised discreetly, and evidence of how that influence has been exercised has recently emerged from both the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) and the Veterinary Products Committee (VPC). It had been a long standing custom on both those committees that the members arrive for a meeting to be confronted not just by the detailed papers on which their decisions should be based, but also by *draft minutes* which indicate, in advance of their deliberations, the decisions which the secretariats propose the committees should reach. The secretariats may sometimes have negotiated those decisions in advance with the companies concerned, in the light of guidance from ministers. Many ACP and

VPC meetings then consisted mainly of discussions of those draft minutes, rather than an independent examination of the evidence.

MAFF's failure to protect consumers and public health has not been occasional or sporadic, but the subordination to the interest of consumers to those of producers has been pervasive and, many of us reluctantly had to conclude, systematic. Specifically, MAFF has

- Failed to provide regulatory standards which could have adequately protected public health;
- Failed to ensure that even those standards which were in place were properly enforced;
- Failed to invest adequately in scientific and technological research and development which could have contributed to raising food standards, and
- Failed to communicate effectively with all the relevant groups of stakeholders.

I agree with Philip James that the regulatory responsibility for food standards should be transferred from MAFF to the Department of Health and that a new and independent Food Standards Agency should be established to advise the Department of Health and in particular the Minister for Public Health.

We have already seen moves within MAFF to set up an agency-in-waiting — their Joint Food Standards and Safety Group² consists largely of MAFF officials who may be looking forward to continuing in their same roles within the new agency. But is this desirable? Should the main positions in the Agency be staffed by people who held corresponding positions in MAFF?

There is a very strong case for insisting that all the senior posts in the new agency are advertised publicly so that a wide range of new talents can be brought into food standards policy making.

The Food Standards Agency will need to be open, accountable and independent of both industry and short-term political interference. And it will need to be seen to be so. This is something which Douglas Hogg almost started to appreciate last January.

¹ 'Regulation Game: Strategic Use of the Administrative Process' 1978 p7

² New Group to Set Up Food Standards Agency MAFF News Release 251/97, 31.8.1997.

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Reduced to this?

Are consumers being misled by claims of 'reduced' fat or sugar? We look at the scams.

In a bid to eat more healthily many shoppers are choosing reduced fat, reduced sugar or 'light' versions of their regular foods. 'Light' or 'lite' has no legal definition, but a 'reduced fat' food must contain at least 25 percent less fat than a serving of its regular version. The same goes for sugar and any other ingredient which makes a 'reduced' claim. But this still leaves room for shoppers to have the wool pulled over their eyes.

Watch out: 'Reduced fat' doesn't mean 'low fat'.

It should contain at least 25% less fat but often there is still a high percentage of fat in the product.

Reduced fat crisps, for example, are typically still a relatively high fat food. We found Walkers Lites Ready Salted Crisps with 28.5 grams of fat/100g. That's a saving of nearly 10g over their regular Ready Salted crisps yet the reduced-fat option is still a high fat food. Similarly Sainsbury's reduced fat shortcake biscuits have one gram less fat per biscuit but at over 17% fat they are still a relatively high fat food. Use the Rule of Thumb guide (opposite) to judge for yourself how much fat you are getting.

Watch out: for smaller packs.

A problem which can make it difficult to compare products is that 'reduced fat' products sometimes come in smaller portion sizes which can give the impression that you are getting a bigger fat reduction than you actually are on a weight for weight basis. The full-fat version of St. Michael Salt and Vinegar Flavour crisps contains 75 grams of crisps, while the reduced fat pack contains only 65 grams.



'You've got to weigh up the price of things with the healthy eating thing.'

Watch out: less fat can mean more.

Before opting for the lower fat version check alternative products. We found a Sainsbury's Low Fat Strawberry Yoghurt actually containing more fat than Sainsbury's regular Economy Strawberry Yoghurt. Both are low in fat but a pot of the Low Fat version actually had twice as much fat — and cost over twice as much!



'I'm afraid I have no idea which is a healthy yogurt and which isn't. I assume that it's reasonably healthy because it says low fat and it's a fruit yogurt.'



'I could be tempted by these Hob Nobs. They are quite healthy because they have got plenty of cereal type stuff in them.'

Watch out: reduced fat but not necessarily reduced calorie.

If you are watching your weight it's tempting to go for 'reduced fat' foods. But beware, it may say 'reduced fat' but it's probably not reduced calorie. Smaller pack sizes (see above) may give the impression of significantly reduced calories but weight for weight the difference is often much less significant.

For example Jacob's 50% Less Fat Cream Crackers contain half the fat of regular Jacob's Cream Crackers but weight for weight the reduced fat crackers have only 8% fewer calories (400 calories compared to 437 calories per 100 grams for the regular ones).

Watch out: you can pay more for less

Buying reduced fat or sugar products can often mean paying more money to receive a smaller portion of food.

For example St. Michael regular Digestive biscuits cost 49p for a 400 grams pack, while St. Michael higher fibre, reduced sugar Digestives cost 55p for a pack of only 300 grams. Similarly, 56 grams of Cadbury's Chocolate Break instant milk chocolate drink

Watch out: less fat can mean more sugar

Buying less fat can mean you get more sugar. For example, Sainsbury's Economy Strawberry yoghurt contains 14.3 grams of sugar per 100g while Sainsbury's Low Fat Strawberry yoghurt has 16 grams of sugar per 100g.

Our advice

Be cautious about bold claims on the front of food packs and check the small print if you can. Use the 'Rule of Thumb Nutrition Guide' below to help you judge for yourself whether a food is high or low in a nutrient.

■ Quotations from supermarket shops.

Read the label and judge for yourself:

We're often attracted by the slogans in big print on the front of packages but these can give a misleading impression. Few of us read the small print on nutrition labels on the back of the pack before buying foods and many foods fail to give full and adequate information. By law if any product makes a claim about a particular nutrient, such as 'reduced fat' or 'reduced sugar' full details of exactly how much of the nutrient is the product should be given. But surveys have found this is not always the case.

'It says half the fat of standard coleslaw. I try and read the nutrition things to see how much fat there is but I think I'll just take their word for it.'

Research and interviews by Devon Metz.



sells for 39p, while just 22 grams of Cadbury's High Lights (with less sugar) sells for 45p.

Rule of thumb nutrition guide

These amounts or more mean A LOT		These amounts or less mean A LITTLE
10g	sugars	2g
20g	fat	3g
5g	saturates	1g
3g	fibre	0.5g
0.5g	sodium	0.1g

For foods where you eat the whole pack, like a ready meal or sandwich, use the figure per serving. For other foods which you eat in relatively small amounts, look at the amount you get per 100g.

Source: Use your label: making sense of nutrition information, MAFF, 1996

Cancer and diet

Besides causing a stink in the COMA panel, and red faces in the Department of Health, the recent report on diet and cancer from the government's advisory committee confirms the view that fruit and vegetables are the most important dietary element in the prevention of cancer, while fat and, it seems, red meat can increase the risk. 'Average consumption of red and

processed meat,' they said, should fall to less than 90 grams per day.

Similar statements were made by the World Cancer Research Fund's expert panel in their review of the research literature. They estimated that a largely plant-based diet was the way to save as many as 30% of cancer deaths each year. 'If eaten at all, red meat should be limited to 80

grams daily. It is preferable to choose fish, poultry or meat from non-domesticated animals in place of red meat.'

A week earlier, the government quietly published their ten-yearly review of health inequalities, which showed among other things a very significantly raised risk of heart disease and cancer among lower income groups in the UK. These were matched by raised fat intakes and by lower intakes of fruit in lower income groups.

And a week later, yet another government publication added more figures to the arguments. An article in *Population Trends* looked at European cancer rates and showed a strong tendency for northern member states to have higher rates of cancer than southern states, even when different age structures of the population are taken into account. The cancer figures make interesting reading when placed next to figures from the Food and Agriculture Organisation on fruit and vegetable consumption (see table below).

Cancer: red meat, or red meat residues?

Organic meat producers have expressed concern over the government's advice to cut red meat consumption. Here we print one comment

As someone whose livelihood is producing beef you might expect me to be unhappy with COMA and WCRF reports on diet and cancer. The emphasis on balance is sound but it seems improbable to me that red meat is intrinsically carcinogenic.

Red meat consumption in the UK has been falling while digestive cancers increased, and Dr Michael Hill of the European Cancer Prevention Organisation has stated that 'not one of eight large European studies has shown any relationship between red meat intake and colon cancer risk.'

Of the many aspects which should be studied, the use of hormone growth promoters is perhaps the most obvious. Banned in Europe in 1986 but with some continuing illegal use, they are universally used in many countries where studies appear to show a cancer link. Nine EU scientists appointed to help fight the World Trade Organisation moves to reintroduce US (hormone-implemented) beef into Europe have concluded that such hormones can be carcinogenic; something with which even two of the five WTO scientists agree.

The health, welfare and environmental problems of intensive poultry production are well known and it would be a tragic irony if consumption of this increased yet again at the expense of extensive and organic beef production.

Richard Young, Kite's Nest Farm

	Cancer incidence per 100,000 population 1993-4	Fruit and vegetable consumption 1990 kg/person/year
Greece	161	422
Portugal	170	287
Spain	177	325
Germany	199	205
United Kingdom	210	170
Denmark	233	155

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Source: *Population Trends*, 89, 1997, and FAO.

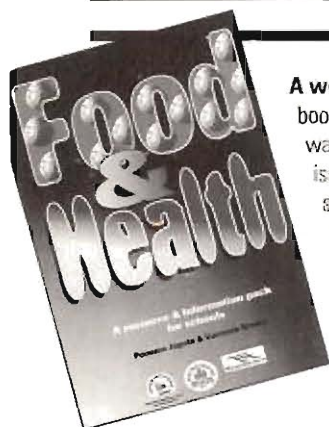
■ *Nutritional Aspects of the Development of Cancer* COMA report, Department of Health, The Stationery Office, 1997.

■ *Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: a global perspective* World Cancer Research Fund, 1997

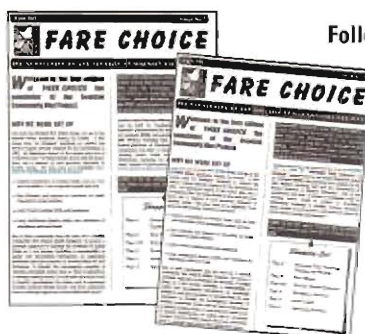
■ *Health Inequalities* F Drever and M Whitehead, Decennial Supplement 15, Office for National Statistics, The Stationery Office, 1997.

■ *Population Trends*, 89, D Pearce et al 'An overview of the population in Europe and North America', Office for National Statistics, The Stationery Office, 1997.

■ FAO fruit consumption data on the FAO statistical database (www.fao.org)



A well-designed and stimulating resource book for people in the Manchester area wanting to get involved in school food issues — and for anyone else wanting to see what can be done by a local health promotion team. Details of the pack from Poonam Jagota, Project Worker, Mancunian Health Promotion, tel 0161 291 3641, or fax 0161 291 3643.



Following the acclaimed Diet Action Plan for Scotland in July 1996 (see *Food Magazine* 35), a range of local projects have started to receive financial support from the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) based at the Scottish Consumer Council. You can follow developments in their newsletter *Fare Choice*. Details from Bill Gray and Jacquie MacIntyre, SCDP, tel 0141 226 5261, fax 0141 221 0731.

Infants' daily intake of nutrients is lowest among highest sugar eaters

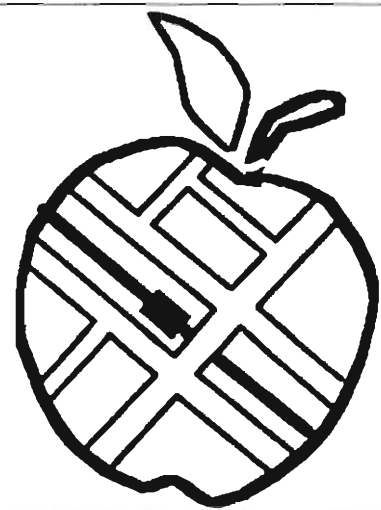
	highest 20% of sugar eaters	lowest 20% of sugar eaters
calcium	509mg	784mg
iron	5.1mg	5.6mg
zinc	3.7mg	5.1mg
thiamin	0.73mg	0.86mg
riboflavin	1.02mg	1.40mg
niacin	15.1mg	17.3mg
folate	123ug	136ug
vitamin C	72mg	39mg
vitamin D	1.8ug	2.2ug

A new analysis of data from the government's 1992 survey of under-five's diets has shown that those consuming most non-milk extrinsic (NME) sugars in their daily food were likely to be consuming lowest levels of vitamins and minerals. NME sugars are free sugars (not bound up in their original plant cells) except for the sugars naturally found in milk.

Only vitamin C showed a reverse relationship, probably due to a greater consumption of fruit juices and fortified fruit-flavoured drinks among the

higher sugar eaters. The high sugar eaters were consuming levels of iron and zinc below their estimated average needs (below levels considered necessary for at least 50% of the group) and they were eating the lowest levels of dietary fibre and, interestingly, fat.

■ S A Gibson, Non-milk extrinsic sugars in the diets of pre-school children: association with intakes of micronutrients, energy, fat and NSP, *British Journal of Nutrition*, 78, pp367-378, 1997.



CityHarvest - new roots for London underground!

A joint project by the National Food Alliance and the SAFE Alliance is aiming to get more people growing food in London, to green the city, improve health and create jobs and training opportunities.

Individuals, community groups, local agencies and businesses are all welcome to get involved in CityHarvest. Contact Fara Garnett, National Food Alliance and SAFE Alliance, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH, tel 0171 628 2442.

An outspoken leaflet from the campaigning group World Development Movement, accuses the banana multinationals Del Monte Fresh Produce, Chiquita and Dole of being no better than 'a bunch of cowboys'.

The leaflet claims the companies fail to meet acceptable health and safety standards and force

their workers to give up their trade union rights. For details of their *Go Bananas* campaign, write to WDM at 25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR, tel 0171 737 6215, fax 0171 274 8232.



Rapid rises in the eating of fat among Chinese people

	Proportion eating less than 10% fat		Proportion eating more than 30% fat	
	1989	1993	1989	1993
Low income	39.2%	14.7%	19.1%	36.4%
High income	14.8%	3.5%	22.8%	66.6%

China may soon be a nation of fatties. With vegetable oils and animal products in greater supply and available to lower income groups, increasing numbers are getting more than 30% of their dietary energy from fat.

The change is remarkably rapid. The table shows the decline in just four years 1989-1993 in the proportion of people eating low amounts of fat (less than ten percent of their energy as fat) and

the rise in the proportion eating high amounts of fat (over thirty per cent of energy from fat) in both poorer and richer families.

■ Figures on fat consumption are from the China Health and Nutrition Survey, cited in A Drenowski and B Popkin, The Nutrition Transition, New Trends in the Global Diet, *Nutrition Reviews*, 55, 31-43, 1997.

Co-ordinating information about poverty in Scotland, the Scottish Poverty Information Unit has received a two-year Nuffield grant to fund three part-time posts. Details: 0141 331 1271, ext 239. This is one of several useful features in the latest Newsletter of The Poverty Alliance, a network of anti-poverty groups. Contact the Alliance: tel 0141 353 0440, fax 0141 353 0686.



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. £10.99 including 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. £6.99 inc p&p.

The Food We Eat

The award-winning author Joanna Blythman's examination of the best and worst in British food today. £8.99 incl. p&p.

Back issues of The Food Magazine

Back issues cost £3.50 or £30.00 for a full set of available issues. Send for index of major news stories and features in past issues. Stocks are limited and some issues are already out-of-stock.



Additives - Your Complete Survival Guide

Still the best reference book with comprehensive tables and summaries of the evidence on the safety of each additive. Limited stocks with marked covers - special price only £2.50 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 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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World Hunger

E M Young, Routledge, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE, ISBN 0-415-13773-X, 1997, £9.99.

Part of the publisher's *Introduction to Development* series, this book makes an excellent contrast to the propaganda of global agribusinesses, namely that despite the green revolution 800 million people live in hunger, and there is no reason to believe that genetic engineering will improve matters.

Liz Young identifies failure of access to the global market — the inequalities which occur at every level, international, national, regional and even within families — to show why some people have rich, diverse diets and others do not. Hunger and famine are rarely due to acts of God but are results of human action. Besides wars and refugees, the inequalities within families between men and women, the inequalities between community members and their ownership of land and water, the inequalities between classes at national level and the control of markets, and the inequalities between industrialised and underdeveloped countries, are all underpinned by the ultimate movers in the equation, the transnational companies that control seeds, pesticides and the main food commodities.

Aid and international conferences have done too little to improve matters. 'Western development ideologies since the 1950s ... have prioritised economic expansion despite evidence that, in inequitable circumstances, this tends to exacerbate social and spatial differentiation. The propensity of policy-makers to assume that improvements in household incomes would benefit all its members leads to misguided policies that have disadvantaged women and children and their nutritional well-being. Patriarchal attitudes prevail at all levels and help to explain the negative impact of numerous policies on both food production and nutrition.'

The author applauds the non-governmental organisations that raise awareness and empowerment. Ultimately, the book concludes, malnutrition is preventable. Positive changes occur where 'people effectively challenge prevailing material inequalities and the ideologies which perpetuate them.'



One curiosity in the book is the presence of a recipe at the start of each

chapter reflecting the cultural significance of local dishes 'despite recent global processes of homogenisation'. They may be traditional peasant dishes but, ironically, virtually every one includes ingredients originally brought to the region from across the globe. TL

London Organic Food Forum (LOFF)
By the time you read this you will have missed the inaugural event of this new branch of the Soil Association. Find out about their next events — contact Tanyia Maxted Frost (Vice Chairman/Secretary) 0181 994 6583 or Craig Sams (chairman) 0171 229 7545.

'Building on Diversity'
What is the Government's proposed Food Standards Agency? Are food companies and caterers working for health? What should the Food for Health Network be doing?

Thursday November 4th 1997
Food for Health Network Conference
Western Rooms of Liverpool Cathedral, St. James Mount, Liverpool.
fee: £35 (Students £25) including lunch and refreshments.
Contact: Kathy Cowbrough 01777 706880. Email <kathy.cowbrough@virgin.net>

The Food Health Connection - A diet for our children's future'
Saturday 8th November 1997
The Good Gardeners Association
Speakers include Dr Peter Mansfield, Professor Bryce Smith, Dr Neil Ward, Dr Rosie Daniel, Prof. RW Lacey.

Warwick University Art Centre, Coventry. £50 (including lunch), concessionary prices to GGA members and health workers.
Contact the GGA Office, Pinetum, Churcham, Glos. GL2 8AD.
tel: 01452 700306, fax: 01452 750402

Food Links — making links between disparate elements of the food and health sectors.

12 noon Thursday 20th to 5pm Friday 21st November 1997
Highland Health Board - Health promotion Department
Contact: Gill MacLennan, Campaigns Officer, Health Promotion Dept, Royal Northern Infirmary, Ness Walk, Inverness, IV3 5SA, tel 01463 230600, fax : 01463 713944.

Globalisation Aggravates Poverty
1997 Intermediate Technology Development Group debate
24th November 1997, Commonwealth Institute Conference Centre. Contact ITDG, tel 01788 560631, fax 01788 540270

Agenda 2000 — CAP Reform
3rd December, Central Hall, Westminster. Joint CIIR and UK Food Group conference
Invited speakers include Franz Fischler, Lord Donoghue.
Contact CIIR tel 0171 354 0883, fax 0171 359 0017, or UK Food Group tel 0171 523 2369, fax 0171 620 0719.

From Local to Global
10th anniversary conference of the Public Health Alliance. 15-16 January 1998, Sheffield Hallam University
Contact Maggie Winters, PHA, 138 Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DR, tel 0121 643 7628, fax 0121 643 4541, Email <pht@ukonline.co.uk>

Food Awareness Week - Give Me 5!
British Dietetic Association
9-15 March 1998
Local activities and media promotions to encourage everybody to eat more fruit and vegetables.
Contact Lyndel Costain c/o BDA, tel 0121 643 5483, fax 0121 633 4399.

Working Together for the Public's Health
Association for Public Health
6th Annual Public Health Forum
24-25 March 1998, University of Lancaster
Speaker: Tessa Jowell MP
Contact Profile Productions: 0181 565 1902, fax 0181 579 9258.

Keep on writing but keep your letters short! You can fax us on 0171 628 0817

Spud supine

I see Monsanto have been doing trials this year on GM potatoes near Cambridge, but who cares? The media certainly don't. The responses I have received have been supine, so I just give up.

Britain is always half asleep, perhaps deliberately so to make more money, no matter what the ethics of it. Compare this with the crackdown on vitamin B6, but I won't bore you with my theories about that one. 'We are the guardians of the nation's health. We don't care a damn about the nation's health.'

D Balaam, Canterbury

Friendly fire

Your snide presentation regarding permitted nitrate levels in lettuce and spinach (*Battle of the Greens, FM 38*) seems unworthy of an independent, factual and responsible publication.

It would be a great pity if good reporting becomes clouded with bias.

M McRobert, Leyburn

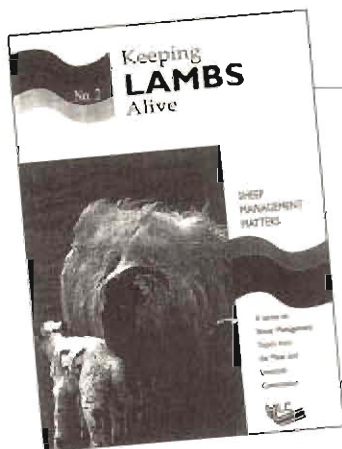
Friendly friend

As a new subscriber, I am absolutely delighted with the magazine. As a Home Economics teacher I want to ask if I can copy material for my students — some of the articles are really interesting for the Scottish Higher which this year involves a study of the causes and prevention of food poisoning.

In our school we are trying to improve the eating habits of our pupils during the day. We are particularly concerned that the caterer allows pupils to exchange their dinner tickets for chips, cola and a chocolate bar!

Name and address supplied

Ed. We are happy for individual teachers to copy pages from our magazine for teaching purposes for specific classes. But please don't abuse this, and please be sure to show the source of the material.



What's this? The Meat and Livestock Commission becoming vegetarian?

Nope! They are only keeping the creatures alive to kill them — we slaughtered nearly twenty million in the UK last year.

Big shopper

The true value of those handsets that allow you to scan your own shopping as you put it in your trolley is beginning to show itself. You have to swipe your loyalty card in first, and this allows the hand scanner to welcome you by name. Soon you will be able to register your personal foibles — vegetarian only, or no peanuts, say — and big brother inside the scanner will flash a warning when you scan an item you might not want.

The scanner can monitor not only what you buy but the order in which you purchase goods (e.g. what aisles you stroll down first) and what products you change your mind about. The next step is to use your loyalty card address to send you personalised offers from the supermarket telling you what items are on offer that will attract you, dearest customer, when you come back again next week.



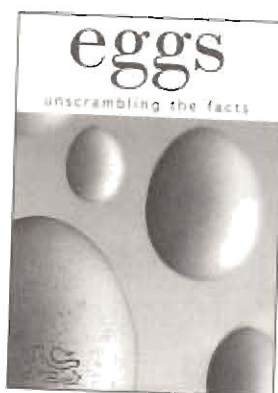
Pops

Here's the very latest in fashionable night-clubbing circuits. Alcopops without the alcohol.

Rudees Soda Co of Torquay are promoting their 'stylish new concept in soft drinks' offering us 'an acceptable alternative to alcohol'.

They may just find that the likes of Coca-Cola and Britvic got there first!

backbites



'Unscrambling the facts' claims this promotional leaflet from the British Egg Information Service. It then scrambles some of its own.

Worried that eggs have a reputation for being full of cholesterol, a great part of the leaflet is devoted to assuring us that dietary cholesterol is not the same as blood cholesterol, and that eating cholesterol in eggs will not necessarily raise blood cholesterol — therefore it is fine to eat eggs.

The leaflet mentions in passing that it is the consumption of fat, especially saturated fat, that raises blood cholesterol. But it rather negligently overlooks the fact that eggs are

not a low fat product. Quite apart from the buttered toast for dipping in the yolk, eggs themselves contain nearly two eggs-spoons of fat, and a third of that is saturated fat.

Turn it off!

We have long campaigned for more responsible advertising, especially adverts aimed at children. All too often the battles that rage within families concern a child's desire for some well publicised piece of junk food against the parents wishes that they should eat something decent.

Such battles should properly occur between the promoters of our public health and the commercial

might of the food industry, but all too often they occur at home instead, creating discord where it is most unwelcome.

Now we see a lead article in the Food and Drink Federation's house magazine *Feedback* addressing the issue — and coming up with its own remarkable slogan. *'The proper place for regulating food advertising is within the family!'* We know where they stand.

Lucky student union members

can order a Big Mac, fries and drink and get an extra cheeseburger for free! Offer lasts all through the academic year. You can't order before 10.30am (as if!) and to be sure you don't have to walk far, McDonald's announced it was opening two new stores each week in the UK for the next twelve months. We predict a rapid rise in coronary bypass operations among university graduates in about twenty years time.



Press pass

A company called InterMedia Training wrote to the Food Commission recently offering us a chance to participate in one of their £800-a-day courses in how to write press releases and talk to journalists. 'As an industry body that the media contact for informed comment on food products, it is important that your spokespeople are trained to control the agenda and send out correct messages for the industry.'

Whoops! That's not us, surely? We don't speak for industry. The company hadn't done its homework. But worse — the letter went on to cite a food scare that had caused mothers to be alarmed and how 'an ill-prepared spokesperson can turn a minor hiccup into a major company disaster'. The food scare? One of our very own research reports — *Baby food topped up with danger sugars* (Daily Telegraph, 20.7.1997).

EU helps market GMOs

The European Commission pumps some £6m into the UK grant-aided Institute of Food Research, based in Reading and Norwich. One 3-year, pan-European project being run at IFR is 'designed to bring about knowledge which will lead to a better understanding of consumer reactions to genetically modified foods.'

These findings, say the researchers, will not only help policy-makers, but will 'enable food companies to integrate new technologies into their product development more effectively.'

If you want them to know what you feel about GE food, contact Dr Lynn Frewer at IFR Norwich, tel 01603 255277, fax 01603 507723, or Email her boss on <roger.fenwick@bbsrc.ac.uk>. You may gain more insight on the workings of the IFR on their website: <www.ifro.bbsrc.ac.uk>.

It's a government document. It's a guide for health professionals. It's about diets for infants, and it is based on the Department of Health's expert COMA report on weaning and the weaning diet.

So it comes from the Department of Health, surely? Or from the Health Education Authority? No. If you look carefully at the cover, you will see it is produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Where food ends and health begins has always been a sticking point between the two ministries. MAFF has responsibility for nutritional information on labels. MAFF also takes (or fails to take) responsibility for regulating the health claims being made for foods, food supplements and so-called functional foods. But publishing healthy eating leaflets for health workers (this one went out to all readers of the *Health Visitor* journal) is surely outside their remit?

