

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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Dutched chicken – we name the brands

Dutch (verb) to stuff chicken meat with cattle and pig proteins, collagen and a large amount of water*

Products sold as chicken fillets have been shown by Irish food inspectors to be carrying large quantities of added water, flavouring agents, sugars, collagen, and proteins derived from cattle and pigs. Pork and cattle ingredients were not declared on the labels.

The Irish Food Safety Agency expresses concern that there are ethical and moral issues associated with the inclusion of undeclared pork and bovine material. Some people are allergic to certain animal proteins

and anaphylactic reactions have been reported.

Several of the products were labelled as 'Halal' or slaughtered according to Islamic ritual. The Agency's report will raise concern among religious groups who abstain from eating pork about the presence of pork DNA in chicken. All consumers will be concerned that bovine material is present but undeclared, as there is a risk that it carries mad cow disease, BSE.

While the Irish government has ordered a reported 40 000 tonnes of these products to be removed from the shelves, the UK's Food Standards Agency said that the problems were merely technical ones relating to label declarations and that no products would be prohibited from sale in the UK. Regarding the potential BSE contamination, the UK's FSA said that the origins of the cattle protein

remained to be clarified by the Dutch authorities.

In the absence of government action to protect consumers from being seriously misled, and potentially exposed to hazard, consumers must try to avoid the products when shopping. We cannot trust the ingredients list on labels to declare the truth. Restaurants must be asked to assure customers that they are not buying chicken from Holland, or if they are, that they have taken steps to avoid the products listed below.

*** Originally Dutch (verb) to irradiate seafood that has previously been condemned for its high bacterial count**

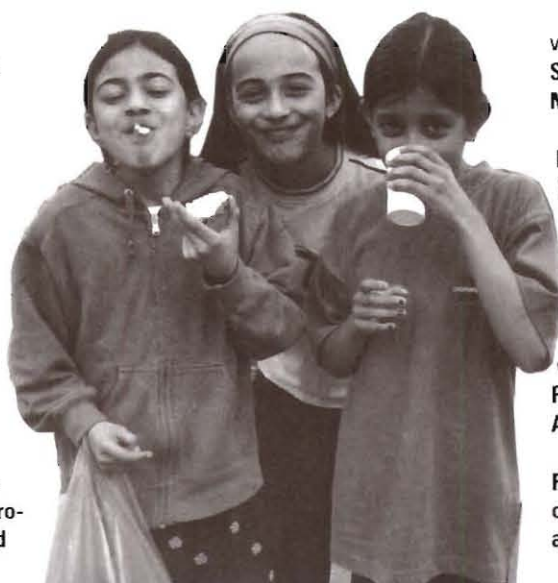
Turn to page 3 for more details

The Parents JURY



The Parents Jury has reached its verdict on the first round of Children's Food Awards.

Eighteen nursery and primary schools in the UK shared the High Five Award for promoting the consumption of fresh fruit and



vegetables. Captain Organic and Sun-Maid were joint winners of the More in my Lunchbox! Award.

Kellogg's 'Real Fruit' Winders jelly sweets walked off with The Tooth Rot Award and McDonald's Happy Meals were the clear winners of The Pester Power Award.

For the full results of these exciting new awards, turn to pages 11-14.



See pages 11 to 14 for the winners of the Children's Food Awards

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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FSA – funking its duty

Several times recently we have been disappointed by the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) response to food contamination concerns.

The FSA's response on the potent carcinogen acrylamide, found in a wide range of fried, grilled and baked foods was 'We are not recommending that people change their diet or their cooking methods.'

When we revealed that the contaminant 3-MCPD is found in a wide range of baked foods, the FSA did its best to undermine our story, possibly in close cahoots with the food industry (see *Backbites*, page 24).

This June, an FSA survey into irradiated food found large numbers of illegal products (see page 3) – but the FSA said it did not intend to prosecute any of the manufacturers involved.

Nor has the FSA withdrawn adulterated chicken (see front page) although their Irish counterparts have impounded 40,000 tonnes of the stuff.

Illegal sales of condemned meat are worth millions of pounds, but food inspectors have said it has been appallingly difficult to involve the police in food fraud cases and a protocol between local and police authorities is urgently needed. The FSA promised to work with police and the Home Office to produce a liaison protocol, we understand, but nothing has appeared. Similarly the FSA promised to look at changes to the Food safety Act to help local inspectors prosecute companies – but there has been a deafening silence on this front, too.

Last year the FSA promised to make proposals on controlling advertising directed at children. We waited and waited. Now the FSA says it wants more research – a nice delaying tactic.

The FSA has been in action for over two years and it has lost its shine. Its declared enthusiasm for action has faded away, and now it prefers to kill the difficult stories, and even ridicule the messengers, rather than tackle the big boys in the food trade.

If the FSA has sold out, then cash-strapped local authorities are the public's last line of defence in law, and consumer groups like the Food Commission resume our posts as champions of public concern.

Taking a view

A fascinating study by the Institute of Food Research last May asked consumers what sources of information they trusted when it came to genetically modified (GM) food. Respondents said they trust consumer organisations, but not the government, nor the European Commission nor scientists developing GM, and certainly not the food industry.

Half the people surveyed were given extra details about how GM food products could be traced and properly labelled – but this made no difference to people's attitudes to risks and benefits of GM.

Our own survey on attitudes to food irradiation (see page 5) shows that people may be persuaded to accept such technology, but only if they don't know the counter-arguments. Hearing both sides lets people decide – usually against the technology.

When the UK government starts its consultation on growing GM crops (see page 15), we shall be deeply suspicious if they do not put both sides of the argument. It is essential that they do.

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. Call 020 7837 2250 or email ian@foodcomm.org.uk

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BADvertisements!

This magazine takes no advertising for food products. We believe that food companies already promote their products too much.

But we do like to expose food companies' deceptive descriptions, silly statements and loopy labels.

So watch out for our ANTI-ADVERTISEMENTS scattered through this magazine!

Irradiation: FSA refuses to prosecute

Survey results released by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in early June contained fresh evidence that companies are flouting food irradiation laws.

The latest survey of herbs and spices, food supplements, prawns and shrimps revealed that unlabelled irradiated products in each of these food categories are still reaching our shop shelves. In the UK, only correctly labelled irradiated herbs and spices are allowed.

Particularly alarming was the fact that a wide range of dietary supplements of different brands were found to have been irradiated, in breach of food regulations.

The survey found that out of 138 dietary supplements tested, 58 (42%) were being sold illegally. The supplements sampled were: alfalfa, Aloe vera, cat's claw, devil's claw, garlic, ginger, Ginkgo biloba, ginseng, green tea, guarana, kava kava, saw palmetto, silymarin (milk thistle), and turmeric. There were positive results for irradiation in all product types except green tea.

Five out of 202 prawn and shrimp samples and one out of 203 herb and spice samples were also irradiated.

The FSA says they have informed companies in breach of the regulations of the results and have told them to remove the affected products from sale.

The Food Irradiation Campaign was shocked to learn that from the start of the survey the FSA had no intention of prosecuting those responsible for stocking illegal, unlabelled irradiated food products. The survey was undertaken 'for surveillance purposes' and so cannot be used in prosecutions. However, local authorities can undertake further sampling with a view to prosecution. There will be a further joint FSA/local authority survey to check that the companies concerned have taken appropriate action.

According to the FSA there are 'no food safety concerns arising from this survey', but 'it remains an important issue of consumer choice and information'. They fail to point out that illegally irradiated produce may have been irradiated at unauthorised premises and may not have been treated according to good practice. They also don't mention the fact that misuse of irradiation to clean up dirty food or food that has gone bad, as has occurred in the past. This constitutes a health hazard, which is why it is illegal.

'This lack of action displays an inexcusable pro-industry stance,' said Merav Shub of the Food Irradiation Campaign. 'The law is designed to protect consumers' health from the misuse of irradiation by unscrupulous food

processors, and to protect consumers' right to know. These laws are flouted by traders who stock illegal irradiated food products that lack the required labelling. How many more times must companies be warned before any real action is taken? Consumers should be protected through strong legislation that is fully enforced without hesitation.'

In February 2001 the FSA sent a written warning to several companies and organisations involved in the food supplement trade, concerning the illegal sale of irradiated ginseng. Since then the BBC, The Food Commission and now the FSA have all conducted surveys, and each of these discovered irradiated ginseng food supplements.

The lack of enforcement by the FSA is a green light for companies to go on breaking the law.

■ Full details from the Food Standards Agency. Survey results at: www.food.gov.uk/news/pressreleases/irradiated_food_pr

■ For further information contact on the Food Irradiation Campaign, contact Merav Shub, tel: 020 7837 9229; email: irradiation@foodcomm.org.uk

continued from cover

Dutched chicken fillets - none of these products have been recalled in the UK

	Best before	Added water	Halal claim	Monosodium glutamate	Pig protein	Cattle protein
De Kippenhof (Kappers Foods)	9/2002	40%	✓	✓	✓	X
De Kippenhof (Kappers Foods)	5/2002	30%	X	✓	X	✓
Diamond	1/2003	27%	✓	✓	✓	X
Farmyard (Packed by Superkip)	1/2003	25%	✓	✓	X	X
Slegtenhorst (MR brand rood)	11/2002	19%	✓	Added 'aroma'	✓	X
Sun Brand (Lamex BV)	6/2003	29%	X	X	X	✓
Blue Ribbon (Lamex BV)	5/2003	23%	✓	X	X	✓
01 B Excellent (PI T Lelle BV)	12/2002	38%	X	✓	✓	✓
Theco (Vrieskoop BV)	10/2002	31%	✓	Added chicken 'flavour'	X	✓
Duke (Vrieskoop BV)	10/2002	21%	✓	Added chicken 'flavour'	X	✓

Source: Food Safety Authority of Ireland, 27 May 2002.

Food fit to fight crime

A study by researchers at the University of Surrey has found that adding vitamins and nutrients to young people's diets can cut crime.

A dietary experiment was conducted with 230 young offenders at a maximum security institution in Aylesbury, cutting offences by 25%.

Half of the young men received pills containing vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids. The other half received placebo pills.

Researchers recorded the number and type of offences committed in the nine months before receiving the pills and in the nine months during the experiment. The group which received the supplements committed 25% fewer offences than those who had been given the placebo.

The greatest reduction was for serious offences, including violence, which fell by 40%. There was no such reduction for those on the dummy pills.

Of course, no-one thought to try teaching these young men how to cook.

Bernard Matthews tussles over turkey tag

French free-range poultry producers and the French government have accused Bernard Matthews of 'hijacking the market' for high-quality turkey by trademarking 'Label Rouge' in the UK. On French poultry, 'Label Rouge' denotes that poultry have a growing period twice as long as factory chickens, they are reared in the open air and fed a cereal-based feed. No animal protein or growth factors can be used in the feed. Bernard Matthews turkey production has, in contrast, been criticised by animal welfare groups such as Viva! for 'overcrowded sheds, dead and dying birds, animals with gaping wounds, birds with one half of their beak removed and cannibalism'.

■ **Source: Food Law Monthly and Viva!**

Soya suspicion

A chemical found in soya-based infant formula has been found to dramatically compromise the immune system of mice, in laboratory experiments. Soya-based foods are rich in genistein, a substance that mimics the hormone oestrogen. If it proves to be harmful, then babies fed soya-based

infant formula would be especially at risk. Soya-fed babies have levels of genistein in their blood up to 200 times as high as those given breast milk or cow's milk formula. The laboratory researchers recommended that a wide-ranging study should now be conducted into the effects on humans.

■ **Source: New Scientist**

US challenges Europe over GM

The US is set to take legal action against the European Union for its continued embargo on the commercial use of genetically modified crops. 'I am very strongly considering bringing a World Trade Organization action,' said US trade secretary Robert Zoellick. 'Right now they're not approving a darn thing and we think the traceability and labelling rules are unworkable.' No new GMO varieties have been approved in the EU since 1998, preventing imports of US-grown GM maize and soya.

■ **Source: The Grocer**

The Organic Directory

This updated directory lists information and contact details, including website addresses, of over 1,000 organisations in the UK sup-

plying organic goods and services, including vegetable and fruit box schemes, local farmers' markets, retailers and wholesalers, farm shops, organic farms offering B&B, mail order suppliers, and organic restaurants and cafés. The directory is available in good bookshops for £4.95 and available online at: www.soilassociation.org. The directory is published by Green Books, tel: 01803 863260.

Farm slurry promotes superbugs

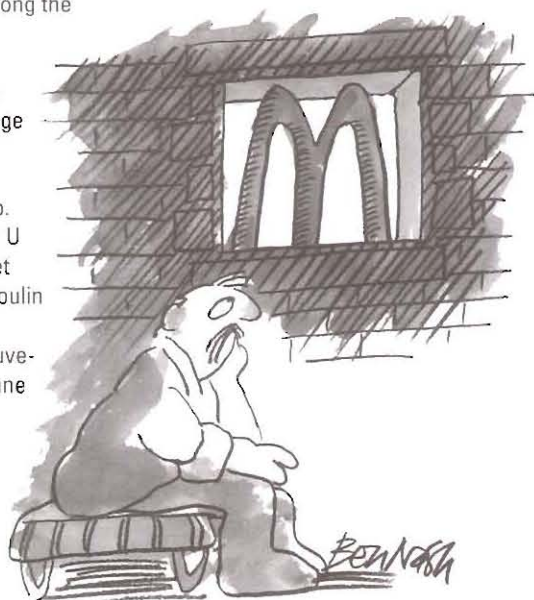
Research in Switzerland has found that slurry spread on fields as fertiliser contains residues of veterinary drugs, and may contribute to antibiotic resistance in bacteria. Over 10,000 tonnes of antibiotics are given to farm animals in the UK and US each year, to prevent disease and promote growth. Stephan Mueller of the Swiss Federal Institute for Environmental Science and Technology in Dübendorf discovered contamination in Swiss soil - especially concerning since Switzerland is one of the few countries to have banned antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed. This has fuelled concerns that antibiotics may be contaminating farmland throughout Europe.

■ **Source: New Scientist**

McPrisoner No.20671U

The french activist José Bové is currently in jail serving a two-month sentence for his trashing of a McDonald's store - dumping a trailer-full of manure among the tables.

If you want to send a message to him, the address is:
José Bové, no. d'écrou 20671 U
Maison d'arrêt
Avenue du Moulin de la Jasse
34750 Villeneuve-les-Maguelonne
France



Bad health claims on junk foods

A charge against W Jordan (Cereals Ltd) from Biggleswade was withdrawn at Shrewsbury Magistrate Court 27/05/02, following the companies decision to accept a formal caution and prosecution costs.

The charge related to a packet of 'Jordans Luxury Crunchy Maple and Pecan', which bore the claim 'Did you know that Pecans are an excellent source of monounsaturated fatty acid - similar to that found in olive oil - and have the same effect in reducing the risk of coronary heart disease'.

It was alleged that this amounted to a prohibited claim within the meaning of paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 to the

Regulations namely that the food had the property of preventing, treating or curing a human disease or made reference to such a property.

Speaking after the case, Mr David Walker, Chief Trading Standards said 'Shropshire County Council is working long and hard to ensure that food companies do not make illegal health claims for their products. The Joint Health Claims Initiative code of practice is designed to ensure that claims of this nature are not misleading. Shropshire County Council expects food companies to fully comply with the law'.

■ **Further information from Shropshire County Council's Press Office on (01743) 252813**

Given the facts, consumers reject irradiation

When told the facts, most consumers say they don't want irradiation, a Food Irradiation Campaign survey has revealed.

Despite intense efforts by the irradiation industry to increase consumer acceptance of irradiated food, consumers who were presented with both the pros and the cons of the technology said they wouldn't buy it.

Carried out in spring 2002, the study explored the link between consumer responses and the information given to them in questionnaires. Those surveyed were students taking degrees in nutrition and other subjects at the University of North London and Manchester Metropolitan University.

The students were randomly split into three groups: Group 1 were given a list of commonly claimed benefits of food irradiation, Group 2 were given a list of

commonly claimed hazards of the technology, and Group 3 received both lists.

The results showed that telling consumers only about the benefits increased their willingness to buy irradiated food. Not surprisingly, telling them only about the hazards led to far more reluctance to buy the food. Most revealing were the responses of Group 3, which closely resembled those of Group 2. The results show that if you tell consumers both sides of the story they become reluctant to buy irradiated foods.

Students' willingness to buy irradiated food

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Would buy (%)	38	14	17
Would avoid (%)	26	53	55
Unsure (%)	36	33	28

The pro-irradiation lobby strenuously promotes 'education' of consumers. What they really mean by this is the provision of material extolling the virtues of food irradiation. It is claimed that consumers can then make an informed choice in favour of irradiated food. However, when supermarkets such as Sainsbury's asked their own customers whether they wanted irradiated products, the answer they got convinced them not to stock such products (see Supermarkets Reject Irradiation in Issue 57).

■ The survey was conducted by Suzanna Lim, under the joint supervision of the University of North London and The Food Irradiation Campaign.

European irradiation campaigns gather pace

Danish consumers are taking up the Food Irradiation Campaign's lead in putting pressure on supermarkets.

Following publication of the results of The Food Commission's survey of UK supermarket policies on food irradiation (see Issue 57), a similar survey of Danish supermarkets is being undertaken by Active Consumers, Denmark. Further surveys are planned for several other European countries.

At least two of the irradiated products listed in the UK Food Standards Agency survey (see page 3) – Kwai brand Garlic and Bio biloba brand Gingko biloba – were also on sale in Danish shops last month.

A Danish newspaper reported that the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration would not conduct an investigation of illegally irradiated dietary supplements, but that they had sent the list of irradiated products identified by the UK survey to their eleven Regional Veterinary and Food Control Authorities with instructions to 'keep an eye out' for the products. If any are found on Danish shelves the importer or retailer will be asked to 'prove' that the product is not irradiated by getting the producer to provide a written guarantee.

Active Consumers, Denmark has written a letter to the Danish Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries insisting that a thorough survey be conducted as soon as possible. A Danish MP has now put the question to the Danish parliament.

The UK Food Irradiation Campaign is monitoring developments.

US Farm Bill undermines irradiation labelling rules

The new U.S. Farm Bill has been strongly criticised by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund because increases in US farm subsidies would have negative impacts on farmers in the developing world.

Far less attention has been paid to a separate but worrying element of the Bill - its provisions on the labelling of irradiated food. The provisions include the redefining of the term 'pasteurisation' to include any food safety technology that has been approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Industry will be able to request to use the term on irradiated food, with no requirement to notify consumers or allow them to comment.

Food producers who use irradiation want to label their products with the word 'pasteurised' because it conjures up images of wholesome milk. However this could confuse and mislead consumers who do not realise that it may mean 'irradiated'. While the requirement to display the radura symbol (the international symbol for irradiation) or to include a label saying that the products have been irradiated remain in force, the new laws will establish a mechanism for the industry to undermine the current labelling regulations for irradiated foods in the US.

Another provision directs the Secretary of Agriculture not to discriminate against irradiated commodities that are purchased through various nutrition programmes such as the National School Lunch Programme and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. To make matters worse, irradiated food served by US schools does not have to be labelled.

Irradiated mail upsets US Congress employees

Employees at the US Congress are suffering ill health from exposure to letters irradiated to reduce the risk from anthrax.

After five deaths last October from anthrax-contaminated mail, the postal service started irradiating letters destined for the White House, Congress and government agencies. The US Congress Office of Compliance, which monitors workplace safety, has now reported on health complaints from employees handling irradiated mail. Of 215 congressional employees, more than half said they got headaches, almost a third had itching, nearly a quarter said their eyes burned and a fifth became nauseous.

The Office has recommended additional research to find out what irritants are making people sick from handling irradiated mail, but irradiation advocates have dismissed the complaints and belittled the congressional employees who expressed concern.

Direct action down under

Campaigners are maintaining a 24-hour presence at the site of a new irradiation facility run by Steritech in Australia. They are protesting about the lifting of a 10-year moratorium on food irradiation. Steritech's brochure says that the facility will be a 'boost to the Queensland economy, as increased export sales will be generated as a result of being able to irradiate fruit and other produce for the export market'. Meanwhile, US irradiation company SureBeam has set up a satellite office in Queensland and submitted its own application to the regional Food Authority to irradiate tropical fruits for export to New Zealand, the US, Japan and Europe.

Food policies fail to deliver good nutrition

Agriculture policies have delivered large quantities of food. Food safety policies have attracted enormous political attention. But the big killer – nutrition – remains a policy desert. Tim Lobstein reports.

Food policies fall into three broad categories: the provision of adequate quantities of food, the provision of safe food free from contamination, and the provision of a healthy diet available to all.

While agricultural policies have been spectacularly successful in their own terms, producing abundant quantities of food, with rising yields and ever more sophisticated technologies, and while food safety policies, although tarnished by several terrible episodes of food-borne disease, have nevertheless established extensive and largely successful inspection and control procedures, nutrition policies are still in their infancy.

For example, which of Europe's nations is achieving healthy diet recommendations? As table 1 shows, few countries are able to meet the dietary recommendations of the last two decades, and no country is meeting all of the recommendations.

Even within a country's population, there are few individuals who are meeting the targets – whereas at least half should do so if the target for the population is to be met. For the UK, the figures are shown in table 2.

This is extraordinary, given the importance of poor nutrition in the creation of human ill health. Recent figures from the

World Health Organization show that over 130 million years of healthy life are lost in the European region every year as a result of disease – and that nutritional factors have a significant role to play in causing some 55 million of these lost years, and can modulate the severity of disease in a further 50 million.

Part of the problem lies in fragmentation of responsibility for food policy. In the UK, local health authorities deal with healthy diet promotion and health education, while local municipal authorities deal with food inspection and commercial production, and yet other bodies deal with local veterinary and farm monitoring services.

At national level, we have ministries responsible for agriculture and other ministries responsible for health. Agriculture is viewed as a business and ministry responsibilities include the support of agricultural trade in local and international markets. Food safety policies bridge agriculture and health ministry responsibilities, but nutrition gets relatively little attention.

At EU level, the European Commission is divided into those that handle the agricultural policies, especially the Common Agriculture Policy, and those that handle health and consumer affairs. Even though major food

Table 2: Percentage of British adults achieving UK dietary guidelines

Guideline	Men	Women
Fat intake	17.3%	10.9%
Saturated fat intake	3.3%	2.3%
Dietary fibre	25.4%	5.6%
All dietary guidelines	0.1%	0.0%

safety problems have arisen in the last decade, such as dioxin contamination and BSE, health and consumer concerns are not on the agenda for the re-negotiation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the current mid-term review. The first status report on the European Commission's activity in the field of nutrition is expected to be published during 2002, which is a welcome move, but early drafts of the document show that little progress has been made in ensuring that nutrition is one of the CAP's priorities.

At world level, the division is reflected in the two UN bodies: agriculture and food production is the domain of the Food and Agriculture Organization, while health and the effects of food consumption are in the domain of the World Health Organization.

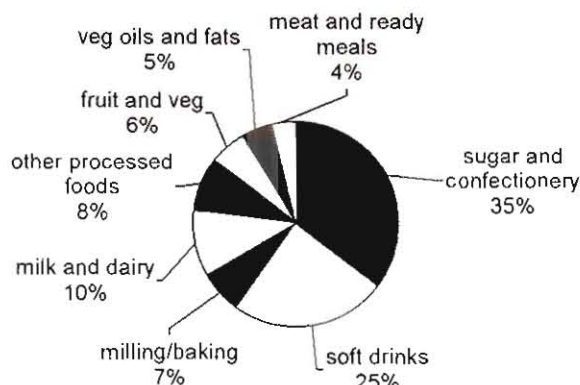
The evidence suggests that where food and nutrition policies are not being actively promoted, dietary patterns may deteriorate. Italy and its neighbours are the home of the traditional Mediterranean diet, or rather the range of diets around the Mediterranean region. As figure 1 indicates, the patterns of food supply in southern Europe have changed since the 1960s, and are now

Table 1: Countries achieving dietary goals

Population goal	Countries achieving goal, out of 14 EU countries examined
Dietary fat: less than 30% total energy	Portugal
Saturated fat: less than 10% total energy	Portugal
Fruit and vegetables: more than 400 grams per day	Italy, Greece, Spain, possibly Portugal
Dietary fibre: 25-30 grams per day	none

Figure 2: Foreign direct investment 1990-1997 in Eastern Europe's agro-food sector (total \$1.9bn)

Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Rep, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine



increasingly similar to those found in northern Europe (FAO, 2002a).

In other parts of Europe the trends are going the same way. In Eastern Europe, much of the transition in food supplies is coming as a result of western countries investing in the region. In this part of Europe, consumption of animal products has been high for several decades, while obesity incidence and cardiovascular and cancer mortality rates are significantly higher than in the European Union.

Dietary recommendations in Eastern Europe would include a significant rise in fruit and vegetable consumption as well as a

reduction in fatty foods. However, an analysis by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development shows that for every hundred dollars being invested in fruit and vegetable production, over a thousand dollars is being invested in soft drinks and confectionery production (see figure 2).

The evidence shows that, without positive intervention, a modernisation of food supplies is linked to a deterioration of diet. This trend, known as the 'nutrition transition' is being increasingly recognised among health and – significantly – agriculture policy-making bodies. Statements from the Food and Agriculture Organization in 2002 show a welcome appreciation of the problem:

'The thinking used to be that if people get enough energy in their diets, the micronutrients will take care of themselves. But increasingly people are eating larger quantities of cheap food that fill the stomach but still leave the body without those micronutrients...'

'Farmers have given up subsistence farming of multiple crops that provide a more

balanced diet in favour of a single high-yielding cash crop. Another element ... is the increasing importation of foods from the industrialised world. As a result, traditional diets featuring grains and vegetables are giving way to meals high in fat and sugar' (FAO, 2002).

In conclusion, current food policies either ignore or undermine the nutritional health of the population. Policies are contradictory and inconsistent, and policy-making authorities are divided in their responsibilities for food supplies.

Interventions are needed, based on nutritional criteria. Interventions cannot rely on consumers changing their behaviour unassisted, and must tackle the supply-side factors, such as subsidies and commercial incentives, as well as demand-shaping factors such as marketing, advertising and pricing.

With the right approach, food producers may be able to improve a population's dietary health significantly. This will require the encouragement – or coercion – of farmers, food producers and distributors in order to counter current trends in food supplies and to re-shape the nutrition transition.

Meanwhile, burger chain McDonald's has announced its intention to expand its activities in Russia by opening an average of one new store every fortnight for at least a year. They currently operate 75 stores in the country, and have proved frighteningly popular, serving 300 million customers since they started in 1990, and selling more than 66 million Big Macs.

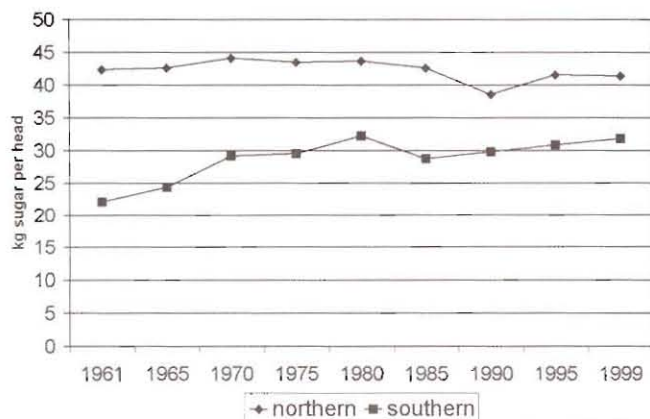
■ Adapted from a paper given to the Nutrition Society, Galway, June 2002.

Figure 1: Food supply patterns in southern Europe are converging with those in the north

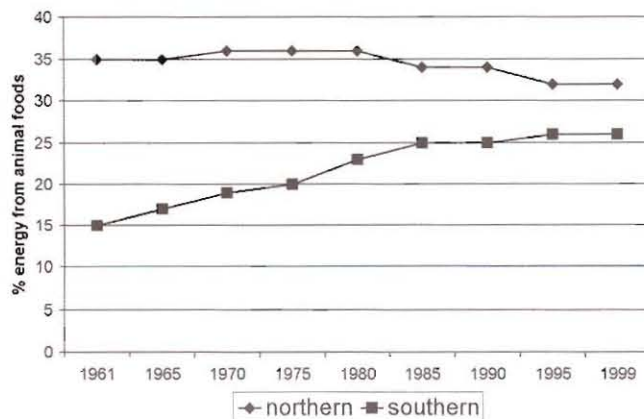
Southern Europe: population-weighted average of Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Northern Europe: population-weighted average of Germany, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom

Kilograms of sugar per person



Percent energy from animal foods



Football = health?

Sports stars are valuable role models. Their healthy lifestyles and physiques demonstrate the benefits of good food and plenty of exercise. In the midst of World Cup fever, footballers were much in demand to help sell foods and drinks – especially those aimed at children.

Fat

Sports stars ought to be good role models. They have the performance, the looks and the fans. Sadly, it's clear that money talks louder than principles.

While specialist chef Roger Narbett fed the England World Cup team in Japan on menus such as Cornish hake with spaghetti, rocket salad, tomato and Parmesan cheese, football heroes such as David Beckham, Teddy Sheringham, Terry Venables, Gary Lineker and David Seaman were promoting burgers, chips, cola, chocolate and crisps. Sports nutritionists would never allow footballers to eat such food in the run-up to a match.

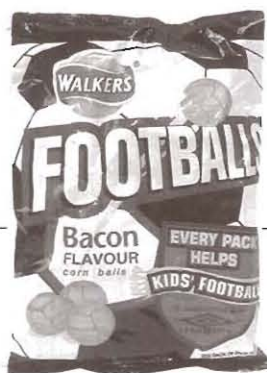
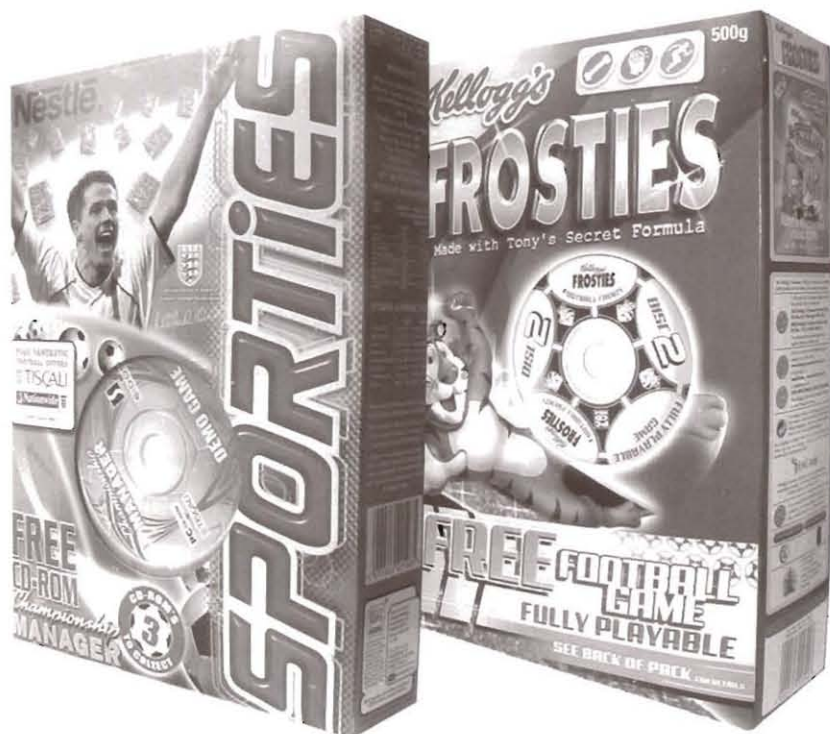
Alerted by members of The Parents Jury to this mismatch between footballers' eating habits and their marketing habits, we searched for products showing a footballer or football imagery. We failed to find a single healthy food or drink promoted in this way. Isn't it time sports stars took more responsibility for the foods and drinks they help to promote? And isn't it time food

manufacturers stopped using sporting imagery for unhealthy foods?

- MacDonald's "Red Hot Football" and "Virtual Ref" promotion featured a link-up with Teddy Sheringham
- Burger King offered footballing Simpsons toys as free gifts with their chips and burgers
- Coca Cola promised the chance to win "VIP tickets to the 2006 FIFA World Cup Final"
- David Beckham's face appeared on promotional packs of Pepsi Cola
- Kitkat chocolate came with a "Terry Venables Challenge"
- Crisps were a favourite vehicle for football imagery. Gary Lineker and David Seaman helped to promote Walkers crisps, while Corn Footballs, Quavers, Monster Munch,

French Fries, Squares, Cheetos and Wotsits also got the football boost

- Kellogg's cereals, for instance Frosties (40% sugar) were promoted with 'foot-bowls' and free 'Football Frenzy' CDs
- Nestlé "Sporties" cereal (27% sugar) was promoted by Michael Owen
- Haribo jelly sweets and M&S chocolates also exploited the football frenzy
- In Sainsbury's, fairy cakes were iced with sugar footballs.
- Jaffa Cakes were closely linked to the England World Cup team and enjoyed a colossal surge in sales.



Walkers Crisps have successfully used football stars such as

Garry Lineker and Michael Owen to encourage children to eat their high fat, high salt crisps.

Occasional consumption of such snacks as part of a balanced diet is fine, but children's diets are already dangerously *un-balanced*, with many children now eating too much fat, too much sugar, and too much salt.

Sugary breakfast cereals such as Frosties (40% sugar) and Sporties (27% sugar) were quick to exploit World Cup fever. The high sugar content could provide useful energy if you were about to play a hard game of football, but wouldn't be so useful if you were to sit down and play one of the cd games that both these packets were giving away.

chance!



KitKats's advertising usually advises us 'to take a break' and scoff a biscuit bar, not tear around a football pitch for 90 minutes.



Fairy cakes – probably not a key component of the England Team's nutritional programme.



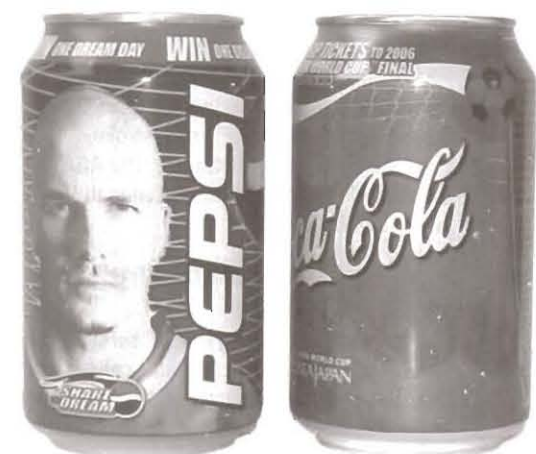
What members of The Parents Jury said about football foods

"Footballers must eat a healthy diet to keep them so healthy and fit. If only they could try and mention their favourite healthy foods to counterbalance their money-making activities in adverts!"

Mother of four, from London

"Rather than push the 'coke and crisps' image, why not push the fact that footballers need the goodness from fruit to help keep them in tip-top condition? It would be better if children were shown that the way to emulate their sporting heroes is to eat and drink healthily."

Mother of an 8-year-old boy, from Hertfordshire



Both Pepsi and Coca Cola used football as a marketing tool during the World Cup. Pepsi had paid for what they thought was an exclusive deal with David Beckham, but Coca Cola were quick to put his image onto their own bottles of Cola, much to the chagrin of Pepsi!

MPs support Coca Cola football

It's not just sports stars who are keen to help promote coke to kids. Colin Burgon, Labour MP for Elmet, has made the following statement, calling for other MPs to sign up in support:

'This House congratulates Coca Cola on their outstanding work in sponsoring the Northern Schools Football Cup involving 372 secondary schools and more than 4,000 players at the under-13 level which culminated in the final being played, thanks to the support of Middlesbrough FC, at the Riverside Stadium, in which Newsome College from Huddersfield beat Boston Spa from the Elmet constituency 4-2 in a game marked with commitment and sportsmanship;

recognises that Coca Cola have worked with existing schools associations in an attempt to stimulate the game at grass roots level; thanks all those teachers who have given so freely of their time to ensure the success of the competition and welcomes Coca Cola's plan to involve girls' teams in future years.'

Sixteen MPs have signed up in support of this pro-Coke statement (EDM 1305), of which, seven have publicly expressed their concern about childhood obesity, and the other 9 have expressed worries about osteoporosis (believed to be exacerbated in girls by consuming fizzy drinks), the effects of advertising on children's health, bias caused by accepting corporate funding, and the

negative impact of corporate activities on society. Joined-up government? We think not!

Luckily, there are also four children's health champions in parliament. The pro-Coke statement has been countered by Simon Thomas, Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion, with the following proposed amendment:

'At end add "and accordingly calls upon Coca Cola to make good this window-dressing support for school sports and children's health by withdrawing their products from school canteens and dispensing machines on school premises".'

Legal, decent, honest and true?

The Advertising Standards Association (ASA) receives numerous complaints against food and drink manufacturers every year. Here we report on just a few of the cases that have caught our eye over the last few months.

X Sexually satisfying beer?

A complaint has been upheld against an advertisement for a pint of bitter in a ribbed glass headlined 'Ribbed for extra satisfaction: John Willie to his mates'. The advertisers, JW Lees & Co Brewers from Manchester claimed they had conducted market research and respondents had not believed that the advertisement implied that drinking the bitter enhanced sexual performance. However, the ASA said that most readers would infer that "Ribbed for extra satisfaction" referred to condoms and sex and that the headline implied improved sexual satisfaction, which infringed advertising guidelines. The ASA welcomed the advertisers' decision not to use the advertisement again.

X Squaring up to violence

An advert showing a male shoulder with four red scratches, advertising 'Red Square' alcoholic drink was criticised as condoning violence and linking alcohol with sexual success. Both complaints against the Sovereign Distillery in Liverpool were upheld. The advertisers said they believed the advert was a stylish, dramatic image with no hidden meaning. The ASA noted the image played on the name and logo of the product but considered that most people would infer that the scratches were a result of violence. The Authority also considered that the scratches referred to sex and that the advertisement linked the product with sexual success in breach of the alcohol section of the advertising codes of practice. The ASA told the advertisers not to repeat the ad.

X Organic vines sprayed with copper

A leaflet for organic wine from the Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard was criticised for claiming to be 'grown and processed without the use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, or chemical disease control sprays'. The complaint was upheld when the advertisers acknowledged that copper sprays

may have been used on the vines (approved under organic regulations). The ASA concluded that the leaflet was misleading to suggest that the advertisers did not use any chemical disease control sprays.

Take a stand against slimming fraud

In April, articles appeared in a number of national women's magazines about our serious concerns about the continued flouting of advertising codes of practice by unscrupulous traders who claim to sell the solution to weightloss problems. Many people have sent in examples of adverts carrying strong claims for the efficacy of the products, and we have undertaken to complain to the Advertising Standards Authority on their behalf. People purchasing weightloss aids, often young women, are at a very vulnerable time of their lives, and need and deserve the very best protection from advertisers who often exploit that vulnerability. If you have examples of misleading slimming advertising, do send them to us. We'll complain on your behalf and keep you informed of how the complaint proceeds.

X Organic purity challenged

Claims that organic food is 'pure and free from pesticides' and 'the safe choice for your family' were judged as misleading by the ASA, who said that the advertiser, Simply Organic, was implying that non-organic food was unsafe. The ASA asked the retailer to amend its claims. A further complaint, against the phrase 'Organic farming helps protect the environment' was not upheld, when the ASA acknowledged that because organic standards require farmers to protect the environment, the claim was acceptable.

X A cure for everything!

Claims for a Chinese herb mixture called 'Arthritis (Osteo) Zhuifeng Tougu Wan' were criticized by the ASA as unsubstantiated. Claims were made for the product's weight-loss effects, and for its benefits for constipation, reducing cholesterol, hair re-growth, scalp itching, longevity, cancer, hypertension, bronchitis, infertility, depression, arthritis, stroke, bronchitis, migraine, diabetes... The ASA welcomed the advertisers' decision to withdraw the leaflet.

X Phoney slimming research

A direct mailing from Assured Testing Consultants of Bristol came in for criticism from the ASA. The mailing appeared to come from a Swiss Research Centre conducting research into a slimming product, accompanied by an 'entry form'. Claims followed for the efficacy and speediness of the product. The 'entry form' included methods of payment, the cost of the product and a short questionnaire about the recipient's weight. The advertisers did not respond to the ASA's enquiries and failed to provide any substantiation for the weightloss claims.

BADvertisement

Cheesy rip-offs!

Parents Jury member Susan Haddleton sent in this packet of cheese fingers promoted by Bart Simpson dressed as a little devil. As Susan points out, these cheese fingers cost the equivalent of £12.90 per kilogram – that's almost twice as much as organic cheddar on sale in the same store (at £6.49)! As Sue points out, "You'd be a sucker to buy them!"



CHECKOUT

Over 800 parents have already joined The Parents Jury, and more are joining every day. Here we report on the Jury's first round of awards

Parent power!

Parents are worried about the quality of food children are eating, yet until now they have had little opportunity to voice their concerns.

In cafés, restaurants and schools the standard fare is chicken nuggets and chips. In the supermarket, children's foods and snacks are often full of fat and sugar and low in essential nutrients. On TV, foods routinely advertised to children are those that contain high levels of fat, sugar and salt.

Taking a stand against the prevailing junk-food culture, the Food Commission's Parents Jury announced the first round of Children's Food Awards on 15th July 2002.

Over the past few weeks and months parents have been nominating children's food and drink products to praise better marketing practices and healthier products, in four categories:

- More in my lunchbox!
- Happy Gnashers!
- Honest Food
- The High Five award

Parents were also very critical of unhealthy foods and the marketing practices used to promote them, in four further categories:

- Not in my lunchbox!
- The Tooth Rot award
- Additive Nightmare!
- Pester Power.

Hundreds of votes were cast, with parents sending in comments and opinions about the products and marketing practices, and anecdotes about their own families' experiences with children's food. The response was overwhelming, and clear winners quickly

emerged in each of the award categories. These are displayed on the following pages.

The awards ceremony was attended by representatives of The Parents Jury (which now boasts a membership of over 800 parents, with more joining every day). Expert witnesses also attended, to share their specialist knowledge about the health effects of children's diets.

The Expert Witnesses were:

- Professor Aubrey Sheiham, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London Medical School
- Jane Landon, Deputy Chief Executive of the National Heart Forum
- Iona Lidington, Dietitian, Community Nutrition Group
- Richard Watt, Senior Lecturer at the University College London Medical School and member of the Oral Health Promotion Research Group
- Charlie Powell, Food Labelling and Marketing project officer for Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming
- Richard Siddall, Grab 5! project officer for Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.



Nutritionist Annie Seeley, co-ordinator of The Parents Jury.

The audience was also addressed by Debra Shipley MP, who is currently running a parliamentary campaign for legislation to ban TV advertising to children under the age of five. She called upon all parents concerned about the quality of children's food to join together in The Parents Jury as a strong force for change.

Following the awards, a lively discussion ensued on plans for the future, with parents keen to see the resurrection of the 'Chuck Sweets off the Checkout!' campaign, to put pressure on cafés and restaurant chains to offer more than chips and burgers, to appeal to sports centres and schools to improve the snacks and drinks on sale in vending machines, and to press for fewer additives in children's drinks and sweets.

From all of the parents, the expert witnesses and special guests, the message was clear: Children's food isn't good enough, and together we can make it better.

If you have a child or children between two and 16 years old and would like to be involved with future awards by The Parents Jury, we'd be pleased to hear from you. And if you have a group or network through which we can spread news of the campaign, please get in touch.

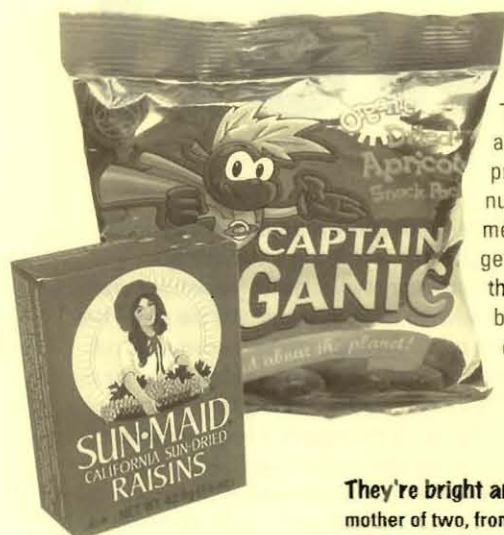
Call 020 7837 2250, send your name and address to: parentsjury@foodcomm.org.uk or visit the website at www.parentsjury.org

Make your voice heard – join The Parents Jury!



CHECKOUT

Children's Food the good, the bad and the



More in my Lunchbox!

The Parents Jury felt that most products marketed as suitable for lunchboxes were best avoided. Such products tended to be overpriced, over-packaged, nutritionally poor and marketed with dubious health messages. They were, however, pleased with genuinely healthy products which they could give to their children. **Sun-Maid** and **Captain Organic** were both popular choices and were joint winners in this category.

They're nutritious and brightly packaged in small boxes mother of two, from Liverpool

They're bright and they're colourful and they go down a treat! mother of two, from York

Not in my Lunchbox!

Parents want to make sure their children get a decent lunchtime meal at school - but school meals aren't always supplied - and hassled mums and dads don't always have the time to make homemade sandwiches. Sensing a gap in this lucrative market (there are over ten million school children in the UK) Kraft foods launched **Dairylea Lunchables** in 1998 - and saturation advertising has ensured that they are now a best-seller. But what's actually in them? And are they any good? The mums and dads on The Parents Jury certainly had a lot to say about Dairylea Lunchables, and unfortunately none of it was good! A clear winner in this category.



Absolutely vile over-processed rubbish! mother of one, from Reading in Berkshire

They are sold at a prohibitive price for what they contain - just tiny slices of ham and cheese and a few crackers! mother of two, from Southampton

Happy Gnashers!

The members of The Parents Jury were united in praising the merits of **fresh fruit**. Cheap, nutritious and tasty - fresh fruit was a clear winner. The Parents Jury also made special mention of advertising campaigns which made tooth-friendly dairy and water products 'cool'. They thought that attractive packaging, including sports caps on drinking bottles, cartoon characters and entertaining TV advertising could all encourage greater uptake of fruit juices, water and milk.



I like the TV advert for bananas - anything that promotes fruit as 'cool' is OK by me! mother of three, from Balfron in Stirlingshire

The Tooth Rot Award

Everyone knows the importance of eating enough fruit and veg - but getting children to eat enough can be difficult, especially once their tastebuds have grown accustomed to the high doses of sugar routinely added to most children's foods. These **Kellogg's Real Fruit Winders** look like the perfect solution - after all, they're 'real fruit' - but The Parents Jury had clearly taken a closer look at the ingredients and were quick to complain about them.



Totally gooey and full of sugar. mother of two, from Chelmsford in Essex

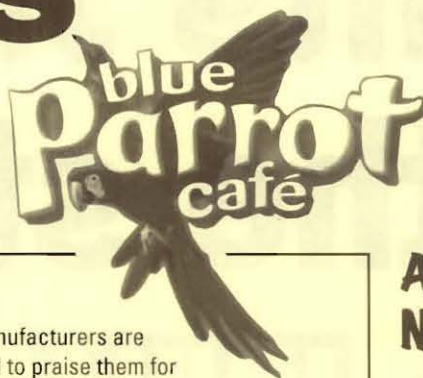
Children eating them at morning break still have it stuck to their teeth at tea-time! mother of one, from Wickford in Essex

There are lots more quotes, nutritional statistics and background information at
www.parentsjury.org

If you'd like to sign up to The Parents Jury and take part in the next Children's Food Awards - email parentsjury@foodcomm.org.uk, call 020 7837 2250 or write to Parents Jury, 2nd Floor, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF

CHECKOUT

Awards appalling



The Honest Food Award

The Parents Jury recognised that some retailers and manufacturers are beginning to take steps in the right direction, and wanted to praise them for doing so, while still pressing for more improvements. Both **Sainsbury's Blue Parrot Café** and the **Organix** range of children's foods received praise from The Parents Jury, with other supermarkets such as Marks & Spencer and Iceland also getting honorary mentions.

I am concerned about the use of artificial additives in children's food & drinks. Sainsbury's Blue Parrot range is a step in the right direction. father of three, from Sevenoaks in Kent

I like the clear percentage breakdown list of ingredients on Organix and Baby Organix products. mother of one, from Horsham in West Sussex

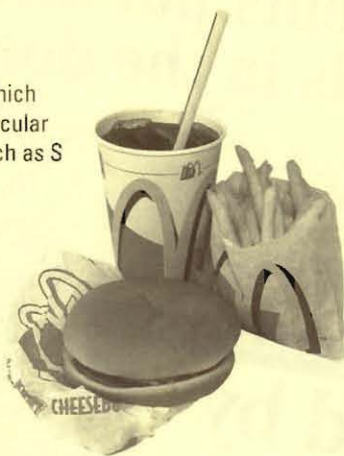


The Pester Power Award

Pester Power is the name given to marketing techniques which encourage children to nag their parents to purchase a particular product. For instance, advertisers use famous pop stars such as S Club 7 and sports heroes such as David Beckham to entice children into wanting their products. The members of The Parents Jury were particularly critical of companies using Pester Power, and **McDonald's** was the clear winner of this award with more complaints than any other food manufacturer.

McDonald's, Burger King, etc., all use children's movies to attract kid to their restaurants. Explaining to a four-year-old why she can't have a toy that lots of other kids will have is very difficult. father of one, from Teeside in Cleveland

He always asks to go to McDonalds because he sees other children with the Happy Meal toys (in fact, he thinks McDonalds is a toy shop!). We haven't given up yet! mother of two, from Stockport



Additive Nightmare!

Sunny Delight was without a doubt the most unpopular product with the mums and dads on The Parents Jury. More critical comments were made about this 'vitamin enriched citrus beverage with sweeteners' than any other product.



Sunny Delight was recently relaunched in the UK after scathing criticism from health campaigners led to a decline in sales. This new version of Sunny Delight has done away with the high levels of added sugar and instead relies on artificial sweetening chemicals, Acesulfame K (E950) and Aspartame (E951), to boost its sweet taste. It has also upped its fruit juice content from a meagre 5% to a whopping 15%. Wow!

Additive Nightmare? Sunny Delight of course! mother of one, from London

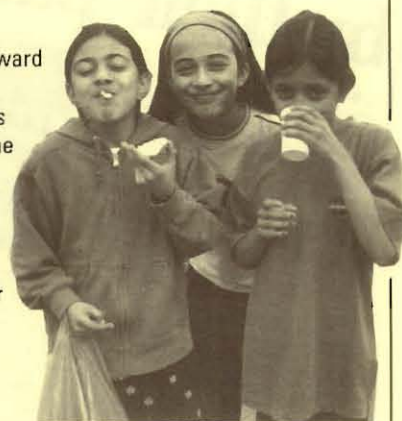
Advertising on children's TV is directed at children and makes them desperately want this. The TV adverts generally imply that you will have lots of friends if you drink Sunny Delight. mother of two, from Cradley in Worcestershire

The High Five Award!

This Parents Jury gave a big thumbs-up to **18 nursery and primary schools** around the UK who share this award for promoting the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. The full list is published on the website www.parentsjury.org. Other parents on the Jury said that they were not aware of any schemes or activities promoting fruit and vegetable consumption to children in their area, but were clear that they would welcome such schemes with open arms. It's worth noting that the parents of children at secondary school were more likely to report that junky foods, rather than fruit and veg, were on sale at school.

At snack time the children are offered bananas, raisins and grapes instead of biscuits, etc. This is a small but popular playgroup and the parents are very pleased with what the children are given. mother of two, from Ingatestone in Essex

Kingsway Primary School, Leamington Spa has provided toast and fruit in the tuck shop and other healthy eating tactics very successfully in a deprived ward. mother of three, from Leamington Spa



Parents Jury hits the streets!

Here are just a few of the headlines reporting on the awards.

BRITAIN'S parents have named and shamed the kids' fruits they hate most.

The school lunchbox parents' survey contains Kellogg's Real Fruit Winders.

Each is blamed for being "addictive," "over processed" and "stained with sugar."

The Food Commission watchdog sent the 800 strong jury list to eat and spit.

A quarter of our 10-year-olds vote over weighty fruits such as:

Foodies' pick as 'the worst' is lunchbox award. Not in Kellogg's Lunchables, processed meat and cake crackers, slices with wheat crusts.

Although half fruit, they are 40 per cent sugar. Plus fruit, juice, Puffs, Kellogg's have no comment.

Belatedly Sunny Delight was ranked for "over-sweetness" and "artificial sweeteners. The jury said it was "addictive" and "low" in fruit (just at 15 per cent).

Pester

"Additive Nightmare" runs, and they were Smarties and Angel Cakes.

McDonald's "Pester" award for "manipulative marketing" of Happy Meals.

Nutritionists Anne Bentley, head of the party, said they are aware these "visual" prizes tempt kids.

Yet the good news: parents' pick of "least liked" Kellogg's Captain Organic dried fruit, and Sainsbury's Blue Fruit Life, and Organic brands that agreed that you can't beat simple fresh fruit.

GM consultations — or manipulation?

The government is to consult the public on the commercialisation of GM crops. But, asks Rachel Sutton, does it really want to listen?

The government feels it should consult the public on whether GM crops should be grown commercially.

About time too, perhaps. In its 2001 report *Crops on Trial*, the government's advisory body, the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission (AEBC), urged a 'comprehensive public discussion of the ecological and ethical issues – including socio-economic issues – which have arisen [around the subject of GM crops and food].'

The AEBC is the government's strategic advisory body on biotechnology issues affecting agriculture and the environment, and is supposed to advise the government on the ethical and social implications arising from GM developments and public acceptability.

The government's response is due to be announced this summer and a public consultation to start this coming autumn. The consultation process is budgeted to cost less than half a penny per UK resident, and will probably follow the AEBC's proposals which consist of sending a video

and perhaps literature to local community groups such as parish councils, museums, schools and festivals, and to encourage local



community debates and focus groups. Consensus conferences and interactive television debates are also suggested.

The AEBC has warned that debates should avoid simple 'yes' or 'no' answers to whether people want commercialisation of GM crops. Previous efforts at local consultation have not run smoothly: a survey conducted by the Highland Council in Scotland found only 17% of the 1140 respondents supported the growing of GM crops. At an Essex village annual council meeting this spring, a ballot was held asking residents if they wanted local crop testing to go ahead. Of the 547 responses, 520 (95%) registered 'no', and 16 (3%) 'yes'.

(The crop testing went ahead anyway.)

A second strategy to avoid getting an answer they don't want is to restrict the debate to the scientific aspects related to the farm scale evaluations and future commercial growing. Despite the rhetoric, it is unlikely that non-scientific concerns – ethics, beliefs, personal risk levels and other issues which people use to



make decisions about the food they eat – will be allowed on the consultation agenda.

The third strategy is to exclude anyone holding a strong opinion. A parliamentary committee noted that 'There is in any event a danger that the public debate will allow those who already hold particular views about GM technology to reiterate their opinions, whilst the vast majority of people, who feel much less strongly about the matter, may not be seriously engaged in the process'. The government may take the hint, and look for groups of people who do not feel strongly about GM crops. The less you know about the issue the better.

Fourth, the AEBC proposals ensure that most debate occurs before the facts are available. It will be another year at least before the UK's GM crop trials are completed, and ecological data can be assessed. Even then there will be problems, for the crops that have been chosen for testing are mostly animal fodder crops, and are not ones directly used by consumers. Under the AEBC's

schedule, the debate will be wrapping up in autumn 2003, just as the research comes through.

Lastly, we may never get to hear the results of the debate. According to the AEBC proposals, the information gathered 'should be independently and professionally synthesised to incorporate the

most informed academic understanding of the possible significance and meanings of the views that emerge'.

UK citizens should be consulted on the issue of GM commercialisation. But will scattered groups of lay-people and school children, preferably without strong views on GM foods, be able to discuss scientific issues such as herbicide management regimes? Is that the best the government can come up with concerning a technology able to cause potentially irreversible damage to the environment and to UK farming? Let's hope not.



The Food Our Children Eat - 2nd edition

How can you bring up children to chomp on clementines rather than cola chews? Award-winning author Joanna Blythman's book is an inspiring guide for parents. From weaning a baby to influencing a teenager, she explains how to bring children up to share the same healthy and wide-ranging food tastes as you. No more tantrums, fights and refusals: her strategies are relaxed, low-effort – and they work. £8.99 inc p&p.

Fast Food Nation - special price - £2 off!

A bestseller first in the US and then in the UK, Eric Schlosser explains how scientists re-create the smells and tastes of cooked meat and fresh strawberries; talks to workers at abattoirs; explains where the meat comes from; and how the fast food industry is transforming not only our diet but our landscape, economy, workforce and culture. Often amusing, sometimes scary, and always fascinating reading. Now only £7.99 inc p&p.



Cause or Compromise? Do marketing partnerships between food companies and health charities compromise healthy eating advice? New report from The Food Commission. 98 pages, comb-bound. £75.00 inc p&p.

Biotech - The next generation

Published by The Food Commission and Genewatch UK this report examines the 'second generation' of genetically modified crops – those with 'enhanced nutrition'. The report surveys the GM products under development, evaluates their claimed benefits and considers the safety, regulatory and trade issues. £10.00 inc p&p.



Back issues of the Food Magazine

Back issues usually cost £3.50 each but we're selling a full set of available issues (approx. eighteen issues from 1996 to 2002) for £30.00. Send for index of major news stories and features in past issues. Stocks are limited and many issues are already out-of-stock.



The Chips are Down

This is an excellent guide to the planning and promotion of healthy eating in schools, full of nitty-gritty practical guidance, such as how to gain the enthusiasm and support of teachers, parents, health professionals and, most importantly, pupils. £15.00 inc p&p.



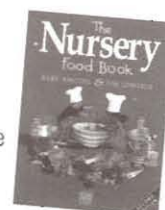
The NEW Shopper's Guide to Organic Food

Is organic food worth the extra expense? Is it all it's cracked up to be? How does it compare with non-organic food? Lynda Brown answers all these questions and more in her NEW Shopper's Guide to Organic Foods. Food writer Nigel Slater describes it as 'Essential reading for anyone who cares about what they put in their and their children's mouths'. £9.99 inc p&p.



The Nursery Food Book - 2nd edition

A lively and practical book exploring food issues such as 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. £13.99 inc p&p.



Poor Expectations

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.



Children's Nutrition Action Plan

The Food Commission's action plan details what UK children are eating and the health problems that are likely to arise as a result of their diet. The action plan maps the measures advocated by governmental and non-governmental organisations to bring about change, and highlights key policies that could make a real difference to children's health and well-being. £10.00 inc p&p.

Posters: Genetically Modified Foods, Children's Food, Food Labelling and Food Additives

Packed with essential information to help you and your family eat healthy, safe food these posters explain the problems with GM technology; give useful tips on getting children to eat a healthy diet; explain how to understand nutrition labelling; help you see through deceptive packaging and marketing claims and examine the contentious issue of food additives. Each poster is A2 in size and costs £2.50 inc p&p.

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Delivery will usually take place within 14 days.



European Food Law: 2nd Edition

Raymond O'Rourke, Palladian Law Publishing 2001, ISBN 1 90255 8448, £58.

Food Safety & Product Liability

Raymond O'Rourke, Palladian Law Publishing 2000, ISBN 1 90255 8227, £49.

For those wishing to keep abreast of food legislation at national and European levels, these authoritative books should prove a useful (if expensive) addition to the reference shelf. Written in a very clear and engaging style, they include case studies of law enforcement to illustrate regulations covering areas such as food safety, hygiene, product liability, labelling, additives and GM food.

The book on European Food Law also contains a valuable commentary on the international context of the WTO and Codex Alimentarius, with advice to businesses wishing to make their way through the maze of international legislative procedures.

For lawyers and food businesses, a useful resource; for food campaigners and researchers, well worth ordering from your local library.



The River Cottage Cookbook

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. ISBN 0-00-220204-2, £19.99. Published by Harper Collins, www.fireandwater.com.

Gaia's Kitchen: Vegetarian recipes for family & community

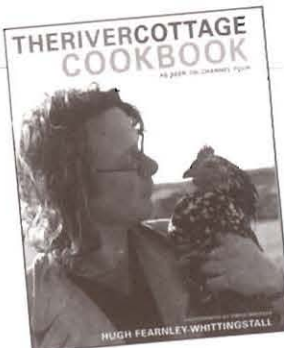
Schumacher College. ISBN 1-870098-93-5 £12.95. Published by Green Books, Foxhole, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EB, UK. Tel: 01803 863260. www.greenbooks.co.uk.

We've said before that we don't usually review recipe books. But two have come into our office that are very special, combining delicious recipes and gorgeous

photographs with ponderings on local production and consumption, providing inspiration for spending more time at the market, in the garden and in the kitchen.

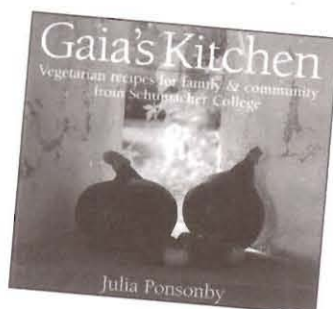
TV chef Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall's lovely River Cottage Cookbook is chock full of wonderful ideas for growing herbs and soft fruit, choosing the right butcher and the right cuts of meat, and bringing each dish to life with a touch of the right garnish or sauce. But who can abandon city living, buy a house in the country and spend the rest of their life keeping pigs, sea fishing, and living off such delights as 'stalker's breakfast' (deer liver and field mushrooms), pigeon pitta and courgette soufflé?

Gaia's Kitchen comes from the ecological Schumacher College in Devon. Alongside recipes for a



wealth of international vegetarian soups, main courses, salads, cakes and

bread, it also offers thoughts on food in the context of the local economy, community living, the environment, organic farming and the ethos of the Dartington estate where the College is based. A nice touch is that the book includes ingredient quantities for family-sized cooking (4-10 people) and communities or parties (up to 50 people).



Irradiation for Food Safety and Quality:

Proceedings of FAD/IAEA/WHO International Conference on Ensuring the Safety and Quality 2001. International Atomic Energy Association. ISBN 1-58716-081-1, \$98.95 + shipping

This book contains the proceedings of the *International Conference on Ensuring the Safety and Quality of Food through Radiation Processing* convened by FAO, IAEA, and WHO in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2000. Hosted by the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority, the conference was attended by more than 150 scientists, regulatory officials and members of the food industry from 48 countries.

Recommended reading for anyone who still thinks irradiation of food is an outmoded idea that won't gain widespread commercial use, this book offers irradiation as the answer to food problems caused by urbanisation, intensification of food supplies, consolidation of food industries and globalisation. It helpfully outlines problems caused by these trends, such as

the increasing opportunities for foodborne pathogens to infect large numbers of consumers. The many contributions from different scientists all support food irradiation as an answer. Yet there is little consideration of how to solve the underlying causes of the problems, or of the problems food irradiation itself could entail.

Mention is made, of course, of the view that 'as long as requirements for good manufacturing practice are implemented, food irradiation is safe and effective. Possible risks resulting from disregard of good manufacturing practice are not basically different from those resulting from abuses of other processing methods, such as canning, freezing and pasteurisation'. We disagree. What of the cumulative losses in nutrients to foods which could soon reach us having not only been frozen or otherwise preserved but also irradiated on top, and then need to be cooked? Dr of environmental contamination and worker exposure through radioactive

leaks at gamma irradiation plants and from radioactive material transport vehicles? Not to mention the risks of some plants irradiating spoilt food to make it appear fit for consumption - not unthinkable, since this has already occurred in Europe.

One conference paper states that viruses are considered to be the most common cause of foodborne illness in the United States, then adds 'food borne illnesses caused by viruses are not likely to be preventable by food irradiation'. So much for the panacea for all ills.

Particularly interesting is the section which emphasises the need for 'effective education programmes' to encourage consumers to buy irradiated food. It is recommended that the pro-irradiation message should 'ring with candour, forthrightness and the conveyance of new information'. In other words, try to sound as if you are telling the truth. Is this as well as, or instead of, actually telling it?

Alex asks... about supermarket service



Alex. And I can't go shopping next door, because the nearest alternative is three miles away.

The in-store bakery was wafting its delicious smells across the aisles. 'Can I have a wholemeal batch loaf without salt, please,' he asked. 'My granny makes bread without salt. And she makes her own peanut butter, too. People think she's weird but when you ...'

The assistant wasn't listening. 'Dunno what's got salt, darlin, cos its' not labelled like that. Have you looked on the shelves?'

Listening to the radio one morning, Alex was pleased to hear a woman telling listeners that supermarkets 'only sell what people want'. 'If we don't do that,' she said, 'then our customers will go next door to a shop which does.'

As it was Saturday, he went to his local Sainsbury's to see what she meant. 'I would like an organic apple,' he asked the woman at the information desk.

'Apples are there,' she pointed. 'Loose ones in the box. But organic ones are all wrapped, so you must buy them in packs of eight.' Bother, thought

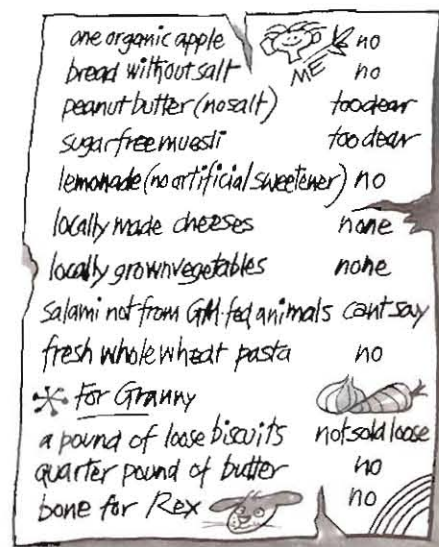


All the packaged bread on the shelves had salt. There was a jar of peanut butter without salt, but it cost

nearly twice the salted version.



This was getting bad. He found a convenient corner and made a list, and took his list to the information desk. 'This is what I want,' said Alex. 'But I don't think you can help me.'



BADvertisement



Irish Scotch Broth

Did you hear the one about the Irishman, the Scotsman and the meaningless marketing hype? Erin's packet soup is touted as 'traditional' yet on the back it is described as one of the

manufacturer's 'new products' and 'new flavours'. Meanwhile, this soup powder was 'designed in Ireland' and sold in Safeway under the banner: 'The taste of Ireland'. But it's called 'Scotch Broth'!

'What a funny little fellow you are,' she said. 'You see there aren't enough people who want these things. It's not worth our while to stock them - we wouldn't make any money on them. We can't stay in business if we lose money, young man, can we? We only sell what we know will make a profit.'

So when Alex next hears supermarkets saying they 'only sell what people want' he will ask: Which people do they mean?

■ Cartoons by Ben Nash.
This cartoon strip may be photocopied and distributed for non-commercial purposes.

You cannot be cereals!

Eat more cereal foods, say health promoters. And cut back on sweet, fatty foods like biscuits and cake. But the latest crop of cereals are as bad as both!

Using words like 'Harvest' and 'Country', the new generation of cereals may lead us to think we are buying the best of arable products: traditional cereal grains just one step removed from the wholesome purity of muesli.

We might think that, but we would be wrong.

With sugar levels rising to 30%, fat levels up to 20% (saturates up to 12%), and fibre levels falling below 5%, these products are not the bowl of cereals they should be, but are a bowl of crumbled cookies.

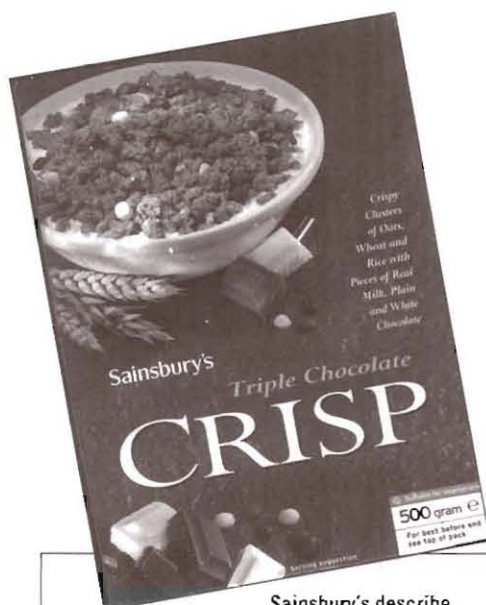
The products are stacked on the shelves among the breakfast cereals and mueslis but, as our table shows, they really don't belong there. A single portion of these so-called cereals is similar to eating five chocolate-chip cookies or a slice of chocolate cake.

A 50 gram portion (before adding milk) provides (to the nearest gram):

	sugar g	fat g	saturated fat g	fibre g
Harvest (Quaker) Red Berries Crunch	13	9	6	2
Jordans Raspberry Country Crisp	10	8	3	3
Jordans Maple & Pecan Luxury Crunch	9	9	2	3
Marks & Spencer Chocolate Flake Crunch	15	8	3	2
Marks & Spencer Decadence	12	9	5	2
Mornflake Triple Chocolate Crisp	15	8	3	3
Sainsbury Strawberry and Banana Crisp	15	9	3	2
Sainsbury Triple Chocolate Crisp	14	8	2	3
Tesco Choc & Nut Crisp	14	10	3	2
Waitrose Chocolate and nut Crisp	13	10	5	3

Or about 50g of biscuits or cake

6 Garibaldis	19	6	3	2
3.5 McVitie's Hobnobs	12	11	5	2
5 Sainsbury Chocolate Chip Cookies	11	12	6	2
1 slice M & S Orange & Carrot Cake	14	10	3	4
1 slice Tesco Chocolate Sponge Cake	17	5	3	1



Sainsbury's describe their Triple Chocolate Crisp as 'Crispy Clusters of Oats, Wheat and Rice with Pieces of Real Milk, Plain and White Chocolate'. They forget to mention that this cereal contains more sugar than chocolate chips and more vegetable oil than either rice or wheat.



This Triple Chocolate Flake Crunch contains more sugar than chocolate and a 50g serving gives you over 8g of fat.



Harvest Crunch – Delicious Crispy Oat Clusters with Real Red Berries. The main ingredients of this cereal are oats, sugar and vegetable oil, with only 3% added fruit.

Loose foods and lost labels



Chef and writer Christopher Challenger calls for better labelling of loose-sold foods.

When I was running my own restaurant kitchen I was using only fresh ingredients bought in small quantities but I was well aware that bulk catering packs of foodstuffs were surprisingly free of ingredients listing, an anomaly perfectly acceptable under The Food Labelling Regulations 1996.

Without such important information how could a chef confidently prepare a meal safe in the knowledge that the dishes were free of say, nuts or artificial sweeteners? I can recall, while on an advanced bakery course, I was invited to produce puff pastry using as shortening a product called Flex. Even the tutor did not know what the make up of this solid, white wax-like substance was but I later discovered it was primarily hydrogenated vegetable fat (HVF), one of the most indigestible components I know.

Bakery products are particularly prone to HVF and before buying any bread of biscuits I always examine the ingredients list to check for its presence. I occasionally enjoy a butter croissant from Waitrose that warns me it is 27% butter but on the same gondola there are other pre-packed croissants that

do contain HVF. Then there are the loose croissants that have no ingredient listing and are only required by law to state if they have been irradiated or contain either GM maize or soya.

While in Waitrose I spotted a range of unwrapped organic loaves and marked on the price ticket was the statement 'contains flour treatment agents'. I asked what these were but the assistant was unable to tell me. When I suggested ascorbic acid I was emphatically told 'no' as it was 'banned'. She did not know who had banned it but it is certainly not the Soil Association, whose UK Cert 5 was displayed, as according to their 2001 UKROFS ascorbic acid is permissible.

Bread is not the only product currently outside the listing legislation. Cooked meats, roasted chickens and ready-made meals sold on deli counters carry little more than the information that they 'may contain nuts' or 'contains preservatives'.

Some years ago my son worked part-time for a national supermarket chain where he was asked to remove the wrapping from

vegetables approaching their sell-by date so that they could be sold loose.

I asked Keith Gregory at the Food Standards Agency (labelling division) why loose foods were so free from labelling controls. He sent me a copy of the 1996 regulations, which clearly listed many permitted exemptions. I could understand fruit, vegetables, fresh meat and fish but was puzzled by the ambiguous clause: [food] 'which has been pre-packed for direct sale, need generally only indicate its name, the presence of certain types of additive, and the presence of ingredients which have been irradiated or derived from GM soya or maize'.

Mr Gregory did inform me that the regulations 'are going to be consolidated and reviewed shortly'. This is in line with EC Directive 2000/13/EC but apparently member states will have discretion as to what, if any, of the labelling provisions they should apply to pre-packed foods.

BADvertisement

Two years old and still fresh!

Tesco's Ravioli in Tomato Sauce is made, the retailer claims, 'with fresh pasta'. Yet this product is tinned, with a Best Before date of December 2004. How 'fresh' is that? Answer: *Not very.*

The label also describes the



product as 'pasta with a pork filling'. Yet this product is 'Less than 10% meat'. How much 'pork filling' is that? Answer: *Not much.* And as for the tomato sauce – the ingredients list explains that there is more water than tomato. *Pathetic.*

What the doctor reads



The latest research from the medical journals

Exercise reduces blood pressure

Several researcher papers have demonstrated that exercise can help reduce blood pressure in people with hypertension (raised blood pressure). Now a meta-analysis of over 100 papers has quantified the relationship and shown it also applies to people who are not classified as hypertensive.

Sedentary adults can reduce their systolic blood pressure by 3 to 5 mm Hg, and diastolic blood pressure by 2 to 3 mm Hg with regular aerobic exercise. The findings

appear to apply to people of black, white and Asian backgrounds, and to both overweight and non-overweight adults, whether or not the exercise helped them lose weight. Although the intensity and type of exercise appeared to make little difference, the frequency or duration did, with the effect on blood pressure being strongest if exercise lasts more than two hours per week in total.

■ SP Whelton *et al* (2002) *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 136, 493-503.

Fish for the heart, for women too

A study by Hu *et al* of over 84,000 women in the US shows that, like men, higher consumption of fish and other sources of omega-3 fatty acids is linked to a reduced risk of heart disease. Similar findings have been shown in men.

In a second study, Albert *et al* obtained samples of blood from a large group of male health workers and compared men who subsequently died from a heart attack with other men matched for age and smoking status. The levels of long chain omega-3 fatty acids – derived from fish or synthesised from shorter chain sources – in heart attack victims' blood were significantly lower than in men who remained healthy. The levels of short-chain omega-3s – derived from vegetable oils – were not significantly different, nor were the levels of other forms of fat, including monounsaturated oleic fatty acid – found in olive oil – or saturated fats.

■ FB Hu *et al* (2002) *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 287, 1815-1821.

■ AM Albert *et al* (2002) *New England Journal of Medicine*, 346, 1113-1118.

of breastfeeding they experienced as babies.

Measures of intelligence in over 3000 Danish adults in their late teens and twenties, were found to link to duration of breastfeeding divided into five groups: less than 1 month, 2-3 months, 4-6 months, 7-9 months and over 9 months, with the first and last group differing by over five IQ points. The finding applied after correction for differences in parents' socio-economic and educational status, indices of mothers health and behaviour before and during pregnancy, birth weights and birth complications.

■ EL Mortensen *et al*, (2002) *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 287, 2365-2371.

Every one is at risk

A review in the *British Medical Journal* suggests that interventions to lower people's blood pressure, obesity or other disease risk factor should apply across the population, not just to so-called high-risk groups. In effect, the authors suggest that virtually all of us fall into the high-risk category, and can benefit from measures which would reduce our likelihood of disease.

The paper looks at Western society's current average

values for risk indicators (blood pressure, blood cholesterol, weight and bone loss) in 60-year-olds and compares these with the values found in hunter-gather groups, equivalent to our 'prehistoric' values. The latter group show far lower levels of these risk factors than virtually all of the Western population, as shown in the table below.

■ MR Law & NJ Wald (2002) *BMJ*, 324, 1570-1576.

Western populations typically show higher values of risk-associated factors (age 60)

	Western average	Prehistoric average	Proportion of Western population below prehistoric average
Systolic BP (mm Hg)	145	110	<1%
Diastolic BP (mm Hg)	80	70	<5%
Blood cholesterol (mmol/l)	6.0	3.2	<1%
BMI (kg/m ²)	27	22	<10%
Bone loss (%/year)	1.2	0.6	<5%

Chubby boys have higher blood pressure

Overweight boys are more likely to have high blood pressure than slimmer boys, according to a study of nearly 1000 children. But the link between overweight and blood pressure does not appear to apply to girls.

Previous studies have shown that young adults with high blood pressure are at risk of developing enlarged hearts, which can increase the risk of a heart attack early in adulthood.

In adults, a greater accumulation of fat in the trunk predisposes to heart disease, and it now appears the same may be true in male children.

■ D Gallagher *et al* (2002) *Circulation (Rapid Access)*, American Heart Association, [www.ahajournals.org].

Breastfeeding builds brains

After controlling for a wide range of possible confounding factors, a significant positive association has been shown between the intelligence of young adults and the duration



feedback

letters from our readers

We welcome letters from all of our readers but we do sometimes have to shorten them so that we can include as many as possible (our apologies to the authors). You can fax your letters to us on 020 7837 1141 or email to letters@foodcomm.org.uk

Local monopoly

Sainsbury's has just opened a local 'Metro' store, just a few minutes walk from their big supermarket. Soon they will control most of our food shopping opportunities in the area. Isn't that against the law about competition and monopolies?

Jose Monteiro
London N1

The government's regulation of monopolies only looks at national ownership and control, not local monopolies, although many people such as Tim Lang have long argued that they should do so.

Incidentally, the big supermarkets are becoming very large companies indeed. The thirty largest European companies control 69% of the region's sales (includes non-food items), up from 51% just ten years ago. The largest ten companies now control 40% of sales. The list below (adapted from M+M Planet Retail, 16/05/02) shows the leading companies operating in Europe, and the amount of food they sold in 2001:

	Net food sales
Carrefour (France)	£26 bn
Tesco (UK)	£20 bn
Rewe (Germany)	£18 bn
Intermarche (France)	£17 bn
Metro (Germany/Switz)	£16 bn
Edeka (Germany)	£15 bn
Aldi (Germany)	£15 bn
Ahold (Netherlands)	£13 bn
Sainsbury (UK)	£13 bn
Auchan (France)	£12 bn
Schwarz (Germany)	£10 bn
Casino (France)	£9 bn
Wal-Mart/Asda (USA)	£8 bn
Leclerc (France)	£7 bn
Tengelmann (Germany)	£6 bn
Safeway (UK)	£8 bn
Migros (Switzerland)	£5 bn
Big Food Group (UK)	£5 bn
Coop Italia (Italy)	£5 bn
Coop Schweiz (Switzerland)	£4 bn

Tomato advice

Can you please throw any light as to why tomatoes these days are always hard? They tend to go bad eventually without ever ripening properly or softening – this applies to 'ripened on the vine' or small cherry ones bought in those little boxes. Had some from Senegal this week (!) – no change.

Mrs N Lawrence, Bournemouth
Any comments, readers?

What about the little ones?

I can see that it is not part of your campaign currently but it would be worthwhile for you to examine baby foods and the way they are marketed – I sometimes get the feeling that the companies producing and selling these products want parents to think that they are incapable of producing food for their children that are as good – obviously not the case.

L Terrington

Food technology

I feel that I must write to say how much I appreciate the *Food Magazine*. As a parent and a food teacher I have serious concerns about the quality of food we are continually 'pushed' into eating. When my job title was 'teacher of home economics' I felt that I did a good job educating pupils with very useful information. Due to the government's ignorance in changing my role to 'food technology teacher' I am now deeply unhappy

The hospital food bill

Vicki Hird's article in the previous *Food Magazine* was very interesting. Civil Servants however may be motivated to buy good food if their bosses in both the Houses of Parliament were forced to eat NHS meals, and nothing else for two weeks! Keep up the good work.

Tom Beeston
Ealing

Thank you for a thought-provoking article on the 'greening' of NHS food. I support local food, and try to buy locally when I can. But a big user like the NHS could have a big impact. Do you know how much food, on average, the NHS uses?

Katie French
Strathclyde

If the NHS were to purchase more of their food from local sources, it would, as Vicki Hird

with the quality and relevance of the information I have been told to teach.

The basis of the subject is now commercial rather than domestic and I feel like a walking advertiser for all food companies. Something which I greatly resent. I see little point in pupils being taught how Quorn is made, where low and high-risk food areas are in factories, and the value of a net in packaging. This hardly compares to what I used to teach: feeding a family on a budget, wise use of convenience foods, healthy and safe eating.

I have and will continue to use your magazine in my food lessons and try as much as possible to input my home economics teachings with my pupils.

Keep up the good work!

Mrs S Bartlett, Gloucestershire

Open sesame

Your recent list giving the calcium content of different foods shows sesame to have more calcium than milk. Your figures appear to differ from those given in other people's lists – is there any way to reconcile the different figures?

T Duke, Worcestershire

Thanks for pointing this out. We have checked various sources and found that two different figures are frequently used for the calcium content of sesame, and they relate to whether the seeds have been hulled ('decorticated') or not. Thus 'whole' sesame has around 1200mg per 100g, while decorticated sesame has around 110mg per 100g (US Dept of Agriculture). If you want the calcium and have the choice, go for the 'brown' sesame—e.g. dark tahini rather than light.

suggested in her article, make a big impact on the 'food miles' problem, as well as showing to growers, distributors and other caterers that it is possible to source local food. We've dug out the following figures:

Current expenditure in the NHS on food is around £500 million per year. Over 300 million meals are served each year in approximately 1,200 hospitals. This includes:

- 55,000 gallons of orange juice (250,000 litres)
- 12.3 million loaves of bread
- 108 million pints of milk (61 million litres)
- 2.5 million pounds of butter (1.1 million kg)
- 1.3 million chicken legs – I am told almost all from Thailand...
- and 29.8 million pounds of potatoes (13.5 million kg).

■ Source: NHS Plan section 4.16

Children's highs and lows

A food manufacturer asked us how we reach our judgements on what constitutes 'high' and 'low' values for fat, sugar and salt in children's foods. The company wanted to stay anonymous (unusual for the food industry!) but the question is important and we offer the following response.

The figures we use are taken from a 1998 MAFF leaflet giving advice to shoppers on reading labels (see table). The leaflet doesn't give age-specific figures, but it is based on the advice of COMA, the government advisory body. COMA states in its report on cardiovascular disease that its dietary recommendations 'apply in full from the age of five years'. The report adds that before the age of 2 years the general recommendations do not apply (infants are growing rapidly and need more energy-dense diets) and between the ages of 2 and 5 a gradual but

flexible transition is recommended.

For **sugar**, the COMA report on dietary reference values (DRVs) notes that 'those particularly at risk of dental caries include children, adolescents and the elderly'. Thus, if anything, the figures for high and low should be reduced to ensure a healthier diet for these vulnerable groups.

For **fat and saturated fat**, the COMA cardiovascular report expresses particular concern that signs of heart disease are detectable in children and young adults, and that a raised blood cholesterol level in childhood and adolescence raises the risk of adult disease. The dietary recommendations are thus fully applicable.

For **dietary fibre**, some caution should be exercised. The COMA report on DRVs suggests that the recommended amounts for adults should be adjusted in

proportion to body size, and lower intakes for children are advised. The report doesn't say what these should be. There are also problems interpreting labels as food companies have started using an EU-recommended method for analysing fibre which gives different values to those used when the table below was published. Thus our Food Commission reports do not usually assess dietary fibre levels when we evaluate food products.

For **salt**, the COMA cardiovascular report notes that the recommendation for adults, of cutting back to 6 grams salt per day (2.4g sodium), reflects an average value, with the expectation that

men may take more than women, and that children will take less than adults. If anything, the table below should thus have lower figures for children to ensure a healthy diet.



For a complete main meal or for 100g of other foods:

	A lot	A little
sugars	10g	2g
fat	20g	3g
saturated fat	5g	1g
fibre	3g	0.5g
sodium	0.5g	0.1g

From MAFF (1998) *Food Sense: Use Your Label*

Ethical entrepreneurs

While your article on Charity Logos For Sale (Apr/June 2002) justifiably highlighted some flagrant misuse of charity logos by food companies, I do think you should be aware that there are a growing number of companies who are making close connections with charities simply because they want to give something back to society. It is easy to be cynical in this world. It is also easy to assume that all companies that mention charities are using the connection simply to make claims or sell product. However, just as consumers are looking for ethical companies, so entrepreneurs are looking for ethical ways to do business. My own company, Viridian Nutrition does not place charity logos on our products, but we did give £15,000 to a selection of environmental and children's charities in 2001, with another £15,000 committed in 2002. Viridian is not alone, Green People in the toiletries sector and others are also making charity donations without 'using' the charity

connection unethically. Your article, while fair and accurate, should not put off ethically-minded companies from making donations to charities, highlighting this to consumers and genuinely giving something back. From our own experience, linking with charities improves staff morale, boosts sales and is much appreciated by the charities concerned. In fact, surely this is something that should be encouraged.

Cheryl Thallon
Viridian Nutrition

Thank you for your comments – our report highlighted that without careful controls, link-ups between charities and companies can sometimes go astray and, as you say, be misused to boost exaggerated marketing claims. We believe this undermines genuinely charitable efforts, and may mislead consumers. It may interest you to know that we have submitted our report as evidence to the Food Standards Agency's review of voluntary labelling practice.

Special appeal to the readers of *The Food Magazine*

**YOU'RE NOT A NURSE
YOU'RE NOT A DOCTOR
YOU'RE NOT A SCIENTIST**



SO HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You could play a vital role in helping to save the lives of many Leukaemia sufferers by helping the Anthony Nolan Trust. Every year there are thousands of sufferers of leukaemia and related diseases for whom a Blood Stem Cell donation is the only chance. The Trust maintains a register of over 320,000 donors which are matched to sufferers.

To help you can make a donation, join the register or get involved with fundraising activities in your area.

For further information, please contact The Anthony Nolan Trust, Ref FM, Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2QG. Tel: 020 7284 1234. Or visit our Website: www.anthonynolan.org.uk



THE ANTHONY NOLAN TRUST

Where leukaemia meets its match



This is Europe (1)

Congratulations to the European Commission for its brave all-guns-blazing attempt to bring the Common Agriculture Policy into the current century. Among the many positive moves being proposed, though, there is one that looks decidedly fishy.

Hidden in the detail lies a remarkable proposal to help farmers to 'meet standards'. This includes incentives to encourage farmers to join quality assurance schemes and certification schemes. It also includes payments to farmers to 'help them

implement demanding standards based on Community legislation in the fields of environment, food safety, animal welfare and occupational welfare standards.'

Effectively, farmers will be paid to obey the law. In what other industry does a producer get paid to comply with legislation? If your local high-street chicken take-away is illegally unsafe or unhygienic, would it get a nice cheque from Brussels in order to compensate it for the trouble of having to comply with the law?

No. But a chicken farmer will.

'Adverse media interest'

Readers may remember our story last year on 3-MCPD, the soy-sauce contaminant which is found widely in other processed foods.

We were rubbished by the Food Standards Agency which put out a misleading statement in advance of our story, telling journalists we had the facts wrong. We hadn't got them wrong, but by then the damage was done. Journalists, with a few brave exceptions, wouldn't touch the story.

We couldn't find out why the FSA had acted in such an extraordinary way – and perhaps we never will. But one theory received some support recently.

On page 5 of the Annual Report of the Food and Drink Federation ('The voice of the food industry') is a section entitled 'So how did the FDF make a difference in 2001?' In answer, they boast: that they 'positively influenced (the) FSA's presentation of the results of its surveys of 3-MCPD to avoid adverse media interest.'

Can Sir John explain what the FDF is referring to?

This is Europe (2)

While attention is focused on the CAP reforms, the European Food Safety Authority is quietly getting underway.

They haven't got a director yet, nor have they agreed where the EFSA will be located. But they have chosen its Management Board. The procedure required the European Commission to put forward a list, and the Council of Ministers to select 14 people from the list, subject to the European Parliament's approval. We were promised that four of the members of the Board would 'have their background in organisations representing consumers and other interests in the food chain'.

According to the European consumer body BEUC, the Commission proposed 30 nominees, and the Council has made its selection. There were nine national officials nominated – of whom the Council chose six. There were two farmers – the Council chose both. There were five food industry representatives – the Council chose three.

Of the four nominees from consumer organisations the Council chose one.

BEUC comments that the overall balance is wrong and will offer 'little hope of resolving the failures of the previous system'.

GM off the map

A study by the Institute of Arable Crops Research at Rothamsted has shown that there may soon be no room for genetically modified crops to be grown in the UK.

Crops have to be grown at least 200 metres from the nearest organic crops to prevent cross-contamination through pollen etc, and that would exclude about 30% of the country. But extending the minimum distance to 600 metres – which would be needed to bring contamination levels down below the proposed 0.1% minimum – would exclude over 70% of Britain's farmland.

It doesn't take a genius to realise that opening just a handful more organic farms in strategic places could ensure that there is nowhere left for GM crops to grow, whether permitted in the food chain or not.



'Phew! We've almost got the whole lot covered!'

Fruit: fine for some

Encouraging children to eat five portions of fruit and veg a day was thrown into confusion by the Heinz claim that spaghetti hoops counted as a portion, because of the tomato sauce.

Sainsburys has now jumped on the bandwagon with a whole range of processed foods labelled 'Way to Five'. Products include a chilled pizza and a sponge pudding.

How a sponge pudding can be classified as helping to protect us from heart disease is a mystery.

But not quite a mystery: we understand that there is a government advisory group helping the Department of Health to define what should and shouldn't be counted as a portion of fruit and veg.

On this committee sits a nutritionist, Gill Fine. Surely this couldn't be the same Gill Fine who works as company nutritionist at ... Sainsburys?

C'est l'Europe (3)

Whilst further moves are made by health ministries across Europe to encourage their citizens to consume more fruit and vegetables, the folk in the European Commission (EC) have other ideas.

The EC has approved payments of over £3000 per hectare to farmers in France to uproot their fruit trees. Some 10% of total production of apples, peaches and nectarines are scheduled to be permanently destroyed. Higher grants of more than £5000 per hectare are available for the destruction of a further 5% of fruit trees and their replacement with new 'certified and improved varieties' that will better 'meet the requirements of retailers and consumers'. *La vie, c'est Golden Delicious.*