

# The FOOD MAGAZINE

**Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all**

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## BBC in row over Tweenies abuse

**T**he Food Commission has formally complained about the use of the BBC symbol and Tweenies cartoon characters on fatty and sugary foods being marketed directly to children.

Our complaint was sent to BBC Worldwide, the profit-making department of the BBC which collects fees for use of BBC characters such as the Teletubbies, Tweenies, Bill & Ben and the Fimbles. Over 100 parents from the Food Commission's Parents Jury added their views to the complaint.

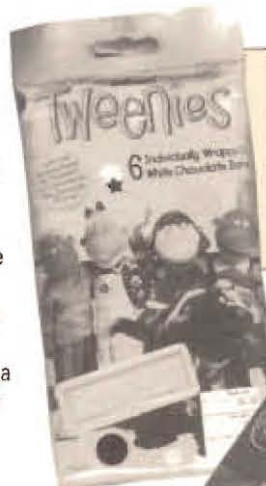
Responding to criticism of this summer's Tweenies link-up with McDonald's Happy Meals, BBC Worldwide stated: 'We exist to maximize the value of the BBC's assets', and claimed that food quality was nothing to do with them, saying: 'The McDonald's promotion is primarily a

toy promotion.' However, BBC Worldwide did admit that its policy on food licensing 'is to create foods that are exciting and appealing to children'.

Our survey of products that feature the Tweenies characters (see pages 4-5) shows every one to have a high level of sugar, fat, saturated fat or salt, making it impossible to choose healthily from the range.

At a time when food companies are beginning to admit they have a role in preventing child obesity and improving the nutritional quality of children's foods, it is deeply disappointing to see a public service body joining forces with the junk food industry.

■ Full report on pages 4-5



The Tweenies branding and 'free' Tweenies Fun Cards ensure that young fingers are likely to reach for these White Chocolate Bars, which are high fat, high sugar and high saturated fat.



McDonald's Happy Meal marketed to young children with Tweenies branding and free 'collectable' Tweenies toys. Each meal is high in sugar, high in saturated fat and high in salt. Is this what the BBC considers a healthy contribution to a balanced diet?

### Inside this issue of the Food Magazine

#### BSE back on the plate?

Is a landfill crisis forcing the government to put mad cow disease back on the menu? The government's agriculture ministry DEFRA has said there is no more room for the rendered remains of older cattle. The Food Standards Agency is proposing that the ban on eating beef from these cattle should be lifted as early as next January. See page 9

#### Mums targeted with formula milk

Direct marketing of formula milk undermines new mothers' resolve to breastfeed. A survey of the Food Commission's Parents Jury found 83% of new mothers had been given Bounty Packs containing formula milk samples and vouchers after the birth of their baby. See page 7

#### Targeting children

Broadcasting bad health, a report on how global marketing to children by multinational food companies is undermining health, is published this summer. Produced by The Food Commission for the International Association of Consumer Food Organisations (IACFO), the report is reviewed on pages 11-14



**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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## Company accounts

**A** whiff of legal problems and shareholders sell their stock. A hint of shareholder desertion and companies will change practices which they had previously declared immutable.

As we reported in FM 60, the investment bank UBS Warburg has issued advice to investors about the prospect of food companies being held liable for causing obesity, and the bank named the companies that depended for their profits on 'less good' foods. The report was closely followed by another, this time from investment advisers J P Morgan, which confirmed that litigation risks 'and their impact on sector sentiment' should not be underestimated, with soft-drinks and snack-food companies particularly vulnerable.

The industry has already started to respond. In the first place it began by attacking UBS Warburg, which responded with a second report on the industry's responsibilities. This second UBS report bluntly told the industry to adapt to change or 'be left behind promoting anachronistic processed foods and sugary drinks'.

The other response by industry is to cut its losses and run. Kraft Inc, owners of brands such as Dairylea, Angel Delight, Birds, Ritz, Terry's, Milka and Toblerone, has led this initiative with a well-publicised announcement that the company will henceforth ban in-school advertising, improve nutritional labelling and limit the portion sizes in single-serve products – all announced as 'initiatives to help address the rise in obesity'.

This implicit acknowledgment of liability for obesity is a major break in the industry's ranks.

Kraft has also sworn to reduce its use of trans-fats following a court case in the US which threatened its popular Oreo cookies.

Trans-fats are at least as artery-clogging as saturated fats, but have benefited from an anomaly in the labelling regulations which does not require the declaration of trans-fats in the nutritional details, even when saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are quantified. This lack of labelling led to a legal case on the grounds that the company was failing to warn consumers of the dangers of its products. Ironically the suit has been withdrawn because the national publicity meant that the prosecutors could not claim that people were kept in the dark about trans-fats. Kraft got the message all the same. Now Nestlé has made a public declaration of its intention to cut trans-fats in fatty products, and Mars, McDonald's and Burger King have said much the same.

But do these moves towards product reformulation imply that the industry has reformed? Do the food companies now recognise public health as a policy driver?

Of course not. Companies look at the costs of legal suits and the value of shares. Indeed, most companies state in their constitutions that their first duty is to their shareholders. Only when shareholders see their profits being threatened will companies act.

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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!



# Cadbury's fingers bitten

**C**adbury's was no doubt shocked and awed at the bad publicity the Food Commission gave it over its misguided 'chocolate for netballs' promotion (see last *Food Magazine*). The scheme encourages children to 'earn' school sports equipment in return for eating a total of £67m-worth of chocolate (nearly 2 million kg of fat, and over 36 billion calories).

Our report had all the necessary ingredients for a news story – money, politics and chocolate. New Labour sports minister Richard Caborn was heavily criticised for being

associated with the company promotion. He refused to comment when *The Guardian* splashed the story on its front page. The Department of Health's then public health minister, Hazel Blears, issued nothing but a frosty silence.

The Food Standards Agency was more outspoken. It made a surprise condemnation, demanding that the Agency be consulted on such matters in future and saying that it did not endorse the Cadbury's scheme. The scheme was, it said "not desirable" in dietary terms.

Cadbury's issued a second press release in response to our criticisms, stating that diet was not relevant. "It's not about calories, it's about activity," said a spokeswoman. "We are not going to solve this debate by counting calories – it's about getting kids active," she repeated.

Cadbury's then quoted one Dr Peter Marsh, director of the so-called Social Issues Research Centre, based in Oxford: 'The Food Commission's irrational response to Cadbury's

*school sports equipment promotion illustrates the extent to which they have lost the plot about diet and obesity,"* he said.

That wouldn't be the same Peter Marsh whose clients include Mars Confectionery and the Sugar Bureau, would it?

In bed with Cadbury's was the Youth Sport Trust, a registered charity that received an estimated £50,000 from Cadbury, and a further £50,000 in 'matching funds' from the tax payer via Richard Caborn's sports ministry. The Youth Sport Trust has also been linked to sponsorship from Nike and Nestlé, and a joint research project with Nestlé Family Monitor.

- Cadbury's claimed that its sports promotions are not aimed at increasing children's consumption of chocolate. Yet its deal with Olympic heavyweight champion Audley Harrison involved donating a case of chocolate to his local school for every minute of a fight with USA's Rob Calloway. The fight lasted four rounds.
- Do Cadbury's promotions increase total sales of chocolate? The company would deny it, but chocolate consumption has risen 10% in a decade, and this growth in demand is 'maintained by advertising and promotion' – not our words but those of the International Cocoa Organisation.

■ See Backbites on page 24 for more on what Cadbury's gets up to.



## Irish food agency finds irradiated supplements

Illegally irradiated herbal supplements have been discovered on sale in southern Ireland, despite companies having been warned repeatedly that imported herbs and spices may have been treated with ionising radiation.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland tested 24 products, and found that 10 had been irradiated – the same percentage (42%) found when the UK Food Standards Agency tested similar products in 2001/2. As in the UK, none of the products found in Ireland declared the irradiation on the label, contrary to European law. The Irish authorities have ordered that the following products be removed from sale:

Product	Company
Dong Qual	Boots
Silymarin Milk Thistle; Saw Palmetto; Raspberry Leaves	Good 'n' Natural Select (Holland & Barrett)
Unique Garlic	Holland & Barrett
Butcher's Broom Root	Nature's Way
Devil's Claw	Rivo
Devil's Claw	Solgar
Black Cohosh	Sona Herbal Remedies
Turmeric	Cynara

The coordinator of the Food Commission's Food Irradiation Campaign, Merav Shub, has joined a panel reviewing the FSA's Food Irradiation Programme. She will push for more and better surveillance of foods that may be irradiated and are on sale illegally.

■ Contact Merav Shub on 020 7837 9229; email: irradiation@foodcomm.org.uk.

## Scottish CMO says ditch the fizzy drinks!

The Chief Medical Officer for Scotland has called for all sugary fizzy drinks to be banned from schools because of their effect on children's health.

Dr Mac Armstrong said he wished to see all fizzy drinks, apart from sparkling mineral water, banned from schools in Scotland, where children have among the worst dental health problems in Europe.

His comments came after figures revealed that 65 per cent of 11 to 15 year olds drink sugary fizzy drinks on a daily basis.

■ Source: *The Scotsman*. See also 'CMO issues fat warning' on page 21.

## Co-op targets preservatives

The Co-op may replace food preservatives suspected of causing food intolerances in sensitive people. The retailer has been prompted to take action following research reported by the *Food Magazine* and the Hyperactive Children's Support Group, showing that additives such as sodium benzoate (widely used as a preservative in fizzy drinks) may be implicated in causing behavioural changes in toddlers. Benzoate additives are also implicated as a common trigger of problems for asthma sufferers. Reporting that it will look at technical and safety implications of reducing preservatives in food products, the Co-op said that it has recognised 'the need for a precautionary approach on intolerance issues'.

## New York proposes fat tax

A 'fat tax' is being drawn up by the Mayor of New York to stop Americans becoming obese. City Hall officials calculate that a one per cent tax on junk food like burgers and ice cream could ease the strain on hospitals clogged with patients suffering the effects of being overweight. Around 300,000 people die of obesity every year in the US.





# BBC cashes in on ignores children's

**When BBC characters appear on children's food, you might expect those foods to be healthier, because of the BBC's public-service ethic. But when it comes to selling its products, the BBC seems to ignore the effects of junk food on children's health.**

**W**hen McDonald's re-launched its Tweenies birthday parties using the BBC-owned characters to appeal to pre-school children, the Food Commission complained to the BBC that it was promoting junk food.

The Corporation's profit-making department BBC Worldwide collects fees from companies for the use of BBC characters such as the Tweenies, Teletubbies, Fimbles

and Bill & Ben. The BBC has been licensing the Tweenies and Teletubbies by both McDonald's and Burger King, and the characters appear on a wide range of other children's snacks – the majority high in fat, sugar and/or salt. In 2001 the total Tweenies franchise earned the BBC over £32m.

We have urged the BBC to use its influential position, to become the first character-licensing body to consider nutritional

guidelines for foods marketed to children, and to lead the way in improving children's diets. Since sending our complaint, over 100 parents from the Parents Jury have also sent their views to BBC Worldwide. Some of their comments are shown below, and more are on the Parents Jury website at: [www.parentsjury.org.uk](http://www.parentsjury.org.uk).

The BBC has attempted to defend their position by stating 'We always seek to find a balance in which foods we license and we consult a nutritionist across our food ranges. *'Treat' foods are intended to be enjoyed by children within a varied and balanced diet. Our aim is to add enjoyment and value.*' Responding to previous criticisms of foods promoted using the Teletubbies characters, BBC Worldwide said, 'We note with interest the comments from the Food Commission and, overall, we seek to license foods for children that are both healthy and enjoyable.'

We can't help wondering where the 'balance' is in the 'healthy' foods claimed by the BBC. You can check for yourself in the Tweenies Nutrition Table opposite.

## What parents have been telling the BBC

'There is so much potential for the BBC to be groundbreaking by allowing the use of BBC figures and names for the promotion of healthier foods. To say that children are not affected by marketing is a total denial of what every parent experiences and what every marketing company knows.'

**Member of The Parents Jury**

'How can several sections of government be trying to improve people's diets while the BBC is helping to promote salt, sugar and fat – and to children as well, when the ill-effects of a poor diet are becoming alarmingly clear?'

**Father of two, from East London**

'The Tweenies programme is excellent, and certainly one of the better programmes on children's television. However I am not





# Tweenies<sup>TM</sup> but health



impressed with the quality of food products marketed with the Tweenies brand logo... You could argue that they are all meant to be occasional treats for the kids, but even the yogurt - an everyday food - is high in sugar. Surely the BBC could target more healthy products for the Tweenies to promote, as being 'cool' for kids to consume.'

**Mother of a three year old, from London**

'I am very disappointed to realise that the BBC has put a small increase in profits ahead of children's health by choosing to allow McDonald's to use the Tweenies brand... Couldn't the BBC have shown more imagination, even leadership... Jake bananas, Fizz apples, etc?'

**Mother from Chester**

'As a nutritionist I'm appalled that the BBC is, by virtue of its partnership with these companies, endorsing foods that are high in sugar, fat and salt for children.'

**Mother from Harrogate, North Yorkshire**

'I'm really disappointed to see that you are allowing the fab Tweenie foursome to promote fatty / sugary / generally junky meals and confectionery. As characters I think they are some of the most wholesome on TV, developing - with the help of Max and Judy - a really healthy approach to life.'

I have always been happy to let my three-year-old daughter watch the Tweenies, safe in the knowledge that she is getting the right messages. I would like to do the same with baby number three, when he/she comes along in the Autumn.'

**Member of The Parents Jury**

If you would also like to encourage BBC Worldwide to consider nutritional criteria for the kinds of foods that the Tweenies and Teletubbies should help to promote, write to BBC Worldwide Ltd, Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT. Email: [worldwide.licensing@bbc.co.uk](mailto:worldwide.licensing@bbc.co.uk). We would like to keep track of all the emails sent, and any replies received, so please send a copy to [info@parentsjury.org.uk](mailto:info@parentsjury.org.uk)

## Tweenies Nutrition Table: Can you spot which foods the BBC thinks are 'healthy'?

	Sugar	Fat	Saturated fat	Salt
<b>McDonald's Tweenies Happy Meal:</b> burger, regular French fries (with tomato ketchup), regular Coke.	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
<b>Marks &amp; Spencer Tweenies</b> children's meal: Chicken nuggets, chips, tomato ketchup and strawberry flavour yogurt	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
<b>Heinz Tweenies</b> pasta shapes in tomato sauce	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	HIGH
<b>Marks &amp; Spencer Tweenies</b> wholemilk flavoured yogurt	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
<b>St Ivel Tweenies</b> wholemilk flavoured yogurt	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
<b>McDougalls Tweenies</b> star banana-roony mini muffin mix	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
<b>Marks &amp; Spencer Tweenies</b> milk chocolate mini figures	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
<b>Marks &amp; Spencer Tweenies</b> white chocolate bars	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
<b>Kinerton Tweenies</b> white chocolate bars	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
<b>Dailycer Tweenies</b> Letter Time choc & honey cereal	HIGH	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM

## Parents Jury sprouts up down under

New Zealand Children's Food Awards, modelled on the Food Commission's Parents Jury, have been launched by the Safe Food campaign in New Zealand.

The Food Commission has assisted with ideas and advice, and is delighted to hear that parents will now have a chance to speak out about their views on children's food and health in a country experiencing similar trends in children's diets and childhood obesity to the UK.

New Zealand parents have been asked to vote on food award categories such as:

- Sickly Sweet
- Salty Supreme
- Label Fables
- GE Genie
- Badvertising Banter
- Nutritionless Nightmare
- Cleanest Greenest Food
- Terrific Tuckshop
- Full o' Fat
- Funky Munch
- Chemical Cocktail
- Best Breakfast

A panel will judge winners of each category, using nominations from parents. Contact (fax): 0064 9 372 2034; web: [www.greens.org.nz/campaigns/safe-food/foodawards.htm](http://www.greens.org.nz/campaigns/safe-food/foodawards.htm).



# Salt advice was diluted

Government advisors have weakened scientific recommendations to cut salt in children's diets. Kath Dalmeny reports.

After decades of campaigning by organisations such as the Food Commission and Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) the government has finally acknowledged the high levels of salt in many processed foods, and the difficulty people face in limiting how much they consume.

Recent national press coverage was prompted by the government report, from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition\* (SACN) – a draft of which we reported on in March 2003 (FM60).

What the press didn't pick up on, however, is that the new salt advice for children had been watered down. The official 'target daily intake levels' for young children represent 'achievable' rather than 'ideal' levels.

So what does 'achievable' mean? Sadly, it means compromise. In SACN's draft report, the recommended daily intake for one to six year olds was no more than 2g. Now, the advice is that four to six year olds should aim for no more than 3g per day. Meanwhile, 11-14 year olds are told to eat no more than 6g per day. A confusing target, since when girls reach adulthood the advice is for women to consume no more than 5g of salt per day.

When we challenged the government to explain, we were told that the food industry had argued that children wouldn't be able to achieve the low targets in the modern food environment. The industry said that the target salt intake levels should be set higher than the amount recommended for health and, in the case of four to six year olds, at a higher level than published in SACN's first draft report.

On a brighter note, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has said it will 'name and shame' the branded ready meals, children's foods and 'healthy eating' products containing high levels of salt. The industry's Food & Drink Federation has pledged to reduce salt in soups and sauces by 10% by the end of the year. But who will judge? At a meeting in May, Sir John Krebs, chair of the FSA, admitted that salt-reduction data from the bread industry had turned out to be incorrect when independently tested.

Meanwhile, despite claims from supermarket chain ASDA that it has removed 900 tonnes of salt from its own-brand ranges, we note that the three saltiest children's foods in the FSA's survey, published in June, were all from ASDA, and the two saltiest 'healthy eating' products were also ASDA own-brand.

■ *Salt and Health*, by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, £14.95, ISBN 011 243 075 9. Web: [www.tso.co.uk](http://www.tso.co.uk)



## Piling on the salt – the home-baked way

Yet another insidious saltification of our diets comes through the recommendations of famous recipe writers in their magazine columns.

Take Rosie Sykes, *The Guardian's* Kitchen Doctor. She is chef at 'The Sutton Arms' in London EC1 and reputedly 'never does things by halves'.

Here, above, are the ingredients for her brown bread, although her other bread recipes are just as salty.

This makes a bread that is 3% pure salt. Not even processed sliced white gets that bad, with most commercial bread around the 1% level.

Forget the Kitchen Doctor – it is the *real* doctor we'll need, if we follow Rosie's recipe.

## Piling on the salt – the industry way

While the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) grudgingly asks its members to reduce salt in processed soups and sauces by a miserly 10%, there are actions the FDF could recommend that would not require any change at all to their food industry members' product formulations.

Cooking instructions on dry foods such as pasta and rice typically tell us to add salt. Some say 'if required' and some say 'to taste' (which implies that otherwise it will be tasteless) and some say ambiguously to add 'a pinch' of the stuff.

But many large manufacturers are more specific in their cooking instructions, urging the addition of salt where none is needed.

The world's biggest food company, Nestlé, owns the pasta brand Buitoni. Our eagle-eyed survey shoppers found Buitoni had the worst cooking instructions, salt-wise, of any in the supermarket. They read: 'Place 100g pasta in salted boiling water (1 litre water, 10 grams salt for 100g pasta). Boil for 10 minutes...'

The instructions also recommend serving with a Buitoni ready-made sauce – more salt again.

**Barillo**, another pasta brand, has the same advice: 1 litre water and 10g salt for each 100g pasta.

**De Cecco** says we should boil 6 litres of water for 500g pasta and 'add salt and put in the pasta'.

**Safeway** tells us to bring 'a large pan of salted water' to the boil before adding their own-brand pasta.

**Tesco** recommends 'a large pan of boiling, slightly salted water'.

**Health Care Products Ltd** Teletubbies pasta aimed at young children recommends that the boiling water be 'slightly salted'.

**Uncle Ben** (rice) suggests that salt could be added 'if desired'. **Waitrose** (pasta) improves on this, suggesting salt is added 'if required'.

Staple foods like rice and pasta don't need extra salt, especially if you are going to eat your meal with a meat or cheese sauce that will already contain some salt naturally. If you are addicted to the taste, wean yourself off by using strong spices, dressings and juices.





# Manufacturers market formula milk to mums

**A Parents Jury survey of mothers found that good intentions to breastfeed were undermined by free formula milk samples in 'Bounty packs'. Annie Seeley reports.**

**T**he government has recently confirmed advice from the World Health Organisation that exclusive breastfeeding for six months offers babies the best nutritional start in life. Yet nearly 30% of new mothers in England and Wales do not breastfeed at all. This compares with a remarkable 98% of mothers in Scandinavia who breastfeed their babies. Research has shown that breastfed babies are less likely to become overweight or obese and have a lower risk of developing heart disease in later life compared to formula-fed babies.

There are many reasons why a mother may not start breastfeeding, or may give up earlier than the recommended six months. Where there is a delay before the first feed, babies are more likely to stop breastfeeding in the first two weeks. Support and advice from health professionals at this time is crucial, whilst support from other mothers, friends and society are also important factors in whether a mother continues to breastfeed.

We asked 118 mothers from the Parents Jury (parents of children under the age of three) what advice they had received, and if they had been discouraged from breastfeeding. Generally, mothers reported that health professionals (including NCT breastfeeding counsellors) and friends and family had been very supportive, giving mothers the confidence to start and continue with breastfeeding.

## Formula milk marketing

However, over 80% of the mothers surveyed had received Bounty Packs containing formula milk samples and vouchers after the birth of their baby and when their baby was four months old they received samples and vouchers of 'follow-on' formula. Many mothers felt that this encouraged mothers to switch from breastfeeding to bottlefeeding.

One mother said "I don't think milk manufacturers should be allowed to put in any free samples or vouchers or indeed influence parents in any way with advertising."

76% of mothers received Bounty packs when their babies were four months old which included baby food samples as well as vouchers. Whilst many found these to be useful some thought it was just a marketing opportunity for formula and baby food manufacturers and that it would be more helpful to encourage mothers to cook fresh food for their babies by including recipes in the packs and/or vouchers for fresh produce. "I think the pack should perhaps contain vouchers for fresh meat and vegetables and details of how to prepare them rather than pushing ready meals."

Some manufacturers are very good at ensuring that mothers-to-be are aware of their brand of formula milk: one mother reported that an SMA formula-milk representative gave a presentation on 'emotional aspects of parenting' at an ante-natal class, offering branded gifts such as pens



and writing pads.

Nearly 40% of mothers surveyed said that health professionals had expressed concern that their breastfed baby's growth

rates were not conforming to the standard growth charts. Growth charts are based on bottlefed babies' progress, and as babies fed on breast milk tend to have more erratic growth rates, some mothers and health professionals think it inappropriate to compare the two. Of the 46 mothers who said that they had been given this advice, only eight were encouraged to increase breastfeeding, while 24 were encouraged to

supplement with formula milk, and 14 were encouraged either to introduce solids early or to increase food intake. One mother was advised by a health visitor to give her baby chocolate to promote weight gain.

Nearly 30% were discouraged either by their own mothers or mothers-in-law, or by friends who were bottle-feeding their babies. Some mothers reported that they were told by friends that their baby looked hungry or underweight and that bottle-feeding would help. About one in five of the mothers were discouraged from breastfeeding by health professionals either because she was tired after childbirth, had had a caesarean or had to take medication. "... minutes after my second child was born by section the midwife suggested giving her a bottle".

Those mothers who continued breastfeeding after weaning found that health visitors and friends were surprised they had not switched to bottlefeeding: "Whenever I took my baby for weigh-ins or health checks after about five months the health visitors expressed amazement that I was still breastfeeding."

The presence of breastfeeding counsellors in hospitals and in the community gave many mothers guidance for breastfeeding. Whilst the majority of hospital staff encouraged breastfeeding, some mothers found these didn't have time to provide needed support.

Many women had gained confidence after having their first child, so that with their second baby they didn't always get their baby measured, to avoid the pressure and worry involved. They also tended to extend the length of time they breastfed with subsequent babies and did not feel the need to supplement with formula or initiate early weaning.

Whilst this survey is a small sample of parents, we hope to conduct further surveys and interviews to gain an understanding of differences in advice and perceptions between social classes and ethnic groups. This will help to inform policy recommendations on issues such as pre-approval of products included in Bounty Packs. Currently no national body sets standards for what can be marketed to new mothers, nor are Bounty Packs monitored to get a picture of what is promoted throughout the country.

We will report on survey findings in future editions of the *Food Magazine*.

■ For more information on the survey please visit the Parents Jury website: [www.parentsjury.org.uk](http://www.parentsjury.org.uk)



# Human milk is food too!

Breastfeeding advisor Laura Joffe writes:

Recent statistics show that by four months of age, 72% of UK babies receive no breastmilk at all (Infant Feeding Survey 2000). We now know that bottlefed babies get more infections (especially gastroenteritis, but also ear infections, urinary infections, etc); are at increased risk of allergies, asthma, eczema, childhood diabetes, some cancers; and that their brain and visual development is impaired, compared to breastfed babies. We also know that bottlefeeding mothers are at increased risk of breast and ovarian cancers and hip fractures in later life, compared to mothers who breastfeed.

The government has finally recognised that even a modest rise in breastfeeding rates would benefit the nation and reduce the financial burden on the NHS. Its response, to focus on breastfeeding initiation rates, has been less helpful than it might have imagined. Pressure is put on women to begin breastfeeding, without also providing them with the support to continue, in a society that is profoundly anti-breastfeeding.

Of the 69% of women who start out breastfeeding, almost a third have given up by the time their babies are six weeks old. And of these women, 90% say they would have liked to breastfeed for longer. However, women are taught to blame themselves for their 'failure' – 'I just didn't have enough milk', 'My milk never satisfied him', 'I wasn't cut out for this'.

Instead of putting pressure on women to breastfeed, it would help if all midwives could recognise when a baby is – and is not – feeding effectively at the breast. It would help if all health visitors understood how and why a woman makes enough milk for her baby. It would help if GPs understood that the cure for mastitis is breastfeeding, not weaning. It would help if mothers could breastfeed in public as easily as they bottlefeed in public; if we saw a baby breastfed on TV soaps for every time we see one bottlefed. It would help if toy manufacturers would stop putting bottles in with the dolls they sell to little girls. It would help if our government would enshrine the WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (both letter and spirit) in law, and put pressure on the Americans to stand 'shoulder to shoulder' with us on this important issue. It would help if everyone in society would put health before sickness and recognise the need of mothers and babies to stay close together.

And it would help if we acknowledged the hard work of breastfeeding mums, and thanked them for their investment in our future.

■ Laura Joffe is a breastfeeding advisor in Edinburgh for the National Childbirth Trust (NCT). For breastfeeding information and support, call the NCT breastfeeding line: 0870 444 8707 (7 days, 8am–10pm). For research on health implications of infant feeding, see [www.babyfriendly.org.uk/health.asp](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk/health.asp).

## BSE news

### BSE in North America

The first case of BSE in home-bred cattle in North America has led to a rapid re-think of American anti-BSE measures. The animal, discovered in Alberta, was part of a herd born in Saskatchewan and subsequently distributed to several states in Canada and the USA. Rules to ban high-risk offal from the food chain, ban the use of poultry litter in cattle feed (poultry are permitted to be fed abattoir waste, potentially recycling the disease) and strengthening the cattle tracking schemes are being proposed.

### Tongues and tonsils

A survey of ox tongues (cattle tongues) going into the food chain showed that over half had tonsil tissue still attached, despite tonsils being classified as specified risk material, and therefore banned. Even where no obvious tonsil tissue was present, nearly all tongues showed tonsil-related lymph tissue, a site of potential BSE infection. UK consumers eat over 2m kilograms of ox tongue each year, mostly as canned meat.



Ox tongue – delicacy or potential source of BSE?

## Badvertisement

### Yakult gains from SARS panic

In Asia this summer, sales of the probiotic yogurt drink Yakult rose by 500 per cent. The reason? In a panic, people in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan believed that it could protect them against SARS.

Whilst Yakult says that it never claimed that the product could protect against the deadly flu-like virus, neither did it make any great effort to

Sales  
up

Share  
price up

stop the rumour spreading. The result? Yakult's share prices soared and Danone, maker of Yakult's chief competitor Actimel (another probiotic yogurt drink) upped its holding from 5% to 19% of Yakult Honsha Ltd. with a transaction worth \$330 billion.

■ Source: *Functional Foods & Nutraceuticals*

### Cow to calf

Leading BSE expert Professor James Ironside says there is growing evidence that BSE could be passed from cow to calf and would 'remain in the national herd for the foreseeable future'. He also said that animals younger than 30 months could carry the infection. See page 9 for news of the Over Thirty Month rule.

### Spanish spinal cord

Seventy nine incidents of banned spinal cord attached to imported beef carcasses have been reported since inspections began in 2001. Nine of the last ten incidents (in April and May this year) have come from Spanish abattoirs. Spain is second to Ireland as having the highest number of BSE cases this year outside Britain. Overall, Britain has the highest number of BSE cases in Europe.



## Is a landfill crisis putting BSE back on our plates?

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has acknowledged that the UK is running out of space in landfill sites to dispose of meat and bone meal (MBM) from older cattle (1). MBM is currently banned from human consumption and use in agriculture, to reduce the risk of human infection from BSE.

The landfill crisis has increased the pressure on DEFRA and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to lift the current ban on human consumption of older cattle (known as the Over Thirty Month rule). Older cattle are thought to be more likely to carry infectious BSE prions. About 20% of the UK's dairy herd is destroyed each year, with farmers receiving compensation worth £300m a year.

Meat and bone meal (MBM) is produced from cattle carcasses, heated and dried into powder. Until identified as a likely vector for the spread of BSE to cattle and humans, MBM used to be fed to cows to increase their milk yield, and used as fertiliser on agricultural land.

In June, DEFRA asked the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) if, in light of the landfill crisis, it would approve the spreading of MBM as fertiliser. Saying that there was still evidence of a BSE risk from MBM from older cattle, SEAC did not endorse the proposal.

The alternative means of disposing of older cattle, used widely in mainland Europe, is to test them for BSE and then put them on our plates. However, putting older cattle into the human food supply raises several concerns:

- Testing cannot guarantee the removal of cattle that are carrying BSE, but whose brain tissue is not yet affected.
- Testing is not fail-safe, but fail-hazardous. If a positive case is missed for technical reasons or incompetence, the animal will enter the food chain.
- Faith in the safety of older cattle rests on the FSA's statistical model, which predicts a very low risk of more cases of vCJD (the human form of BSE) if the OTM rule is lifted. However, this model is based on several

assumptions, including a relatively short incubation period for vCJD, a decline in the current incidence of vCJD, and that all vCJD cases are of a high-risk genetic type. These assumptions are untested.

- The model predicts one or two further cases of vCJD over three decades if the OTM rule is lifted. Previous statistical models from the same team have given wildly different figures for the total vCJD epidemic (see box, right) and were also used for the much-criticised foot-and-mouth cull policy.

Lifting the Over Thirty Month rule is a risky political move, not least because the meat trade fears that a flood of cheap beef from older carcasses will undermine the price for prime beef. Beef importers are concerned that this will threaten the market for cheap beef from outside the UK.

Shoppers may also be wary of eating older cattle while the level of BSE in Britain remains the highest in Europe. The UK had over 400 cases of BSE last year and a further 600 were found when older animals were checked at the abattoir. Ireland came second, with some 350 cases in total last year.

■ Further concerns are listed in the Food Commission's comments on the OTM rule submitted in June (see [www.foodcomm.org.uk/otms.pdf](http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/otms.pdf)).

1. Dr M Bailey, statement to SEAC meeting, London, 24 June 2003.



*"I'm not sure I want to spend more than 30 months here"*

### Getting predictions wrong

Statistical modelling techniques allow teams of academics to find patterns in the data which allow predictions of future cases to be made. But perhaps reading tea leaves may be more accurate, judging by the statistical predictions shown below.

**Prediction from the Veterinary Laboratory Agency in 2001:**  
BSE cases (*passive surveillance*)

	predicted	95% confidence range	actual reported
2001	504	353 - 655	781
2002	183	93 - 273	450
2003	57	7 - 107	75 so far

**Prediction from Imperial College in 1997:**

	Predicted BSE cases	Actual reported BSE cases
1997-2001	7,000	11,843
2001	89*	781

\* Imperial College said that this predicted figure would rise to 1,012 if BSE could pass between animals within the same herd – and the actual figure suggests that this is happening, or that the model was seriously wrong. If herds are infecting each other then the government must drastically re-think the current on-farm BSE controls.

If this were not evidence enough that statistical models are not always reliable guides for policy, compare the two following predictions:

**Prediction from Imperial College in 2000:**  
vCJD cases predicted a total of 6,000 cases (Imperial College stated that it was 95% confident that the figure would fall somewhere between 63 and 136,000).

**Prediction from Imperial College in 2003:**  
vCJD cases predicted a total of 100 cases in next 60 years (Imperial College stated that it was 95% confident that the figure would fall somewhere between 10 and 2,600).



# FSA proposals are a 'rogue's charter' for processed meats

**It isn't just excess water added to chicken that needs tough laws, it's the whole of the processed food supply.**

In the wake of BBC TV's *Panorama* investigation into added water in chicken fillets, which in turn followed more than a year of press revelations about the 'Dutching' of chicken for British markets, the Food Standards Agency's chief, Sir John Krebs, announced action – of a sort.

*'The only reason to add the proteins is to pump up the water to high levels,' Sir John declared. 'That's a recipe for ripping consumers off. That is why we consider that the amount of water that can be added to chicken should be limited and the use of non-chicken proteins banned.'*

He said the FSA will press to:

- Cap at 15% the amount of water that may be added to chicken.
- Ban the use of non-chicken proteins (such as beef and pork) in chicken.

Between 2-7% water is absorbed by chicken during normal processing. Some manufacturers add further water 'to retain succulence' in cooked products, on the grounds that chicken can lose approximately 15% of water during cooking.

The FSA found chicken with as much as 55% added water, and as little as 41% real chicken meat. Many of the other samples tested contained only 50-60% chicken and nearly half the samples had a meat content that was less than that declared on the label.

However, the moves by the FSA will fail to deal with the problem. Banning non-chicken proteins means that the companies will use proteins from chicken skin and gristle or

denatured proteins that cannot be species-identified. Furthermore, the rules allow the use of animal or plant proteins, or starch, without any label declaration if these ingredients are 'needed for technological purposes'.

*'This is potentially a rogue's charter,' commented Shropshire Chief Trading Standards Officer David Walker. 'The trade will always be able to produce some expert to argue that the added ingredient is there for a technological reason.'* He said the opportunities for fraud would greatly outweigh any genuine technological uses to the industry.

Other trading standards experts have noted the use of blood plasma used to adulterate roast beef, ham and poultry products, and the use of pork skin and bone proteins to adulterate ham.

Manufacturers of water-binding ingredients boast that their products can 'extend' ham by 100% and suggest that it is not uncommon for hams 'to contain 100 or even 110 per cent injection volumes'. The purpose, as Sir John acknowledged, is consumer fraud.

The FSA needs to address a range of added-water problems:

- For both cultural and food safety reasons, cross-species proteins should be promi-

nently declared to the final consumer (including unlabelled products such as take-away dishes and school meals).

- For the same reasons, there should be an outright prohibition on the use of proteins deliberately denatured to prevent their species being determined.
- The presence of added water should be prominently declared in products, and the quantity of added water should be stated for all foods sold by weight or by volume – including delicatessens and butchers' cold meat counters, as well as food sold in catering outlets. (Products sold by volume should also have their net weight declared to help limit the abuse of added air.)
- Regulations on frozen products should be made consistent: frozen chicken has a statutory limit on the amount of added water but frozen turkey does not. Frozen fish and vegetables should be included in this measure.
- Consumers should be told the presence of ingredients whether they are there for 'technological need' or not.

The FSA says it is prepared to act. But when the media spotlight passes on, will the FSA's resolve get... watered down?

## MRM (mechanically recovered meat) – or not?

As of this July, mechanically recovered meat – a paste produced of connective tissue produced from crushed bones and carcasses – has to be declared separately on food labels. The Turkey Roll (see picture) declares: Turkey (25%), Turkey (mechanically separated) (25%), chicken, water, etc.

But close one door and another opens. Burger and sausage manufacturers have turned to a new technology which purports to 'de-sinew' raw meat by rolling carcass bones firmly against an abrasive sieve, resulting in a thicker textured material with 'the structure and functionality of ground meat as opposed to MRM puréed meat paste' according to the trade. It is especially good for 'soft pork bones and chicken frames' and unlike MRM leaves a residual tangle of bones and sinew with better 'salvage value' than the 'bone cake' left after MRM processing.

Are we eating de-sinewed ground chicken or pork? Yes, but we don't know it. The process does not require labelling.

One meat producer boasts 'Many UK manufacturers, instigated by major retailers, have taken MRM out of their recipes in favour of our ground meats. They have also been successful in replacing muscle meat in part or total with this product.'



**Bernard Matthews 'Dinosaur' Turkey Roll: 50% turkey, of which half is mechanically recovered.**

**Ham, Sir John?**  
**This product is only 50% pork meat!**





# CHECKOUT

In a special four-page report, the Food Commission examines why food marketing to children needs to be controlled

## Broadcasting bad health

**T**he past decades have seen an unprecedented shift in the pattern of disease and ill health around the world. With more overweight adults globally than there are underweight adults, and with countries of the South adopting the eating habits of the industrialised world, we are facing damaging global trends in diet and health. The people that will suffer most are those who lack the financial resources and infrastructure to obtain treatment for obesity and diabetes.

This year, the World Health Organization (WHO) is conducting an international consultation on the prevention of non-communicable conditions such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. By early 2004, WHO hopes to issue advice to countries around the world on how to keep their populations healthy.

The WHO will face many challenges along the way. Earlier this year, when the WHO issued an expert opinion that sugar should be reduced to no more than 10% of a healthy diet, the US Sugar Association threatened to lobby the US Congress to withdraw funding from the WHO, unless the WHO scrapped the advice. Thankfully the WHO stood up to the bully boys of the sugar industry.

The food industry is likely to be just as aggressive, if not more so, when it comes to restrictions on marketing activities for fatty, sugary and salty products. Yet such restrictions will be needed if any reduction is to be made in the over-consumption of energy-dense low-nutrient foods.

An expert report to the WHO declared:

- **Convincing** – Evidence of the adverse effects of a high intake of energy-dense, low-nutrient foods;
- **Probable** – Evidence of the adverse effects of a high intake of sugar-sweetened drinks;

- **Probable** – Evidence of the adverse effects of heavy marketing of energy-dense foods and fast-food outlets.

The role of marketing in spreading disease has been examined in a new report from the Food Commission on behalf of an international coalition of consumer organisations.

The report explores how energy-dense, low-nutrient foods are sold, especially to children and young people. Although conditions such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, cancer and diabetes are classified as 'non-communicable', the report argues that disease is in fact 'communicated' by social means – from parents to children, food corporations to consumers, and industrialised country to less-industrialised countries.

Our research has shown that as a country's economy grows, it attracts investment in food processing – with sectors such as sugar, confectionery, soft drinks and dairy products receiving the most financial input. These processed foods are backed by marketing campaigns – frequently targeted at the young. For every \$1 spent by the WHO on trying to improve the nutrition of the world's population, \$500 is spent by the food industry on promoting processed foods.

The report is illustrated with case studies of companies such as McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, which boast some of the largest food advertising budgets in the world. Coca-Cola, for instance, spends \$1.5 billion annually to market its soft-drinks brands.

On the following pages, the marketing activities of KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) are used to illustrate how global companies sell their fatty, sugary and salty food to children around the world.



**Sweet smiles:** In India, glamorous Bollywood megastars Simran and Aishwarya Rai promote Coca-Cola drinks brands to teenagers. One 500ml bottle of Coca-Cola (the pack size held by Simran in the picture) contains the equivalent of 10 heaped teaspoons of sugar.



Also in India, Coca-Cola has sponsored a musical talent contest to create an all-girl band (Viva) who are so popular, their first album sold over half a million copies.

Source: [www.myenjoyzone.com](http://www.myenjoyzone.com)

■ The 30-page report *Broadcasting Bad Health: Why food marketing to children needs to be controlled*, has been submitted on behalf of the International Association of Consumer Food Organizations (of which the Food Commission is a member) to the WHO's consultation on diet and health.

■ The report is available in pdf format on the Food Commission website: [www.foodcomm.org.uk](http://www.foodcomm.org.uk) (full colour). A black-and-white printed version is available from The Food Commission for £10 (incl. p&p) at 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. Credit card orders can be made on 020 7837 2250.



# CHECKOUT Targeting

## How does the food industry low-nutrient food

Global food companies that promote energy-dense, low-nutrient foods and drinks use highly effective marketing techniques to encourage regular consumption, repeat purchases and brand loyalty – especially amongst children.

Familiar examples include the use of collectable toys given away free with hamburgers and sugared breakfast cereals, character licensing, and the use of TV advertising and catchy jingles. However, as new technologies become accessible to children and teenagers, marketing budgets are also directed towards techniques that fly under the radar of parental control. These use websites, email, text

### Korea – free toys

Free toys are given away by KFC, Burger King, McDonald's, Nestlé, Quaker, Kellogg's... This technique is a firm favourite for companies wanting to make their products appealing to children. This KFC example is from Korea.  
[www.kfckorea.com](http://www.kfckorea.com)

### United States – packaging gimmicks

Clever packaging such as this US 'KFC Kids Laptop' meal pack is used as a gimmick to revitalise the popularity of the standard children's meal. In the UK, Burger King is using a similar method this summer to promote its *Incredible Hulk* children's meal.

[www.kfc.com](http://www.kfc.com); [www.burgerking.co.uk](http://www.burgerking.co.uk)

### UK – a 'healthy' spin

In the UK, the KFC website offers advice on healthy eating that classifies KFC 'pure chicken breast meat' as a 'lower fat option', implying that it is healthier than 'high fat sausages and burgers'. However, a Crispy Strips meal advertised by KFC for children contains 28g total fat and 2.25g salt – more than a typical burger meal.

[www.kfc.co.uk](http://www.kfc.co.uk)

### Costa Rica – prices

Fast-food is especially appealing to children with limited pocket money. Increasing freedom to buy snacks. KFC Costa Rica sells fried chicken for 25 cents, and boasts that it has

fried chicken 'to three generations of Costa Ricans'.  
[www.kfccostarica.com](http://www.kfccostarica.com)



# CHECKOUT

# g children

## promotes its energy-dense, ads to children?

messaging and marketing in schools – appealing to a media-savvy yet nutritionally inexperienced generation.

Using KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) as a case study, this page illustrates the global reach of food marketing to children, and the techniques used by companies such as McDonald's, Burger King, Nestlé, Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Kellogg's, to ensure that their fatty, sugary and salty products maintain their popularity through the generations.

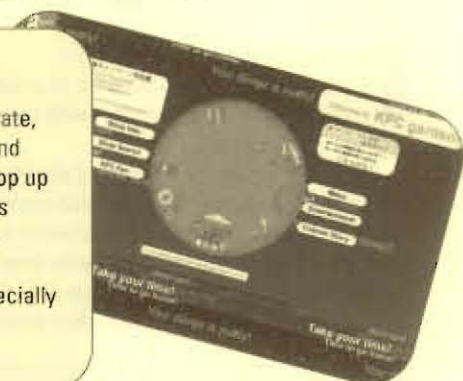
■ Examples from: *Broadcasting Bad Health: Why food marketing to children needs to be controlled*, see: [www.foodcomm.org.uk](http://www.foodcomm.org.uk).



### Japan – free downloads

With children becoming increasingly computer-literate, many food-company websites offer free software and downloadable graphics to ensure that the brands pop up on personal computer screens to reinforce the sales message. In Japan, the KFC website offers branded animations of the KFC Colonel. In India, Coca-Cola Bollywood screensavers are available online – especially appealing to teenagers.

[www.kfc.co.jp](http://www.kfc.co.jp); [www.myenjoyzone.com](http://www.myenjoyzone.com)



### Thailand – local events

Children's events are organised by fast-food companies to link their products with social and sporting occasions. In Thailand, KFC coordinates a singing contest to gain local media coverage. In the UK, McDonald's finances children's football, offering McDonald's branded football shirts to participating teams.

[www.kfc.co.th](http://www.kfc.co.th); [www.mcdonalds.co.uk](http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk)



### Malaysia – ties in to local cultures

TV ads for KFC Malaysia show a boy and a girl fishing in Malay countryside, bored and argumentative. They become friends when they visit KFC together, with the sign-off 'sedapnya hingga menjilat jari' (It's finger lickin' good). In Malaysia, KFC also sponsors the popular children's *Cartoon TV Hour*, explaining, 'We intend to be part of Malaysia's growing up years in entertainment'. In the UK, Nestlé has sponsored Children's ITV programmes in order to promote its Milky Bar white chocolate.

[www.kfc.com.my](http://www.kfc.com.my)



### Singapore – games & competitions

On the Singapore KFC website, a children's game measures how many drinks of cola, bags of fries and boxes of chicken pieces the child can grab in an allotted time. In the UK, the website for Nesquik (a sugary flavouring for milkshakes) features games that encourage a child to visit again and again, to collect Nesquik stickers.

[www.kfc.com.sg](http://www.kfc.com.sg); [www.nesquik.co.uk](http://www.nesquik.co.uk)



### Panama – clubs & societies

Membership clubs encourage children and their families to be loyal to a brand. In Panama, Chicky Clubs are a central feature of KFC's marketing campaign. In the UK, sugared breakfast-cereal brands such as Kellogg's

Frosties (40% sugar) encourage children to belong to online clubs where they can play games and enter competitions.

[www.kfc-panama.com](http://www.kfc-panama.com);  
[www.kelloggs.co.uk/tonys-cubs/](http://www.kelloggs.co.uk/tonys-cubs/)



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# CHECKOUT

## Children at school – a captive market

In recent years, advertisers have increasingly identified schools as a rich opportunity to target children with their marketing messages.

In the UK, as we have reported previously in the *Food Magazine*, the specialist company Jazzy Media leads the way in marketing in schools, selling advertising space on exercise books that are then distributed free of charge to children in primary and secondary schools.

Pepsi, 7up and Walkers crisps have all been advertised in this way. Jazzy Media also has plans to offer canteen food-product sampling to children as young as four years old 'with the implicit endorsement of the catering staff'. Meanwhile, companies such as Walkers and Cadbury's encourage children to collect millions of crisp packets and chocolate wrappers to exchange for books and school sports equipment.

We have only to look at the situation in the United States to see that without controls, marketing creeps into every aspect of school life (see table, left). In the US, marketing in schools is entrenched, well-financed, and highly sophisticated. Channel One, for instance, is a key vehicle for delivering advertisements directly to children as a captive audience, with schools paid (through incentives and equipment) to broadcast the commercial Channel One to children for a set time each day.

An audit of commercial activities in schools was recently conducted by the US government's General Accounting Office (GAO), which gives an insight into how children can be systematically targeted through schools, in a country with very light regulation on marketing activities, and one of the highest obesity rates in the world.

The GAO identified several pervasive and persuasive examples of marketing to children in US schools including 'pouring rights' – exclusive contracts between drinks companies and school districts – to ensure that particular brands are the only drinks available to children.

In the US, experience has shown that only by parents and teachers fighting back can such commercial activities in schools be restricted. Several school districts, including Los Angeles, New York City, Sacramento and Buffalo City, have recently announced bans on the marketing of sugar-sweetened drinks in school. In Seattle, a parents' group called Citizens' Campaign for Commercial-Free Schools has lobbied successfully for a ban on advertising in the district's schools. It is now aiming for state-wide legislation in Washington. The campaign group Commercial Alert, working with a parent coalition, has also been instrumental in stopping the ZapMe! corporation tracking children's internet use at school.

The Food Commission has written to the National Audit Office recommending that it undertakes a national survey of commercial food promotions in schools, with an assessment of how much UK schools have come to rely on such fund-raising activities. This could be a vital tool in pressing health and education policy makers to provide more core funding, to make national recommendations on products suitable for school vending machines, and to stop British children being targeted by marketing in schools.

### Companies in the classroom – USA style

Activities	Examples
<b>Product sales</b>	
Product sales	Exclusive contracts to sell soft drinks in school grounds Contracts to sell food in school grounds
Credit rebate	Credit awarded for coupons collected by schools or children Internet sales from which a percentage is given to a school Fundraising through sales of candy (confectionery), cookies, etc.
<b>Direct advertising</b>	
Advertising	Billboards in school corridors Advertising on school buses Product displays in schools Corporate logos on school furniture and equipment Corporate logos on posters, book covers and assignment books
Publications	Ads in sports programmes, yearbooks, school newspapers
Media adverts	Televised ads by Channel One or commercial stations Computer-delivered advertisements
Samples	Free snack food
<b>Indirect advertising</b>	
Education	Materials on issues associated with particular industries, for instance food companies Materials that promote industrial goals, such as nutritional information produced by dairy or meat associations
Incentives	McDonald's poster contests, Pizza Hut's Book-It program
Corporate gifts	Corporate gifts to schools with commercial benefit to the donor
<b>Market research</b>	
Surveys or polls	Student questionnaires or taste tests
Internet panels	Use of the internet to poll students' responses
Internet tracking	Tracking students' internet behaviour

■ Source: United States General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Requesters. *Public Education: Commercial Activities in Schools*, September 2000.



## Legal, decent, honest and true?

The activities of the food and advertising industries raise many important questions for nutrition and health. We report on work by the Food Commission to improve food labelling and marketing.

### X Knorr exaggerates five a day claims

Following a Food Commission complaint, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has ruled against the 'five-a-day' claims made for Knorr Vie carton soup. An advert that appeared in the trade magazine *The Grocer* in December 2002 (see below) claimed that one carton of Knorr Vie soup could contribute up to three portions of vegetables.

Whilst the ASA said that companies can claim that vegetables in processed soup contribute to a person's fruit and vegetable intake, the advertising watchdog agreed with the Food Commission that Knorr's soup was too salty to be promoted as a healthy product using the 'five a day' message. One serving (500ml) of Knorr Vie Country Vegetable Soup containing the claimed 'three portions of vegetables' also contains 5g of salt (2g of sodium). This is the maximum recommended daily intake of salt for an adult woman (the maximum for men is 6g). The ASA also agreed with the Food Commission that Knorr (a division of Unilever Bestfoods) had exaggerated how much fruit and vegetables a consumer could get from a single serving because in some of the soup products a lot of it came from tomatoes, so didn't represent enough variety. Variety is a key part of the 'five a day' health message, since health benefits are associated with eating a wide range of different fruits and vegetables.

The Independent Television Commission (ITC), which assesses television advertising, had already approved the Knorr claims for broadcast on UK television, and has refused to uphold a similar complaint from the Food

Commission. Which raises the question: On what basis did the ITC make its decision?

The ASA's judgement follows its previous ruling that Heinz should not claim in advertisements that tomato puree in its canned soups, beans

and spaghetti contributes more than one portion to the 'five-a-day' target. The claim still appears on cans of Heinz tomato soups.

Recognising that several major manufacturers have begun to use 'five-a-day' claims for processed foods (sometimes containing high levels of fat, sugar or salt, or minimal amounts of fruit or vegetables) the Food Standards Agency is currently developing guidelines to send to regional trading standards officers, advising how to deal with such problems.



If you see food and drink adverts that you think are misleading or contentious, send us a copy. If we think it is a good case, we will be pleased to submit a complaint on your behalf.

### ✓ Food Commission holds manufacturers to account

As part of the Food Commission's ongoing campaign to make sure that food labelling and advertising are consistent with healthy food choices, over the past few months we have submitted dozens of complaints to regional trading standards departments about labels and marketing practices. Trading standards officers are responsible for food law enforcement, including food labelling issues. We have also submitted several complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority,

Independent Television Commission and the Radio Authority, who judge whether advertisements have contravened their voluntary codes of practice. As the Knorr Vie case (left) illustrates, differences between the regulatory authorities can illuminate weaknesses in the system.

We hope to test the system and find out whether the regulations and codes of practice are adequate to protect health messages and support healthy eating.

Many of the labels and adverts that we have challenged have been sent in by *Food Magazine* readers – for which, many thanks! If you see food and drink products or adverts that you think are misleading – especially if they imply that a product is healthy – please send us the label or advert telling us when and where you found it. If we think there is a good case to be made, we will be pleased to submit a complaint on your behalf, and will continue to report the results in a future *Food Magazine*.

Send your labels or adverts to: The Food Commission, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. Email: [enquiries@foodcomm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@foodcomm.org.uk).

### Badvertisement

## Five-a-day the salty way

When Heinz launched its 'five-a-day' logo to appear on pasta shapes, tomato soup and canned vegetables, it wisely did not include the logo on products using characters like the Teletubbies to appeal to very small children. Why? Because one small can of Teletubbies pasta shapes with mini sausages contains 2.5g of salt in a single serving, and as the ASA's ruling against Knorr Vie soup (left) demonstrates, highly salted products should not be promoted as a healthy contribution to the 'five-a-day' target.

New government advice states that pre-school children should aim to consume no more than 2g of salt per day (children aged one to three) and 3g of salt per day (children aged four

to six). After hearing this government advice on restricting toddlers' salt intake, you might expect that Heinz would reformulate its products to reduce the salt to an acceptable level.

But no, instead it has simply changed the label – for the worse. New labels for Teletubbies pasta shapes with mini sausages, still containing 2.5g salt in a single serving, now claim that this product can indeed form one portion of a toddler's

'five-a-day' fruit and vegetable intake. The label even states: 'Five a day – the healthy way'.

Challenges from the Food Commission to the Food Standards Agency and the trading standards officer responsible for Heinz are already in the post.





# New CAP for old?

**After a year of discussions, negotiations and late night, last-minute deal-making and breaking, Europe's Common Agriculture Policy officials finally decided ... on a massive fudge. Vicki Hird reports.**

**P**otentially much more significant than the 1990s McSharry agriculture policy reforms, last year's European Commission proposals to break the link between production and subsidies, and increase funding for rural development were bound to be bitterly resisted.

The proposals were hailed by environmental groups as a step to stop the support for unwanted production and a move towards better rural sustainability. But farming interests who are happy with the present arrangements would not budge easily, and the final agreement was a split that allows each country to run its own mini-CAP as it pleases.

France claimed victory by winning the right to keep subsidies partly coupled to production for most sectors. The UK hailed a new era where farmers were free to make their own decisions, and where the farmed environment would be protected. Both are wrong. Whilst it is not clear from the highly complex final agreement what each EU country is going to do, two things are clear: the CAP is far more complex than before, and there is still woefully little attention given to sustainable agriculture and fair play with regards to poorer countries.

At a subsequent meeting between European farmer and development groups, it was clear that the downward pressure on prices worldwide from EU and US policy – with expensive but badly flawed subsidies – will continue to drive more farmers out of business, and play into the hands of the large food corporations who seek the cheapest raw materials wherever they can get them.

The UK Consumers' Association said that the only thing green about the deal is the people who think it will make a difference. There is a pitifully small allocation (up to 5% a year) of the so-called pillar II measures for greener farming and rural development, and the cross compliance measures, while welcome, will have very little enforcement behind them.

In health terms, there is little to be cheery about. Sugar was mentioned little and not reformed at all although it will have to be

soon. The dairy regime stays as it is, although there will be cuts in prices paid for purchasing intervention butter and skimmed milk.

This could result in less dairy production, produced by a few large companies to minimum standards of welfare and environmental protection. Quotas will remain but smaller dairy farmers will probably disappear. Worse still, the next substantive review of the dairy regime will be in 2014-2015, allowing another 12 years of dairy export subsidies and dumping of surplus produce, damaging poorer farmers around the world.

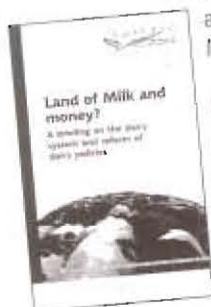
The reforms will not lead to more fruit and vegetable production as farmers gaining the income payments which replace the current subsidies won't be allowed to undercut their unsupported colleagues. The effect on prices will be minimal anyway, as shop prices rarely reflect farmgate prices.

Much of the drive for reform has been the impending World Trade Organization talks to reduce trade barriers. On health and environment criteria there is little to be pleased with, and as for trade barriers – it remains to be seen whether the Europeans have made any friends when they meet in Cancun, Mexico, in September.

■ DEFRA has published a summary of the CAP deal at: [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/capreform/agreement-summary.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/capreform/agreement-summary.pdf)

## Dairy reform is overdue

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming and the UK Food Group have published their long-awaited analysis of the workings of the CAP milk regime. The report calls for complete de-coupling of subsidies from production and diverting these funds into the provision of public benefits – environmental improvements, better animal welfare, better public health measures and sustainable rural development. The report argues for targeting support towards remote communities, smaller farmsteads and the encouragement of local food chains.



■ **Land of Milk and Money?**  
£16 from Sustain, tel 020 7837 1228, email [sustain@sustainweb.org](mailto:sustain@sustainweb.org) or visit [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org).

## Public sector should buy sustainably

Some £2 billion of UK taxpayers' money is spent every year purchasing public sector catering services, serving over 1.5 billion meals in schools, hospitals and a wide range of local and national government departments. Purchasing policies, though, rarely include sustainable food production among the criteria for awarding a contract to a food supplier.

Now a manual produced jointly by East Anglia Food Link and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming can put the matter to rights. Entitled *Good Food on the Public Plate*, it provides not only the theory but most of the practical equipment to help public sector bodies become more sustainable in their food purchases.



The full pack consists of a summary booklet (16 pages), a main report making the case for sustainable public purchasing policies (67 pages), a guidance manual for suppliers and purchasers (40 pages), a toolkit of resources including model contracts, checklists, recipe ideas, and seasonality charts (50 pages) and a directory of assurance schemes, public sector purchasers, national and international agencies and reference materials (60 pages).

■ Sections of the report can be purchased separately. The complete pack costs £65 for public sector bodies, NGOs and producers (£120 otherwise) from Sustain, tel 020 7837 1228, email [sustain@sustainweb.org](mailto:sustain@sustainweb.org) or visit [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org).



# Children's menus – the best and the worst

**It is summertime, and families are setting off on their holidays. But what sort of children's menus will they find on their days out? The Parents Jury investigates.**

**H**undreds of members of the Parents Jury have complained to us about the quality of children's menus on offer around the UK. We asked the 1,400 members of the Parents Jury to nominate the best and worst children's menus that they had seen. Then we sent menus that had received the most nominations to a panel of 12 judges from the Parents Jury and asked them for their verdict.



Little Chef was generally regarded as the worst of the motorway service stations. This advert promises a free lollipop to children when they finish their hotdog or burger.

## What parents thought

Overall, parents reported that they were very disappointed with the foods on offer. In fact, most parents said that they felt 'children's food' should be done away with altogether. A common response was: Why can't we get grown-up food in child-size portions? Typical comments from the Judging panel were as follows:

*'If parents tasted the food that is available on children's menus I am sure that they wouldn't waste their money on it!'*

*'The food industry produces visually appealing, highly processed products, suggesting children will only eat vegetables disguised as faces. They have a lot to answer for.'*

*'When on holiday and eating out a lot I get tired of daily fried fatty food, chips and ice-cream which is offered in so many places for children.'*

## The Holiday Food award

Parents report that it is very difficult to find healthy food available for children when they are away on holiday – the ubiquitous fare is chicken nuggets with chips and beans. However, a few places are making more effort to help parents.

### The best

Judges thought that the Eden Project's Morocco Red menu, provided a 'good selection' of 'uncomplicated dishes', which included fruit and vegetables. They were very pleased to see the fruit juices were fair trade, and noted that the restaurant was the only entrant that sourced local produce wherever possible. Parents also commented that the menu offered 'A nice range. Its

*suitability and appeal for children seem well thought out.'*

### The worst

The pub chain Wacky Warehouse was criticised for its narrow range of children's foods for children's parties – including chicken nuggets, mini burgers, and cheese & tomato pizza with chips, accompanied by a Fruit Shoot drink (10% juice) and ice-cream. The Judges thought this provided very little choice and was expensive at £4.99.

*'It's disgusting'. 'Very expensive for food which is little better than McDonald's Happy Meals'. 'Awful, nothing remotely healthy', 'Bog standard children's junk.'*

## The Pitstop award

Meals at motorway service stations were criticised by parents for offering nugget-and-chips meals and little in the way of healthy food or drinks. Assessing menus from Little Chef, Moto and Welcome Break, the Judges deemed Moto 'the best of a bad lot'. Many service stations offered pick'n'mix lunchboxes for children, which one judge thought should be renamed 'junkboxes'.

Overall the judges felt that service stations could do a lot to improve their children's menus. There was no overall winner in this category – all of the service stations received a thumbs-down from the Jury.

*'They're all fairly awful – the children however are happy to eat the stuff. They're often enticed by the free toy. I'd prefer to get and share out an adult meal instead, but they've usually been won over by the freebie before I can achieve that.'*

Mother of two from Cardiff

*'You are often tired and not in the mood to complain. Having bad food makes travelling with children even more stressful than it already is.'*

Mother of two from West London

**We would like to thank the Parents Jury and judges for sharing their views. We will be writing to all of the companies to let them know the verdicts. More details can be found at [www.parentsjury.org.uk](http://www.parentsjury.org.uk).**

## The best of the worst

**Moto\*** Provides hot food and a pick'n'mix lunchbox. *'This menu is trying at least, but it's achieved with no great effort to sell good food.'* Father of two from Solihull

On the positive side: Fresh fruit, raisins and milk and an organic juice drink, cheaper than the others with fish and pasta on the menus, and meals available without chips.

On the negative side: Too much chocolate and sweets, and no vegetables offered with the main meal. Of the pick'n'mix offerings, one judge said: *'If you offer children pick-and-mix or hot food, they nearly always want the junk. I would prefer this not to be offered,'* while another thought *'I would have problems finding five items that I would be happy to put in my children's lunchboxes. I do not object to crisps and biscuits, but I do object to the quantity in which they are offered.'*

\* Note: After the judging, one parent reported that some Motos sell fruit, salad and yogurt.

## The worst

**Little Chef** had no vegetarian option and offered pasta with main meals (plus chips) instead of vegetables. It also offered sugary desserts instead of fruit. One judge said that Little Chef provided *'No fresh food. Everything is out the freezer and into the fryer or microwave. I bet they haven't got a chopping board in the kitchen.'*



## Are the calorie counters getting it wrong?

**Food surveys say we are eating less than ever before. So is the rise in obesity solely a result of lack of exercise – or are the dietary surveys wrong? Tim Lobstein looks at the data.**

**T**hat we Britons are getting fatter is not in doubt. The proportion of adults who are obese (BMI 30+) rose from 7% in 1980 to 24% in 2001.

Children are following suit. The figures for children in England show that the proportion overweight rose from 8% in 1984 to 11% in 1994 and to 20% in 1998.

Assuming that the laws of physics are correct, the excess bodyweight being shown by so many people comes from energy intake exceeding energy expenditure. This is where the argument starts, with the food industry keen to suggest that energy intake is not the problem, while expenditure – a lack of physical exercise – is. Indeed Cadbury's has boldly stated 'Inactivity is the biggest cause of obesity amongst young people'.

### What do the surveys tell us?

On exercise, the data are equivocal. Looking at what has happened in the last two decades, when adult and child obesity has shot up, there is plenty of evidence that car use has increased, including use for shopping and the school run. But it is not obvious that cars have replaced human labour. And compensating exercise may be

taken: the use of gyms and the purchase of exercise equipment have grown substantially, bicycle sales are strong and swimming pools continue to be popular.

The sale of school sports fields and the reduction of physical activity in the school curriculum has attracted strong criticism, and is thought to contribute to child obesity levels. But researchers in Plymouth from Peninsula University have found that children in schools that offered more sports tended to do less activity out of school hours, while children from schools with minimal PE on the curriculum made up for this by being more active in the evenings. No matter how many hours were dedicated to PE at school, all children did roughly the same amount of exercise.

According to Sport England, during the 1990s children have increased their school-time participation in tennis, rounders, football and overall games lessons. Sports out of lesson time has also tended to increase, and time spent on sports in summer holidays has risen.

If the evidence on physical activity is unclear, then what about food intake? The standard annual survey, often cited by industry and government departments, is the National Food Survey (NFS), which for forty years has been monitoring the nation's household shopping habits. This data suggests a remarkable decline in calorie consumption over the last few decades from over 2,500 kcal per person per day in the early 1970s to barely 1,800 kcal in the last few years. There are, though, several serious problems with the NFS data which makes their trends unreliable.

Firstly, until 1994, the NFS ignored foods purchased and eaten outside the home. Evidence from several sources shows the amount eaten out of the home has steadily increased over recent years, so that we are eating far more food away from home than ever before. The government's own Family Expenditure Survey shows that around a third of our food budget is spent on foods eaten out – a proportion that has doubled in just two decades (see table 1).

The Food Standards Agency states that 'food eaten out often has a higher percentage of fat and saturated fat than food eaten at home', i.e. snacks, take-aways and restaurant foods tend to be high-calorie foods. Yet, when the NFS started looking at foods eaten out in 1994, its surveys



consistently found very low levels of additional calories being eaten, adding only 11% or 12% to the total intake. Given the increasing amounts of money being spent, this looks like a gross underestimate of the actual amounts being consumed out of the house.

More detailed studies of what people are actually eating have been run intermittently. For adults, a survey in 1987/87 and repeated in 2000/01 allows a more careful examination of trends. For children, too, a survey of school children in 1983 can be compared (at least for some age groups) with a larger survey in 2000. The results (table 2) show that self-reported energy intake has declined by some 60-120 kcal per day for adults and a remarkable 200-400 kcal per day for children.

However, even these surveys are criticised for the potential under-reporting and therefore under-estimation of the true amount eaten. The survey instructions told people eating at home to weigh their food and note the amounts in a diary. Food eaten out should be reported in a pocket notebook, stating quantity, price, where foods are purchased etc, and estimates of portion sizes. There is good evidence that people routinely under-report snack foods and soft drinks eaten while away from home, yet the surveys relied on these voluntary diaries being kept for seven days.

The most alarming problem is that the amounts reported in these surveys – e.g. for confectionery and soft drinks – are far smaller than the amounts being purchased. Industry sales figures cast serious doubts on the

**Table 1: We are snacking and dining out more than ever before**  
(per person per week)

	total food £	eating out £	eaten out %
1980	22.70	3.90	17
1985	32.70	5.80	18
1990	41.67	8.68	21
1995	52.88	14.38	27
2000	61.90	20.50	33



**Table 2: The dietary surveys indicate a fall in energy intake**

kcal/person/day

Adults	1986/87	2000/01
Women	1690	1632
Men	2440	2313

Children*	1983	1997
Girls	1855	1637
Boys	2275	1869

\* age matched

accuracy of any of the self-reported food and diet surveys (see table 3).

The most telling data comes from the annual report sent by the UK's agriculture departments to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. These reports show all the food produced in the country, plus imports, exports and food in storage. The results show how much food 'passed into consumption' each year. From these results, the FAO gives estimates of the daily food supply, in calories, per person in the UK.

The results are shown in figure 1 (adjusted to take account of revised UK population estimates announced by the National Statistical Office this spring). The data show a clear recent trend upwards – more food is being consumed than ever before (figure 1). According to these figures, our food supplies contain around 200 kcal per day more than in the 1970s (although the figures in the 1960s were not as low as 1970s). An average rise of 200 kcal means that while some people may be eating no more, others may be eating 300 or 400 kcal more per day.

These figures give serious cause for concern. An average rise of 200 kcal per day, without a compensatory rise in physical activity, would lead to significant weight gain.

## Just 20 kcal makes you fat

How many calories does it take for the average person to get too fat? The answer is: surprisingly few.

Take Mr Average, an adult 30-year old male, height 5'10" (1.78m) and weighing a healthy 11.5 stone (73kg). His BMI is 23, (below the threshold for 'overweight' of BMI 25). How many calories does he have to eat in excess of his energy expenditure in order to become overweight by the time he is 40?

The body tissue we gain when we put on weight has a calorie content of about 7 kcal per gram so, in theory, every 7 surplus kcals eaten could add a gram to Mr Average's weight. However, as Mr Average puts on weight so his daily energy needs increase (to keep the extra mass warm and to move it around) so a safer, more conservative figure would be 9 or even 10 surplus kcal eaten per gram gained.

For Mr Average, a gain from BMI 23 to BMI 25 is equivalent to a gain in weight of 6.2 kg. This requires eating a surplus of some 62,000 kcals. If you spread these extra 62,000 kcals over the ten years, you have a relatively small figure of an extra 17 kcal per day.

To become obese (a BMI of over 30) requires Mr Average to eat an extra 60 kcal or so per day, over 10 years.

Two observations follow. Firstly it is very easy to become overweight with just the odd snack or soft drink. One extra snack per week (such as a Cadbury's Boost bar or a Mars Snickers bar) would make Mr Average overweight within four years.

Secondly, the surveys of food intake have margins of error that are much larger than 17

**Table 3: Market data vs survey data**

	Industry sales	Self-reported consumption (adults age 16-65)
Confectionary grams/person/week		
1986/7	–	74
1992	240	–
1996	250	–
2000/01	–	82
Soft drinks ml/person/week		
1986/87	2,300	800
1990	2,820	–
1994	2,830	–
1996	3,249	–
2000/01	–	1,810

kcal. The NFS reports admit they can be 60-80 kcal adrift in their estimates, and the adult diet surveys acknowledge that the actual figure could also be some 80 kcal above or below the amount they report, so both data sets have poor sensitivity for the small changes that could lead to obesity. Under-reporting adds to this problem, with some surveys suggesting that 200-400 kcal can be 'forgotten' in the daily diaries.

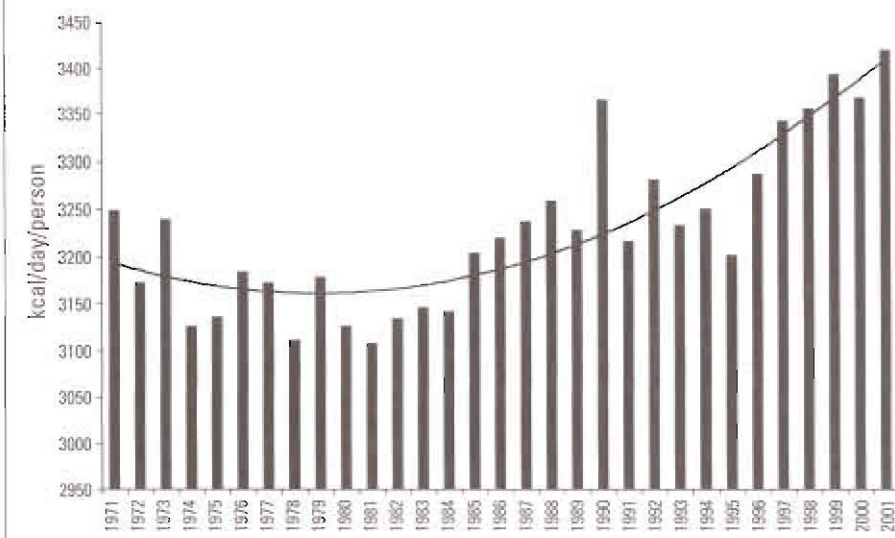
## Food counts

Whether or not the cause of obesity lies in excess food or lack of exercise, the solution requires looking at all possibilities for weight control.

No-one would deny that exercise is good for us and should be enjoyed whenever we can, but exercise alone is unlikely to remove the obesity problem. It is far harder to lose calories than to gain them: for example burning an extra 100 kcal means walking briskly for 30 minutes, while 100 kcal can be consumed in that drink of Lucozade Sport or half-pint of lager you gave yourself as a reward at the end of the walk.

So, while the food industry tells us that obesity is caused by our sedentary lifestyles rather than the products they market, it is not helping us find the solution.

**Figure 1: Food 'moving into consumption' according to production figures**



## kcal and BMIs

A kcal, or kilocalorie, is 1,000 calories.

BMI stands for Body Mass Index, and is calculated by dividing one's weight in kilograms by one's height in metres, and then squaring the result (weight in kg / height in m)<sup>2</sup>.





# books

## Don't worry (it's safe to eat). The true story of GM food, BSE and foot and mouth

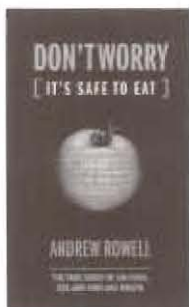
A Rowell, 2003, Earthscan  
(www.earthscan.co.uk), ISBN: 1-85383-932-9, £16.99

As our government is scrutinised for its presentations of the 'facts' in the lead-up to the Iraq war, this disturbing book illuminates philosopher Noam Chomsky's notion that public consent can be 'manufactured' by scientists, government and the media.

An investigative journalist working for national newspapers, Rowell has spent many years exposing how corporate influence undermines environmental and health policies. In *Don't Worry: It's safe to eat*, his theme is the manipulation of science in order to persuade the public to accept industrial farming and GM food. This is explored through a detailed analysis of the way policymakers dealt with BSE, the foot and mouth crisis, and the introduction of genetic engineering.

Based on interviews with scientific researchers and policy makers, and analysis of landmark reports and research, Rowell leads us through a detailed narrative account of each subject, identifying the individuals and organisations that shaped the way the science and risks were reported to the public.

Rowell's accounts include the story of Pusztai and his GM potatoes, illustrating that individuals who dare to speak out can find themselves vilified by their colleagues and the media. During the BSE crisis, for instance, Dr Tim Holt was publicly denounced by the Ministry for Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the meat industry for suggesting that if eating cow brains might be a source of infection from BSE, they should be removed from the human food chain. This advice later became policy.



As Edwina Currie so succinctly stated, MAFF officials were not 'the least interested in public health and felt that their task was to look after the farming industry'.

With the commercialisation of genetically modified crops likely to be upon us in the coming months, Rowell warns, 'a stranglehold of silence is slowly tightening on the debate over genetic engineering, as short-term economic needs are, once again, seeing precaution thrown to the wind'.

He suggests many ways in which decision-making could be better in the future, with proposals for Common Agricultural Policy reform, import controls, income protection for farmers, and policies that put consumers, not companies, first. Rowell suggests that we should democratise the scientific process, especially organisations such as the Royal Society, which politicians look to for unbiased advice, but which is increasingly coming into question from the public-health community.

An eye-opener and a page-turner. Well worth the read.

For further work from this author, check out the website: [www.andyrowell.com](http://www.andyrowell.com).

## Brand Child

Remarkable insights into the minds of today's global kids and their relationship with brands  
Kogan Page, 2003, £25  
(www.kogan-page.co.uk) ISBN 0 7494 3867 3.

It is illuminating to glimpse a world view that you are never likely to share. Such is the case with *BrandChild* by Martin Lindstrom, who has helped sell big-brand products to kids, including Mars, Pepsi, Lego and Cartoon Network.

Lindstrom sees 8-14 year olds as 'purchase influencers' with 'brand allegiance' and a spending power of some \$300 billion a year. He clearly has great liking for children, and the challenge of selling to them, but he fails to address nutrition at any point in his 316-page book – food is a brand like any other. If it comes in a fancy bag, with plastic toys, a link to an interactive website and a free ticket for the latest movie character that also appears on the pack, then kids will buy it. And apparently that's just fine.

Lindstrom recommends making a brand 'visible in the school-yard and in the late hours'. 'Marketing to kids places a huge responsibility on you,' he continues. 'If you fail to maintain an ethical approach, it will soon come to light. And that will undermine the freedom of access that is granted in most countries across the globe.'

An enlightening book for food campaigners, to help understand the vast marketing machine.



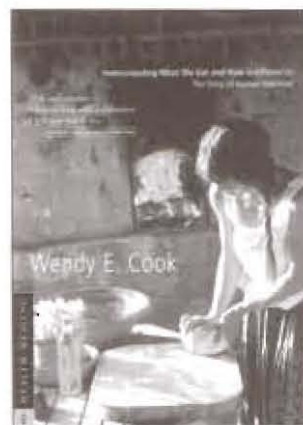
## Foodwise: Understanding what we eat and how it affects us

W Cook, 2003, Clairview Books,  
£16.95  
(www.clairviewbooks.co.uk)  
ISBN 1 902636 39 2.

This book tells the story of human nutrition, mingling an engaging and informative narrative on the evolution of food with the story of our developing consciousness as human beings. Food is what we create, and what creates us.

Wendy Cook, with many years' experience of cooking in cancer recovery clinics, communities and schools, is interested in food for its nurturing and life-giving properties. She communicates her joy in the form, flavours and colours of food plants, but also her joy in the functional properties of foods in delivering health and vitality.

She is not romantic about our past – recognising what great efforts were made by our ancestors to create agricultural systems and develop food plants. But she is highly critical of modern industrialised agriculture that has produced monocultural mega-farms requiring endless agro-chemical inputs. We have lost our wisdom, says Cook, and should pay more attention to the health of our bodies and our ecosystem.



## The Composition of Foods

Royal Society of Chemists and the Food Standards Agency, 2002, ISBN 0-85404-428-0 ([www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org)).

The sixth edition of our office bible, McCance and Widdowson's *The Composition of Foods* is now out and, at £45 for 540 pages, a bargain if you need to know the selenium content of corn flakes or even the phytosterols in pizza. Plans to make the tables available on the internet seem to be stalling, though, and will probably depend on charging viewers to look at them. For free nutrient data based on American products try the USDA database on ([www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/index.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/index.html)).





# What the doctor reads

The latest research from the medical journals



## Vending machines affect diet

A study of American high schools has shown that the presence of vending machines selling snack foods had a noticeable impact on the children's diets. Comparing the lunch-time food choices of 12-year-old children in 16 schools in Minneapolis, the researchers found that for every snack vending machine present in the school the pupils' average daily fruit consumption fell by 11%. Secondary schools had on average twelve vending machines.

In schools where children could select their own meal items in the lunch canteen, children ate fewer fruits and vegetables and more fat than in schools which had set menus. Given the choice, children went for high fat items: in the self-select canteens 84% of the foods on offer were high-fat items, and these formed 93% of the foods actually sold.

■ MY Kubik *et al*, pp1168-73, and SA French *et al*, pp1161-8, *Am J Pub Health*, July 2003.

## Pills or food (1)

The Gates Foundation has launched its long-anticipated multi-million grant-making trust to encourage countries with nutritional deficiency problems to add micronutrients to staple foods. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) aims to add vitamins, iron and iodine into flour, oil, sugar and salt. The first projects are targeting populations in China, South Africa, Vietnam and Morocco. Previous moves to fortify foods such as soft drinks have been heavily criticised by nutritionists for the misleading dietary messages the products would carry.

■ See [www.gainhealth.org](http://www.gainhealth.org).

## Pills or food (2)

A new examination of the effects of vitamin E and beta carotene supplementation has concluded that there are no benefits from consuming these nutrients in supplement form. Examination of trials of over 80,000 vitamin E supplement takers, and 130,000 beta

carotene supplement takers, showed no benefits in terms of heart disease deaths or all-cause deaths.

■ DP Vivekananthan, *Lancet* pp2017-23, 14 June 2003.

## Diabetes to affect 1 in 15

Type 2 (non-insulin dependent) diabetes is expected to reach epidemic proportions around the globe in the next two decades, with 5-8% of the world's population affected by the disease by 2025. The close association between type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease has led to suggestions that they both reflect a 'metabolic syndrome' dubbed syndrome X. A British Medical Journal editorial has suggested that the metabolic syndrome should be characterised by the co-occurrence of obesity (especially central obesity), dyslipidaemia (especially high levels of triglycerides and low levels of HDL cholesterol), hyperglycaemia and hypertension. The author notes that the diabetes epidemic 'is fuelled in large part by a parallel epidemic of obesity and physical inactivity, clearly pointing to prevention of obesity as the most direct route to prevention of the metabolic syndrome and its sequelae.'

■ JB Meigs, *BMJ* pp61-2, 12 July 2003.

## CMO issues fat warning

The British government's official doctor, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Liam Donaldson, has issued his annual diagnosis of the public's health, emphasising this year that we are a nation of fatties, and it is time something was done.

Instead of the usual homilies to watch our weight, eat sensibly and get plenty of exercise, the CMO has recognised that the problems lie as much with government policies as they do with personal choices. Dr Donaldson has promised a Food and Health Action Plan that will 'look at food supply, production and preparation' as well as access to healthier foods and consumer information.

In the report, the CMO says: 'I urge the food industry to consider what it can do to ensure that the levels of fat and sugar in products contribute to a healthier diet ... In the United States a range of fiscal and

*economic measures are being considered, as well as health 'warnings' on foods. I am not opposed to such an approach here.'*

And he adds a sideswipe at the promotion of junk foods to children by suggesting there may be a need to regulate the promotion of foods in schools and possibly control advertising to children.

*'There is a case for adopting the precautionary principle for the marketing of foods to children. Industry should be asked to take a more responsible approach to the promotion (especially to children) of foods high in fat, salt and added sugars and balance this with the promotion of healthier options, including fruit and vegetables.'*

*'No country has successfully tackled the problem of obesity,' Dr Donaldson concludes. 'With a co-ordinated and comprehensive response from health and local authority services and across government and with the co-operation of the food, sports and leisure industries it is still possible to mitigate its impact on future generations.'*

■ Health Check: *CMO Annual Report 2002* (<http://www.doh.gov.uk/cmo/annualreport2002/pdf/cmreport2002.pdf>).

Dr Donaldson prescribes a Food and Health Action Plan in his annual report.



## Fibre reduces cancer risk

A lack of protective effects from dietary fibre have been reported in several surveys in recent years, but now the largest prospective survey ever mounted in Europe has shown a significant benefit of eating foods naturally rich in fibre. The EPIC prospective survey into cancer risks analysed over half a million dietary records completed by adults aged 25-70 years, and followed the group for nearly a decade to check who developed cancer.

Over 1,000 cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed, and the risk of being one of these patients was greatest for those people who ate diets containing few fibrous foods. No particular fibrous food was better than another. The use of fibre supplements was not investigated. For people eating low levels of dietary fibre, the authors found that doubling their intake would cut the risk of colorectal cancer by 40%.

■ SA Bingham *et al*, *Lancet* pp1496-1501, 3 May 2003.



# marketplace



**Kids' Food for Fitness** You don't have to be the parent of an aspiring athlete to benefit from Anita Bean's excellent book. It's full of great everyday advice, including: The latest nutritional guidelines for active children aged 5-16; Clear practical advice on nutrition and exercise; Tips on eating and drinking for sporty kids; Smart advice for overweight children; Healthy menu plans, tasty recipes and snack ideas. Special offer - £12.99 (p&p is free).

## Dump the Junk! - new book

Containing over 300 expert tips for how to encourage your children to eat healthy food and dump the junk, and with lots of tasty recipes, this is an essential guide for parents. Illustrated with entertaining cartoons by the *Food Magazine's* Ben Nash. £7.99 (p&p is free).



## 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 - now in paperback

Eric Schlosser's bestseller lifts the lid on the fast food industry. He explores how fake smells and tastes are created, talks to workers at abattoirs and explains how the fast food industry is transforming not only our diet but our landscape, economy, work-force and culture. Essential reading. £7.99 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 2003) 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.

## 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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# 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 write to The Editor, The Food Magazine, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF or email to [letters@foodcomm.org.uk](mailto:letters@foodcomm.org.uk)



## Does pester power work?

Molly Gilbert, a Health Visitor from Bristol, contacted The Food Commission to enquire if we knew the actual cost of pester power in the UK. She'd found that many parents reported difficulty when purchasing healthy food for their families because their children demanded highly advertised but less healthy choices. We've heard the same complaint from many parents, but we couldn't find any research calculating the total commercial value of pester power in the UK. However, the US publication *Consumers' Research Magazine* quotes marketing consultants stating that American children directly influenced \$170 billion of spending on food in 2001. We weren't able to check this figure, but if it's correct, that's an awful lot of pester power!

## Cadbury's calories

Congratulations to the *Food Magazine* for revealing the unpalatable facts behind Cadbury's so-called 'Get Active!' campaign (see FM61). However, on feeding my ten-year-old son the 170 chocolate bars required to purchase one basketball, I found that he was able to burn off all of the chocolate calories by playing basketball for only 90 hours, not the 900 hours quoted in the *Food Magazine*. Does my son have an exceedingly fast metabolism, or did you miscalculate?

Sally Clark (nutritionist), received by email

Eds: Thank you for pointing this out! Our mathematical error (adding an extra 0) got spotted just after the magazine went to press. The calculation should read: '...a ten-year-old child consuming enough chocolate to earn a basketball through the Cadbury's scheme would need to play basketball for 90 hours to burn off the calories; a junior basketball team would have to play for 18 hours (27 full-length games).'



Dawn French – refused right to adopt unless she lost weight

## Government insults overweight people

Obesity is a disease, associated with a wide-range of life-threatening disorders including heart disease, some cancers and diabetes. Diabetes alone costs the country millions of pounds to treat, with a typical renal dialysis patient needing £25,000-worth of treatment per year. Now the government wants to make overweight people promise to lose weight before a doctor will treat them.

This is insulting. We overweight people already suffer embarrassment and bullying at school and at work. Now we will be very reluctant to go to a doctor. We need help and encouragement to resist all the temptations put in our way. It is like having an addiction. For some people it may be the result of glandular problems, or even genetic disorders. Being moralised at by health workers won't help at all.

I have paid for my NHS services, and putting up a barrier between me and my doctor is quite unfair. I won't easily find private health insurance.

Incidentally, did you know that being overweight is a reason for being denied the chance of fostering or adopting a child?

Lizzie Walker  
Brighton, East Sussex

Yes, we were aware that some overweight people wanting to adopt have been told that their weight is a problem. The agencies say that it may lead to life-threatening diseases affecting their parenting ability and may show a poor attitude to general health care. Although we don't know how they judge overweight in the UK's adoption investigations, we do know of Australian adoption services that recommend against adoption by people with a BMI over 35.

The comedienne Dawn French has adopted a child but was initially told she was 'the wrong size for a woman of her height' and could not adopt without losing weight (which she did, if temporarily) according to her fan site <http://dawnfrench.tripod.com/big.html>

And in case you wished to know, adoptive mothers can breastfeed – see a supportive internet site for this at [www.adoptionbreastfeeding.com](http://www.adoptionbreastfeeding.com)

## Fat figures don't add up

I love your badverts and loopy labels and my shopping trips (just like yours, I expect!) take ages because of reading all the small-print. But I am sometimes completely bemused by what the labels say. For example, I was looking at a label on some blueberry muffins, and noticed that the total amount of fat declared was more than the sum of the parts. How come?

Angie Twohig  
Chorley, Lancashire

Good question! According to McCance and Widdowson (see page 20), the total fat is more than the sum of the parts listed for two reasons. Firstly, fat contains non-fatty acid material such as phospholipids and sterols. Between five and ten percent of the fat in meats, and even greater proportions of the fats in plants can be non-fatty-acid material.

Secondly, some fatty acids do not have to be listed in nutrition panels, of which the *trans*-fatty acids are the most common. Some *trans*-fatty acids are found naturally in butter, but most *trans*-fatty acids are created in the hydrogenation process for treating vegetable and marine oils to extend their shelf-life. Between 10% and 20% of a hydrogenated oil may be in the *trans*-form.

*Trans*-fatty acids are considered at least as artery-clogging as saturated fats, and for this reasons we believe consumers should be given more information about their presence in our food. Kraft Foods, the maker of Oreo cookies, was threatened with a lawsuit for failing to warn American consumers about the presence of *trans*-fats in the products, and Kraft has announced revised formulations to cut the *trans*-fats (see editorial, page 2).

The last two items on the ingredients list for your muffins are hydrogenated oils. We would like to see companies list the amount of *trans*-fatty acids in the nutrition panels.

### 6 blueberry muffins

Nutrition		Ingredients	
Typical values	Per 100g	Per 100g	
Energy	1320 kJ (312 kcal)	1025 kJ (244 kcal)	Wheat Flour, Sugar, Whole Egg, Rapeseed Oil, Blueberries (20%), Water, Modified Maize Starch, Wheat Powder, Baking Agents: Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate, Sodium Aluminium Phosphate, Emulsifier: Polyglycerol Esters of Fatty Acids, Salt, Wheat Protein, Palm Oil, Flavourings, Stabiliser: Saccharin Salt, Hydrogenated Palm Oil, Hydrogenated Rapeseed Oil
Protein	4.0g	3.5g	
Carbohydrate	29.2g	40.6g	
of which sugars	14.1g	25.1g	
of which starch	14.1g	25.1g	
Fat	12.3g	16.8g	
of which saturated	1.2g	1.6g	
of which trans-unsaturated	0.0g	0.0g	
of which polyunsaturated	1.0g	1.0g	
Fibre	0.3g	0.3g	
Salt	0.04g	0.04g	
of which sodium	0.02g	0.02g	

**Allergy advice**  
Contains eggs, milk, wheat & gluten.

**How to store**  
Store in a cool dry place away from strong light and odours. To retain freshness, store in an airtight container.

**Use by**  
If freezing, freeze within 3 months of production and consume within 1 month. Do not refreeze.





## backbites



### Fast Food Rockers

In the Top Ten pop chart this summer is a group, the Fast Food Rockers, whose song features Pizza Hut, McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Its repetitive lyrics are catchy and popular, just like advertising jingles, although the BBC feels compelled to play the song on children's television.

*'A pizza hut a pizza hut kentucky fried chicken and a pizza hut  
McDonalds McDonalds kentucky fried chicken and a pizza hut...*

*I want it I need it nothing else can beat it  
Hot and spicy whenever I'm in town (mm mm)'*

Whether parody or not, this appeal to the hypnotic effect of marketing is reminiscent of Burger King's current advertising, drawing attention to the word URGE lurking in the word 'burger', and their ironically named 'livin' large' Big Kids promotion (see [www.burgerking.com](http://www.burgerking.com)). McDonald's marketing phrase for its first ever global advertising campaign, launched in June, is 'I'm lovin' it'.

Perhaps parents and teachers could take this song as the perfect opportunity to talk about advertisers' tricks of the trade.

### Breast cancer charity promotes fat

As the *Food Magazine* has often reported, many health charities work with food companies to raise money, or to help them promote food products as contributing to healthier diets. Most charities realise that using their name communicates an endorsement of the food product, so are rightly wary about which foods their logo can appear on.

But this doesn't seem to be an important consideration for the US charity Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Patti Chico, a *Food Magazine* reader from Chicago participated in a fun run to raise money for the breast cancer charity. This lapel pin (above) was given to her at the end of the run – sponsored by McDonald's. Runners also received a free piece of pizza from Pizza Hut.

A study of breast cancer mortality rates and dietary factors for 35 countries published last year in the academic journal *Cancer* showed that diet (especially a diet high in fat) is one of the most important risk factors for breast cancer.



### Two jobs for one

John Sunderland is the president of the Food and Drink Federation. He is also president of the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers. The ISBA's code says: 'No sales promotion should be undertaken which is likely to harm children or young people mentally, morally or physically...' We are sure he is serious in his commitment to children's healthy diets, but it can't be easy for him. John has a third job, too. He is chief executive to Britain's number one promoter of chocolate-for-sport-tokens, Cadbury-Schweppes.



Another busy person is Baroness Wilcox, ex-chair of the nation's consumer champion, the National Consumer Council, and now (i) chair of the Consumer Policy Institute, (ii) President of the Institute for Trading Standards and... (iii) a director of Cadbury-Schweppes. So did she approve the idea of promoting chocolate to kids using the sports tokens scheme? Indeed she must have, since she is chair of the company's Corporate and Social Responsibility Committee, no less.

### Gross food from Grossman?

At the time when TV chef Lloyd Grossman was hired by the NHS to improve hospital food, 40% of adults and 15% of children admitted to hospital were malnourished, half of these severely so, and many others became malnourished during their stay in hospital.

Lloyd Grossman's new menu has arrived, full of high-fibre cereals, and dishes such as broccoli quiche, bean goulash and fish pie.

Described as a 'lighter alternative' to the normal menu, the children's snackbox is a different matter. Crisps, a Mars Bar, sugared fromage frais, sugared milkshake, a cheese triangle, breadsticks and a banana.

In total, we estimate this box contains 90g of sugar, and around 30g of fat.

And yet the box is branded with the logo: Better Hospital Food.



See page 17 for more on children's menus.

### Winnie the Pooh's juicy profits!

Children's foods promoted by the use of popular cartoon characters are usually high in sugar, fat or salt, and low in nutritious ingredients. So we were relieved to see that Disney's new Winnie the Pooh juice drinks for pre-school children contain no added sugar and 55% juice – a lot better than the meagre 3% or 15% offered by drinks like Vimto and Sunny Delight.

However, it seems that Disney cares more about American toddlers than British toddlers. The equivalent Winnie the Pooh juice drinks in America are 100% juice.

Why the difference? Does Disney think British toddlers need 45% added water and flavourings?

