

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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Soft drinks – or liquid candy?

A *Food Magazine* survey has revealed that a single drink of Ribena or Lucozade could give you as much sugar as several packets of sweets.

Either drink would exceed a child's recommended maximum sugar intake for the whole day – by 30% in the case of Ribena.

With increasing attention being paid to the role of soft drinks in the obesity epidemic, especially among children, the *Food Magazine* takes a look at how much sugar you can expect to find in some of the nation's favourite soft drinks.

For the full report, see page 21.

A whopping 70g of sugar in this 500ml bottle of Ribena is equal to the sugar in more than three and half packets of Chewits, or seven lollipops. That's more than a child's recommended maximum sugar intake for a whole day.



2003: Ten campaign successes!

Ten attempts by the food industry to market unhealthy foods to children flopped last year, thanks to the tireless campaigning of the Food Commission and the Parents Jury.

1) Sunset for Sunny Delight

Sunny Delight is up for sale following flagging sales and continued bad publicity. It was given the 'Additive Nightmare' award in 2002 by the Food Commission's Parents Jury and was criticised on a BBC TV's *Money Programme* in December 2003. The trade magazine *The Grocer* reports that 'the brand has suffered a 28.6% nosedive at the till in the last year'. News of this massive drop in sales came in the middle of a six-month advertising campaign costing £7.5m, selling Sunny Delight as a 'good compromise' and 'a step in the right direction' for children's health. But parents were clearly not fooled, and the brand is now up for sale. No buyer has yet been found. Can anyone spare a tenner?



A £7.5m advertising campaign in 2003 featuring the geeky Max Wilde has failed to save Sunny Delight from falling sales. The brand is now up for sale

2) ASDA checkouts chuck out (some) snacks

ASDA has announced that it plans to display fruit at some checkouts in an attempt to stave off criticisms from the Food Commission and Parents Jury about unhealthy snacks displayed where customers have to queue.

ASDA, Britain's second largest supermarket, was identified as the 'worst offender' in a *Food Magazine* survey published in October 2003, for selling high-calorie snacks, confectionery and soft drinks at supermarket checkouts – all within easy reach of children. ASDA was confronted by MPs at the parliamentary Health Committee inquiry into obesity with evidence from the *Food Magazine* survey and quickly announced that it would try displaying fruit at up to a quarter of its checkouts.

■ For more campaign successes, see page 3

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.

Director: Tim Lobstein
Policy Officer: Kath Dalmeny
Campaigns & Research Officers:
Annie Seeley, Merav Shub
Office & Subscriptions Manager:
Ian Tokelove
Administrative Officer: Graham Hood
Information Officer: Mary Whiting
Assistant Research Officers:
Marjon Willers, Kate Millington,
Marion O'Brien, Helen Sandwell

Cartoons: Ben Nash and Joe Short

Trustees and Advisors:
Joanna Blythman, Dr Eric Brunner
Tracey Clunies-Ross, Peta Cottey, Prof
Michael Crawford, Derek Cooper, Sue Dibb,
Alan Gear, Vicki Hird, Dr Mike Joffe, Robin
Jenkins, Prof Tim Lang, Iona Liddington, Dr
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McCrae, Dr Erik Millstone, Dr Melanie
Miller, Charlotte Mitchell, Dr Mike Nelson,
Dr Mike Rayner, Prof Aubrey Sheiham,
Colin Tudge, Hugh Warwick, Simon Wright.

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The Food Commission (UK) Ltd
94 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
Telephone: 020 7837 2250
Fax: 020 7837 1141
email: enquiries@foodcomm.org.uk
websites: www.foodcomm.org.uk
www.parentsjury.org.uk

A happy new year for us all!

The Food Standards Agency got off to a bad start in 2004 when it responded to the farmed salmon scare by repeating almost word for word the statement from the salmon farm owners: don't worry, salmon is good for you, the levels of toxins are below safety limits, etc, etc.

A pity. The Agency could so easily have said they were concerned about the problem, would deal with it, but would encourage people to continue eating oily fish of one sort another while the problem was cleared up.

The Department of Health fared little better when it held a stakeholder forum in January to discuss its Food and Health Action Plan. Their draft document reiterated the need to cut back on salt, fat and sugar (messages the Department has been repeating for over a quarter of a century) but said nothing on what action was needed.

The Department could start by launching a food policy forum to replace the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) – a gap that remains unfilled for over five years.

Meanwhile a deathly hush can be heard from the European Food Standards Agency. It has said very little on safety and virtually nothing on diet and health throughout 2003.

But something stirs at the World Health Organization, due to publish its long-awaited analysis of European food policy this spring, and to ratify a global strategy for preventing non-communicable diseases in May.

However, not surprisingly, the Bush Administration is trying to block criticism of the food industry, using the same tactics it did over global warming: discredit the evidence, bully colleagues and walk out of the hall.

Parents Jury wins campaign award

One of the legacies of the campaigning nutritionist Caroline Walker is an annual lecture and prize-giving event. Awards are given to individuals, researchers and campaigners who during the preceding year have contributed to improving nutrition.

In 2003, the Food Commission accepted a Caroline Walker Trust award on behalf of the 1,700 members of the Parents Jury. The Caroline Walker Trust praised the Parents Jury for helping to keep children's nutrition on the national agenda at a crucial time. This award is special because it comes from fellow nutritionists and campaigners.

So a big thank you, once again, to you – our readers and supporters – without whom none of our campaign work would be possible.

■ For Caroline Walker Trust
publications, lectures and
awards, see: www.cwt.org.uk



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Badvertisements!

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

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

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

..continued from page 1

Success! Companies backtrack on unhealthy promotions

3) Cadbury drops sport tokens from chocolate bars

Following widespread criticism of its 'tokens for school sports equipment' scheme, Cadbury has announced that it will change the way the promotion works. Sponsorship of school sport is likely to continue, but Cadbury will no longer require children and their families to buy large amounts of chocolate in order to take part. Food Commission calculations (published in FM61, April 2003) showed that if a ten-year-old wanted to earn a 'free' basketball, they would need to play the game for 90 hours to burn off the 38,463 kcalories from eating the chocolate.



Cadbury to scrap Get Active tokens

By Claire Wootton and Emily Rogers
Cadbury is to scrap its controversial 'Get Active' promotion, dropping the controversial 'tokens' which were used to win prizes. The manufacturer has been criticised for promoting unhealthy eating habits and for requiring children to eat large amounts of chocolate to earn tokens. Cadbury has announced that it will change the way the promotion works, but will continue to sponsor school sports. The new scheme will require children to buy a smaller amount of chocolate to earn tokens. The manufacturer has also announced that it will stop advertising the promotion in schools.

4) Coca-Cola loses BBC deal

In January, the BBC announced that by September it will drop the mention of Coca-Cola from *Top of the Pops* and the Radio 1 chart show. This promotion was due to Coca-Cola's recent sponsorship of the UK Singles Charts. The public service broadcaster (which received no payment for the mention of Coca-Cola) had been criticised for promoting sugary drinks to children and teenagers – the main



audience for *Top of the Pops*. The BBC said that by dropping the Coca-Cola logo, it was responding to 'internal disquiet', and pressure from licence payers and the media. When news of the sponsorship deal first emerged, the Food Commission took part in many radio and newspaper interviews slamming the scheme.

5) Heinz reduces salt and stops marketing in schools

Following widespread media coverage of Food Commission criticisms of high levels of salt in Heinz foods targeted at children, Heinz has committed to reducing salt in its processed food. In a year in which the subject of advertising to children was hardly ever out of the papers, Heinz has also published a communications policy acknowledging that marketing in schools can promote unhealthy diets. The new policy states: 'Any in-school programs should be strictly educational, not commercial, and only of a public service nature. They should reinforce healthy lifestyles and healthy dietary behaviours, encourage knowledge of nutrition and cooking, and should complement the school curriculum.' Heinz goes on to say, 'Exclusive vending machine contracts with schools that require the promotion of Heinz brands or products should be avoided.' Heinz is also one of the first mainstream food companies to state that it will stop advertising to pre-school children. See: www.heinz.com/jsp/communications_guidelines.jsp

6) Minister acknowledges inadequacy of advert rules

After lobbying from parents and health groups, including the Parents Jury and Food Commission, the minister for Culture, Media and Sport has finally acknowledged that food advertising may contribute to children's unhealthy diets.

Minister Tessa Jowell, who is responsible for the regulation of TV advertising, is reported to have received several hundred letters from concerned parents and health professionals. Although she has previously said that the rules on advertising are adequate, she has now written to the advertising regulatory body OFCOM saying, 'I believe the current code of conduct governing the advertising of food and drink products to children may be inadequate and is in need of review.'

■ For details of the OFCOM consultation on advertising to children, contact: Rozline Grazette at OFCOM. Tel: 020 7981 3640; email: rosline.grazette@ofcom.org.uk

Campaign successes 7, 8 and 9

In response to bad publicity from the *Food Magazine* and Parents Jury: 7) Kellogg's has reduced the fat and saturated fat content of its Coco Pops and Frosties cereal bars; 8) Kraft Dairylea has reduced the salt in its Lunchables range, and 9) Golden Vale has announced that it will reduce the salt in its Cheestrings snacks. These are small changes, but successes nonetheless, and brought about by the hard work of parents, *Food Magazine* readers and Food Commission campaigners.



■ The Food Commission will be developing campaign work in the coming months to challenge more food manufacturers improve their products. If you see products or marketing that you would like to see



challenged, please send us a sample of the packaging telling us your concerns and saying where and when you bought it.



And number 10...

BBC Worldwide, the marketing arm of the BBC, has told the Food Commission it is working on its 'food review' and that it 'will be in touch shortly'. The BBC was embarrassed by the Food Commission's campaign highlighting the use of BBC characters the Teletubbies, Tweenies and Fimbles on unhealthy foods.

The US campaign group Commercial Alert has issued a challenge to the US public service broadcaster PBS (the US equivalent of the BBC) to drop a sponsorship deal between McDonald's and its pre-school programme *Sesame Street*. See: www.commercialalert.org

Boots serves up flavoured water for newborns

The World Health Organization recommends that babies should drink breastmilk exclusively for the first six months of life, a principle adopted by the UK's Department of Health. Breastfeeding is protective against a host of ailments and diseases, ranging from allergies and digestive disorders to diabetes and heart disease.

Dietitians generally stick to the 'six months breastfeeding' advice, with some saying that water can be introduced into the baby's diet at around four months, especially in hot weather. But for younger and newborn infants, nutritious breastmilk should be their sole source of fluid.

However, contrary to such sound advice, the pharmaceutical retailer Boots has launched a new product range of flavoured water designed for babies 'from four weeks'. The ingredients are water, flavouring and citric acid.

Not only is this a very expensive way of buying water (over £5 per litre); but do babies



really need their first contact with water to be adulterated with peach, blackcurrant, strawberry or apple flavourings?

Boots is not the only company giving product advice that is unlikely to match up with guidance from dietitians.

Meridian Apple Juice Concentrate (left) is described as a 'baby juice'. The company does give advice on diluting the highly concentrated product, but

says that up to five drinks a day would be suitable for a four-month-old baby. No advice is given on the bottle relating to dental health care despite the fact that even after dilution this is a very sugary drink. Five times a day is a high level of exposure to sugar for newly developing teeth, especially if the baby is also consuming sugars in other foods.



Toddler top puts teeth at risk

How can one tiny piece of plastic pose a serious threat to toddlers' teeth?

This new screw-on top, available in Tesco and sent to us by a concerned dental specialist, is called an Anywayup Toddler Top and fits onto plastic bottles. The design of the screw-on top means that whichever way up the bottle is held, fluid cannot leak out. This might seem handy for mums, but it is not so handy for teeth.

We have found that the Anywayup Toddler Top is a perfect fit for products such as Coca-Cola, 7-Up, Irn Bru and Panda Pops – all highly sugary products. It also fits onto several popular varieties of sweetened squashes and flavoured fruit drinks, but not onto milk bottles.

One of the main threats to newly formed toddler teeth is frequent exposure to sugary foods and drinks. Yet this is just the sort of exposure encouraged by a top that allows sugary drinks to be sipped frequently throughout the day. This drip-feeds sugar into a toddler's mouth, creating a perfect environment for tooth-rotting bacteria to thrive.

The British Dental Association says that around a third of children will have one or more of their teeth extracted before the age of five. The majority of these extractions could be prevented by better dental care and healthier eating and drinking habits.

We have raised our concerns about the Anywayup Toddler Top with the company that produces them, and with Tesco, the Food Standards Agency and the local trading standards officer responsible for Anywayup products. On grounds of safety and health, we think this top should be withdrawn from sale.

Mandy Haberman, the inventor of Anywayup Toddler Tops and Anywayup Cups that have also been criticised by dentists for encouraging children to sip on sugary drinks throughout the day.



Badvertisement

How old is an infant?

Because of their small size, babies and infants are especially vulnerable to contaminants and additives in their food. That's why the food regulations ban artificial sweeteners from foods and drinks for babies and young children. Yet many products designed for very young children do contain artificial sweeteners, such as this carton of Thomas & Friends Apple & Blackcurrant juice drink.

Toddlers are the main audience for Thomas the Tank Engine, yet this product contains only 15% juice, with artificial

sweeteners Aspartame and Acesulfame K. How should parents judge what age their child must be in order for artificial sweeteners to be 'safe'? The regulations do not say, and neither does this carton.



Toy adverts promote physical inactivity

Promotion of food accounts for almost half of all advertising broadcast during children's TV viewing times, representing by far the largest category of advertisements shown. The majority of the foods and drinks promoted to children in this way are high in fat, sugar and/or salt, fueling calls for a restriction on food advertising to children. The advertised diet is grossly unbalanced, doing little to support healthy food choices.

In the lead-up to Christmas, toys tend to take over from food as the largest category of advertisements shown on children's TV. Since an increase in physical activity could help children towards using up some of their extra calories from the snacks and drinks usually promoted, we wondered: could toys help to promote a more active lifestyle?

We kept a note of products promoted during Saturday morning children's television on a weekend just before Christmas.

Amongst children's programmes sponsored by Ribena and Walkers Squares crisps, and interspersed with ads for McDonald's, Burger King and Frosties cereal, we found that almost all of the Christmas toys and games were for products to be played sitting on the floor or at the table, or for children's movies.

Only two out of 25 toy and game adverts involved some physical activity – the party game Twister, and a Junior Ready Steady Cook Popcorn Maker, in which children might walk around the kitchen to gather ingredients, shortly before making a snack.

Some organisations are now recognising that a balanced approach to tackling obesity involves healthy eating and active play.

The National Association of Toy Libraries and the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA), representing several toy manufacturers, are working to promote active and physical play. Guidance has been issued to toy libraries about healthy eating during play sessions and avoiding sponsorship by companies marketing unhealthy messages to children. The annual *Good Toy Guide* includes an award for outdoor toys and BTHA is examining how to develop materials for indoor active play.

Perhaps the food industry could take a leaf out of the toymakers' book and develop healthier products and healthier promotions.

Even old-fashioned toys like tricycles now have added motors so that children do not have to pedal as they play

Krispy Kreme targets disability charity

We hoped it wouldn't happen in the UK, but how wrong we were. The US doughnut company Krispy Kreme (see FM63: *Krispy Kremes 'do nought' for health*) has started to market its high-sugar, high-fat products to UK nursery schools and, worse still, to a disability charity.

Krispy Kreme opened its first UK store in Harrods in autumn 2003. At the launch, one 'lucky' customer won 24 free doughnuts a week for a year, equivalent to an extra half kilo of sugar and 400g of fat every week. Krispy Kreme has been dubbed by the UK media 'the heart attack with a hole'.

At a time when the UK government is considering restricting marketing of unhealthy food to children (see page 24), Krispy Kreme's PR company sent letters to nursery schools in London, encouraging them to raise money by selling doughnuts, by the dozen, to raise extra cash. The more they sold, the nursery schools were advised, the more money the schools would make.

And while parliament's Health Committee met to examine the causes of obesity, Krispy Kreme's PR company was writing to a community disability charity in West London encouraging it to raise funds by marketing and selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts – offering half the purchase price to the charity.

A recent study of 145,000 adults in Massachusetts found that 25% of people with disabilities were obese compared to 15% of people without disabilities. People with physical disabilities may be unable to be as physically active as those without, so it seems highly inappropriate for a company to promote calorie-dense foods through a disability charity in this way. To add insult to injury we are told that the PR company invited the disability charity to attend a breakfast briefing at a hotel in London which had no disability access!

Irradiation company goes bust

A leading maker of food irradiation equipment, SureBeam Corporation, filed for bankruptcy in January. During 2002, the American company had invested in new facilities, anticipating a change in US law to allow irradiation of ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs and delicatessen meats. Heavy borrowing and upbeat press releases from SureBeam did little to assuage investors, and the company has been sued by several shareholders. News of SureBeam's imminent bankruptcy has been hailed as a success by US anti-irradiation health campaigners.

■ For information about food irradiation, see: www.foodcomm.org.uk/food_irradiation.htm

Chemical giant found guilty of causing birth defects

Parents who blamed a pesticide for their baby being born without eyes have won a ten-year legal battle and \$7m (£3.9m) compensation. It is the first time a chemical company has been found guilty of causing birth defects.

In December, the Supreme Court in Florida ruled that the fungicide Benlate, made by the US chemical giant DuPont, was responsible for causing the birth defect.

American judges concluded that the baby's condition was caused when his mother, Donna, was sprayed with Benlate when she was seven weeks pregnant as she walked past a fruit farm in Florida. Benlate was used for years on farms and in gardens in Britain to control fungal infections until DuPont took it

off the UK and international markets two years ago because of mounting litigation costs (an estimated \$1.3 billion to date).

Thirty British families who claim that their own children were born with birth defects caused by Benlate are now preparing to bring further legal cases.

As early as 1972, the US Environmental Protection Agency, advised DuPont to put a warning on Benlate that it could 'cause birth defects ... and exposure during pregnancy should be avoided'. DuPont argued that this information was misleading and unnecessary, and refused to print the warning.

■ Source: *The Observer*

Farmed salmon: time to clean up the industry

The US Environmental Protection Agency reported this January that farmed UK salmon have higher levels of contamination from toxic organochlorines – including dioxins, DDT and PCBs – than any other salmon in the world.

Both the industry and the UK Food Standards Agency were quick to reassure consumers that the levels were perfectly safe and that salmon was a valuable part of a healthy diet.

But the US report came just days after a street demonstration in Edinburgh by the Salmon Farm Protest Group (SFPG) drawing attention to the industry's 'filthy' production methods.

SFPG supporters dressed as Santa Claus to hand out cans of wild Alaskan salmon to Christmas shoppers, and called for a consumer boycott of farmed fish.

'Fish farm sea lice are killing wild salmon,' said SFPG chair Bruce Sandison. 'The fish contain artificial colourings, they may carry *listeria* and may be contaminated with PCBs, dioxin, chlordane and DDT.'

Salmon farms are also accused of discharging waste materials directly into



marine waters. In addition, mass escapes of farmed fish may lead to the extinction of wild salmon.

Far from being a sustainable form of fish production, it takes four tonnes of wild fish meal to produce one tonne of farmed salmon. Fish farming also depends on a range of toxic chemicals to control diseases and parasites.

■ Details on the SFPG campaign from www.salmonfarmmonitor.org

Organochlorines and obesity

Researchers are increasingly concerned that environmental contaminants that affect hormone function in humans, including the oestrogen-like activity shown by organochlorines such as DDT, may be increasing our risk of excess body weight. A call for research proposals on links between endocrine-disruptors and obesity has been issued by the US National Institutes of Health.

The possible links have been recognised for several years, with research in the 1980s showing that one of the more widely used organochlorine pesticides, lindane, caused a significant increase in food intake and weight gain when administered to experimental animals. In humans, the levels of organochlorines in blood plasma are generally higher in people with higher body mass.

A possible explanation for a role in obesity is that the contaminants – soluble in fat and resistant to degradation – are dealt with in the body by storing them in fatty tissue, with extra fatty tissue created to reduce the concentration of the chemicals. In this sense, obesity may thus be a physiological adaptation to increasing exposure to toxic chemicals.

The result would be high levels of organochlorines stored in body fat. It has been observed that when obese people are put on a weight reduction diets their circulating levels of organochlorines rise rapidly, as fatty cells shrink and release the chemicals, thus raising the risk of thyroid and autoimmune dysfunction and cancer.

In the call for further research, the National Institutes for Health is looking at early (in utero and neonatal) implications, the role of contaminants in influencing the function of fat cells, the interaction with genetic susceptibility to environmental agents as well as wider aspects of obesity in society.

■ For details see: www.niehs.nih.gov/dert/programs/special/obesity.htm

Study finds banned pesticides in fatty tissues in every person

A study of 155 people from 13 different areas of Britain undertaken for the WorldWide Fund for Nature has shown that every person tested had chemicals in their bodies that have been banned from use since the 1970s.

The chemicals found included organochlorine pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). A DDT metabolite was found in all but one of those tested.

■ For details see: www.labnews.co.uk

Take heart with other fish

If you despair of farmed salmon, take heart! Canned salmon comes from wild, unfarmed sea stocks. And other heart-healthy oily fish are in good supply: mackerel (including smoked mackerel), herring, sardines, whitebait and pilchards are all rich in valuable long-chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (LC-PUFAs). The COMA report on cardiovascular disease (HMSO 1994) recommended that we double our national average consumption of around 0.1g of LC-PUFAs per day per person, to 0.2g per day or 1.5g per week.

Are you getting your 1.5g/week? Try these:

	LC-PUFAs per 100g serving*		LC-PUFAs per 100g serving*
Smoked mackerel	4.3g	Fresh wild salmon	1.2g
Canned pilchard	2.8g	Canned sardine	1.2g
Fresh mackerel	2.5g	Canned mackerel	1.0g
Kipper	2.2g	Rainbow trout	0.8g
Fresh herring	1.6g	Eel	0.8g
Canned pink salmon	1.4g	Fresh halibut	0.6g
Fresh sprats	1.3g	Prawns	0.5g
Pickled herring	1.2g	Crab	0.5g

* Long-chain polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids: average values, based on Purdue University, NAMI-SCC and McCance & Widdowson Composition of Foods tables.

■ Vegetarians should ensure they get plenty of shorter chain Omega-3s from oils such as linseed and rapeseed (canola). Other sources are walnuts, tofu and green leafy veg.

New GM labels exclude meat and milk

The hard-won tighter labelling requirements for GM foods and animal feeds, scheduled for introduction this April, will leave one glaring loophole: there will be no requirement to label food such as meat, milk and eggs produced from animals fed with GM animal feed.

Consumers wishing to discourage farmers from using GM animal feed will not be allowed to know which products come from GM-fed animals and which do not. The only assurance will be for organically-certified foods.

The European Commission is expected gradually to lift its moratorium on new GM approvals. This follows scientific approval of a Monsanto animal feed maize in December and an unresolved scientific decision on a Syngenta sweetcorn for import in canned form direct to supermarket shelves. The European Commissioner for consumer protection and health, David Byrne, has indicated that it is time 'to move on' over the GM issue, implying that he sees the scientific argument as unable to hold back pressure from the US to allow an open market in Europe.

Supermarkets are being urged by the Food Commission voluntarily to label products sourced from farms using GM animal feed, or

to declare a policy that the supermarket will not sell food from such farms. Other major food manufacturers, importers and mass caterers such as school meals providers, will also be pressed to declare their policies.

GM companies may be held liable for contamination

A campaign has been launched by a coalition of environmental organisations, including the Five Year Freeze, in support of a parliamentary GM contamination and liability bill.

If passed into law it would hold companies liable for any economic or environmental harm resulting from the use of GM products. If you would like to help, write to your MP asking them to support the Genetically Modified Organisms Bill. MPs can be contacted at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

■ To join the GM Bill email list, send an email to majordomo@foe.co.uk with 'subscribe gm-bill' in the body of the email. Contact the Five Year Freeze on 020 7837 0642; or see: www.fiveyearfreeze.org.uk

GM safety margins could put an end to GM crop production

If a requirement were introduced to surround all genetically modified (GM) crops with a specified non-GM safety margin to prevent bees carrying GM pollen to non-GM crops, this would effectively prohibit GM crops been grown in the UK and much of Europe, according to Food Commission calculations.

Bees have been known to travel as far as 13.5km in the US western deserts. UK studies show that over 10% of bees commonly fly over 9km from the hive several times a day if their favoured crop is in flower.

A minimum distance across the non-GM safety margin should therefore be at least 9km. A radius of 9km around a GM crop

requires a total area for the non-GM safety margin of some 25,000 hectares (see table below). The safety margin will have to be a bee-free zone as well, so that bees do not carry the pollen towards

the edge of the zone, to be picked up by bees coming in from outside the zone. If bees are to be allowed to live within the non-GM safety margin, then a much larger zone will have to be set to prevent pollen being transferred relay-style to crops outside the zone.

In the UK fewer than 14% of farms are larger than 100 hectares. Farms above 1,000 hectares are very unusual.

In the European Union as a whole, only 9% of farms are larger than 50 hectares.

Minimum distance	Safety margin area
5 km (~3 miles)	7,850 h (~30 sq miles)
7 km (~4.5 miles)	15,400 h (~60 sq miles)
9 km (~5.5 miles)	25,450 h (~100 sq miles)
11 km (~7 miles)	38,000 h (~150 sq miles)



"Did you hear? Defra will track each of us on a Global Positioning Satellite system!"

GM declarations on food and feed labels

	Now	In April 2004
GM plants (e.g. GM chicory)	Yes	Yes
GM seeds (e.g. GM maize seed)	Yes	Yes
GM food (e.g. GM tomatoes)	Yes	Yes
GM food ingredients with detectable DNA (e.g. GM tomato purée, GM corn flour)	Yes	Yes
Derivatives from GM crops without detectable DNA (e.g. oil from GM cottonseed or rape seed)	No	Yes
Starches and syrups from GM crops (e.g. glucose syrup from GM maize starch)	No	Yes
Food additives made from GMOs (e.g. lecithin from GM soya)	No	Yes
Food produced with GM enzymes (e.g. bread made with GM amylase)	No	No
Food from animals fed on GM feed (eggs, milk, meat from animals fed with GM crops)	No	No
GM animal feed (e.g. GM maize for chicken feed)	Yes	Yes
GM derivatives in animal feed (e.g. gluten from GM maize)	No	Yes
Additives in animal feed produced from GMOs (e.g. GM vitamin B2)	No	Yes

Source: European Commission Memo/03/221, 7 Nov 2003.

Inadvertent contamination of up to 0.9% will be allowed under the European rules. Campaign organisations argue that a much lower level of 0.1% is feasible, and some supermarkets already set a maximum of 0.1% contamination in specifications to their suppliers.

Parent power urges retailers to curb pester power

The Parents Jury campaign *Chuck Snacks off the Checkout!* was launched in 2003 to highlight how retail displays affect what people buy and eat.

Parents report that snacks bought on impulse at the checkout add extra calories to a shopping basket, and can also cause conflict when children pester for products their parents would rather they did not eat.

The campaign has rapidly gained momentum, and is now supported by 12 public health organisations, including the British Dental Hygienists Association and the National Oral Health Promotion Group. Parents have submitted statements of concern about fatty, sugary and salty snacks displayed at supermarket checkouts – see our website for examples.

A sample of 100 of these statements has been sent to supermarket bosses, to challenge them to say what they intend to do.

Over 100 checkout surveys have also been carried out by supporters up and down the country. The findings show that ASDA has the most displays of unhealthy foods at checkouts,

with an average 1.4 displays of products per checkout. So despite its plans to display fruit at some of its checkouts (see page 1), ASDA still has a very long way to go!

Safeway was also found to have confectionery displays at 88% of its checkouts, mostly within children's reach. Let's hope Safeway takes action to remove these unhealthy temptations, especially in light of its own survey, published in January, that announced: *'Pester power is rife! 59% of parents are pestered for treats when out shopping with their children with chocolate and sweets getting the most requests (63%).'*

The surveys also revealed that confectionery at the checkout is common in unexpected places, such as in pharmacies and in Mothercare. Boots was also highlighted by surveyors, with an average of 1.2 displays of products per till.

Waitrose has retained its title as 'top of the league'. Surveyors found only one store in



Kate Millington, nutritionist and volunteer for the Chuck Snacks off the Checkout campaign, prepares to send statements from parents to major supermarkets

which confectionery was displayed at the end of the aisle near the tills. But in general, Waitrose continues to live up to its stated policy of protecting parents from pester power.

BBC sheds the pounds... and then puts them on again!

Research shows that the more people watch television, the fatter they are. This is likely to be because people who watch a lot of television do not move about much. They may also eat a lot of calorific snacks, be more likely to order take-away food, and may see and respond to more adverts for high-fat and high-sugar foods.

The BBC acknowledged these relationships in an ad campaign for this year's Children in Need appeal. A roadside billboard (above, right) says 'Shed a few pounds watching telly'.

The campaign went further than a jokey reference to sedentary



behaviour. As with fund-raising for other good causes, BBC's Children in Need has moved into licensing deals with food companies, such as Fox's, whose Pudsey Bear chocolate-covered biscuits now carry the Children in Need logo.

Studies show that overweight children are more likely to be bullied, to have symptoms of depression and to have suicidal thoughts. Surely Children in Need does not have to attach its logos to fattening foods that will only add to these children's

Supporters of the Chuck Snacks campaign

- The Allergy Alliance
- Healthy Eating on a Low Income Forum
- Bolton Primary Care Trust
- British Dental Hygienists Association
- British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry
- Camden Primary Care Trust
- Consensus Action on Salt and Health
- Health Education Trust
- Hyperactive Children's Support Group
- National Oral Health Promotion Group
- Obesity Awareness and Solutions Trust
- UK Public Health Association

■ If your organisation would like to support the campaign, contact us at the address below and we can send more information.

Tell retailers what you think

The more people who support the campaign, the more likely we are to persuade supermarkets to change their policies! Forms for submitting statements of concern are at: www.parentsjury.org.uk or write to: **Chuck Snacks off the Checkout, c/o The Food Commission, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF.**

Dubious science – but who cares?

In autumn 2003, Nestlé produced cereal boxes for its Cheerios and Shreddies brands with an unusual format. Prominent panels featured the findings of a research study on different breakfasts and their effect on children's attention span later in the morning.

The packs even showed a graph indicating the superiority of Cheerios and Shreddies cereals over other types of breakfast.

This was an unusual place to publish academic research findings, so we followed the website link to the original research paper. The authors were Keith Wesnes and colleague, of a company called Cognitive Drug Research, plus David Richardson, an ex-Nestlé senior advisor, along with Gareth Helm, a Nestlé employee, and one Simon Hails from a private food laboratory, Reading Scientific Services.



The paper was published in a journal called *Appetite* (41: 329-331, 2003) – which presumably is not peer reviewed as the paper was apparently accepted for publication within 48 hours of submission. Had the paper been properly peer reviewed it surely would have been rejected.

The four breakfasts examined in the trial were (a) a bowl of Cheerios and milk, (b) a bowl of Shreddies and milk, (c) a glass of glucose drink with a similar amount of carbohydrate, and (d) no breakfast.

The Cheerios and Shreddies eaters showed better attention performance after some three hours compared with the glucose drinkers and the no-breakfast children. Fine, except how do we know it was the cereal that delivered the results? Any rigorous study would ask more questions.

Could it have been the milk – which only those eating cereals received?

Could it have been the protein or the fat in the cereal and milk breakfasts, rather than complex carbohydrates which the authors and the company claim?



Or could it simply have been the additional energy provided in the cereal-plus-milk breakfast? We estimate the cereal eaters received between 170 and 220 kcal, compared with the 145 kcal in the glucose drink and nothing for the last group. The differences between groups were not apparent after two hours, but only emerged by the third.

We will never know.

By the time we had drafted a complaint, Nestlé had changed its cereal box designs again.

And even if, as a result of our complaint, Nestlé had got a ticking off for making unsubstantiated claims, would it care? After all, the message had already appeared on several million breakfast tables.

Cereal breakfasts may be good for children, but poorly executed research will

Milky Way pretends to be healthy

This Milky Way chocolate spread claims that it is 'rich in calcium, magnesium and vitamins', making it sound as if the product could make a valuable contribution to our diet.

But can adding minerals and vitamins magically transform a fatty, sugary food into a healthy food? This is more than a philosophical question. The debate lies at the heart of European negotiations regarding new rules for the fortification of foods and drinks.

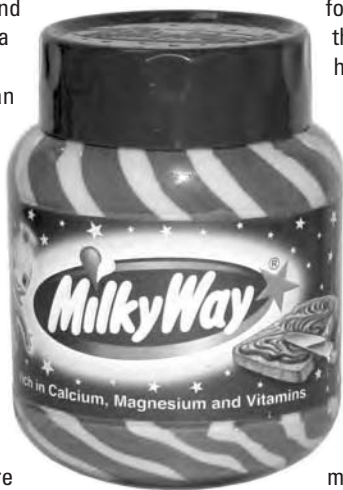
Fortification is the addition of vitamins, minerals and other beneficial substances for the purpose of improving nutrition. Under UK rules, white bread and margarine are automatically fortified to ensure that people who eat these products do not suffer from particular nutritional deficiencies.

However, companies can also add fortifying ingredients to foods of more

questionable nutritional quality, to give the impression that such products have health-giving properties. In 1999, when the Food Commission conducted a survey of 260

fortified food products, we found that nearly three-quarters were high in fat, sugar or salt.

The Food Commission believes that the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods should not be used for the purposes of 'enrichment' of foods that also contain high levels of fat, salt and/or sugar. This is a view supported by many consumer groups throughout Europe, and upheld in Danish law which bans fortification to prevent misleading marketing. But the industry is pushing hard to have its way.



■ The Food Commission position paper *Fortified Junk* is available in pdf format on the website: www.foodcomm.org.uk

US government sued for renegeing on claims law

The US Center for Science in the Public Interest (a consumer group affiliated to the Food Commission) and the US campaign group Public Citizen have filed a lawsuit against the US government's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to challenge the FDA's scheme to permit food companies to make health claims based on weak or inconclusive evidence.

Formerly, the 1990 Nutrition Labeling and Education Act allowed the FDA to approve health claims if they were supported by 'significant scientific agreement'.

In 2003, the FDA announced it would allow food companies to make health claims even when evidence is too weak or inconclusive to meet the statutory standard. Claims would even be permitted where the weight of the evidence suggests that the claim is likely to be false, as long as a disclaimer accompanies the claim.

The consumer-interest lawsuit has been filed on the accusation that the FDA is violating food law requirements and is failing to protect consumers from misleading claims.

■ The complaint is available at: www.citizen.org/documents/compl-3.8xx.pdf

Legal, decent, honest and true?

The activities of the advertising industry raise many important questions for nutrition and health. Here we report on complaints against food and drink companies adjudicated by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in recent months.

X McDonald's fries: Not so pure

The ASA upheld a complaint from the Food Commission against an advertisement for McDonald's fries. The advert claimed to tell 'The story of our fries. (End of story)'.

'First,' said McDonald's, 'we take the potatoes. We peel them, slice them, fry them and that's it.'

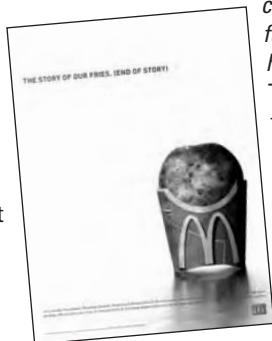
We knew this was not the whole truth and submitted our complaint. The ASA's investigations confirmed that fries for McDonald's go through several more processes. For a start, the potatoes are also par-fried, frozen and stored. Dextrose is added to make the fries yellow, and salt is added before serving to the customer. Because the story told in the advert clearly WASN'T 'it', McDonald's was told by the ASA not to repeat this marketing approach.

This is an interesting case, since the advert was part of a 2003 McDonald's campaign targeted at middle-class mums through glossy magazines and newspaper supplements. The campaign was designed to associate McDonald's products with purity and health.

Perhaps a better approach for McDonald's would be to make the food pure and healthy.

X Smoothie ads: Too fruity

Several complaints against an advert for fruit smoothies produced by 'thejuicecompany' were upheld by the ASA on grounds of 'taste and decency'. The poster campaign showed a man in drag wearing black lingerie, a necklace and a blonde wig with the line: 'New fruit on the block'. The complainants pointed out that 'fruit' was a derogatory term for homosexual men, and said that the advertisement was offensive and homophobic. The ASA acknowledged that the poster could be seen as offensive and asked the advertisers not to use this theme in future.



X Arthritis pills: Creaky claims

A direct mailing for an anti-arthritis supplement was criticised by the ASA for claiming that the product, called SAME, 'is capable of improving the structure and function of joint cartilage... SAME not only helps arthritis - it also makes you happy!'

The advertisers – Elixir of Life also stated that SAME had been shown to be useful in the treatment or prevention of depression, fibromyalgia, liver cirrhosis, Alzheimer's disease and aging. The advertisers failed to respond to the ASA's enquiries.

Complaints were also upheld against a newspaper advertisement for an anti-ageing and anti-arthritis capsule from a company called MicroTech. The company said that it did not know it had to hold evidence to prove the product's efficacy, and sent the ASA the results of a trial with 60 patients, in which only four patients' appeared to have been cured.

The ASA said that this did not support the advertised claim: 'Up to 100% pain relief in most cases', and told MicroTech not to make such statements again.

Wyeth convicted of illegal formula ads

X The ASA is not the only body that can challenge misleading or illegal advertising. In a case brought by an area trading standards department, Wyeth, the parent company of SMA Nutrition, has been found guilty of illegal advertising of formula milk. The adverts appeared in magazines targeted at young mothers, such as *Prima Baby* (an extract is shown below).

Announcing the verdict, the district judge at Birmingham Magistrates Court said: "The defendants have deliberately crossed the line, in an effort to advertise direct to a vulnerable section of society. This is a cynical and deliberate breach of the regulations."

SMA Nutrition is the second largest baby milk manufacturer in the world.



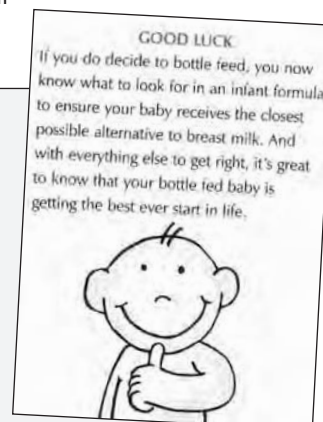
Nothing added – except glucose and fructose syrup, anthocyanins, guar gum, beta-carotene, modified maize starch, pectin, flavouring, potassium citrate, citric acid, calcium citrate, sodium citrate and sugar.

X Danone yogurt: Full of additives

Muller Dairy and several members of the public objected to a magazine advertisement for yogurt headlined: 'New Danone Shape. Now with added nothing'. The text continued, 'Simply a virtually fat free yogurt packed with real fruit. And because there are no artificial sweeteners, preservatives or colourants, the delicious natural fruit flavours can really come through'.

As well as yogurt and fruit, the products contained added ingredients such as glucose and fructose syrup, anthocyanins, guar gum, beta-carotene, modified maize starch, pectin, flavouring, potassium citrate, citric acid, calcium citrate, sodium citrate and sugar.

The ASA said that 'with added nothing' was therefore misleading. The claim 'virtually fat free' was also criticised by the ASA, because the yogurt contained 0.9% fat. Danone stated that, because no legal definition of 'virtually fat free' existed, they had developed their own definition. The ASA considered that because the Food Standards Agency states that 'fat free' claims can be made only for products containing 0.15% fat or less, the claim was misleading.



The Judge fined Wyeth/SMA £4,000 for each of four advertisements, and £5,000 each for two further advertisements which could have been withdrawn after a warning from LACOTs, the national trading standards body.

■ Source: Baby Milk Action

If you see food and drink advertisements 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.

INQUIRY

Cause obesity? 'Not us' food companies tell MPs

January saw the last session of parliament's Health Select Committee inquiry into obesity. The committee's report to government is due in April. Over the next three pages we review some of the statements made by the food industry – and contrast their words with their deeds.

The Health Select Committee inquiry into obesity was set up by government to gather evidence from individuals and organisations whose work affects what we eat and how much exercise we take. The committee, representing a cross-section of MPs and political parties, heard evidence from food manufacturers, advertisers, food and physical exercise specialists, consumer groups and academics. It has been a landmark investigation into the cultural causes of disease.

Among those submitting written evidence was the Food Commission, drawing on our investigations into food, food labelling and food marketing conducted over the past 15 years. We were also called to give oral evidence to the committee and were able to present the concerns not only of our own supporters, nutritionists and campaigners, but also of the hundreds of members of the Parents Jury who want to see children's food improve. We emphasised the need for nutritional standards for children's foods, decent resources for promoting healthier diets, and better food labelling. We also said

that government should tackle the unhealthy imbalance in food marketing to children.

Also giving evidence were representatives from supermarkets, the food and drink industries and the food advertisers. Put under the spotlight, many of these representatives tried to steer the committee towards uncontroversial options such as improved food labelling and better food education in schools, and away from restrictions on unhealthy food advertising or nutritional standards for processed children's food.

On the following pages, we report on what the food and advertising industries told the MPs ... and what they didn't.

Pepsi claims its 'labelling is fantastic!'

From January, for the first time, Pepsi labels will reveal to customers that Pepsi is around 11% sugar. Information, the food companies all agreed, was essential in order for customers to be 'free to make their own choice'. Two points of interest arise here. First, that the United

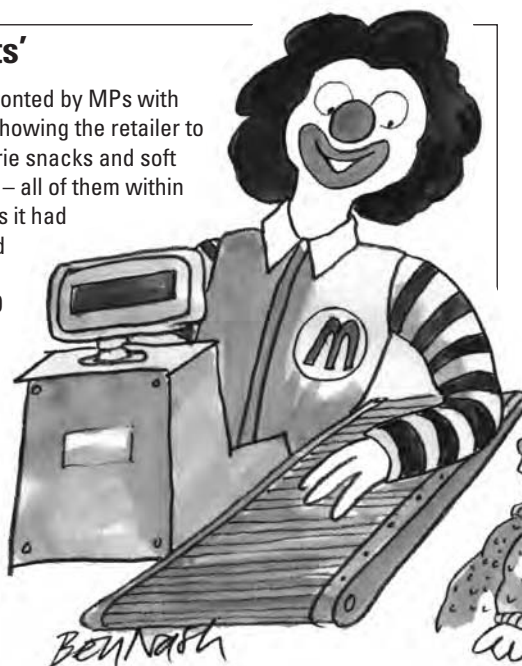
States has had mandatory nutrition labelling since 1994, and obesity rates in the US are still rocketing. Clearly, information isn't everything. And second, such information can be presented in all sorts of ways. At the obesity inquiry new labelling for Walkers crisps was proudly exhibited by Pepsico UK, the company which owns both Pepsi and Walkers. This information panel will appear on 240 million Walkers crisp packets and describes what the company wants us to believe is a healthy, balanced diet. 'It is important to have a variety of food for lunch', says the panel, 'including 'a little treat' – a daily bag of high-fat, high-salt Walkers crisps.



ASDA 'wants to help parents'

During the obesity inquiry, ASDA was confronted by MPs with evidence from a Food Commission survey showing the retailer to be the worst offender in terms of high-calorie snacks and soft drinks displayed at supermarket checkouts – all of them within children's reach. ASDA admitted to the MPs it had a responsibility to promote healthy food and quickly announced that, for a trial period, it would display fruit at four or five in every 20 of its checkouts.

What ASDA did not reveal to the Health Select Committee was that just two weeks earlier it had allowed McDonald's to open a restaurant in an ASDA store in Scotland for the first time. Scotland's second ASDA McDonald's opened 11 days later in Kirkcaldy – at almost exactly the same time as ASDA was making its 'healthy checkouts' commitment to MPs.



Pepsico have yet to introduce the information panel shown above, but in the meantime they seem to be doing their best to expand the waistlines of the nation. Bags of Walkers Crisps now contain 50% more crisps, boosting the total fat content to over 18g per pack.



"Sorry, kid, no snacks on this checkout!"

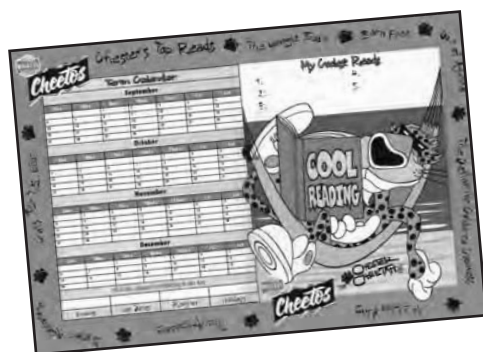
ASDA told MPs they would try selling fruit at some checkouts, but that failed to mention that they have incorporated McDonald's restaurants into stores across the UK.

INQUIRY

Food companies plead of promoting obesity

Walkers 'don't advertise in schools'

Marketing in schools is a very sensitive issue at the moment. Food manufacturers Kraft and Heinz have recently committed to a policy of avoiding marketing in schools. That's why the marvellously named 'Cilla Snowball' of Abbott-Mead Vickers, the advertising agency for Walkers crisps, was quick to point out: 'We do not do any advertising in schools.' Errr... what about Walkers 'Free Books for Schools' scheme in 26,000 UK schools? Or sponsored exercise books, given out 'free' to secondary schools by the company Jazzy



Media, featuring adverts for Walkers Cheeto crisps? Clearly, Ms Snowball thinks neither of these activities on the part of its client are advertising. But we do.

Kellogg's and the advertisers: 'We never encourage pester power'

'Pester power' is another sensitive issue 'It's against the advertising code of practice,' said the advertisers, 'We would never encourage pester power'. Kellogg's confirmed that they 'are not allowed to' use pester power. However, a job ad for a Kellogg's Senior Researcher for Kids' Brands reveals the true state of affairs. The first paragraph of the advert reads, 'Coco-Pops, Fruit Winders, Cereal Milk Bars and Frosties are some of the brands you need to get under your skin in this role. You will spend your time understanding kids, finding out what interests them and

establishing which other brands they associate with, and appreciating the realm of pester power.'

The advertising agency for Walkers was also shown to be being economical with the truth regarding pester power. In a sample of one its own media strategy briefs, the desired response from children was described as 'Wotsits are for me. I am going to buy them when I get the chance and pester Mum for them when she next goes shopping.' Ms Snowball from Abbott-Mead Vickers admitted that 'The wording was unfortunate and we won't do it again.' As current Wotsits packets say, Wot a Laugh!

Pepsi claims that 'Sugary drinks don't make you fat'

During the inquiry, Pepsi asserted that sugary drinks do not contribute to obesity – which will come as a surprise to the experts at the World Health Organization who have stated that soft drinks are indeed likely to contribute to obesity. An average 500ml bottle of cola contains

Walkers claim not to advertise in schools. So how come this sponsored exercise book contains a double page plug for Walkers Cheetos snack?

McDonald's

'It's all up to the parents'

McDonald's told the Health Select Committee that, 'The majority of Happy Meal advertising is aimed purely at the parents.' In fact, McDonald's has been found to be the most prolific advertiser during children's television viewing times in many European countries including the UK.

And what about this promotion sent in recently by reader Tracy Hayden, from the *South Woodham & Maldon News*?

It advertises a 'bonny baby' photo competition, to take place in the Maldon branch of McDonald's. Prizes include a year's supply of Happy Meals for children aged six months to five years.



At a parliamentary meeting in autumn 2003, the Food Commission showed this advert as an illustration of how fast-food companies try to become a regular part of family life. Little did we know that the head of McDonald's public affairs was in the audience. They were so embarrassed to hear the scheme criticised in front of MPs, they contacted the local branch to get the scheme stopped. It just goes to show that exposing fast-food marketing tactics can make things change!

'Sports sponsorship is altruistic'

McDonald's told MPs that its sponsorship of community football has nothing to do with marketing the brand and is purely altruistic. Oh yes? So why do participating children have to wear McDonald's branded shirts?

And why do they appear in the local press in publicity shots that feature the golden arches? Is this altruism or marketing?

'We don't encourage people to eat larger portions'

Food companies often argue that 'supersizing' of portions does not encourage overeating and is simply to offer more choice. However, under questioning from MPs, McDonald's admitted that it trains its staff to encourage customers to choose a larger meal. The bigger the meal, the more money in the tills.



'innocent'

According to the advertisers, sports stars can't make crisps or soft drinks attractive to youngsters – but can increase sales of bananas!



around 11 teaspoons of sugar, adding over 200 kcalories to your diet. It seems that the only time soft drinks manufacturers admit that you can consume excess calories in the form of sugary drinks is when they want to sell 'diet' products to people worried about their weight. This advert for Sugar-Free Red Bull reveals the contradiction. Does sugar add

to your waistline or not?

Food companies and advertisers (in chorus): 'It isn't us!'

The message from the evidence submitted to the obesity inquiry by food companies and food advertisers came across loud and clear: Don't blame us! It's all down to the parents!

■ Transcripts of the Health Select Committee hearings are available through the Select Committees link at: www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmhome.htm

The advertisers

'We can promote healthy food too!'

During the Health Select Committee hearings, food companies and advertisers frequently stated that advertising does not encourage children to eat an unhealthy diet.

But when offered the opportunity of a fat fee to promote fruit and vegetables, advertisers were all too eager to contradict this view and say that advertising would be a highly effective in encouraging children to eat a healthy diet.

Hmmm... So can advertising affect children's diets or not?

'Marketing only encourages brand-switching'

When the director of the industry's Advertising Association, Andrew Brown, stated that, 'Advertising does not have an effect on increasing market size.' MPs pointed out that fast food is a recent phenomenon in the UK, and presumably achieved its huge popularity through

promotions, creating a market that had not existed before.

Faced with the prospect of a ban on the advertising of high-sugar food to children, Kellogg's pronounced that without advertising of cereals, children would stop eating breakfast. Once again, the food companies admit that advertising does indeed have an effect on children's diets.

'Young people aren't attracted to brands promoted by sports stars'

Gary Lineker and David Beckham got several mentions at the committee hearings for promoting Walkers crisps and Pepsi.

The advertisers maintained that these footballing heroes do not encourage young people to find such foods attractive. Andrew Brown of the Advertising Association admitted that when tennis stars were seen eating bananas at Wimbledon, banana sales increased. What a strange anomaly. So using sports stars to promote foods only works when it's for healthy food?

We don't believe it.

'Children don't collect collectible toys'

We're not sure what planet Julian Hilton-Johnston lives on, but as Vice President of McDonald's UK he told MPs that in his experience, children don't collect sets of collectible toys.

MPs reminded Mr Hilton-Johnston of a 2003 McDonald's Microstars promotion offering collectible toys in the shape of famous footballers – 20 toys available over a five-week period. A child would need to have eaten at McDonald's four times a week to get the whole set.

Mr Hilton-Johnston explained 'the objective of our promotion is not principally to drive people to come in more often, it is largely designed to get different people to come into our restaurants.' The MPs also highlighted a recent promotion linked to

Disney's children's film *Treasure Planet*. A 'Ben the Robot' toy had to be collected in four separate components given away with McDonald's Happy Meals. If a child did not visit McDonald's repeatedly to collect all of the components in the set, they would have been left with an incomplete, useless toy.

Challenged on this point, and probably recognising that this promotion reveals the flaw in his defence, Mr Hilton-Johnston said, 'We will not be repeating it.'

This is the body section of a 'Ben the Robot' toy given away with McDonald's Happy Meals last year. Children needed to collect four separate components to assemble a full toy, which meant purchasing four Happy Meals.



A child would need to have eaten at McDonald's four times a week, over a five-week period, to get a whole set of Microstars footballer toys.

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Industry calls in the spin doctors

As food companies come under fire for the nutritional quality of products, and as food advertisers are warned to back off from marketing unhealthy food to children, there is only one group of people who seem to benefit from the intensifying debate. Not consumers or parents, but the PR companies, who are currently picking up fat contracts to give a positive spin to the food and advertising industries.

Fuel (or to use its own description – fu“el: power; passion; energy) is one such company, which is making its mark in the food debate. Its leaflet advises that ‘We know what we need – more education from opinion-formers and organisations who work to ensure we only receive quality information.’

And who are these eminent opinion-formers on whom we should rely for our quality information? One of Fuel’s clients is the Food Advertising Unit (an offshoot of the industry’s Advertising Association), which defends food advertising interests and which has never been in more need of positive spin.

One of Fuel’s first efforts on behalf of the Food Advertising Unit was to conduct an opinion poll of 1,500 parents. Its resulting press release emphasised that parents accept that advertising is part of modern life, and that they make all the decisions when shopping. But on closer examination of the poll, the following interesting statistic emerged: ‘Sixty

three per cent [of parents] cited advertising as an influence on what the child asked for.’

Fuel spent the rest of the paragraph reminding readers that parents may feel this to be the case but that they are in fact wrong: ‘The actual impact of advertising on children’s food choices and attitudes is not generally considered to be significant.’ A convenient conclusion, considering that Fuel’s poll and the academic research on which this banal and unhelpful statement was based were both sponsored by the advertising industry.

International PR company Weber Shandwick is also seeking to establish itself as an advocate for the food industry. At a conference in 2003, it presented the results of a survey on ‘globesity’ to an audience packed with senior representatives from companies specialising in fatty and sugary foods, such as Coca-Cola and McDonald’s. One of Weber Shandwick’s latest clients is the Brazilian sugar industry association.



The fruit images in this leaflet from the PR company Fuel are somewhat ironic. One of its clients is the industry’s Food Advertising Unit, whose members hardly ever promote fresh fruit or vegetables to children.

Here are some independent polls that reveal what parents *really* think about advertising.

- A Mori poll (November 2003) carried out for the National Family & Parenting Institute found that 84% of parents thought that companies targeted their children too much.
- A *Guardian* newspaper/ICM opinion poll (October 2003) showed that ‘66% of those in social classes D and E supported a ban on advertising aimed at children,’ with strong support across all social groups for restrictions on soft drinks and fatty snacks in school vending machines.
- Mori (1994) found 64% of parents would like tougher restrictions on the advertising of foods and drinks to children, and that most parents believed advertising has a detrimental effect on children’s diets.
- Cooperative Wholesale Society (2000): 80% of parents wanted tighter controls on advertising to children, and 77% wanted to see a ban on the advertising of food to children.
- Welsh Consumer Council (2003): ‘Many parents felt under pressure from their children’s demands as a result of the attractive and powerful advertising they saw on TV during children’s programmes.’
- Chartered Institute of Marketing (2002): 75% of parents said that children see too much advertising.

Getting in a food spin

The food advertising industry has found a new ally in former spin doctor Alistair Campbell. In his first public speech since quitting Downing Street, he addressed the annual conference of the Marketing Society.

At a time when food producers and advertisers are criticised for the quality of their products and for targeting children with unhealthy food, he advised marketing professionals, ‘You have to make your argument on your own terms. If you get your message strategy right, you are in a good position should a crisis come.’

We can look forward to the advertising industry trying to set the media agenda, influence ministers and shift the blame away from themselves (organised by spin doctors for a fat fee), if Mr Campbell’s past ‘message strategies’ are anything to go by.



Fight fat the fiscal way!

Improving public health takes action from all government departments: health, education, transport, environment, media, sport, planning, trade, agriculture – and the Treasury. Tim Lobstein looks at some fiscal measures that could help shape our diets.

From setting income support levels to the prices of imported goods, the Treasury plays a role in shaping our access to food, and hence our diet. And just as parents attempt to control the diets their children consume through controls over their pocket money, so the government can do much more to link consumer spending to public health.

The idea is hardly new – tobacco has been severely taxed for many years, to discourage smoking and recoup some of the costs of tobacco-related disease. With the WHO now showing that diets are responsible for as much disease as tobacco, the prospect of fiscal intervention in our food supply must surely tempt the Treasury. Here are some ideas on how it could happen:

1. Value added tax (VAT)

Most food in the UK is VAT-free, with some notable exceptions and peculiar distinctions. The exceptions were originally part of a vague notion that snacks should be taxed while meal items should not, but the difference was never clear and the subsequent rulings have made the definitions ever more complex.

Table 1 shows a few of the anomalies. It is clearly time for a review of the foods that are standard-rated. This review should be undertaken in the light of modern dietary patterns and the government's Chief Medical Officer's advice on healthy eating.

Care should be taken so that the extra VAT does not further disadvantage poorer households, where food is a major part of the weekly budget. A rise in the price of some foods may need to be offset by a fall in the price of others.

2. Snack taxes

Some countries apply sales taxes to foods: in France, for example, VAT of 20.6% is added to sweets, chocolates, margarine and vegetable fat, while other foods are rated at 5.5%.

In Canada, sales taxes are charged on soft drinks, sweets and snack foods. Similar snack taxes have been levied in several US states: Jacobson and Brownell* list 19 states in the year 2000 with snack taxes, and a further 12 where snack taxes had been introduced but later abolished – largely, they suggest, due to industry pressure. The tax levied was generally low, typically 3%-7% of sales price,

but it raised tens of millions of dollars for the relevant state authority annually.

In 1988 Californians supported a 25 cent tax on cigarette packs, raising \$90m annually for tobacco control and health promotion. This ring-fencing or hypothecation of a sales tax, to ensure it goes to promoting health, increased its popularity among the public. Similar moves could be undertaken with food.

3. CAP recovery levies

The Common Agricultural Policy is costing the European Union's tax payers some 40bn Euros annually. Both the sugar and dairy sectors have been described by the European Court of Auditors as chronically overproducing – with some of the surplus exported to cause ill-health elsewhere, while much of it goes into our food supply in hidden and subsidised forms. Much could be done to improve this situation.

Butter is a particular problem, with nearly a third of EU butter production bought up by the European Commission and sold cheaply (i.e.

with public subsidy) to food manufacturers to make products such as pastries and ice cream. Fruit and vegetable payments in the CAP help producers destroy crops in order to 'protect' the market, i.e. keep prices high – a clear opportunity to intervene for better health.

A subsidy-recovery levy, in which Gordon Brown takes back money paid to the sugar, butter, meat and oil producers, would lead to price rises for these commodities, as they move from producers into food manufacturing. Manufacturers might think again about their recipes, cutting their use of fats and sugars.

4. Marketing tax

An advertising tax is likely to be fiercely resisted by broadcasters and the advertising industry. However, a levy in which every advert for junk food had to cover the cost of an advert for healthy food might appeal to politicians who are resisting pressure for an outright ban. It might also please advertising agencies and the media. A ratio of, say, seven healthy food adverts for every unhealthy one, to encourage a balance in line with healthy eating guidelines, might be even better!

■ M Jacobson, K Brownell, *Am J Pub Health* (2000) www.cspinet.org/reports/jacobson.pdf

Standard-rated and zero-rated VAT on food in the UK

Standard-rated	Zero-rated
confectionery	chocolate spread, cake decorations
biscuits with chocolate coverings	other biscuits including iced, caramel-coated and choc-chip cookies
ice cream, gateau, frozen cakes	cakes, jaffa cakes, baked Alaska
marshmallows	marshmallow teacakes
sweetened cereal bars, muesli bars	oat biscuits, flapjacks
crisps, puffed snacks, roasted nuts	tortilla chips, roasted nuts in shells
ice cream, water ices, sorbets	frozen yogurt if thawed before eating, ice cream sauces and toppings
fruit drinks, juices and concentrates	milkshakes
monosodium glutamate	salt, additives, flavourings, sweeteners
hot take-away food	sandwiches
bread in take-away, e.g. burger and pitta; bread with restaurant meals	bread, rolls, pitta and other bread products
sesame bars	halva
chocolate raisins, sugar almonds	toffee apples
Marron glacé	glacé cherries
mineral water	cocoa, drinking chocolate

From HM Customs and Excise Notice 701/14

Rising food miles will cause a 'soft'

Some disasters take many years to develop. They do not arrive suddenly in our awareness but accumulate slowly, year-on-year. Because it develops incrementally, climate change is sometimes dubbed a 'soft disaster'*, a title that belies its potentially harsh outcomes.

With soft disasters like climate change, policy-makers find it hard to apportion responsibility, or to find the political will to tackle the many small causes that add up to the larger effect. Each individual vehicle cannot be held responsible for climate change, just as each individual food portion cannot be held responsible for obesity. But taken in aggregate they lead to outcomes that affect our health.

New research from the transport and environment campaign group Transport 2000 paints an alarming picture of how the modern food system is making an increasing contribution to global climate change. Its report, entitled *Wise Moves: Exploring the relationship between food, transport and carbon dioxide*, also highlights a multitude of inadequacies in a regulatory system that fails to tackle greenhouse gas emissions head on.

The food chain is estimated to be responsible for over a fifth (22%) of UK greenhouse gas emissions. Yet this is likely to be a gross underestimation of the UK's true contribution to climate

change, since the UK is responsible for many more food journeys than take place on its own roads.

Transport 2000 points out that food journeys taking place outside the UK are not included in UK Government transport statistics, nor are the emissions they generate included in the UK's greenhouse gas total. Indeed, those produced by aircraft and ships are attributed to nobody, because they take place in international air space and on international waters.



CO₂ targets fail to consider food miles travelled by air

Most food entering and leaving the UK travels by ship. However, the *Wise Moves* report from Transport 2000 highlights a rapid growth in air freight of food — the method of transport that generates the most carbon dioxide of all.

The trend, says Transport 2000, is aided by untaxed aviation fuel, lower manufacturing costs overseas, and sophisticated communication including the growth in e-commerce. The increase in demand for high-value foods also makes air-freight a cost-effective option for exporters and importers.

Although globally 50% of air-freighted goods are carried in the hold of passenger planes that would be flying anyway, more weight means greater fuel use. In addition, the growth in use of dedicated freighters has been significantly higher than the growth in the transport of freight in passenger planes. Transport 2000 points out that dedicated freight planes are often old, decommissioned passenger planes and therefore very unlikely to be fuel efficient.

Several anomalies in the regulatory system suggest little will be done to curb this trend.

For a start, carbon dioxide emissions from ship and air transport are not attributed to the tally of any country's carbon dioxide emissions. This is because such journeys take place in international waters and international air space. By signing the Kyoto Protocol, most countries have committed to reducing their carbon dioxide emissions (with the notable exception of the US, which has refused to sign the protocol). But because nobody is held responsible for air

and ship emissions, there is no incentive for anyone to tackle the contribution ships and planes make to climate change.

A commonly held view is that harmful emissions can be mitigated by improving the energy efficiency of transport, packaging and refrigeration. Supermarkets have, for instance, applied computer technology to ensuring that fuel is rarely wasted in moving empty trucks around the country. Regional stock depots for major stores and load optimisation increases efficiency in food delivery.

However, even in the best case scenario of maximum efficiencies gained by such technological approaches, Transport 2000 states that *'whatever the gains in efficiency, more goods are being transported further and more frequently than ever before, leading to an absolute increase in tonne-kilometres. Despite the efficiencies achieved, existing technology still falls significantly short of mitigating this growth.'*

There are few examples of effective action to reduce air miles. Currently, unless you buy your food from a farmers' market or local box scheme that guarantees food is produced within a given locality, there is no way to find out how far your food has travelled or if it arrived by air. We believe consumers should be able to see how much damage their food causes: an air-freight symbol combined with the country-of-origin declaration could help. We also think that because of their 'good for the environment' claims, organic certification bodies should take a lead in reducing the damage caused by air freight (see box below).

Organic: Good for the environment?

Although organic production has clear benefits for the environment, air freight undermines these advantages. Recognising this, Swiss organic certification rules mean that food cannot be labelled as organic if it has been imported by air.

The Food Commission is lobbying the UK's leading organic certification body, the Soil Association, to implement similar rules for organic food sold in the UK.



Soil Association-certified watercress from the USA, beans from the Gambia and corn from Thailand — probably all air-freighted to the UK.

disaster

Emissions generated by road vehicles overseas carrying food destined for British stomachs count towards the host country's annual greenhouse gas bill, not to the UK's. Whilst emissions produced trucking British products across the UK before they are exported will be included in the UK's balance, we import much more food than we export so the greenhouse-gas imports/exports equation does not balance out. We are driving our food on other nations' roads more than on our own, and more than ever before. As a result, the UK's food system is generating rising amounts of transport-related CO₂ emissions. But, as far as the UK balance sheet is concerned, these are hidden, so there is little incentive for anyone to reduce them.

So what can be done? Transport 2000 stresses that apparently straightforward solutions are not always the best choices. The total contribution of a food product to carbon dioxide emissions is more than simply the distance travelled. A product that has travelled the shortest distance may have caused atmospheric pollution in other ways, during agriculture, manufacturing or cold storage. During the spring, imported field-grown Spanish vegetables that are the product of 'free' sunlight may be responsible for less CO₂ emissions than UK hot-house equivalents that rely on electric lights and heating, even when the longer distance is taken into account. Both food miles and seasonality are crucial factors in a truly sustainable food system.

Transport 2000 assesses the relative contribution of improving technologies, efficiencies in truck use, shortening supply chains, and centralised distribution, and looks at the prospects for more ethically based consumer demand.

But the conclusion is clear. If we want to mitigate the effects of our food system on the global climate, we can no longer expect our food to be transported from ever greater distances, and to require so many varieties of food to be available outside of their natural season.

■ **Wise Moves: Exploring the relationship between food, transport and CO₂** (2003), by Tara Garnett, is published by Transport 2000 Trust; £15. Tel: 020 7613 0743. A summary is available at: www.transport2000.org.uk

■ See also: **Eating Oil: Food supply in a changing climate** (2001), published by Sustain; £30 (£12 conc). Tel: 020 7837 1228. A summary is at: www.sustainweb.org

London's hospitals aim for sustainability

In the UK, over 1.5 billion meals are served up in the public sector – in schools, prisons, army canteens, government offices and hospitals. It is widely recognised that public sector caterers could therefore make a huge contribution to reducing carbon dioxide emissions by using local and seasonal produce. With this in mind, the network organisation London Food Link is to launch a two-year programme to increase the amount of sustainable food in four NHS London hospitals.

■ For details, see www.londonfoodlink.org; tel: 020 7837 1228; email: fiona@sustainweb.org

Help sought for canteen survey of local food

As part of an ongoing campaign to reduce food miles, Sustain is asking for help to conduct a survey of canteens. If you use a canteen at school or work and could ask the catering manager a few questions about food purchasing, contact Vicki Hird on 020 7837 1228; or download a survey sheet at: www.sustainweb.org/chain_survey.asp

Supermarkets fail to cooperate on green assessment project

A three-year government-funded research programme designed to compare the social, health, ethical and environmental track records of supermarkets has been scuppered by leading supermarkets failing to cooperate.

Iceland, M&S and Sainsbury's took part in a confidential pilot of the Race to the Top (RTTT) programme in 2002, but declined to submit data in 2003. Supermarkets ASDA, Tesco, Waitrose and Morrisons chose not to participate at all. Three retailers (the Co-op Group, Safeway and Somerfield) completed the 2003 programme, with the Co-op judged the winner for its sustainable business practices.

However, surveyors examining the amount of local food available in all retailers found that whilst many retailers had 'admirable policies and publicity on how they supported small producers and local and regional foods', in reality 'few had any figures on stocking levels and only a tiny number of stores showed any evidence of local food promotion'.

Under the Race to the Top programme, supermarkets were to be compared on a range of sustainability issues, to provide an incentive for improving working practices.

■ Contact RTTT on: 020 7388 2117; email: bill.vorley@iied.org; web: www.iied.org

Badvertisement

Food miles the jet-set way

Like many supermarkets, Marks & Spencer is proud of its environmental credentials. Its *Corporate Social Responsibility Report* for 2003 says that the retailer takes a three-pronged approach: Support the best; Avoid the worst; Improve the rest.

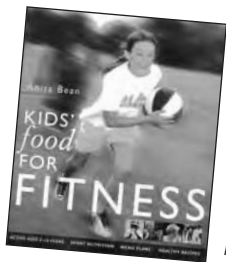
M&S acknowledges its contribution to 'food miles' – the distance travelled by food from producer to processor to shop. Increased food miles means increased emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide.

M&S states in its report that 'food miles decisions also include elements of locality, freshness, use of preservatives, packaging, choice, support for UK farmers and quality'.

We doubt that these considerations have been communicated to the M&S marketing department, however. This advert appeared in *The Metro* newspaper in November.

Because of the huge amounts of carbon dioxide generated by aircraft, air-freighted food have been identified as the most environmentally damaging food miles of all. Yet M&S boasts that its Freshly Squeezed Pineapple Juice takes 'just 48 hours from the pineapple plantation in Ghana to the pineapple juice in Marks & Spencer', and freely admits that this is 'Jet Set Juice'. This is hardly a good advertisement for M&S's commitment to the future of the planet!





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

Dump the Junk!

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



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



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, workforce and culture. Essential reading. £7.99



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.

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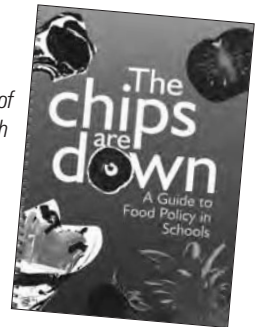
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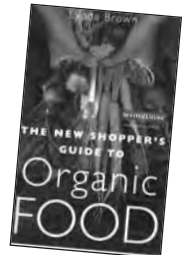
The Chips are Down

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



The NEW Shopper's Guide to Organic Food

Is organic food worth the extra expense? How does it compare with non-organic? Is it all it's cracked up to be? Lynda Brown tackles 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



Children's Nutrition Action Plan

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

Broadcasting Bad Health

Packed with illustrations, case studies and statistics on trends in health and food advertising around the world, this report sets out the case for why food marketing to children needs to be controlled. Available free of charge in pdf format on the website (see below) or in print for £10.00

Posters: GM Foods; Food Additives, Children's Food; Food Labelling

Packed with essential information to help you and your family eat healthy, safe food these posters explain 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



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What the doctor reads

The latest research from the medical journals

Exercise does not prevent obesity

Two papers from the Danish Epidemiology Science Centre have examined the gradual onset of obesity in adults and found no evidence that physical activity patterns could predict who would gain weight, although obese people did take less exercise.

Researchers monitored 6,000 adults across a 15-year period and also 2,000 men over a 40-year period. If anything, physical activity levels were higher among those that later developed obesity.

The researchers suggest that obesity develops from factors other than physical inactivity or lack of exercise, but that once established obesity leads to a reduced willingness to take exercise – possibly due to the discomfort of sweating and breathlessness. Social factors – e.g. showing oneself in public changing rooms and gyms – may also be involved.

■ H Bak *et al*, *Int J Ob*, 2003; L Petersen *et al*, *Int J Ob*, 2004.

25% cut in salt undetected

An experiment in which the salt level in bread was cut by 5% every week for five weeks found that the reduced salt could not be detected. Ratings of the saltiness and the flavour of the bread were no different to those made by a control group whose bread was not altered. The authors recommend the bread industry to make small, repeated adjustments to lower the overall salt burden on the population, in order to reduce the risk of hypertension and stroke.

■ S Girgis *et al*, *Eur J Clin Nutr*, 2003.

Self-reported diets underestimate calories

A comparison between the amounts of food women said they were consuming and the amounts they would need according to their weight, height and metabolic levels showed that self-reported diets were typically more than 400kcal per day below the expected levels.

Over a quarter of women under-reported by more than 800kcal per day. In the study (of

over 160,000 US women) those with higher BMIs tended to underreport more: at BMI 35 underreporting was about 330 kcalories per day greater than at BMI 20.

■ JR Hebert *et al*, *Annal Epidem*, 2003.

Fast food is linked to poor diet

A study of over 6,000 children showed that the diets of those eating fast foods is poorer overall than the diets of those not eating fast food, and that children have better diets on days that they do not eat fast food.

On days when fast food was consumed, the survey of a nationally representative sample of US children found:

- higher energy intake (up 126 kcal/day)
- higher energy density (up 0.3 kcal/gram)
- more fat (up 7g/day)
- more saturated fat (up 3g/day)
- more added sugars (up 21g/day)
- more soft drinks (up 189g/day)
- smaller amounts of fruit and vegetables (down 47g/day).

Typically, nearly a third of children reported eating fast food on any given day.

■ SA Bowman *et al*, *Pediatrics*, 2004.

Organic plants contain more salicylic acid

A comparison of commercial soups made using organic and non-organic vegetables found the former to have significantly higher levels of naturally-occurring salicylic acid, the active ingredient found in aspirin.

Although levels were lower than would be found in pharmaceutical doses, if the overall diet contains substantial amounts of organic produce then the total effect may be comparable.

Levels of salicylic acid in the blood of some vegetarians is as high as it is in some patients on regular low-dose aspirin prescribed for heart disease prevention.

■ GJ Baxter *et al*, *EFRC Bulletin*, Dec 2003.

Guidance sought on calorie counting

Several journalists and other individuals have contacted us over the past few months asking how to calculate the amount of activity needed to burn off calories. The following chart shows approximate calorie expenditure for a range of activities:

Activity	Kcalories used in 20 minutes of activity
Aerobic dancing – low intensity, equivalent to walking	80
Aerobic dancing – medium intensity, equivalent to jogging	130
Aerobic dancing – high intensity, equivalent to running	170
Bed making	100
Cleaning windows	60
Cleaning stairs	65
Climbing stairs (72 steps per minute)	95
Climbing stairs (92 steps per minute)	130
Cycling on flat ground ('own speed')	125
Dancing (waltz)	130
Dusting	70
Gardening	110
Golf	100
Knitting	25
Office work (general)	25
Operating electric sewing machine	25
Playing cricket	160
Playing pool	65
Playing squash	200
Playing tennis	140
Playing football	140
Playing table tennis	90
Playing cards	40
Running (speed unspecified)	190
Sitting typing	30
Walking on the level (1-2 km per hour)	45
Walking on the level (4-5 km per hour)	85
Watching football	40

■ Source: *Human Energy Requirements: A manual for planners and nutritionists*, by WPT James and EC Schofield, published by the Oxford University Press (1990).



books

Adolescent Health

British Medical Association Board of Science and Education (2003, 66pp). Tel: 020 7383 6164. Also available in pdf format at: www.bma.org.uk

This authoritative report from the British Medical Association (BMA), the voice of the medical profession, sets out the health problems facing UK teenagers, the causes of ill health and likely means to improve the situation. It considers such weighty matters as drugs, smoking, sexual health, mental health and the increasing rate of obesity.

The report states that excess body weight 'is now the most common childhood disorder in Europe', that adolescents consume too much salt and soft drinks, and that nutrition not only has an immediate impact on health but that there is increasing evidence that adult susceptibility to disease is



associated with nutrition in childhood and adolescence.

Of special interest is that the BMA recognises that whilst individuals bear some responsibility for their own health, *'It is clear, however, that health is subject to social and economic circumstances that are often beyond individual control,'* and that *'The social environment plays an especially important role in nutrition,'* making healthy choices more difficult.

It also points out that school education has been effective in helping adolescents understand what constitutes a healthy diet, but not in helping them to put that knowledge into practice. The report suggests that an approach addressing the structural and environmental causes of poor nutrition, inactivity and obesity are likely to be necessary, to enhance opportunities for physical activity, increase access to healthy foods and limit exposure to unhealthy food and unhealthy food marketing.

Smoke: The killer in the kitchen

Hugh Warwick and Alison Doig, ITDG Publishing, 2003, ISBN 1-85339-588-9, £7.95. Also available in pdf format at: www.itdg.org



For millions of people around the world, wood, crop residues, charcoal and dung are the main sources of fuel for cooking, and a significant cause of respiratory diseases and premature death. This hard-hitting report from the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) states *'the smoke from burning these fuels turns kitchens in the world's poorest countries into death traps'.* ITDG calculates that indoor air pollution from the burning of solid fuels kills over 1.6 million people each year, predominately women and children – a death toll almost as great as that caused by unsafe water and sanitation, and greater than that caused by malaria. And what makes these figures all the more alarming is that the people worst affected are those from the poorest communities – often in rural areas of India, China and Africa who can least afford to lose working days to ill health. ITDG calls for a Global Action Plan, coordinated by the UN, 'to address this neglected killer'.

Future Foods for Wellbeing

Institute of Grocery Distribution (2003, 43pp). Tel: 01923 857 141; email: igd@igd.com. Also available in pdf format at: www.igd.com



This new report from the industry body, the Institute of Grocery Distribution, coins the phrase 'wellbeing foods' to describe food products with added ingredients to offer particular nutritional benefits – sometimes referred to as 'functional foods' or 'nutraceuticals'.

The report is the result of discussions by an expert panel of scientists and nutrition experts to discuss 'health enhancement and maintenance' over the next 25 years.

The panel projects that policy will shift from the treatment of chronic degenerative disease to the avoidance of risk factors through improved diet. Technologists, they say, will identify 'active compounds' that can be added to food to help them enhance health.

The report also assesses how legislation and education can help or hinder public acceptance of 'functional foods'.

So Shall We Reap

Colin Tudge, Allen Lane (published by the Penguin Group), 2003, ISBN 0-713-99640-4, £20 hardback.

This book's subtitle runs as follows: *'How everyone who is liable to be born in the next 10,000 years could eat very well indeed; and why, in practice, our immediate descendants are likely to be in serious trouble.'*

Thus the book's scope is epic, its tone both erudite and accessible, and it is wonderfully irreverent in parts. Tudge's enthusiasm for his subjects – food, agriculture, the environment, gastronomy, life, the universe and everything – is evident on every page.

His analysis of why agriculture has gone wrong and what can be done about it is quite clear. As a society we have played fast and loose with biological laws, and allowed our elected representatives, our scientists and our commercial bodies to pretend that this doesn't matter. It does.

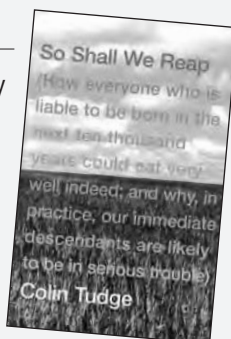
Examining thousands of years of human history, Tudge explains that systems have evolved to ensure that good farming practices lead to good nutrition which, in turn, forms the basis of the world's great cuisines. In short, people have historically thrived, and could continue so to do, on a judicious mixture of cereals and legumes, together with fruits, vegetables and herbs and small amounts of animal products: "The

mixed farm is the key to the future of all humanity," he says.

But mixed farms are rapidly disappearing, to be replaced by larger and larger specialised units in the name of 'efficiency'. Although Tudge is far from being an advocate of vegetarianism, he is clear that *'...over-emphasis on meat...has been the most pernicious of all trends in agriculture'.* By 2050, if current trends continue, the world's population of livestock will eat more food than was eaten by the human population – 4 billion of us – as recently as 1970.

Similarly, although he is a trenchant critic of our current industrialised agricultural system, he is not convinced that organic farming can necessarily solve all the problems he has identified. Perhaps his deliberate association of organic farming with an anti-science approach has coloured Tudge's analysis. But this is a minor criticism. For although he is a passionate advocate of the value of science, Tudge is no apologist for the misuse of science in the service of bad husbandry.

He is equally passionate about the need for change: 'We are not angry enough,' he says. 'Not by far.' We can't help but agree.



Sweets in a bottle

Exactly how much sugar are children unwittingly drinking when they swallow a bottle of Coke or a can of Fanta?

With bottled water costing as much or more than a soft drink, and with the demise of the freely-available drinking fountain in parks and school playgrounds, children inevitably turn to the colourful, flavour-boosted, fruity-looking products as a widely-available quencher of thirst.

But soft drinks do more than quench thirst. They add hugely to a child's daily sugar intake.

As our survey shows, typical drinks provide the equivalent to several lollipops or a pack or two of sweets, in every portion sold.

This 380ml bottle of Lucozade Energy packs a real punch with 64g of sugar, equivalent to two packs of Bassetts Jelly Babies



Enough is enough...

The World Health Organization and the UK Government recommend no more than an average of 10-11% of daily calories from non-milk extrinsic (e.g. not in the cells of fruit) sugars in adult diets. No specific guidance is published for children, but there is little evidence that they have greater requirements for sugar. In terms of grams a day for a typical child this equates to

Coca-Cola: A 330ml bottle contains 35g sugar, equivalent to one-and-a-quarter packs of Rowntrees Fruit Gums



the figures in the table below. Remember, these are the top amounts consistent with health – lower levels are preferable.

Sugar limits per day

	age 5	age 10	age 15
Boys	50g	60g	80g
Girls	45g	50g	65g

Vimto: A 250ml carton contains 22g sugar and the artificial sweetener saccharine. The sugar content is equivalent to a whole pack of Fruit Gums.



Fanta Orange: This 330ml can contains 34g sugar as well as two artificial sweeteners, aspartame and saccharine. The sugar is equivalent to one-and-three-quarters packs of Chewits



Doctors want soft drinks banned from US schools

Pediatricians have urged US school authorities to take their child protection duties seriously by restricting children's access to soft drinks in vending machines and school canteens.

In a strongly worded statement from the American Pediatric Academy, doctors are urged to contact superintendents and school board members and 'emphasise the notion that every school in every district shares a responsibility for the nutritional health of its students'.

The statement goes on to say that 'advertising of sweetened soft drinks within the classroom should be eliminated'. Currently, Channel One, an in-school marketing programme, regularly advertises sugar-sweetened drinks to its captive audience of 8 million children in 12,000 schools across the US.

Sweetened soft drinks sold in schools are an increasingly popular target for interventions aimed at reducing childhood obesity. In October, the Australian government announced that sugary soft drinks would be excluded from regular sale in canteens in state schools, although the schools will be able to sell them up to twice per term.

In Canada, the soft drinks industry has agreed to remove carbonated drinks from school vending machines and replace them with fruit drinks and sports drinks. Whether this will reduce sugar intake remains to be seen, as many such products have just as much added sugar as other drinks marketed to children.

■ **For more on the sugar content of soft drinks, see our Liquid Candy story on page 1 and above.**



A statement from American paediatricians urges schools to act responsibly on nutrition



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

Antibiotics resisted

Although it has been said that antibiotic resistance is caused by and spread through hospital environments, antibiotics are also used in food production. Here in Japan, we could find little public data on how much antibiotics are actually used. The Japan Offspring Fund (a consumer group affiliated to the Food Commission) repeatedly asked the Japanese government to reveal this information. Now we have the data and we can see that food production is likely to be a serious cause of antibiotic resistance. The level of antibiotic use in Japan is as follows:

- Hospital: 100 tonnes/year
- Home (patients take antibiotics at home): 400 tonnes/year
- Animal production (chickens, pigs, cattle): 900 tonnes/year
- Fish farming: 200 tonnes/year
- Vegetable, fruit and rice production: 100 tonnes/year

In Japan, antibiotic use is permitted in the production of many fruits and vegetables: peaches, plums, lemons, apples, grapes, pears, strawberries, melon, watermelon, kiwi fruit, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, green pepper, aubergine, daikon, onion, butterbur, leeks, garlic, ginger, potatoes and rice.

There is also extensive use of antibiotics as a growth promoter in chicken production. Our investigations show antibiotic-resistant bacteria in poultry droppings and on egg shells.

More investigations should be undertaken worldwide, urgently. We need to find ways to work together internationally to tackle this important issue and prevent bacteria from becoming resistant to the drugs that protect human beings from disease.

Natsuko Kumasawa
Japan Offspring Fund, Tokyo
www.mmjp.or.jp/JOF/

Eds: We agree that this is an important issue to investigate. Do any readers have access to data or evidence relating to antibiotic use in fruit and vegetable production in the UK or Europe? Please get in contact.

feedback

letters from our readers

Trade: what next?

I read the article in the previous edition of the *Food Magazine*, by Vicki Hird of Sustain (Trade talks: All heat and no light, Issue 63), and found it most enlightening. I'm sure most people have no idea about this totally unfair situation regarding the trade system for developing countries, and even fewer ideas about what we can do about it. What happens next? I'd like to know what we, as Food Commission subscribers, can do.

Pauline Fielding, by email

Vicki Hird, Policy Director, Sustain: *I suggest that you get in touch with the public organisations who are campaigning loudly on this. The websites would be a good start and each has ideas for taking action, which range from writing to government ministers, getting involved in fair-trade initiatives to joining protest demonstrations.*

- Oxfam: www.oxfam.org.uk
- ActionAid: www.actionaid.org/ourpriorities/foodrights/foodrights.shtml
- Christian Aid: www.christianaid.org.uk/campaign/
- Friends of the Earth: www.foe.co.uk

Do X-rays harm food?

I work with staff at Heathrow Airport and any food to be consumed is X-rayed. Although I know the doses are small, could there be a long-term effect from eating this food?

Don Illingworth, Health Safety & Environment, Emcor UK

Eds: We have not come across evidence of any significant chemical change in foods from a radiation dose at the level of an X-ray. Industrial irradiation, used increasingly in the US to treat beef, and in Australia and South America to treat tropical fruits, is undertaken at a dose equivalent to several million chest X-rays. At this level, chemical changes do occur – especially in foods containing fats. New chemicals are formed called cyclobutanones, which have been shown to be carcinogenic in laboratory tests.

Testing for food irradiation

On a related point, we have also received requests from regional trading standards officers for details of laboratories that are capable of undertaking tests for irradiation, in the UK and other European countries. A list is available from the Food Irradiation Campaign. Tel: 020 7837 2250; email: irradiation@foodcomm.org.uk.

Better food, please!

As subscribers to the *Food Magazine*, we become more and more annoyed at what goes into food.

Our son is six years old, autistic and on a gluten free diet, also has poor speech so finds it hard to communicate. We have found that he is allergic to aspartame, colourings, and MSG.

Shopping is a nightmare as we constantly read labels and won't buy anything for any of us with the rubbish in it the manufacturers seem to think we want to eat.

Holidays are also a nightmare. We have to take more food away than we did when he was a baby. We had two days away last week in a hotel and he got hold of a sugar packet off our tea tray in our room and ate a little of it. Guess what? It was that dreadful sweetener stuff, so we suffered for two days with his behaviour.

What can we do to get food better?! Help!

Helen and James Irvine, by email

Sandwiches should be more transparent!

I was pretty sure that I eat the right amount of salt, but when I started to add up the amounts using the information in your magazine, I was shocked to find that I'm probably one of the people eating about twice as much salt as I should! I have an office job, and I'm finding it really hard to get information about the sandwiches I have every day.

Most sandwiches have no salt information on them, and even when they do, it's given as sodium, or gives details only for the filling, or per 100g and not per pack. Funnily enough, I'm not in the habit of taking weighing scales and a calculator with me when I pop out for lunch!

I enclose a wrapper from one of my regular sandwiches – the ingredients have salt listed three times, for the bread, the falafel and the houmous. If anyone can work out how much salt is in what I actually eat, do let me know!

Emily Morris, London

I have been finding out more about what's in my sandwiches, and just had a salad wrap from Pret a Manger (relatively healthy, I thought). From the Pret website, I found it had 46g of fat and 600 kcalories. My wife, who's a nutritionist, says this is about half my recommended fat intake for the day. Why isn't this information on the packet?

Andy Oram, Knightsbridge



Low fat bagels with high fat fillings

Food shops on train stations have started to offer healthier options, but do you know what definitions they use? I asked an Upper Crust manager recently what they mean by the word 'healthy' (which is used on signs to promote several of their sandwiches), and he had no idea. He said that it was probably the low-fat mayonnaise! And here's a photo of the Bagel Factory at Paddington station (above). They advertise 'low in fat' and 'low salt'. I got suspicious because some of the bagels have high-fat fillings like full-fat cream cheese and bacon. When I asked the staff, they said they thought the claims were only relating to the bagels and not to the fillings. I don't think that's very helpful.

Kathleen Short, Chesterfield

Eds: Your experiences show that labelling schemes must be based on universally agreed definitions for what counts as 'high' and 'low' fat, sugar and salt, presented in a standard format and referring to the whole product, not just components of it. Left to individual food companies and sandwich outlets, we will end up with partial, confusing or misleading information. The Food Standards Agency should take a strong lead on this.

Schools could do better

I have read the *Food Magazine* article about the Cadbury's Get Active scheme and have a suggestion. Instead of bringing in the wrappers, perhaps children should be encouraged to have a chocolate-free day every week and donate their 42p, or whatever, to the school sports equipment fund. The schools would benefit and get the £5 netball a whole lot quicker and the children could be encouraged to feel virtuous in not having the chocolate. It is the sort of thing that would work well in primary schools with positive encouragement from parents. A nationwide campaign would be wonderful.

Sarah Harris, by email

Eds: Cadbury has now announced that it is to scrap the token-collecting part of its sports equipment promotion (see page 3). Perhaps schools will take the opportunity to adopt your healthier fundraising ideas!

feedback

letters from our readers

Yogurt fit for babies

You often feature unhealthy products, but I wanted to say well done to a company that is making healthier products for babies. Mums4 yogurts are the first 'baby food' I have bought my breastfed 16-month-old, because the others are full of rubbish! These are sweetened with fruit. I also like the labelling, which says 'suitable from 6 months'. It annoys me that other baby food companies say 4 months when it is recommended that solids should be introduced at 6 months at the earliest.

Tracy Hayden, South Woodham Ferrers

Celebrity marketing is dishonest

I think sports people are dishonest when they promote products like fizzy pop and crisps. They wouldn't eat this stuff! But can't we extend that ethic? Shouldn't food tie-ins with films have something to do with the film?

I enclose the most ridiculous example of a *Lord of the Rings* tie-in. Can anybody remember where in the book Aragorn eats margarine, because I certainly don't!

Rosie Halliday, West London

Eds: Aragorn didn't consume Pringles crisps, Cheerios, KFC children's meals or Panda Pops, but these have Lord of the Rings branding too!

However, you will be pleased to see that, at last, a popular footballer has come clean about good diet and sporting success. In an interview with The Grocer trade magazine about his link-up with Sainsbury's, ex-England and Manchester United footballer Teddy Sheringham said: 'To be an athlete you need to be responsible about your diet. It's like putting petrol in a car. When you eat more healthily you have more chance in a game.'

He encouraged children to eat more fruit and vegetables, cut back on fatty foods and, before playing sport, to consume cereals, bread and pasta. He also suggested that manufacturers could help by reducing the amount of sugar, fat and salt in food.

Let's hope that Teddy Sheringham will take a truly principled approach, and stop appearing in

McDonald's adverts, as he did in 2002!



'I can't believe Tolkien intended hobbits and elves to sell margarine!'

Will FSA test organics properly?

The government's Food Standards Agency is commissioning research to compare the nutrient value and pesticide residues in organically grown and conventionally grown foods. I am worried that the criteria for what they call 'organic' may not be adequate to show the difference.

When I worked on Lady Eve Balfour's pioneering farm in the 1940s there was a minimum of 5 years' conversion before crops could be considered organically grown. The standards today allow crops to be called organic after just 3 or even 2 years' conversion. If anything, an even longer period than 5 years should be required today, to ensure the soil has fully recovered its vitality after conventional use.

A true comparison of the nutrient levels from organic farming needs to take account of this. I urge everyone to write to Andrew Stephenson at the FSA (125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH) to make this point loud and clear.

Lizzie Walker, Brighton

Deconstructing sacred scripts

I am increasingly of the opinion that when the food industry says it wants to provide consumers with 'greater choice' it actually means that it wants more opportunities for selling goods of lower standard.

Whereas before we had, say, beef, we now have beef, cheap beef, imported cheap beef, GM-fed beef, beef from older animals, beef from BSE-riddled animals, and mechanically recovered beef slurry. Some choice!

Keep up the excellent work.

Tom Coleman, email

Eds: We always welcome new insights into old clichés. Keep them coming!

Clarifications

Bounty Packs: Bounty, the providers of samples and vouchers to new mums, say that their packs have contained no samples or vouchers for infant formula since 1996 (see our survey in *Food Magazine* 62).

Nestlé Cheerios: Nestlé tell us that the hydrogenated fat levels in their Cheerios is 1%, and not the estimated 3% as published in *Food Magazine* 63.



What price independence?

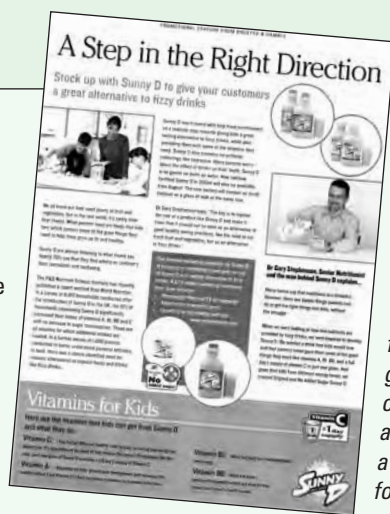
On its website, the government's Food Standards Agency (FSA) provides an opportunity for people to have their say about children's food and food marketing. Of the 80 or so contributions, the majority express concern about the types of food marketed to children and support a range of options to improve the situation, from controlling the contents of school vending machines to an outright ban on unhealthy food advertising.

Most contributors give themselves a title such as 'parent', 'health promotion worker', 'dietitian', 'food manufacturer' or 'advertiser'. This helps readers to judge the motivation behind the comments.

Two dissenting voices stand out: Angie Jefferson, 'freelance dietitian', and Gary Stephenson, 'nutritionist and parent'.

On the FSA website, Angie Jefferson states: *'At the moment the debate is being led by lobby groups and is not focused on achieving the most effective outcome for the consumer and their health. This needs to be addressed. It should be independent experts, not lobbyists, leading any changes.'*

Another website where you will find Angie Jefferson's 'independent' views is at: <http://getactive.cadbury.co.uk/21010.asp>. In support of the Cadbury Get Active 'tokens for



school sports equipment' scheme, Angie Jefferson states: *'Rather than cutting back on what children are eating, the main focus should be on getting them to burn off more energy, allowing them to eat a wide range of foods every day as part of a healthy balanced diet.'*

And Dr Gary Stephenson? On the FSA website, he states: *'More guidance for schools (on food promotions) is nannying. Schools can decide for themselves.'* Dr Stephenson is described as a 'nutritionist and parent'. Could that be the same Dr Gary Stephenson who is senior nutritionist for Sunny Delight and Pringles crisps, and also represents the Snack Manufacturers Association?

Gary's photograph appears in a current advertising campaign, persuading mums of the nutritional benefits of Sunny Delight (above).

What price independence?

■ To take part in the FSA debate on food marketing, visit: www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/promotion/haveyoursay/

Tricks of the trade, number 38

If you operate a company in both Britain and Portugal, for example, where do you think you should have to pay tax?

Where the company has its headquarters? Where the taxable transaction took place?

Neither, say the companies, who claim they have the right to pay tax wherever they operate, i.e. in the country with the lowest corporation tax levels. And a round of Group Litigation Orders – court orders on behalf of several litigants at once – are currently before the courts. If the companies win then the Inland Revenue, and hence the public purse, could be poorer by billions of pounds.

Among the corporations trying to avoid UK taxes are our old friends Cadbury and Sainsbury's.

Would that be the same Cadbury whose Chairman, Roger Carr, was appointed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to the Industrial Development Advisory Board – a statutory body charged with giving advice to government?

And would that be the same Sainsbury's whose chief executive, Sir Peter Davis, chairs the DTI-supported Business in the Community – an organisation proud of its promotion of corporate social responsibility?

New Year gongs for services to...

The New Year's Honours included:

An MBE for **Dr Roger Cook**, the animal drug industry's front man for 16 years. A highlight of his career was his passionate defence of the genetically engineered hormone BST used for artificially boosting milk production in the dairy industry. He was a strong campaigner for the continued use of organophosphate sheep dips and often criticised the Soil Association for its reports on animal welfare.

Jim Scudamore, the government's chief vet, becomes a Companion of the Order of Bath. His were the guiding hands during the foot-and-mouth epidemic in Britain which saw the destruction of over 4 million cattle and sheep for want of a vaccination policy. The government wasted hundreds of millions of pounds of public money in poorly-scrutinised contracts, and the outbreak cost the economy over £8 billion.



Jim Scudamore: a gong for carcasses rendered.

Starbucks: the true meaning of Christmas

To be sung to the tune of *O, Little Town of Bethlehem*

O, coffee chain of Starbucks

How easily you lie

Impoverished farmers get scant reward

For coffee they supply

So, prompted by a boycott

That showed that you were bad

You grudgingly said, one day per week

Fair-trade blends could be had.

But at Christmas time, when you should think

Of fairness and goodwill

You dropped Fair-trade for a 'Christmas blend'

Your bank account to fill!

A question of density

An amusing comment from the Institute of Food Research (IFR) set us thinking. In a statement supporting industry measures to combat obesity, the IFR, which provides scientific consultancy services to the food industry, commented: 'The industrialised world is facing a huge nutrient density challenge'.

Does this mean that the challenge is to find any nutrients whilst wading through all the dense processed foods? Or that the food industry is too dense to put nutrients in the processed foods in the first place? Answers on a postcard...

What price free fruit?

At a January meeting hosted by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs, delegates had lunch in the canteen at Ergon House in Westminster. Among the usual snacks and sandwiches, some Fair-trade and organic food was available. And diners were offered free fruit. How nice for the government to help policy-makers eat more healthily. But no, the fruit was available 'free' only if you also had a sandwich and a bottle of Lucozade!