

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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MoD warns of burger threat

Under the banner 'Who Dares Slims' the UK Ministry of Defence has announced plans to tackle what it calls 'the modern four horsemen of the apocalypse – obesity, heart disease, diabetes and the cheeseburger'. Yes, it seems that the MoD now regards the cheeseburger as a major threat to public health.

The MoD's Defence Logistics Organisation has launched a programme to examine its catering and nutrition requirements. 'The intention is to develop menus that optimise physical and mental performance and address the growing problems in society of obesity and over reliance on junk food and their impact on military personnel's health and fitness.'

Moves already underway include increased provision of salads and fruit alongside the 'less healthy' chips and sticky puddings, said the Director of the Defence Catering Group, Brigadier Jeff Little.

Brigadier Little also took a brisk view about unnecessary additives such as colourings: "There's very little highly coloured in ration packs. There are some boiled sweets, but that's about all. There's nothing in there that would contain these type of additives."

The services recruit up to 18,000 young adults each year but, with rising rates of child and adolescent obesity, their fitness for duty is in doubt. Serving personnel also have to pass annual fitness tests.

While civilian politicians might allow market forces to determine the nation's eating habits, the military cannot afford such complacency. The move to improve soldiers' diets is reminiscent of the concern faced by the British army during the Boer War, when 40-60% of men presenting for service were found to be too malnourished to be recruited. The potential disaster for British colonial ambitions led to various measures to improve diets both within the services and throughout society, including the development of the school meals service.

Brigadier Little recognised that he would be facing a difficult task. "The UK Armed Forces have traditionally fed soldiers very well, but even though many are happy to regularly stock up on steak and chips, we have a duty to provide meals that combine taste with a healthy diet." He added that with a budget of £120m, compared with national food purchases in excess of £70bn, the MoD "needed to be realistic in its targets".

Nonetheless, the military can take the lead in changing the UK's diet, he believed. "Generating the cultural change required for a generation brought up on cheeseburgers and TV dinners will be considerably more challenging and no-one expects immediate results. However, if the MoD can be seen to deliver improvements, I believe other parts of society can learn and benefit from our experience."

Is this the most expensive fruit juice in the UK?

Are you a fan of Robinson's Fruit Shoot Juice Drink? It is a product available with children's meals around the country. But did you know that, at the price charged for this Robinson's product, you would need to pay £22.60 to purchase a litre of pure, undiluted fruit? That's equivalent to 33 bottles, each containing only 10% fruit. And no, this is not the most expensive juice.

See pages 12 to 13 for the true cost of juice in juice drinks.



Parents Jury fixes Bob the Builder

Bob the Builder's agents have been in touch with the Food Commission, eager to find out what they can do to avoid bad publicity for Bob the Builder branded foods.

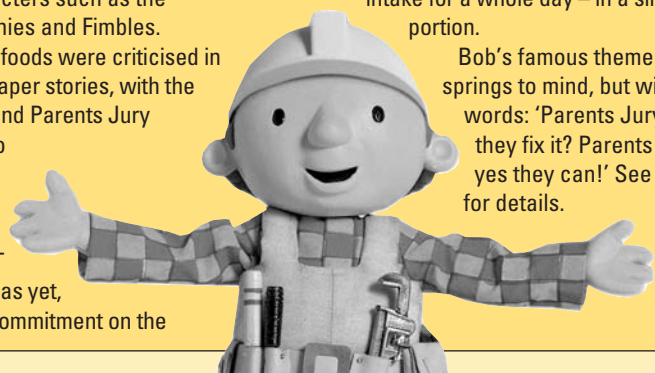
The move follows widespread media coverage of a new nutrition policy from BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the BBC. The policy commits the BBC to nutritional standards for the kinds of foods that can be promoted by characters such as the Teletubbies, Tweenies and Fimbles.

Bob the Builder foods were criticised in many of the newspaper stories, with the Food Commission and Parents Jury calling on Bob to do more for toddlers' health.

Bob the Builder's agent, HIT Entertainment has, as yet, made no detailed commitment on the

types of foods they will allow Bob to promote to pre-school children. However, in a telephone conversation with the Food Commission in April, a HIT representative said that they would be starting talks with Heinz and HP about reducing the salt in their canned pasta. Currently, HIT characters appear on Heinz and HP products that would take a pre-school child over their recommended salt intake for a whole day – in a single portion.

Bob's famous theme tune springs to mind, but with new words: 'Parents Jury, can they fix it? Parents Jury, yes they can!' See page 3 for details.



Get the facts with the Food Magazine

The *Food Magazine* is published quarterly by The Food Commission, a national non-profit organisation campaigning for the right to safe, wholesome food. We rely entirely on our supporters, allowing us to be completely independent, taking no subsidy from the government, the food industry or advertising. We aim to provide independently researched information on the food we eat to ensure good quality food for all.

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

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

Cartoons: Ben Nash

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
Alan Long, Jeanette Longfield, Diane
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

Choosing not to choose

Manufacturers love the word 'choice', which has the double implication that (a) marketeers can throw anything at us and tell us it increases our choice, and (b) pass full responsibility on to us if we make wrong choices.

Even our government lives by the mantra of choice, offering notional choice in education, health services, pensions and train companies.

Choice in the food market can be equally barren of meaning. Take McDonald's. Can we choose a salad at McDonald's? Yes, but with 13 grams fat in a crispy chicken salad (with no dressing!), the 'healthy' choice is fatter than a regular burger (under 8 grams fat) or even a cheeseburger (around 11 grams fat). It's not a choice at all: like political parties, you get a bad outcome whatever you choose.

And does McDonald's serve fresh fruit? Not quite fresh, as the pieces of apple are ready cut and pre-packed in cute blue bags emblazoned with Ronald McDonald's face. Each bag costs £0.59, more than the price of a can of cola or a bag of sweets at the newsagent next door, and equivalent to paying £2.50 for a pound of apples. Not even Harrods charges that!

A recent survey nicely exposed the problem of 'choice'. When it comes to goods and services, consumers said they did not want meaningless choices between, say, different hospitals. They would rather have no choice at all if they could be sure of a good, high quality service.

With food, too, we don't want empty choices. We just want the best.

How do we do it?

Our budget is often in the red. Our rent has just been increased. And the battle for healthy food is becoming more and more intense... Yet the Food Commission survives.

How? By being as frugal as possible with our resources. By creative campaigning. By paying ourselves low wages. By using volunteer and student help when we can.

And by asking our readers to help us. And help us you have: our January appeal raised over £5,000, and thanks to Gift Aid claims we can add another £1,000 to that figure.

And it isn't just the cash. It means a great deal to us when we open the letters and read your words of support, your good wishes and your encouragement.

That, in the end, is our reason for continuing to build the Food Commission and its campaigns. Your support is what means most to us, and for that we are always grateful.

Advertising Policy. The *Food Magazine* does not accept commercial advertising. Loose inserts are accepted subject to approval – please contact Ian Tokelove at The Food Commission for details. Call 020 7837 2250 or email ian@foodcomm.org.uk

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Badvertisements!

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

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

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

Parent power works!

BBC publishes nutrition policy... and Bob the Builder is shamed into action



BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the BBC, has published its long-awaited food and nutrition policy. This commits the BBC to use nutritional guidelines for the sorts of foods that can be promoted to children by means of its licensed pre-school characters such as the Teletubbies, Tweenies, Fimbles and Bill & Ben.

This development is a great victory for the Food Commission's Parents Jury. The announcement of the BBC's new policy follows pressure from the Food Commission and Parents Jury, prompted by a Tweenies Happy Meals promotion in McDonald's. Many members of the Parents Jury wrote to BBC Worldwide to express their anger at BBC Tweenies characters being used to promote unhealthy food to toddlers.

The *Food Magazine* followed up the story last July by exposing all the other unhealthy products that the BBC was allowing Tweenies to promote.

As a result, BBC Worldwide agreed to meet with the Food Commission, to discuss the development of a BBC nutrition policy.

Embarrassed by the media attention that the BBC's announcement stirred up this March, Bob the Builder's agents (HIT Entertainment) contacted the Food Commission. The agents assured us they will be negotiating with Heinz and HP to reduce salt in children's pasta shapes on which Bob the Builder and Thomas

the Tank Engine appear. They have also agreed to meet with the Food Commission and Parents Jury to discuss details of the BBC's nutrition initiative.

Other companies owning the licence to familiar characters have also been in touch, and the Food Commission is planning a round-table meeting to bring these companies together to discuss their responsibilities in promoting food to children.

In summary, BBC Worldwide's new policy stipulates that:

- There will be no more fast food deals for BBC children's characters – nationally and internationally.
- There will be no more 'everyday treat' foods branded with BBC characters, e.g. confectionery, lollies and crisps. BBC Worldwide will continue to allow its children's characters on 'occasional treat foods for special occasions', e.g. Easter eggs.
- Foods carrying BBC characters will conform to salt, fat and sugar guidelines drawn up in partnership with the Food Standards Agency.
- The BBC will seek to use its children's characters to promote healthy staple foods, supporting foods from the major food groups.
- Additive use (e.g. colourings and preservatives) will be reviewed, with the aim of excluding those that may be linked to hyperactivity, asthma or unhealthy reactions.
- Foods carrying BBC children's characters will have clearer and less misleading labelling. BBC Worldwide research with over 1,000 parents found that they were unhappy with being given the impression that a food was healthy from information on the front of the label, only to find that the ingredients list revealed unhealthy levels of sugar or fat.

The nutritional standards will be communicated to BBC agents

worldwide, with final sign-off of any food deals managed by the Director of Children's Operations.

The Food Commission is delighted that the BBC, with its public-service role, has understood what an important part it has to play in improving children's diets. We hope that the agents for other characters will follow suit, and we will contact them over the coming weeks. These will include companies such as Disney, HIT Entertainment, Warner Bros and Mattel, whose internationally recognised characters include Winnie the Pooh, Bob the Builder, Thomas the Tank Engine, Tom & Jerry and Barbie – all firm favourites with young children.

The BBC's announcement of a nutrition policy has shown, once again, that Parent Power really works. When we sent out news to the Parents Jury, we received many comments in response, typified by this from a Parents Jury member: *"It was good to hear that the parts we played all helped achieve this. Fantastic – and a big thank you to the Food Commission for pulling all the parent power together!"*

■ Visit the Parents Jury website at: www.parentsjury.org.uk

There are still plenty of products promoted by other children's characters that would be unlikely to comply with the BBC's new nutrition policy. These high salt cans of pasta are promoted using Tom and Jerry (Turner Entertainment Co) and Barbie (Mattel, Inc)



The Food Commission first challenged BBC Worldwide when we found its Tweenies characters being used to promote this high salt, high saturated fat and high sugar McDonald's Happy Meal



More support for Chuck Snacks

Seven local public health organisations have added their support to our call to Chuck Snacks of the Checkout, including district food networks, community dental services and voluntary child-care organisations.

With many of these supporters working in communities to improve health, they see first hand how children's food choices are influenced by the foods promoted to them.

One supporter, Bolton Primary Care Trust, undertook 22 checkout surveys, finding that 'many stores had confectionery and snacks at every or nearly all checkouts (e.g. Asda and Morrisons) whilst only three had no displays. As one Bolton parent commented, "I totally disagree with sweets at the checkouts. At the end of a busy shopping trip I don't want an argument with a tired toddler. There are sweets in the main aisles – why do we need them again at the exit?"

Julie Holt, Food Strategy Co-ordinator at Bolton PCT, told us, "It's really difficult for parents, they are under so much pressure to buy these sorts of products for their children. It's particularly stressful for parents who are on a low income. At least if the products are in the aisles, parents can choose whether they want to buy them for their children."

■ Email: chucksnacks@foodcomm.org.uk, or write to: Annie Seeley, Food Commission (CSOC), Freepost KE7564, London N1 9BR

Market specialists highlight obesity as a profit opportunity

The Food Commission has been invited several times over the past year to address audiences of marketing executives from national and multinational food companies. These are often organised by public relations (PR) companies or specialists in 'market information'.

Perhaps naively, we have been happy to oblige, feeling we should brave the lion's den in order to contribute to positive change. But we must admit to a growing sense of unease.

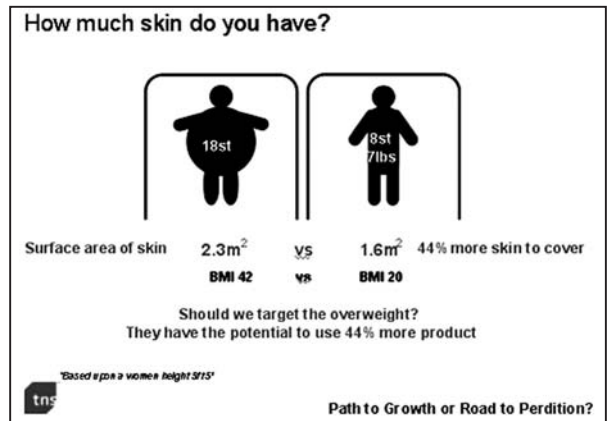
One such invitation arrived this month from the international market information company TNS (formerly Taylor Nelson-Sofres). TNS describes itself as having 'extensive global reach, operating out of 70 countries worldwide' and helping clients 'develop effective business strategies and communications'.

An enlightening PowerPoint presentation (a page is reproduced right) provided on the TNS website helped us to crystallise the cause of our discomfort. Entitled *Path to growth or road to perdition?*, the presentation sets out what TNS sees as the threats and opportunities for companies in the face of a global obesity epidemic. The threats are familiar territory to *Food*

Magazine readers: increased regulation, advertising bans, fat taxes...

And the opportunities? One of the main areas in which TNS operates is pharmaceuticals and healthcare products. The TNS PowerPoint presentation suggests that healthcare product manufacturers calculate the profit opportunities that obesity can offer. The calculation goes like this:

If your female customer weighs a healthy 8st 7lbs, her skin area will be 1.6m². But if she becomes obese and weighs, say, 18st, her skin area will be 2.3m². That's 44% more skin. 'Should we target the overweight?' asks TNS. But of course! 'They have the potential to use 44% more product.'



McDonald's uses local press to target children

McDonald's has received a lot of good publicity over the past few weeks for its revised menu, offering plain milk and pre-cut apple pieces to children. These healthier options will be offered alongside the regular fare of burgers, fries, carbonated drinks and shakes.

This might seem like a sea-change in attitude were it not for the fact that the less healthy options are still receiving considerable marketing support, as demonstrated by McDonald's marketing partnerships with local newspapers.

Member of the Parents Jury, Mrs Penny Shadbolt, sent us this cutting from the *Epsom & Sutton Post* newspaper showing its kids club promotion sponsored by McDonald's. She reports that she has written to the local paper to protest that by offering free hamburgers to children, it is "contributing to the escalating rise in childhood obesity and junk food related health problems".

Meanwhile, another member of the Parents Jury, Tracy Hayden, reports that her local McDonald's has persisted in a promotion to reward children aged six months to five years with a year's supply of Happy Meals if they win the Bonny Baby competition. This is a joint promotion by McDonald's and the *Maldon and Burnham Standard*.

In January, the *Food Magazine* reported that McDonald's, embarrassed to hear its Bonny Baby scheme criticised by the Food Commission in front of a meeting of MPs, had hurried off to scrap the scheme. But never trust the promises of a marketeer! Tracy Hayden tells us that the scheme went ahead, and Burnham bonny babies were duly photographed in McDonald's receiving their prize.

It will take a lot more than cut-up apple to convince parents that McDonald's has really changed its spots!

Epsom & Sutton Post KIDS CLUB McDonald's

The Kids Club is open to all boys & girls aged 5 years and under. All Kids Club members will receive a membership card, which will be sent to you by post. The Kids Club membership card will be sent to you by post. The Kids Club membership card will be sent to you by post.

New Members

James Russell, Chloë Gilmore, Michael Agar, Owen Gallacher, Kieran Cain, Hayden Cain, K Potter, Ellis Kayle, Leanne Taylor, Eilona Nicholson, Rebecca Reeves, Brandon Mallet, Aaron Godfrey, Aaron Worth, Jake Brummer, Kieran Dally, Wendy-Anne Hawkins, Lisa-Marie Peachey

FREE HAMBURGER

Only available on production of your Epsom Post/McDonald's Kids Club card. The Kids Club offer is only available at McDonald's, Ashley Centre, Epsom High Street, Oldfield Road, North Cheam & Sutton High Street. To obtain a membership card you must complete the application slip below.

Would you like to WIN

4 Tickets to see **LOONEY TUNES Back in Action**

(Kindly donated by Warner Village Cinema in Greats of Creyke)

Send your entries into the usual address

NAME _____ SEX _____

AGE _____ D.O.B _____

ADDRESS _____

CONTACT NO. _____

I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY CHILD TO BE A MEMBER OF THE KIDS CLUB & FOR MY CHILD'S NAME TO APPEAR IN THE PAPER

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN _____

Nestlé and Nutricia target vulnerable families

Food companies continue to promote inappropriate food to vulnerable babies from low-income families, ignoring an international code drawn up to protect infant health.

A new marketing campaign from Dutch baby-food company Nutricia has prompted international outrage from organisations working to protect child health.

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) exposed Nutricia's plans to give away free CDs to Chinese mothers if they buy Nutricia baby food. Over 20,000,000 babies are born in China annually, which Nutricia director Marc de Rouw described in a television interview in February as an opportunity for the company to "have gold in our hands".

Nutricia has been lobbied by individuals and organisations from around the world, calling on the company to drop the campaign.

IBFAN points out that in its enthusiasm to make money, Nutricia would violate the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, which clearly states: 'Manufacturers and distributors should not distribute to pregnant women or mothers of infants and young children any gifts of articles

or utensils which may promote the use of breastmilk substitutes or bottle feeding' (Article 5.4).

The International Code was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981 as a 'minimum requirement' for all governments in order to protect infant health. Its goal is to protect and promote breastfeeding and to curb marketing of breastmilk substitutes. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 1.5 million infants die around the world every year because they are not breastfed.

Nutricia is not alone in persisting with promotion of such products. This February, Nestlé launched a marketing campaign to promote formula milk to young Hispanic mothers in America, just as the US government was poised to launch the first campaign in a century to encourage breastfeeding among low-income mothers from ethnic minorities. The potential benefits for Nestlé of ignoring the International Code are apparent: 38 million Hispanic people live in the US, in a population with higher birth rates than other ethnic groups. Hispanic people are likely to account for 20% of the US population by 2020.

The new Nestlé campaign includes posters, leaflets and free samples targeted at the Hispanic community, and new product labels that proclaim the benefits of the products in Spanish.

Because America does not enforce international rules on baby-milk marketing, many US hospitals distribute free samples of products such as Enfamil to the mothers of newborn babies, undermining the advice that 'breast is best'. Such marketing is outlawed in most other countries and enforced through surveillance, fines and prosecutions.



In the US, Nestlé is unlikely to be chastised for its activities, since America is one of the few countries to have failed to enact laws to enforce the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and protect its newborn children. The US government estimates that between only 8 percent and 15 percent of American women breastfeed their babies exclusively for 6 months, whilst the formula industry's annual revenue is around \$4 billion in the US.

■ For the full text of International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, see: www.ibfan.org/english/resource/who/fullcode.html

■ To find out more about campaigns to stop the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, see: www.babymilkaction.org

Boots re-labels water for newborns

Following a *Food Magazine* exposé, Boots has re-labelled its flavoured baby water, by withdrawing the advice that it was suitable 'from 4 weeks'.

Just like formula milk, water marketed for consumption by babies can also contravene the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (see story above), since parents may believe that a product is suitable for

their newborn and substitute water for breastmilk. They may be especially likely to believe this if the advice comes from a reputable company such as Boots.

We reported on this product in the previous issue of the *Food Magazine*, reminding Boots that World Health Organisation advice is that nutritious breastmilk should be the sole source of fluid for newborn babies – preferably up to the age of six months. Not expensive water containing flavouring and citric acid.

We're delighted to see that Boots has acknowledged the problem and changed its label. But still, is this product really suitable for babies as young as four months old?

Boots's 'purified', flavoured water. First targeted at babies just one month old the product is now aimed at infants of four months, but still carries the vastly inflated price tag of £5 a litre



Soya formula confirmed as unsuitable for babies

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has confirmed advice that soya-based infant formula should not be used as the first choice for feeding babies with intolerance to cows' milk.

The CMO warns that soya-based formula products have a high phytoestrogen content, "which could pose a risk to the long-term reproductive health of infants".

The government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition has also advised GPs and health visitors that soya-based formula should be used only in exceptional circumstances, e.g. for babies of vegan parents who are not breastfeeding, or babies who find alternatives unacceptable.

At least two soya-based infant formula products are currently on the market – available in high-street shops – SMA's Wysoy and Cow & Gate's Infasyoy.

Pesticide campaigners call for right to know

Campaigners at the Pesticides Action Network are backing proposals for people to have a legal right to know what pesticides are used in the local environment, or on fields where there are public rights of way.

If implemented, legislation would allow public access to spray records. Advance notification of spraying would be required, with signs in fields near houses and footpaths.

To support the campaign, contact your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA and ask them to sign Early Day Motion 776.

■ **Contact: Pesticide Action Network UK. Tel: 020 7274 8895; email: davidallen@pan-uk.org**

Row brews at World Health Assembly

Consumer and public health groups are gearing up for a confrontation at the World Health Assembly in mid-May, fearing that a strongly-worded resolution on combating obesity and heart disease through diet will be watered down by food industry interest acting through the USA and fellow country delegations.

The Assembly, the annual meeting of the members of the UN's World Health Organization, is facing a rough ride for its 'Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health' which, campaigners fear, will no longer have references to the need for advertising controls, or legal or fiscal instruments, and will break its link to an expert document published earlier this year setting quantified targets for dietary improvements.

There are also concerns that the Assembly will require WHO staff to 'cooperate' with industry despite the conflicts of interest this could give rise to.

■ **The key document is number A57/9 at: www.who.int/gb/ebwha/e/e_wha57.html**

GM in organic soya foods

Soya foods from health-food stores tested positive for GM ingredients in a survey conducted by Glamorgan University, published in February. Ten out of 25 products tested gave positive results, although at levels lower than required for a label declaration. However, eight of the ten positive samples were labelled 'organic' or 'GM-free', which might mislead consumers. The Soil Association standards require products to have less than 0.1% GM if they are to be accredited organic, but several products contained more than this amount.

■ **Glamorgan University press office: 01443 483362.**

Heinz scraps controversial five a day claims



After months of criticism, Heinz has finally admitted that many of its products are too salty to carry the 'five a day' message that is intended to encourage people to eat more healthily.

In 2003, an advert for Heinz baked beans

showed a branded beans label wrapped around fresh beans and tomatoes, in support of the 'five a day' message. The Food Commission submitted several complaints about such marketing to the Advertising Standards authority, the Food Standards Agency and regional trading standards officers.

Instead of using the Department of Health's official 'five a day' logo, Heinz invented its own logo, which appeared on products such as

This Heinz tomato soup claims to contain four portions of fruit and veg in a single can and to be a healthy choice, yet each can also contains 4g of salt. Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day.



salty Heinz Bob the Builder canned pasta and mini sausages, Heinz baked beans and Heinz cream of tomato soup. In a single serving (200g), the tomato soup contains 0.8g of sodium, equating to 2g of salt. But Heinz claimed that this could contribute two portions of fruit & veg 'the healthy way'.

On average, people in the UK eat twice as much salt as they need, with implications for long-term health.

Lawsuits accuse aspartame of poisoning the public

Lawsuits have been filed in three California courts against twelve companies who either manufacture the artificial sweetener aspartame or use it in products for human consumption.

The suits, filed in April, allege that the food companies committed 'fraud and breach of warranty' by adding aspartame to products such as diet Coke, diet Pepsi, sugar-free chewing gum, children's vitamin supplements, sweetened yogurt and medicines 'in the full knowledge that aspartame is neurotoxic'. The lawsuits are supported by the US campaign organisation The Natural Justice League.

Defendants include Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Bayer Corp., Dannon, Wrigley's, ConAgra, Wyeth, NutraSweet, and Altria (parent company of Kraft Foods and Philip Morris). Plaintiffs have asked for an injunction to stop companies from producing, manufacturing, processing, selling or using aspartame.

Aspartame was approved in 1983, for use in carbonated drinks. Today it is found in over 5,000 foods, drinks and medicines. Critics say that consumption of aspartame is linked to conditions such as migraine, vision loss, multiple sclerosis and chronic fatigue.

News of the aspartame lawsuits was welcomed by the Additives Survivors' Network UK. Its chair, Geoff Brewer, said "European manufacturers, retailers and suppliers of aspartame will need to look cautiously into their future," and called the legal action "a wakeup call for these companies – together with government agencies and regulatory bodies – to address the aspartame problem effectively".

■ **To contact Additives Survivors Network UK, email: geoffbrewer@eurobell.co.uk website: www.additivesout.org.uk**

France and Denmark ban Red Bull

French and Danish moves to ban the stimulant drink Red Bull have been upheld by the European Court of Justice, which ruled that of member states can ban products on health grounds, even if the European Commission believes the products to be safe.

The French said the drink presented a hazard due to its high caffeine level along with concerns over two other ingredients: taurine and glucuronolactone.

French and Danish moves to ban foods containing added vitamins, such as breakfast cereals, were not upheld by the Court.

Children's food as salty as ever

A year after the FSA issued salt guidelines, little has changed.

In May 2003, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced guidelines on maximum recommended salt intakes for children. At the time, the Food Commission warned that with so much hidden salt in children's food, it would be hard for parents to achieve the targets without a significant reduction of salt in processed food.

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF, representing the food industry) responded with a statement that avoided commenting on the salt content of children's food. Instead, the FDF announced that it would work with its industry members to reduce salt content in soups and sauces by 10%.

The *Food Magazine* can confirm that it has found some reductions in ketchup and soup salt levels, and this is welcomed. However, the FSA guidelines related to children's diets, so how is the food industry tackling high salt levels in children's foods?

In a survey of 20 children's foods conducted one year after the FDF's commitment to salt reductions, few products have reduced salt content. Three quarters of the children's foods retained the same high salt levels.

Barney pasta shapes in tomato sauce, for example, would still provide a 3-year-old with 2.75g of salt – almost one and a half times their recommended intake in just one serving.

Of all the crisps surveyed, none showed a reduction in salt since 2003 despite industry 'co-operation' with the FSA.

A recent Mintel report on savoury snacks targeted at or popular among young people aged under 16 ("typified by ... Wotsit, Monster Munch and Skips") found that UK sales had increased by a massive 26% in the four years between 1998 and 2002. The same survey reported that 60% of children between 7-16 years snacked on crisps after school. Hardly surprising when £31.4 million was spent on advertising crisps and snacks in 2002.

The FSA has issued a public consultation including the proposal that any foods marketed at children should not be high in salt, sugar and fat. The FSA has said it will publish nutrition criteria by March 2005.

Following the government salt guidelines, aimed at encouraging a *reduction* in children's salt intakes, two manufacturers have managed to *increase* the salt content in their children's products! The salt content of Iceland Kids Crew cheese and tomato flavour pizza has increased by 15%, and the salt level in Tidgy Toads (toad in the hole) has also i

Calculating the salt content

Many manufacturers and retailers list only the sodium content per 100g of product. To calculate the salt, multiply the sodium content by 2.5, then by the portion size in relation to 100g, and then compare the result to the recommended salt intake.

Alternatively, government guidelines state that any product containing 0.5g or more of sodium per 100g contains 'a lot' of salt, and any product which contains 0.1g of sodium or less per 100g contains 'a little' salt.

Age	Grams of salt
0-12 mths	less than 1
7-12 mths	1
1-3 yrs	2
4-6 yrs	3
7-10 yrs	5
11 yrs and over	6

ncreased by 12%. Full details of products' salt levels are at: www.foodcomm.org.uk

Three manufacturers have reduced salt content in their products. For two, the reduction followed criticism from the Parents Jury and the *Food Magazine*: Dairylea Lunchables Ham Stack'ems and Cheestring Attack-a-Snak Cheestring and chicken wrap, reduced by about 10% and 50% respectively.* These products are still very high in salt, however: Lunchable's Yummy Ham Stack'ems and Cheestring Attack a Snack would

provide a 3-year-old child with more than their recommended maximum salt intake in just one snack (2.25g and 2.5g of salt per portion).

Marks & Spencer had also improved its product, reducing the salt content in its Tweenies Meal for One from 1.1g of salt per portion to 0.83g per portion, a 25% reduction.

The *Food Magazine* survey found that all of the food labels declared their sodium content, but only one in five of the products surveyed translated the sodium into the salt equivalent.

The FSA has recently suggested that all labelling should declare the salt content (as well as sodium). It is also exploring the use of 'descriptors' for fat, sugar and salt, so product labelling would clearly state whether a product is high, medium or low in salt. This would help parents make healthier choices for their children. The recommended intakes for children are shown in the table.

However, with the industry's FDF unwilling to accept such labelling recommendations and slow to take action on reducing salt levels in children's food, where can the government go apart from regulation?

The *Food Magazine* will take part in an FSA consultation on its action plan on children's food promotions and will support the FSA's recommendation that all products are labelled as high, low or medium salt – perhaps using a traffic-light colour coded system. We also believe that such labelling should be extended to fat, saturated fat and added sugar.

* Golden Vale has told us that the sodium content of the Cheestrings Attack-a-Snak was previously 'mislabelled'.

Badvertisement

Medicine resolves salt information

Medicines designed to settle stomach upsets often contain sodium bicarbonate, and may contain other sources of sodium too, such as sodium lauryl sulphate or the artificial sweetener sodium saccharin.

Containing all of these ingredients, this packet of Resolve Extra helpfully states that each sachet contains 0.45g of sodium.



Manufacturer Seton Products then adds the information that most food manufacturers

refuse to tell their customers: 'This may be harmful if you're on a low sodium diet.'

Medicines such as this are generally consumed on an occasional basis, whereas food must be consumed daily. So why is there no declaration on food products to let customers know that their food is high in salt? Heinz Baked Beans contain over 0.8g of sodium in a serving, nearly twice as much as a single sachet of Resolve.

Krispy Kremes pushes 'calorie colonialism' on UK consumers

U.S. doughnut marketing may appear charitable, but it's also a highly persuasive way to get us to eat America's excess calories, argues Kath Dalmeny.

Who could fail to feel a warm glow when they see newspaper reports of giant-sized cheques presented to needy children by local businesses? Raising money for charity through special events and sponsored activities has become something of a national pastime for companies and local voluntary groups.

Ten years ago, Mr Freeman, who runs Dunn's bakery in Crouch End, North London, set up National Doughnut Week, in which bakers give a donation of up to 20p to the Save the Children Fund for every doughnut sold. This April, Mr Freeman received a certificate from Save the Children, to say thank you for the £400,000 raised through doughnut sales.

This year, for the first time, the 1,000 high-street bakers participating in National Doughnut Week were joined by US doughnut giant Krispy Kremes, no doubt tempted by the opportunity to gain free local press coverage at a time when they are pushing for increased market share in the UK.

Whilst the occasional doughnut can be a treat for children and their families, Krispy Kremes marketing tactics are beginning to

resemble a calorie-laden juggernaut bearing down on the 'everyday' food market. As Don Hershall, managing director of Krispy Kremes in the UK explains, "*Krispy Kremes are not meant as a meal replacement but as a treat, say, once a day.*" Can a doughnut once a day really be classed as an occasional treat? Recent Krispy Kremes promotions also include the opportunity to win 'a year's supply of Krispy Kremes' – 24 doughnuts every week for a year.

The *Food Magazine* has reported on other ways in which Krispy Kremes are attempting to position themselves as an everyday part of the UK diet. The company is already infiltrating cash-strapped UK schools with money-making opportunities, and has approached nurseries and disability charities, advising that they can raise funds by selling the fat- and sugar-laden products at school events.

Krispy Kremes tactics are spreading as far afield as Australia, where Save the Children announced in March that over 19 dozen Krispy Kreme doughnuts were sold per minute at a fundraising event in Sydney. A recent study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare revealed that at least 42 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women are classified as overweight, and probably not in need of extra doughnuts.

The marketing tactics of food manufacturers such as Krispy Kremes have been described by the US food policy commentator Marion Nestle as a form of 'calorie colonialism', exporting American-style eating habits to the rest of the world. She estimates that around 1,700 excess calories per US citizen are produced in America every day, so new overseas markets are hungrily sought by US food corporations.

"We overproduce food in this country, and we have to sell it somewhere, so any large company with multi-national interests is going to be trying to get its food sold overseas," explains Marion Nestle. "Our food supply makes 3,900 calories available per person per day. That's nearly twice what people eat, so it's got to go some place."

Of course, the EU practises similar calorie colonialism by off-loading surplus agricultural product, such as sugar, onto the developing world at a subsidised price.

In February, Krispy Kremes announced a 25.6 per cent jump in total sales for the final quarter of its financial year. Using US nutritional figures for Krispy Kremes, the Food Commission estimates that for everyone



Krispy Kremes latched onto National Doughnut Week as an easy source of feel-good publicity. The occasional doughnut can be a treat for adults and children alike, but Krispy Kremes would like the UK public to eat one of their doughnuts every day. This is equivalent to eating a lump of sugar-coated fat every week, weighing over a quarter of a kilo!

percent increase in sales, Krispy Kremes offloads approximately:

- 18 million additional kilograms of fat (over one quarter of which is saturated fat)
- 358 billion additional kcalories
- 25 million additional kilograms of sugar.

All this does little to support local economies and local bakers; and too much for children's waistlines.

Badvertisement

Safeway s-s-s-s-s-stretches the truth

Safeway is the latest supermarket to launch a range of own-brand foods for children. Its Parental Promise is that 'this range has been specially designed to deliver good value, healthier products for you and your children'.

Sounds great. But can anyone tell us how these Stretchy Strawberry Snakes could possibly be described as healthier than any other jelly sweets? We're told it's because the colourings are natural, not artificial. Is this really sufficient reason for sweets to gain a 'healthy' marketing tag?



We have a few holes to fill

Assistant General Managers - Enfield
Night & Day shifts available
Salaries from £18K-£27K plus benefits

The qualities we are looking for in our new Assistant Managers are:

- You have managed or supported a business with turnover in excess of one million per annum.
- Developed and managed a large team in excess of 70 people.
- Delivered exceptional guest service through a committed & motivated team.
- Enthusiastic and passionate about what you do.
- Inspired by constant challenges.
- Able to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Dynamic and innovative - creative.
- Ambitious and self-motivated.
- Outstanding people skills.

Krispy Kreme is one of the world's fastest growing brands. With their one of a kind 'Vanilla Caramel Glazed Doughnut' each store owner enjoys far over 10 years. Krispy Kreme sells 1 million doughnuts a day in the US. Average sales in excess of £25 million per annum. Some exceptional promotions and are actively involved in the local community. In the UK our first store opened in Harrogate under a new name of public and has been a great success. The plan is to open another 24 stores in the next five years.

As part of the UK start-up you will undergo extensive training in the UK followed by graduation in the USA. Don't miss out on your opportunity to share. Krispy Kreme is a company that values its people, encourages fun and change, being a global brand, it was enough to know that your opportunity is here.

Please send your CV to:
Krispy Kreme
c/o Recruitment Rights
2nd Floor, 11 Canalside Rd
London WC2E 9LJ
Tel: 0207 434 4538. E: 020 7434 4539
Email: careers@krispykreme.co.uk
www.krispykreme.co.uk

This job ad appeared in the *Enfield Advertiser* in February boasting that Krispy Kremes plans to open 24 stores in the UK in the next five years. Does the UK really have a doughnut-shaped hole in its diet that Krispy Kremes needs to fill?

Irish regulators get firm with advertising to children

Regulators in Eire have taken action to protect children from the effects of advertising of unhealthy foods. The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) has published a draft code of practice containing measures that exceed the restrictions placed on food advertising to children in the UK.

Under the new code, no 'children's advertising' for food or drink can use celebrities, sports stars or children's heroes, unless the advertisement is part of a public health or education campaign.

This restriction extends to the use of programme characters to endorse and advertise products because of 'the potential for this practice to exploit the loyalty or emotional attachment that a child has for a character or presenter from a children's programme and the potential for this practice to increase pester power'.

In explanatory notes, the BCI admits that 'It has been recognised by all that advertising is one influence [on obesity] and therefore advertising regulations have a role to play.'

Such an admittance stands in strong contrast to slow-moving OFCOM, the UK's advertising regulator. Despite being urged by the Food Standards Agency to take action, OFCOM has instead commissioned further research – no doubt hoping to come up with findings that are more favourable to the advertising industry.

The Irish code of practice is in line with new European laws on unfair commercial practices – due to be enforced by summer 2005 – stating that adverts cannot imply that a child will be more popular by buying a

product. The Irish code adds that adverts aimed at children must not undermine the authority, responsibility or judgement of parents or carers, such as using plot lines that show children manipulating their parents.

However, the new code does not place any restriction on the types of foods that can be advertised to children, nor the frequency with which ads can be shown. It does little to address the enormous imbalance towards unhealthy foods currently represented among children's food adverts. Two minor concessions are that adverts for fast food outlets must display an on-screen message that this type of food should be eaten in moderation, as part of a balanced diet. And advertising for sweets, cakes, biscuits and confectionery will have to show a toothbrush symbol.

The Irish government's Food Safety Promotion organisation, SafeFood, has welcomed the code of practice in a document entitled *A Children's Advertising Code*.

The code is due to come into force in the summer, with a review promised one year after its introduction. The BCI says that the purpose of the review will be to assess 'how the type of measures outlined above have worked, and how the industry has responded to their implementation'.

■ **Summaries of the 540 submissions received from adults and children to the BCI's consultation are available on the website: www.bci.ie**



US chief medic opposes advertising restrictions...

US Surgeon General Dr Richard Carmona, in a speech to the American Association of Advertising Agencies, has appealed to the industry for help in fighting the nation's obesity crisis.

Referring to the problem as "the terror within", Carmona asked advertisers to help improve food labelling, educate consumers and avoid misleading information in advertising.

Carmona gave his speech at a time when a new study commissioned by the American government has warned that obesity is likely to become the country's biggest preventable killer within the next few years.

The research, by the US government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found that poor diet and lack of exercise caused 400,000 deaths in the US in the year 2000. This represents a 33% rise since 1990.

If current trends continue, obesity will soon overtake smoking as the single biggest

cause of preventable deaths in the US. Two-thirds of American adults and nine million

American children are either overweight or obese. However, Carmona reassured advertisers that regulation was not on the government's agenda. "The food industry has come a long way," he said. "We don't want to impede capitalism."

Judging by our calculations shown on page 11 ('How much

does obesity cost?'), Mr Carmona may find that capitalism becomes impeded anyway, by the effects of obesity on productivity, lost work hours, medical costs and social care.

...while US campaigners call for global ad ban

Meanwhile, the US campaign group Commercial Alert is coordinating support for an international ban on junk food advertising to children. The campaign statement has been endorsed by 140 organisations, 86 health experts and children's advocates, and 24 elected officials from 19 different countries. They are calling on the World Health Organisation to incorporate the marketing ban into its global anti-obesity initiative, or to enact the ban through international health regulations. National health ministers from around the world will meet in May, at the World Health Assembly, to discuss the proposals.

■ **See: www.commercialalert.org/junkfoodstatement.pdf**

US legislators try to squash fast-food lawsuits

Republican legislators in Washington have pushed a bill through the US House of Representatives that, if enacted, will prevent people from filing lawsuits against food companies and advertisers.

The proposed legislation, entitled the 'Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act,' states that food companies should no longer be held accountable for 'claims of injury relating to a person's weight gain, obesity or health condition associated with weight gain or obesity'.

The bill, nicknamed the Cheeseburger Bill, was sponsored by Republican Ric Keller in March, to defend the food industry from lawsuits claiming damages for diseases caused by junk food consumption.

Republicans argued that exposing the US food industry – which employs almost 12 million people – to lawsuits like those used against the tobacco industry could wreck the economy and increase the price of eating out.

Opponents said that the proposed legislation sent a signal to the food industry that it did not have to worry about the public health.

Before becoming law, the bill will need to be passed in the Senate and signed by the President, who has already stated that he believes obesity has more to do with declining rates of physical exercise than the amount of food people eat. However, the Senate has often blocked measures passed by the House of Representatives that would put a cap on legal damages or protect certain industries from lawsuits.



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 authorities in recent months.

X Red Devil told to remove sex references

Britvic was criticised by the ASA for promoting its caffeine drink Red Devil with the phrase: 'He was going so fast he went for the wrong entrance'. Although Britvic contended that the advertising campaign was 'playful and cheeky', the ASA considered that the posters referred to anal sex and were likely to cause widespread offence. Britvic was told not to repeat the advertisements.

X Kellogg's misleads over weight loss

A ruling was confirmed by OFCOM* against claims for the Kellogg's cereal Kickstart. The Kellogg's advert described how people wanting to lose weight could eat Kickstart cereal for breakfast, substitute it for lunch or dinner, eat a balanced third meal and lose up to 6lbs in two weeks. OFCOM expressed concern that the advertisement did not make it clear that participants should only follow the diet for two weeks, and that simply putting this information on the Kellogg's website was insufficient.

Kellogg's was advised by OFCOM that current medical opinion is that a safe rate of weight loss is no more than 1-2lbs per week, and that the Kellogg's claims were excessive.

OFCOM also expressed concern that the actresses appearing in the advert were already slim, and might encourage those who do not need to lose weight to adopt an unbalanced diet. Kellogg's said that it would review its choice of models in future.

* OFCOM is the new regulator for broadcast advertising, and is now the one-stop shop for complaints against TV, radio and other broadcast advertisements. It replaces five former regulators – the Broadcasting Standards Commission, the Independent Television Commission, Oftel, the Radio Authority and the Radiocommunications Agency. The separate Advertising Standards Authority continues to be responsible for regulating print advertisements. Write to: OFCOM Contact Centre, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA.

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.

X Sunny D fails to delight regulators

Our old friends Procter & Gamble, makers of Sunny Delight, have come under fire once again for promotion of its low-juice juice drink. They narrowly escaped censure from the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) for a print advertisement showing three boys

the advert depicted Max Wilde as a strange boy with no friends and was detrimental to health promotion messages that encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables. The ASA did not uphold the complaint.

However, the Radio Authority* upheld a Food Commission complaint against a similar Sunny D promotion. Aired on pop music stations, the advert claimed a 200ml glass of Sunny D contained less sugar than two bowls of spinach. The Radio Authority agreed that it is nutritionally misleading to compare the sugar in a soft drink to naturally-occurring sugar in leafy vegetables, and that a 'bowl' was a variable and unhelpful measure. Sunny D was told not to use such advertising again.

Note: We hear that Procter & Gamble has finally found a buyer for its lack-lustre brand Sunny D, which they have been trying to offload for nearly a year. A private equity firm based in Cincinnati has agreed to purchase the Sunny Delight Beverages Company for an undisclosed sum.



drooling over sweets in a sweet shop, whilst geeky Max Wilde licks his lips outside a greengrocer. The strapline stated, 'Because no child's like Max Wilde, there's Sunny D'. The complainant objected that

X Beer-maker told: drop the health claims

Following a complaint from the Food Commission, the ASA told leading brewer Coors, maker of Carling, Grolsch, Caffrey's and Worthingtons beers, to stop using misleading health claims.

The claims appeared in this promotional leaflet sent out in the trade magazine, *The Grocer*. Coors said that consuming beer can protect drinkers against heart disease.

The leaflet also compared the calorie content of 100ml of beer with the same amount of gin, rum, whisky, cognac and wine, giving the impression that beer was a lower-calorie alternative. Coors blamed 'late-night kebabs and curries' for beer bellies.

The Food Commission pointed out that beer is rarely consumed in quantities as small as 100ml (one pint is 568ml), and said that this was an unrealistic comparison. We also questioned the validity of medical research cited in the leaflet and reminded the ASA that

claims that food or drink can prevent disease are illegal in the UK. Coors said drinking beer could 'slow down the deposition of fat on artery walls' and 'protect against heart disease by combating narrowing of arteries and blood clotting'.

The ASA upheld our complaints and Coors agreed it should not use the claims again. However, we were concerned to learn that when a national broadsheet newspaper phoned Coors for comment, Coors reportedly said that the medicinal claims were true, but were simply not permitted under UK law. The journalist told us that he took this to be additional marketing spin, and did not re-publish the illegal claims.



How much does obesity cost?

Putting a cash value to the cost of the obesity epidemic helps to make an economic case for government action. The National Audit Office suggests a figure of £0.5bn medical costs, and up to £2.1bn in costs to the economy – but, says Tim Lobstein, this figure could be a small fraction of the real costs.

In an unusual move by the National Audit Office (NAO), it agreed in 1999 to step out of its normal role of looking at government departmental costs, service charges, public procurements, contract compliance and the like, and to tackle a health issue: obesity.

In 2001, the NAO published its findings, including an estimate that obesity was costing the health services at least £0.5bn a year treating the ailments that obesity gives rise to. This figure, the NAO acknowledged, was a conservative estimate, citing international studies suggesting that obesity-related ill-health costs a country's medical services some 2 to 6 percent of the national medical bill. In England that would give a figure of £0.7bn – 2.1bn, based on 1998 NHS costs.

By 2005, NHS expenditure for Britain (not just England) is expected to be £87bn, and private medical costs add a further £15bn. Taking the international estimates of 2 to 6 percent of national medical expenditure, the 2005 figure for the medical costs of obesity-related ailments can be estimated at £2bn-£6bn. But by 2005 the prevalence of obesity will have increased by some 15% of its 1998 figure, giving an adjusted cost of £2.3bn – 7.1bn (see box).

The NAO looked only at the medical costs, and did not include the social care costs for looking after ill people, e.g. stroke victims and angina patients etc, at home or in social care institutions. It acknowledged that some 18m days of certified incapacity were attributable to obesity but gave no figure for non-certified sick leave, or for certified days for which no benefits were claimed.

If half these days of incapacity require care outside of hospital, and if the costs of care – borne by both the social services and the family – are valued at, say £50 per day, and if the days of non-certified or non-claimant sick-leave add a further 50% to the certified days (probably an underestimate), then the care costs come to £0.7bn. These figures are for England, so for the UK would be over £0.8bn. The figures also excluded days of incapacity due to back pain – a problem closely linked to obesity and one of

the commonest causes of days off work. We suggest a total figure of £1bn for care is a reasonable estimate (see box).

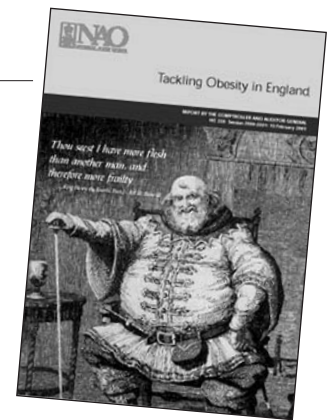
In its report, the NAO also made estimates of the costs due to lost productivity as a result of sickness and premature death – and these the NAO estimated at £2.1bn for England, in 1998. Again, we can update the figure for inflation and for increased obesity levels, and expand it to include the rest of Britain, giving over £3.4bn (see box).

Obesity costs

Our estimate for the UK in 2005	£bn
Medical costs for obesity-related ailments	2.3 – 7.1
Social care costs for obesity-related ailments	1.0
Indirect costs through lost productivity	3.4
Medical, social and indirect costs for overweight	3.4 – 5.7
Childhood overweight and obesity	1.0
Total	11.1 – 18.2

The estimates that have given rise to these figures are based on the definition of adult obesity, i.e. adults with BMIs above 30 kg/m². It has become increasingly clear over the last few years that people with weights in the 'overweight' range (BMI 25 – 30) are also at an increased risk of many of the same ailments as those who are obese. Typically, overweight people are at raised risk of ill-health compared with non-overweight people, but not to the degree of fully-obese people: typically their illness and early death rates are about a quarter to a third of those over BMI 30.

This would imply that we can add a further 25% to some of the costs noted for obese people. But there are far more overweight people than obese people – about three overweight people for every obese person in Britain – so that the costs for this group could be nearly as high in total as those already estimated for obese people. To err on the conservative side, we suggest here that 'overweight' as a condition contributes a further 50% of the costs which we have noted for obesity (see box).



In 2001 the government's National Audit Office suggested that the cost of obesity was up to £3bn, but the figure is outdated and is a serious underestimate.

And to all these costs should be added the costs of childhood obesity and childhood overweight. We will not estimate a figure for lost productivity, although parents and carers may have to take days off work to care for ill children, and the children themselves will lose later earning power if they miss significant amounts of formal education.

Medical costs for childhood obesity and overweight have not been properly estimated although one US report suggests that ailments related to childhood obesity, including asthma, sleep apnoea, diabetes and gall-bladder problems, accounted for some 1.7% of US hospital costs. There are some 800,000 obese children in the UK, and a further 1.7m overweight children, a total of 25% of British children. This is a lower prevalence rate than found in the USA, but it would not be unreasonable to add a further £1bn to the medical and care costs to the total estimate (see box).

The grand total at this point lies between £11bn and over £18bn.

These figures could be raised further if it was possible to put a cost to the social and psychological effects of being obese. Excess bodyweight is linked to a lower likelihood of being married, of finding work and of being promoted. Overweight people are likely to be on lower earnings, live in poorer housing and have poorer access to healthier foods and a safe environment. Psychological disorders, especially depression, are the largest cause of lost days of health, using up primary care resources and losing days of productive work. In economic terms they could add several more billions of pounds to the estimates already made.

The possible links between psycho-social problems and obesity beg questions about cause and effect, but they deserve proper research and careful costing, if only to prompt more concerted action to solve the problem.

And then there is the slimming industry. Whether the money spent on products sold for weight loss should be considered a cost to the economy or a boost to the gross national product is debatable. At any one time over 12 million Britons are 'on a diet' and they buy some £2bn-worth of slimming products annually.

If these psychological and diet-seeking factors were added to the obesity bill, it is unlikely we would get much change from £20bn.

You'd like a litre of juice?

Coca-Cola made an expensive mistake earlier this year when it launched its new Dasani bottled water. The over-sold product treated with 'reverse osmosis' turned out to be ordinary mains-water from Sidcup. The media loved the story. Questions in parliament and a volley of newspaper headlines, followed by the embarrassing discovery of bromate contamination in Dasani tap-water, led to Coca-Cola withdrawing the product in March.

Coca-Cola got its come-uppance for trying to dress up tap-water as an expensive designer drink. But what about all the other companies that get away with this trick on an everyday basis?

Most squashes and juice drinks are mainly water and sugar, with a dash of juice to make them seem like a healthy choice – often pumped up with additives to make them seem more fruity. Do you know what you are really getting for your money? We bought 10 squash products, 10 juice drinks (sold by the litre), and 10 single-serving juice drinks aimed at children. For comparison, we also bought 10 pure juice products (sold by the litre). Leaving aside the water, sugar and additives, we calculated how much customers are being charged per litre for the real juice content, and must admit to being amazed as the prices quickly mounted up...

Juice drinks (by the litre)

Product name (one-litre cartons)	% juice	Equivalent price juice per litre
Consumers Pride Exotic Tropical Juice Drink with added vitamins A, C & E	12%	£12.50
Sunpride Tropical Juice Drink	10%	£6.90
Princes Refreshingly Tropical Juice Drink	11%	£6.27
Suncrest Tropical Fruit Drink	16%	£5.56
Del Monte Fruit Burst Tropical Refreshing Juice Drink with Added Vitamins A, B6, C & E	13.6%	£5.07
ASDA Extra Special Freshly Squeezed Orange, Lemon and Lime Crush	10%	£4.80
Pure Heaven Out of this World Tropical Fruit Juice Drink	31%	£3.19
Rubicon Sun Exotic Tropical Fruit Juice Drink With A, C & E Added Vitamins	25%	£3.16
Cape Tropical Juice Drink Experience	30%	£2.63
Tesco Tropical Juice Drink	40%	£2.73



What's the difference between pure tropical fruit juice blends and the tropical juice blends found in juice drinks? Our survey found that the latter are much more likely to burn a hole in your pocket.

Pride Exotic Tropical Juice Drink costs an astonishing £12.50 equivalent per litre of pure juice, with Princes Refreshingly Tropical Juice Drink not far behind at £6.27 per litre.



Would you pay £7.79 for a litre of fruit juice for your child? That's the equivalent you would pay for the juice contained in Kia-Ora Mixed Fruit Squash.

Kia-Ora contains more sugar than real fruit juice, as well as two artificial sweeteners, two preservatives, flavourings and other additives.

Squash

Product (one-litre bottles)

	% juice as bought	Equivalent price juice per litre
Noddy Smooth Style Orange Squash	10%	£9.90
Kia Ora Mixed Fruit Squash	14%	£7.79
Londis Apple & Blackcurrant Squash	10%	£6.90
Budgens Whole Orange Squash	10%	£6.50
Kwik Save Orange Squash	10%	£6.30
Sainsbury's Mixed Fruits Squash	10%	£6.20
Morrisons Apple & Blackcurrant Squash	11%	£5.90
Pataya Apple & Blackcurrant Squash	10%	£4.50
Tesco Orange, Lemon & Pineapple Squash	13%	£4.46
Princes Geebee Orange Squash 'Contains Real Fruit'	10%	£4.00

That will be £20!

Children's juice drinks

Product name	% juice	Equivalent price of juice per litre
Ribena Blackcurrant Juice Drink	6%	£34.67
Twist 'n' Squeeze Juice Drink Orange with sugar and sweetener	5%	£25.00
Robinsons Fruit Shoot Orange and Peach with added vitamin power (fruit and puree)	10%	£22.60
Calypso Organic Forest Fruits Flavour Juice Drink	10%	£13.20
Tom & Jerry Apple & Blackcurrant juice drink	8%	£12.50
Florida Style Sunny D original	15%	£10.27
Tesco Kids 'It's very refreshing!' Orange & Peach Juice Drink	20.5%	£9.56
ASDA More for Kids No Added Sugar Apple & Pear Juice Drink	10%	£9.20
Thomas & Friends Juice Drink Apple and Blackcurrant No added sugar Enriched with Vitamin C	15%	£6.60
Disney Winnie the Pooh Roo Juice Winterberry	55%	£3.53



Children's juice drinks were the most expensive of all the juices we purchased. We calculate that Ribena costs the equivalent of £34.67 per litre of fruit juice, and Robinson's Fruit Shoot isn't far behind at £22.60 per litre. Both of these products use added vitamin C or 'Vitamin Power' to encourage mums to consider them healthy, and both rely on enormous advertising budgets to increase demand.

Selling us water

Manufacturers rely on many tricks to make us part with our cash, even when we are not getting much juice for our money. Without a calculator, it is hard work to make meaningful comparisons about the quality of the products.

During our survey, we noticed that many cartons of juice drinks boast of the fruitiness of the products, with prominent fruity imagery and descriptions such as 'pure heaven' and 'fruit burst'. Such claims seem to be used by manufacturers as a licence to print money, with cartons of juice drinks sold at a price equivalent to between £6.00 and £12.50 per litre for the fruit content.

We also noticed that many descriptions can be used to give the impression of fruitiness. Watch out, for instance, for the word 'refreshing'. It is often used to denote 'lots of added water', but you won't find this explained on the pack.

Adding vitamins to children's products is another favourite ploy to make them appeal to parents. Vitamin powder added to a juice drink costs just a few pence. But such ploys are also used to hike the price of fruit ingredients – to an astonishing equivalent of £34.67 per litre in the case of Ribena. The message to parents? If you want watered-down juice, why not do it yourself? For the same nutritional value, it will be a whole lot cheaper.

Pure juice blends in cartons (for comparison)

Product name (one-litre containers of 100% juice)	Price per litre of juice
Tropicana Tropics Orange Pineapple Mango	£2.69
Liquifruit Breakfast Punch	£2.49
Santal 100% Exotic	£2.35
Marks & Spencer Pressed Pineapple, Peach & Passionfruit Juice	£1.99
Safeway Pressed Apple With Mango	£1.79
Tesco Pressed Apple & Mango Juice	£1.59
Fruit Passion Fair Trade Juice Pure Breakfast Juice	£1.49
Waitrose Orange and Passion Fruit Juice from concentrate	£1.09
ASDA Multivitamin Tropical Breakfast Juice with added fibre	£0.88
Sainsbury's Pure Tropical Juice	£0.75

Pure juice blends like those listed above reflect the more expensive range of 100% juices available on the market.

You don't have to spend this much to enjoy the nutritional benefits of pure fruit juice. Economy orange juices can be purchased from most of the major supermarkets.

They may not come in snazzy packaging, but they are just as healthy as pure juices, and aren't adulterated with sugar or additives like most juice drinks. This litre pack of Sainsbury's Orange Juice costs just 38p.



The price of

How long can the world sustain a love for eating meat? Not for much longer, according to the figures. Tim Lobstein reports.

Intensive beef production in Spain. The increasing growth in meat production around the world is not ecologically sustainable.
(Image courtesy of Compassion in World Farming)

Three quarters of EU agricultural land is devoted to animal production: grazing land and feed-crop production. In addition, several million hectares of land outside the EU are used to provide animal-feed imports, amounting to 14m tonnes of cassava, 17m tonnes of soybeans and 22m tonnes of soya cake (EU figures for 1999).

Europe has a well-established habit for eating meat, with a typical supply of 92kg per person per year. By comparison, the USA has a supply of 122kg. China, whose large population is demanding increasing quantities of meat, consumes some 51kg per person according to latest data, but the total quantity has rapidly accelerated, from an amount similar to that eaten in the UK in the 1960s, to an amount matching that of both the USA and EU combined in the last few years.

Food supplies: Meat

millions of metric tonnes

	USA	UK	EU*	China	World
1961	17	4	17	3	70
1971	23	4	24	9	103
1981	24	4	29	15	137
1991	29	4	32	33	181
2001	35	5	35	66	234

* the 15 member states of the EU in 2001

Meat is not an 'efficient' food. The use of resources such as land, energy and water is very high for meat production compared with the production of plant-based foods.

Ecological footprints

Trade globalisation serves to increase the separation of people from the ecological impact of their lifestyles, making continued growth and consumption patterns appear sustainable when they are not. The ecological 'footprint' of an industrialised population – the amount of land needed to supply all the resources they consume – is typically several times the larger than the area in which that

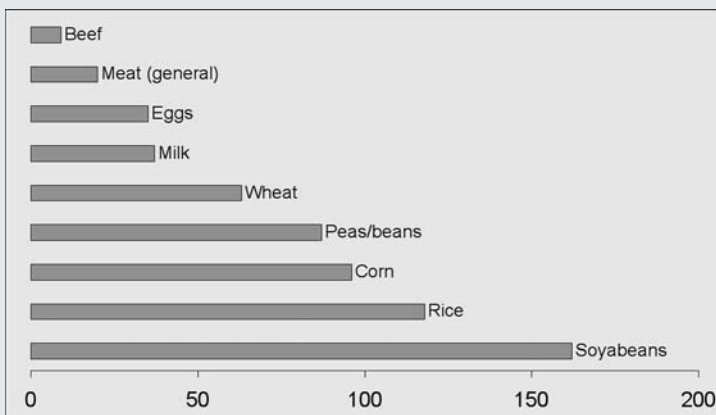
population is situated. For example, Italy's ecological footprint is estimated to be approximately eight times larger than the entire country. If the global population increases to 9-10 billion, it would need two or three extra Earth-like planets if it wanted to maintain 'Western' lifestyle

In terms of agriculture, the ecological footprint of meat is significantly larger than it is for plant foods.



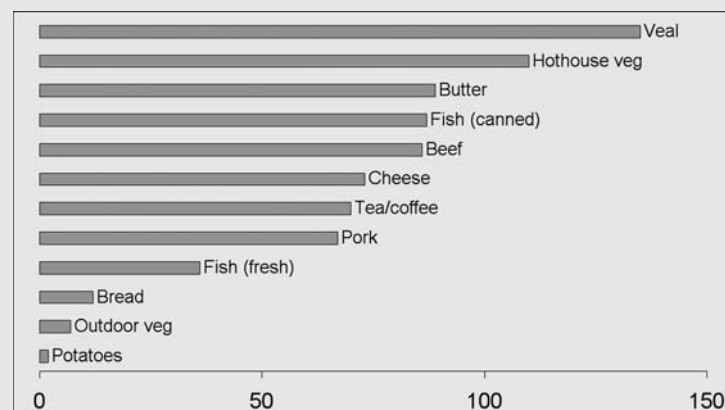
Protein per acre of from different foods

Kilograms of usable protein



Energy requirements for food production

M Joules input per kilogram of food produced



environment meat

Ecological footprint per tonne of foodstuff

	hectares
Vegetables	0.7
Fruit	0.8
Milk	1.5
Cereal foods	2.1
Pulses	4.0
Meat	10.5

Food supply footprint for the UK, 1999 consumption

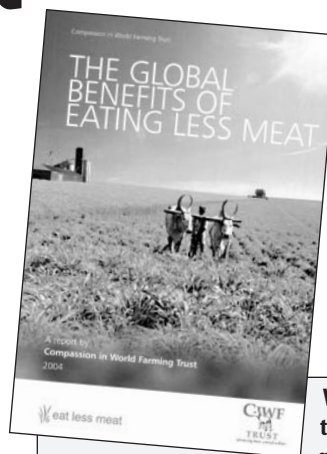
	hectares
Vegetables	8m
Fruit	4m
Milk	21m
Cereal foods	13m
Pulses	2m
Meat	54m
Sugar, oils, beer, wine, coffee	>18m
Total	>120m

Based on these figures, we can estimate the ecological footprint required to support the UK's current food consumption patterns. Based on 1999 figures, the agricultural area required for our current diet is over 120m hectares. The actual agricultural land area of the UK is 18.6m hectares, less than one sixth of the land we need. Either we continue to use other people's land or we change our dietary patterns.

Environment and health

There is a close concordance of the environmentalist's views of sustainable agriculture, and the nutritionist's views of healthy diets: both seek a switch from meat to vegetable production.

In a study looking at the implications of reducing land requirements, energy demands and fertiliser inputs, researchers compared Sweden's current dietary patterns with a pattern of diet that would be more ecologically sustainable. The results showed that reducing the ecological impact of food production would require changes to diets that are in close accordance with the World Health Organization's recommendations for healthier diets.



With a third of the world's grain crops

being used for animal feed, is it time to reconsider our priorities? Compassion in World Farming's latest report gives a definite 'yes' – not just for the sake of the environment but for our dietary health and for the welfare of the animals themselves. Details from www.ciwf.org

If ever a case were needed for bringing environmental, animal welfare and public health interests together, this is surely it.

■ Sources

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Changes to diet can benefit the environment and health: the case of Sweden

	Current daily intake in Sweden, g/day	Reduced ecological impact, g/day	Change	Recommended by WHO dietary guidelines
Bread	100	200	Increase	Increase
Cereal	15	45	Increase	Increase
Potato	140	270	Increase	Increase
Vegetables	150	190	Increase	Increase
Root vegetables	25	100	Increase	Increase
Dried legumes	5	50	Increase	Increase
Snacks/sweets	200	140	Reduce	Reduce
Soft drinks	150	80	Reduce	Reduce
Margarine, butter, oil	50	50	Same	Reduce
Milk products	400	300	Reduce	nr (reduce)
Cheese	45	20	Reduce	nr (reduce)
Egg	25	10	Reduce	nr (reduce)
Meat, poultry, sausage	145	35	Reduce	nr (reduce)
Fish	30	30	Same	Same or increase

nr (reduce) = no specific recommendation except to lower consumption of animal fats

GI explained

The food industry is turning to Glycaemic Index values to try and sell processed foods as healthy, but very few people understand what the Glycaemic Index means. We have received many enquiries about this over the past few months. Here, we answer some of your questions.

What are Glycaemic Index values?

The glycaemic index is based on how rapidly blood glucose levels rise after eating different foods, in which a rank of 100 is given to the fastest-acting food, pure glucose. The theory is that a more slowly released carbohydrate is more satisfying to the appetite and hence reduces one's craving for more food.

The release of glucose into the bloodstream is affected by the presence of dietary fibre, protein and fat in the food, so that healthy foods may have high GI values: for example ripe fruit can have higher GI index values than sweet biscuits or cakes.

Furthermore, the GI values are based on 50 grams of carbohydrate in a food, which is the amount found in two slices of white bread, in nearly a pound of potatoes and in over two



'Steady Energy Release' claims the latest product from Slim-Fast, hoping to cash in on the idea that low GI foods can help us lose weight. Although boasting that these meals can help reduce weight, and that 'all Slim-Fast products are low GI' the packet does not state the meal's actual GI rating. The largest single ingredient in this meal is white Basmati rice (35%), a medium GI food.

Higher GI		Lower GI	
Maltose	110	Wholemeal bread or bread with bran	50
Glucose	100	Wholegrain rice	50
Baked potatoes	95	Peas	50
Mashed potatoes	90	Wholegrain cereals without sugar	50
Honey	90	Fresh oranges	43
Cooked carrots	85	Fresh fruit juice (without sugar)	40
Cornflakes	85	Wholemeal rye bread	40
Sugar (sucrose)	75	Wholewheat pasta	40
Chocolate bars	70	Red kidney beans	40
White sliced bread, bagels	70	Fish fingers	38
Refined cereals with sugar	70	Tomato soup	38
Boiled potatoes	70	Fresh apples	35
Biscuits	70	Dried beans	30
Corn (maize)	70	Lentils	30
White rice	70	Chickpeas	30
Mars bar	68	Dried apricots	30
Brown bread	65	Sausages	28
Beetroot	65	Fresh plums	24
Bananas	60	Fruit preserve (no sugar)	25
Long grain rice, Basmati	58	Dark chocolate (>60% cocoa)	22
Orange juice	57	Fresh cherries	22
Jam	55	Green vegetables, tomatoes, mushrooms	<15
White and coloured pasta	55	Peanuts	<15

pounds of carrots. This means that if a food has a relatively high GI (over 70) but is eaten in small amounts carbohydrate-wise, such as carrots, then the GI value is not really an issue. But if a medium ranking GI food (55-70) like a soft drink, or even a low GI food (under 55) such as pasta, is eaten in large amounts, then blood glucose will still rise rapidly. Cooking, mashing or juicing a food will increase its GI value.

Is a low GI diet healthy?

Generally, lower GI foods are more nutritious than higher GI foods. Whole grains, for example, provide a wide range of nutrients not found in refined carbohydrate equivalents. First, whole grains are concentrated sources of dietary fibre, resistant starch and oligosaccharides which escape digestion in the small intestine and are

Australian products can now bear a GI symbol and state their GI value, but the scheme bans foods which may be unhealthy in other respects: e.g. be high in salt or fat. See www.gisymbol.com.au/pages/index.asp



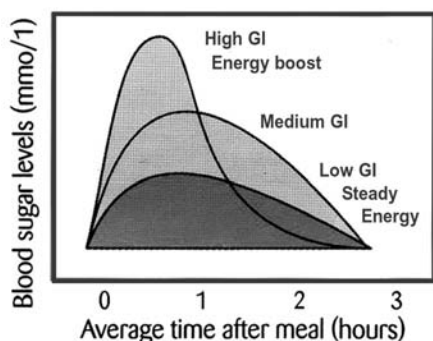


What the doctor reads

The latest research from the medical journals

fermented in the gut, producing short-chain fatty acids that in turn lower colonic pH and provide immune protection beyond the gut. Second, whole grains are rich in antioxidants, including trace minerals and phenolic compounds, and these compounds have been linked to disease prevention. Additionally, whole grains mediate insulin and glucose responses.

Finally, whole grains contain many other compounds that may protect against chronic disease: phytate, phyto-oestrogens such as lignan, plant stanols and sterols, and vitamins and minerals.



Do GI diets improve weight loss?

Long-term studies have not been performed. Short-term studies have shown success, but not reliably. A systematic review comparing the effects of high- and low-GI foods or diets on appetite, food intake, energy expenditure and body weight showed inconclusive results. In a review of 31 short-term studies, low-GI foods were associated with greater satiety or reduced hunger in 15 studies, whereas reduced satiety or no differences were seen in 16 other studies. Low-GI foods reduced total food intake in seven studies, but not in eight other studies. In 20 longer-term studies (up to 6 months), weight loss on a low-GI diet was seen in four and on a high-GI diet in two, with no difference recorded in 14. The average weight loss was 1.5 kg on a low-GI diet and 1.6 kg on a high-GI diet. There have been no long-term studies comparing unrestricted diets differing in GI.

■ For more details, see:
www.healthyeatingclub.com/info/articles/diseases/GIsymbol.htm
 and check your own diet at:
www.glycemicindex.com

Poor schooling linked to poor diet

In an investigation into the factors affecting nutritional status of a growing foetus, researchers analysed the diets of over 6,000 young women in Southampton, UK.

The results showed a clear split between dietary preferences in those favouring a cluster of healthy foods (fruit, veg, wholemeal bread, pasta, yogurt, cereals) and less healthy foods (chips and roast potatoes, sugar, white bread, meat and full fat dairy products).

The study also found that educational attainment was the strongest social factor associated with the poorer diets. Smoking, watching TV, lack of exercise and living with children were also linked to poorer diets.

■ SM Robinson *et al*, *Eur J Clin Nutr* March 2004.

Milk, not meat, speeds growth rate

Diets rich in protein are associated with maximum growth rates in animals and humans alike. Recent research suggests that milk proteins boost growth more efficiently than meat proteins: high intakes of milk, but not meat, were linked to raised levels of the growth hormones IGF-1 and IGF-1R in a study of 24 eight-year-old Danish boys.

■ C Hoppe *et al*, *Eur J Clin Nutr* March 2004.

Collagen ages with increased bodyweight

Collagen, the proteins forming flexible tissue in tendons, cartilage, bone and skin, ages over the human lifespan and shows increasing stiffness and weakness.

A review of research shows that restricted diets prolong collagen's life, while overweight is linked to more rapid collagen deterioration.

This may help explain the increased risk for overweight people of failure in collagen-containing tissues such as heart ventricle and arterial walls.

■ J Frey, *Clin Chem Lab Med* Jan 2004.

Knitting versus emailing

Following our 'What the Doctor Reads' report in FM64, giving a listing of calorie expenditure for different physical activities, we received several letters requesting information on calorie use for more sedentary behaviour. Some teachers, for instance, wrote to say that they would find information about sedentary activities useful, to help children make the comparison between playing sport and watching sport.

Another reader commented that we were a bit old-fashioned in our choice of activities such as knitting and waltzing, so we have come up with some modern alternatives to add to the list.

The table below gives the energy you would expend above your basal level (measured asleep).

As you will see, some of the 'activities' burn so few calories they are hardly worth recording. A sign of the times, perhaps.

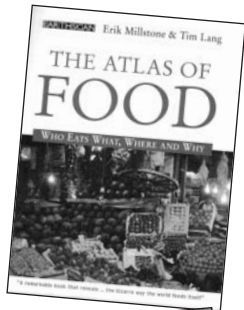
We have been unable to find a definitive figure for swimming, but estimate that between 140 and 200 kcal are used every 20 minutes, depending on the stroke.

Energy expenditure and activity

	kcal
Using TV remote control	<1
Getting up to change TV channel	3
Sitting, talking on the phone, 30 min	4
Letting dog out of the back door	2
Walking the dog, 30 minutes	125
Using pre-cut vegetables	0
Washing, cutting vegetables, 15 min	12
Using auto car wash	18
Washing and waxing car, 1 hour	300
Using a lift, 3 floors	<1
Walking up 3 floors	15
Sending email to colleague, 4 min	2
Walking and talking to colleague, 4 min	6
Shopping on-line, 1 hour	30
Shopping, pushing trolley, 1 hour	200

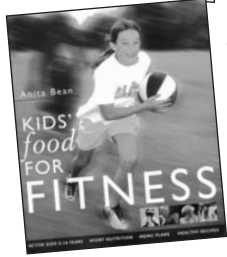
■ Source: Mayo Clinic Proceedings (77) 2002

marketplace



The Atlas of Food

The subtitle of this book is 'who eats what, where and why.' Clearly presented with colour maps, diagrams and simple statistics this book demonstrates how the world attempts to feed itself, examining different markets, environmental impact, health, politics and new technologies. This extremely useful, comprehensive publication is an ideal resource for anyone who wants a quick yet detailed overview of food production and its effect on our lives and livelihoods. £11.99



Kids' Food for Fitness You don't have to be the parent of an aspiring athlete to benefit from the great everyday advice in this excellent book, which includes: 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. £12.99

The Food Our Children Eat – 2nd edition

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 enjoy a healthy wide-range of foods. No more tantrums, fights and refusals: her strategies are relaxed, low-effort – and they work. £8.99



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

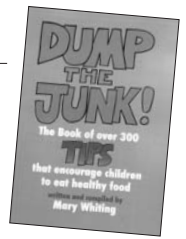
Back issues of the Food Magazine

Back issues usually cost £3.50 each but we're selling a full set of available issues (approx. eighteen issues from 1996 to 2004) for £30.00.

Stocks are limited and many issues are already out-of-stock.

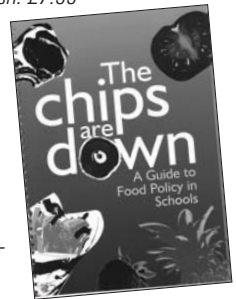
Dump the Junk!

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 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



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

Fast Food Nation

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



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's the beef?

In our pursuit of economic 'efficiency' in modern agriculture we have lost sight of the natural efficiency of old ways of farming. Stanley Challenger Graham laments our fall from wisdom.

In the days when my beard was black and I was driving a flat wagon which modern truckers would laugh at, a 90hp engine, 4 gears and a legal payload of 10 tons, I used to make a regular trip across to Sherburn in Elmet in East Yorkshire to pick up ten tons of barley for Cyril Richardson at Little Stainton who mixed his own cattle food. The name of the farmer I went to was Mr Bramley and I always used to enjoy visiting him because he was an able man, treated me with respect and I always learned from him.

The sharpest memory I have of the farm is the day Mrs Bramley asked me to come into the kitchen after we had loaded the 80 railway hire sacks each weighing 280lb and sheeted them down. She gave me a pint of tea and asked me if I'd like a beef sandwich. When I said yes, she asked me what sort, Angus or Hereford? I had to admit that I didn't know there was any difference; as far as I was concerned beef was beef, full stop. She gave me some of each and I sat there and advanced my education. The thing that strikes me now is that they were so enthusiastic about beef on that farm that they always had at least two joints on the go from different breeds.

Mr Bramley ran Home Farm on the same cropping system that his father and grandfather had used. There were three rotated field crops, barley, turnips and grass. He kept Hereford beef cattle which grazed in summer and in winter were fed on barley, chopped turnips and straw in covered straw yards. The cash flow came from sales of finished beef cattle and surplus barley.

The beef cattle were bought as stores in Ireland and shipped across to Birkenhead. Jim Bramley and his mates used to go to Ireland for the sales in the spring and buy the best cattle they could obtain. Back in the 1960s they were paying £400 and £500 apiece for the beasts. I asked him how they could make any profit and he surprised me by saying that they couldn't, they always made a small loss so I pressed him further, I knew there had to be an explanation.

He explained that the cattle were never intended to be profitable. The reason he farmed them was two-fold; he liked cattle, enjoyed rearing them and competing for

prizes at the winter fatstock sales but the economic reason they were on the farm was as part of the farm machinery. They ate grass, turnips and barley and trod straw to make manure for the crops. This input maintained the condition and fertility of his land and resulted in a surplus of barley which provided the profit. A side benefit of the system was low stress and disease levels in the herd, the straw bed fermenting under the cattle kept them warm and killed off bacteria. He admitted that the main benefit to him was that he loved going out and watching prime quality contented beasts kept in the best conditions he could provide them with. Here we had a happy man making a profit out of producing top quality beef and grain with the added benefit that he was improving his land in the process.

Fifty years on it sounds like some Utopian dream. So what brought on this attack of nostalgia? I was listening to *Farming Today* on the BBC this morning and they were describing the moves in the USA to break away from traditional line breeding of cattle to a system where the selection of the breeding stock was based simply on performance. The resulting animals are finished on feed lots that can hold upwards of 100,000 cattle and rely heavily on hormonal and other chemical additives to raise growth rates and keep down disease levels. The



Stanley Challenger Graham (right) and colleagues showing a prize-winning heifer at the Gargrave Agricultural Show in 1972.

interviewer visited farms in Yorkshire where this technology is being adopted and the conclusion was that this was another nail in the coffin of the small scale traditional grazing farm.

My conclusion is that I must be some kind of a dinosaur. I bitterly regret the loss of the old style mixed farm which gave a good life to both the farmers and the stock. Apart from the purely agricultural considerations this is an erosion of a management system which has served us well for hundreds of years, preserved a landscape and nurtured a way of life which has made an enormous contribution to our social system. It seems to me we are losing out all round here and I wonder if considerations like these ever cross the minds of the people making the changes.

Badvertisement

The figures don't add up!

A quantitative ingredients declaration (QUID) on a food label is a percentage figure telling you how much chicken there is in your chicken pie or how much juice in your juice drink.

What should we make, then, of products that claim to be made up of more than 100% of an ingredient?



If a customer believed either the 'made from 100% beef' flash on the pack front, or the '200% beef' declaration in the ingredients list on Jack Link's Beef Jerky they could be forgiven for thinking that they were buying an extremely pure product. In fact, the Beef Jerky contains 13 extra ingredients including salt, monosodium glutamate and two types of sugar.



books



Consuming Kids: The hostile take-over of childhood

Susan Linn, The New Press, 2004, ISBN 1 56584 783 0, £16.95 hardback

Starting her career as a ventriloquist, Susan Linn became fascinated by the way children play, and how children interact with imaginary characters. She used her puppetry skills in therapy, to help young hospital patients learn about their medical conditions and explore their emotions. Linn is now an instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard University.

The marketing culture that Linn describes is American, so it is easy to find yourself reading this book and tut-tutting about how the US has allowed its children to become such a target for the marketing machine. But because so many of the examples are familiar in the UK (including an especially resonant rant about the Teletubbies), it soon becomes clear that Linn is relevant to anyone bringing up children in a commercial world.

Linn is especially critical of food marketers for exploiting natural characteristics of childhood in order to create a market for products – the need for peer approval and the desire of children to gain independence. As an illustration, she quotes 'strategic marketing and consumer insight consultant' Linda Neville on the appeal of Dairylea Lunchables: "Parents do not fully approve – they'd rather their child ate a more traditional lunch – but this adds to the brand's appeal among children because it reinforces their need to feel in control."

As Linn points out, the marketing for Dairylea Lunchables and other foods designed for children is successful precisely because it drives a wedge between parents and children. Deliberately putting parents in the position of saying "no" makes the brand more attractive to children. This is the root of pester power.

Consuming Kids is a valuable book for all those who feel disquiet about the creeping commercialism of childhood. Linn's message is: "You're not alone!" The final chapter is a call to action, and a reminder of the need for campaigns such as the Food Commission's Parents Jury: "Marketing to children is a societal problem that cannot be fixed by one individual, or even one individual advocacy group, working alone. Its solution lies in collaborative efforts to influence public policy."

Food Fight

KD Brownell and KB Horgen, Contemporary Books (McGraw Hill), 2004, ISBN 0-07-140250-0, £12.32 (e.g. amazon.co.uk)

Kelly Brownell is a psychology professor at Yale and heads the university's Center for Eating and Weight Disorders – so he can be expected to understand the social as well as the biological aspects of obesity.

Furthermore, he has a fine record of collaboration with consumer groups and public health organisations.

For these two reasons, and because this book is sub-titled *The Inside Story of the Food Industry, America's Obesity Crisis, and What We Can Do About It*, the book should offer an excellent review of the social and political issues concerned with obesity and the production and marketing of food, and how to get it changed. That is the expectation – and the book meets this expectation most of the way, but then flunks the final hurdle.

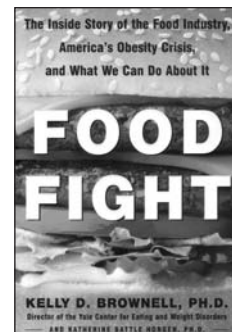
We get the statistics (mostly for USA populations), and we get the social commentary on the culture that encourages weight gain while pretending it encourages the opposite. We are made fully aware of the pervasive 'toxic environment' that induces obesity. We get a review of marketing to children and we get an analysis of the links between obesity and low family income along with low self-esteem.

The problems arise when it comes to solutions. To its credit, this book goes further than most critiques in its identification of the commercial and political obstacles (and, of

course, the close links between commercial players and politicians). But we are left at the end of the final section, with its hopeful title 'Taking Decisive Action', with all-American answers: individual behaviour change, working in local communities, lobbying politicians, protesting to companies, urging industry codes of practice, and ultimately litigation.

The word 'regulation' barely surfaces, and then mainly in terms of the enforcement of long-established controls to protect children, or the successful control of smoking. Taxation is hardly referred to except as an example of the tactics used to deter smoking. There is no alternative view of food production or how to control the US's exportation of obesity through marketing its junk food worldwide. Lower-income households may suffer more health problems, but there is no urgent call to end poverty. Politicians are seen to be corrupt, but there is no call to reform the democratic process. The inspiration for social change stems from Gandhi – fondly quoted by the authors – rather than Marx or Mandela or indeed America's own revolutionary founding fathers.

This is a fight without a true call to arms. It is, though, the nearest we come to such a call for a while, and is to be welcomed for that. The book is also stuffed with anecdotes, comments and evidence, from product placement scams to how the tobacco campaigns were run. Well worth reading.



Food and health in Europe: A new basis for action

Aileen Robertson et al. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2004, \$90, www.euro.who.int

This is an unusual book to come from a sometimes stuffy body like the World Health Organization (WHO), but all the more reason to take its contents seriously.

The three main sections review nutrition, food safety and food production, followed by a fourth providing tools for policy-makers. The authors have made some attempt to show how the themes overlap, with the nutrition section referring to food access and food production, while food safety affects both food production and nutrient intake.

The section on food production is the most contentious, and the most encouraging, taking as its starting point the shift in perceptions from the last century to the present, with emphasis on productivity changing to sustainability; and on dietary

targets and health education giving way to a focus on inequalities and the controversial role of food marketing.

Over a decade ago, the WHO took a brave step by publishing food-based dietary guidelines. It is taking two more brave steps this year, firstly by putting food policy onto the World Health Assembly agenda in May, and secondly by producing a book such as this, providing background thinking on which sound food policies should be based.

The book is well referenced but sadly un-indexed. Although it is priced at a ridiculous \$90, the entire text can be downloaded at: www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/who/InformationSources/Publications/Catalogue/20040130_8



CAP reforms will short-change fruit farmers

On the 12th February 2004, Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Margaret Beckett announced the "most radical reform of the Common Agricultural Policy since its inception". Beckett said that, "The link between the subsidy paid to farmers and the level of production has been broken."

Farmers will no longer be compelled to produce what the subsidy system dictates; what they decide to produce will be driven by the market. Farmers will still receive subsidies, but these will be calculated by acreage and type of farm.

This de-linking (called 'decoupling') of subsidy from production may help reduce environmental effects by removing incentives for intensification and over-production, and by making farmers comply with a range of environmental and animal welfare standards in order to qualify for new payments.

Decoupling could also reduce the trade-distorting nature of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by reducing over-production and preventing food being offloaded on the world market at less than the cost of production. Development charities have long protested that this prevented farmers in developing countries, who do not benefit from a subsidised system, from being able to compete in the global market.

The government's Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is also keen to point out that reforms should mean reduced prices for consumer and better marketing of UK produce to UK consumers.

That's the theory, anyway. But whilst many of the changes to the current system are to be welcomed, several anomalies remain.

Fruit and vegetable producers (except for orchard owners) will start to see a bit of subsidy for the first time. That's good news for the struggling UK industry and hopefully good news for consumers wanting to buy more local fruit and veg. However, uniquely in the EU, Britain has chosen to exclude the growers of apples, pears, plums and cherries from any of the new payments. Growers of hops, soft fruit, asparagus, and willows used for fuel will, like other farmers, receive around £220 per hectare per year. Orchard owners will get nothing – unless by January 1 they have uprooted all their trees, in which case they will receive the full £220 per hectare, even if the ground is left unused.

This is a worrying situation, at a time when we are all being encouraged to eat more fruit and vegetables, and at a time when the Department of Health has finally taken on board environmental concerns and agreed to include some locally grown produce amongst the fruit and vegetables given away free to primary school children. It is ridiculous that another department of the same government is busy ensuring that less local fruit will be available.

Organisations working on behalf of developing countries are also suspicious that many new-style payments under the reformed agricultural policy will actually be at the same

level as before. They remain concerned that these payments may distort trade just as much as they did before the reform.

Another confusing aspect of the reforms is that EU member countries were given some discretion in how they implement these reforms. A beef farmer across the Channel, for instance, will receive completely different support from a beef farmer in England. It is really no longer a 'common' agriculture policy. England has chosen completely to decouple the levels of subsidy received from levels of production and introduce a flat rate regional payments by 2012. Until this date, payments will be based on the historic level of payments that farmers received. The rest of the EU including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will implement the reforms differently.

Meanwhile, farmers producing other crops are scratching their heads over the changes and what they should plan to plant next year. It's clear that nobody really knows how this will affect production and therefore what foods will end up in our shops and canteens.

The way in which the payment will be made is highly complex, but early predictions are that dairy farming will become ever more concentrated, with the result that your daily pinta will probably travel further and come from an even larger farm. On a positive note, the new system is less likely to result in surpluses, so at least we'll see less dairy fat getting into our diets in hidden ways such as the free butter given to nursing homes and schools.



"I'm grubbing up the old orchard and planting St John's Wort instead. Apparently it's an anti-depressant!"

Tracing the history of the London loaf

London's position as a trading city for over two millennia makes it a fascinating focus for the study of the history of food.

Bread Street: The British baking bloomer? is a new report from Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming. Commissioned by London Food Link, it traces the changes to the baking industry over many generations. From Roman spelt bread, through 18th century loaves adulterated with chalk, alum and bone ashes, to the dubious delights of modern industrial bread cooked up in vast baking plants using fractionated and hydrogenated oils – this is a fascinating account of London's staple food. The report

also contains interviews with home and commercial bakers, giving insights into the lives of an international medley of London bakers, from the UK, Italy, Somalia, Kosovo, India and Poland.



The report costs £15 + £1 p&p from Sustain
94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF; tel: 020 7837 1228; email: sustain@sustainweb.org

■ Further details from Vicki Hird, tel: 020 7837 1228; email: vh@sustainweb.org



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

feedback

letters from our readers



Nestlé targets schools

I am relieved to report that Nestlé's long-running birthday club has finally closed. I signed up to it to find out what sort of muck they were circulating to kids. Their final mailing illustrates so many of their techniques, I thought I should send it to you. Of particular concern is Nestlé's scheme to 'win a private pop concert at your school'. Isn't this yet another way that schools are being persuaded to help the food industry ruin our children's diets?!

Emma Plover, Swindon, Wiltshire

Vegetarian cheese: GM or not?

I recently wrote to you asking if vegetarian chymosin made from GM micro-organisms is used in organic vegetarian cheeses. You advised me to contact the Soil Association, and I thought that other readers might like to see their reply.

Carrie Stebbings, London

In 1987 'vegetarian rennet' became available. This was produced by introduction of the gene for chymosin production from pigs into yeast (i.e. genetic modification). The yeast is then grown in a liquid sugar material and excretes the chymosin into the liquid. The chymosin is then extracted from the liquid, and purified, so there is no yeast present. The majority of vegetarian rennet contains chymosin produced by this process, so most vegetarian cheese is produced with this rennet (as is most non vegetarian cheese as this chymosin is cheaper than calf rennet).

More recently enzymes similar to chymosin have been found in some bacteria and fungi which have not been genetically modified. These enzymes are now produced by a similar fermentation and purification process from these bacteria or fungi and are used to make 'non GM vegetarian rennet'.

Organic products must not use GM organisms or their derivatives. This includes enzymes which must be from non GM organisms. To ensure that this is the case every cheese manufacturer must submit a declaration from their 'rennet' supplier that the material is not derived from a GM organism.

Whatever happened to organic wholefood?

At a recent conference an organic retailer said people should expect to pay higher prices for organic food and customers should be educated to think it more expensive.

In our opinion, that's nonsense and typical health-food industry snobbery; particularly since, at the conference, Tesco said the only way to increase sales would be lower prices. It also said 93% of people that shop at Tesco were still not buying organic on any kind of regular basis. Having tasted their version, that's hardly surprising; manufacturers and supermarket own-brands are jumping onto the bandwagon, but what they forget is that organic is not necessarily healthy because equally vital are ingredients and integrity of product.

For all their hype, supermarkets can't afford to understand the difference. Asda's advert on TV 'It looks good' – 'twixt a programme sponsored by Rennie's indigestion tablets – doesn't hide the fact much supermarket food is poor quality. If you think the average health-food shop a safe haven, then think again. Innumerable so-called health foods do not stand up to scrutiny, often full of raw-cane sugar, lactose, sea salt, etc. Wholefood organic is nourishing, satisfying and healthy. We can eat less, extract more energy and lose weight naturally. So, is organic food more expensive? Not on your life!

Michael and Clio Lever, The Rice Cake health-food shop, Ledbury

Air miles aren't all bad!

As a reader/subscriber of many years, I was horrified by your lobbying to stop air-imported food being labelled organic (FM64). I do realise the need to lobby for support for more organic production in the UK, and to transport food as little as possible. Without air-freighting would it be possible for us to have a reasonable range of organic fruit and vegetables throughout the year?

Have you looked at what is available now (January - April) in genuinely locally sourced box schemes? Are migrants like me destined never to have the possibility of eating tropical produce in England? With everyman and his brother apparently needing to fly off to holidays overseas (which I rarely do), it does seem grossly unfair that you should be attempting to block my sources of varied organic food. Keep up the good work (apart from this appalling idea).

Neville Cramer, by email

Meals on wheels

Have meals on wheels been investigated in the *Food Magazine*? Many very vulnerable people are dependent on them including the elderly, the disabled, people awaiting hospital admission and people discharged from hospital. The problem may be small appetites and loss of weight rather than obesity. Hence fat may not be the bogey but desirable! These days the service must provide a variety of menus. My husband and I published a paper on this in 2001, looking at how community food and nutrition services can lower costs by reducing the need for hospital beds, can reduce waiting lists and can save the lives of many hospital patients.

Peggy Wynn, Highgate, London

(Reducing waiting lists for hospital admission: Community nutrition services reduce the need for hospital beds, by Margaret Wynn and Arthur Wynn, *Nutrition & Health* 2001, Vol 15, pp 3-16).

Thank you for the suggestion. In the past, we have worked with several local authorities and trading standards departments to assess nutritional standards of meals provided by public bodies – for instance, school meals, canteen food and meals-on-wheels services. If readers working for local authorities would like to commission such research, we would be pleased to hear from them. We will also look into this for a future Food Magazine report.

Antibiotics in agriculture

In response to a reader's letter (FM64) you ask whether antibiotics are used in UK and European fruit and vegetable production. As a lifelong grower I am almost certain that I am right when I say that there are no complex molecules approved for such use in the EC. I think that the only sprays allowed for control of bacterial diseases are based on copper.

Nick Reese, Jackdaws' Nursery, Horsham

feedback

letters from our readers

Obesity? Look to the soil

I wonder if the rise in obesity is related to the declining quality of soil. I have a theory that food grown in soil that has been depleted of minerals over the last 50 years of intensive agriculture, and fails to satisfy our nutritional needs for these elements. We then crave more and more food in order to make up for the deficiencies.

Animals will congregate at certain spots where the soil is rich in minerals, and will use their salt-licks to supplement their diets if they are short of salt. It might follow from this idea that if we all took food supplements we might stay slim, but I haven't found a pill that has helped me yet!

Fiona Train, Brighton

Tom Stockdale of the McCarrison Society (www.nutritionhealth.org) comments: Several elements may be under-supplied nowadays, of which selenium is known to be supplied at well below recommended amounts in most diets. Selenium deficiency adversely affects every tissue in the body. Not only is the capacity of the kidney to retain essential elements impaired but a centre in the brain appears to respond to deficiency by stimulating appetite. When we are being properly fed our bodyweight becomes stable – I achieve this by taking a supplement of 200mg daily selenium as selenite.

Sainsbury's sidesteps GM enquiry

Prompted by a Greenpeace campaign, I wrote to Sainsbury's to ask whether cows that produce Sainsbury's milk are fed on genetically modified (GM) animal feed. I do not want to support the market for GM produce, and am angered when valid concerns about GM are ignored by government and the food industry.

I've just received a letter back from Sainsbury's, but it doesn't really say anything. They tell me that there is no detectable GM material in milk – but that's not what I asked. They also tell me that I have the choice to buy organic, which automatically excludes cows fed on GM feed. They neatly avoid answering my direct question about their own-brand normal milk. It strikes me that GM may be entering the UK environment by the back door. I feel very frustrated that we are unable to make the choice to avoid it.

Annabelle Farmer, Suffolk

Do parents know soya milk is sweetened?

My son is four years of age and has eight cavities. Two of which are very bad. This is not due to a lack of teeth brushing or too many sweets. The orthodontics dentist has told me that this is common in children who were drinking soya milk when babies. I was very shocked at this. My youngest child had to have soya because he was intolerant to dairy.

Surely it should be made known to other parents who use soya milk that there is possibility that their child will suffer from tooth decay due to the sugar added to the soya milk to make it taste sweeter!

I have recently spoken to another mother who like myself has two children. One child was fed soya milk as a baby and the other dairy. The child fed on soya has also had lots of dental treatment. But the child fed on dairy is fine. My eldest child was also fed dairy and is fine.

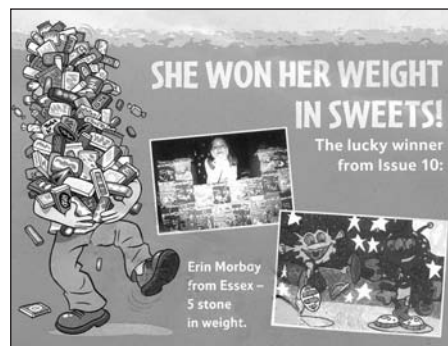
Helen Heath, by email

Some soya milks, such as Provamel, come in both sweetened and unsweetened varieties, and should declare this on the label. Provamel sweetened soya milk contains concentrated apple juice, to give a sugar content of about 2.6%. This is not high in sugar, but if your child drinks a lot and eats other sweet foods too, then you need to be aware of this.

So much for Tesco's five-a-day!

My children are members of the Tesco Kids Club and regularly receive magazines such as the enclosed, but even they were horrified by the prize awarded to Erin Morbay on page two. She won her five stone in weight of sweets! What does Tesco think it is doing? Certainly not promoting 5-a-day healthy eating.

Jayne Gates, Bracknell, Berkshire



Industry responses

Starbucks policy on fair trade

The Christmas Carol featured in your previous edition of the *Food Magazine* claimed that Starbucks pays farmers badly for the coffee they supply to us.

Starbucks is committed to helping to improve the quality of life of coffee growers and ensuring a long-term, sustainable supply of high quality coffee – and as such we take a socially, economically and environmentally responsible approach to purchasing coffee beans.

Starbucks is committed to paying fair prices for all of its coffee, not just Fair Trade certified coffee, which currently represents less than 2% of the world's coffee farmers. For the vast majority of our coffee purchases, we negotiate the price outright so our suppliers know in advance they'll be paid a fair price for their quality coffee, regardless of any downturn in the market.

In financial year 2003, Starbucks bought 97% of its coffee at outright, negotiated prices, for which it paid an average price of \$1.20 per pound (Fair Trade Coffee guarantees a price of \$1.26 per pound), despite worldwide commodity prices for arabica coffee being as low as \$0.55 per pound. This average price was more than double the commodity price in 2003, and helped farmers cover their costs of production, reinvest in their farms, and provide a decent living for their families. Paying farmers fair prices is essential to their livelihoods and the long-term sustainability of coffee farming.

Scott Keiller

CSR Manager, Starbucks Coffee Company (UK) Ltd, www.starbucks.co.uk

Bagel salt and fat facts

We have also been contacted by The Bagel Factory, following a letter in FM64 from Kathleen Short of Chesterfield. She complained about the company's bagels being prominently marketed as 'low in fat' and 'low in salt' without any further explanation.

The Bagel Factory told us that their bagels are indeed low in fat and low in salt, but admitted that this was only before the bagels are filled, usually with fatty and salty fillings such as cream cheese or bacon.

Hmmm – we're not impressed, and a complaint is on its way to The Bagel Factory's local trading standards officer.



Sit down to get more exercise!

As options for tackling childhood obesity are batted about by policy-makers and health specialists, people working with children are seeking ways to help solve the problem. This has spawned a raft of educational tools targeted at schools, some of which also land in the Food Commission's in-tray, sent to us by concerned teachers.

One such educational tool caught our attention because it is a computer game that claims to promote healthy eating, exercise and a healthy lifestyle. That's a lot to claim for one little CD.



The 'It's Your Goal' computer game sets pupils the challenge of rescuing their favourite football player from the spell of an evil wizard who has turned him into a couch potato. To win the game, children have to explore the wizard's castle, select healthy food options and encourage the footballer to take exercise.

Whilst the sentiment is laudable, it is hard not to notice that the only exercise enjoyed whilst playing the game is through repeated clicking on the computer mouse button.

Mexican munch

The Mexican health authorities closed their borders to US poultry products at the end of February because neighbouring Texas had reported cases of the bird disease, avian flu. Two weeks later the Mexicans backed down to pressure from both the US and their own food processing companies, who were claiming that the ban would push up the prices of their sausages and ham by 20%.

Sausages and ham?

Si, señor, said the Mexican Meat Council, adding that 150,000 tonnes of mechanically separated poultry and 100,000 tonnes of turkey legs and thighs are imported from the US each year to make sausage and ham products.

Sorry we asked.

Advertisers forced to admit junk is unhealthy

Like the food industry, the Advertising Association has consistently opposed the division of foods into 'healthy' and 'less healthy' categories, knowing that if this approach ever became enshrined into legislation, strict regulation of food advertising to children would surely follow.

When the Food Commission shared a platform with the Advertising Association at a recent conference of the Marketing Society, the advertising trade body struggled to find a way of describing unhealthy foods.

Faced by evidence of the huge amounts of sugar, salt and fat in products marketed to children, head of the Advertising Association Andrew Brown was forced to admit publicly that "We have a problem with product here." And despite vehemently opposing the use of the term 'unhealthy food', he found himself describing fatty, sugary and salty foods with the phrase "foods in the more problematic area".

What a mouthful!

Don't risk too much media coverage!

Finding out how government officials measure their success can be very revealing.

At a recent conference of parliamentarians and the food industry, the Chief Executive of the new European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Geoffrey Podger presented his views on risk management. Readers may remember that before his move to European government, Geoffrey Podger was Chief Executive of the UK's Food Standards Agency.

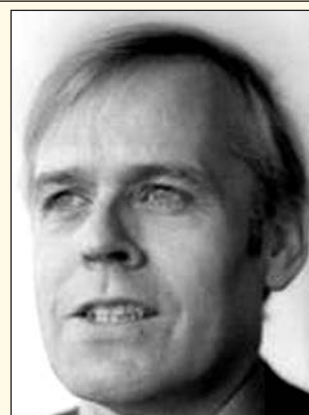
Successful risk management, said Podger, can be measured on a graph. Plot the number of media stories about a food scare against time to gauge how often the story returns to haunt you.

A series of peaks, explained Podger, shows

that journalists keep revealing more about the story, and get EFSA a bad name. A single, short-lived spike of media coverage is a sign of success. Journalists report the story once and the story dies away.

Mr Podger's version of 'risk management' contained little about managing risks. His approach is more about the management of public perceptions.

Geoffrey Podger, Chief Executive of the new European Food Safety Authority, has a novel theory of risk management during food scares. Ideally the media should report a story once and then forget about it. He considers sustained media interest to be a sign of poor risk management. After all, you don't want the public knowing too much, do you?



Olympic challenge to Coca-Cola?

Readers with long memories may recall the 2000 Olympics in Australia, officially sponsored by Coca-Cola. It was the occasion when security guards were told to ask spectators if they were carrying 'knives, weapons or cans of Pepsi'. Spectators who refused to give up their cans or bottles of Pepsi were refused entry. It's nearly Olympic time again, and again it will be a publicity-fest for Coke, the official sponsor. There is, however, one fly in the ointment.

Coke's original formulation included cola for flavour and cocaine leaf extract for its stimulant properties. The cocaine has long given way to caffeine, the stimulant found in coffee. However, Olympic Movement regulations stretch further than the soft drink company may realise. Among the prohibited Class A substances which form part of the athletes' Anti-Doping Code, to which they must all swear allegiance, are listed amphetamines, cocaine... and caffeine!

"That sponsor makes me want to run a mile!!"

