

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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Thirst for bottled water fuels food miles



In a supermarket survey, the Food Commission has found bottled water that has travelled more than 10,000 miles (16,000km) to reach UK consumers.

The distance that food travels is growing ever longer, with food products and ingredients shipped, flown and trucked to supermarket shelves. Every extra mile uses more fossil fuel and adds more carbon-dioxide (CO₂) emissions to our national total – emissions that boost the UK's contribution to climate change.

The Food Commission has often criticised government and retailers for failing to tackle food miles – the distance that food travels. Often, foods that have been transported for long distances could have been grown more locally, whether in the UK or in nearby countries. As well as contributing to climate change, the increasing globalisation of the food trade also leads to new food safety concerns, such as the spread of avian flu from Asia and contaminated food products that are almost impossible to trace.

Although bottled water is unlikely to cause food safety concerns, transporting water halfway across the world is surely the most ludicrous use of fossil fuels when water is plentiful in the UK. In October, the UK government's scientific advisor said that levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere already represent a danger and that the world had to adapt to prepare for significant changes ahead, and also to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Curbing greenhouse gas emissions will involve everyone – industry and consumers – taking action to reduce energy and fuel use. Yet UK supermarkets such as Waitrose and Fresh & Wild stock Fijian water that boasts that its source is 'separated by over 2,500 kilometres of the open Pacific from the nearest continent.' The water is bottled at source in Fiji – about 10,000 miles from mainland Europe – and transported to the UK.

Industry self-regulation is illegal

Worried that the government may regulate their activities, the food industry and the advertising industry are increasingly keen to suggest they will regulate themselves. But now the Office of Fair Trading has warned food producers that self-regulation may be contrary to competition laws.

The food industry – aware that they have suffered terrible publicity over the health effects of processed foods – published a *Food and Health Manifesto* in September, timed to coincide with the party conference season.

The Manifesto, issued by the trade body the Food and Drink Federation (FDF), committed manufacturers to reducing fat, sugar and salt in processed foods ('where technologically possible'), cutting portion sizes and tightening self-regulation of advertising. The Manifesto indicated how far

industry might move voluntarily, and was timed to take the wind out of the long-awaited government White Paper on public health.

But just days after the Manifesto was launched, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) sent an extraordinary letter to the Food and Drink Federation, warning that a coordinated industry agreement to reduce salt in processed foods 'could potentially have the effect of restricting competition between manufacturers, thus limiting consumer choice' and 'could have an impact on the availability of cheaper or alternative food ranges'.

The letter, sent by OFT executive officer Siobhan Furlong, said that plans to phase out super-size portions, 'may prevent consumers from obtaining best value for money'.

Continued on page 3

See survey on page 14

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

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Who will win the battle for our minds?

The past few months have seen a plethora of anti-obesity initiatives launched by the food industry, TV companies and government departments – many focusing on energy expenditure through physical exercise.

While the BBC's *Big Challenge for a Healthier Lifestyle* promotes both good nutrition and physical exercise, ITV's *Britain on the Move* focuses almost entirely on persuading people to be more active. ITV's message about diet and health, published on its website, is: 'All things in moderation', which can neatly be translated as 'no advertised product can be criticised, whatever its nutritional content'.

Giving evidence to the MPs Select Committee's enquiry into obesity, the Advertising Association (the industry lobby group of which ITV is a member) claimed that 'Another example of a constructive contribution by the industry to raising public awareness of the importance of exercise is ITV's *Britain on the Move*'. This is how advertisers side-step the problems of poor diet, and fend off the growing discontent among parents, health organisations and regulators that the junkiest food continues to be targeted at children.

In fact, whilst some food manufacturers are at last acknowledging the contribution of unhealthy foods to unhealthy diets, and have begun to improve their recipes, the advertising industry has done little to improve people's health. Their most eager agreement to participate came when MPs asked if they would like to receive public money to design health promotion campaigns.

While ITV has increased its revenues by up to 7% this year, the company intends to extend its income through product placement, and is lobbying to overturn European legislation which bans this means of advertising. Product placement is the covert practice, common in the US, of companies paying for products to appear in TV shows – on the shelves of a character's kitchen, on the bar in a fictional pub, or even discussed in a positive light by the characters. The technique aims to overcome the problem of ad skipping – where viewers use their video-recorders to record only the TV show and edit out the ad breaks. It also seeks to associate brands more closely with popular TV shows and actors.

ITV is presumably hoping to see *Coronation Street's* Vera Duckworth scoffing on some Dairy Milk and declaring how nice it is to eat a snack so choc-full of antioxidants. So much for its commitment to better health.



Before I cheat on Kev and you cheat on Tracey let's have a quick nibble on my delicious Cadbury's Dairy Milk (made with a glass and a half of full cream milk in every half pound)!

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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Can the Food Commission help you?

- Are you planning non-commercial research that needs expert input on food and health?
- Do you need nutritional survey work to be undertaken?

The Food Commission may be able to help you. Contact Kath or Ian on 020 7837 2250.

EC tells Coca-Cola to curtail marketing

A five-year legal battle between Coca-Cola and the European Commission is nearing conclusion, following a complaint from PepsiCo about Coca-Cola's anti-competitive marketing practices in the UK, Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Germany. Coca-Cola currently accounts for half of all market share in Europe, while PepsiCo has less than 10%.

EC regulators have circulated a draft agreement to the company's main competitors. The proposals aim to promote competition between the drinks companies and curtail Coca-Cola's market domination.

They suggest that Coca-Cola share up to 20% of refrigerator space with rivals like

Pepsi, and cease retailer incentives to achieve target sales levels. Coca-Cola would also be expected to stop exclusive sale of its products during sponsored events.

Bulk purchase discount offers and exclusive rights to branded drink dispensers would be allowed to continue.

It seems that the EC is happy to take action against soft drinks companies when it might mean increased trade opportunities, but less willing to take any significant action to decrease children's consumption of highly sugary products.



Continued from page 1

Industry self-regulation is illegal

On advertising to children, the OFT said, 'The ability of manufacturers to advertise is an important aspect of competition. An agreement between manufacturers to limit that aspect of their activities is therefore likely to be of concern. A blanket prohibition on advertising to children, for example, would seem likely to give rise to concerns.'

In brief, if it is legal to advertise junk to children – or to sell mega-portions, or to load up food with extra salt – then any voluntary agreement among producers to limit legal activities are potentially anti-competitive.

At first sight the OFT's behaviour looks like the worst example of a government failing to join up its thinking. While the Food Standards Agency (FSA), Department of Health and others call on industry to be more responsible, the OFT tells the industry to ignore health and carry on as before.

But the OFT is simply warning industry of what the courts and the European Commission could rule if the FDF's Manifesto was challenged under current law. Voluntary arrangements to fix prices are illegal, and voluntary arrangements to fix food formulations are no different, the OFT warns, even if the motive might appear to be for the public good.

The Food Commission was never convinced that the food industry's voluntary measures would be adhered to, but now there is more reason than ever to push for a statutory approach for setting standards for food composition and food marketing. The government has a Food Standards Agency. So let's have some standards for food!

Toddlers' teeth show no improvement

A government report on children's dental health has shown no improvement in toddlers' teeth since statistics were last collected in 1993.

The Office of National Statistics figures for 2003 show 41% of English five-year-olds have signs of decay in their milk teeth. The figures for Northern Ireland are even worse, with 61% of five-year-olds showing signs of tooth decay.

The report shows that by the time they are eight years old, half of all children have tooth decay.

The Food Commission continues to be concerned at high levels of sugar in biscuits and rusks described as suitable for toddlers. It is also concerned at the lack of advice on most sugary drinks that they are not suitable for small children – especially when given in spill-proof beakers that allow toddlers to sip on sugary drinks throughout the day.

There is also a worrying trend in manufacturers producing highly sugared drinks described as 'suitable from four months', which undermines World Health Organization advice.

The advice, which has been adopted by the UK government, is that breastmilk should be the only food recommended for babies for the first six months.



Percentage of children with obvious decay in primary teeth

	1983	1993	2003
% five year olds with cavities	41	40	40
% eight year olds with cavities	49	50	50



Boots describes its Organic Rusks (left) as suitable for babies of four months and older. They also state that it is never necessary to add salt or sugar to any of your baby's food. And yet this product contains 15% added sugar. We wondered if any of the sugar might

come from the juicy looking apricots pictured on the packet, but no.

Whilst Boots are happy to add sugar to baby's food they've skimped on the fruit – these rusks don't contain any significant fruit at all, only 'natural flavouring'.

Heinz Farley's rusks (above) are also promoted as suitable for babies aged four months and older. They contain a whopping 29% sugar, making them a great way to wean babies onto the taste of heavily sweetened foods and drinks – just the kind of diet that is linked to tooth decay.

French impose junk food warnings

Food advertisers in France may soon be required to publish a health warning on TV advertisements for unhealthy sugary and salty foods, or pay 1.5% of their annual TV-advertising budget to the National Health Promotion and Education Institute, to fund nutritional information and education campaigns.

The French parliament has also approved nutritional standards for products in the estimated 8,000 vending machines in French schools, and have not yet ruled out an outright ban on school vending machines. The new laws will come into force from September 2005.

■ We have tried to find out how the French will define 'unhealthy' food but as we go to press, we have not yet received details. When we do, we'll let you know.



McDonald's sued over broken trans fat promise

McDonald's has faced an anti-advertising campaign in the US for failing to stop cooking its fries in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

of partially hydrogenated fat in the US diet with natural unhydrogenated vegetable oils would prevent approximately 30,000 premature coronary deaths per year, and epidemiologic evidence suggests this number is closer to 100,000 premature deaths annually.

In March 2003, Denmark became the first country to introduce restrictions on the use of industrially produced trans fats. Oils and fat are now forbidden on the Danish market if they contain trans fats exceeding 2 per cent.

In the UK, the government's Food Standards Agency (FSA) acknowledges that *'Trans-fats have no known nutritional benefits and because of the effect they have on blood cholesterol, they increase the risk of coronary heart disease. Evidence suggests that the effects of trans-fats are worse than saturated fats.'* However, the FSA has no plans for mandatory trans-fat labelling in the UK. Nor is it planning to require food companies to limit trans-fat in processed foods.

It has fallen back on the weak position of advising consumers to limit their intake, without giving them the information or opportunity to do so.

In September, the Food Commission's sister organisation in the US, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, ran a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* highlighting McDonald's continued use of oil containing artery-clogging trans fats.

CSPI said that McDonald's has reneged on its 2002 promise to stop using the oil. By 2003, the fast-food firm issued a statement that said it would 'extend the timeframe' for the change, but have still not removed partially hydrogenated oil from its fries.

McDonald's is also being sued in California by the campaign organisation BanTransFat.com, for 'false advertising regarding its use of reduced trans fat cooking oil'. The campaign reports that 'replacement

Heinz twists the salt message

Heinz received good publicity in September for swooping on supermarkets and removing all of its overly salty products in one night. It replaced the products with reduced-salt varieties, donating the old stock to the Salvation Army.

So far, so good, unless perhaps you're a recipient of Salvation Army aid and are trying to follow a low sodium diet.

Millions of Heinz labels have also changed to reflect the new formulation, and provide customers with details of how much salt the products contain. But close inspection of the new labelling reveals a twisted health message.

New tins of products such as Heinz Baked Beans state: 'A serving contains 1.7g of an adult's recommended daily salt intake of 6g'. This makes it sound as if 6g is an upper target level that we should be striving to achieve. The phrase 'recommended daily intake' is usually used to describe target levels for beneficial micronutrients such as vitamin C or folic acid.

In fact, the official message is that adults should reduce their salt intake to less than 6g of salt per day – a level considered achievable, and within reasonable bounds for good health for most people.

Could it be that Heinz Meanz Spinz?

Hovis confirms and denies salt effect

The UK's biggest baker RHM (Rank Hovis McDougal) is simultaneously supporting and opposing the government's campaign for salt reduction in processed food.

In the guise of RHM bread manufacturer, the company says it has 'responded to the requests from the Food Standards Agency... by making strenuous efforts to reduce the levels of salt added to foods', and says that the FSA aim to cut salt intake by a third by 2010 'will have a generally beneficial impact on the health of the nation.'

However, RHM is also a supporter of the Salt Manufacturers' Association, and is party to lobbying activities attacking the salt-reduction message. The salt trade association even reported the Food Standards Agency to the Advertising Standards Authority, complaining that the Agency's new Sid the Slug salt awareness campaign

was 'incorrect and potentially very damaging to the image of an essential product'.

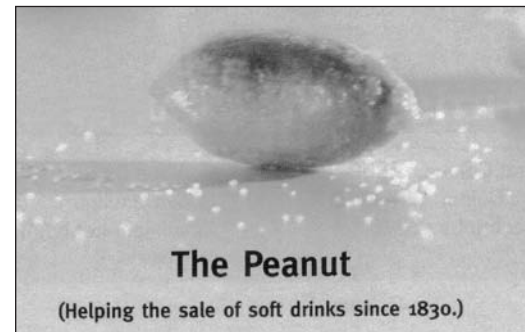
Luckily the ASA threw out the complaint in October saying that they did not think it worthy of a formal investigation.

The Salt Manufacturers' Association, of which RHM is the largest member, states that *'Scientists have repeatedly concluded that there is little or no benefit to the general population from using less salt.'*

The likely reason for RHM's apparent schizophrenia can be found in the range of products in which the company has a financial interest.

On the one hand, RHM is manufacturer of Hovis, Mother's Pride and Nimble bread, as well as Mr Kipling, Lyons and Cadbury cakes, and sells more than 600 million hamburger buns and 70 million muffins a year to restaurant chains such as McDonald's. The company has also launched a loaf with 25% less salt called 'Best of Health'.

On the other, RHM's parent company Doughty Hanson & Co. also makes the UK's top-selling brand of salt – Saxa.



Coke admits: salt boosts sales

This peanut appears in a job advertisement from Coca-Cola for a Category Planning Manager who will be offered £40,000 per year to maximise sales and profit of Coca-Cola's range of soft drinks.

The advertisement boasts of the peanut's abilities in 'helping the sale of soft drinks since 1830'. How? Not the peanut itself, but the white granules scattered on the surface around it. Salt. The snacking and soft-drink culture are mutually dependent. Eating salty snacks makes people thirsty. It's no coincidence that outlets such as cinemas sell highly salty snacks right next to mega cups for cola and other sugar-sweetened beverages!

Publicans call for pint-sized portions

Following widespread media coverage of the appalling nutritional state of children's menus, prompted by surveys publicised by the *Food Magazine* and Parents Jury, *The Publican* magazine has responded with a new campaign calling for pubs to serve better food for children.

'Over the past 20 years Britain has transformed itself from a country with a laughable culinary tradition into a nation of food lovers,' says Kerry Rogan, editor of The Publican. 'With public awareness about healthy options for kids increasing, parents are demanding more choice and commercially-minded, forward-thinking licensees would be wise to listen.'



The campaign is called 'Pint-Sized Portions', and aims to promote balanced meals made from high quality ingredients, and more adventurous menus than the standard fare of chicken nuggets and chips.

The Publican will help pub-owners by sharing recipes, and publishing experiences of serving better food for children. It will put some of the best recipes to the test with a panel of children later in the year.

■ **Contact:** Kerry Rogan, Pint-Sized Portions, *The Publican*, 19 Scarbrook Road, Croydon CR9 1LX; email: kerryr@thepublican.com

Prisoners take food to court

Five hundred prisoners in seven Scottish jails are taking the Scottish jail service to court over the nutritional quality of prison food. The prisoners allege degrading conditions that they claim breach their human rights.

Lawyer Tony Kelly, who is acting on behalf of the prisoners, commissioned a study of the prison menus at Barlinnie Jail, undertaken by Glasgow University. The study showed that the menus were dominated by high-salt and high-fat dishes such as burgers, sausages and processed meals, and did not provide the five daily portions of fruit and vegetables recommended for health.

Take-aways 'come clean' on hygiene scores

Restaurants, pubs and take-aways in Greenwich have been asked to display evidence of their good hygiene. This is part of a new scheme designed to combat food poisoning in the London borough.

Caterers will receive a Food Hygiene Award Certificate from Greenwich local authority if they are found to have good standards. Hygiene inspection results will also be published on the Greenwich local authority website. A few months into the scheme, after 38 inspections, 24 outlets have failed to achieve a hygiene award – a discouraging message for the residents of Greenwich but at least now they can find out the information.

However, the project appears to fall short of schemes already operating in New York and Denmark, where restaurants that fail an inspection must declare this to customers, allowing them to choose not to eat in dirty food outlets. In Denmark, the information must be displayed by the main door of the food outlet. In New York, reasons for hygiene inspection failure are posted on the NYC website.

Lecture by Lawrence

This year's Rachel Carson Memorial Lecture will feature Felicity Lawrence, author of the widely-praised *Not on the Label: What really goes into the food on your plate* (see p.20).

Organised by Pesticides Action Network, the lecture will examine our increasingly industrialised, agrochemical-dependent food system. It will take place at the Museum of London, Friday 3 December, from 6.30pm.

Tickets £25 or £20 if booked by 31 October. The lecture will be followed by a buffet, music, information and a chance to meet Felicity.

■ **Email:** annascalera@pan-uk.org; **visit:** www.pan-uk.org or **tel:** 020 7065 0905



Parents Jury goes to Oz

Following the success of the Food Commission's Parents Jury, campaigners in Australia have launched a Parents Jury of their own.

This new campaign will bring parents' voices to the debate on obesity, junk food and physical exercise issues.

It is funded jointly by Diabetes Australia, The Cancer Council Victoria, and the Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity, and was set up after consultation with Parents Jury UK.

As in the UK, the Australian Parents Jury is independent of the food industry, the weight loss industry or the exercise/fitness industry.

Parents Jury members' opinions on the role of food advertising in damaging their children's diet, and on the role of schools in improving and maintaining the level of children's fitness can be found on the campaign website.

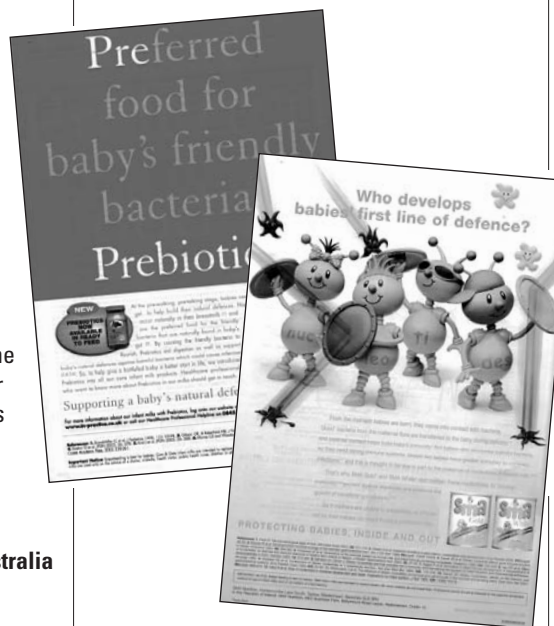
■ **The website for The Parents Jury Australia is at:** www.parentsjury.org.au

Challenge to bottled baby milk adverts

Campaigners defending infant breast feeding have called on the professional organisation for health visitors to cease advertising bottle milk products in its journal, *Community Practitioner*.

Representatives of Baby Milk Action, the National Childbirth Trust, the Breastfeeding Network and the Baby Feeding Law Group have written to the journal's editor, Moira Davies, asking her to review the policy of taking adverts, such as the ones shown, promoting baby formula products.

■ **Visit:** website: www.babymilkaction.org or **contact** Baby Milk Action, **tel:** 01223 464420.



Fish – made of soya?

Continuing our series on the effects on our diets of modern farming we look at fish – and ask whether the feed given to farmed fish reduces their value to human health. Tim Lobstein reports.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, increasing evidence showed the value of fish oils to human health. Scientific papers showed the benefit of these oils in preventing heart disease and providing various other benefits including a reduced risk of mental problems such as bipolar disorder and senile dementia. The US Food and Drug Administration has ruled that foods containing these oils can carry a health claim that they can help to reduce the risk of heart disease.

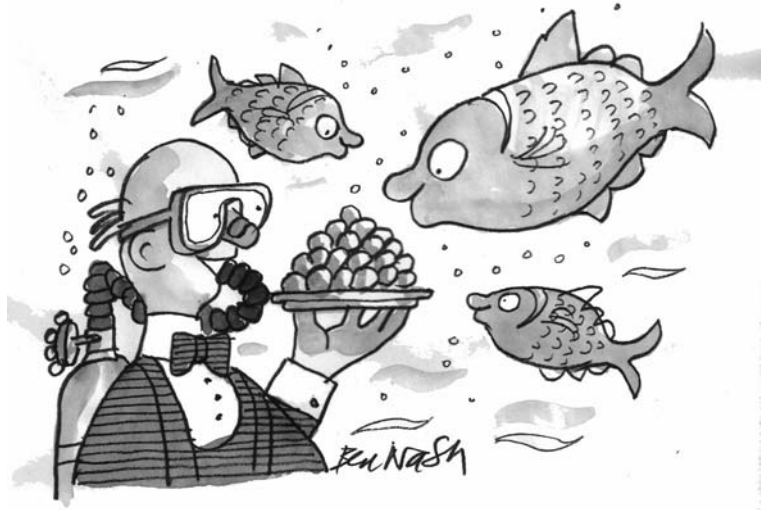
As a result of this accumulating evidence, committees of experts have recommended that minimum quantities of these oils should be included in our diets on a regular basis. The 'Eurodiet' consensus suggested an average intake of 200mg per day of the very long chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids – the fats found in plankton and other minute aquatic organisms, and in the fish and other creatures that eat them. Depending on which fish species you choose, the consensus is that we should eat at least 140g (5 oz) of oily fish per week.

Fish stocks are unlikely to be able to sustain this quantity of fish for the whole human race unless they are more carefully managed, and unless protection of spawning grounds and other measures to preserve fish stocks are enforced. In the meantime, fish farming has developed rapidly and world

aquaculture output has risen around 10% per year for the last two decades. Fish farms are supplying increasing quantities of the world's fish market – UK fish farmers reared over 150,000 tonnes of salmon and trout in 2002, as well as increasing quantities of species such as turbot, halibut and char.

The rise in farmed fish production has significant environmental consequences: the fish cages create pollution, and the fish have to be dosed with pesticides and antibiotics to prevent infestation and disease. The flesh of the fish tends to be pale and grey compared with wild stock, so colouring agents may be added to the fish feed.

And, as with the diets of intensive broiler chickens, farmed fish are usually fed a concentrated diet designed to maximise weight gain in as short a time as possible. In intensive farms, fish are not encouraged to swim extensively as this slows down weight gain. Fish feed is given in pellets which float and which are carefully sized to be 25% of the size of their mouths to ensure they eat as



“And for dessert may I recommend the Super Soya Surprise!”

much as possible and spend as little time as possible finding the pellets.

The effect of this imposed lifestyle is to make flesh fatty but the nature of that fat depends on the content of the fish feed. With world fish stocks threatened by over-fishing and by global warming, fishmeal is becoming harder to obtain. Marine oils especially have been rising in price and exceeded the price of vegetable oils such as soya oil in the late 1990s.

The result is that many fish farmers have been substituting vegetable oils for marine oil in fish diets. In their early, larval stages, fish need high levels of omega-3 type fatty acids, but as they grow into fry and later maturity they can survive on the blend of omega-3 and omega-6 oils found in vegetable oils. But this will affect the oils in their flesh, and that in turn could affect our dietary health.

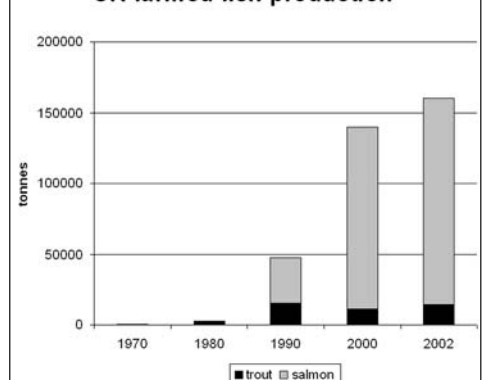
For humans, the quantity of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids is important, but so too is

Table 1: Farmed fish have more oil, but a poorer ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids

	Coho Salmon		Atlantic Salmon		Catfish		Trout	
	Farmed	Wild	Farmed	Wild	Farmed	Wild	Farmed	Wild
Total oil	7.67g	5.93g	10.85g	6.34g	7.59g	2.82g	5.40g	3.46g
Total omega-3	1.28g	1.24g	2.01g	1.73g	0.37g	0.81g	0.99g	0.71g
Total omega-6	0.44g	0.33g	1.78g	0.43g	0.96g	0.25g	0.74g	0.35g
Ratio of 3 to 6 (the higher the better)	2.9	3.8	1.1	4.0	0.4	3.2	1.3	2.0

Source: Purdue University, <http://fn.cfs.purdue.edu/anglingindiana> Amount per 100g fish.

UK farmed fish production



the ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids in the diet. Omega-6 fatty acids compete with omega-3s, and an excess of omega-6s will reduce the effectiveness of eating omega-3s.

The Eurodiet consensus recommended that our dietary intake of fats would be balanced if we ate up to around 15g omega-6 and 2.2g of omega-3 (including 0.2g long chain omega-3s). The latest survey of UK diets shows that on average, adults are eating around 11g of omega-6 and less than 2g of omega-3. More than half the population is failing to eat the recommended minimum amount of oily fish (one portion per week).

Wild fish, such as herring, have very little omega-6 – typically 2% of their oils are omega-6 fatty acids, and 15% to 30% of the oils are omega-3 fatty acids, much of this in the form of the valuable long chain omega-3s. Fresh water fish, such as trout, have more omega-6, but still substantially less omega-6 than omega-3.

But with farmed fish the situation changes, and is destined to change far more. As table 1 shows, the ratios of omega-3 to omega-6 are worse in farmed fish. And as table 2 shows, feeding trout with an experimental mixture of feed containing higher levels of soya oil led to a dramatic increase in the omega-6 content of the fish, and a matching decrease in the omega-3s.

In the name of sustainable production, groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) are calling for increased use of vegetable oils in fish farm production. But little research has been done on the nutritional effect of different types of vegetable oil in fish diets. Soya, the cheapest oil, has a high omega-6 content as does sunflower and corn oil (see table 3), although other oils, such as linseed, have a much higher omega-3 content. These are currently more costly to fish farmers, partly because they have not received the investment and development

Table 3: Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids in cheaper vegetable oils (% of the oil)

	palm oil	soya oil	corn oil	sunflower oil	cottonseed oil	rapeseed oil
Total omega-3	0.2	6.8	1.2	0.03	0.2	9.3
Total omega-6	9.1	51.0	53.2	65.7	51.5	20.3
ratio of 3 to 6 (the higher the better)	0.02	0.13	0.02	0.001	0.04	0.46

Source: USDA <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/>

which have benefited soya producers. And although fish can convert the omega-3 oils in vegetable oil into the beneficial long chain omega-3s that we expect to find in fish, the rate of conversion is slow and unreliable.

Genetic selection of fish breeds capable of converting vegetable oils into long chain omega-3 oils is considered feasible, and genetic modification of plants may increase their omega-3 content – but these approaches may not be popular with the public.

A more positive approach may be taken by revisiting the food chain that makes fish so valuable. Single cell organisms (marine algae) and more complex plankton capable of producing long chain omega-3 oils are the primary building blocks in the fish food chain. Such marine organisms are already being harvested for the food supplement market and their industrial culture could be the basis of marine fish feed – but again the system requires considerable investment.

Meanwhile, programmes to ensure sustainable harvests from the sea, protected breeding grounds, strongly enforced controls on net mesh sizes and the prohibition of trawling methods which damage the sea bed are necessary to ensure a vital nutritional resource remains available for as long as possible.

The end of the line?

Don't expect a comfortable read with this book, particularly if you enjoy a trip to a sushi bar or a fresh fish feast on your holiday in the Med. From page one, Charles Clover, Environmental Editor for the *Daily Telegraph*, sets out to

present the truth about the demise of the world's fish stocks and the destruction of many marine environments.

The main culprits behind this disaster in the making, Clover believes, are unworkable fishing policies and governments refusing to take action over a fishing industry too large and too greedy to enable sustainable fishing in all but a few areas of the world's oceans.

Clover presents some alarming facts, such as 50% of cod and 60% of hake are illegally landed on our shores, making a mockery of any quotas set for sustainability. He paints a grim picture of the state of today's fishing industry: fishing pirates, poor countries unwittingly selling off their fishing legacies, unimaginable levels of discarded fish and marine mammal by-catch and near-barren seas where fish stocks have completely collapsed. A few glimmers of hope are offered with some individual programmes that have revived the local marine environment.

A shopper's guide to choosing fish is given at the end of the book. It is rather more restrictive than that presented by the Marine Conservation Society in their Good Fish Guide and may leave you deciding to stop eating fish altogether. An uncomfortable read perhaps, but an essential one for anyone concerned with issues of sustainable food supplies.

■ **The End of the Line.** C Clover, Ebury Press (www.randomhouse.co.uk), £14.99 ISBN 009189780-7

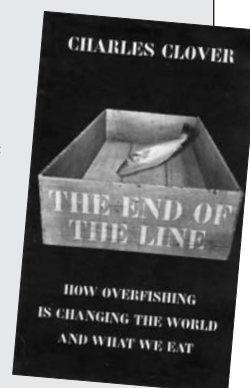


Table 2: Added vegetable oil in trout feed dramatically raises omega-6 & saturated fat content

	Trout fed without vegetable oil (% of oils in fish flesh)	Trout fed with vegetable oil (% of oils in fish flesh)
short chain omega-3	6	3
long chain omega-3	25	13
total omega-3	31	16
short chain omega-6	8	18
long chain omega-6	1	1
total omega-6	9	19
saturated fatty acids	19	28

Source: Bell et al, in Sargent and Tacon, *Proc Nut Soc*, 58, 1999

Selling better health

Vending machines come under scrutiny

School vending machines are being targeted to improve the quality of food and drinks on offer to children in Scotland and Wales, and belatedly in England.

This is one of the areas in which everyone agrees – parents, teachers and pupils – that intervening to improve children's health is both acceptable and viable.

Introduced in the right way, in consultation with staff and children, they soon become just as much a part of the everyday landscape as the ubiquitous coke, crisps, snack and chocolate machines that many schools are now phasing out, for the good of children's health.

But initiatives in UK schools are mild compared with US cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle, perhaps prompted by the effects of poor diets on children's health – ever more visible in the form of expanding waistlines.

In both Wales and Scotland, soft drinks company Coca Cola has agreed to remove its branding from existing machines and to stock healthier alternatives – such as bottled water and fruit juices – alongside its soft drinks.

In Wales, water coolers are being installed in 384 schools, as part of a scheme jointly funded by the Welsh Assembly and Welsh Water, encouraging children to fill up bottles

from cooled mains water. Changes in school regulations will allow children to have bottled water, but not soft drinks, on their desks.

Wales has also been the site of a pilot programme for trying alternative drinks, including milk and fruit smoothies in vending machines, and a joint project with pupils and caterers choosing to stock machines with healthier food items including half baguettes, bread and wraps with fillings such as cheese, chicken korma, and tuna and cucumber. The machines will also dispense pasta, salads, fruit salads, fruit and yogurts.

In 2003, health minister Stephen Ladyman indicated that English schools would consider such initiatives as part of his intention to 'work with schools and the food industry to bring in constructive changes' but added that government had no plans to ban snacks or fizzy drinks.

Vending machines can be worth up to £20,000 a year to a school. Coca Cola is reported to have some 2,000 machines in secondary schools, and Masterfoods (Mars bars and other confectionery items) another 1,200.

But overseas, schools are taking stronger action. In Los Angeles, schools have removed soft drinks entirely from their premises, and

across the whole of California a new bill will require elementary schools to set nutritional standards for all food other than school lunch, ensuring that the products:

- Have no more than 35% calories from fat
- Have no more than 10% calories from saturated and trans fat
- Contain no more than 35% sugar by weight
- If a beverage, it must be milk, water or fruit drinks with a minimum 50% juice and no added sweeteners
- If sold in middle schools, carbonated beverages cannot be sold until after lunchtime.

In Seattle, Washington State, new policies will require all foods and beverages sold and distributed during the school day, by February 2005, to meet nutrition guidelines and follow certain portion sizes (see box).

Such rules, with built-in opportunities for measuring the range of foods on offer against set nutritional standards, saves children from being at the whim of cost-cutting exercises in school catering and patchy interpretation and understanding of nutritional guidelines.

It is disappointing that UK government initiatives to improve snacks and drinks on offer in schools are limited to voluntary guidelines rather than enforceable standards. Schools will continue to be free to stock unhealthy products, creating in effect a postcode lottery for children's health. A survey this year found over a third of British secondary schools were giving lunchtime access to vending machines in the school dining room, selling sweets, chocolates and soft drinks.

However, the guidelines are at least a start – offering schools practical advice and parameters with which to work. Earlier this year, the FSA funded a study of the impact of alternative vending products, demonstrating that healthier vending is commercially viable. A manual for schools on *Vending Healthy Drinks* has now been published by the Food Standards Agency.

■ Schools can gain control of their machines using this guide, available on www.food.gov.uk.



Vending
healthy
drinks

A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

The Seattle School Board has issued tough criteria for foods other than the lunchtime meals service

Nutrition

- Total fat content must be less than or equal to 30% of total calories per serving (not including seeds and nuts)
- Saturated fat content must be less than or equal to 10% of total calories per serving
- Sugar content must be less than or equal to 15 grams per serving (not including fresh, dried or frozen fruits and vegetables).

Portions sizes

- Beverages (except water and milk): 12 oz (330ml) or less
- Snacks: 1.25 oz (40g) or less
- Cookies/cereal bars: 2 oz (60g) or less
- Bakery items: 3 oz (85g) or less
- Frozen desserts: 3 oz (85g) or less
- Yogurts: 8 oz (220g) or less
- Other items shall be no larger than the portions of those foods served as part of the school meal programs

Beverages

- No more than 15 grams of added sugar per serving
- No caffeine
- Beverages must also meet the nutrition guidelines for fat and saturated fat
- 100% fruit juice OR beverages sweetened with 100% fruit juice are allowed as long as the portion size does not exceed 12oz (330ml)
- Non-fat and 1% fat chocolate milk with greater than 15g of added sugar per serving is allowed, but with a portion size limit of 16oz (450ml)
- There is no serving size limit on bottled water
- All drinks other than milk must be priced at a higher level than water, for an equivalent size serving.

Foods and drinks should, as much as possible, be fresh, locally grown, organic, unprocessed, non-GMO and non-irradiated, and contain no additives or preservatives.

School meals are failing, with no rescue in sight

New research into food provision in UK secondary schools has found that one third of catering managers had never heard of the government's compulsory nutritional standards for school meals. Of those who had, 39% could not describe any of the standards, still less describe how they might be achieved.

The research, funded by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), found that whilst 83% of secondary schools met the government's compulsory school nutrition standards at the beginning of the lunch hour, only 47% met the standards towards the end of the service period.

On average, only 7% of the children's meals met eight or more of the 12 Caroline Walker Trust (CWT) nutritional guidelines, which are widely recommended by dietitians as best practice for school food provision. The CWT guidelines are more prescriptive than the government rules, and ensure that children are given a specified balance of nutrients over the course of a week.

The government's nutrition rules stipulate only that certain food groups such as carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables should be provided.

The main problem with the government's standards is that while schools may make fruit and vegetables available every day, there is

no target for sales of these healthier items. Schools can also continue to sell the same range of less healthy foods.

Yet the research also demonstrates that the range of foods a school chooses to offer can affect the nutritional balance of what children eat over the course of a week.

For instance, the research showed that the more often the schools served chips the worse the nutritional make-up of children's meals. In three quarters of schools surveyed, chips were served at least four days out of five. In schools where chips were served more than twice a week, three quarters of children exceeded the Caroline Walker Trust recommendations for fat intake.

Overall, fried high-fat foods were the most popular, eaten by 18% of all children, while only 1% of children chose fruit or fruit juice and only 2% chose vegetables or salad.

In conclusion, the report states that *'the failure of the national nutritional standards...to have a substantial positive influence on food choices justifies a call for alternative strategies.'* It adds, *'The most likely way to ensure healthy eating in schools is to constrain choice to healthy options.'*

■ **Details of the research study can be found at: www.food.gov.uk/science/101717/schoolmealsresearch**

New law to control illegal meat

A top food law barrister, John Pointing, has proposed a new law that would make it a criminal offence to introduce unfit meat or other unfit food into the human food chain. The proposal follows a series of legal cases which have failed, or in which local authorities have become embroiled in elaborate and expensive prosecutions for conspiracy to defraud. Such cases sometimes founder due to the challenge of proving that more than one person deliberately conspired to defraud the public.

These rules were not designed to deal with the deliberate introduction of unfit meat into the human food chain by individual operatives, such as an abattoir worker, a meat packer or someone from a meat delivery company.

The other legal avenue for enforcement officers is to enforce the Food Safety Act which, as Pointing explains, *'is designed to deal with regulatory offences. It is not well-equipped to deal with people who are engaged in systematic criminal activity, who have no respect for regulations and no intention of following them.'*

Prosecutions under the Food Safety Act are therefore unlikely, and result only in light fines. The result of the hole in the regulatory net is that environmental health officers and local authorities often struggle to combat the highly lucrative trade in meat unfit for humans.

Recent unfit meat cases – in Rotherham; Amber Valley, Derbyshire; Ceredigion and Tower Hamlets – involved over 1,000 tonnes of poultry waste, destined for pet food, being illegally diverted into the human food system. In Derbyshire, it is estimated that more than 450 tonnes of rotten poultry was sold through shops, supermarkets, schools, hospitals and pubs, undetected for at least five years.

Under the new law proposed by Pointing, of the law firm Field Chambers, a prosecution would need to establish criminal intent and would relate to the legal definition of 'fitness' under the Food Safety Act. It would not be necessary for the prosecution to prove that there had been a conspiracy to defraud.

The new law could cover illegal slaughter, smokies, trading in illegally imported meat (including bush meat), and false Halal meat. It would become an offence to produce or trade in such products, so that food brokers and middle-men, who are not currently legally regulated, would all be covered.

Law firm Field Chambers will draft the new Meat Crimes Bill, planned for introduction into Parliament in 2005. The move has already won the backing of Roger Williams, MP for Ceredigion; Unison, the UK's largest trades union; the National Farmers Union of Wales, the London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre, and Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.

A blueprint for inaction

So how does the government intend to help schools to overcome the problems of poor nutrition? Its *Healthy Schools Blueprint* published in September by DfES advocates a 'whole school approach', long called for by campaigners and public health experts.

The stated intention of the Blueprint is to provide schools with guidance to develop their own programmes for improving health. However, disappointingly, it provides little in terms of practical guidance on how changes might be brought about – for instance information on designing food

service contracts to ensure health is always a top consideration.

Also, despite agreeing that *'Promotion of food and drink high in fat and/or sugar can negatively influence children's food choices and lead to an unhealthy diet,'* the Blueprint does not offer guidance on such promotions in the school context.

Neither did the DfES offer extra funding to improve school food provision, in contrast to the government's £1bn pledge for school sport.

Without a strong lead from government, schools are in danger of failing to have the means to protect the health of their pupils.

■ **The *Healthy Schools Blueprint* is available at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving**



Treat or trick?

More than one in four adults in the UK are trying to lose weight and many of us are watching our fat and sugar consumption. With shoppers turning away from calories, food manufacturers are increasingly describing sugary, fatty foods as 'treats', encouraging us to indulge whilst remaining guilt free.

Food companies are on the defensive. They fear government action to limit the promotion of unhealthy foods to children, and to improve nutrition information on product labels.

Under the auspices of the Food and Drink Federation, the lobby group that represents the food manufacturers, many companies have promised to improve their labels voluntarily.

No-one can argue with moves to provide better labelling – it gives customers information and choice. However, the usefulness of that information relies very much on the intent of the company providing it.

Walkers, for instance, says that it will provide 'more informative labelling' by

displaying a panel giving 'lunchbox suggestions'. Lunch, according to Walkers, should contain fruit, vegetables, a sandwich, a yogurt, a drink and 'a little treat'. Not surprisingly, the 'little treat' is a bag of Walkers crisps.

The word 'treat' has become the defence of companies and advertisers pushed onto the back foot by criticisms of the high fat, sugar and salt levels in so many processed food products – particularly those targeted at children. Whilst many of us might associate the word 'treat' with home-cooked food, a dinner with friends, or a special delicacy, the snack industry has appropriated it to mean 'foods that health



Children, we are led to believe, will refuse to drink plain milk or eat dessert without added sauce or toppings. Nesquik's 'wholesome everyday treat' is a sugary flavoured concoction with which parents can turn 'an ordinary glass of milk into a delicious treat your kids will love'. Meanwhile, rival Robinson's encourages parents to add sugary syrup to milk, for 'the healthy treat mums have been waiting for'.

organisations criticise, but which we would like to associate with a positive feeling'.

We took a look at how the word 'treat' is used in food marketing, looking at marketing brochures, adverts, websites, food labels and in-store promotions. We found many examples of the word 'treat' in marketing for fatty and sugary snack foods (and even in one

promotion for cigars). Many treats were also targeted at the pet market – biscuits

Nestlé is keen to associate the idea of a 'treat' with its products, including Nestlé Crunch chocolate. The same description is used by other chocolate manufacturers such as Cadbury to describe small versions of its regular bars, sold in 'treat size'.



Online shopping reveals how far the word 'treat' has seeped into food marketing, and how it is nearly always associated with snacks and confectionery.

Search for the description 'treat' in Tesco online shopping and you will find only sweetened buns, muffins, shortbread and cream-filled biscuits.

On Sainsbury's website, 'treat' is associated with ice-cream sauce and confectionery. Only two products might be considered healthy – Yeo Valley Tropical Treats yogurt and Müller Yogz Treat Size – both dairy products. Sadly, both are also relatively high in sugar.



Sweet biscuits are routinely described by the grocery trade as 'everyday treats'.

We found this description used to market many types of biscuit, cookie and cake bar, including Jaffa Snack Packs and Cadbury Mallos and cheap supermarket own-brand custard creams.

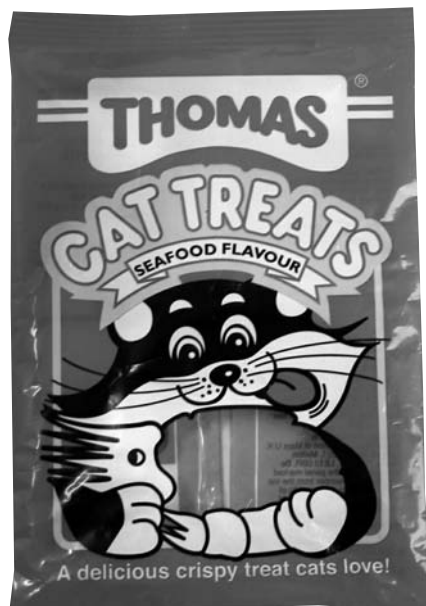
and shaped snacks with added vitamins designed for cats, dogs, parrots and fish. Our surveyors commented that some of the pet treats appeared to be much healthier than the treats designed for humans!

We failed to find a single 'treat' promotion associated with fruit or vegetables, with meal products or other foods that dietitians would

recommend that people eat every day. Yet many of the fatty and sugary products were described with the phrase 'everyday treat'. The majority of foods described as a 'treat' were highly sugary and fatty snacks such as sweet biscuits, doughnuts, crisps and confectionery.

Recognising that language evolves, we would like to suggest a 21st century definition for the word 'treat' – 'Treat means unhealthy. It is a covert adjective used by the food industry to describe foods high in calories, sugar or fat, and which they would like you to eat every day'.

Walkers' idea of a 'treat' is an everyday addition of crisps to your lunchbox. The company's version of a balanced diet is one which always contains their salty, fatty product. Walkers also hopes that its upmarket crisps, such as Slow Roasted Lamb and Mint Flavour Sensations will be more than an occasional indulgence, describing them as an 'everyday treat'.



Treats are widely available in pet food shops, but often seem healthier than their human counterparts.

These cat treats contain cereals and fish oils and are fortified with vitamins. The label states: 'Why not teach your cat to come to you? Just give one or two treats each time your cat responds when you call – soon she'll be waiting for you attentively.'

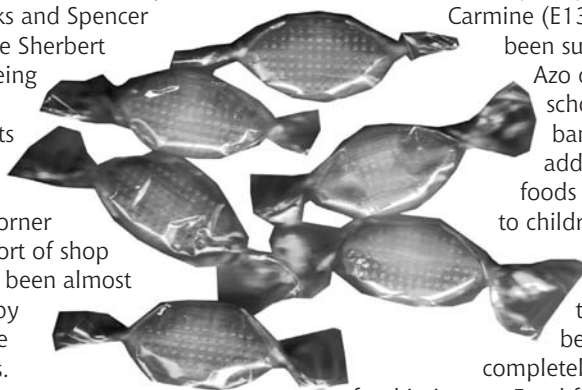
This is presumably just what food advertisers think when they target unhealthy 'treat' food at children. 'Just give one or two treats each time the child responds... soon she'll be hooked on your brand and pestering for more.'

Badvertisement

Don't be a lemon!

Marks and Spencer display a wide range of own-brand sweets and chocolates at their checkouts, encouraging last minute 'treat' purchases as well as 'pester power'. Marks and Spencer describe these Sherbert Lemons as being based on the sorts of sweets one would find in a 'traditional corner shop' – the sort of shop that has now been almost swept away by the rise of the supermarkets.

Maybe we should be grateful for Marks and Spencer for protecting our traditional sweets from the march of progress. They say they have 'recreated these nostalgic favourites' to give us a 'taste of the good old days'.



And sure enough, these sweets have been coloured the old fashioned way, with a couple of traditional 'Azo' dyes – Quinoline Yellow (E104) and Indigo

Carmine (E132). There has been such concern over Azo dyes that many school caterers have banned the additives from any foods or drinks served to children. The Soil Association is also calling for these additives to be banned completely from school food in its new Food for Life campaign.

Wouldn't it be refreshing if M&S could stop using artificial colourings and flavourings and find another way to make their products appealing?

US targets China for junk food

The US Department of Agriculture is urging food manufacturers to consider China as a vast and potentially lucrative market for processed food.

In a USDA report they urge companies to participate in the 'strong economic growth combined with higher disposable incomes' which will raise demand for processed foods – offering opportunities for US exporters of processing machinery, packaging, ingredients and American processed foods.

The report notes recent food scares in China associated with fake baby formula and tainted alcoholic drinks, which have led to reduced consumer confidence in locally-produced processed foods and a strong demand for imported and well-known branded products.

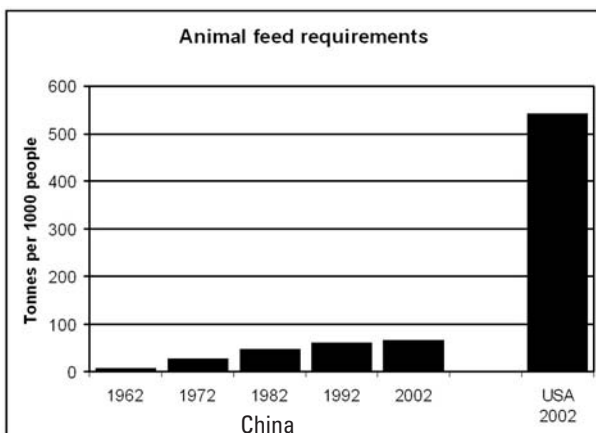
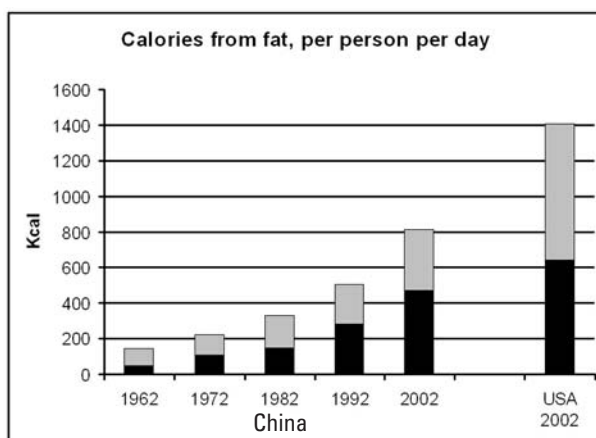
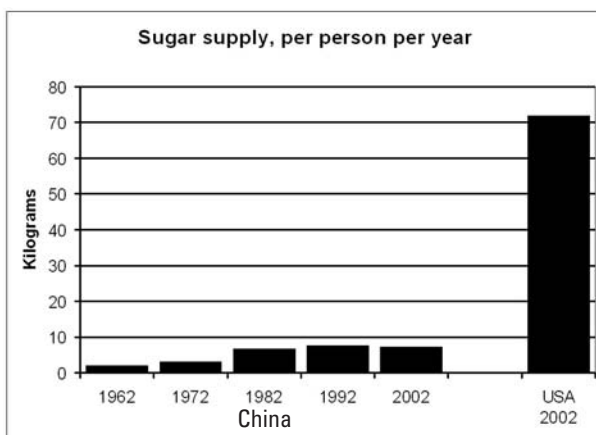
Local manufacturing, says the report, needs upgrading and is open to foreign investor partnerships. Food manufacturing in China is currently unable to meet the growth in demand for processed foods, and will not play a role in exporting onto world markets for several years.

Chinese households were estimated to spend over US\$200bn on food in 2002, and the figure is increasing at the rate of nearly 12% per annum. Food eaten out of the home is also increasing, especially among higher income groups who are spending more on meat, dairy and confectionery items and are favouring chain

If China ate American diets... the amount of sugar entering the food supply would have to increase 100-fold! The calories from fat in the average Chinese person's diet would nearly double, much of this from meat. Crops grown for animal feed would have to increase by 70-fold.

restaurants such as Pizza Hut, says the report. Meanwhile, China is in the process of becoming a member of the World Trade Organization, which will require the country to lower its import tariffs, allowing more processed food to enter the country at competitive prices.

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service GAIN Report CH4606, 21 June 2004.



Commercial orchards face the axe

Traditional orchards have been saved from the axe, according to new advice published by the UK government. But new and commercial orchards still have no sign of a reprieve.

Orchards are under threat due to uncertainty about whether they will qualify for support payments under a new European agricultural support system, the Single Payment Scheme.

As reported in the April-June edition of the *Food Magazine*, this new scheme allows fruit and vegetable producers to benefit from Common Agricultural Policy payments for the first time, to the tune of £220 per hectare. But the UK government had indicated that growers of apples, pears, plums and cherries were to be excluded. Orchard owners realised that only if they grubbed up their trees by January 1st would they receive payments, even if the ground was left unused.

Owners of 'traditional' orchards have now been assured by the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that they can qualify for help from the Single Payment Scheme, with additional financial support available from the new European Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

However, Sustain (the alliance for better food and farming) has said that DEFRA is failing to support new and commercial orchard owners, who may still be forced to grub up their trees in order to qualify for payments. European rules prevent payments for land on which permanent crops, such as trees, are grown at densities higher than 50 trees per hectare. However, land that can also be grazed – such as sparsely-planted traditional orchards – could be eligible for payments.

'At a time when we should all be eating more fruit and veg, we are especially concerned that commercial fruit growers may continue to grub up their orchards,' said Vicki Hird, policy director for Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming. *'DEFRA should be committed to helping UK farmers produce local and sustainably grown fruit to supply the growing market. It is good that traditional orchards are being helped, but it is doing little to stop the decline in orchards in the UK.'*

The total area of all types of orchard in the UK has dropped from 110,590 hectares in 1950 to 25,998 hectares in 2000.

■ **Contact Vicki Hird at Sustain, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF, vh@sustainweb.org, tel: 020 7837 1228.**

Ofcom report agrees: TV ads can harm health

In a carefully-worded report commissioned by the government's new TV regulator, Ofcom, the authors confirm that 'regulation of TV advertising has a role to play' in solving the problem of obesity among children.

The report also acknowledges that children watch a lot of TV advertising during non-children's TV programming, making regulation within a particular period such as 4pm-6pm less effective than a general control.

Ofcom's report confirms that the categories of foods most frequently advertised in recent studies were confectionery, savoury snacks, fast food stores, soft drinks and sweet breakfast cereals. The pattern of foods being advertised was reflected in the patterns of foods being eaten by children, especially by those who were obese, says the report. However, Ofcom also notes that total TV advertising expenditure for food products has declined from £669m in 1999 to £522m in 2003.

The report does not make a specific policy recommendation, and says that controlling advertising to children 'as a single approach' to reducing obesity would be 'highly unlikely to succeed', and gives a number of suggestions for other interventions that should be considered – such as improving access to healthy foods in areas of deprivation, improving food provision in schools, and policies to help consumers through labelling and pricing of foods.

The report also repeats a statement made by Gerard Hastings that simply banning advertising would be 'at best, ineffective' without a more radical approach 'limiting the amount of promotion, product development,

pricing and advantageous distribution that is put behind the shoulder of unhealthy options.'

The report raises the problem of defining what is a healthy food and what is an unhealthy food.

But in the end it concludes, as did the Hastings report issued by the Food Standards Agency last year, that TV advertising has a modest, direct effect on children's food choices. There may also be larger, indirect effects which encourage children's obesity.

Despite these conclusions, Ofcom has remained very cautious. Although the report acknowledges that Ofcom has a responsibility to ensure that advertising does not harm children, it also must ensure 'a healthy broadcasting ecology' which in Ofcom language means weighing the benefits of regulation against the costs to industry.

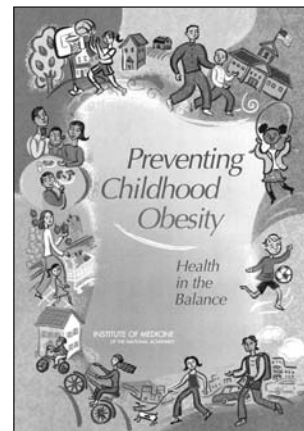
At the time of publishing the report, Ofcom stated that it is waiting for the Department of Health to publish its long-expected White Paper on Public Health, and for the Food Standards Agency to complete its nutritional profiling of food products. Only then, says Ofcom, will it start assessing the conclusions of the report and the extent to which these should be reflected in the Advertising Code.

Meanwhile, Ofcom states that it will undertake a public consultation later this year, designed to 'take into account the views expressed by parents' which, asserts Ofcom, do not support an outright ban on television advertising.

■ See: www.ofcom.org.uk/media_office/latest_news/nr_20040722

US Institute of Medicine urges tougher action on child obesity

In the US, rates of childhood obesity are at an all-time high, effectively demonstrating where the UK may end up if we do not take decisive action now to improve children's health. The Food Commission continues to monitor initiatives in America that seek to improve children's health – hoping to learn from progressive projects and policies that may be applicable in the UK.



In recent weeks, the US Institute of Medicine (IoM) has called for strong government intervention and increased corporate responsibility to combat child and adolescent obesity in America.

The IoM report urges the US Department of Agriculture (which governs food and nutrition in the US) to set nutritional standards for all school foods, including vending machine items, and calls on the food and drink industry voluntarily to limit their advertising to children or face Federal Trade Commission sanctions.

Fast food stores should extend their menus to offer more nutritious products and should provide full calorie and nutrient information on their products, the committee says.

It also urges government agencies to help the most disadvantaged communities in the US to access affordable and healthy food.

US schools are urged to find alternative sources of funding to reduce their dependence on selling 'pouring rights' to beverage companies and gaining profits from soft drink sales. Schools should also improve opportunities for physical activity, aiming to have all students take part in at least 30 minutes moderate to vigorous activity daily. School health services should monitor children's growth and body mass index (BMI) annually and report to students and families.

Parents and carers should limit access to televisions, computers and videos to below two hours per day. Families and community groups should press for safer streets, more sidewalks and bike paths, and more investment in parks and play areas to provide more sports and games facilities.

■ <http://www.iom.edu/project.asp?id=5867>

Children's Food Bill gets 226 MPs



The Children's Food Bill, a private member's bill currently gaining ground in parliament, has now earned support from an impressive 226 MPs.

The bill calls for a range of positive measures to improve

children's diets, including protecting children from the marketing of unhealthy foods, improving school meals standards, banning unhealthy foods from school vending machines, improved teaching about food and stronger promotion by government of healthy foods like fruit and vegetables.

Whilst it will not become law in this session of parliament, the bill will be reintroduced early in 2005 and the campaign is set to build on its successes over the coming months.

■ See the leaflet in this magazine or visit the website at www.childrensfoodbill.org.uk

Thirst for bottled water fuels food miles



In a Food Commission survey of London supermarkets and other food outlets selling bottled water, we looked at how far the water had travelled to quench the thirst of Londoners.

Most food retailers that we surveyed stocked the same types of bottled water – mainly waters from Scotland, Derbyshire, Wales and France.

Over 10,000 miles from source to consumer. Is this the most well-travelled water in the world?

Evian and Vittel were the most commonly available French waters. Vittel travels approximately 400 miles (645 km) to reach the UK, and Evian travels approximately 460 miles (740 km).

The Scottish bottled waters, whilst from our own mainland, travel a similar distance to those sourced in France – typically 400 miles (645 km).

The closest we could get to London in all the waters we surveyed was Cotswold Spring Water, available in Asda, and bottled in Bath – about 100 miles (175 km).

All of these bottled waters mean extra trucks on the road, extra fuel use and extra carbon dioxide emissions, when Londoners could simply have turned on their taps!

Some waters also came from further afield than the UK or Europe, with one water from a small London retailer coming from Canada and one water (shown on the left) coming over 10,000 miles from Fiji.



The trade in bottled water doesn't go in one way either. In 1998 the UK imported £65 million of bottled water, and exported £5.7 million.

Pamper your pets with PetRefresh water, especially imported from the US.

Our investigations also revealed the absurd extent to which we now believe that bottled water is better than tap water. Not only can humans clock up their water miles, so can pets! These products are from the US, but have been seen on sale in pet shops in Scotland. PetRefresh water for your pooch, parrot or kitty!

GM food reappearing on our shelves

Vigilant shoppers are finding food products with genetically modified ingredients are creeping back onto supermarket shelves after years when the big stores denied they were selling any GM-containing foods.

According to the environmental pressure group Friends of the Earth, at least five products are currently on sale, and most of the big retailers are stocking these foods. A typical example is Betty Crocker Bac-Os non-meat 'bacon' bits, on sale in five leading supermarkets.

The campaigning organisation Five Year Freeze says that it is concerned that supermarkets may be relaxing their longheld stand against stocking GM foods, and is urging shoppers to look carefully at labels. If you do not want to see these products on supermarket shelves, complain to the store manager and to the company headquarters.

More details from Five Year Freeze, tel 020 7837 0642 (www.fiveyearfreeze.org).



INGREDIENTS: DEFATTED SOYA FLOUR*, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED VEGETABLE OIL, SALT, SUGAR, FLAVOURING. COLOURS: ALLURA RED AND CARAMEL COLOUR, SOY SAUCE (CONTAINS SOYA BEANS PRODUCED FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED SOYA), HYDROLYZED VEGETABLE PROTEIN (CONTAINS SOYA PROTEIN PRODUCED FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED SOYA), CONTAINS SOYA AND WHEAT INGREDIENTS. *GENETICALLY MODIFIED.

Schwartz claim that their Seasoned Salad Topping will add 'a new dimension to your salads' – although we doubt they're referring to the four different GM ingredients which you'll be sprinkling over your lettuce.

Bac-Os contain three different GM ingredients, as revealed in the small text (above, shown over twice actual size).

Watch out for GM products

Product	Supermarket
Taiko Vegetarian Sushi with Pickled Vegetables	Waitrose
Supercook Easy Colour Spray	Sainsbury, Somerfield, Safeway
Orville Redenbacher Popcorn Cakes (caramel flavour)	Tesco
Schwartz Bacon Flavour Salad Topping	Sainsbury, Tesco, Morrison, Safeway, Co-op
Betty Crocker Bac-Os	Sainsbury, Tesco, Safeway, Budgens, Morrisons

Source: Five Year Freeze Freeze Update 22, Aug-Oct 2004.

Note that stores may change their suppliers, and product formulations may change.

Regulators say Frosties are not healthy

Kellogg's has been told by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) to withdraw advertising implying that Frosties cereal is healthy. In its adjudication, the ASA said that because Frosties had a high sugar content, they concluded that 'the implication was misleading'.

The Food Commission believes that this landmark ruling has significant implications for the regulation of food advertising in the UK. Firstly, the ASA has acknowledged that an individual product can be classified as 'high' in a particular ingredient, such as sugar. And secondly, that associating a healthy eating message with a high-sugar product is inappropriate – especially where that product is targeted at children, who do not have the nutritional knowledge to unpick and interpret such messages.

The cinema advertisement for Kellogg's Frosties cereals showed boys playing football, with the slogan 'train hard, eat right and earn your stripes'.

The ASA ruled that the claim 'eat right' misleadingly implied that Frosties are healthy when the product is in fact 40% sugar, or 12g per 30g serving. Kellogg's was told not to include the claim in future adverts for Frosties.

The company defended the product's nutritional value, saying it was high in simple and complex carbohydrates, and low in fat. Of

course, high in simple carbohydrates means high in sugar.

What could the ASA ruling on Kellogg's Frosties mean for other food companies marketing their high-sugar and high-fat products using healthy-sounding descriptions? See box below.

Tony the Tiger hires a PR firm

This is not the first time sugar information has been manipulated to give a Kellogg's product a healthier image.

When Kellogg's launched new Reduced Sugar Frosties in August, the press release for the launch described the product as a healthier alternative to eating a banana – stating that a banana contains 21g of sugar.

The Food Commission quickly wrote to Hill & Knowlton, the PR company hired to promote the new product, expressing our concern that they were circulating misleading nutritional information – pointing out that the sugars in a banana are not an appropriate comparison. After all, health concerns about sugar consumption relate to extrinsic sugars such as those found in Frosties, not to the intrinsic sugars contained in the cells of fruit.

Our concern was met with a stony silence. But why should Hill & Knowlton know or care about such nutritional details? Because they describe themselves as expert advisors to the



Comparing the sugar content of Reduced Sugar Frosties with bananas is, to put it bluntly, bananas.

food industry on European food law, food safety, consumer protection, food labelling, advertising and sales promotion and corporate and social responsibility. No doubt for a fat fee, Hill & Knowlton says it can provide the following service for companies such as its current clients – the European Breakfast Cereals Association, Benecol, Kellogg's, Novartis and Proctor & Gamble:

- Provide strategic advice on how to reach political and regulatory objectives
- Ensure control and cost-effectiveness for any lobbying campaign by early involvement in the decision-making process
- Cover all the European institutions and all stages of the legislative process
- Identify pressure points and key players in the process by analysing the political, economic and social aspects of an issue
- Provide tailored lobbying strategies with and/or on behalf of the client
- Assist the client in the preparation of position papers
- Set up contact programmes with key decision-makers

Surely this portfolio ought to stop Hill & Knowlton undermining the five-a-day message by painting fruit in an unfavourable light?

We also wonder if the very launch of Reduced Sugar Frosties was another clever bit of spin. We have yet to see any of this product on sale. Reduced Sugar Frosties were launched at a time when food companies were under fire in the media for the fat and sugar content of many products targeted at children. Kellogg's stock response was to say that the reduced sugar variety offered greater choice. A quick survey by the Food Commission revealed that, in supermarkets offering online grocery shopping, only Tesco offers the reduced sugar variety. Sainsbury's, Asda and Waitrose do not.

New products require considerable promotion to ensure that they are seen and tried. It is no good saying that a company offers choice if the products are not available for consumers to choose.

Testing the test case

Sugar Puffs are nearly half sugar (49%) – five times as much sugar as the Food Standards Agency classifies as 'a lot' (10%). This breakfast cereal is marketed to children with free toys and collectables. In the light of their ruling that Frosties should not be marketed with the phrase 'eat right' due to its high sugar content, what would the ASA now say about Quaker describing Sugar Puffs as 'nutritious'?

Real Fruit Winders are described by Kellogg's on its vending website (www.kelloggsfoodservice.co.uk) as 'healthy confectionery' and 'the healthy treat mums have been waiting for'. Even if the 30% sugars in this product are largely from fruit, they are extrinsic sugars – the type that can damage teeth. Following the Frosties ruling, what would the ASA now have to say about this product being described as 'healthy'?

And what about all the other products marketed with healthy-sounding descriptions, but which contain high levels of fat, salt or sugar? The Advertising Standards Authority ruling on Frosties cereal could set a precedent. If it does, this will be a real opportunity to stop food companies associating healthy properties with fatty, sugary or salty foods – something that consumer groups such as the Food Commission have called for for years.

If you see advertisements in print, on television or at the cinema that focus on healthy-sounding properties – especially if the advertisement is aimed at children – please let us know. Tell us what the advert said, where it appeared and when (and send us a copy, if you can). If we think it is a good case, the Food Commission will submit a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority on your behalf.

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 considered by the Advertising Standards Authority in recent months.

? Get your little cub ready... for the dentist

The advertisement below is for Snoozoo, a 'nutritious bedtime drink' made by Horlicks, which appeared in the July edition of Sainsbury's in-store magazine. Looks cute enough. But the Advertising Standards Authority code of practice explicitly states that adverts '*...should not actively encourage [children] to eat or drink at or near bedtime*', out of concern for children's teeth, since sugary drinks consumed by children at bedtime can linger on the teeth, encourage bacteria and cause damage overnight.

The advert was sent to us by a concerned oral hygienist, who said that the advert '*does not remind parents to ensure that children should clean their teeth after consuming sugary Snoozoo and before going to bed*'. The only nutrition information visible is the phrase 'with calcium' on the front of the Snoozoo pack, which parents might well associate with good nutrition and healthy teeth. We calculate that a single serving of Snoozoo contains over one and a half teaspoons of added sugar (excluding milk sugars).

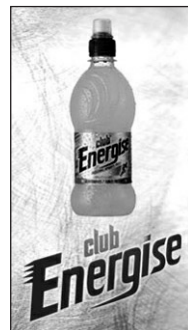
We have complained to the ASA that we think this Horlicks advertisement breaks the advertising code of practice. We will report on the result in a future *Food Magazine*.



X Over-egged claims for energy drink

The drinks manufacturer C&C group were hauled up for claiming that their energy drink Club Energise 'rehydrates seven times faster than water'. The complaint came from GlaxoSmithKline, makers of Lucozade Energy.

The advertisers said the drink was aimed at people who undertook strenuous physical exercise and lost significant amounts of fluid as a result, and submitted a couple of studies in support of their claim – neither of which involved tests of the Club Energise drink.



The ASA concluded that the evidence did not substantiate the claim, and told the advertisers to seek advice from the ASA's Copy Advice Team before advertising again.

X Not-so-pure butter

A complaint was upheld against Kerrygold for a press advertisement claiming that its butter is '100% pure'.

The ad showed a tub of butter between two plates of crumpets with a halo above the tub. At the bottom it stated 'Nothing added, nothing taken away. Just 100% pure spreadable butter.'

In fact, the product contained 2% added salt. Kerrygold was told by the ASA that the message was misleading.

■ For discussion of a landmark ASA ruling on Kellogg's Frosties, see page 15.



Badvertisement

Say 'nuts!' to the allergy risk

One theory to explain the rise of peanut allergy, especially among children, is that the allergic reaction may be induced by frequent exposure to peanut ingredients in food.

Peanuts and peanut oil are often used as ingredients in processed food. And even before babies start eating solid food, they can still be exposed to peanut extracts in the form of skin creams, or nipple creams used by breastfeeding mothers.



Parents are therefore advised to avoid feeding potentially allergenic food to their young children, especially common allergens such as sesame seeds and peanuts.

But food manufacturer Osem has paid little heed to these warnings. These Bamba snacks, which we purchased in Sainsbury's, feature a skateboarding baby. The name 'Bamba' suggests that this is a product suitable for small children. Yet the product is 49% peanut.

Do we need to be buying plant sterols?

Do healthy people need to eat food with added plant sterols, like Flora pro-activ or Benecol?

Plant sterols are currently being lauded as a natural, cholesterol-busting wonder ingredient, and can be found in several premium-price margarines, milk products and yogurts. They are present naturally in small quantities in many fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, cereals, beans, and other plant foods containing fats and oils, and they can be sold commercially as supplements or added as a component of 'functional' foods.

There are over 60 types of plant sterol, but the most common form is beta-sitosterol. Plant sterols are almost identical in chemical structure to cholesterol and are processed by the body in the same way. They function as cholesterol-lowering agents in blood by blocking the absorption of cholesterol from food during digestion and also by blocking the re-absorption of cholesterol manufactured in the liver.

The American Heart Association warns that products with added plant sterols are

intended for people who want or need to lower their blood cholesterol levels. It says that patients on cholesterol lowering medication should use these foods in consultation with their health care provider. In particular it advises that the foods may not be appropriate for children or for pregnant and breast-feeding women.

Randomised trials have shown that typical consumption of foods with added plant sterols (contributing an extra two to three grams of plant sterols each day) can also lower blood concentrations of valuable antioxidants, such as beta-carotene by about 25%, alpha-carotene by 10%, and vitamin E by 8%, and people who are taking these products are urged to consume more fruit and vegetables to compensate for these losses.

Interestingly, most trials of the plant sterol enriched foods which show that they do have an effect on blood cholesterol do not directly compare eating these products with eating a healthy diet rich in fruit and vegetables, although the companies state that the benefits of the products are found when eaten 'as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle'.

But Flora tells us that once you start eating these products you shouldn't ever stop: *'Missing out on your daily intake of Flora pro-activ for a day or two will not cause a problem. However, remember that plant sterols will only actively prevent the absorption of cholesterol if consumed on a regular basis i.e. at least two meals a day is preferable.'*

There are some doubts about their effectiveness: In controlled studies dietary changes which include these products can reduce total cholesterol by 10 to 15%, but in subjects who were free to supervise their overall diet and use of the products (i.e.

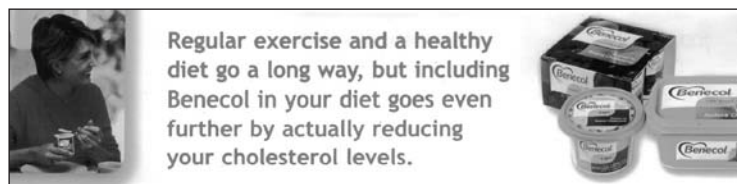


Plant sterols can 'dramatically reduce' cholesterol levels during controlled trials. They may also dramatically reduce the uptake of essential antioxidants.

people living normal lives, like those who buy such products off supermarket shelves), less than half this reduction is achieved.

The American Heart Association is also cautious, suggesting that no studies have shown long-term heart benefits, and these products should not give people a false sense of security. Basic diet and lifestyle changes, as recommended for years, rather than one easy change, are advised. The British Heart Foundation agrees, suggesting that *'however effective sterols are in helping to control cholesterol levels, it is vital that people also eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and fish, stop smoking and increase their activity to reduce their overall risk of coronary heart disease.'*

For people with normal levels of blood cholesterol there is little advantage gained from eating these products. A healthy diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and especially grains, nuts, beans and seeds, will provide a modest amount of plant sterols – as well as a host of other beneficial nutrients – reducing the need to take high doses through specialised (and expensive) manufactured products.



Benecol extols the virtues of its product but also gives some very outdated advice, such as telling consumers to avoid cholesterol rich foods such as eggs, shellfish and offal. Whilst this may seem to make sense, eating cholesterol has a surprisingly small effect on our cholesterol levels. Consumption of fats, especially saturated fats, are widely recognised as the prime cause of rising cholesterol levels.

Some foods naturally rich in plant sterols (per 100 grams of the food)

Avocado	80mg
Walnuts	70mg
Almonds	120mg
Soya beans	160mg
Olive oil	220mg
Peanuts	220mg
Sunflower seeds	530mg
Wheat germ oil	559mg
Sesame seeds	710mg
Corn oil	970mg

■ Figures from USDA nutrition database



reviews

Food Wars: The global battle for mouths, minds and markets

T Lang & M Heasman
Earthscan (www.earthscan.co.uk), £19.99
ISBN 1-85383-702-4

This solid and well-referenced book (50 pages of references!) is as good an analysis of the current struggle for control of food policy as a reader is likely to find for a decade. The struggle – and hence the ‘wars’ of the title – is between the forces representing capital investment in our current food production methods and the forces of public health allied to those producers who offer alternative, more sustainable approaches to growing and processing food.

One of the book’s strengths lies in its development of a language with which to analyse this struggle and move the argument forward. The traditional approach to agriculture and food supply is described as ‘productionist’, based on the 20th Century approach to chemicalisation of agriculture, industrialisation of food processing and the globalisation of supplies, markets and diets.

The productionist model is being replaced, argue Lang and Heasman, with a model based on exploiting biological technology – a ‘life sciences paradigm’ – which shifts the focus of industrial endeavour into genetic technology, gene-nutrient interactions and nutraceuticals while leaving the control of food policy largely in the hands of the same corporations.

The alternative future offered by the authors is an ‘ecologically integrated’ model of production which uses biological knowledge to assist in the long-term sustainability of food production, a ‘whole farm’ systems approach and a reduction in the use of non-renewable resources. Only an ecological approach will ensure both human health and environmental health.

In short, the book seeks to give more intellectual muscle to the organic movement and its fellow travellers, the better to resist the arguments of the modern multinationals. It does so in several key areas: the defence of public health, the prevention of environmental degradation, the promotion of consumers’ needs, the reduction of social inequalities and the promotion of democratic governance.

An ambitious task, but this is where the book’s importance lies. Integrating the different arguments posed by the various ‘alternative’ movements – be they green activists, health advocates, consumer



a few buts – the book tends to err on the rose-tinted side, especially through a lack of full consideration of the role of capital in driving the mechanics of production. For example, in flow charts which are designed to show how the three production models affect human health, the productionist model clearly identifies the role of capital influencing agriculture, processing and distribution of food. In the life science model capital does not feature – yet it can hardly be absent from that system. And in the ecologically integrated model, capital is represented in three ways, as social capital, natural capital and economic capital – as if this latter form was a benign force for good. But financial capital, unless entirely under democratic control, has a compelling need to obtain returns on investment, and those returns mean that the system has to produce a surplus that can be creamed off, creating inequalities and debt, and driving intensification in agriculture, and efficiencies through mass production, mechanisation and deskilling of labour. The role of capital encapsulates the conflict between private interest and public good.

The fault is not a fatal one: within the purpose of the book it would not be difficult to add a section dealing with democratisation of the ownership and control of capital, perhaps borrowing from the work of the New Economics Foundation or similar theorists. But if this were to be included it would expose the higher political implications behind the authors’ preferred solution. Whereas we can readily accept the desirability and feasibility of making the food industry more accountable to consumer demands, and can imagine it happening within our lifetime, we might find it harder to believe that the same can be demanded from the investment banks and shareholding institutions whose operations are virtually invisible to the majority of people, but whose influence extends throughout the governing bodies of the world’s largest economies.

representatives, socialists or animal welfare lobbyists – requires a delicate but confident finesse, and Lang and Heasman effectively pull it off.

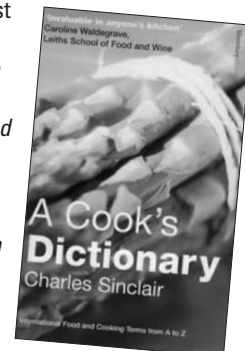
But – and there have to be

A Cook’s Directory International food & cooking terms from A to Z

Charles Sinclair, Bloomsbury 2004.
ISBN 0 7475 7226 7. £20.00.
(www.bloomsbury.com/reference)

This directory lists almost every conceivable food item, cooking process and ingredient. On the first page we have **Aam ka achar** (*South Asia: A type of mango pickle. Halved unripe mangoes are mixed with fenugreek, turmeric, asafoetida, dried red chillies and salt, allowed to rest, then covered with warm mustard oil and kept warm until matured*) and on the last page **Zwyczajna** (*Poland: A hard sausage made with coarsely chopped pork, seasoned, packed into casings and knotted in long links*).

A fascinating and useful reference book, but probably not one to read in a single sitting.



Flavor Perception

AJ Taylor and DD Roberts (eds)
Blackwell (www.blackwellpublishing.com),
£99.50. ISBN 1-4051-1627-7

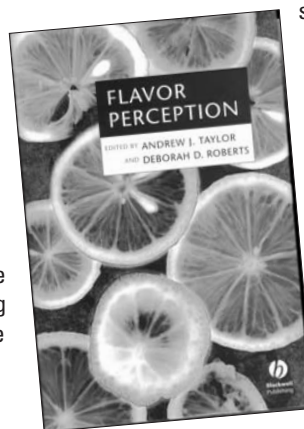
An expensive, scientific book for academic libraries, Flavor Perception will interest biologists, psychologists and food technologists, and will be an aid to food

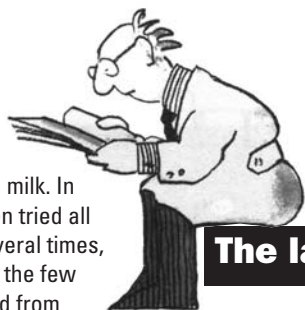
companies trying to boost sales of their products.

One of the more interesting chapters for the non-specialist is one (by AA Blake) concerning how children learn food preferences. It gives a valuable account of the original experiments that led to the belief that, left to their own devices, children will choose a healthy diet when offered a wide array of foods. The experiment, run for a period of six

years in the 1930s, offered children some thirty or forty different foods but, significantly, none of these were ‘junk’ – no confectionery, no salty, fatty snacks, no desserts or soft drinks. The author notes that the experiment would be impossible to repeat today.

Children did choose some odd combinations, including a breakfast consisting of a pint of





orange juice with a bowl of minced liver, followed by a supper of eggs, bananas and milk. In the first weeks all the children tried all the foods available, often several times, but gradually they settled for the few they preferred, which differed from child to child. The children thrived and appeared to be meeting their energy and nutrient needs. Food patterns occasionally changed: for example after illness it was noted that children ate more raw beef, carrots and beets.

Other experiments have shown that children can associate taste preferences with family situations – a disliking for the smell of alcoholic drinks is associated with family life that includes alcohol dependency or alcohol abuse. Similarly, threats and coercion will put a child off, so that parental interventions along the lines of ‘eat your broccoli or I will get cross’ or ‘you must eat your broccoli if you want to have pudding’ both give the child a negative association with the broccoli, including broccoli’s taste and texture.

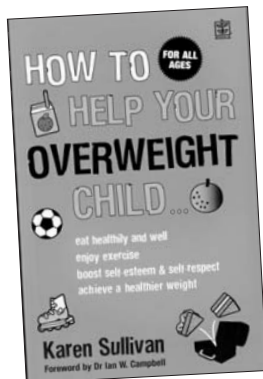
How to help your overweight child

K Sullivan, Rodale/Pan Macmillan
(www.rodale.co.uk), £12.99
ISBN 1-4050-7732-8.

Sparky, sympathetic and practical, this is a book for anxious parents wanting to do something positive without making their child overly neurotic about their body shape. It offers body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference charts to help monitor a child’s growth, it offers a glossary of advice under headings within a ‘troubleshooting’ section (e.g. binge eating, bulimia, bullying), and it adds a useful appendix of organisations able to provide further information and advice.

Although focusing heavily on parents’ roles and responsibilities, the book does include advice on how to be more active in getting schools to adopt health policies. It is also

sympathetic to the problems of dealing with environmental pressures, such as TV advertising, although it stops short of directing parents towards overt political activity to improve the food their children eat.



What the doctor reads

The latest research from the medical journals

Diet drinks may ruin appetite

Drinking low calorie sweetened drinks may actually increase calorie consumption at subsequent meal opportunities, according to experiments on laboratory rats. When offered a series of foods in which the sweetness was inconsistently associated with actual calories, rats lost the ability to judge how much they had eaten. After ten days of training with some meals sweetened using saccharin and some using glucose, rats then fed a standard piece of sugar-sweetened food subsequently ate four times as many calories at their next meal than animals that had never experienced artificial sweeteners like saccharin.

Similar results were shown using viscosity, in which a fixed number of calories was presented to laboratory animals either in a low viscosity form (like chocolate milk) or high viscosity form (like chocolate pudding), in addition to being allowed as much normal food as they wished. Over a period of two weeks the animals given the low viscosity meals gained more weight, indicating that they were less able to compensate for the calories taken in the form of a liquid.

Both results suggest that soft drinks, whether containing calories or not, can make it harder to regulate calorie intake through normal appetite mechanisms.

■ TL Davidson, SE Swithers, *Int J Obesity*, 28, 2004.

Soft drinks linked to women’s weight gain

A study of over 50,000 women has shown a link between increased consumption of sugar-sweetened soft drinks and a gain in weight over a four-year period.

Those women who did not increase their soft drinks consumption showed no significant weight gain, but those who increased soft drink consumption from one or fewer drinks per week to one or more drinks per day gained about 4.5kg (about 9lbs) after adjusting for different lifestyles and other aspects of their diets. Furthermore, women consuming one or more sugar-sweetened soft drinks per day had a 180% greater risk of type 2 diabetes compared with those who consumed less than one of these beverages per month.

■ Schulz MB, et al. *JAMA*, 292, 2004.

Mediterranean diets abandoned by young people, especially men

An analysis of the diets of residents of the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean has shown that adherence to the traditional Mediterranean diet was greater for older people, and was commoner among women. In all, less than half the Islanders (43%) were still eating traditional diets – high in olives and olive oil, pulses, cereals, fruits, vegetables and fish, with moderate wine drinking and relatively little meat and milk. Adherence to the Mediterranean diets was also associated with taking greater physical activity.

■ Tur, JA, *Brit J Nutr*, 92, 2004.

High cost of eating well

An analysis of the diets of nearly 1000 French adults has shown a close inverse relationship between the healthiness of the diet and the cost of the foods. For each additional 100g of fruit and vegetables in the household shopping purchases, the cost of the shopping was between 18c (12p) and 29c (20p) per day more expensive. For each additional 100g of fats and sugars the cost was between 5c (3p) and 40c (28p) per day cheaper.

■ A Drewnowski et al, *Am J Pub Health*, 94, 2004.

Students unaware of better diet

A study of food promotion interventions to promote lower-fat foods in secondary schools resulted in higher sales, even though students reported no dietary change. Twenty secondary schools in Minnesota were followed for two years, with half the schools making lower-fat versions of foods widely available and the other schools not changing their practices. Increased availability led to increased purchases (up 40% compared with less than 20% in the control schools), but there were no significant changes in the students’ self-reports of what they were eating.

■ SA French et al, *Am J Pub Health*, 94, 2004.

Not on the Label

Felicity Lawrence examines what really goes into the food on our plates in a series of undercover investigations that track some of the most popular foods we eat today. She discovers why beef waste ends up in chicken, why a third of apples are thrown away, and why supermarkets won't stock different varieties of wine unless they all taste the same. Investigative food writing at its best. £7.99



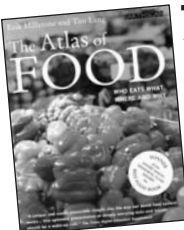
Shopped: The shocking power of British supermarkets

Joanna Blythman investigates the handful of supermarkets that now supply 80% of our groceries. Meticulously researched, this is a book that will make you angry at just how far the supermarkets have misled us, seducing us with apparent convenience, choice and value whilst destroying our farming heritage and food culture. £12.99



The Atlas of Food

The subtitle of this book is 'who eats what, where and why.' This extremely useful, well illustrated and comprehensive publication examines the food trade, food politics and new technologies, and their effects on the environment and human health. An ideal resource for secondary-school pupils, students, and anyone seeking facts and figures, and an overview of food production and its impact on our lives and livelihoods. £12.99



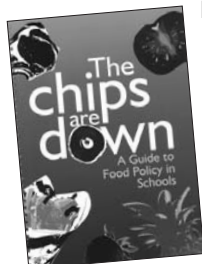
The Food Our Children Eat – 2nd edition

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



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



Dump the Junk!

Containing over 300 expert tips for how to encourage 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



Fast Food Nation

The bestseller that lifted the lid on the US fast food industry. Eric Schlosser explores how fake smells and tastes are created, talks to abattoir workers and explains how the fast food industry is transforming not only our diet but our landscape, economy, work-force and culture. Essential reading. £7.99



Broadcasting Bad Health

This Food Commission report sets out the case for why food marketing to children needs to be controlled, using illustrations, case studies and statistics from around the world. Available as free pdf file on website (see below) or in print for £10.00

Back issues of the Food Magazine

A full set of available back issues (numbers 50–65 and several older issues) is available for £30.00 (£40 overseas). Stocks are limited and some older issues can only be supplied as photocopies. Individual back issues cost £3.50 each.

Posters - now in full colour:

Food Additives, Children's Food, Food Labelling

Packed with essential information to help you and your family eat healthy, safe food these posters 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. Fully updated in 2004. Reduced rates available for bulk purchases.



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Should we let good food go to waste?

How can we let tonnes of perfectly good food be thrown away every day whilst there are still millions of people in the UK cannot afford to eat healthily, asks Alex Green from FareShare

Four million people are unable to eat well, due to low income and the expense of healthy foods such as low-salt and low-fat options and good quality fresh fruit and vegetables in comparison to cheap fatty and sugary products.

Over 2 million people are believed to be malnourished and 6.7 million are affected by low income – perhaps the most critical factor leading to food poverty. This is at a cost not only to the individual but also to society.

Policy makers and food providers should be working to ensure that a good range of balanced food is readily available to everybody. Access to good food and good health should not be influenced by postcode, age, ethnicity, social background or work status. Nor should it be a matter of very practical considerations, such as whether or not there are shops in your area, wheelchair access to shops, or affordable transport.

Many policy initiatives are focused on people with a low income and that is, of

course, very welcome. But we should also remember that there are a large number of people who effectively have no income at all, who often have no idea where their next meal is coming from. These are some of the most disadvantaged people in the UK.

FareShare is an organisation that provides a free food service to local charities that provide meals and other support services to disadvantaged people. We collect surplus food from the food and drink industry, and redistribute it to the people who need it the most. Food companies are pleased to donate stock that would otherwise be expensive to dispose of, especially with the tightening of regulations over landfill. They are able to integrate our service into their operations as a form of ethical waste management.

It is estimated that the UK food sector produces in excess of 17 million tonnes of waste per annum – 15% by food manufacturing, 21% by retailers, and the remainder by distributors, caterers and consumers.

In 2003, FareShare's staff and volunteers redistributed over 1,800 tonnes of food, contributing to some 2.5 million meals. Working in partnership with 250 local charities we helped to improve the health and well-being of around 12,000 homeless and vulnerable people.

Over the years, since it was first established by Crisis, the charity for homeless people, FareShare has become a sophisticated operation, with facilities that can now handle fresh produce as well as frozen and packet/canned foods, to ensure a balanced range of foods are distributed to charitable organisations.

FareShare is a charity, but it is also using its expertise to develop a range of social business models where all profits will be reinvested into local communities and projects. The service is clearly not a solution to food poverty, but it does offer vital relief and support to those most in need by providing good food at no cost.

However, we are often criticised by policy-makers, and sometimes characterised as a food dustbin, with rich food companies handing out old food

to the poor. Our message is: times have changed.

The food that we redistribute is of the highest quality. It has usually been designated as surplus simply due to over-production of a particular brand, mistakes in label printing, or because a load has become damaged – it is easier for a big food operation to give the food away than to re-pack a pallet.

We have developed our systems and processes by working in partnership with Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's and Check Mate International (CMI), a leading quality standards company. CMI carries out regular safety and standards checks at our depots. We work to the principle that we only take and redistribute food that is within its best before date and is still in a condition that we feel would be appropriate for anyone to eat and enjoy – rich or poor.

We also pay attention to the nutritional balance of products. Whilst we do not exclude luxury or 'treat' items such as chocolate and coffee, we never include them at the expense of being able to redistribute healthier items such as fruit, vegetables, milk and meat.

There is continuing concern that work such as ours may create a dependency culture, in which disadvantaged people come to rely on charity rather than their needs being permanently addressed by the state. We recognise this, and have taken steps to learn from experiences of food redistribution in other countries, such as food-charity projects in America. We saw that our best role was not to give food directly to individuals, but rather to the agencies who work with them. Money saved by charities benefiting from our service allows them to provide other services, such as training, medical advice and counselling, which allow vulnerable and excluded people to start to rebuild their lives.

There will always be waste food. And sadly, for the foreseeable future, there are likely to be thousands of people who cannot afford to eat well. Our task is to make sure that good food is not wasted, and that it reaches the people who need it the most.

■ **Contact FareShare, Unit H04, Tower Bridge Business Complex, 100 Clements Road, Bermondsey, London SE16 4DG. Tel: 020 7394 2468; email: enquiries@fareshare.org.uk**

FareShare redistributes high quality, surplus food to local charities who ensure it reaches those who need it the most.





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

My money, their gift

I was treated to a meal in a fashionable restaurant in London, but as a *Food Magazine* reader I couldn't resist looking at the bill (enclosed).

I was really surprised to see that the restaurant had casually added £1 'for charity'. I asked the waitress and she looked at me like I was muck, and said it was for blind children in India, and that the restaurant had a policy of making donations to needy causes.

I felt I couldn't make a fuss – at least not a big one as it would ruin the evening. But I felt as if I had been mugged.

C Kay, Bloomsbury, London

We agree that donations should be voluntary, and not tagged on to a restaurant bill. Zuma is a fashionable Kensington sushi restaurant where Russell Crowe got in a brawl a couple of years ago. It was founded by the daughter of Gulu Lalvani, founder of Binatone and estimated to have a personal fortune of £400m.

Flabbergasting facts!

I saw an article in *The Metro*, and wondered if you were aware of the fact that in some cases the same product has differing levels of sugar and salt depending on the country in which it is sold. Examples were breakfast cereals like Kellogg's cornflakes. I'm flabbergasted.

Keep up the excellent work.

Grace Onions, by email

A recent US survey published in the Wall Street Journal showed that a serving of Philadelphia cream cheese sold in America contains 14% more calories than the same size serving in Milan. A jar of Hellmann's Real mayonnaise purchased in London has half the



saturated fat of the Hellmann's Real mayonnaise bought in Chicago. And a Kellogg's All-Bran bar bought in the US has nearly three times the sodium as one sold in Mexico.

In the UK, Kraft has reduced the sodium in its DairyLea Lunchables. The same variety in the US has 56% more sodium. Kraft admits the extra sodium in the US Lunchables extends their shelf life to about 90 days, compared with 70 days in the UK. Probably goes to show why the company has been so resistant to change, and why so much campaigning was needed to persuade them to do more in support of children's health!

Help the little guys

Isn't it so typical of government to hand out taxpayers' money only to big businesses which don't need it (Government subsidises snack promotions, FM66). Of course they are the only ones who know how to 'play the

Well-travelled fruit

The following letter was received from the company that supplies pineapple juice to Marks & Spencer, highlighted in a recent edition of the *Food Magazine*. M&S boasted in an advertisement that it air-freights pineapple juice from Ghana, calling this 'Jet Set Juice'.

We are a company called Blue Skies with three factories in Africa employing about 1,000 people. We harvest, cut and pack fruit for the European markets. Our fruit lines fly on scheduled aircraft to market. 300 small farmers depend upon us.

In Ghana, where the M&S juice comes from, we are responsible for almost 1% of Ghana's exports after just 7 years. (Perhaps none too surprising given the size of Ghana's economy – \$5 billion. Compare that with Sainsbury's turnover last year of \$26 billion). In the local town of 45,000, we estimate that 10,000 people directly or indirectly receive cash from Blue Skies regularly each week.

We have a policy of mutual respect, trust and equal opportunity. We live with HIV, AIDS and other scourges like malaria which kills more people in Ghana than anything else.

We all feel that the benefits to Africa in the short run outweigh the relatively small disadvantages of greenhouse gas emissions which may occur as a consequence of our trade. Of course we understand the point. But we lament the imbalance with which the argument is put forward given the massive advancement of Africans from such opportunities to send, as in our case, fresh fruit products to market.

The West gives Africa a pretty poor deal. We impose tariffs and quotas to remove Africa's competitive advantage in the market place; we give aid with strings attached and which amounts to a fraction of the EU's revenue from the tariffs; we do little to help with AIDS (compare our effort to stop the threat of SARS in the developing world with what we are doing to help say, South Africa, who have 5 million people living with HIV).

Anthony Pile, Blue Skies fruit juice manufacturer, Ghana

How much fat?!!

Please forgive me if I am being dim, but do I not read in your table that an adult man should eat up to 9,931 grams of fat a day, of which 757 could be saturated fat? – it does seem an awful lot.

Roger Griffin, Emeritus Professor, University of Cambridge

Ah yes – well spotted!

In our news item on fat, salt and sugar levels for children on page 6 of FM66 a typeface problem occurred during printing, meaning that the text was compressed.

Hopefully no-one will attempt to follow our apparent advice to eat 9,931g of fat in a day! The table should read as follows:

Daily maximum amounts	Fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Sugar (g)	Salt (or as sodium) (g)
Adult man	99	31	75	7 (2.8)
Adult woman	75	24	57	5 (2.0)

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grants game' which normally involves full-time expertise and lots of networking. I'm sure Messrs. Dairy Crest and Weetabix could manage perfectly well without our help.

By contrast, the multitude of small, poor and struggling tiny business start-ups, often attempting to sell quality local products at a fair price, are given the cold shoulder.

If it's any consolation it's the same in the tourist industry. When Foot and Mouth devastated the UK holiday industry, driving thousands of small businesses to the wall, government response was to mount a multimillion pound advertising campaign to counteract some of the damage they themselves had done. This involved giving lots of money to plush advertising agencies, and a lot more money to rich national newspapers and richer TV stations. The people who actually needed it got not a penny.

Tony Parkins, by email.

Fuel Pod disputed

I am writing in response to the article *Nestlé gives children little choice in fuel* (FM 66).*

Refuel:Pod is a new UK vending concept, developed to be a part of the catering service provided by secondary schools for pupils. Nestlé is committed to providing consumers with a wide range of choices so that they may attain a balanced diet. In developing Refuel:Pod, Nestlé asked secondary schools, pupils and their parents how we might help them to move toward more balanced offering within the school environment.

They told us they wanted a machine which offered a wider range of products, to include fruit products, water, breakfast foods and also lighter versions of traditional snacks, than the traditional vending machine offering two more energy dense product ranges: confectionery and crisps.

Refuel:Pod was developed as a result of these findings and is a first step in what is an evolutionary process we are going through

with schools to help them to deliver balanced food choices to their pupils. Refuel:Pod offers ten product ranges including cereal bars, cereal pots with UHT milk, dried fruit bags, mixed fruit bags, orange juice, water, flavoured milk drink, as well as a limited choice of confectionery and crisps (including lower fat varieties).

We also provide detailed information in the form of posters with each machine to enable pupils to assess sugar, salt and fat content of each product prior to purchase.

We will continue to integrate the thinking of nutritionists, schools, parents and pupils as we move forward to offer even broader choices.

**Jon Walsh, Marketing Director,
FoodServices
Nestlé UK**

** Note from the editor: This letter was cut to fit the letters pages.*

Quorn okay for babies?

I have been informed of recommendations that Quorn is not suitable for babies or young children, but I don't know where this report has come from and I am unable to locate any information regarding this. Can you help?

Andrea Maddox, by email

The warning may relate to the potential for Quorn to trigger an allergic reaction. As with other potentially allergenic foods, such as sesame and peanut, there are concerns that early exposure may trigger or exacerbate an allergic reaction. The Food Standards Agency and Marlow Foods, manufacturers of Quorn, estimate that about one in 146,000 are affected by Quorn allergy. However, the US campaign group Center for Science in the Public Interest says that this may be a serious under-estimation, see www.quorncomplaints.org

Request for eco-info

Do you have statistics on energy use in the food manufacturing industry, and how I can calculate how much carbon dioxide is emitted in importing and transporting food by different modes of transport? My class is doing a project on food miles and the effects of food globalisation on the environment.

Amanda Ferrier (secondary school teacher), Ilford, Essex

According to the government's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 'food, drink and tobacco manufacturing' is one of the most energy intensive industrial sectors in the UK, second only to the chemicals industry. The DTI does acknowledge that between 1997 and 1999 it is estimated that there was an overall energy efficiency improvement of 4% in the food and drink industry, but the sector still accounts for around 25% of all industrial energy use. Sugar manufacture accounts for one fifth of all energy used by the food, drink

and tobacco manufacturing sector. A further 13% was used for making beverages and another 10% for the production, processing and preserving of meat and meat products. For details, see Energy Consumption in the UK, DTI, 2002: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_consumption/ecuk.pdf

Remember that these figures do not include transport of the food, domestic cooking, refrigeration or waste disposal. Nor do they include energy used in producing agricultural inputs such as pesticides and fertilisers.

An example of the calculation (using figures from the table below) is as follows: 1kg of Chilean cherries is 0.001 tonnes, and travels 11,600km (if you haven't got an atlas to check distances, then see: www.indo.com/distance/). If the cherries were brought in by long-haul air transport, they would be responsible for the emission of about 6.6kg of CO₂ (0.001 x 11,600 x 570 = 6,612g of CO₂ – about 6.6kg of CO₂).

Correction

In the April/June 2004 issue of the *Food Magazine* we printed an article entitled 'Children's Food as Salty as Ever'. As part of an analysis of children's foods we stated that the salt levels in Aunt Bessie's Tidgy Toads had increased by 12%. This was incorrect. Although 2002 packs contained 0.8g sodium (just over 2g salt) this level had been reduced to 0.5g sodium (1.27g salt), representing a reduction of over 60% by 2004. Our apologies to the company Aunt Bessie's.

Mode of transport	Description	Amount of CO ₂ emitted in transporting one tonne of food for one kilometre (CO ₂ emissions in grams of CO ₂ per tonne- km)
Air	Short-haul	1580
	Long-haul	570
Road	Transit Van	97
	Medium Truck	85
	Large Truck	63
Ship	Roll-on / Roll-off	40
	Bulk Carrier	10



New York to become Logo Land

Not content with selling the city's name to the soft drink Snapple in 2003, New York's bureaucrats have come up with yet another way of turning public assets into a marketing opportunity. The New York transport authority is proposing to allow companies to promote products by renaming the city's famous rail and subway stations, bridges and tunnels. Roll over Brooklyn Bridge – you could soon be rebranded as Burger King Bridge. What about KFC Central Station? Or Budweiser Broadway? The idea is unpalatable, to say the least.



Calorie alert

Planning a late-season barbeque for Bonfire Night? These BBQ Biscuits from M&S contain an astonishing 247 kcalories per biscuit. They are one quarter fat and over 40% sugar! Yet M&S seems to think them suitable for young children, judging by the age of their model.

Induction process

A new legal concept is being tried in US law which might have implications for food companies advertising fatty, sugary foods.

Senator Orrin Hatch, a US Republican, has introduced a Bill into the US Senate which would allow musicians to sue corporations that encourage children to make illegal copies of their music. Software and hardware that encourages music copying and copyright infringement should not be marketed to children, who are 'ill-equipped to appreciate the illegality or risks of their acts,' he says.

Inducement of a child to commit an illegal act is itself illegal, and the Bill only seeks to allow the musician as well as the child's representatives to take a corporation to court. But the idea that it could become illegal to induce a child to commit an act which puts the child at risk would be a significant strengthening of child protection laws – and should certainly alarm the soft drinks and fast food companies!

Who guards *The Guardian*?

The *Guardian Weekend Magazine* (September 25) featured an interesting article entitled *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor*, written by Sam Murphy and concerning the unsubstantiated claims being made for herbal supplements.

Much of the article was devoted to the case of Erdic, a product costing over £300 which purports to enhance the size of a woman's breasts. The Food Commission had complained to the Advertising Standards Authority that Erdic's claims were unfounded, and the Authority agreed with a judgement slamming Erdic for its bad behaviour. The claims were certainly misleading, said the ASA and, as Murphy's article pointed out, people who saw the advertisement could be

persuaded to spend a lot of money for no results, and possibly suffer unwanted side-effects into the bargain.

But where had we seen these offending advertisements? In the *Guardian Weekend Magazine*! Twice!

Erdic's advert (right) received point-by-point condemnation



Show us your labels!

Early this summer Tesco gained much media coverage and plaudits from government and consumer groups alike for their bold initiative to put 'traffic light' nutrition labels on a range of food products.

The idea was that food labels would show if the foods were 'high' in fat, sugar or salt (red warning), medium (amber) or low (green). Tesco had promised that the new labels would appear in September, and that the range of foods could be extended after the September trial run. In the last *Food Magazine* we congratulated Tesco for stepping boldly into honest labelling where most other

supermarkets feared to tread, although we warned them that even their Healthy Eating products would carry a rash of red signals.

Well, September came – and no labels appeared. A week into October we rang Tesco to see when the products would be available.

'Oh no,' said spokeswoman Laura Voyle. 'It was only a limited trial,

and it has finished. The products were never meant to be on general sale, only tested by our consumer panel.' She was unable to say when the new labels would ever see daylight, only 'some time next year'.



Barbie tells little girls, 'Be good: eat chocs!'

Advent Calendars are popular the world over, marking off each day in December until the arrival of Christmas. But here's a new twist to the theme. Marks & Spencer seems to think that eating chocolate every day for one month of the year isn't enough.

This chocolate-filled calendar encourages young girls to ask for a sweet reward each time they do a good deed, such as washing their hands or brushing their hair. There is even one suggestion on the back to eat a sweet chocolate *after* brushing their teeth!

