

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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Changing climate for food choices

The Government has received its most convincing warning yet that we must all take action to tackle climate change, but failed to emphasise food as one of the main ways to deliver change.

The 700-page *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* by Sir Nicholas Stern (formerly Chief Economist of the World Bank) warns that climate change could shrink the global economy by 20%. But Stern also planted seeds of hope by estimating that it could cost just 1% of global gross domestic product to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a tolerable level, and invest in new low-carbon products and services.

The impact of the food system on human-induced climate change is generally calculated to be around 25 to 30% of the total effect. Yet, identifying food choices as one of the main solutions for climate change gets only a tiny mention in the economist's lengthy report. To assess the interest in climate-friendly foods, rather bizarrely, the report cites a recent interest in fair trade food as a signal that the UK market is moving towards less carbon intensity. Whilst we applaud this increasing interest in ethical purchases and the income this will mean for developing countries, moves to increase the market for imported food can hardly be said to be, in itself, a move towards climate-friendly activity.

Stern's comments on food are generally in relation to alarming statistics about the predicted effects of climate change on crop yields and food security worldwide. For example, the report states that, 'Declining crop yields, especially in Africa, could leave hundreds of millions without the ability to produce or purchase sufficient food,' and, 'By 2055 subsistence farmers' maize production (the main source of food security) in the Andean countries and Central America could fall by around 15% on average.'

Yet the report has little to say about the types of agricultural production, food-system logistics and food culture that could lead to a permanent cap on greenhouse gas emissions, and help avert the looming threat of droughts and famines predicted to occur with even a modest rise in temperature over the coming years.

Continued on page 5



Destructive fishing methods result in a quarter of all fish caught being thrown away. This Greenpeace display shows some of the unwanted marine life disposed of by trawlers. See page 3.

Will Rose, Greenpeace 2006

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Introducing Jessica Mitchell as the new Editor of *The Food Magazine*



I am very happy to have been appointed to this post at a time when food issues are hitting the headlines every day. It is a privilege to investigate interesting stories and to pursue The Food Commission's long campaigning tradition. It is a privilege, too, to follow on from prestigious campaigners like Tim Lobstein and Kath Dalmeny, who have done so much to improve the food system here in the UK.

As for me, I have always loved to eat, and any passion for campaigning and writing about food sprang straight from my stomach. It isn't that long a route from the belly to the brain and questions of *what do I want to eat*, soon led to *what don't I* and *why on earth that might be*. I spent all my youth in Brooklyn, and the one connection between all the communities of Flatbush was in eating: the Jewish bakeries selling Sunday morning bagels; the half pound of Mortadella from the Italian cornerstore for lunch; the big family meals in Chinese restaurants; home cooked corned beef with potatoes or Jamaican patties as a snack after the library. Since moving to the UK in 1984, I have shared many a feast this side of the pond, not least in my travels as a Producer for BBC Radio 4's The Food Programme and during research for my MSc in International Public Health Nutrition.

I feel you see people at their best when they share and show off what they love about how they eat. But, in the end, that only gets you so far, and you look up from the plate to see that we have a global food system with businesses that are quite happy to squeeze every person and everything on the planet until the pips squeak if it helps them to make a profit.

In this issue, you will read about politicians dithering over advertising regulations while childhood obesity levels soar and while the numbers of women breastfeeding their babies in the UK languish among the worst in the world. Millions of people here and abroad live in food poverty and the situation is getting worse. This magazine is full of people who are thinking about these issues, who are asking questions about how they can fight international food poverty, while valuing their local communities, while fighting for the integrity of the planet against climate change and genetic engineering. I hope the magazine asks difficult questions about issues you care about and hope we give a voice to people you don't read about elsewhere.

So, please do keep in touch with us to let us know what you would like to see in the magazine.

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



The Food Magazine is published quarterly by The Food Commission, a national not-for-profit organisation campaigning for the right to safe, wholesome food. We rely entirely on our supporters, allowing us to be completely independent, taking no subsidy from the government, the food industry or advertising. We aim to provide independently researched information on the food we eat to ensure good quality food for all.

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

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The Food Commission sends out occasional news and information by email. To receive such emails, please send your name to: news@foodcomm.org.uk
We will not pass your name or email address to any other person or organisation.

Call for beam trawl ban

Commercial fishermen kill or throw away one quarter of the fish they catch – as well as seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals and other ocean life, according to a new campaign from Greenpeace. Around 300,000 cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) die as 'bycatch' each year.

In October, the environmental campaign group spread smelly samples of a typical haul of non-target species across tables in Trafalgar Square, London, to demonstrate just how wasteful modern fish trawling can be. Beam trawling has been compared to dragging a net big enough to

encompass several Boeing aeroplanes across the rainforest, uprooting everything in its path, indiscriminately. On the seabed, such destruction is largely invisible and therefore goes unchecked. Greenpeace wants to see the practice banned. Due to such unsustainable practices, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN warns that 70% of the world's commercially important marine stocks are fully fished, overexploited, depleted or slowly recovering.

Greenpeace reports that supermarkets such as Waitrose, M&S

and Sainsbury's are now leading the way in excluding endangered fish species from their shelves, and beginning to offer certified sustainable fish in its place. Following adverse media coverage, ASDA is now starting to follow suit, whilst Somerfield and Iceland are still lagging behind. Supermarkets account for 90% of all seafood sales in the UK.

Also in October, a global trade association set up its first office in the UK, aiming to promote sustainable seafood. The Seafood Choices Alliance will bring together conservation groups, corporate partners and other interested parties to attempt to reach consensus and agree actions to ensure the long-term supply of seafood and conservation of marine habitats.

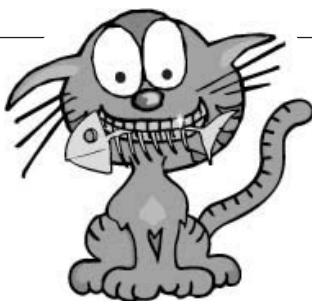
■ For details of the Seafood Choices Alliance see: www.seafoodchoices.org

■ For details of the Greenpeace Oceans campaign see: www.greenpeace.org.uk

Fishy website launched

The Marine Stewardship Council has launched a new website, for children and teachers. Fish & Kids provides an enjoyable way to teach children about fish and fishing – including the environmental problems of overfishing and bycatch. The teaching materials are presented by Murdock the Fisherman's Cat.

■ See www.fishandkids.org



Pressure grows to reduce salt in children's food

The first scientific review of the medical effects of reducing children's salt intake has shown that this can significantly reduce children's blood pressure. The findings lend added weight to the call to reduce salt in children's food, and to control salt in catering for children, such as in schools.

The salt and snack industries have long argued that reducing salt in processed foods will be beneficial to the health only of those adult consumers who already have high blood pressure or are pre-disposed to disease. High salt consumption is considered to be one of the risk factors for raised blood pressure, stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Yet, the new scientific research suggests that salt reduction can help reduce blood pressure in children. The researchers analysed ten previous clinical trials that had worked with nearly 1,000 children and teenagers aged between eight and 16, and a further three trials studying a total of 551 infants.

The trials with older children revealed that a reduction in salt intake by 42% produced significant decreases in blood pressure of 1.17 mm Hg (systolic) and 1.29 mm Hg (diastolic). Analysis of the infant trials showed that a reduction in salt intake of 54% was associated with a significant drop in systolic blood pressure of about 2.5 mm Hg.

"We already know that a modest reduction of salt intake in adults causes very worthwhile falls in

blood pressure but this new research now strongly supports the same policy of salt reduction in children," said the lead researcher, Dr Feng He, from St George's University of London.

In the UK, over 70% of salt intake comes from processed food – a large proportion of which is from cereal products and meat. Recent surveys by the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) found high levels of salt in foods normally consumed by children, including meals sold in catering outlets. One product contained over twice the Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) for 11-15 year olds and a meal in Devon contained 185% of the GDA for 4-6 year olds. The TSI is calling for a ban on the promotion of high salt, fat and sugar products aimed at children and for industry to reduce levels in food.

As nutritionist for the academic group Consensus Action on Salt and Health, Jo Butten, says, "The UK is leading the world in making reductions in the salt content of manufactured foods and some children's foods have had their salt content reduced, but sadly many other manufacturers are still stuffing salt into their products and marketing them to children. They need to take immediate action to reduce these unnecessary and very high salt concentrations."

■ He J F & MacGregor G A (2006). Importance of salt in determining blood pressure in children: Meta-analysis of controlled trials. *Hypertension*, (48), 861-869.

US obesity Chairman faces jail

The ex-head of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Chairman of its authoritative Obesity Working Group, Lester Crawford, has admitted owning shares in Pepsico and food company Sysco. He has pleaded guilty to a Conflict of Interest charge and to making false statements to the US Senate, and faces a possible two-year prison term.

It was his failure to admit that he and his wife owned shares in four companies whose products were regulated by the FDA – Pepsico, Sysco, Kimberly-Clark, and Embrex – that brought him down. His ownership of nearly \$80,000 Sysco and \$60,000 Pepsico stock when he was Chairman of the Obesity Working Group gave rise to the Conflict of Interest charge.

The Obesity Working Group's report, *Calories Count*, published in 2004, contained only a few modest proposals for action by the food industry, notably to make a product's calorie content more visible on labels, to encourage voluntary labelling of larger portion sizes, and to encourage claims that compare products (such as regular versus light versions).

The report was widely criticised by consumer groups for its lack of strong proposals. "Aside from printing up brochures and having a press conference or two, the government does virtually nothing to educate Americans about [healthy eating] guidelines," says the US Centre for Science in the Public Interest.

Crawford is due to be sentenced by the District Court of Washington DC in January 2007.

Food Commission receives accolades

We are very proud to report two accolades for The Food Commission – from very different sources.

The first is recognition for two of our campaigners – Dr Tim Lobstein and Kath Dalmeny. Each received a Special Award from the Caroline Walker Trust (CWT), an organisation which has worked tirelessly to promote better nutrition for children, older people and people in care. It is a great credit to the Trust's tenacious

and principled work that their nutrition guidelines have now been adopted as the national standard to improve children's health through better school food.

Presenting the awards, CWT Trustee Dr Martin Caraher praised Tim and Kath for their persistence and hard work in challenging the food industry to help provide better food for all, and for never giving up even in the face of attacks from the industry. Although Tim and Kath are now busy with other projects, they are continuing to contribute to the *Food Magazine*.

Which neatly brings us to our second recent accolade, of which we are also (strangely) rather proud. In September, *Marketing* magazine published a feature entitled 'Are you a match for enemy number one?'

With commentary from the former Marketing Director of Pepsi, Martin Glenn, the article gave 'aggression ratings' to organisations that have vocally criticised the food industry over recent years. In fourth place came the Countryside Alliance for its criticism of the prices paid by supermarkets for farm produce. In third place, Sustain, for its Children's Food Bill campaign. In second place, *Which?* magazine for exposing the sugar content of children's

cereals. But we are proud to announce that marketing professionals consider that The Food Commission is the 'worst of all' – 'the most vociferous in its desire to chastise any marketer who gets in its way.' As *Marketing* magazine explains, The Food Commission campaign that really got under their skin was 'pressurising the government to outlaw the use of celebrities in food advertising campaigns that promote unhealthy products.'

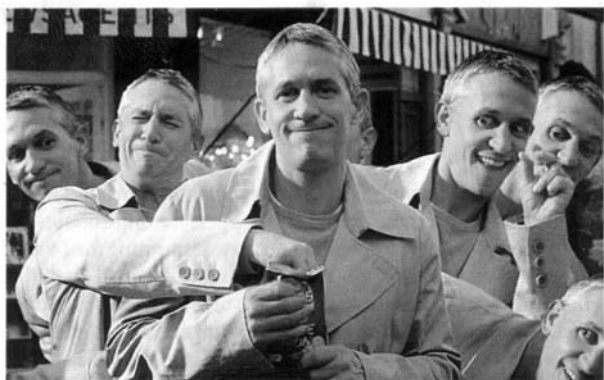
Marketing's article made our day. Gary Lineker has often been the butt of Food Commission campaigns for his persistence in promoting fatty and salty snacks to young people. He even received an award of his own in 2004, from The Food Commission's Parents Jury: The Greedy Star award. Nine out of ten to *Marketing* magazine for making our point so beautifully all over again!

Chew on this!

Surrey County Council Trading Standards have distributed copies of The Food Commission's 'Chew On This' website to over 100 teachers, calling it "brilliant" and an ideal resource for education. For further information see: www.chewonthis.org.uk, email chew@foodcomm.org.uk or call 020 7837 2250.



Kath and Tim with one of the CWT awards – an engraved Dartington crystal bowl



The Food Commission

The ASA rates The Food Commission as the most vociferous in its desire to chastise any marketer who gets in its way, with 75% of its ASA complaints upheld. Recent actions range from accusing Nestlé and Disney/Pixar of promoting junk food to children through text messages to pressurising the government to outlaw the use of celebrities in food advertising campaigns that promote unhealthy products.

Aggression rating

9
10

Trans fats: is the tide turning?

As regular *Food Magazine* readers will know, industrially produced, hydrogenated fats contain trans fats which are known to be more harmful than saturated fat, specifically increasing the risk of heart disease. In the UK, we consume around 1.2% trans fats per 100% of our energy intake, although there are sections of the population who are – for reasons of income or convenience – much more likely to be eating foods high in trans fats. The only 'safe' level for trans fats is zero but the UK Government considers current consumption levels to be acceptable, preferring instead to focus on other health issues.

Over in the US, where average consumption of trans fats is admittedly higher (about 2.6% fats per 100% of energy intake according to the FDA*), members of the New York City Board of Health are seeking to ban all but tiny quantities of trans fats from being used in the city's 24,000 restaurants. The Board is expected to vote in

December 2006 and, if successful, all the city's restaurants, cafes and street stalls will be forced to keep to a limit of half a gram of trans fats in any item served from their menus. Denmark took similar action back in 2003, banning more than 2% trans fats in any food.

The FDA passed legislation in January 2006 forcing mandatory listing of trans fat content on the nutrition facts labels of packaged foods. Meanwhile, in the UK we have no idea if the food we eat contains trans fats or not, as no such labelling is required.

Whilst the UK government may be slow to act, sections of our own food industry are starting to clean up their own act. The Food and Drink Federation claims that £1.5 billion worth of products are being reformulated in the UK, a welcome move that deserves encouragement. McDonald's has also stated that it will reduce trans fats in its cooking oil (but not until late 2007 in the UK and then to a level

of 2%). Their claim must, unfortunately, be taken with a pinch of salt as they've made similar promises before, reaping good publicity in the US in 2002 before quietly back tracking.

* FDA = Food and Drug Administration, the US equivalent of our Food Standards Agency.

KFC bows to pressure in US

Kentucky Fried Chicken has announced it will remove trans fats from its cooking oil in 5,500 restaurants across the US. Unfortunately, KFC has said that it will not be making any such changes in the UK, pleading it lacks the necessary "low linolenic soybean oil".

Other oils are available, but it seems KFC may require more pressure before it cleans up its act in the UK.

Specialist cheese production matures in UK

A group of British cheesemakers has travelled over to Paris to meet their French counterparts. The story the UK group have to tell is one of small-scale, specialist producers rescued from the brink of extinction and thriving to the extent that the French want their advice on how to stop a decline in numbers of their own, long cherished specialist cheesemakers.

When you visit Neal's Yard Dairy in London there are many cheeses on offer from all over the British Isles. Labels let you know all about the provenance – *Keen's Cheddar, Moorhayes Farm near Wincanton, Somerset; Orkney (cow's milk), made by Hilda Seator at Grimbister Farm, Kirkwell; Teifi (cow's milk) made by John Savage at Llandyssul, Dyfed.*

The crowded counter is a herald of the success of small, specialist cheesemakers in the UK. When Randolph Hodgson started with the Dairy, back in 1979, the geography tour would have been a short one indeed, he says, "Back then there was just a handful, around 12 cheeses, I wanted to sell, but now on our counter there are over a hundred. The vast majority we sell now didn't exist back then, and really it was all very near to extinction."

In France, they still have many more specialist cheesemakers than we do here in the UK, but there has been a worrying decline. Big dairies have moved into producing quite good versions

of traditional, specialist cheeses and the French public do not yet seem to have woken up to the need to fight for their small producers.

For Hodgson, the key messages are: "Put the name of the producer on the cheese, they are the most important person in the whole chain. Then inflate the price you pay them for their products, they need to know there is a future. I remember when I started buying Mrs. Kirkham's Lancashire, I gave her 10p a gallon more than she was getting for the milk, about £1.10 a pound. By the end of the first year that was up to £1.70, the customers had to pay more or the cheese wouldn't exist."

Here in UK, it took the threat of extinction to bring new ideas, hopefully the French won't need to go that far. As to why it all matters, Hodgson says, "When you taste the cheeses of the small, specialist producers you taste what real excellence can be. It is like very fine wine, I don't have it that often, most of the stuff I drink is £5 a bottle, but I am really glad the amazing stuff exists."

■ You can listen to BBC Radio 4's Food Programme about the French visit online at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4

■ www.specialistcheesemakers.co.uk is a good online resource for anyone looking to purchase specialist British cheeses.

Smart appliances use energy intelligently

As we go to press, the not-for-profit engineering organisation Dynamic Demand has heard that the Department of Trade and Industry is interested in financing a scientific trial of a new gadget to make domestic fridges play their part in tackling climate change.

"When we all put the kettle on during an advertising break in the Cup Final (or go to the loo – it takes a lot of power suddenly to operate industrial water pumps nationally!) electricity demand rises steeply," explains Dynamic Demand Director Joe Short. "The National Grid pays some power stations to run on partial output all day, just to be on standby for such surges in demand. This is hugely inefficient in terms of energy use and carbon dioxide emissions."

The trick of Dynamic Demand is to encourage fridges to time their electricity use to be more conducive with the needs of the National Grid. Fridges already turn on and off throughout the day, keeping their temperature at a constant level. Dynamic Demand fridges can 'listen' to the conditions of the National Grid by monitoring mains frequency, and turn off a bit early when they 'hear' that the Grid is in trouble

due to a surge in demand. "It's perfectly possible for these fridges to operate within a safe temperature range," says Short. "Dynamic Demand control allows a fridge to read the state of the National Grid so that it can wait to take energy at the most efficient time. DTI funding will help us to get 500 of these new fridges into people's homes to monitor their behaviour in normal usage. It's likely to be just two years until they're ready to be rolled out for manufacture," says Short.

It is likely to cost only around £3 per appliance to incorporate Dynamic Demand into a new generation of fridges, yet Short estimates that it could save around two million tonnes in carbon emissions a year. It could also help smooth the way for greater integration of fluctuating renewable energy supply into the National Grid, such as from wind power. Other appliances that are not time-sensitive about their use of electricity may also be suitable to become 'smart' Dynamic Demand devices and play their part in tackling climate change.

■ For more info: www.dynamicdemand.co.uk

GM consultation 'flawed'

Food campaigners say UK Government proposals for the coexistence of genetically modified (GM), conventional and organic crops would result in widespread GM contamination, leaving UK consumers increasingly unable to tell if their food is GM free or not.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) public consultation on proposals for managing coexistence has only just finished and legal experts already say their proposals are fundamentally flawed. Two European law specialists have published a legal opinion that suggests any regulations emerging from the consultation could be incompatible with European law, as Defra have their proposals wrong on so many counts.

Under current European law, food products can contain up to 0.9% GM ingredients, without being labelled as containing GM, if this contamination can be proved to have occurred accidentally. Anything higher than that, or any deliberate inclusion of GM ingredients means products must be labelled. Now, the UK Government has suggested that GM crops can be grown so closely to conventional and organic crops that up to 0.9% of those fields could be filled with plants growing from GM seed, with food products made out of those crops going unlabelled as containing GM ingredients.

"Defra has misunderstood both European law and crop science. Their plans would allow GM crops to be grown so closely to non-GM crops that contamination would be routine and often above the 0.9% threshold picked by Defra," says Carrie Stebbings of GM Freeze, a coalition campaign for a moratorium on GM crops. "It is bad enough that European law does not insist upon tighter scrutiny of GM contamination of food products and allows up to 0.9% accidental contamination. But, our legal experts say the UK Government's plans for up to 0.9% contamination of conventional and organic crop fields, with no subsequent food labelling requirement, is entirely out of step with European law. The Government's proposed planting distances allow for up to 0.9% contamination in the harvested crop, so in no way can any resulting contamination be regarded as having occurred accidentally."

As the Environment Minister, David Miliband, wades through thousands of responses to his consultation for England, campaigners have made sure their legal opinion has hit the desks of the Scottish and Welsh Executives, who have yet to publish their coexistence consultations, with a warning that, "other administrations in the UK should consider the legal opinion very carefully before proposing coexistence measures to avoid the fundamental legal flaws in Defra's consultation document for England."

Saving orchards the local way

"What is going on here looks picturesque but it's deadly serious. I don't get out of bed at four in the morning every Saturday and Sunday for nothing, I do it so we can make a living."

So says Chris Learmonth of Stocks Farm, in Constable Country, on the borders of Essex and Suffolk. He and his brother Iain travel down every weekend to London Farmers' Markets to sell their organic apples, pork, lamb and eggs because, "The Government won't ban supermarkets and we can't survive selling our products to them at the prices they demand."

In Stoke Newington, they pitch their large stand at William Patten School, at the Farmers' Market organised by Growing Communities, a social enterprise run by local people working to make the food system more sustainable by supplying good food in a way which benefits the environment and the community.

The day is classic England, a sky bright one minute and cracking with rain the next. Apple Day celebrations are in full swing with bobbing, story telling and apple peeling contests. Director of Growing Communities, Julie Brown, says, "This market is a real part of the local economy. The growers here sell directly to the public, keeping prices down. Everything is locally sourced and either organically certified, wild or biodynamic."

The Learmonth brothers have over thirty acres of traditionally managed apple orchards, all organic, with some new planting in the process of conversion. They have around eight varieties at the market today, including James Grieve, Cox, Russet, Worcester Pearmain, but grow many more. Chris and Iain have always been committed to traditional orchard management, with large trees, widely spaced and

underneath natural grassland providing habitat for birds and wild flowers.

Their apples are all picked by hand in orchards grazed by lambs and chickens. Chris got the idea after bluebugs caused big problems to his apple crop, "The bluebugs go to ground in May and June, sheep come and graze on the plants with the bugs, then the chickens

get rid of sheep worms and sawfly. We seem to have broken the cycle of disease, plus some of our customers say the eggs taste of apple." "Have you told her about the apricots?" asks Iain, "Oh yes, if we can get them," says Chris. The brothers plan to experiment with growing apricots this year, they say the variety they are looking at survives on chilly Swiss mountain sides and the worse you treat it, the better it will do.

The brothers keep afloat by maintaining a relentless schedule – markets Saturday and Sunday, Monday to the abattoir, Tuesday admin, Wednesday back to the abattoir to pick up the meat, Thursday and Friday butchering and getting ready for the weekend with apple picking going on all week. "Not all farmers want to do the markets, it is hard work, but these markets keep us in business. With apple growers, the supermarkets suck you into their system, and

offer you the same price every year whatever your crop. This year was a bad one, with only around a 60% crop in many orchards, so those growers will only get 60% of the income they expected. It used to be that if the crop was bad, at least the price of apples would rise, but the supermarkets don't do that."

Traditional orchards have been disappearing over the past fifty years, with counties such as Devon losing 90% of its orchards and Kent around 85%. It is down to urban development, low profitability and stiff competition from cheaper imports.

When orchards are planted they are more likely to be intensively managed bush orchards, with fewer varieties, grown closely together, and machine picked.



Chris Learmonth in Stocks Farm orchard, grazed by lambs and chickens.

According to Dave Matthews, author of *The Good Cider Guide*, "Replanting of traditional orchards isn't really happening, it is mainly isolated groups of enthusiasts. Large scale producers of apples and pears such as the C&C Group, who produce Magners and Bulmers original, continue to grow. They've just offered a big contract to Monmouthshire, but that will inhibit the planting of traditional orchards even more in the area."

But thanks to campaigns to support traditional orchards, the situation is not as bleak as it seemed just a few years ago. Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming, is working on a national orchard project. According to Co-ordinator Ida Fabrizio, "We'll be producing a best practice guide with case studies of projects that show the many ideas being developed to make it possible for traditional orchards to thrive, for the benefit of owners, and their communities."

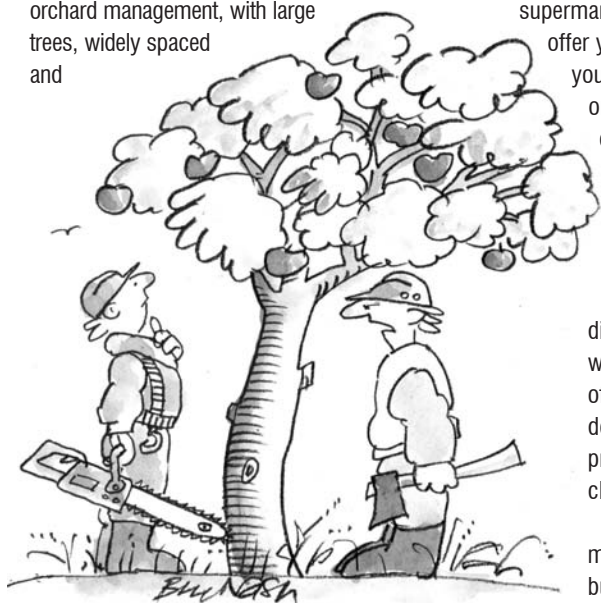
Meanwhile back in Hackney, Growing Communities' Julie Brown is helping to start a new orchard, together with local residents, right in the middle of the borough, on council land. Planting starts in January and the site will be open to all, with the freedom to come and pick apples and the chance to volunteer and learn about tree management.

As for Iain and Chris they say they just want, "The perfect apple, tasty, keeps forever, doesn't get scab and makes us loads of money."

■ Saturday farmers' market at William Patten School, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 (10am - 2.30pm).

■ More info at www.growingcommunities.org

■ Thank you to Amy Loader for her research and interviews.



"Come on, mate! Who needs 263 kinds of apple anyway?!!"

Changing climate for food choices

Continued from cover

Life Cycle Analysis is the favoured scientific method for tracing greenhouse gas emissions of food products from farm to fork (or perhaps more accurately from farm to fart, since waste food is a major source of the powerful greenhouse gas methane). Through such analysis, sources of greenhouse gas in the food system are becoming better known, although the assessment is complex, and consumer advice to guide choices is never straightforward.

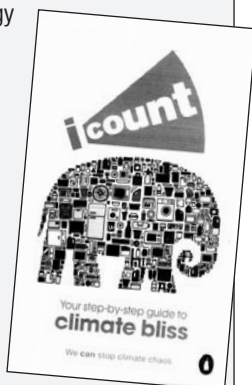
Nitrogen fertilisers

Currently, consumers have only simple rules-of-thumb to cut back on their contribution to the seemingly distant ramifications of their everyday food choices. Nitrogen fertilisers are used globally to increase yield from farming. Yet, they do so at significant climate change cost, due to energy used in production, and greenhouse gas emissions of nitrous oxides in use. You will rarely see nitrogen fertiliser use appearing on the labels of food products. Organic farming excludes their use. In place, organic farmers use clover grown on additional land to produce fertility for the soil.

Such complexities must be considered in policy circles, if we are not to see a rush for productive land to produce biofuels without paying due consideration to the food and fertiliser services that the same land may also be needed for.

i count

This little book is full of ideas about how every individual can take steps to cut carbon emissions in their everyday lives. There are loads of simple tips for energy saving, including some to do with food: put your saucepan lids on and save up to 90% of the heat you use while cooking; buy local food or get an allotment; eat food when it is in season; and buy an energy efficient fridge when you get a new one.



■ Penguin 2006, £3.99

Transport

Choosing between different modes of transport can make a significant difference to the climate impact of our food choices. For example, we have seen estimates that food transported by air can have between 50 and 177 times greater greenhouse gas emissions than the same weight of produce transported by ship across long distances. But once again, food miles and methods of transport rarely feature on the label, nor in economic analyses such as the *Stern Review*. The only time we have seen food transport methods openly declared in the mainstream food market is on the rare occasion when retailers such as M&S and Morrisons show off about the freshness of their fruit or fish by boasting that these are air-freighted. Should we really be demanding fresh produce from all corners of the globe, which requires immediate transportation to ensure freshness, rather than supporting local markets first, with international markets considered only for less perishable produce? Stern does not say.

Meat

A further rule of thumb that Stern might have pointed out is that the increasing consumption of meat is creating an ever-greater burden on the



'Honey, the dinner ingredients have arrived'

environment. Put shortly, meat production and storage are responsible for high levels of energy use, due to fertilisation and transport of feed crops; destruction of carbon-sinking forests to make way for growing feed crops; energy-intensive production systems, and refrigeration in both transport and storage. Lower consumption of meat could mean that mixed farms and upland areas would still benefit from being able to provide small amounts of extensively reared local meat. But on meat, Stern has little to say.

The *Stern Review* has been widely heralded as the 'tipping point' for the UK government's response to climate change. It should surely also be the tipping point for our relationship with the food system, for the benefit of our health, local food economies and the environment.

■ For more info on the Stern report visit: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk and search for 'Stern'

■ Information about greenhouse gas emission hotspots in the food chain and recent research and analysis can be found at the Food Climate Research Network website: www.fcrrn.org.uk

Birds flying free above the tumult of Trafalgar Square at the National Climate March when 30,000 protesters gathered to demand urgent action from the world's governments gathering for UN Climate Talks in Nairobi.



Eben Mitchell 2006

Adverts undermine breastfeeding

Yvonne Wake reports.

Selfish breastfeeding mums are costing baby food companies a fortune in profits every year. If every one of the approximately 720,000 babies born in the UK each year were formula fed, that would mean around £350 million in sales for companies selling milk powder, sterilisers, bottles and all of the many other bits and pieces that go along with bottle feeding.¹ And companies are so good at it, what mum could begrudge them the £500 it costs to feed her baby a year?

Ads, aimed at new parents, make claims like *'ColicUltivent anti-colic bottle for 'breast-like' feeding; Avent Naturally: proven to reduce colic; Your baby's immune system needs years to develop, that's why we're here to help, by putting prebiotics in our milk, we're supporting your baby's natural immune system. These special nutrients, found in breastmilk, work away inside their tummy.'*

These are just a few examples from 364 adverts promoting the benefits of bottle feeding which a Food Commission survey found in just ten parenting magazines during this year's National Breastfeeding Awareness Week.

Of course, the magazines did run eight positive images of breastfeeding that week too. That's all right then, except, of course, the UK claims to support recommendations by the World Health Organization that it is best for the health of your baby to breastfeed exclusively

for the first six months, and to continue until your baby is two years old or beyond.

In a letter we received in September 2006, the Department of Health's Maternal & Infant Nutrition Policy Manager, promised, "The Government is committed to the promotion and support of breastfeeding and recognises the importance of breastfeeding as the best form of nutrition for infants. Breastfeeding provides short and longer-term health benefits for both mothers and infants – that is why we are committed to increasing the number of women, particularly from disadvantaged groups, who choose to breastfeed."

It is fine talk, but as our survey shows, the Government has consistently failed to take action to vigorously defend breastfeeding against aggressive marketing tactics used by baby feeding companies. They have had a key tool to hand in the form of *The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (The Code)* adopted by the World Health Assembly, including British representatives, some 25 years ago.

The Code covers the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, complementary foods marketed as breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats and applies to governments, companies and health workers worldwide. The principal provisions of *The Code* include: NO advertising of any products (formula milk, teats, and bottles) to the public, NO words or pictures idealising artificial feeding, and taken with subsequent, relevant Resolutions (implicitly included in the use of the term '*The Code*' in this article) endorses exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding up to two years of age and beyond.

However, *The Code* is not 'a law', but a recommendation. The UK has consistently claimed to support *The Code* but despite this, successive governments have failed to implement it fully. As a result, companies continually press the boundaries of what they think they can get away with in adverts. They advertise bottles without even including a 'breast is best' comment, liken the nutritional quality of formula milk to breast milk and offer incentives to join clubs for information on infant feeding.

Who said men can't breastfeed? Such advertising promotes the use of feeding bottles in direct contravention of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.



Companies spend around £20 a year, per baby, promoting their products. Meanwhile, the UK Government spends a measly 14 pence promoting breastfeeding for those same babies.¹ Photo by Ruth Corney / the Breastfeeding Manifesto.

"Companies should be abiding by *The Code* and Resolutions independently of Government action, but they aren't. The Government hasn't fully implemented them and the enforcement authorities denounce malpractice to find their scope for action is limited," says Mike Brady of Baby Milk Action, a not-for-profit organisation monitoring and campaigning for infant health since before *The Code* was introduced. "It would be simplest if all promotion of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats was banned as required, to protect all mothers, breastfeeding or bottle feeding. They have a right to independent information from health workers, free from commercial pressure."

Baby Milk Action also fears a new European Directive on baby feeding could allow companies to get away with even more, "The Government fought for changes in the Directive, but only got so far. The bad news is the Directive legitimises some idealising practices, such as use of health claims, despite widespread objections from health organisations. Now the UK law is up for review and we are calling for the Government to put infants and their families first and stand up to the European Commission if necessary."

The shocking number of adverts we found in only ten magazines during one week of surveying is just one way companies undermine breastfeeding. Supermarkets are not allowed to offer price promotions on formula milk, but many do so repeatedly, despite action being taken



against them by Trading Standards Officers. Mike Brady says, "Supermarkets seem to apologise, but then roll out similar promotions. In the long run it will save hard-pressed Trading Standards Officers time if they put a lid on this soon by bringing one or two prosecutions, instead of having to trot down to the supermarket every time it happens."

According to figures from Baby Milk Action, companies spend around £20 a year, per baby, promoting products while the UK Government spends around 14p promoting breastfeeding. Britain has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates, not just in Europe, but in the world. The 2000 National Infant Feeding Survey showed around 69% of mums start breastfeeding but by six weeks it is down to 43% and at six months only around 22% of mums are breastfeeding. The Government has partially released figures from the 2005 Survey, which show around a 71% initiation rate, but figures on sustaining breastfeeding haven't been released. Nine out of ten of the women who stop before six weeks regret it. In Norway 98% of mums start and around 80% are still breastfeeding at six months. But in Norway, health service support for

breastfeeding, longer maternity leave and legal rights to breastfeeding breaks, are combined with much tighter controls over baby food companies.

The Food Commission has recently joined over 30 other UK organisations in signing up to the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition. The Breastfeeding Manifesto has seven key demands aimed at making sure the UK Government tackles low breastfeeding rates in a holistic way including: full implementation of *The Code*, better training on breastfeeding for health professionals, active support for a woman's right to feed in public places and enabling this at work. All MPs have now received the Manifesto, "More than 70 MPs have already added their support. Over the next few months we are working to achieve mass, cross-party support for the Manifesto," according to Campaign Co-ordinator Alison Baum, "MPs are here to listen to their constituents, your voice really counts. I

encourage you to visit our Manifesto Coalition website www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk, from here you can read the Manifesto and email your MP. From the website you can also add your own support and email your friends about it. You

Aptamil First is here being sold at a discounted price by ASDA in the summer of 2006. This type of price promotion by a retailer is not only banned by *The Code* but is also prohibited by UK law. This case has been reported to Trading Standards by the Baby Feeding Law Group.



The next breast thing? This advert is promoting a bottle shaped like a breast. Needless to say, it doesn't matter what shape the bottle is, we think this ad is still in breach of *The Code*.

can play a crucial role in helping us get to a point in the UK where women, irrespective of their socio-economic background are able to make fully informed choices about how to feed

their babies and are fully supported in their decisions. This change isn't going to happen overnight, but it is achievable – we can do this together, for future generations."

1) www.babymilkaction.org

■ **Yvonne Wake is a Public Health Nutritionist and Associate Lecturer at Roehampton University, London.**

Further information

The Baby Feeding Law Group is a coalition of UK health worker organisations campaigning for UK law to be strengthened. Its website www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk contains results of monitoring projects and forms for reporting violations.

For further information on *The Code* see the Baby Milk Action website at www.babymilkaction.org

To sign up to the Breastfeeding Manifesto check out www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk

Am I getting enough folate?

A *Food Magazine* reader wrote to say he had heard the Government was considering fortifying the UK flour supply with folic acid. He wanted to know if this was a good idea and how the Government made a decision like this.

At the moment the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition is considering the evidence on this issue, before reporting to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) which will then make a recommendation to Ministers. The decision has been delayed so all evidence can be considered, but a recommendation should be made in the new year.

Countries that do fortify flour with folic acid (a synthetic form of folate), such as the USA, have seen big declines in pregnancies affected by neural tube defects, which are serious birth defects. But, if the Government decides to fortify the UK flour supply, it has to be sure that the whole population

of the UK will suffer no adverse effects. If it decides that it is not possible to be sure about this, it is likely to continue to recommend that women of childbearing age take supplements or find ways to increase dietary uptake through, for example, consumption of leafy green vegetables. One irony is that wholemeal, wheat flour contains around 50% more folate than highly milled, white flour; so if white flour was to be fortified, manufacturers would need to add synthetic folic acid to the flour, to replace the natural folate they'd removed.

New evidence has recently been emerging around possible adverse effects. High intakes of the vitamin might be associated with speeding up the progress of certain cancers, are known to mask B12 anaemia (a worry particularly for the elderly) and may be associated with cognitive deterioration. Predictions of how much fortification would

increase intakes in the population of the USA were also wrong, they have been around twice what was estimated when the process started in 1998.

In a recent paper, *Folate Supplementation: Too much of a good thing?* the authors suggest that, 'It remains unclear whether the possible deleterious effects of high folic acid outweigh the known and potential benefits... Because of the high intake of folic acid from supplements and fortified foods in a large fraction of the population, these questions need answers soon.' The authors also say more research is needed about folic acid versus folate and whether the synthetic form has different effects on the body.

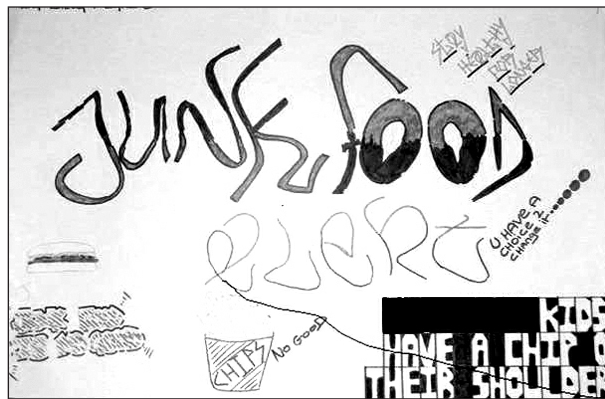
■ **Ulrich, CM and Potter, JD (2006). Folate Supplementation: Too much of a good thing?, *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention*, (15), 189-93.**

A matter of social

The Government takes an interesting approach to health promotion – widen social inequalities, deprive millions of citizens of adequate money to live on and then encourage them to ‘choose health.’ *The Food Magazine* asks: what income do people need to have a decent life?

Even conservative measures suggest that around ten million people are living in poverty, including three million children, which means, amongst other things, that they don't have enough money to buy a healthy diet. And the percentage of the UK population that is poor is getting larger. If you find that hard to believe, perhaps they're just not shouting loudly enough about it, as not everyone wants to admit that they can't always afford to put dinner on the table.

A year nine girl, in a struggling secondary school in South London, sums up the contradictions in the Government's health eating messages perfectly, "Most of us will probably wind up in prison, on the dole or dying young, why are you bothering?" A couple of schoolmates of hers, year seven boys, at just age 12, have been asked to produce a poster as part of a research project to improve school food. Their slogan is *Stay healthy, Rob longer.*¹ Hideous cynicism at a young age? Or, perhaps, a realistic appraisal of life chances in a society that institutionalises inequalities and then expects the poor to climb happily onto the healthy living bandwagon?



A poster produced as part of a school food project by two 12 year old boys with ‘Stay healthy, Rob longer’ in the top right corner. These boys worked hard on the project but were pessimistic about how their lives were going to turn out.

"For years I have worked all night driving a taxi so I could support my four children. I get home early in the morning so I can get them ready for school, do all the shopping, cooking, get a bit of sleep and pick them up again. Then I go back to work. It has been hard work to manage, but they

have done well and I am very proud of them," says one of the parents we spoke to. Her story is essentially typical of so many people in the UK; they work hard at home or in their jobs, they do their best for their families and still it is difficult to manage. Plus they're dogged by the prejudices of so many who persist in thinking that sheer stupidity or outright bullheadedness lead them to waste their money on chips, high fat ready meals, sweets and fizzy drinks.


As campaigners have long known, the majority of the poor manage their budgets very well within tight constraints. Cooks in these households know that experimenting with new foods can mean waste, then hunger, know full well how long it can take to shop around for the best prices and how hard it is to have a meal out or a coffee with friends.

After her recent experiment living on the £21 a week food budget of a young, pregnant woman on benefits, Labour MP Helen Goodman commented, "I found it was a daily choice between filling up on cheap foods like potatoes or choosing a wider range of fresh foods that left me hungry. Although I shopped very sensibly and went for the cheapest products, I found it impossible to eat the five fruit and vegetables per day that is recommended."

The Government says it wants to get rid of child poverty by 2020, but part of the problem is that there has been a failure to say exactly what that means, as Jonathan Bradshaw of the Family Budget Unit at York University notes, "Current debates about reducing or ending poverty in Great Britain suffer from the absence of a socially agreed, empirically based minimum income standard." He and colleagues from Loughborough University Centre for Research in Social Policy have embarked on a major piece of research funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) that aims to answer: What level of income is needed to allow an acceptable standard of living in Britain?

In lay terms this means that at the moment, the National Minimum Wage (£5.35 an hour) and

**LIVING
WAGE
EMPLOYER**



Organisations that recognise their responsibility to out-sourced cleaning, catering and security staff that work on-site, as well as to their own employees, can apply for the right to call themselves Living Wage Employers.

benefit levels are essentially political figures, not only has no one made sure it is possible to live on current amounts, research from a range of sources, including the Family Budget Unit, suggests that it is in many cases entirely impossible, even with full benefit and complementary benefit take up.

According to Deborah Littman of UNISON, the union most active in funding research into minimum income standards, including what campaigners call the living wage, "The remit of the Low Pay Commission has always been to set a National Minimum Wage that doesn't have a negative impact on business, it has never been asked to find out how much people actually need to live on."

The JRF research is developing a method for doing just that; it will cost out a basket of goods, including one for food, that is needed to afford an acceptable living standard. To do this it will involve people living on a low income in discussions about what is included in the basket. The aim is to develop income standards that are not aspirational or based on wants, but that are about fulfilling more than just needs.

As Elizabeth Dowler, Reader at Warwick University, and longtime food poverty activist puts it, "A least cost diet is something nutritionists have been devising for 50-100 years. It's nonsense, it's not how people live. Least cost expenses are higher than people assume and people are social beings so are setting out to meet needs other than the purely physiological. There is also no reason why those who are poorer should have to live differently from anyone else. This is a matter of social justice of true justice as much as the application of nutritional science and cooking skills."

Justice

A broad coalition is uniting around the issue of the living wage, and with around one in seven London workers living on poverty level wages and over half the capital's children living in poverty, the Mayor of London has become a keen advocate. His Living Wage Unit now recommends £7.05 as a living wage for London. "He has set a powerful example in implementing this pay rate in the GLA group and across its contractors. The London Living Wage has already made a material difference to thousands of London's low paid workers, and this in turn is helping communities across the capital," says Littman.

Matthew Bolton of London Citizens, the lead organisation campaigning for a living wage, says, "If work doesn't bring you out of poverty what is the point? At the moment employers get away with paying a low wage which is then topped up with taxpayers' money from the benefits system. We'd like to work towards a living wage of £10 an hour in London, that would mean people no longer needed to rely on benefits at all to have a decent living standard."

At the Royal London Hospital (RLH) in Whitechapel, campaigners recently succeeded in ensuring that all employees, including those working for contractors, will be paid on NHS pay scales, with the lowest wage set at £7.50, up from a low of £5.25. Recent research has for the first time measured the impact of a move to the living wage on workers' lives, focusing on RLH. The proportion of hospital workers who say they had enough money to buy food for themselves on the new wage was 85.2%, up from 41% on their old wage. 80% say they now have enough to buy food for their children with only 37.5% agreeing they could before.²

"Getting the pay rise because of London Citizens and UNISON has meant that now I've got

more money every fortnight and I can do a big food shop if I need to, saving time during the week, rather than have to go shopping for little bits here and there," says Martin Grant, domestic and Union representative at RLH.

Campaigners hope that more and more employers will follow the lead of those like RLH, at the moment Lambeth Council has suggested it is committed in principle, and is researching the issue with a view to making a decision by early summer 2007. Councillor Steve Reed, Leader of the Council, is very concerned that any wage increase would be funded by local taxpayers, yet those benefiting would not necessarily live or shop in Lambeth. At the moment, those lower wage earners supplement pay with higher amounts of benefit paid by central Government, so Reed is also concerned that the move would mean local Government taking on an unfair burden.

"It sounds parochial, but it is wrong in principle for local authorities in poor areas to subsidise the central government benefits system. If we decide to raise wages, we will be looking to cut a deal with government so any savings in benefits come back to Lambeth," says Reed.

With no sign of central government coming out in support of a living wage, campaigners are keen that local authorities note that payment of higher wages can actually have a positive effect on community regeneration. UNISON recently funded research from Staffordshire University Business School, *The Regeneration Effects of 'Fair Wages'*, which showed that bringing the pay of around 500 private sector care workers, in Stoke-on-Trent, up to the level of local authority colleagues, would boost the local economy by £1.5 million a year. "Low paid workers spend a lot of the money they earn locally, so increasing their pay gives a real stimulus to local businesses. We found that for every additional £1 of income paid to these workers, the local economy would benefit from an extra 63p of income creation," says one of the study authors, Ian Jackson.

We wait with bated breath to see Government reaction when recommended minimum income standards are released by JRF next year, but while we wait the storm clouds gather over the state of health of the poor of our nation. The Food



Low paid workers demonstrating for the Living Wage in London.

Commission strongly suspects that the findings from the Food Standards Agency's much delayed Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey report will show the dire consequences of poverty on the health status of children and adults throughout the UK.

Over a hundred years ago recruits to the Boer War were found to be too small and under-nourished to be taken into the army. Now the army says many potential recruits are too fat. Many are undoubtedly also deficient in vitamins and minerals.

And, as one older person recently put in a letter to Professor George Davey Smith, an epidemiologist specialising in social inequalities and health, it was all so obvious to start with: "I've just read the headlines regards your 'Richer the taller' investigations & I have this to say. We were six children and one parent & once we had but one egg between us all & eating apple cores found in the gutter was common. Our groceries were bought on Saturday & gone by Tuesday. I cannot believe you didn't see the connection between 'height & money' in the first place and you got paid for this? Unbelievable."

1) Draper, A et al. (2004). Methods to Access Consumer Views on Food Policy Issues, Food Standards Agency.

2) Sokol, M et al. (Queen Mary, University of London, 2006). The impact of improved pay and conditions on low-paid urban workers: the case of the Royal London Hospital. Available on the London Citizens website: www.londoncitizens.org.uk

■ For information on campaigns and projects see Sustain's Food Access Network at www.sustainweb.org

■ The Family Budget Unit at The University of York: www.york.ac.uk/res/fbu



Cleaners at the Royal London Hospital have benefited from Living Wage employment practices, which guarantee not only a living wage, but also 20 days paid holiday a year plus bank holidays, ten days full sick pay and free and unfettered access to a trade union.

Appetite for change

In 1996, the report *Eating for Health: a Diet Action Plan for Scotland* set a framework for improving the diet of the Scottish people. Ten years down the line, Bill Gray reports.

From the beginning, the approach set out by the *Scottish Diet Action Plan* (SDAP) was multi-sectoral with clearly identified responsibilities, targets and timetables. The ten year Review Panel, chaired by Professor Tim Lang (also on the Board of The Food Commission), conceded that some of the worst dietary trends in Western Europe have failed to be reversed, namely low consumption of fruit, vegetables, oily fish, fibre and high consumption of fat and sugar. However, the Panel also noted genuine progress in tackling the health inequalities and social exclusion that accompany a failing food system.

A key impetus for change has for many years come from the energy and imagination applied by local community initiatives in responding to the barriers they face in accessing an acceptable diet.

Much of Scotland's community-based activity can trace its origins to anti-poverty campaigns that pre-date the *Scottish Diet*

Action Plan. Many have eagerly taken up the sustainable development message, whilst others tackle equality through using food as a vehicle for social inclusion. Increasingly, community-based activity embraces all these elements in a manner that national agencies and policies can at present only aspire to.

There are no shortage of examples of individual food co-ops, initially set up in isolation, to maximise incomes in deprived communities. These have not only strengthened their effectiveness through building stronger networks but have also become integrated into Government strategies to tackle health inequalities. Wherever possible, such co-ops buy direct from local farmers or fairly traded sources.

Similarly, whatever their initial motivation may have been, many community gardening schemes inevitably find themselves simultaneously involved in environmental, dietary and physical activity. They promote sustainable development and biodiversity alongside tackling disadvantage and promoting inclusion, equality and diversity.

Even community-based cooking skills classes are increasingly recognised as about more than simply getting the lumps out of your custard. The building of confidence and self esteem sits alongside promoting a more critical approach to eating and shopping as well as being a vehicle for promoting multi-



A stall selling fruit and drinks, run jointly by Khush Dill (a project that works with the local South Asian community) and Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, at the annual Edinburgh Mela in 2005.

culturalism, social cohesion and the building of independent living skills.

The review clearly recognises that progress from different sectors has been inconsistent and a key challenge for the future is ensuring not only that all sectors play their part but that they also take ownership of future strategy. Scotland's local communities have never argued that answers lie with them alone and have always welcomed progress in other sectors with a mixture of relish and relief.

Over the past ten years, local communities have informed, enhanced and led by example. Over the next ten, well-engaged communities can only be an asset to the direction, pace and progress of this crucial national effort.

■ **Bill Gray is National Project Officer at Community Food and Health (Scotland), formerly the Scottish Community Diet Project, www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk**



Both the young and not-so-young make good use of a mobile fruit and veg shop run by Roots and Fruits, which operates in East Lothian.



"Our ancestors also ate fast food, but only when they could catch it"

Advert ban 'best way to beat child obesity'

Advertising controls are likely to prove the single most cost-effective means of cutting childhood obesity levels, according to work undertaken by the State of Victoria, Australia.

The research team, which has already studied cost-effectiveness of interventions in mental health, heart disease and cancer, published its findings in Australia in September. The team compared 13 different approaches, including walking school bus schemes*, family-doctor initiatives, school education and activity programmes, drug treatment and surgery, and estimated the likely effects on body weight in the short and long term.

From these figures they calculated the impact of the lower body weight on an individual's health over a lifetime and the number of years of ill-health or premature death that would be saved by

having a lower body weight. They then calculated the likely costs to the public purse of the intervention, set against the amount of potential health benefit.

The startling findings were that, although TV advertising has only a small estimated effect on average weight, because it affects such large numbers and because the costs of restrictions are comparatively low per child, the results show that this option scored the best of the 13 examined.

The next best options were educational programmes to cut soft drink consumption, educational programmes to reduce the hours of TV watching, and school programmes targeting those who are overweight.

Surgical interventions also scored well because they have a greater effect in reducing body weight, but they scored badly in terms of the

numbers of children who would be suitable for surgical treatment and the cost of the procedures.

Active transport schemes such as walking school buses tended to score poorly because they have a low impact on body weight and only affect small numbers of children for the staff resources needed – but the

There are now approximately one million obese children in the UK.

research team point out that there are many other benefits – such as cardiovascular health and social skills – which these programmes generate. Obesity should not be the only target of these types of interventions, they suggest.

The table below shows estimates made by the research team of the average likely weight reduction achieved by the different programmes, the projection of this in terms of the reduced numbers of obesity-related DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years – a measure of population health impairment) and the gross cost of the interventions per DALY saved.

The prevalence of obesity among school-age children in Australia is approaching that in the UK, with nearly 30% of children overweight. Commercial children's television in both countries includes frequent advertising for unhealthy food brands. The Australian data indicates that some \$300m would be saved if advertising controls were introduced, equivalent to nearly £500m for a population like the UK.

"This is a low-cost, high-gain option to counter obesity," commented Tim Lobstein, of the International Obesity TaskForce. "A comprehensive advertising ban is the only sensible way forward. The alternative is to sacrifice the next generation's health for the sake of protecting TV companies' profits."

* A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults.

As we go to press, the media regulator Ofcom is due to announce recommendations on the restriction of TV food and drink advertising to children. Health campaigners, including The Food Commission, are calling for a ban on junk food adverts before the 9pm watershed.



Cost-effectiveness modelling for child obesity prevention

Intervention	BMI* reduction per child (kg/m ²)	Population health gain (DALYs** saved)	Gross cost per DALY saved***
Walking School Bus schemes	0.03	30	over \$120,000
TravelSMART active transport scheme	0.04	50	over \$120,000
Active After School Communities	0.08	450	over \$50,000
GP-family program for overweight children	0.25	510	over \$15,000
Surgical gastric banding for obese adolescents	13.9	12,000	over \$9,000
Orlistat therapy for obese adolescents	0.86	450	over \$8,000
Multi-faceted school-based without active PE	0.14 – 0.31	1,600	over \$6,000
Multi-faceted school-based including active PE	1.1	8,000	over \$5,000
Targeted family-based program	1.7	2,700	over \$3,000
Health education to reduce TV viewing	0.45	8,600	over \$1,500
Health education to cut soft drink consumption	0.13	5,300	over \$1,000
School program targeting overweight children	0.52	360	over \$1,000
Reduction of TV advertising to children	0.17	37,000	under \$8

Analyses by Dept of Human Services, Melbourne. * BMI: Body Mass Index, a measure of body weight relative to height ** DALY: Disability Adjusted Life Years *** Australian dollars (\$1 = £0.40 approx). **Sources:** ACE-Obesity: Assessing Cost-Effectiveness of obesity interventions in children and adults State of Victoria, Melbourne, Sept 2006; and Haby MM, et al, *International Journal of Obesity* 30, 1463-1475, Oct 2006.

Good intentions with small steps



What is important to catering and food manufacturing companies owned by people from London's multicultural communities? Zeenat Anjari finds it is more than just turning a profit.

Ummah means the global community of Muslims. Ummah Foods is a small company serving the Muslim community with Halal chocolates. "From day one, we are trying to build up our company using a community based model," says company Managing Director, Khalid Sharif.

Part of that community approach means a very close attention to getting food produced just right. In modern food manufacturing, even if a single ingredient might be acceptable to Muslims, it may have come into contact with something that is not. Sharif needs to ensure that machinery cleaning processes do not use alcohol, and even that the glue in the bar wrapper does not use animal fat.

Ummah Caramel Chocolate is advertised with the slogan 'Community & Chocolate close to your heart? Ask for Ummah Caramel Chocolate next time you want some tasty chocolate and also want to change the world Insh'allah (By the grace of God).'

Mr Sharif explains, "We aim to give a percentage of our profits to charities. We have our chocolate wrappers designed by young artists to encourage more youngsters to turn their creative abilities into commercial ones. We also use any marketing muscle we have to promote charities, such as Muslim Youth Helpline which supports young Muslims facing serious issues such as bullying, drug abuse, social problems, or mental health. I feel we can make a difference as long as we don't try to be everything to everyone on day one. Good intentions with small steps is our approach."

Ummah chocolate is not certified as Fairtrade at the moment because of the investment required. Sharif would like to investigate fair trade cocoa and sugar for future products but expresses doubt as to whether it should be a priority for his company.

"This is an aspiration of mine. But my main investment is in developing and monitoring halal systems. Another priority are the issues of living in the UK; Bangladeshis and Pakistanis living in poverty, unemployed Muslim youth,

treatment of old people, the homeless. There is a debate in the ethnic community that the 'fashion' in the media for promoting fair trade is displacing important issues on our doorstep. I am concerned with community issues, local issues, the local environment. I am using the marketing of chocolate to raise issues concerning our community."

However, The Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), in their newsletter *Ecolslam*, suggests that the issues of poverty affecting many Muslim communities around the world are directly related to the environment. IFEES asks Muslims to consider that those worst affected by climate change have only marginally contributed to the problem and urges that Muslims in the developed world address this at a grassroots level by promoting fair trade.

The lifestyles of some of London's multicultural communities are defined by religious ideals embodied in concepts such as Islamic teachings *tayyib* (wholesome), *I-tal* (vital, life-giving foods close to their natural state as favoured by Rastafarians) and *ayurveda* (Hindu holistic system of healing). These spiritually and community motivated

ideals encourage religious adherents to live what may be described as a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable life.

While enterprises such as Ummah Foods focus on the cultural and social sustainability of the Muslim community, Muzammal Hussain of the London Islamic Network for the Environment questions why, given that Muslims have a responsibility as *khilafah* (guardians) of the earth (as revealed in the Qu'ran, for Muslims the Word of God), "There appears a lack of proportional representation of the global climate challenge in the Muslim media and amongst Islamic social and environmental justice groups. This needs to be urgently addressed."

Many of the business owners I've met have emphasised the responsibility they feel to their own communities, such as providing jobs or youth opportunities. Scotch Bonnet Catering, a social enterprise based in Lambeth, creates authentic, high quality African and Caribbean food while also providing employment for people with mental health needs and learning difficulties and the American Muffin company in Harlesden sponsors the local youth football team. London Food Link's project, Sustainable food in Multicultural Communities, is looking at ways to make business owners like Sharif consider that supporting a sustainable food system by using local, organic or fair trade ingredients is the next step in taking care of the needs of the local community and the Ummah.

■ Zeenat Anjari is London Food Link Officer at Sustain. Her report *Greener Curry: Sustainable Food in Multi-cultural Communities* will consider how to engage a variety of communities, and the businesses that serve them, in embracing sustainability ideals. It will be published in the new year. Contact Sustain on 020 7837 1228 or visit www.sustainweb.org



Norma at Scotch Bonnet Catering, a social enterprise based in Lambeth.

Still a jungle...



**Sheila Dillon
reports on 100
years since
The Jungle.**

In 1906, when monopolies controlled almost every sector of the US economy from steel to sugar to coal to meat, Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle* – a novel exposing the horrors of the stockyards of Chicago, the centre of the US meat industry. Sinclair was invited to the White House and President Theodore Roosevelt commissioned a report from the Department of Agriculture to find out if the novel told the truth. His officials prepared a report assuring him *The Jungle* was a tissue of lies and exaggeration. Roosevelt, however, had served in the Spanish American War and knew how bad canned meat sent to the troops had been so he commissioned a further secret report from two trusted friends. Their report confirmed the truth of the portrait painted by Sinclair. Within a short period the US had its first Pure Food and Drug Act and Meat Inspection Act. But nothing was done to improve working conditions. “I aimed at the nation's heart and hit its stomach,” said Sinclair.

He worked in a place where his feet were soaked in chemicals... sores began to break out on his feet... The sores would never heal In the end his toes would drop off if he did not quit.

Working conditions only improved slowly over the next four decades through union organising and the gradual break up of the monopolies.

In the '50s the meat industry included hundreds of companies. In the '70s the four largest companies controlled just 20% of the industry and the average meat plant worker earned 20% more than the average factory worker. But then the fast food industry started to grow at speed and they wanted uniformity of product from Alaska to the Florida Keys. McDonald's gradually cut its suppliers from 175 to five. Working in New York at *Food Monitor* magazine in the early '80s my colleagues and I covered the rise and rise of the new monopolies in the meat industry. Iowa Beef Packers (IBP) had been the first of the giants to set up abattoirs, cutting and packing plants in rural areas near the feed lots: areas where there were few unions. Month after month the big companies bought up the smaller. It was a time of

lockouts, blacklegs and rapid concentration of power – the Reagan years.

In 2006, the US meat industry is even more concentrated than it was in the year of *The Jungle*. IBP was bought by Tyson Foods for \$4.7 billion in 2001 – joined at the hip they dominate the beef and poultry industries. Smithfield Foods is the biggest producer and processor of pigs in the world as well as the fourth most powerful player in the beef market. Along with Cargill (one of the largest private companies in the world and a dominant force in almost every globally traded food commodity) and ConAgra they form the biggest meat monopoly the world has ever known.

What this means for workers in the industry was exposed by Human Rights Watch last year in its report: *Blood, Sweat and Fear: Workers' Rights in US Meat and Poultry Plants*. It paints a frightening picture of a largely immigrant work force (now mostly from Latin American rather than from Eastern Europe as in Sinclair's day) working long hours at speeds that lead to frequent injuries. An increasing percentage of the plants are unionised, but forming unions is, as the HRW report shows, difficult and sometimes dangerous.

One of the plants studied in the report is Smithfield Packing in Tar Heel, North Carolina, a poor, rural area of the state. They kill 32,000 pigs a day at the plant. Earlier this year the US Court of Appeals ruled that Smithfield Packing repeatedly violated the National Labour Relations Act by sabotaging the efforts of the union to organise at the plant. The Court said that the company spied on workers, bullied and racially abused them and threatened to close the plant if a union vote was successful. The company vigorously denied the Court's findings but has decided not to appeal against them. In 2002 a former supervisor at Tar Heel testified to a US Senate committee that management hired a special consultant to run anti-union campaigns in Spanish. Latinos, he said, “were seen as easy



This is no fairy story and no joke. The meat would be shovelled into carts and the man who did the shovelling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one. There were things that went into the sausages in comparison with which, a poison rat was a tidbit.

targets of manipulation because they could be threatened with immigration issues.”

Pork production, like every other form of meat production in the US, is a low-margin operation. Smithfield, Cargill and the rest are gigantically profitable but only because they are so big. Cheap meat is, if not actually written into the constitution, something of an American right. The fact that such cheapness rests on horrific animal cruelty and dire working conditions has so far had little impact on most Americans.

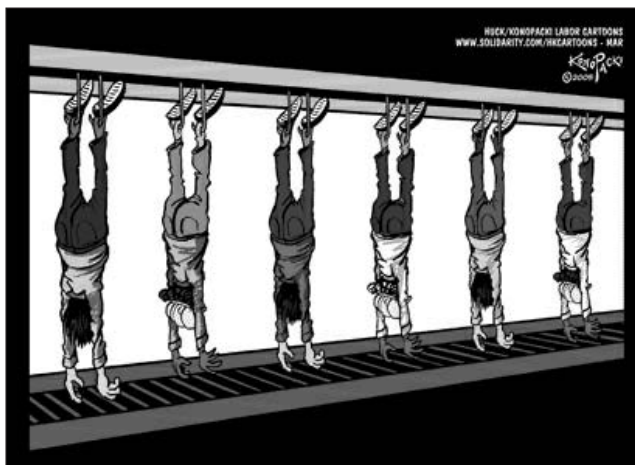
Another factor not making much of an impact is climate change; rampant demand for cheap meat on a global scale is making an enormous contribution to CO2 emissions. Back in Chicago, researchers at the local university have calculated that your average burger eating man is responsible for around 1.5 tonnes more CO2 emissions each year than your average vegan man. In what might seem an irony, Compassion in World Farming recently published a report, *Global Benefits of Eating Less Meat* that outlined just how the extra land for animal feedstuffs, water, energy and chemicals that will be consumed to meet the expected 90m tonne rise in demand for meat worldwide by 2020 is very bad news for our climate and ultimately global food security.

There weren't many placards suggesting *Don't Eat Meat* or *Eat Less Meat* at the recent climate demonstration in London, but maybe there should have been.

■ **Sheila Dillon is the Presenter of The Food Programme, BBC Radio 4, broadcast at 12.30pm on Sunday and at 4pm on Mondays and available online at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4**

■ ***Blood, Sweat and Fear: Workers' Rights in US Meat and Poultry Plants* is available at www.hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105**

■ ***Global Benefits of Eating Less Meat* is available from www.ciwf.org.uk**



www.hrw.org

Getting school meals right

Lynn Walsh reports.

When TV chef Jamie Oliver cast a spotlight on the pitiful state of school meals in the UK, reactions in Wales were a sweet and sour mix.

After all, things had been changing in Wales for a while, 'pre-Jamie.' At present, a major consultation, *Appetite for Life*, has just finished. This sought views on the Food in Schools Working Group's report, which asks to what extent more stringent nutritional standards should be introduced. The aim is to reduce pupils' consumption of saturated fats, salt and sugar whilst boosting their intake of fruit, vegetables and other foods containing essential nutrients.

In other words, it's designed to put a stop to what Professor Kevin Morgan, who sat on the working group, has called "a race to the bottom" in the quality of school meals. Now Professor of European Regional Development at Cardiff University, he is also a member of the Food Ethics Council. He says of what happened to the school meals service during the 1980s, "It was about shutting down a service that was central to health and well-being and replacing it with a crass commercial venture. The de-skilling of the traditional dinner lady – who was really a health worker in disguise – is a clear example of the decline of public service. It was truly idiotic. In return for meagre savings made at the time, we're now seeing huge long-term costs, in terms of obesity and general health."

The document from Wales pulls no punches in the recommended steps the Welsh Assembly Government should take: ban the sale of sweets and crisps in schools; provide free water and no other drinks other than milk or fruit juices; snacks provided in primary schools should be fruit only; and parents should be helped to provide good packed lunches.

The Working Group is also pushing for better training for school caterers, the production of 'whole school' food policies and more inclusion of healthy eating within the curriculum. They want to see more local producers in the supply chain, and better recycling policies. They have also recommended that software should be available and easily accessible across Wales, so that take-up of meals can be analysed. They feel that schools with less than 100% take-up of free school meals by those pupils eligible would benefit from a 'smartcard' scheme; simply



Improve nutrition and you can improve concentration.

processing cards would take any stigma away from the pupils on free meals.

Step forward Elin Cullen, head of facilities management for Carmarthenshire County Council. One of her starting points for the trailblazing she has done was research in 2003, which reminded her that hers was not a healthy county. Low levels of physical activity, high obesity and overweight, low intake of fruit and vegetables, all conspired to the high levels of cardiovascular and respiratory disease, diabetes type 2 and dental caries in children.

"Many children were not having breakfast – and one in six did not have a cooked meal in the evening," she says.

A raft of strategies followed, covering sustainable procurement policies as well as nutritional standards. The county now expects not only high quality food, but a commitment to lessons, with pupils going on visits to farms and processing plants. She also aims high in terms of providers' handling of the impact on the environment and sourcing of Fairtrade, organic, GM free products.

And she wants local businesses to form her supply chain. This is potentially a thorny issue since Euro legislation says that tenders over £150,000 must go out across the European Union. Cullen has stressed, in Carmarthenshire's tenders, that providers must, of course, comply with the Welsh Language policy. She has her local suppliers. Processed food has also disappeared from school menus. "We have done away with the 'opening packets' syndrome and in primary schools, there is no daily choice," says Cullen.

Cullen reports a common pattern when radical changes have been made to school meals provision: uptake went down at first, and has been steadily rising ever since. It's early days to study the effects on the health of the county, but meanwhile, headteachers have reported increased

concentration in pupils, particularly in the afternoons.

The demand for hard data occupies much of this debate, and Professor Morgan gives way to some irritation at this. "We are asked to evaluate these measures, in terms of the benefits to education and to economic development. Must we really try to do so, before we take these steps? Why do we have to justify this on some 'scientific' basis?... The economics of this service are already teetering on the edge, and we must defend it."

Some of his recent work has highlighted the differences between school meals in Italy and the UK. Produced with colleague Dr Roberta Sonnino, the *Catering for Sustainability: The Creative Procurement of School Meals in Italy and the UK* report highlights how the Italian system emphasises the importance of sourcing local and organic food – priorities which are established through a national law.

By contrast, the UK emphasises a least-cost approach, said Professor Morgan. "This leads to an industrial food culture, with cheap additives in school food, which is often transported a long distance rather than sourced locally."

Sonnino has also highlighted the fallacy of the 'lunch hour' in UK schools. Some have 30 minutes, some 45. In their Italian research, this was more likely to be up to 90 minutes.

Another Welsh 'champion' who agrees is Allison Williams, overseeing catering in nearly 170 schools in the Rhondda Cynon Taff area.

"Headteachers do not seem to see the lunch break as an important part of the day. Thirty minutes – when you have 1,200 kids to feed! The lunch time is not only about feeding them; it's about social interaction."

Whether Welsh pupils will have longer to make their choices (currently, three seconds on average is allowed) remains to be seen. As the *Appetite for Life* consultation responses are analysed, Professor Morgan says: "We have always had good local authorities developing good food in Wales, but it has been variable. Good practice needs to be the norm. We need to raise the whole standard of Wales to the level of Carmarthenshire."

■ **Lynn Walsh is a freelance journalist.**

The boy who took this photo complained that all you could eat in a half hour lunch period was fast food.



Healing bodies and minds

Good nutrition should be an essential element in treatment for those with drug and alcohol dependencies. Helen Sandwell reports.

My friend Andre gets an organic vegetable box, cooks up delicious dinners for friends and has herbs on his windowsill. He also has hepatitis C, epilepsy and a heart damaged by an infection caught from a dirty needle many years ago. He has had a thrombosis, a stroke, and been seriously undernourished, all the result of injecting heroin.

Studies have estimated rates of undernutrition in substance misusers to be a staggering 50-60%. The British Dietetic Association, the professional body for State Registered Dietitians, produces no specific guidance for providing dietary advice to drug and alcohol users, despite the high rates of undernutrition and the many complex physical and mental health problems affecting this group. Substance misusers remain a much neglected group when it comes to professional nutritional support, since very few dietitians work in the drug and alcohol field.

Sally Sandford is one of a handful who does. She works with active drug and alcohol users in Leeds where she is involved in a project handing out emergency food parcels to young drugs users suspected of being at risk of poor nutrition.

"Three days guaranteed emergency food helps them to focus on other issues such as engaging with services which will hopefully help them into treatment," says Sandford. "During this time the drugs workers help sort out factors which may be contributing to their clients' malnutrition, such as being homeless or not having received a benefit cheque."

Recent intervention studies have shown that a range of mental health conditions including clinical depression, bipolar disorder, and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder can be improved by diet. A small-scale randomised control trial demonstrated that young adult prisoners taking nutritional supplements for a minimum of two weeks, and a maximum of nine months, showed a 35% reduction in offences (committed in jail) during the supplementation period as compared to a 6.7% reduction for those receiving a placebo.

It makes good sense that advice on healthy eating should form an integral part of drug and alcohol rehabilitation. In spite of all this, treatment programmes do not as a matter of course contain a healthy eating element.

The National Treatment Agency publishes *Models of Care* which is a framework describing the range of drug treatment services that should be available around the country. The *Models of Care* makes only cursory mention of nutrition and does not include it as a part of recommended treatment. When I enquired further about this with the NTA I was told by Joanna Sullivan, Senior Communications Officer, that no one had ever asked that before and that the *Models of Care* were based on research evidence and nutrition does not fall within the treatment guidelines.

Despite the lack of interest at the top, people working face to face with drug and alcohol users are becoming more aware of the need for provision of healthy food and sound healthy eating advice for their clients. Simon Shepherd, the Chief Executive of the Federation of Drug and Alcohol Professionals (FDAP), says, "Diet is an area that a lot of workers in the field feel has been neglected. They are keen to know more about it, both in terms of the advice they give to clients and, in the case of residential treatment, the best meals to provide for people staying there."

As awareness of the importance of good nutrition for drug and alcohol users grows, success stories are beginning to emerge, as at Clouds House, a residential treatment centre. Claire Clarke, head of treatment services at Clouds took the brave step of overhauling menus, risking dissent from residents. "Vending



Terry, one of the catering team at Clouds House, where good nutrition is an integral part of the recovery programme.

machines with fizzy drinks and confectionery were removed and were replaced with fresh fruit and water dispensers. Coffee in the evening was replaced with herbal teas," said Claire. "Chefs reduced salt, sugar and saturated fats in meals and introduced more fresh fruit and vegetables with more meals made from scratch."

At the end of each meal time, the chefs go into the dining room to see that everyone has eaten their meals and that there were no problems. Encouragingly, the new menus have been received well by Clouds' clients. "Staff have witnessed more settled behaviour and better sleeping patterns amongst residents," said Claire. "Clients too are noticing the benefits and are actively learning more about healthy eating to prepare them for life beyond treatment."

Richard Humphreys, a worker for Drugline in Birmingham, is very enthusiastic about healthy eating in his work, "We have recently secured funding of £5 per day to pilot giving healthy food to clients using our service. When we offer the fruit we can ask the client how they are eating and explain that we have a range of other healthy living resources available. We can provide leaflets relating to diet and physical and mental health. If I had more time to spend on this I would go a lot further!"

Andre, who nearly lost his life several times to his heroin addiction, has been clean for a couple of years now and feels that healthy eating is a very important part of his life. The people whose lives could be improved by healthy eating are eager, even if those at the top who have the power to effect major change are dragging their feet.

■ **Helen Sandwell is a Nutritionist specialising in this field. Contact: helen@goodfoodandhealth.co.uk**

Lunch time at Clouds House – on the menu is roasted veg, roast pork and red lentil soup with wholemeal rolls.



Double standards in food safety

Stephanie Williamson reports.

In an endless array of colour – tomatoes, green beans, onions, chili peppers, all ripen in the hot Senegalese sun, some for export, some for sale to local people. But, though the tomatoes grown for us to eat here in the UK might be just a stone's throw from the tomatoes grown for the local market, they are actually a world apart. In the one, all the best that money and technology have to offer ensure production that can meet UK standards while the other has been left to just struggle along as best it can.

"Food safety should not be a luxury for European consumers only, we have a right to healthy food in developing countries too," says Mrs Awa Ndione, a small-scale vegetable grower from Senegal, who recently took part in a visit to Europe organised by the Pesticides Action Network's (PAN) Food and Fairness Project. PAN's research shows that contaminated food and drink is a major source of pesticide exposure, responsible for hundreds of acute poisonings, and even fatalities, among farming families in West Africa.

Vegetable production for local markets is often associated with use of highly hazardous pesticides, sometimes sprayed right up to harvest. Yet, food safety and minimising pesticide use hardly features in donor or government programmes for poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods or modernising smallholder agriculture. Considerable donor funding is going into projects to help African export sectors comply with European food safety and quality requirements, sometimes with support for smallholders, but there needs to be specific measures to make sure that production for local markets also benefits.

In July 2006, PAN supported Ndione and four other Senegalese vegetable smallholders to visit the UK, Germany and the Netherlands to learn how European farmers are coping with tougher pesticide restrictions and price squeezes in highly competitive markets.

"We're more than capable of producing good quality vegetables but what we need is that initial help up the first rung of the ladder," says Ndione. She is one of the founder members of a group of dynamic young women who set up a rural women's self-help group in 1994 to



Tomatoes on sale in a Senegalese market

improve their living conditions. The Yakaar (meaning Hope) group now consists of 105 members, growing fruit and vegetables for sale in local markets and sometimes for export.

Ndione and her fellow farmers are also competing with cheap imports from Europe, for example, Dutch onions and potatoes, dumped on the Senegalese market below the cost of production, while many of the vegetables that don't make the grade for export to Europe also end up on the local market, further depressing prices.

Along with other womens' groups, they've received training in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for vegetables, in collaboration with PAN Africa, to reduce their exposure to hazardous pesticides and produce safer food for consumers. However they have found there is no reward for the extra time and effort that this type of farming involves as Senegalese consumers have very little awareness of pesticide dangers and there is no real market demand for safer food. PAN UK's Food & Fairness project aims to help raise awareness of the need to support African smallholders to change to safer pest management, for local, as well, as export markets.

During the PAN exchange, the smallholders visited horticulture growers, organic, IPM and conventional, and talked to supermarket and trading companies. One of the ideas the Senegalese particularly liked was the concept of vegetable box schemes and the practice of one German organic farm to get its loyal customers to invest modest sums to support the farm's growth and receive interest in fresh produce.

Mr Diery Gaye from Niayes Horticulture Producers Federation, with 1,800 small and medium scale members, plans to look at public procurement for their IPM produce, targeting hospitals with the argument that sick patients are most in need of safe and healthy food. He also wants to set up a Senegalese labelling scheme for IPM produce. For Mrs Jeanne Diatara from the Women's Network for Organic Farming & Fair Trade, the main aim is to access appropriate technology to improve the storage and processing facilities for organic cereals and fresh produce. They have started a weekly stall and restaurant to educate consumers of the benefits of organic farming and are keen to address sustainability in all aspects, beginning with biodegradable or recyclable packaging, using local resources.

For all the farmer groups involved, the biggest challenge remains to convince consumers and traders that safe food deserves a better price. European partners need to persuade food retailers and importers that corporate social responsibility includes supporting safer pest management for the sake of farmers and workers throughout their supply chains, with special attention to the 45 million people who depend on horticulture in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific countries.

■ **Stephanie Williamson coordinates the Food & Fairness project at Pesticides Action Network UK: www.pan-uk.org**

Smallholders selling vegetables in Senegal



Legal, decent, honest and true?

The actions of the advertising industry raise many important questions for nutrition and health. We report on recent activities at the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

Five a day the easy way?

The Department of Health's (DoH) 'five a day' logo may have been totally ignored by most food manufacturers, but they've not been slow in piggy-backing the well publicised advice that we should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. One such manufacturer is Hero UK, which launched a product called Fruit2day in November last year. Under DoH guidelines fruit juices and smoothies can claim to contribute only one portion of fruit and/or veg to your daily five a day, no matter how many you drink. So how could Fruit2day boast that it contained '2 portions of fruit in a bottle' in adverts that stressed how real fruit is supposedly 'inconvenient' to eat?

Hero UK reckoned that their Fruit2day was a 'unique' product, better than a juice drink or a smoothie, because it contained a mixture of fruit pieces, purées and juice, which added up, in their opinion, to two whole portions of fruit, rather than the single portion which a regular fruit juice or smoothie could claim.

Following complaints the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) took a look at Fruit2day's claims and also contacted the DoH, who explained that they had already made clear to Hero, before the product was launched, that in their view Fruit2day could not claim to provide two portions of fruit a day.

Having taken expert advice the ASA ruled in October that Fruit2day could no longer claim to supply two portions of fruit towards the recommended 'five a day'. The ruling rather undermined the massive £4m advertising campaign designed to promote the product as an alternative to eating 'inconvenient' fruit

and led to the prompt disappearance of Fruit2day from shop shelves. Huge marketing budgets like this reveal the lengths to which manufacturers will go to profit from the concerns of health conscious shoppers.


Fruit2day isn't the only product to confuse the definition of what comprises 'five a day'. PJ Smoothies (owned by PepsiCo) are currently claiming that a 250ml serving 'provides you with 2 of your daily portions of fruit and vegetables' and Innocent smoothies state that a single serving equates to 'your recommended daily intake of fruit.' Such claims run directly contrary to DoH advice.

The most outrageous five a day claim we have seen comes not from a smoothie manufacturer, but from a supplement seller. Ultralife market a supplement called 'Fruit & Veg: 5 a day the easy way!' which they describe as 'nutrition in a drink – just add water!' Each sachet is composed of fructose (sugar), maltodextrin (starch), food additives, artificial sweeteners and a sprinkling of various plant extracts and added vitamins.

Like Fruit2day this powdered drink plays on the theory that we have such 'hectic lifestyles' and 'fussy children' that we can't actually eat real fruit and vegetables because they're so darned inconvenient. After all, peeling a banana or tangerine is just so awkward and fiddly. The product also appears to make an illegal claim that it can 'guard against long term disease' – although it fails to mention which disease it is so effective at protecting us from.



Are you too busy to peel a banana or bite into a lovely, fresh apple? Help is at hand! For just fifteen quid you can buy 30 sachets of instant 'fruit & veg'. Just add water for instant nutritional gratification.

 250ml	YOUR RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE OF FRUIT	100% PURE AND FRESH FRUIT - NEVER, EVER FROM CONCENTRATE
	OVER 110% RDA OF NATURAL VITAMIN C	

An Innocent mistake? The Department of Health says smoothies can only count as one of your recommended daily five portions of fruit and veg – and yet Innocent reckon you can get a full day's fruit in a single 250ml serving of smoothie.



Flora pushes health benefits too far?

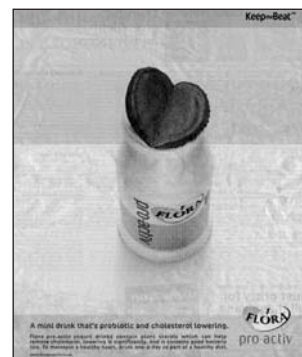
Analysing the logic of Flora Pro-Active advertisements can leave you going round and round in self-defeating circles.

This 'cholesterol-lowering yogurt drink' contains plant sterols, which clinical trials show can help reduce cholesterol in your bloodstream. Flora's claim for health benefits is based on clinical trials that involved trial participants consuming Flora Pro-Active foods containing added plant sterols *whilst moving to a healthy diet*. The bit in italics is important, but rarely appears in Flora's advertisements. The subtlety and accuracy of the description is lost in translation into the absolutist language of advertising.

The bold claim: 'To maintain a healthy heart, drink one-a-day as part of a healthy diet' is surely flawed. Consider these questions: If you are eating a healthy diet already, can Flora Pro-Active offer any additional benefits, since you will not be able to *move to a healthy diet* to replicate the trial conditions? And if you were eating an unhealthy diet and moved to a healthy diet, wouldn't that go a long way to reduce your heart disease risk in itself? Would pouring a bit of Flora Pro-Active on top really make a significant difference, or is the significance associated with the shift to a healthier diet? What about if your cholesterol is already at a healthy level, do you actually need to lower it significantly? And can consuming plant sterols help *everyone* to maintain a healthy heart, or only those who have the risk factors for an unhealthy heart?

Funnily enough, Flora's advert fails to say. The website is more helpful, informing readers that Flora Pro-Active 'is designed exclusively for people who want to lower their cholesterol' – not everyone, as we think the print ad implies. However, 'people who want to lower their cholesterol' may well be older people, the very group less likely to have access to the internet. In any case, we fear that most readers would take the claims at face value and fail to question Flora's logic. We have therefore complained to the Advertising Standards Authority, to ask such questions on behalf of consumers. We will let you know what they say.

Flora's mini drink claims to be cholesterol lowering, but the science showed this to be true only for people also moving from a less healthy diet to a healthy diet. How much added benefit did the Flora really give?



Kitchen Secrets: The Meaning of Cooking in Everyday Life

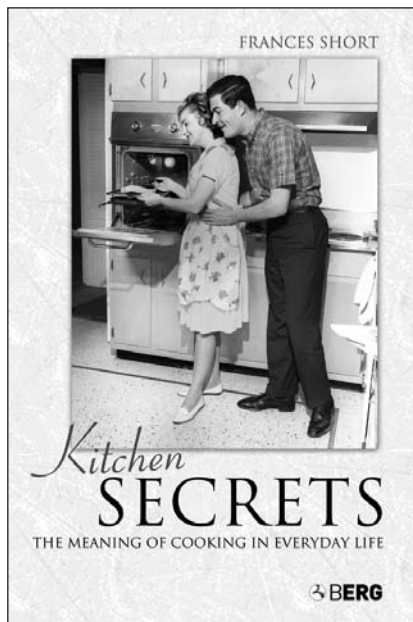
Frances Short, Berg Publishers, 2006; paperback, 168 pp; ISBN 1845202767; £19.99.
www.bergpublishers.com

As the title proclaims, Frances Short investigates, by means of interviews, the meaning of the verb 'to cook' in modern Britain. She seeks to broaden its significance away from the mechanistic: the chopping, slicing and dicing; the heating, frying and boiling. She embraces Anne Murcott's definition of the word to encompass 'the household task of cooking' along the lines that washing up, shopping and doing the laundry are general tasks that nonetheless can be subdivided into myriad specific acts of skill and discrimination.

Her general intention is to question the glib assertions of policy-makers, educationists and gastronomic food writers that we have entered into a phase of deskilling and ignorance in the kitchen and that we are witnessing the disappearance of good cookery in the domestic sphere. Any number of social consequences are ascribed to this putative decline and Short urges these doom-mongers to reassess their criteria before undertaking facile, if not fatuous, policy initiatives that have no hold on the realities of modern living.

She is certainly right about the terrible effects of nostalgia on modern social commentators. 'We used to do it so much better' is invariably a mistaken assertion, in cookery as much as novel-writing. Of all the skills necessary for maintaining a household, cookery is the one that has been longest taught in a formal, structured manner. From the end of the 17th century, there have been schools imparting kitchen skills to generations of British men and women: in Edinburgh and northern cities as well as in London. In continental Europe, the number of secular, urban schools may have been fewer, but convents and nunneries made up the shortfall. In other words, cooking skills have always been at a premium and measures to improve them have been in place for centuries. Careful reading of any number of diaries, letters and travellers' accounts will also show that skilled cookery was often as rare as hens' teeth in vast swathes of rural Europe. The mythological happy housewife, easing her way round markets and shops than quickly producing ethereal dishes, is myth, has always been myth, and will remain myth.

Frances Short captures a variety of experience in her interviews with nicely chosen subjects. They encompass skilled cooks, reluctant cooks, non-cooks and fearful cooks. She touches on the great range of skills required even to open a



packet and reheat it in a microwave: different from chopping and slicing, but skills all the same. She refers to that wonderful concept 'the hermeneutics of labels'; she discusses the strategy of housekeeping as a facet of the tactics of cooking on the stove; and she touches briefly but rewardingly on gender and the male and female approaches to kitchen work. All contributes to her conclusion that we must give more nuance to the meaning of cooking when framing our policies on its promotion.

To a gastronomic food writer like myself, there are plenty of good points to treasure, but there is also a gaping hole in the argument. In all her interviews and all her observations, there seems no recognition of the importance of taste and flavour. All culinary actions have, to her, equal value. But the opening of a prepared pasta or casserole sauce does not have the same value as one made from scratch. It tastes foul. As indeed does most pre-prepared food. Culinary education needs to start, not from the mechanistic end of boiling and baking but from the real ground floor, that of the palate. Instant coffee does not taste as good as real coffee. There are a whole number of false flavours imparted by the industrial process.

Her refusal to bring taste into the equation reminds me of surveys that assess consumer reactions to restaurants. The most important factor for most diners is hygiene. Next may be price. Far, far down the list is taste. Similarly, when I try to sell my lambs to butchers in south-west England, they laugh and deride their small stature. That they are a primitive hill breed raised entirely on grass and herbage and that their flavour is better than the fat giants of their normal suppliers weighs little with them, as doubtless it does with their customers. I repeat, education of the palate is the essential first step.

Review by Tom Jaine, former Editor of *The Good Food Guide*, who runs Prospect Books, an award winning publisher of books about cookery, food history and the ethnology of food.
www.prospectbooks.co.uk

Candyfloss

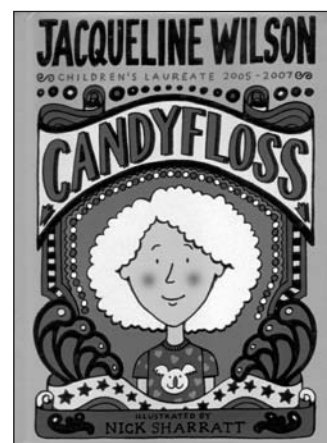
Jacqueline Wilson ISBN 0385608373. Hardback, £12.99. Published by Doubleday

This book is about a ten year old girl called Floss. She loves spending weekends with her dad in his chip butty greasy spoon café, but when her mum and new partner decide to move to Australia, Floss has a hard decision to make, but she sticks with her dad. He doesn't have much money, but she helps him in the café and with his chip van. Her mum has more money and thinks Floss' dad gives her too much junk. Her best friend Rhiannon who is rich and popular even starts calling her names like smelly belly chip as Rhiannon lives on a diet of fresh fruit and veg, healthy smoothies and salads.

This really makes me think about how the book has made people who eat fruit and veg snobs and people who eat cheap, junky food poor and normal. In some ways I understand it is harder to get fresh fruit and veg which can be expensive if you are poor or don't have enough money, meanwhile the other voice in my head is saying not all people who eat fruit and veg are snobs, nor are all people who eat junky food always poor, normal and kind.

I like the book because it is interesting, fun, realistic and you get to know the characters. I wouldn't have read a 360 page book if I didn't like it. I like the cover too.

Ceridwen Mitchell, age ten.



The Oxford Companion to Food

Alan Davidson, Second Edition edited by Tom Jaine. Oxford University Press, ISBN 0 19 280681 5. Order online at www.oup.co.uk/reference £40.00

First published in 1999, this updated edition of *The Oxford Companion to Food* is an astonishing encyclopedia of food, food history and culinary knowledge. If you ever wondered what the nomadic Bedouin of Arabia and North Africa eat and drink and how they prepare their food, this book will tell you. You can also find out what beaver tastes like (apparently the tail is the best

bit) and learn that muskrat meat is 'fine grained and tender' and suitable for roasting and stewing.

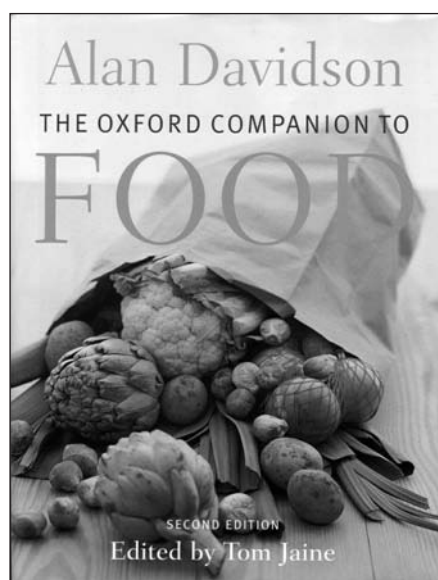
The alphabetic listing covers an enormous range of foods, ingredients and drinks from across the world, encompassing both the familiar and the exotic. Thankfully, what might have been a rather dry catalogue is remarkably enjoyable to read, enlivened by Alan Davidson's easy wit and humour. An early example is his description of barley water – 'Barley water used to be made at home by boiling pearl barley in water. The infusion was cooled, sweetened, and sometimes flavoured with orange or lemon. Ready-made and bottled barley water is now more usual. It is a traditional drink of infants, invalids and tennis players at Wimbledon.'

Davidson was also happy to let others do the talking for him, and often quotes from historical sources. This quotation is from Alexandre Dumas's *Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine* (1873) and regards the hermit crab, now rarely eaten outside of France.

'There is nothing more comical than this little crustacean. Nature had furnished him with armour as far as the waist – cutlass, gauntlets and visor or iron, this half of him has everything. But from the waist to the other end of him there is nothing, not even a nightshirt. The result of this is that the hermit crab stuffs this extremity of himself into whatever refuge he can find.

The Creator, who had begun to dress the creature as a lobster, was disturbed or distracted in the middle of the operation and finished him off as a slug. This part of the hermit crab, so poorly defended and so tempting to an enemy, is his great preoccupation, a preoccupation which can at times make him fierce. If he sees a shell which suits him, he eats the owner and takes his place while it is still warm – the history of the world in microscopic form.'

This book will appeal to anyone with a serious interest in food – especially if they like their facts spiced with a little humour.



The latest research from the medical journals

Overweight men worry about being useless

A Danish study of overweight men in lower socio-economic classes has found that their main motivation to lose weight came from feelings of ineffectiveness in the workplace rather than concern for slimmer appearance or even better health prospects.

A series of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with mainly unskilled men found that the main barriers for losing weight appeared to be lack of motivation and their perceptions of the slimming diet. Although the men had a desire to have a lean appearance and avoid illness, in all the interviews it appeared that the strongest motive for losing weight was a strong desire to become more effective and a greater asset in their workplace. They believed that being overweight made them less effective and attractive for the labour market. The authors suggest that if men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are to be motivated to lose weight then the focus should be on increased effectiveness and performance, primarily in the workplace.

■ Sabinsky M S et al. (20 September 2006) **Overweight men's motivations and perceived barriers towards weight loss.** *Eur J Clin Nutr.* (epub).

UK: Diabetes numbers soar

The number of people diagnosed with diabetes in England has increased by over 120,000 in the past year. Figures published by the Information Centre for health and social care show that diabetes prevalence has jumped from 3.3% to 3.6%, or from 1,766,000 people to over 1,890,000 in just one year.

"Diabetes is a serious condition, which can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke and nerve damage that can cause amputation," said Douglas Smallwood, Chief Executive of Diabetes UK. "We also know that up to 750,000 people have diabetes and are not aware of it. This means that thousands of people are going about their daily lives unaware they have a condition that reduces their life expectancy." 80% of people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes are overweight.

[Note: earlier this year the NHS acknowledged that some 30% of diabetic patients required kidney treatment and that it was performing 100 amputations every week as a result of foot or limb ulceration and infection due to diabetes.]

■ Diabetes UK, 26 September 2006 (see www.diabetes.org.uk)

Cancer: American Cancer Society calls for diet action

Weight control, dietary choices, and levels of physical activity are the most important modifiable determinants of cancer risk for non-smokers, according to a report of the American Cancer Society (ACS). One-third of the more than 500,000 cancer deaths that occur in the United States each year can be attributed to diet and physical activity habits, including overweight and obesity, while another third is caused by exposure to tobacco products, the report states.

The ACS document updates their 2001 guide to clinicians for preventing cancer and re-asserts the recommendations made in 2001. The document advises readers to avoid overweight, keep active, eat a mainly plant-based diet and limit alcohol intake.

For organisations, the ACS calls on public, private, and community bodies to create social and physical environments that support the adoption and maintenance of healthful nutrition and physical activity behaviours. They suggest that this includes better access to healthful foods in schools, worksites, and communities, along with the provision of safe, enjoyable, and accessible environments for physical activity in

schools, and for transportation and recreation in communities.

The ACS calls on health care professionals and community leaders to promote policy changes in their communities. There is no explicit call for legislative interventions, but the ACS indirectly shows its support by referring to tobacco, they suggest that although individual changes led to a small decline in smoking levels, 'restrictions on cigarette advertising, increases in the price of tobacco products through taxation, laws preventing exposure to secondhand smoke in public places, and restrictions on the access of children to tobacco products' led to much larger reductions in cigarette smoking among children and adults.

■ Kushi LH et al. (2006). **American cancer society guidelines on nutrition and physical activity for cancer prevention: reducing the risk of cancer with healthy food choices and physical activity.** *CA Cancer J Clin.* 56(5), 254-81.



We welcome letters from our readers but we do sometimes have to shorten them so that we can include as many as possible (our apologies to the authors). Write to The Editor, *The Food Magazine*, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF or email to letters@foodcomm.org.uk

What's best, hydrogenated fat or palm oil?

Hi, I've just come across your website and I think it's great. As a mum and a committed foodie, I was pleased to see that my local supermarket is promoting biscuits that don't contain hydrogenated fat. But having looked at the ingredients I see that these biscuits contain palm oil. I'd always thought this was just as bad for your arteries as hydrogenated fat. Am I wrong? Or is this another gimmick that isn't as good as it first sounds?

Georgina Altay, by email.

Hydrogenated fats have a bad name because they contain trans fats as well as high levels of saturated fat. Both types of fat can raise the type of cholesterol in our blood that increases the risk of coronary heart disease – but trans fats appear to be especially effective at doing this.

Food manufacturers have been happily adding hydrogenated fat to our food for over sixty years, but in recent years the UK public has become much better informed about the food we eat and has started to avoid hydrogenated fats. As a result manufacturers are now rushing to remove hydrogenated fats from their products in a bid to maintain sales, but substitutes such as palm oil are hardly a healthy alternative as palm oil is itself almost half (47.8%) saturated fat.

The problem faced by both the manufacturers and the public is that biscuits need to contain solid (saturated) fats that will stay put in the biscuit – so it is very hard to make a 'healthy' biscuit. The agricultural production of palm oil is also the cause of massive rainforest destruction in Malaysia and Indonesia – so if you care about the environment as well as your own health, you may wish to avoid it.

■ **If you want to avoid trans fats you need to watch out for ingredients such as hydrogenated vegetable oil, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, vegetable shortening and margarine. You can find more info at TFX, the campaign against trans fats in food. Website: www.tfx.org.uk**

More misleading GDAs

Valerie Barber from Taunton alerted us to what appeared to be significant differences in the nutritional content of similar breakfast cereals. Why, she wondered, did Tesco Frosted Flakes contain so much more sugar, fat and salt than Kellogg's Frosties? Could the Kellogg's product really be so much healthier than the own-brand equivalent?

Sadly this isn't a case of Kellogg's making its cereal healthier, it's about how they choose to display their front of pack Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) information. GDAs are favoured by many food manufacturers over the Food Standards Agency's simple-to-understand traffic light system, because the traffic light system makes it very easy for consumers to spot (and avoid) products high in sugar, fat and salt.

Kellogg's gives GDA information for a 30g serving of cereal, as if it was eaten straight from the packet. Tesco, on the other hand, gives GDA information for a 30g serving of cereal with 125ml semi-skimmed milk – as many of us would actually eat it. The milk contains natural fats, sugars and sodium (salt) which Tesco includes in its calculations, and this bumps up the GDA values, making the Tesco product seem less healthy when compared to the Kellogg's product.

A shopper trying to compare products using GDAs will almost certainly assume that the Kellogg's product is healthier, even if it isn't, which gives Kellogg's a huge competitive advantage over its rivals. This rather contradicts the official Kellogg's statement that they 'have committed to putting GDA information on the front of their products to help consumers make informed

choices about food quickly and easily.' Kellogg's is consistently voted the 'most trusted breakfast cereal brand' by consumers – but it would appear they are deliberately confusing shoppers with GDAs that have been designed to look good and increase sales, rather than provide useful nutritional information that can be compared with other cereals.



GDA levels for Kellogg's Frosties and Tesco Frosted Flakes make Kellogg's look like the healthy choice, despite the products being almost identical in sugar, fat and salt content.

GDAs	Calories	Sugar	Fat	Salt
Tesco	175g 9%	17.7g 20%	2.2g 3%	0.6g 10%
Kellogg's	111g 6%	11g 12%	0.2g 0%	0.3g 6%

■ **It's not just Kellogg's GDA labelling that needs to be questioned. Our US cousins, the Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), recently revealed large differences in the salt and sugar content of seemingly identical UK and US cereal products. Some UK products contain more than double the salt or sugar of equivalent US cereals.**

CSPI have rightly questioned why Kellogg's can't reduce salt and sugar levels to the same levels in both countries. In a letter to the company, Bruce Silverglade, director of legal affairs at the Center, said, "The company's global commitment to good nutrition seems to be more rhetorical than substantive."

'Five a day' the salty way

Del Monte Premium Tomato Juice claims on the container that it is 'The healthy way to 5-a-day' and that 'One 200ml glass of Del Monte Tomato Juice is equal to one portion of your daily intake of 5 portions of fruit and vegetables, as recommended by the World Health Organization.'

The nutrition information includes energy, protein, carbohydrate, fat and vitamin E. What it doesn't mention is the amount of salt. Is it because it is very close to the maximum recommended intake of 6g/day? Judging by the taste, it could well be.

Anna Marie Bedford, Cambridge

Del Monte do seem curiously shy of letting shoppers know how much added salt their tomato juice contains – perhaps because a single, salty 200ml serving contains more than a quarter of an adult's maximum daily salt intake (200ml juice contains 1.58g salt or 0.63g sodium).

The Department of Health expressly forbids companies from using its 'five a day' logo on products containing added salt, but Del Monte have ignored this advice and have created their own '5-a-day' logo. This is legal, although many would find it morally questionable. Del Monte have also cherry picked from the advice given by the World Health Organization (WHO), preferring not to mention the WHO's very clear advice that 'dietary intake of sodium... influences blood pressure levels in populations and should be limited so as to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and both forms of stroke.'

Manufacturers are required by law to give some nutritional information if the label makes a nutritional claim, as in this case – but there is no requirement to include salt levels. We think there should be.



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Drinking to excess

Drinking bottled water is widely regarded by environmentalists as the ultimate in excessive and wasteful behaviour. Transporting glorified tap water halfway across the world encased in plastic is 'food miles' madness at its worst.

When *The Food Magazine* undertook a survey of bottled waters last year, we found bottled water on sale in UK shops from as far away as Canada, and even Fiji (10,000 miles away)! The Fijian water had been promoted as a fashion accessory by actors such as Whoopi Goldberg, Pierce Brosnan and Vin Diesel, who were said to enjoy its 'tropical taste.'

We reckon we've now found an even worse example of long-distance travel by a bottle of water. The bottle of Gleneagles Mineral Water pictured left is likely to be the all-time winner (or should that be loser?) in the food miles competition. It was served, along with several



hundred identical bottles, on a BA long-haul flight from Sydney, Australia, to London – giving it a record-breaking, round trip journey of some 26,000 miles!

Meanwhile, fashionistas will no doubt get excited over the latest bottled water nonsense – Bling Water from Tennessee. The bottles are frosted, decorated with crystals, marketed by naked women, and retail at around £30 a bottle. We say: Long live tap water!



Bling bottled water: for those with large pockets and little taste.

Sexy chocolate bemuses health officials

A selection of chocolate bars caused amusement at a conference on obesity policy held in Brussels this autumn. The bars were put out for delegates at the top table at the Crowne Plaza hotel, Brussels. Among those gathered to discuss health policy were European Commission food officials who govern food quality and food labelling. They debated whether the name 'Sexy' and the description 'Vitality' might be construed as health claims associated with a high-fat, high-sugar product.

But if they want health claims, they should take a look at the chocolate maker's website. There, the

company NewTree explains, the chocolates are designed as an 'alliance between gastronomy and health,' with 'subtle flavours associated with the natural benefits of plant and fruit extracts known for their proven health benefits.'

NewTree is keen to report that 'Chocolate performs a more effective antioxidant function than many commonly eaten vegetables.' So much for the antioxidants, but what about the fat and sugar? The European health officials should be relieved to note that NewTree is one of the few companies to admit, on the label, that chocolate 'brings you energy.' A useful message to remember in the context of conference on obesity.



New Zealand greens defend food miles

A fruitless tiff was sparked this month when Stephen Byers MP (UK) suggested that flying kiwifruit from New Zealand (NZ) contributes to climate change. Mr Byers hadn't done his homework, however, since kiwifruit is rarely transported by air – its long shelf life and tough skin mean that it can be brought more cheaply by boat, causing fewer emissions (though still quite a lot – it's a long way from down under!)

This followed a meaty spat over NZ lamb, when kiwi trade minister Phil Goff dismissed the concept of food miles as 'protectionism' and a

'PR campaign'. He claimed it takes four times as much energy to produce lamb in the UK as to produce and export the same product from NZ.

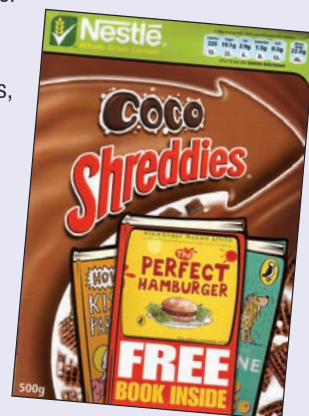
Climate change scientists are still arguing about whether or not the figures are correct, questioning whether the NZ research took meat refrigeration into account, and what their emissions figures were for nitrogen fertilisers.

One NZ organisation decided to write to UK environmentalists telling them to back off. Not the UK trade minister this time, but the NZ *Green Party*!

Nestlé promotes burgers at breakfast

Breakfast cereal marketers know that in most houses, the cereal box ends up on the breakfast table, and is therefore a great way to communicate marketing messages directly to families. Children often pore over the box as they pour milk over their cereal. The packets are a favourite place for marketers to promote products, games, collectible toys, token-collecting schemes and health messages.

This recent promotion from Nestlé gives, what we think, is an iconic picture of modern childhood. Eat chocolate cereal whilst reading a free book about the 'Perfect Hamburger.' Can't food companies think of a better message to give children about their food culture?!



Emergency rations

How many Brits keep an emergency supply of food for several days just in case of bioterrorism, bombings or floods? Despite the fact that you were all sent the Cabinet Office booklet *Preparing for emergencies*, an informal survey by The Food Commission revealed complete incomprehension by every householder we spoke to: "What are you talking about, are we expecting an emergency?" "I have a big tin of spaghetti hoops, does that count?" "Run to the nearest takeaway, that's my plan."

We are way behind the Americans; a recent survey complained that ONLY 43% of them have household disaster plans. Log onto their Ready America website and you can download plans for household pets and even find disaster supply treasure hunt games for kids.

The problem of what disaster foods to keep in your cupboard is, of course, vexing, but companies recognise the potential in this expanded market now that it isn't just the lunatic fringe planning for Armageddon. You can buy so-called 'Meals Ready to Eat' – burgers in buns, jambalaya with shrimp and ham – products with shelf lives of up to ten years, that don't even need heating up. If things get really bad, one company even produces meals that can be rehydrated with your own urine.