

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

Published by The Food Commission

Issue 77 ♦ April/June 2007 ♦ £4.95

Do children have a sporting chance?

As part of its National School Sport Strategy, the Government has appointed double Olympic gold medallist, Dame Kelly Holmes, as National School Sport Champion, a role that sees her visiting schools all over the country to speak to thousands of parents, teachers and children to find ways to encourage them to get more involved in physical education and sport. The biggest challenge, according to Dame Kelly, is, "girls, and trying to find ways to stop them dropping out of sporting activity." She told us that, "Girls should be taught

from a very young age how dangerous yoyo dieting is for them and they should be encouraged to use sport as a way of maintaining correct body weight."

She also thought they should be warned of the challenges women face in getting pregnant if they are not a healthy weight in later life.

Of course, it is not only girls who need advice about diet and exercise, and advice will mean little if the Government does not do more to promote the well being of the nation's young people. See pages 4-7 inside.

"Let girls who don't think they are good at sport tell us what they want to achieve."

Dame Kelly Holmes speaks to *The Food Magazine* about exercise and diet for young women.



The Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it (MEND) programme is for young people all over the UK and provides support for changes to diet and exercise. See page 5.

Yours, in sustainability

The other day I walked down the High Street from Clapham Common towards Clapham North, counting my footsteps between supermarket chains. I started at the large Sainsbury's near the Common, took 232 steps to the site of the new Tesco and then 200 more to a Sainbury's Local. 432 footsteps in total and about three minutes of time. I did this because I have been spending a bit of time recently going to meetings about local sustainability and just how we are going to manage, here in Lambeth, in a carbon constrained, energy lean world. I wonder, will wall-to-wall superstores play a key part in an energy lean, climate chaotic Lambeth?

The so-named 'Transition Town' movement moves on apace, with more places around the UK listed on the 'coalition' website, signed up for action to positively plan for a, "more localised post peak-oil future." Brixton, in the London Borough of Lambeth, is now one of them, with a group that meets regularly to think about how we can plan for a positive future in a changed world that cannot rely on fossil fuels and a predictable climate.

But, it is noticeable that the majority of places are towns like Totnes, Stroud, Glastonbury and Lewes. Bristol is up there, but otherwise it is Brixton leading the way for we urbanites. I have lived here in Brixton for more than twenty years now, it is my home and I like it; but I am not sure how positively I feel about its ability to cope with the pressures that will surely come to bear.

Rob Hopkins, the founder of the Transition Town movement, lives in Totnes; in an interview he told me he chose it deliberately with peak oil and climate change in mind. Indeed, who in their right mind would choose inner city London? Hopkins told me that the concept of Transition Towns is an antidote to a survivalist approach – build your bunker and get in the supplies of long lasting food and the pistols to fight off pillagers.

But then why do I feel uneasy? Totnes has recently embarked upon planting fruit and nut

trees – a future local food source. Will they share? They have launched the 'Great Reskilling' – a series of courses to redress the fact that we have lost self-sufficiency skills; among the courses listed are edible container gardening and sock darning. Now, I do not want to grow my own veg, or darn my own socks and in truth, I don't entirely look forward to cooperating with all of my neighbours. That's why I live in London.

I think I am not the only one who is going to have to be dragged kicking and screaming to this new future; I get emails from one business person who signs off, "Yours, in sustainability." When he is not at a meeting about local sustainability, he is off in a country 6,000 miles away – a place he flies to every few weeks to see clients.

But, beyond the fact that some of us




Jessica Mitchell, Editor, *The Food Magazine*, discusses ideas to tackle climate change, through local action, for a film shown at an environmental festival in France.

are sceptics, some of us are just kidding ourselves, and some of us maybe really are visionaries, it is surely time for all of us to get our heads around a few things. It is time for Lambeth Council to stop putting out the local newsletter with front covers promising that it is a leader in the field of fighting climate change, with a column telling us to buy local food – at least while they are allowing branches

TRANSITION TOWN
BRIXTON
presents

Energy beyond Oil



An illustrated talk by Paul Mobbs
Thursday 17 May, 7.30, Lambeth Town Hall
A clear look at how much is left and how our energy use may change in the future.
visit www.transitiontownbrixton.org for more events
Transition Town Brixton, the community led initiative to design Brixton's pathway to a better low energy future.

of supermarket chains to spring up all over the place. More people with power need to get along to these Transition Town meetings – where are the housing associations, the major businesses, the Leader of the Council at the Brixton events? Probably, we need more philosophers; my local group promises not to be just a talking shop. I wish we humans could manage even that.

My son is obsessed with an online computer game community, tonight he told me that the rich characters in the game are more likely to give you donations if you are also another rich character. He told me that richer, more advanced players demand large payments for information about how to play the game better. Another boy wondered why he should be more interested in his neighbourhood than in other countries in the world?

It makes me believe we need to rethink what we mean by this word local; Brixton isn't local, never has been and never will be. People here owe their allegiances to different classes, cultures and communities of interest. The idea of Transition Towns is somehow still little England for me; we may all be in this together but just who exactly is the all? If my better off neighbours won't share their nuts with me now, will they when things really get tough?

■ For more information about Transition Towns see www.transitiontowns.org

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Child labour in the cocoa industry

People around the world love chocolate, but behind some of the friendly wrappers lies the exploitation of workers. Much of the world's cocoa is farmed in West Africa where thousands of children are forced to work to produce the beans which are the main ingredient in chocolate. Côte d'Ivoire accounts for more than 40% of global cocoa production and the U.S. Department of State estimates that more than 109,000 children in that country's cocoa industry work under, "the worst forms of child labour." Some 10,000 children working on Ivorian cocoa farms are victims of human trafficking or enslavement. These children work long hours in the heat, wielding machetes and facing frequent exposure to dangerous pesticides.

In an attempt to avoid government regulation, chocolate companies made a voluntary

commitment in 2001 to certify their cocoa "child labour free" by July 2005. When industry failed to meet their commitments by the deadline, the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) filed a lawsuit against Nestlé, Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill alleging the multinationals are involved in trafficking, torture and forced child labour. While the lawsuit slowly moves through the court system, the companies have extended their deadline to July 2008 to certify only 50% of their beans as child-labour free. Based on recent meetings with the chocolate industry, many groups are concerned that once again, the companies are not on track to meet their new deadline.

In the UK, the Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Association which represents Nestlé, Mars, Cadbury and others admitted in May to MPs

that they did not wish to set out a timetable to meet their promise to end child labour - having already missed their deadline of 2005.

While the major companies drag their feet to take responsibility for their unethical purchasing policies, there is an existing alternative for conscious chocolate lovers. Fair trade certification ensures that cocoa farmers receive a fair price for their product and that no child labour was used in the production of the chocolate. The ILRF and other NGOs have been working for years to promote fair trade principals and hold chocolate companies accountable for their unjust practices. This year, the ILRF sponsored a Fair Trade Chocolate Essay and Art Contest asking young people what they could do as consumers to support their counterparts in cocoa-producing countries.

Young people from all over the United States wrote powerful statements calling for their peers to stand up for the rights of children around the world. Ethan Miller, winner of the high school category, wrote, "As youth, we have great power. By buying fair trade chocolate, we are exerting our power. Through our choices, we can reform the cocoa industry like no one has ever done before."

■ **Timothy Newman, International Labor Rights Forum.** For more information about the problem of child labour, see the ILRF website at www.laborrights.org. To get involved in Stop the Traffik's chocolate campaign – check out www.stopthetraffik.org/chocolatecampaign

A young boy rakes cocoa beans on a drying rack at a family compound in the Soubré region, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Image courtesy of ILRF.



Eat less salt

The Food Commission is leading a pioneering project in south east London which aims to improve the health of thousands of tenants and staff of the Sydenham-based Hexagon Housing Association. The 'Healthy Hexagon, Eat less salt' project will provide healthy eating advice to over 3,000 households, showing the residents and staff of Hexagon how to reduce their salt consumption.

We beat strong national competition to join seven other projects funded by partnership grants from the Food Standards Agency. The Eat less salt project is part of the FSA's national salt campaign to help consumers reduce the amount of salt in their diet to no more than 6 grams a day – about a teaspoonful. This is the most adults should eat in a day and the lower the better. Children should have less. The project will work closely with

Hexagon staff and residents, including those living in hostels and care homes, who will attend free 'Eat less salt' workshops.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive of Hexagon says, "Hexagon has a strong tradition of resident involvement, and we are committed to assisting in building healthy communities. This project gives us a chance to be involved in a pioneering initiative that we hope will make a real difference to the health of the communities we support."



Hexagon residents try to work out how much salt is in the food they eat. For further information check out www.foodcomm.org.uk or www.salt.gov.uk

Breast is best

Arsenal star Theo Walcott was an unexpected guest at the official launch of the *Breastfeeding Manifesto*. He joined supporters from all over the UK, including The Food Commission, to call for better support for breastfeeding.

Walcott came to the event with his mum and said, "I have grown up knowing how important breastfeeding is, as my mum was a La Leche League breastfeeding leader. I would like to support the *Breastfeeding Manifesto* as it will help to ensure the first step to a healthy lifestyle for all children."

■ See www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk to support the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition



Through the mincer

Recently, two consumer research surveys from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have hit our desks; one is on minced meat composition and labelling and the other on ham. Among the surprising facts about mince is that the word 'lean' is allowed to be used largely indiscriminately, appearing on products with as little as 5% fat and up to 20%. The FSA surveys tell us that 83% of consumers surveyed did not know that when, "amount of collagen protein," appears on mince labels, it means things such as gristle and connective tissue.

Products described as 'ham' can actually contain up to 30% water, as we reported in FM69; but only just over half of people surveyed were able to calculate that ham which was labelled as being 80% meat would have a maximum of 20% added water.

Amongst the many factors that were cited as influencing ham purchasing decisions – price, look, leanness, best quality, taste, freshness – nowhere appeared packaging. The FSA prompted consumers to name specific factors in their choice, why didn't it prompt them about this? Presumably, Bernard Matthews has invested a huge sum on the Spiderman promotion because it makes kids clamour for their ham, even if the product does only contain 66% meat.

The FSA notes that it plans to use the information to revise the *Meat Products Regulations*, with a view specifically to, "reducing burdens on businesses, but without significantly reducing information for consumers." The Food Commission thinks the regulations are already far too weak. The quality of meat products, their advertising and labelling suggest that business should be burdened more, not less, to improve consumers' health.



Bernard Matthews is free to use Spiderman imagery on the packaging to sell this wafer thin ham. A closer look at the label shows it contains just 66% pork. This product could legally contain up to 30% water, with the remaining 4% composed of ingredients such as salt, starch, dextrose, glucose syrup and stabilisers.

Protecting children from junk food advertising

Momentum is gathering behind the campaign to insist that the Government properly protects children from junk food TV advertising through the introduction of a 9pm watershed.

The Children's Food Campaign (CFC) has been leading the coalition campaign for better regulation after the announcement by Ofcom, the broadcasting regulator, of their final proposals in which junk food ads are only restricted in programmes where under-16s form a disproportionately high part of the audience. These new rules will restrict less than half of young people's exposure to junk food ads on TV.

The CFC is backing Baroness Thornton, who has introduced the 'Advertising on Television of Food Bill' into the House of Lords. The Bill will introduce a 9pm watershed for TV adverts for products high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS). More than 230 MPs have now signed-up to support the Bill, which shows the progress this campaign is making. The Bill receives its second reading on 8 June.

Junk food marketing away from TV

While campaigners work to stop junk food adverts on TV, a parallel debate has been raging about how to restrict these in non-broadcast advertising, such as billboard posters, magazines, texts and websites. Hard as it is to believe, despite many millions being spent on this type of food advertising by companies, it has not been subject to official regulation.

In April, the Committee for Advertising Practice (CAP) – an industry-run group that manages the current weak self-regulatory system – issued its own new code. In its wisdom, CAP decided that it disagreed with the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) method of determining what is a junk food, so it has decided to apply restrictions to all food and soft drink products except for fruit and veg. Even Ofcom has used the FSA's model for determining just what is a junk food for their TV advert regulations; but CAP refuses to take that step, presumably to avoid upsetting major food companies. The new code is full of loopholes, has no legal status and is vague on just what penalties advertisers would suffer for breaching it. Whilst a spokesperson for the Department of Health hopes the industry will, "embrace both the letter and the spirit of these new rules," it is hard to believe the health of our young people is being left to a fingers-crossed exercise.

Jane Landon, Chair of The Food Commission, and Deputy Chief Executive of the National Heart Forum, says, "Using the FSA model provides an incentive to HFSS advertisers to reformulate existing products or develop and advertise new products with healthy profiles," she added that, "Different rules for different media will create confusion and difficulties for advertisers, regulators and the public alike."

■ Richard Watts, Children's Food Campaign, www.sustainweb.org

Findus links with Beckham to push omega 3

Food manufacturer Findus has linked with The David Beckham Academy to promote yet another range of omega 3 supplements. The supplements have yet to appear in the shops, but can be purchased from a website which makes some highly misleading claims about the benefits of omega 3 oils. Children can use the website to print or email a 'request form' to their parents or guardians asking them to order the capsules for them. On receiving this form a parent will learn that:

"(Name) kindly asks you to order some Omega 3 power!"

"(Name) wants to get increased power, stamina and improved tactics"

The form also boldly states that, "according to recent studies 40% of children show significant improvement in school performance after regularly (sic) Omega 3 intake."

Omega 3 does not increase power, it does not increase stamina and it does not improve tactics. There is no scientific evidence that omega 3 can improve the typical child's school performance. Omega 3 oils are important, but a healthy diet will provide a much greater range of essential nutrients than these expensive capsules.

Findus are free to make such claims on the internet as websites are so poorly regulated.



Supermarkets abuse the word 'seasonal'

The Food Commission has become increasingly concerned about the apparent abuse of the word 'seasonal' by many food manufacturers and retailers.

Fresh, seasonal produce is likely to be at its most tasty. Eating seasonal food is also generally understood to be one of the ways in which we could reduce our impact on the environment. Seasonal food is (or should be) grown outside in natural conditions, with no need for energy-intensive heated greenhouses. And, because it is indigenous and fresh, there is greatly reduced need for energy-intensive transport, packaging, agricultural chemicals and refrigeration – all of

which contribute to the food and farming sector's significant contribution to climate change.

'Eat more seasonal food' is therefore a key message for people promoting health, environmental protection and UK farming. Indeed, promoting the uptake of seasonal food has been highlighted by Environment Secretary David Miliband as one way supermarkets could help reduce carbon emissions.

Yet, over recent months we have collected, or been sent by readers, many examples of inappropriate uses of the term 'seasonal' in mainstream supermarkets, such as the examples shown here, to reveal how ludicrous the situation



A definition

of 'seasonal' is needed: Can these 'season's choice' melons from Tesco be grown outdoors in the UK?

has become. Our examples reinforce findings of the National Consumer Council, who last year found the term 'seasonal' on hot-house aubergines, pineapples, strawberries (in December) and even chocolate. It is a little surprising to find that, according to a MORI poll, three-quarters of young people aged 18-24 do not know the seasons for classic British fruit and vegetables.

The Food Commission challenges food manufacturers, supermarkets and other food retailers to help people understand the true meaning of the word 'seasonality', for the good of our health, the environment and UK farming. This could involve special displays of seasonal food, with incentives and promotions. It could also mean that supermarkets could choose not to stock energy-intensive products at unseasonal times of the year, offer reasonable alternatives, and explain to their customers why.

It is no longer good enough simply to allow retailers to bring in produce from anywhere in the world, grown in any conditions, and label it as 'seasonal' or 'new season'. We therefore challenge Defra and the Food Standards Agency to remind industry officially what 'seasonality' really means, especially when so much communication about the environment and climate change rests on this definition.

Supermarkets use the word 'seasonal' to convey an all-round feeling of well-being and fun. At Easter, Asda shows a 'seasonal' banner with a girl eating chocolate cake.



Department of Health splashes out on bottled water

Plastic water bottles account for a significant proportion of the estimated half-a-million tonnes of plastic we throw away every year. Collection of waste plastic is patchy at best – only about 17% of plastic bottles produced are recycled in the UK – and there is still little market for recycled plastic here. More than half of all recycled plastic, from industrial packaging and household waste, is exported, using up yet more energy in transport; the main destination is China.

At the end of 2006, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) reported that, "The energy use associated with bottled water is of orders of magnitude greater than tap water and almost certainly more environmentally damaging." For example, the UK's leading brand (Volvic) is transported about 1,000km by road from its production site in the Auvergne region of southeast France, requiring

about 0.6MJ of energy per litre. In comparison, Severn Trent Water calculates that tap water is delivered at 0.0024MJ of energy per litre. Defra estimated that bottled water companies serving the UK market produce around 33,200 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year.

With a commitment to improving the recycling rates of the nation and tackling global warming, you might expect, therefore, that the Government would seek to 'do the right thing' and avoid wasteful bottled water, in favour of good old tap water to serve to staff and visitors. After all, they regulate the stuff; they must know it's safe to drink!

However, a parliamentary question answered by government officials this April reveals that in just one area, 'the London Administrative Estate', the Department of Health spent over £200,000 on bottled water over the past two years for, "hospitality purposes." They bought some 98,500 litres of bottled water, at a cost of around £1.95 per litre.

The Department of Health spends around £100,000 per year on bottled water in just one region. MPs also prefer to avoid drinking the tap water they regulate, preferring wasteful bottled water, like the specially branded House of Commons Mineral Water pictured on the right.





In support

**“We need more girls to come through so they can be sporting heroes for a new generation of athletes.”
Dame Kelly Holmes talks to Yvonne Wake of *The Food Magazine*.**

For example, over 85% of participating girls rate their PE kit and the range of activities on offer as average to poor. When Dame Kelly asked the girls, “How can we change activities?” the girls list things like streetdance, boxercise, abseiling, rock climbing, assault courses, and trampolining as better options. She says, “Traditional sports such as hockey and netball are viewed as boring.”

According to Dame Kelly, another reason girls are put off is the notion that they are not good at sports, or at least, they think they are not good at sports. However, the workshops with GirlsActive are designed to change all that and she is enthusiastic and positive about the future of girls and sport. Dame Kelly shared her view on how to make a difference suggesting that, “We need to listen to the girls, ask them what they want to do in a PE lesson, let girls who don’t think they are good at sport tell us what they want to achieve. Give them the voice instead of ignoring them on this issue.”

Talking to teens

Ten teenage girls, from a state secondary school in Putney, came along to a meeting to tell us how they felt about sport. Here is some of what they said:

- Teachers are more encouraging and nurturing if you are good at an activity and can be entered into sports competitions at a local

level. If you are not seen as good enough for that, they are not so interested in you.

- Boys are a problem – they are very competitive in mixed gender PE classes and they get far more opportunities to do sport as there are lots of team sports like football, and basketball.
- To keep weight off is the main reason we go to PE lessons, otherwise we might diet more and we know that is not a great idea.
- We love our school but we think the Government should make sure it has more money for better sports facilities. On our wish list for the future would be a fully equipped gym, with running machines and rowing machines – just like in health clubs.

Women continue to remain under-represented in sport and excluded from the multitude of benefits that sports involvement can bring. For example, in 2006, only 29% of members of sports boards and committees were women. At the Sydney Games in 2000, only 8% of the British Olympic Team coaches were women, which is even less than the 1996 Games in Atlanta when 11% of coaches were women.

The Easy Fireman, Leg Circles into Back Arch, and Climbing the Pole into a Crucifix...do these names mean anything to you? They are, in fact, the terms used to describe a set of actions in a pole dancing class.

In December 2006, a fitness instructor, from Northumberland, in an attempt to combat obesity in children, launched her pole dancing classes for adolescents, with the approval of their parents but to the consternation of many, including Michele Elliott, Director of Kidscape, the UK charity against bullying and child sexual abuse.

Adolescent girls are much less likely than boys of the same age to exercise, with around 40% dropping out of all sporting activity by age 18. But, research shows that as few as one in five teenagers are likely to get the recommended minimum one hour a day of physical activity. Surely, there are few who think pole dancing is the answer, but while it is almost impossible to imagine boys being encouraged to take it up, sadly it is less difficult to imagine that girls might be encouraged to think of pole dancing as an acceptable exercise alternative.

As National School Sport Champion, Dame Kelly Holmes hopes to offer more positive alternatives. One area of Dame Kelly’s role that has seen positive changes is the GirlsActive scheme. As part of her tours around the UK countryside, Dame Kelly has held workshops which engage young girls and teachers to discuss the barriers of getting girls more interested in sport participation. The workshops have been successful at identifying some of the challenges.



Young women discuss what they think about diet and exercise with reporter Yvonne Wake.

Part of sport

Dame Kelly agrees that this is a woeful state of affairs, and her thoughts on this are again related to the lack of motivational physical education lessons in schools, the lack of education on correct diet and the lack of coverage of women's sport (she is calling for a dedicated women's TV channel).

She is convinced that the 2012 Olympics will be one of the greatest sporting events ever staged in the UK and that there is no reason why girls should not figure as prominently as boys. She says, "Seb Coe was my hero when I was just 14. The passion shown by Seb to be a winner is what inspired me to want to be a winner too. I followed my dream and came through." Kelly's message to all girls out there is to do the same because, "We need more girls to come through so they can be sporting heroes for a new generation of athletes."

As for the girls we spoke to, "Yes! We would be motivated by a talk from Dame Kelly Holmes."

Yvonne Wake, Public Health Nutritionist

Sport and sponsorship

Sport has a rather chequered history in terms of how readily it accepts corporate sponsorship. Sports people and events need financing; schools need the funds to buy equipment and run tournaments. There are currently no Government regulations in place about company sponsorship of school teams or activities, arrangements are left to the discretion of school governors, leaving the door open for companies that sell high fat, salt or sugar foods.

Coca-cola is one of the biggest corporate sponsors of sport in the world. It is putting millions into the Olympics, millions into the English Football League and it also sponsors Scotland's largest schools football tournament – the Coca-Cola 7s. In England, it runs the Minute Maid Schools Cup – one of Europe's biggest school football tournaments.



Photo: Roddy Scott, www.rodmyscottphotography.co.uk

...but is it the only answer?

If we are ever to get to grips with the rising level of obesity in young people, answers need to come from places other than sport. Research evidence is emerging that shows exercise from active play, walking to school and other such routine activities are essential.

No ball games



Children all over the UK live in properties owned by housing associations and councils, yet signs like this are plastered up all over the place. Worries over anti-social behaviour take precedence over the needs of young people to be able to play safely right outside their own homes.

Fat teens can't hunt

Despite the fact that some young people fall victim to a society that promotes junk foods and makes it difficult for them to get enough exercise, we still seem to have a jolly old time humiliating them for our viewing pleasure. This new programme to go out on BBC3 is surely one of the crassest ever commissioned.



Channel 4's website publicised Ian Wright's 'Unfit Kids' with the following, "Britain has the fattest, unhealthiest and laziest children in Europe..." Thanks for the encouragement, C4.

Beauty and the Bike

The charity Sustrans is rolling out 'Bike It' nationally to encourage more children to cycle to school. Beauty and the Bike is one of their projects at secondary schools in Exeter designed to tackle the fact that many fewer girls cycle than boys. It offers health and beauty advice in addition to teaching practical

skills such as puncture repair.

According to Project Officer, Emma Osborne,

"We do discuss whether it is right to wear make-up and issues like that, but these days lots of girls are interested in looks and they don't want to arrive at school feeling like they look like a mess. We have to start where they are."

Working with families

The MEND programme is for young people who are overweight or obese. The programme is currently being rolled out all over the UK. Parents and children attend sessions together.

At one session in south London, parents and children raised a range of thoughts about the programme and how they had ended up there. Paul, age ten, wondered, "Suppose I'm too busy to exercise," and, "If I go to the cinema as a treat for doing all this exercise maybe I'll eat popcorn, maybe there'll be chocolate."

Parents noted problems with food on sale, "There's fast food everywhere, every corner, every street, you can't police them all the time," and, "Buy one get one free, you don't see that for fruit."

They also wondered why they didn't get more help. One parent said, "Kids don't really like to come because it labels them overweight. You should just have more of this for all of them from the start at school," and, "I kept asking my GP, but he just said, she's growing, it's puppy fat."

The playground at this girls' school in London is now a staff car park.



Not even in the running

Physical activity is essential for everybody's health. But does sports coverage in the national newspapers promote equal participation for both men and women?
Jessica Mitchell reports.

It is a simple fact that women make up around half of the UK population; let us also, for the sake of argument, assume that females start life with a potential for interest and involvement in sport equivalent to that in males. Women also read newspapers; around 12 million take a daily and, for example, about 85% of women in Scotland say they are regular readers. Survey information from the Newspaper Marketing Agency suggests that women are also very loyal readers, with more than 80% saying they had taken their paper for as long as they could remember.

I am a loyal reader too, with more than 20 years of taking the same newspaper every day under my belt. But, for years I have been angry that the sports section of my paper seemed to report almost nothing about women. Despite this, I have never sought an alternative and never complained. I am complaining now; a survey for *The Food Magazine* has confirmed that women's sport is almost entirely ignored, not just in my favourite paper, but in eight of our major national newspapers.

Women and sport in the newspapers

Our survey found that sports coverage consistently ignored women in sport.

- *The Sun* devoted more than ten times as much space to 'page three girls' as it did to women's sport.
- All of the titles devoted less than 5% of their sports coverage to women.
- Of more than 3,000 sports pages, only about 60 were about women.

- In more than 150 individual newspapers, 46 had no mention at all of women athletes on the sports pages.
- During the period in which we surveyed these newspapers, the *Guardian/Observer* led the field with 4.5% of sports coverage featuring women. *The Sun* came in last with a paltry 0.21% coverage.

The newspapers we read

From 11 March through to 1 April, we looked at the: *Sun*; *Mirror*; *Guardian (Observer on Sunday)*; *Telegraph*; *Times*; *Daily Mail*; *Daily Express* and *Independent*.* We focused purely on the sports pages. However, it should be noted that the other sections of the papers also reported more on male than on female sports people. We were most interested in the extent to which women sports people were either pictured or featured as article leads on the sports pages. The survey attempted to be generous to the papers; for example, if an article mentioned a man and a woman in the headline, or included a woman's photo, but then went on to report for a page almost exclusively about the male, we still counted that as a page about women because the article headlined the woman.

* Out of 22 possible days, we took seven of the papers at least 19 times. We took the Sunday editions for all of the papers except *The Sun*. Note that this survey is a snapshot of activity over a limited period.



Should these young swimmers go on to be champions, will they get the recognition they deserve?

Percentage of newspaper sports coverage devoted to women (11 March through to 1 April 2007)

Guardian/Observer	4.5%
Telegraph	3.5%
Times	2.3%
Daily Mail	2.0%
Independent	1.3%
Daily Express	0.83%
Mirror	0.25%
Sun	0.21%

Why sports coverage matters

We spoke to two top sports women for this article – Gill McConway, the Engand and Wales Cricket Board's Executive Director for women's cricket and Sarah Potter, former England cricketer with a weekly women and sport column for *The Times*. Both told us that publicity for women's sport might not be the only factor in increasing participation by women, but that it is an essential one.

Gill McConway has professional experience of how this can make a difference. "This is a subject I feel very passionate about, women's sport does not get the recognition it deserves. Youngsters just don't get to see women like Charlotte Edwards (England women's cricket captain) making a beautiful cover drive to the boundary; it is hard to create role models for young women if these talented players get no recognition."

McConway has seen the practical effect of media coverage in her role, as she says, "There is most definitely a link between what women see on TV and in the papers and what grabs their imagination and who they want to copy. You can tell this if you look back to the Ashes – both the men's and women's teams won in 2005. The women were on the big tour bus just like the men, and we got countless calls to the office about cricket for girls and women after that, everyone noticed."

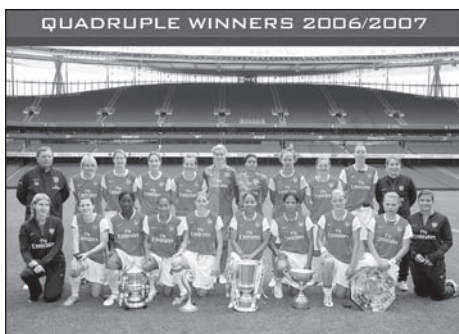
Sarah Potter notes, "Sport needs its heroes – people at the very top of their game that you want to emulate. If column inches are dedicated to those people it will generate a following and it gets people up."

Why is there so little coverage?

The experts we have spoken to suggest it may have to do with prejudices about the quality of women's sport; ignorance about how much is going on in women's sport and newspaper Editors' belief that there is little desire, and therefore need, for change.

According to Sarah Potter of *The Times*, "There is plenty going on in women's sports, my columns over the past months have looked at skiing; Thai boxing; triathlon; judo; rugby union; BMX biking; netball; football and hockey just to name a few." She says that newspapers' market research probably suggests it is an area they do not need to concentrate on, but also mentions that amongst some of the older school of reporters, there is a degree of prejudice. "Some of the coverage of women's tennis is terrible, you get these old male codgers who have a completely distorted view that really does not have anything to do with what is going on in front of them," says Potter.

Both noted that there was also much pleasure to be had from viewing or reading



Arsenal Ladies football team won the women's FA Cup, the UEFA Cup, the League title and the League Cup this year. So why aren't the players household names?

about women's sport, the problem often is, people just do not get to see or hear about how good it is. Gill McConway says, "The women's game is vibrant, we've had huge successes and each year it is getting stronger and stronger. Once you get people to watch – especially older supporters of men's cricket, they say it's pure cricket – like it was 15-20 years ago. In the men's game, power and strength has somewhat taken over, but women don't have the strength for the improvised shot. They are also amazed that we can throw it in from the boundary."

A quick look at the BBC's online sports calendar for March shows plenty of activity in women's sport, including rowing, as one letter writer to *The Times* pointed out: "On Saturday about 2,000 women, plus their coxes, representing clubs and universities from all over the UK and abroad, took part in the women's Head of the River Race (for eights) on the Tideway. Your paper did report the main results but there was no report of the event itself with such large amateur participation. No doubt, there will be "extended coverage" for the Boat Race."

A look to the future

McConway and Potter are both agreed that publicity is not the only ingredient necessary for increasing girls' and women's participation in sport. For example, at the Engand and Wales Cricket Board, more resources are now devoted to building practical structures and programmes to get girls involved. But, both suggested that we are trapped in something of a vicious circle – if participation in sport by girls is lower than that of men, it gives an excuse to cover it less in the media which also means fewer resources – which then in turn surely means participation will not rise and so on.

Potter says, "It is difficult to change, it's a tough one. It has gotten a bit better, and the top people get coverage. But, until women really jump up and down about it, it will continue. Women have got to stand up for themselves and say we want to watch, we want it covered."

According to McConway, "We need more matches running alongside men's. Twenty20 cricket is the ideal vehicle for men and women to compete at the same ground, on the same day, with the same audience – we have two of these fixtures this summer. That is one way people will say, wow women do play. Hopefully then, we will have supporters for life. And we've got to educate the media, so they say the men are at Headingly today, the girls at Blackpool tomorrow."

So, to all of you men and women out there, who want so see more coverage of our women sporting heroes, start jumping up and down. If it doesn't get editors to change, at least it might get you fit.

■ For more information on women's cricket see www.ecb.co.uk



The Sun scored lowest in the survey, with only 0.21% of sports coverage featuring women

Additives and 'unwanted effects'

In the last *Food Magazine* we revealed that many over-the-counter children's medicines contain additives which are banned from food and drink for the under-threes. Here we reveal what the labels do (and don't) tell us.

In the last issue of *The Food Magazine* we revealed how food additives which are banned from food for the under-threes are routinely added to medicines for children of the same age. These additives are banned from food and drinks because they cannot be proved to be safe for consumption by the very young. Before publishing our research, we contacted the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to express our concerns, but the Agency failed to respond to our questions in any detail. However, the MHRA finally rolled into action after *The Food Magazine's*

research made the front pages of both *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* on 10th March. The MHRA made it clear it did not believe the 'under three' legislation should apply to medicines, despite our concerns, and protested that the additives used in medicines are safe. However, their response has raised even more issues, as we report here.

Warnings on labels

Many of the additives which we found require special labelling when used in medical products, as the additives may cause what the MHRA

refer to as, "unwanted effects." Such additives (and any other ingredients also capable of causing an 'unwanted effect') must be listed on the outside packaging of a medical product. No specific warning needs to appear alongside the ingredient's name. If you know that you might react to a specific additive or ingredient (and many people will not know this) such limited labelling does at least give you a chance to avoid that ingredient. However, we found that almost a quarter of the products



Additive health warnings displayed on medicines (but not on food or drink)

Medicines which contain additives that can cause an 'unwanted effect' should warn consumers of the risk. However, foodstuffs which are consumed regularly and in much greater quantities, do not have to list any warning. Here we reveal the additive health warnings which medicines should give, but which you will fail to find on any foods or drinks.

Additive	Threshold	Warning
Azo colouring agents: For example, E102 (tartrazine); E110 (sunset yellow FCF); E122 (azorubine, carmoisine); E123 (amaranth); E124 (ponceau 4R red, cochineal red A); E151 (brilliant black BN, black PN).	Zero	May cause allergic reactions
E951 (aspartame)	Zero	Contains a source of phenylalanine. May be harmful for people with phenylketonuria
Benzoic acid and benzoates: for example: E210 (benzoic acid); E211 (sodium benzoate); E212 (potassium benzoate)	Zero	Mildly irritant to the skin, eyes and mucous membranes
Hydrogenated Glucose Syrup, E965 (maltitol) and E953 (isomaltitol), E965ii (maltitol liquid)	10g	May have a mild laxative effect
E421 (Mannitol)	10g	May have a mild laxative effect
E966 (Lactitol)	10g	May have a mild laxative effect
Parahydroxybenzoates and their esters. For example E214 (ethyl hydroxybenzoate); E216 (propylhydroxybenzoate); E217 (sodium propylhydroxybenzoate); E218 (methylhydroxybenzoate); E219 (sodium methylhydroxybenzoate)	Zero	May cause allergic reactions (possibly delayed)
E420 (sorbitol)	10g	May have a mild laxative effect
Sulphites including metabisulphites. For example: E220 (sulphur dioxide); E221 (sodium sulphite); E222 (sodium bisulphite); E223 (Sodium metabisulphite); E224 (Potassium metabisulphite); E228 (Potassium Bisulphite)	Zero	May rarely cause severe hypersensitivity reactions and Bronchospasm
E967 (xylitol)	10 g	May have a laxative effect

* Information taken from European Commission *Guidelines for Medicinal products for human use - excipients in the label and package leaflet of medicinal products for human use*. The warnings listed here apply to medicines for oral consumption - different warnings may apply to medicines taken via different routes such as injection. To view a copy of the complete document please visit www.foodcomm.org.uk/additives_june07.htm

we surveyed failed to list additives known to have 'unwanted effects,' on the outer packaging, in direct contravention of the guidelines. The MHRA has told *The Food Magazine* that the manufacturers of these products will be asked to, "submit revised labeling or justify why the guidance need not be followed for their product."

Warnings on patient information leaflets

Additives and other ingredients which are known to cause an 'unwanted effect' should also carry a fuller warning on a patient information leaflet inside the box.

For some additives, a warning is only required if the additive is present above a certain threshold level, but for other additives, such as preservatives, the threshold level is zero. Such warnings might typically read "Maltitol may have a mild laxative effect," or, "E123, E214, E216 & E218 may cause allergic reactions (possibly

delayed)." However, our survey found that 31 out of 41 medicines failed to warn of an 'unwanted effect' for specific additives, where as other medicines did provide a warning for those additives.

When we presented this information to the MHRA it again assured us it would, "ask the authorization holders to submit revised patient

leaflets or justify why guidance need not be followed for that product."

It seems that the labelling of many medicines may be in breach of EU legislation. The MHRA, which is supposed to monitor and regulate such products, needs to keep its eye on such labelling issues. Consumers need honest information if they are to make informed choices, and at present they are not getting the facts they need.

■ Ian Tokelove. For further information see www.foodcomm.org.uk/additives_june07.htm



These soft drinks contain sodium benzoate (E211), a widely used preservative which medical products warn may irritate the skin, eyes and mucosal surfaces. Like other food products, none of these drinks are required to carry any warning.

Sulphites: a small step forwards

Sulphites (a common type of preservative) are known to provoke asthma-like symptoms in susceptible people, but we have yet to find a food or drink product providing that information. In a very small concession to public health, legislation now forces food and drink manufacturers to declare the presence of 'sulphur dioxide' or 'sulphite' if it is present above a certain level (10mg/kg or 10mg/litre expressed as SO₂).

This is all very well, but most people will have no idea if they are allergic to sulphites, and without further information they are likely to continue purchasing products that could be detrimental to their health.

Interestingly, this legislation also applies to alcoholic drinks which are exempt from normal food labelling rules and do not have to list their ingredients.

Supermarket survey

The Hyperactive Children's Support Group (HACSG) has asked 11 major UK retailers about their additive policies. The group is worried that not enough research has been done on food additives, particularly with regard to their effect on child behaviour. They are also concerned about labelling issues, for example, thousands of flavourings are authorised for use in our food but these do not need to be labelled separately. This makes it impossible to know which ones you are consuming. The group says supermarkets are making some progress on removing additives from their own brand products, but more needs to be done.

■ For full information see www.hacsg.org.uk

Flavour of the month

At a conference in Paris this summer, one Dr Gordon Shepherd of the Department of Neurobiology at Yale will address the audience with a talk on, "the relation between flavours, aromas and the prevention of obesity." His focus is on using personal preferences to select foods, and hence develop your own personal diet plan. Another gimmicky diet book?

It is, of course, all too easy to ridicule the ability of scientists from every corner of a university to want to link themselves to the latest public health bandwagon, especially if there is research money to be gained or a book to be sold.

But we can't resist! Surely he should be telling his audience that the way to use flavours to help people lose weight is to make those flavours as

horrible as possible? And in as many high-calorie foods as possible?

When fruit and veg taste nicer than Kentucky finger-licker' fries, customers may actually want to change their orders and ask for something healthy.

We may laugh, but the good doctor Shepherd has raised a much more serious point than he realises. The vast majority of food flavouring agents, and flavour boosters like MSG, yeast extract and salt, for that matter, are added to calorie-rich, nutrient-poor foods. The sorts of foods that make us fat. The same applies to colouring agents.

These cosmetic additives serve a single purpose. They are marketing tricks to boost the apparent appeal of foods that otherwise would not sell so well. They encourage junk food diets,

and they should be classified as dangerous obesogens.

The Food Standards Agency has funded several studies on the role of additives in causing child behavioural disorders, and these have consistently shown that children, at least a small proportion, are indeed affected. In fact, such evidence has been around for years, but such is the value of additives in selling huge quantities of poor quality food that governments are reluctant to act.

Now, with a child obesity target to be met by 2010, it is time for a fresh look at what, exactly, these chemicals are doing to our dietary choices and to our long-term health. And to ban them.

■ Tim Lobstein, International Obesity Taskforce



Members of the London Beekeepers Association collecting a swarm of honey bees from a roof space. Photo courtesy of Simon Wilks.

Honey bees are a protected species, so what do you do when a swarm sets up home in your house? Jessica Mitchell reports.

Chasing round an allotment after an escaped swarm of bees might not be everyone's idea of fun, but for beekeeper Mark Emptage it's all in a day's work. I joined him on a sweltering day on One Tree Hill in Honor Oak to try to re-home a swarm that he had recently collected from behind the brick vents of a flat in Rotherhithe. He had spent hours smoking the 10,000 plus bees out from behind the wall of a flat and was now relocating the bees to his allotment site.

The collection had been tough enough, involving removing part of a wall in someone's flat and now the re-hiving wasn't exactly going smoothly. Half an hour earlier my daughter and I had donned bee suits to watch him 'dump' a great basket of bees on a ramp in the hope that the honey bees would climb up, settle in and take to their new hive. Off we went for a cup of tea to let them get on with it, and when we returned, they were gone. Emptage took this all his in stride, and when we finally found the swarm, dangling like a rugby ball from the branch of an oak tree, he shook them off in one sharp movement, and then left them to rest in a basket, covered by a sheet, until trying again later. According to Emptage, "You just need to be patient, sometimes it goes well, sometimes it doesn't."

This type of work is par for the course for beekeepers, who have been co-opted by councils as free 'pest' controllers. Honey bees are a protected species, and any attempt to destroy

them can carry a several thousand pound fine; so if they take up residence in your house, you either have to live with them or find someone to remove them safely. Come spring, honey bees send out scouts to look for places to set up new hives, and a nice spot under the eaves of your house might look just the place to them.

"I have nearly managed to kill myself getting them out of some ridiculous places," says Simon Wilks of the London Beekeepers Association. "Councils just tell people to get in touch with us, but we get no money from them and just charge minimal expenses to people for the service. I had a miserable, cold and dangerous day recently trying to get them out of someone's roof space - we had to set up scaffolding the bees were so

All ab

high up." A quick call to a London council's pest control department confirms this approach where a spokesperson suggests that, "The honey bees are the beekeeper's payment."

Iris Mennell was one of the tenants in Rotherhithe who came home to find honey bees covering doors and steps on her street before they took up residence in a vent. "We think the bees may have come from the nearby Surrey Docks City Farm, they made such a lot of noise behind the walls, and it took hours to get rid of them, but we were glad that Mark Emptage could come and take them away safely," says Mennell.

That option would not have been possible if she lived in New York, where it is illegal to keep bees, as under health codes they are deemed creatures, "wild, ferocious, fierce, dangerous or naturally inclined to do harm." Simon Wilks hopes things do not get to that point here in London; beekeepers can be stopped if their hives are deemed a nuisance, but he says, "If people don't know what they're doing they can upset their bees, and make them grumpy, so do a proper course if you are interested. Also, people should just get used to living with bees, there is usually no problem, and they can live quite happily in your roof space without causing any trouble at all."

And by the way, the bees did eventually take to their new residence on One Tree Hill, where as far as I know, their children live happily still.

Sugar Puffs enlists bees to target five year olds

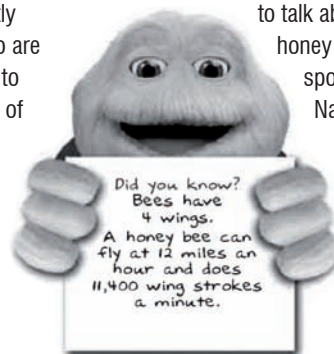
If health legislation is making it hard for you to market your high sugar breakfast cereal directly to the children who consume it, how else can you advertise to them? One time-honoured approach is to disguise your marketing message as an educational resource, so that teachers take your advertising directly to a 'captive' audience, the children in their care.

This is the approach currently being used by Sugar Puffs, who are investing £3.5m in a campaign to promote the 'natural goodness' of honey and the importance of bees. The campaign includes a schools education programme which will target children aged as young as five at 5,000 primary schools.

Sugar Puffs have at least reduced their sugar levels to 35%

(until recently it was a staggering 49%) but it is still questionable whether any child should consume a breakfast cereal that is over one third sugar. Most of this comes from glucose-fructose syrup and sugar, not honey.

To make sure the message gets across Sugar Puffs have employed BBC wildlife presenter Bill Oddie to visit schools during June and July to talk about how children can help the honey bee, and Sugar Puffs have also sponsored the wildlife garden at the Natural History Museum.



Sugar Puff's Honey Monster tells 5-11 year olds all about bees. Perhaps he can explain tooth decay in the next 'educational' pack?

uzz about bees

The major monetary value of bees is not with sales of honey, but with pollination of crops, wild flowers and domestic garden plants. Figures released by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2005 estimated a valuation of the benefits of the honey bee, primarily to agriculture, at about £120 million per year in England.

Across the pond, commercial pollination in the U.S. is on a vast scale and is a multi-million dollar industry. Familiar foods and domestic crops such as almonds, apples, broccoli, strawberries and cotton rely on commercial beekeepers that are willing to travel with their hives. Demand has increased over the years, and prices for rental of honey bee hives for pollination of almond crops in 2006 stood at approximately \$136 per colony in California – nearly a 300% rise since 1995.

Good pollination is essential, particularly for fruit. Although, some fruits such as apples can manage quite nicely by themselves, without the help of additional bees, the fruit will result in a less than perfect shape which is unacceptable to the supermarkets and therefore unsellable. It also ensures the fruit is ready for harvest at the same time, which is important for growers. At least 39 fruit and seed crops grown in the UK need to be pollinated by insects. Fruits such as apples, pears, plums, cherries, greengages all depend on adequate and effective pollination and bees play a vital role in this.

However, in contrast to the big bucks of the U.S. and while pollination is an essential mechanism in growing and setting fruit, commercial pollination fees from beekeepers in England accounted for only £198,000 per year in the Defra report. According to John Howat, Secretary of the Bee Farmers' Association, "In the US, there are huge tracts of almonds, oranges and cotton. These crops need bees on an industrial scale. Thousands of hives are carried huge distances, on pallets, on massive articulated lorries complete with fork-lift. Beekeeping is big business in the U.S. In the UK, making a living from bees is very hard work for unreliable returns, so there are very few commercial bee farmers, with most bees being kept by hobbyists." These hobbyists' hives are a hugely important part of our agricultural system, flying off to pollinate crops entirely for free, and providing honey for sale by their keepers.

The commercial pollination year in the UK starts in springtime, with hives being moved into fruit orchards. By May or early June, bees are then carted off to oil-seed rape fields, then onto field beans and mustard. Around June/July, some bees will be taken to borage crops, finishing at the

The honey bee was once one of the most familiar insects around. But, it is now in severe decline in the wild. Cally Matthews reports.

heather moors in August. Hives are also needed for pollination inside the giant poly-tunnels that are used to grow soft fruits. Strawberries, raspberries and blackberries are reliant on bees being brought in to pollinate the crops because there are no natural insects inside the greenhouses. Since 80% of the soft fruit sold in supermarkets has been grown under the poly-tunnel, the bee is a vital participant in fruit production.

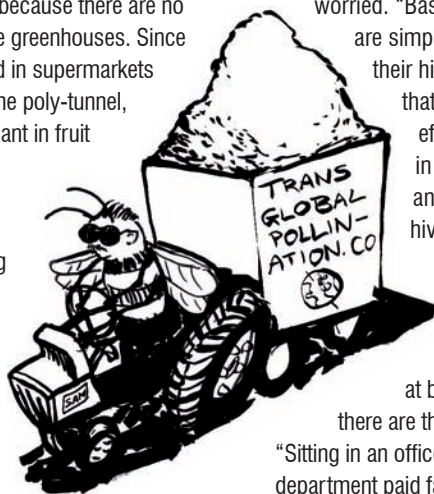
It is somewhat ironic that wild bees have been co-opted into being agents of the very sort of intensive production that some suggest contributed to their decline. According to the Vegan Society, "The food industry is now looking to artificially managed honeybees to pollinate crops because wild bees and other insects (who would naturally pollinate crops) have been and are being

destroyed by housing development, industrial pollution, pesticide poisoning, intensive farming practices, destruction of hedgerows."

Honey bees have had a difficult decade – the nineties saw the parasitic varroa mite wiping out colonies, and more recently the so-called Colony Collapse Disorder which has particularly affected the USA. Recent research has suggested neonicotinoid insecticides may be implicated; these relatively new systemic insecticides have become popular because they target insects that have become resistant to previous insecticides.

Third generation beekeeper Neil Pont is worried. "Basically what happens is the bees are simply not finding their way back to their hives. We know in this country that certain pesticides have that effect on bees. If they get caught in it they become disorientated and they don't go back to their hives."

The UK's beekeepers are essential to the survival of honey bees, looking after hives, keeping the varroa mite at bay and it is good luck for us that there are those like John Howat who says, "Sitting in an office working as a manager in an IT department paid far more for a lot less work (but not less stress). But, as I work with my bees on a warm day in utter peace and tranquillity, seeing the honey they have brought in, I have to say that life is much more satisfying these days."



Beekeepers prepare to relocate a swarm of honey bees.

Overfished and in need of protection

Many of the world's fish stocks are in crisis. We find out how consumers can get the information they need to decide what to buy.

Official figures suggest that over 70% of the world's wild fish stocks are either over-exploited or fully exploited. That means that some of the most familiar of sea creatures – tuna, cod, swordfish, plaice – are in serious decline either everywhere they grow, or in certain oceans. 10 species account for 75% of all seafood sold in the UK, with cod accounting for 22% of all consumption and haddock, salmon, plaice, tuna and prawns (warm and cold water) all appearing in the top ten. The pressure on these stocks, from the heavy demand, is considerable.

Around 90 million tonnes of wild fish are caught worldwide each year. Over the last thirty years demand for seafood products has doubled and according to the charity, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), only 3% of fish stocks are currently under-exploited. The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has 43 species on its 'Fish to avoid' list, including popular species eaten in the UK. Fish make it onto that list because they are overfished, or because the methods used to fish them are particularly damaging to the environment.

Efforts to tackle the serious problem of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing are underway, as traceability is an essential part of ensuring sustainability. Campaigners are working to tackle the worst of fishing methods, such as beam trawling, which damage the environment and kill other marine creatures. The vastness of the global market also presents a problem of being able to verify the source, as Cat Dorey of Greenpeace told us, "The many stages of a journey of a fish, from boat to supermarket shelf, make it notoriously difficult to police."

Is farming the answer?

The issue of fish farming is a hotly contested one. Fish farming accounts for around 1/3rd of the supply of UK fish. Some experts suggest that shifting consumption to farmed fish from wild fish cannot be the answer for a range of



Greenpeace activists attempt to disrupt a Scottish ship trawling for North Sea cod, which is classified as a 'threatened and declining species.' Visit www.greenpeace.org.uk and check out *A recipe for change*.

reasons: the food for farmed fish often includes marine creatures that themselves are an essential part of the marine food chain; fish farming uses chemicals damaging to the marine environment and farmed fish can spread diseases that then affect their wild cousins. There are organically certified farmed fish for sale in UK supermarkets, but this itself has been the subject of considerable debate due to concerns around welfare and the make up of fish feed.

At the moment, both Greenpeace and the MCS are pressuring UK retailers to improve their sourcing policies with regard to the sustainability of farmed fish. According to Dawn Purchase of the MCS, "Although a number of supermarkets include key sustainable and environmental requirements for production of UK farmed fish such as salmon, few have such stringent requirements for production outside of the UK. MCS would like to see all supermarkets developing a comprehensive policy for imported farmed production as well as a greater focus on the sustainability of the feed used to grow farmed carnivorous fish both within the UK and elsewhere."

What is being done?

Three of the key charities in terms of fish and sustainability are Greenpeace, the Marine Conservation Society and the Marine Stewardship

Council. Both Greenpeace and the MCS publish supermarket league tables that rate the big retailers on their performance with regard to the sustainability of the fish they sell. It is so important to tackle retailers as 85%, by volume, of all fish sold in the UK is purchased in these retailers. The work of these organisations challenges the big retailers to put sustainability at the forefront of their fish sourcing policies, and the people we spoke to at Greenpeace noted that real progress was being made with some retailers.

The MCS also offers consumers extra help through their pocket *Good Fish Guide* and through their www.fishonline.org site that allows consumers either to check out 'Fish to avoid' and 'Fish to eat' lists or to do more specific searches for information about fish that do not appear on either that worst or best list. They give fish a ranking from 1&2 (most sustainable, and on the 'Fish to eat' list) through to 5 (worst, 'Fish to avoid' list).

The MSC is slightly different, as it runs the only internationally recognised certification scheme for measuring fisheries to assess if they are well run and sustainable. The MSC currently certifies around 32% of the global prime white fish catch, for example, and all certified fisheries can use their logo; but worldwide only around 5% of fisheries are

MSC certified. The logo is widely respected, with the Chief Executive, Wynne Griffiths, of Young's (the UK's biggest seafood supplier) saying, "It would be a huge advantage to the whole industry if we could unite behind the MSC and drive it forward." You can check out their website for lists of certified products, by supermarket or by brand or look out for their logo on products.

Which retailer is top?

According to MCS and Greenpeace, the best two sustainable fish retailers are M&S and Waitrose; MSC criteria put Sainsbury's at the top of the list because the retailer sources the most products with the MSC logo. M&S has promised that by 2012 all of the fish they sell will be from sustainable sources certified by the MSC, but in the meantime they promise, along with Waitrose, to sell no fish on the MCS 'Fish to avoid' list whilst offering a wider range from the 'Fish to eat' list.

However, contradictions abound, with Mike Parker, Deputy Chief Executive of Young's,

quoted recently in *The Grocer* magazine, claiming that, "We (at Young's) don't believe there are any core species in the UK market which are unsustainable." This rather flies in the face of evidence gathered during a recent shopping expedition by *The Food Magazine* to Sainsbury's, and also does not concur with information gathered in the most recent Greenpeace and MCS supermarket league table surveys. Unilever, which produces Bird's Eye products, recently committed to a program of dealing only with sustainably managed fisheries within two years, but have run into problems keeping to their own schedule as they cannot find enough sustainable fisheries to keep up with demand. At time of writing, both Unilever and Young's are still dealing in cod caught in the eastern Baltic – an area considered overfished by scientists.

Oliver Knowles of Greenpeace told us, "It's important to remember that even though good things have happened, these guys are no angels, they are businessmen and fish is big business."

What can you do?

- Tell your fishmonger and retailer that you want them to stock more fish from sustainable sources and to have easy information available at sale point.
- Get the facts about the fish you eat – where it is caught; what fishing method is used; which retailers come out best for their fish sourcing for farmed and wild.
- Avoid products that do not give the information you need.
- Look out for the MSC logo and check out the MCS fish lists.
- Once you have checked out the facts, be adventurous about the fish you eat so that the pressure on core species is reduced.
- Support Greenpeace's call for Marine Reserves over 40% of the world's oceans (protected areas where, amongst other things, fishing would be banned.)

The Food Magazine cannot recommend eating less fish than the current government recommendation of two portions a week. However, Sarah Read of the Food Standards Agency told us that the Agency is, "Currently collating information to support a sustainability assessment on our advice relating to fish consumption, drawing on advice from Defra on the sustainability of fish stocks." Some campaigners did tell us that, for them, eating less was one option. According to Oliver Knowles of Greenpeace, the fear still remains that despite all of the improvements to fisheries management, "All we're doing is shunting pressure from one stock to another."



Look for the Marine Stewardship Council logo when purchasing fish. Visit www.msc.org for lists of approved fish products.

Visit the Marine Conservation Society's websites at

www.mcsuk.org and www.fishonline.org for extensive information on which fish to buy, and which to avoid.



Marine Conservation Society

Going fishing

Jessica Mitchell of *The Food Magazine* goes fishing in her local supermarket

Since around 85% of fish is sold in supermarkets, I decided to have a look for myself to see just what sort of information is available to guide consumers when they are making their purchases. I wandered into a south London branch of a major retailer with no pocket *Good Fish Guide*, armed only with the intention to see what I could find out from the labels on fish products, other point of sale information and from store employees. I wandered the store for about forty five minutes, reading the fine print

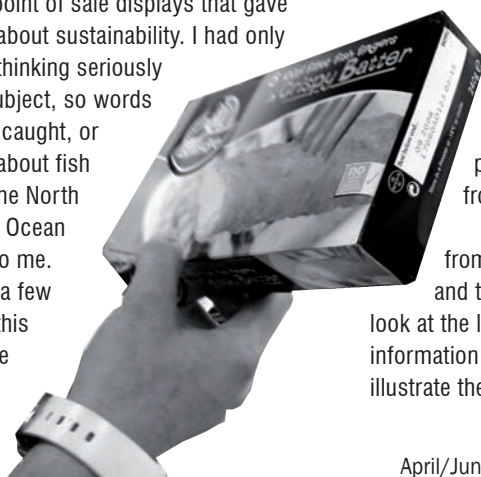
on labels that told me much more about the nutritional properties of fish, than about their sustainability.

Packs gave a mix of information, in a mix of places on the label; there were no leaflets on offer, or point of sale displays that gave information about sustainability. I had only just started thinking seriously about this subject, so words such as line caught, or information about fish being from the North East Atlantic Ocean meant little to me. I only found a few products in this shop with the MSC logo,

so had very little information to go on. The man at the fish counter was happy to assure me that, "Most of the fish we have in the store is sustainable," and he mentioned the Marine Stewardship Council.

However, when I got my purchases home and started searching for more information about them, I realised his easy remark masks the fact that it is also easy to purchase fish at the shop that are from depleted stocks.

I bought a hodge podge of products from the freezer and chiller cabinets and took them home to have a closer look at the labels. Turn to page 14 to see the information given on just a few products to illustrate the difficulty in choosing.



Going fishing

Continued from page 13

Choosing sustainable fish is not easy, as this sample of products shows:

1. Birds Eye 100% cod fish fingers

Nothing about method or place of catch; this information is not required for the product under labelling law. It is, therefore, not possible to judge how sustainable this product is from the packaging. In fact, for all I knew, it might not be; Atlantic cod (from depleted stocks) appears on the MCS 'Fish to avoid' list and the MCS recommends at least looking for more environmentally friendly line caught fish.

2. Own brand Cape Hake

Nothing about catch method; this is not required by law. Cape Hake has been certified by the MSC, and it is possible to choose fish with this logo, but the packaging on this product did not have the logo.

3. Own brand cod fillet fish fingers

Fish caught in the North East Atlantic Ocean with no method listed. North East Atlantic Cod are assessed as being overfished and are on the MCS 'Fish to avoid' list.

4. Own brand wild Alaskan salmon fillets

Caught in the Pacific Ocean; the MSC logo is present on the least noticeable bit of packaging under the rim of the plastic container and in fact, I did not notice it until I got home.

5. Young's large haddock fillets frozen

No information about ocean or catch method, but the back of the pack notes, "If all the portions of fish and chips we ate last year were lined up end to end they would stretch twice around the world." Some haddock is on 'Fish to avoid' list and none on 'Fish to eat' list.



Fishing for information on sustainability isn't easy. If shoppers are to make sensible choices, they need accessible information.

UK fish eating

The leading recipe magazines sell millions of copies and feature many fish recipes. Could they be hastening the destruction of endangered fish stocks?

Would you eat a fish pie or fish fingers made with pollack or whiting rather than cod?

The Food Magazine wanted to see what sort of information is given about fish and sustainability in some of the most popular magazines in the UK. We surveyed magazines which specialise in (or make recommendations about) food, i.e. ones with recipes and those with a strong food / lifestyle element. On average, we looked at two consecutive issues of sixteen different magazines, with a total of 184 seafood recipes between them. The survey is not intended to be comprehensive or an indication of individual magazines' editorial policies, but rather an attempt to gauge whether sustainable seafood is perceived as an important issue and if consumer advice is given.

We checked out: Do magazines promote any information about sustainability with recipes or in general; do they give information about method of catch or ocean; do they promote the same seafoods repeatedly, or do they encourage choice within sustainability criteria; how consistent is their message and what do celebrity chefs' recipes include? Here's how they rated:

- **Top of the class** with good information about sustainable fish: *BBC Good Food* and *Delicious*.
- **Okay, but could do better.** Some degree of information: *BBC Olive*, *Country Kitchen*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Weightwatchers*.
- **Bottom of the class** with absolutely no mention of sustainability: *She*, *Prima*, *Top Sante* (1 issue), *Best*, *Zest*, *Lighter Life* (1 issue), *Food and Travel*, *Diet & Fitness*, *Slimming World*, *Fresh* (1 issue).



Between them, the magazines have a circulation of around 3 million every month; *Good Housekeeping* sells to around five million readers a year, *BBC Good Food* to around 4 million. That is a significant audience which surely offers a

wonderful opportunity to promote messages about sustainable seafood.

Fast fish facts from the survey

- Over 1.5 million readers a month get no information on the importance of sourcing fish sustainably.
- Tiger prawns specified nine times, with no sourcing information, despite some stocks being at huge risk.
- MSC logo appeared only once.
- Cod, haddock, tuna, and prawns account for as much as 80% of sales in the UK; these are also the top fish in the magazines, along with salmon, appearing 118 times in recipes, putting ever more pressure on stocks.

Top of the class

BBC Good Food was streets ahead in the way that it put information about sustainability and fish throughout the magazine, next to recipes and not just in a single article. The magazine repeatedly mentioned the need to choose fish from a sustainable source; the information was often given in bright boxes, next to recipes. The magazine ran special features on the topic such as a lengthy item on seafood and sustainability. That article included recipes for unusual varieties of fish from sustainable sources. *BBC Good Food* offered a range of choices of fish with many recipes; it also suggested open choices,

such as white fish, rather than specifying cod or haddock. Some recipes included information on method of catch – line caught – or information on rearing – organic.

Delicious also made efforts to put information throughout the magazine and in a specialist article on the topic. Some recipes in the magazine offered alternatives, such as red snapper for mackerel, that were positively

rated on the MCS site and which might not have been immediately obvious to cooks. The magazine also suggested white fish rather than specifying a species in recipes. *Delicious* recipes also specified particular fish species that are well rated by the MCS. The magazine was beaten to the top spot by *BBC Good Food* as that magazine

ng habits die hard

shouted a bit louder about sustainable fish; it was easier just to flick through and notice that the issue was important.

Okay, but could do better

Only four other magazines – *BBC Olive*, *Country Kitchen*, *Weightwatchers* and *Good Housekeeping* – included any information useful to the reader interested in sustainable fish. Of these, *BBC Olive* was the best. The magazine's Editorial page includes a section that makes promises to readers, including one to use sustainable fish; however, this did not appear in both editions. The magazine did make some effort to leave open choices, such as white fish, but generally failed to offer much information at all about the fish it recommended.

Country Kitchen promotes British food, and as a consequence of this did to some extent discuss locality and seasonality in relation to fish, but was otherwise disappointing. *Good Housekeeping* makes it into this section because of one thing; it put the MSC logo with a sentence of explanation in an article about food labelling. *Weightwatchers* had a single paragraph on sustainable fish and mentioned www.fishonline.org.

Contradictions and inconsistency

Even the magazines that did best suffered somewhat from contradictions and inconsistency in their editorial approach.

BBC Good Food might have done best in our survey, but it is not 100% consistent. For instance, it suggests prawns with no further sourcing information. The magazine also includes a full page ad for the company Frozen Fish Direct – the company's website promotes its cheapness, quality and convenience but not sustainability. It sells tiger prawns and skate, which is a stock in terrible condition and a 'Fish to avoid'. The magazine has a seasonal section, it includes conger eel – a seafood that Greenpeace has asked supermarkets to stop selling. Ironically, the seasonal column also suggests looking out for MSC certified fish in season.

Delicious includes a five page article which includes a couple of recipes for sustainable fish; the piece mentions the MSC but does not show the logo, and it does not appear elsewhere in the magazine. It does not promote the MSC logo even when recommending choices that are certified such as Alaskan Red salmon. The magazine also includes recipes for fish that



have mixed reports, including halibut, some of sources of which are 'Fish to avoid' and others, such as monkfish, squid, tuna and prawns where checking the source is important. The magazine makes regular suggestions for alternatives, but their information policy lacks consistency.

BBC Olive makes a pitch on the Editor's page in one edition, "Where possible we use... sustainably caught fish," but does not repeat it in the next. Even in the edition for which it makes the suggestion, tiger prawns appear in a recipe; the magazine chefs might have sourced these organically farmed (as recommended by the MSC) so why didn't they tell their readers to do so? Other recipes suggest tuna steaks or salmon, without suggesting sourcing information.

Country Kitchen promotes British food, tradition, and local eating, but this is not necessarily linked to sustainability. It recommends elvers as seasonal; these are on the MCS to avoid list. The magazine uses prawns, salmon, herring, haddock and other fish with no mention of sustainability in sourcing.

Celebrity chefs

Gary Rhodes, in *BBC Good Food*, gives a tip in his recipe for roast halibut steaks. "Buy your halibut from a sustainable source." This is vital advice considering halibut from both Greenland and Atlantic is on the MCS 'Fish to avoid' list. More worryingly, two pages earlier he has a recipe for seared tiger prawns, also appearing on the 'Fish to avoid' list with no advice on sourcing, i.e. to look for organically farmed.

In *Good Housekeeping*, Head Chef of Petersham Nurseries, Skye Gyngell, includes her recipe for bouillabaisse with no mention of fish sourcing. Her recipe includes seafood found on the 'Fish to avoid' list - tiger prawns, and turbot (a problem if it is from the North Sea).

In an article on food labeling, *Good Housekeeping* gives brief mention of the MSC logo and shows it; but then there is no particular attempt in the magazine to encourage or recommend sustainable choices.

Fish to eat, fish to avoid

This is a hard one; magazines do not generally go out of their way to specify unsustainable fish. It is more a lack of information that bedevils us. For example, cod is used repeatedly in recipes with no mention of catch method or ocean; only *BBC Good Food* mentions that it is worth seeking out line caught or organic farmed. Tuna is mentioned repeatedly in the magazines, with no opportunity ever taken to specify within a recipe which tuna it is best to look out for. The Marine Conservation Society is particularly concerned about tuna stocks worldwide. Over 1.5 million readers a month get no information on the importance of sourcing fish sustainably. Tiger prawns are on the 'Fish to avoid' list unless they are organically farmed, and yet we did not see this source recommended in any of the recipes we looked at.

Even when magazines take care to make specific suggestions with regard to sustainability criteria, it can still be difficult for the consumer. *Delicious* suggests the use of cold water prawns, a better choice than warm water prawns. But, the MCS website suggests, "The status of prawn stocks is generally unknown and subject to large natural fluctuations. Increase the sustainability of the fish you eat by only choosing prawns taken in fisheries using sorting grids to reduce by-catch of non-target species." It is difficult to be clear just where a consumer might find this level of detail about the prawns they are purchasing.

What should the magazines do?

- Have a consistent approach to promoting sustainable sourcing of fish.
- Make sure the MSC logo appears in each issue.
- Do not include recipes for seafood on the 'Fish to avoid' list.
- Include a wider range of recipes, particularly for seafood recommended by the MCS.
- Get celebrity chefs to take particular care about which seafood they promote.

Finding out which fish to buy can be complicated, but it is very important with so many fish stocks in crisis. Magazine editors are in a position to guide millions of readers to make the right choices, and must do so now.

Food industry sails into storm over carbon labels

Can carbon labels help steer consumers towards a climate-friendly diet, or are we heading into a storm, every bit as messy as the furore over nutrition labelling? Kath Dalmeny reports.

This seems to be the year for major food manufacturers and supermarkets to wake up to their environmental responsibilities as never before, particularly with regard to carbon emissions and climate change. The new consciousness, and the eagerness of companies to communicate their green credentials to customers, has given rise to a plethora of different commitments and food labels from the major players (see box below).

The Soil Association (the UK's leading organic certification body) started the year by announcing its intention to consult on a proposal to exclude airfreighted products from its certification process. "Overall, the carbon footprint of air-freighting is greater to such a large degree than land transport that we think there is a pretty strong case for looking at a ban very seriously," said the Soil Association's director Patrick Holden. Should consumers stop buying airfreighted organic produce, or do the environmental and development benefits of

organic farming outweigh the transport costs to the environment?

Meanwhile, a report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, by Manchester Business School, caused a media furore for highlighting that in certain production systems (notably speciality produce from heated glasshouses; and for extensive welfare-friendly chicken production) greenhouse gas emissions from organic agriculture can sometimes be higher than from conventional. So should we switch back to consuming chicken products produced in cruel conditions? Or should we drill deeper into the figures and recognise that welfare-friendly chicken production is still orders of magnitude less greenhouse-gas intensive than red meat production. Perhaps a more ethical and climate-friendly answer would be to eat less meat overall, boosting our consumption of less energy-intensive seasonal foods from plants.

Responding to increasing concerns about transport of fresh foods by air, and intense

media scrutiny, both Tesco and Marks & Spencer declared their intention to label certain products as having been airfreighted. Several have already started to appear on Tesco shelves and examples are shown on these pages. It is notable that this applies only to fresh produce, which contain only one ingredient, so the carbon calculation is easier, and traceability and country-of-origin commitments already apply. No sign yet of carbon labels on complex ready-meals that may conceal all manner of hidden greenhouse gas emissions, and which the supermarkets sell in ever-increasing amounts.

In February, the Department for International Development fought back against increasing concerns about airfreight and climate change, saying that action to curb airfreight might disproportionately affect one million small-scale farmers in very poor countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, who rely on the income from exporting fresh produce to the West. A debate on the relative merits of flowers imported from Holland versus Kenya ensued. Yet, as our table shows, both types of flower production are inherently carbon-intensive. Flowers also require a great deal of water, which has its own significant environmental impact, especially for African countries.

What should we understand by the plethora of developments, of which these are just the tip of the melting iceberg? According to the Food Climate Research Network, which is undertaking a major review of 'greenhouse gas emission hotspots' in the food chain, the food system makes a hefty contribution to climate change. The FCRN's conservative estimate is that around 18% (just under one fifth) of the total greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are attributable to our food system, with even greater effects if other environmental factors such as water, pollution and waste are taken into account. Around a half of the total 18% is from agriculture.

If we wish to decrease the very significant greenhouse gas emissions embodied by the food we eat, our responses to such findings are going to need much more attention than simply deciding between different types of snack

Walkers count the carbon

In March, buyers of Walkers crisps were presented with the information that their snack represents 75 grams of carbon, emitted throughout all of the stages of production, from farming, processing, cooking and transportation. A label on the front of cheese & onion crisps declares: 'Working with the Carbon Trust, 75g of CO₂'. The Carbon Trust is a government-funded independent company that helps businesses and the public sector to cut carbon emissions. 75g – is that a lot or a little?

At the same time, the soft drinks company Innocent announced that one single-serve 250ml bottle of mango and passion fruit smoothie represents 294g of carbon dioxide (whereas

due to efficiencies of scale, a one-litre bottle represents 760g). Should consumers therefore see exotic fruit smoothies as a 'worse' choice than cheese & onion crisps? Or should health concerns override the carbon count?





Mexican blackberries; Israeli chives; South African leeks and Kenyan green beans – all flown in by air. Tesco does at least admit this with a small blue sticker.

or drink. Perhaps, industry and consumers alike need to accept, for now, that these developments are simply a foray into an arena that will require a very great deal of attention, research and change over the coming decades.

Every decision regarding food and climate change requires a balancing act of many different factors. This should not put us off; there are ways forward. The most encouraging aspect of labels such as the Carbon Trust's logo on Walkers crisps is that companies are

now engaging with the subject and making a commitment to carbon reduction.

Just as red nutrition traffic lights appearing on food labels have encouraged manufacturers to reformulate their products to be more healthy, the Carbon Trust aims for its logo to incentivise companies to reduce their carbon footprint.

However, a discouraging aspect of single-issue labels such as Tesco's airfreight sticker is that this may give consumers the impression that greenhouse gases are associated with only one aspect

of the food chain (in this case, unarguably an important one), and make partially informed choices that disproportionately affect poor countries, whilst continuing to be personally responsible for very damaging aspects of our food system, such as driving to the supermarket by car. A rush to market with partial information may have damaging side-effects.

And if supermarkets start to require carbon labelling of the products on their shelves, who will bear the costs? We fear that suppliers may be required to do so by the supermarkets, just as for other aspects of the supermarket supply chain such as marketing. A conservative

estimate puts the cost of full life-cycle analysis at between £20,000 and £40,000 per product, which would effectively exclude smaller suppliers. A publicly managed and affordable mechanism for carbon assessment is now needed to prevent this happening.

What is also crucial is that a narrow focus on carbon does not undo the very considerable commitment that has been made over recent years towards a sustainable, ethical and fair food system, taking many factors into account. Carbon reductions, highlighted by labelling and favoured by an increasingly carbon-literate population, should not be allowed to mask or encourage unsustainable water use, for example. Rapid introduction of airfreight labelling should not be allowed to cause a sudden swerve away from supporting farmers in poor countries. If the age of airfreight is over, whether due to climate change policy or the rapidly increasing cost of fuel, then we surely need a fair transition period, and we need to offer assistance to farmers to find less carbon-intensive modes of production. It is perfectly within our power to create assessment and labelling systems that take into account, and balance, a range of factors – including carbon – to ensure that we head towards a truly sustainable system.

■ **Kath Dalmeny of Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming.**

■ **The Food Climate Research Network website contains a wealth of information about food and greenhouse gas emissions. See: www.fcfn.org.uk**

Embodied carbon of selected products sold in the UK

Calculating greenhouse gas emissions associated with the farming, processing, transport, packaging, storage and disposal of food products is notoriously complicated, with figures varying very considerably in response to just small changes in, for example, packaging or method of transport. The figures in this table were presented to a conference organised in May 2007 by the UK's Energy Research Centre, commissioned by Tesco. Due to differences between studies (especially with what is included or excluded), the data is patchy and inconsistent, but it gives a very broad-brush indication of the range of greenhouse gas emissions from different types of product.

Product	Carbon dioxide (CO ₂ e*)	Method	Source
Apple	26g	Not stated	Innocent press release
Smoothie, mango and passion fruit (250ml)	294g (equivalent to 1.2kg per litre)	Carbon Trust	Innocent
Smoothie mango & passion fruit (1 litre bottle)	760g approx per litre	Carbon Trust	Innocent
Beefburger	4,500g	Not stated	Innocent press release
Packet of cheese & onion Walkers crisps (35g)	75g	Carbon Trust	Pepsico
12 roses from Holland	3,500g	Seed to UK distribution centre	Ashridge report
12 roses from Kenya	2,200g	Seed to UK distribution centre	Ashridge report
Carrots: 1kg fresh bunched	241g	Plough to landfill (excl home use)	Manchester Business School
Carrots: 1kg frozen bagged	1,200g	Plough to landfill (excl home use)	Manchester Business School
Carrots: 1kg canned	1,400g	Plough to landfill (excl home use)	Manchester Business School
Fishfingers 1kg	3,700g	Sea to retailer	Manchester Business School

* CO₂e is a standard calculation that incorporates carbon dioxide plus other greenhouse gases, converted into carbon dioxide equivalence for ease of comparison

Food for free

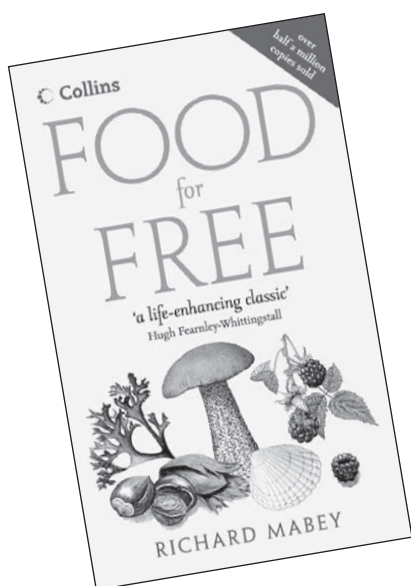
Richard Mabey, Collins, 2007, £12.99, ISBN: 978-0-00-724768-4 www.collins.co.uk

In the UK, we have a huge appetite for cheap food, the sort of stuff that is produced on an industrial scale but which frequently includes questionable ingredients. On the other hand, the free food which author Richard Mabey describes is guaranteed to be unprocessed, 100% organic and hopefully contaminated by nothing more than the occasional insect or smudge of dirt.

First published in 1972, *Food for Free* has recently been updated and reissued in paperback format. The publication helps us identify 240 wild foods, including fungi, seaweed, shellfish, roots, vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruits and nuts. Mabey stresses that we should pick responsibly, not gathering those plants that are rare and intersperses the text with recipes, historical references and anecdotes. Most of the wild foods are illustrated, although an image of a flower isn't always useful when you're hunting for the leaves of an early season plant that has yet to flower.

Those with a sweet tooth may be interested in the candies produced from wild plants in years gone by. For instance, Mabey introduces us to the original Marsh-mallow (*Althaea officinalis*), a tall perennial plant which produces soft-branched clumps of velvety pink flowers between July and September. Before marshmallows came to be manufactured out of gelatine and sugar they were produced from the roots of *Althaea officinalis*, which contain the necessary starch, sugar and gelatinous matter.

If you're the sort that likes to walk in the countryside and wants to know more about the plants around them, particularly the edible ones, this would be a fine, pocket size publication to take with you. At £12.99 it isn't cheap, but think of all the money you will save as you tuck into dock pudding, sorrel soup and simmered chickweed.



Feeding People is Easy

Colin Tudge, Feeding People is Easy, Italy, Paris Publishing, 2007, ISBN 978-88-901960-8-9

Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like the evil spirits at the dawn of day.

Thomas Jefferson, letter to Pierre S. du Pont de Nemours, 24 April 1816

Colin Tudge is an avowed Jeffersonian democrat. His latest book is founded on the premise that human behaviour is ultimately determined by ideas: if our facts are correct and our thinking is logical, then we can make use of our traditional crafts, guided by science, to feed every human being on the face of the earth—not just now but forever.

It's a tall order: "The title of my book exaggerates somewhat," Tudge wryly observes. His close observation of traditional farms all over the world has made him aware that our painstakingly accumulated agricultural skills are under massive attack from the global farming factories. The elements of the plot are already familiar to the point of cliché, but he weaves the threads together into a coherent pattern in which "market forces" promote greed, dissatisfaction and boredom, making them the prime incentives for destructive, ultimately sterile agricultural overproduction. Our grain has been transmuted into gold—hard food for Midas indeed!

Tudge's botanical knowledge takes him beyond the usual organic versus technological debate. Truly sustainable agriculture includes "agroforestry": "Livestock can fare particularly well under trees. Pigs, poultry and even cattle are basically forest animals. They are demonstrably happier and more productive with shade and shelter." This would not be simply a retreat into Luddism: "Willows can be continuously cropped as a source of biofuel."

Colin Tudge may not talk to plants, but they speak eloquently to him. They tell him that all over the world they are being stretched beyond their natural limits, deprived of proper nutriment and of the symbiotic relationships with other species that promote their optimal growth. And what is good for plants and animals is also good for the humans who primarily depend on them for nourishment:

What are the basic ingredients of traditional cooking all the world over? Plenty of plants, not much meat, and maximum variety.

In short, we can't lose. Farms that are designed to feed people forever...produce exactly the right foods in the right proportions as recommended by modern nutritionists; and these in turn are precisely what is required to produce the world's finest cooking....The future, indeed, belongs to the gourmet.

The final chapter outlines his plan for two vast institutions to reeducate our farmers and make their products widely available. The College for Enlightened Agriculture would collect, preserve and transmit the inherited knowledge of the world's disappearing artisanal farmers; the Worldwide Food Club, set up initially as a website, would be a global exchange mechanism to put consumers in touch with suppliers, predominantly local. Colin Tudge's ambitions may look impossibly starry-eyed, but the evidence increasingly suggests that such a radical overhaul of our food production and distribution is the only game in town.

Although his previous books give ample evidence of his science and his scholarship, a bibliography and footnotes would have been reassuring. There's not even an index; readers who wish to refer back to his closely reasoned arguments might well make their own. Nevertheless, the book is a useful and inspiring Jeremiad from a farmer-scholar who has earned the right to thump his lectern. Whether he's holding a pen or a plough—more power to his elbow!

■ John Whiting www.whitings-writings.com

Garden grabbing

Over the next ten years, garden space of around the size of 2800 Wembley pitches will disappear if the growing phenomenon of 'garden grabbing' is not stopped. Garden Organic says the definition of gardens as brownfield sites leaves them ripe for development. Housing shortages mean that property developers buy up homes with large gardens, then build a small estate of new flats on the plot.

That is just what has happened to Theo Bryer, of Brixton Hill, who told us, "We have a small garden, less than 25 feet, I love the view of a nearby tree and there are all sorts of birds and wildlife sharing our bit of green with us. But now, three houses in a row to one side have been converted into flats and the gardens have been built over or are about to be. One flat is

designated a family flat because it apparently has a garden, but there is only about 12 feet left. In such a built up area as ours, green space is at such a premium and the gardens are so small anyway. It has an impact on everyone's quality of life."

Garden Organic is not against building homes on true brownfield sites, but says this should not apply to gardens. It has succeeded in getting a Bill introduced into Parliament to change the classification of gardens and this gets its second hearing on June 15.

■ To support their 'Save our Garden' campaign check out www.gardenorganic.org.uk/saveourgardens.

SOS save our seeds

When we shop at supermarkets we buy runner beans, beetroot, celery, peas, tomatoes. The variety on offer is rarely promoted, and the runner bean shelf hardly brims with different types. The laws about seeds work in a way that means it is actually incredibly difficult to preserve biodiversity. Thousands of vegetable types have been lost since seed legislation was introduced in the 1960s; this could include some important for our future food supplies in a changing climate, where it is not just the weather that will change – there will be disease and pests to adapt to as well.

Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library (HSL) keeps a collection of vegetable seeds from around the UK and Northern Europe that are not readily available in seed catalogues. It is always searching for new seeds to add to its collection. The Library is not just a gene bank, it grows seeds and makes them available to its member gardeners so that they remain alive and adaptable to new conditions.

According to Sandra Slack, Head of the HSL, "Seeds saved by gardeners at home and handed down as heirlooms carry with them stories of culture and tradition. Gardeners are individuals. Each has their own distinct preferences for growing and eating. Local

Have you ever heard of, or tasted the Sub-Arctic Plenty tomato or Mrs. Fortune's Climbing French Bean or the Carlin Pea? The Heritage Seed Library hopes to ensure that vegetable varieties such as these do not become extinct.

conditions vary as much as gardeners and cooks. Vegetable varieties that adapt to particular regions and conditions give better assurances of a crop."

The reason the Library is so essential is because it is illegal in the UK to sell seed that is not on the so-called National List; a list that purports to protect seed by ensuring Distinctiveness (as in different from another variety); Uniformity (as in all plants the same) and Stability (meaning the same over generations). But in fact, it is these DUS factors that ensure the extinction of seed varieties; the cost of breeding, maintaining and registering

a variety runs into thousands of pounds. So big seed companies register varieties they can make money out of – usually ones for large scale growers that sell to supermarkets. Flavour isn't usually top of the list; it is factors such as uniformity of ripening time for easy harvest; tough skin for easy transport and acceptability of appearance. Legal Uniformity requirements also mean the varieties have a narrow genetic potential whereas variability is highly prized in varieties looked after by the HSL.

The Library gets around legislation by being a membership organisation. People all over the UK take part in growing rare seeds in their gardens and become Seed Guardians; individuals can also Adopt a Veg.

■ To join the Heritage Seed Library or Garden Organic check out www.gardenorganic.org.uk

A basket of heritage vegetables, all with their own stories. For example, Pea 'Carlin', given to the HSL by a family that had been growing them for over 100 years. 'Carlin' is grown for drying and is still traditionally eaten in the north of England on the Sunday before Palm Sunday, know regionally as Carlin Sunday. The peas are soaked overnight in salted water, then boiled and eaten, served with salt and vinegar (or doused with beer or mint sauce). Others say the tradition may commemorate the arrival in Newcastle of a shipload of peas in 1644, which saved many from starvation.

The Heritage Seed Library (HSL) and the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) joined up at Culture Kitchen events in Bradford and London where many women from community growing groups shared seeds, ideas about growing and seed saving tips. For information about WEN including its work on food growing in urban spaces contact www.wen.org.uk



Legal, decent, honest and true?



Cadbury ad meets a sticky end

Until recently, the Wrigley company had the lucrative UK chewing gum market pretty much wrapped up. Cadbury, wanting a slice of the pie, decided to introduce a chewing gum called Trident into the UK market. In early 2007, they launched a massive advertising campaign using the catchphrase "Mastication for the Nation."

The television and cinema adverts showed an over-excited black man speaking with a strong

Caribbean accent, extolling the virtues of Trident chewing gum. In other ads, a white, middle-aged woman at a women's meeting and a white man, at what appeared to be a parrot-fanciers club meeting, also spoke in rhyme about Trident gum in a Caribbean accent.

Over 500 viewers complained about the ads, which they considered offensive and racist, because they believed they showed offensive stereotypes and ridiculed black or Caribbean people and their culture.

The ads had already been cleared for broadcast by The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre but the ASA sided with the viewers. The ASA declared that the stereotype depicted in the ads had, unintentionally, caused deep offence to a significant minority of viewers and that many of those who complained were concerned that the negative stereotype would be perpetuated.

In its defence, Cadbury pointed to research which it had commissioned before broadcasting the ads. The company had sought views from the general population as well as representatives of the African Caribbean community. However, as the ASA pointed out, the Cadbury research clearly suggested that approximately one in five of the British African Caribbean sample had found the ads offensive – which rather indicates that Cadbury was only too willing to trample on the feelings of a huge number of British African Caribbeans simply to shift more units of chewing gum.

Complainants had told the ASA: "it portrays us as objects to be laughed at"; "this near 'driving miss daisy' degradation of singing songs for the whites sickens me"; "this man's behaviour shows anything but a positive role as a black man"; "it is as if it is laughing at black people who campaign for equal rights" and "depicting times of a Minstrel Show, or where black people used to have to do degrading things to 'entertain' white people".

In the light of the ASA findings, Cadbury has been forced to drastically rethink the misjudged £10m advertising campaign. However, the company claims to have already grabbed 15% of the chewing gum market in the UK, so who knows, maybe the campaign has paid off for them after all?

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A bird's eye view?

How's this for deceptive packaging? I bought these eggs from my local Spar shop - but wished I hadn't! On closer inspection, when I got home, I found in very small letters on the back of the packet that it says 'Eggs from caged hens'. The packet states that the hens have been vaccinated against salmonella - I should imagine they need to be if they are crowded into cages! The 'view from their farm' - how misleading is that, obviously not from the hens' point of view!

Bethany Guest, Taunton

It's an unfortunate truth that even in the most beautiful parts of our countryside, there are many farmers engaged in



The box shown above tells us it contains 'Farm eggs from our West Country Farm' - but the small print reveals these eggs have been laid by caged hens. Compassion in World Farming are campaigning for much better welfare conditions for such hens, which are typically crammed into small cages such as the one shown here. For more information visit www.ciwf.org



intensive egg production. The caged hens are hidden from the public within sealed industrial units, so that for many people they are both out of sight and out of mind. The hens can typically spend a full year in a floor space no larger than a single page of this magazine, laying over three hundred eggs, before being worn out, then slaughtered.

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) is urging readers of *The Food Magazine* to support their campaign to ensure such battery cages are banned. Eight years ago, the *Laying Hens Directive* promised that by 2012 these cages would be replaced with new, 'enriched' cages which would at least give each hen a little more space (about the size of a post-it note). However, many industry bodies are lobbying for this deadline to be delayed, or even for this agreement to be abandoned. CIWF wants these better minimum standards to be enforced, and is working in the longer term for much better welfare conditions for laying hens.

Saucy cooking claim for probiotics

I know you always want to know about doubtful labelling. Marks & Spencer's probiotic yogurt is labelled as containing Bifido probiotic cultures. At the same time they say that it is, "ideal for cooking," and recommend it for soups and sauces. I have asked them for evidence that their bacteria survive this treatment, but have not been able to get a clear answer. Can you investigate?

Hans Lobstein, Brighton

M&S should have been able to give you a very clear answer, which is that cooking with their probiotic yogurt will almost certainly render every one of their 'friendly bacteria' stone dead. The bacteria can survive the low temperatures associated with refrigeration and the warmer temperatures encountered in the body, but if you stir them into your soup they'll have less chance of survival than a snowflake in hell.

Mind you, M&S do point out that yogurt makes a healthy alternative to cream - and it is cheaper too!



The Food Magazine is published by The Food Commission, an independent watchdog campaigning for healthier, safer food in the 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 largely on our supporters, allowing us to be completely independent, taking no subsidy from the food industry or advertising. We aim to provide independently researched information on the food we eat to ensure good quality food for all.

A sister company, 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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■ Issue 77 of *The Food Magazine* April/June 2007. ISSN 0953-5047

■ Typesetting and design by Ian Tokelove of The Food Commission.

■ Printed on recycled paper by RapSpider web, Oldham OL9 7LY.

■ Retail distribution (sale or return) by Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN. 0845 458 9911.

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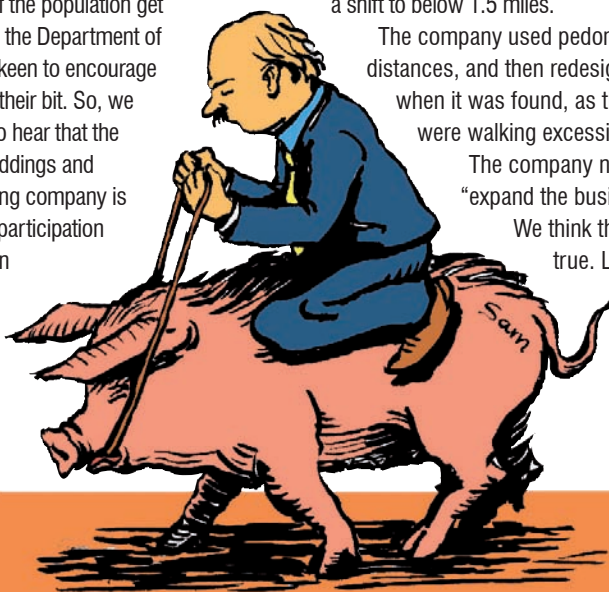
Lean manufacturing, we don't think so

With obesity rates skyrocketing and dire warnings about how few of the population get enough exercise, the Department of Health has been keen to encourage employers to do their bit. So, we were interested to hear that the Dorset-based Puddings and Pies manufacturing company is bragging that its participation in a so-called lean manufacturing programme has led to a reduction in the

distance staff walk at work from an average 5 miles a shift to below 1.5 miles.

The company used pedometers to measure distances, and then redesigned the premises when it was found, as they put it, "staff were walking excessively."

The company now feels it can, "expand the business further." We think that is undoubtedly true. Let's hope they keep an eye on staff pudding consumption too.



Day-glo chicks fuel creativity

Millions of these marshmallow chicks, known as Peeps, are sold every year in the USA. Fanatics even have a website for 'Peeps' artwork. We like this one - perhaps a subversive comment on the welfare conditions of KFC chickens?



Tesco says it can save the planet!

Supermarkets have been busy trying to persuade shoppers they are the greenest retailer around, with a disproportionate amount of attention on carrier bags. In April, Sainsbury's even banned ordinary carrier bags for a day. Shoppers hate waste and excess packaging, so it is encouraging to see supermarkets reminding customers not to waste plastic. But, compared with retailers' own wastage behind the scenes, carrier bags are an absolutely minuscule part of the problem. We spotted the poster (above) in our local Tesco Metro, offering a Bag for Life at half price and saying that customers can save a) a few pence and b) the planet. The whole planet, just with a half-price carrier bag? Oh, Tesco, if only it were that simple...

Within just a few weeks the eco-poster, in the same position, in the same store, had been replaced by a new one: 5p off per litre of petrol or diesel for every £50 spent in store. To save the planet? Not this time!



Yum yum

As health professionals around the world unite in efforts to get us to reduce the amount of salt we eat, the Salt Manufacturers' Association here in the UK is growing increasingly desperate.

Their *Salt Sense* newsletter encourages people to write in with salt scare stories. Most recently, it reports the case of a solicitor taken ill while hiking in Mali, convinced that this was due to a sodium deficiency, and with no food to hand, he came up with the idea of sucking the salt laden sweat from his tee-shirt. "It may sound odd but I started to make a rapid recovery," reports solicitor Robert Ulph.

Please, readers of *The Food Magazine*, even you athletic ones, spare yourself the tee-shirt sucking. Check out www.salt.gov.uk or www.actiononsalt.gov.uk for good sense about how salt affects your health.

Soft drinks science holds no surprises

Surprise, surprise, a review of the evidence about the effects of soft drink consumption on nutrition and health has found that studies funded by the food industry report significantly fewer negative effects than

those studies not funded by the industry. *The American Journal of Public Health* reports that, "Recommendations to reduce population soft drink consumption are strongly supported by the available science."

■ **Effects of Soft Drink Consumption on Nutrition and Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *The American Journal of Public Health*, April 2007, Volume 97, no.4**