

The FOOD MAGAZINE

Campaigning for safer, healthier food for all

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Poor pay more for good food

Exclusive research by *The Food Magazine* shows that eating healthily costs about 50% more – rising to almost 60% extra in low income neighbourhoods.

Twenty years ago, in 1988, Community Dietitian Cathy Mooney conducted a survey of food prices in different neighbourhoods of north London. Taking a basket of common foods, she compared the prices of the regular and the healthier versions of each item.

As a dietitian, Mooney was concerned that the cost and availability of healthier foods being recommended by health workers might be a problem for some of their clients, especially those trying to make ends meet on a tight budget.

She found that food prices generally tended to be lower in more deprived areas, but the healthier basket of food cost more wherever she looked. And the difference, the price 'premium' needed to pay for a healthier basket of food, was greater in lower income areas.

The Food Magazine repeated this survey in 1995 and again in 2001 (with a slightly different basket), and we have now undertaken the survey a fourth time.

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Dinner ladies play a vital role in helping children to eat healthily, yet their wages rarely reflect their importance.

See 'High art, low wages' on page 7 for more information about campaigns for a Living Wage.

Temples that feed thousands free every week

More than 35,000 vegetarian meals are served entirely for free every week at two Sikh temples in Southall, London. Langar is the word for the free food offered at all Sikh temples (called Gurdwara). The temples are open every day providing meals to all who come, regardless of faith.

The provision of such food is at the heart of Sikhism, in which all people are considered equal, embodied by the sharing of meals together. The food is offered for free so that anyone can come, no matter what their circumstances. *The Food Magazine* visited the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara to find out more about a British Heart Foundation project to improve the nutritional quality of the meals on offer.

■ Continued on page 8



These Sikh women do voluntary cooking preparation at the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara (temple) in Southall, London. Many arrive at 2.30am to start the day's work. Photo by Jessica Mitchell.

Welcome to the melting pot?

Jessica Mitchell, Editor of *The Food Magazine*, questions what it means to be British.

What is driving me most crazy at the moment in the UK is the increasingly xenophobic tone of the debate around just what it means to be British. I woke up this morning to the latest fear mongering headline about migrants – apparently they are costing the NHS a fortune by having babies here in the UK. This is just the latest in what seems to be an endless string of insidious reports and commentary about, let's admit it, what we used to call 'foreigners'. The other week I listened to a phone-in about whether migrants who commit crimes that require them to be jailed for more than a month should be immediately deported, whether or not they have lived here for years entirely legally – a suggestion that proved most popular amongst those who phoned in. Gordon Brown has waded in with his own useful remarks about British workers for British jobs.

When I visit some shops, the amount of bunting around the promotions for British food would not be out of place at a BNP rally. Reading my Saturday papers, the ads now promise me that my chickens are born and bred British – and not to worry, never from some far away land – like Poland. On a recent TV programme – the Great British Menu, chef, Gary Rhodes informed fellow contestant, chef, Atul Kochar, that his food just was not British. Kochar begged to differ – his food could be both Indian and British. And, a colleague tells a story – she was at an Apple Day event – and asked the primary school children why they thought they should buy British apples, one yelled out, "Because foreign food makes you sick."

Obviously, big issues are rumbling under this hodge podge – climate change, struggling UK

farmers going to the wall, the future of Britain in a changing and challenging world. People see a world that scares them, where things do not seem to be right and quite rightly, they want to do something about it. But, to drift unthinkingly into a rhetoric which is about separating us from our sense of a collective humanity is surely no answer.

Of course, the blatant hypocrisy gets on my nerves too – we wouldn't buy a chicken from abroad, but we take two foreign holidays a year. We want to retire to live a quiet life in another, warmer, part of the EU, but we do not want other EU citizens taking British jobs. We eat out Thai food two nights a week but watch programmes that wax lyrical about the Bath Chaps we have never in fact tasted. And, if supermarkets object so to Polish chickens, why are the aisles full of other food from all over the world?

Is it wrong to lump all of these issues together – do debates about Polish migrants have anything to do with debates about Polish chickens? I think they do. Our notions of what it means to be British, of what Britain is, its place in the world, are helping to define our response to issues such as food poverty, the worldwide trade in food, climate change... I found the recent Soil Association debate around air freighted food and certification an interesting case in point – and thought their solution (see FM79) a good one because it considered the needs of people here and abroad within the context of environment.

There are certainly no perfect answers to some of the problems we face, but I certainly hope the stories *The Food Magazine* reports, and the work we do, are part of a spirited and challenging debate about the rights and responsibilities that come with being citizens of the world and of Britain.



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Legal challenge to baby formula rules

A legal challenge by baby formula manufacturers has stopped the introduction of new rules to control the marketing of their products, whose £199 million market has grown by about 70% in the past twelve years. The Infant and Dietetic Foods Association (IDFA) claims that the Government-backed plans, set to come into place this January, imposed too quick a time scale for changes to advertising and labelling of products.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has expressed alarm at this move and Gill Fine, Director of Consumer Choice and Dietary Health at the FSA says, "We are extremely surprised that companies to whom we have been talking about these regulations for almost three years should decide at the last minute to apply for a judicial review."

The new rules include a range of measures, such as a ban on advertising of formula for babies under six months and a requirement to make a distinction between infant formula and formulas for older babies, the so-called follow-on milks. Campaigners had already been critical of the rules as they did not go far enough towards fully implementing the World Health Organization backed *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*. The new regulations permit advertising of follow-on milks – a practice prohibited by the *International Code*.

According to Patti Rundall, Policy Director of Baby Milk Action, "In response to unanimous advice from UK health professionals and Government advisors the Government recognised the harm being done by follow-on milk advertising and wanted to stop it. However, fearing infringement charges from the European Commission, it decided on a two-stage approach instead, starting with a 12 month review process which would move steadily towards adopting the recommendations in the *International Code* if aggressive marketing did not stop."

The Baby Feeding Law Group (whose 22 members include The Food Commission), and the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition are supporting Baby Milk Action to fight IDFA's legal challenge, but the time scale for resolving the dispute is still unclear. Baby Milk Action hopes the legal challenge can be quickly overcome, so that the process of implementing the new rules can start. If IDFA wins this case campaigners fear years of delays and serious implications for policy setting globally.

■ Visit www.babymilkaction.org to offer your support for the campaign. See 20 for Patti Rundall's report about how baby milk companies undermine breastfeeding.

Dutch retailers go for 100% sustainable fish

From 2011, all wild-caught fish and seafood at every food retail chain in the Netherlands will come from sustainable fisheries that are certified to the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) environmental standard.

Over 4,500 stores in the Netherlands have committed to this radical transformation of seafood supply.

According to the MSC's Chief Executive, Rupert Howes, "This is an incredible, ambitious and ground-breaking initiative... I have no doubt that this bold move will deliver real and lasting change in the marine environment and will contribute to ensuring the sustainability of seafood supplies for this and future generations. The MSC is looking forward to working closely with the Dutch Association of Food Retail and its members over the coming years to ensure this commitment becomes a reality."

Marc Janssen, of the Dutch Association of Food Retail, said of the sector's decision: "Fish consumption in the Netherlands is rising because Dutch consumers have come to appreciate fish. At the same time they are increasingly aware of sustainability issues and are asking how the fish they buy has been caught. In the past, the Dutch food industry has focused on food safety when it came to quality control. With meat, vegetable and fruit we have learned that you cannot ignore sustainability issues and we want to make use of this knowledge when it comes to fish. All these aspects have led to our decision to aim for a completely sustainable fish and seafood offer."

Meanwhile in the UK, the Food Standards Agency has just announced that it is reviewing its dietary advice on fish consumption in relation to sustainability issues. The Agency will be consulting widely and aiming to publish updated consumption advice by the end of 2008.

■ Visit the Marine Stewardship Council website at <http://eng.msc.org>



Photo by Lisa Woodburn. Image taken from the IBFAN Calendar on www.babymilkaction.org

The Marine Conservation Society 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).



Bring choice back to our high streets

As *The Food Magazine* reported at the end of last year, the Competition Commission has come up with the flawed logic that to provide shoppers with more choice we need more big supermarkets and that land should be freed up outside of town centres to accommodate them.

Such logic poses an immense threat to our remaining independent shops. In early 2008, the Government is due to publish a consultation on new planning rules for retail development and it has been waiting for the Competition Commission's final conclusions before going ahead. So, you can be sure that they will influence the Government's thinking.

But, the Government has to listen to other stakeholders, and to the public, so the forthcoming revision to planning policy can also be seen as an opportunity to strengthen controls on supermarket expansion and better support a diverse retail mix. After all, the existing system is hardly working in the interests of the independents. On average, two supermarkets open each week in the UK and three quarters of

supermarket stores are being built outside of town centres.

Friends of the Earth has joined up with the Association of Convenience Stores, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Food Access Network and the Women's Institute to put forward an alternative set of recommendations to the Government. In contrast to the Competition Commission, they want to see a presumption against out of town supermarkets and new planning tests that would put diversity, local economies and local access to shops at the centre of the new policy. Campaigners argue that the Competition Commission has totally failed to consider the needs of carless shoppers in its deliberations, and fails to consider the environmental implications of its recommendations since these are outside of its remit. But, the Government cannot ignore these issues so easily.



A worker at the G. Jack & Son Ltd Speciality Foods store in Beverley, East Yorkshire. Local traders are being pushed out of business by new Tesco stores, therefore reducing consumer choice and damaging local economies. Visit www.tescopoly.org for more information.

You can help to convince the Government that their social and environmental commitments should come before the expansion plans of the big supermarkets by signing the postcard you will find in this issue of *The Food Magazine* and sending it to your MP.

Government promises to tackle obesity, again...

The Government is trying, again, to cut obesity levels. In January, the Department of Health announced a new £372 million cross-government strategy *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* to help people maintain a healthy weight and live healthier lives. The new initiative is full of proposals, promises and plans, but words alone will not halt the nation's obesity crisis. Here, in short, are some of the strategy's proposals:

- **Children:** Investment in healthy schools with increased participation in physical activity. From this September, pupils aged 11-16 will be, "entitled to learn to cook nutritious dishes from basic ingredients." It plans to make cooking a compulsory part of the curriculum for 11-14 year olds from 2011. There is no provision for encouraging children to cook from an earlier age. £75 million will be spent on a marketing campaign to 'empower' parents to make changes to their children's diet and levels of physical activity.

- **Promotion of healthier food choices:** A hugely optimistic strategy to work in partnership with the food and drink industry to create a *Healthy Food Code of Good Practice*, including proposals to develop a single, simple and effective approach to food labelling. This is exactly what many segments

of the industry have been fighting against ever since the Food Standards Agency introduced a 'single, simple and effective approach to food labelling' in the form of traffic light labelling.

- **Physical activity:** The investment of £30 million in 'Healthy Towns' and a review of the Government's overall approach to physical activity.

The Government's previous initiatives have not fared well. 15 years ago, the Conservatives published a White Paper, *The Health of the Nation*, which set a number of targets to tackle obesity. Little progress was made, largely because other targets, such as reducing hospital waiting lists, took precedence. A lack of cross-departmental commitment also hindered progress.

The Health of the Nation was discarded by Labour when they came into power in 1997, but

by 2004 they had produced their own initiative, *Choosing Health*, to tackle the same issues. This promised £300m over two years but critics have questioned how much of this money actually made it to the 'front line'.

Choosing Health promised to improve food labelling and to crackdown on TV junk food advertising but progress has been slow, with the food industry fighting hard. Different, voluntary labelling schemes have left consumers muddled and confused. And, whilst some progress has been made on TV advertising to children, research from Which? has shown that new rules do not affect advertising during 18 of the 20 TV programmes most watched by children.

Neither *The Health of the Nation* or *Choosing Health* stopped the rising incidence of obesity, so we will have to see if the new strategy is more than just hot air and optimistic promises.

Junk food cyber stalkers

The Food Magazine has often reported on the tricks which food companies use to ensnare children. A new report from the British Heart Foundation and the Children's Food Campaign repeats our warnings but also proposes a revolutionary regulation system to cover all forms of marketing to children, including food and drink

packaging and online activity. The report cites many examples of irresponsible food marketing to children and argues that the current system of voluntary self-regulation of non-broadcast marketing has failed.

The *Protecting Children* report can be downloaded from www.sustainweb.org.

Trans fats and fast foods

Many breathed a sigh of relief recently when the Food Standards Agency (FSA) declared that its review of the evidence about the health impacts of trans fats suggested good news all round. Industry was reformulating to ditch the nutritionally useless and artery clogging fats and your average joe was unlikely to be consuming more than 1% of their food energy in this form.

On this basis, the FSA made no recommendations for a need to label foods, clearly stating trans fats, and no recommendations for strict, upper limits on trans fat content in foods. Industry was, in fact, to be congratulated for their work in reformulating products such as biscuits, cakes, fat spreads, and confectionery.

But now, health campaigners are challenging the FSA to take a closer look at their data on consumption as there is concern that the diets of certain sectors of the population, particularly children, and those living on low incomes, could in fact be exceeding 2% levels in the diet, meaning

they are increasing their risk of developing coronary heart disease.

Tim Lobstein, Childhood Obesity Research Programme Director for the International Association for the Study of Obesity suggests that frequent, “fast food eaters,” are likely to be getting trans fats at a level, “well above average.” Many fast food restaurants are likely to use deep frying oils with high levels of trans fats, as they can be reused again and again. In some restaurants a single serving of fried chicken and chips can put you above the maximum recommended daily intake.

The FSA review considered evidence from past surveys about food intake in the UK population allied with recent evidence from manufacturers about trans fat levels in foods. But, the average figures arrived at are not particularly useful in all instances, for example, many of us do not eat an average diet.

Dietary surveys are also notorious for people under-reporting what they have eaten; in particular, people neglect to report foods eaten out and

snacks – both food categories that are likely to be sources of trans fats in the diet. There is also limited information about the effects of trans fats on the health of young people.

In Denmark, a maximum 2% level of trans fats in all foods is enforced by government legislation. Companies were given no choice but to reformulate products, and to do this quickly. It is unclear why here in the UK, industry seems now to have been left to self-regulate in this area. Trans fats are totally unnecessary in the diet, and companies can be compelled to substitute them with healthier unsaturated fats. *The Food Magazine* would like to see a proper, public debate about introducing and monitoring legally enforceable standards.

The FSA has just announced its draft Saturated Fat and Energy Reduction Programme which aims to promote better consumer understanding and food choices, and industry reformulation of products.

Action on saturated fats is essential or we may see parts of the food industry simply replacing trans fats with saturated fats – basically replacing one bad fat for another.



Fast food restaurants and trans fats

Some of our most popular take away meals are deep fried in hydrogenated oils which are rich in trans fats. The oils work out cheaper for businesses as they can be reused again and again because of their long shelf-life. The problem is, how can you tell what your meal has been fried in? Answer, with difficulty or not at all. The type of oil used for frying is not mentioned conveniently anywhere in the restaurant or on the take away boxes.

The Food Magazine conducted a mini-survey of chicken, chips, ribs, fish and burger joints along a 2½ mile stretch of road in London. We asked staff in five of the take aways what oil they used for cooking. None of them were able or willing to

tell us what they fried in. Excuses ranged from: blank stare of incomprehension; come back later to see the manager and I don't know.

We counted 26 take aways selling deep fried food, with around 150 separate meal deals on offer, with various combinations such as chicken burger or ribs and chips. You could get a piece of chicken and chips for as little as 99p. Meal deals like this could put you over your daily, recommended maximum limit for trans fats.

The Food Magazine would like to see better monitoring of the oils used in restaurants such as these, and has suggested to a Trading Standards department that they conduct an area survey to find out which oils are in use.



Eggstremely frustrating

We reported in FM79 about a victory for long time campaigner, Roy Benford, in his struggle to get the Government to reveal information about egg producers. Every egg sold in this country is printed with a Farm ID, a lettered and numbered code, which encapsulates information about where the egg was produced, by who, and under what system of farming. Unfortunately for the consumer, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) refused to reveal the meanings of the code – until Benford's successful challenge of this secrecy.

“People who produce our food should not be able to hide behind secret codes. I want the information so I can find out more about where my

local egg producers are, and perhaps visit the farms if they are open to the public,” says Benford.

But, his victory has lasted all of about ten seconds, until his first request for such information. “I bought eggs at Waitrose and went home to check the code against the information list DEFRA provided and it was not there. So, I checked the list and noticed there were no Scottish or Northern Irish counties listed and that the list was from a database as at 1st August 2005,” says Benford.

DEFRA has now suggested he make enquiries directly to Scotland and Northern Ireland departments about codes and have further noted that his request for information

about codes dated after 2005 is a, “new Freedom of Information request.”

Benford's original request for code information was made back in spring 2005 but took 2½ years to resolve. DEFRA has taken the literal interpretation of the decision by the Information Tribunal that they must comply with Benford's information request – and have given him information up to 2005.

“After 2½ years it is back to the beginning. For those of us who care about how our food is produced, it should not be so hard to get basic information,” says Benford who is now gearing up for what he hopes will not be another epic struggle.

Give artificial colo

Research has confirmed a link between certain food additives and hyperactivity. Anna Glayzer investigates the use of these in children's medicines.

Many people in the UK will now know that research funded by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has shown that certain food additives can increase hyperactivity in susceptible children (See Seven suspect additives box). But, what they may not realise is that these additives can also be found in over-the-counter and prescription medicines commonly given to children. Our campaign, Action on Additives, now has an ever-growing list of hundreds of products, including medicines, which contain these additives.

Using the online Electronic Medicines Compendium, *The Food Magazine* undertook a survey of five commonly prescribed types of children's medicines (many of which are also available as over-the-counter medicines), to check if the suspect food additives were also used in children's medicine.

We looked at 70 medicines in total, all of which were suitable for the under twelves. 28 of these contained one or more of the suspect additives. 16 of the products which contained suspect additives were aimed at the under threes.

We have little control over the choice of prescription medicines which are prescribed to us and our families, so those who wish to avoid these food additives would find the task tricky to say the least.

The pharmaceutical industry argues that because the additives are used in such low quantities there can be no risk to children's health, and defends them on the basis that



it is still perfectly legal to use them in foodstuffs. The fact that all of these additives are banned from food and drink for the under threes is simply ignored.

But, not all parents want their children to consume additives unless it is absolutely necessary. We spoke to Cathy Court, a mother of two and Director of the Netmums website, who told us that she found it, "really hard to find an antibiotic or a medicine for reducing fever that does not contain artificial colourings." Court, who has personal experience of dealing with hyperactivity in children, said, "I don't care whether medicines are bright orange or pink, I just want a plain, uncoloured medicine that does its job. I don't understand why manufacturers haven't responded with formulations for which there is clearly so much demand."

Interestingly, some companies are slowly responding to consumer pressure, but for most companies, the issue seems to be of little concern.

Seven suspect food additives

The following food additives have been shown, by government research, to increase hyperactivity in susceptible children.* These additives have not been banned and are still used in children's foods, drinks and medicines.

Tartrazine	E102	The additives may be listed by name or by E number. E211 is a preservative, the others are artificial colourings. www.actiononadditives.com
Quinoline yellow	E104	
Sunset yellow	E110	
Carmoisine	E122	
Ponceau 4R	E124	
Allura red	E129	
Sodium benzoate	E211	

*Food Standards Agency, September 2007

Take action on additives

Each issue of this magazine should contain a free plastic card which will fit handily into your purse or wallet. Please use it to check the foods and medicines you have in your own house; the products which you may see in your local corner shop or supermarket; and the food and drink which your children bring home after school.

If you find new products which contain the seven suspect additives please tell us about them. The Action on Additives database is free to use at www.actiononadditives.com. You can also use the website to comment on the many hundreds of products which are already listed.

We can provide up to three, free extra cards if you send a stamped, sae to The Action on Additives Campaign, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. If you would like to order larger quantities of the cards, please contact Anna Glayzer on 020 7837 2250 or anna@actiononadditives.com.

www.actiononadditives.com

Surveyed medicines for the under twelves

Product	Description	Number of products in survey	Number using 1 or more of the 7 suspect additives
Paracetamol	Pain killer and fever reducer	37	17
Ibuprofen	Anti inflammatory and pain reliever	11	2
Amoxycillin	Antibiotic for bacterial infections	5	3
Erythromycin	Commonly used antibiotic	8	2
Linctus	Medicated syrup for the throat	9	4
Total		70	28

urs the red card

Seven suspect additives

The seven additives shown by recent UK research (known as the 'Southampton Study') to increase hyperactivity in susceptible children. The first six are colours, the seventh is a preservative:

- E102 Tartrazine
- E104 Quinoline Yellow
- E110 Sunset Yellow
- E122 Carmoisine
- E124 Ponceau 4R
- E129 Allura Red
- E211 Sodium Benzoate

Adverse drug reactions

The Food Magazine spoke to the Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB), the trade association for manufacturers of over-the-counter medicines and food supplements in the UK, about the issue of food additives in medicines.

When asked whether companies were cleaning up their act in regard to colours in medicines, the PAGB responded, "Companies take this issue seriously and since the findings of the study by the University of Southampton have been reviewing the use of additives in their products. This has included looking at Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) reports in relation to additives. However, these reports have not provided any evidence to suggest that the use of such additives in medicines has caused any problems."

It is little wonder the ADR reports have not shown any problem. How many parents are actually aware of the 'yellow card scheme', administered by the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)? The scheme allows patients to submit Adverse Drug Reaction reports directly to the MHRA, but is not mentioned anywhere on the packaging of medicines or on patient information leaflets. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many parents are concerned by the side effects apparently caused by medicines, but few would know how to report such effects.

Interestingly, the 'yellow card scheme' is only supposed to be used to report a suspected side effect that is not mentioned in the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine. Since most medicines do carry warnings of possible allergic reactions to colours and preservatives, one could understand why a parent might not use the scheme to report an adverse reaction.

What are the alternatives?

The MHRA argues that colourings are necessary so that those who must take multiple medicines can use colour to identify the right medicine at the right time.

Steve Tomlin, Consultant Pharmacist at Evelina Children's Hospital, agrees with this, and also points out that, "Colours can be hard to avoid altogether. Natural colours are all well and good, but are they less likely to cause reactions?" Tomlin suggests that, "Avoidance where possible and awareness where not possible is the only real way ahead."

Tomlin's recognition that 'avoidance' and 'awareness' are the way ahead is a refreshingly frank and forward-thinking response, seemingly out of kilter with the pharmaceutical

industry. Poor labelling of medicines means that ingredients lists are frequently only found inside packets, buried deep within the small print. Such labelling hinders both avoidance and awareness.

What does the future hold?

Food manufacturers have been reformulating products (or promising to do so) as consumers seek out products which are free of artificial colourings. Where the threat of legislation looms, such action increases rapidly. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is currently reviewing the UK research that linked the seven suspect food additives to hyperactivity. If need be, EFSA can advise the European Parliament to ban their use in food and drink across Europe.

The MHRA tell us that they are awaiting "the review being carried out by European FSA," to see how it might impact on additives in medicines.

Meanwhile, in January 2008, the UK's Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum called for a ban on the use of, "substances of no nutritional value as foods or ingredients in foods." If such a ban was to be undertaken, we would see artificial colourings disappear overnight.

Ultimately it seems that only a change in legislation, or at the very least a willingness from the MHRA to do something a little stronger than "discourage" unnecessary additives, will prompt the makers of children's medicines to take this issue seriously. In the meantime, parents have no choice but to continue to buy the medicines that are available. Then of course, there is always the yellow card scheme.

■ The MHRA yellow card scheme can be found online at www.mhra.gov.uk

Medicine manufacturers do little, or nothing

Since *The Food Magazine* exposed the use of banned food additives in children's medicines in March 2007, several major brands have spent millions on relaunching or reformulating their products. But where did the money go?

In September 2007, Calpol introduced three new colour free variants to its range

of children's medicines. The packs make it very clear the products are colour free, but Calpol has failed to clean up older products, such as Calpol Infant Suspension (two months and over) which still contains the controversial azo dye E122, carmoisine.

Calpol clearly understands that consumers want children's medicines to be free of colourings, but they will not risk removing the artificial colours from their more established brands. E122 is banned from food and drink for the under

threes and has been linked to hyperactivity in susceptible children.

In October 2007, Benylin cough medicine announced a huge £8m relaunch campaign, ahead of the peak winter coughs and colds season. Benylin's children's cough medicines contain E211, sodium benzoate – another additive suspected of influencing hyperactivity in children and banned from food and drink for the under threes. So what did Benylin do with that £8m? They spent it on fresh packaging and bigger bottles, and did nothing to remove the additive from their children's medicines.



Healthy food costs more

Continued from front cover

The results of *The Food Magazine's* latest healthy food basket survey

In every survey we have found that families in low income neighbourhoods face a double burden: the healthier foods are not only more expensive than the less healthy options, but also the extra premium needed is actually greater in low income areas.

Furthermore, the size of this premium has been growing significantly, with the latest survey showing that households in poorer neighbourhoods would need to find almost 60% more cash to buy healthier

foods than equivalent less healthy items. In affluent areas the health premium was less than 40%. Back in 1988, this premium was only 20% in low income areas and 16% in affluent areas.

Our latest survey also found the healthier options to be unavailable in many of the local stores in lower income areas. In contrast, the less healthy items were often available as special offers or in large packs, encouraging increased consumption.

The Food Commission's latest price survey

The Food Commission's new survey of food baskets was conducted in north London during



October and November 2007. Shops were selected on the basis of known household characteristics in the vicinity, primarily the concentration of social housing.

Food prices were obtained from shop displays and labelling. Quantities were standardised to provide equal amounts of the healthier and less healthy items. Where the standard size was unavailable, attempts were made to obtain prices for larger and smaller sizes and standardise between these. Where a product was unavailable, the average standardised price of the product from other shops in the same category (affluent or low income) was used. The items in the basket are listed below (similar to the baskets used in 1988 and 1995, and a sub-sample of the survey of 2001).

■ Research: Lindsay Rodrigues.

How the health premium has increased for all of us			
	Regular basket £	Healthier basket £	Health premium: average extra cost of healthier foods
1988	9.78	11.56	18%
1995	11.04	15.11	37%
2001*	12.72	19.19	51%
2007	16.01	23.71	48%
*2001 basket differed from the other three surveys			

The 2007 health premium is significantly higher in low income neighbourhoods			
	Regular basket £	Healthier basket £	Health premium: average extra cost of healthier foods
Low income areas	15.26	24.15	58%
Affluent areas	16.75	23.27	39%

The equivalent figures for 1988 were 20% and 16% for the low income and affluent premiums respectively. In 1995 they were 41% and 31% respectively.



Participants in a Food Commission 'Eat less salt' project work out which beans are healthiest. The Food Commission has been working with a housing association in south London. The majority of residents are on low incomes and can find it challenging to afford healthier options.

Less healthy basket	Healthier basket
Cheese spread	Cottage Cheese
Full fat cheddar	Edam
Whole milk	Semi-Skimmed milk
Soft margarine	Low fat margarine
Vegetable oil	Polyunsaturated vegetable oil
White bread	Wholemeal bread
White rice	Brown rice
Cornflakes	Weetabix
White spaghetti	Wholemeal spaghetti
White flour	Wholemeal flour
Tinned baked beans	Tinned baked beans reduced sugar
Peaches in syrup	Peaches in fruit juice
Minced beef	Low fat minced beef
Pork sausages	Low fat pork sausages
Beef burgers	Low fat beef burgers

High art, low wages

The Tate Galleries are the pride of the nation, but the people who clean the museums, and the staff who serve in the restaurants earn just above the minimum wage. In Ealing, London, primary school dinner ladies working for the catering company, Harrison's, get just about the same. Lambeth Council in London has now abandoned plans to make sure all contractors who provide services for the Borough pay their staff more than the legal minimum.

With evidence accumulating about the difficulties of purchasing a healthy diet on a low wage, campaigners are challenging employers like these to ensure the Living Wage. According to London Citizens, a grassroots charity supporting low paid workers, a Living Wage is, "A level of pay and conditions that enables a full-time worker to make ends meet for themselves and their family."

In London, that means a wage of at least £7.20 an hour, a rate calculated by economists for the Greater London Authority, and considerably higher than the National Minimum Wage of £5.52 an hour. But, the Government consistently fails to legislate for a decent minimum wage, leaving employers to shift the burden of financial provision back to the state in the form of benefits. And, if the Government fails to take a lead on tackling social inequalities, it does not exactly encourage employers to take up the reins independently.

Many employers are slow to recognise the benefits that come from paying staff a decent

wage, for example, in the form of staff retention and fewer sick days. According to new research from London Citizens and The Food Commission, the health of workers paid the minimum wage suffers partly because they skip meals more regularly and eat less fruit and veg than those paid the Living Wage.

In Ealing, primary school dinner ladies, employed by Harrison's, are worried about the health impacts of their low waged employment on the young people in their care. According to Teacher Assistant Margaret Sowa, "When Dinner Ladies get to know children well, remember their names and their likes and dislikes they can convince them to try new dishes. It is such a negative experience for the children to see forever changing faces behind that food counter. A key way to enhance retention is to improve the pay and conditions of staff."

London Citizens is supporting the Ealing Dinner Ladies in their campaign for the Living Wage. Under new provisions in the Sustainable Communities legislation, all Councils are now being required to submit suggestions to the Government about how it can help local areas to become more sustainable. Will any recognise that ensuring that all who work for them are in decently paid jobs is part of this? If the Government supported a Living Wage for all workers, the short-term costs to businesses would be more than made up by the savings in health costs for the whole nation.



Demonstration organised by London Citizens in support of cleaning and restaurant staff at the Tate Modern who are paid less than the London Living Wage of £7.20 per hour.
Photo © ChrisJepson.com

■ See London Citizens www.londoncitizens.org.uk for information on the Living Wage.

■ The Food Commission has co-authored a new report with London Citizens, *The impact of low wage employment on workers' health, nutrition and living standards: a case for the London Living Wage*. See www.foodcomm.org.uk/latest_news.htm

Challenging health inequalities

Concern with inequalities goes back well before Rowntree's investigation into working class living conditions, before almshouses and Maundy money, and perhaps back to the origins of tribal hierarchy. Yet inequality, and the poor, appear always to be with us.

The *Black report* of the 1980s, the *Acheson report* of the 1990s and recent Department of Health policy initiatives, all speak of the constant battle to understand and thus to tackle the remarkable association between the educational and income status of a household on the one hand and its health profile – from life expectancy and infant mortality through to diabetes, obesity and heart disease – on the other.

The lessons we have learnt, few though they are, tell us that we should not see this as a problem among the poorest sections of society, for the 'health gradient' stretches up through each level of income and education. And, they tell us that although absolute poverty is likely to be a major impediment to obtaining good health, relative poverty is just as significant, and in wealthier societies possibly more so.

Furthermore, if you compare countries that have a greater degree of equality, e.g. a low differential between the incomes of the rich and the poor, with those that have less equality, you find the disease statistics follow suit.

A new book, *Challenging Health Inequalities*, takes a broad sweep through current issues in inequality research, with chapters looking at housing, ethnicity, biological development and, of course, food and nutrition. It alerts us to the subtle difference between food insecurity (where poor people may have difficulty simply getting enough to eat) and nutrition insecurity (where food may be available but not with a healthy range of nutrients).

The food and nutrition section concludes with a call for serious upstream intervention, requiring, "imaginative and courageous cross-sectoral working." In the last chapter of the book, veteran sociologist Mick Carpenter reminds us that all too often we deal with inequality by, "gilding the ghetto" – with all that the phrase implies in criticising the cosmetic community project that does little to bring about real change in the power relations between rich and poor.

There are opportunities for positive community initiatives, he shows, but the approach is best rounded in the terminology of social justice rather than health improvement.

I somehow sense we have lost something here that used to be available in these debates. It may have been the Marxist analysis, it may have been the revolutionary fervour, it may simply have been the certainties enjoyed in this reviewer's youth. But, surely we need something a bit more powerful than 'upstream policies' and 'community empowerment'. Social justice comes quite near it – but this is an ideal, not a programme of action.

Where are the demands for change? Why is there no sense of struggle and street action to back up the calls for social justice?

Public health protagonists have a role to keep these issues at the forefront of politics, but there may need to be a greater political shift, a sense of real popular demand, if we are to see new upstream policies actually come into effect.

■ **Challenging Health Inequalities: Form Acheson to 'Choosing health'** E Dowler and N Spencer (eds). The Policy Press ISBN 978-1-86134-899-9.

■ Tim Lobstein

Feeding the th

Most of us would balk at feeding ten dinner party guests, never mind thousands of strangers. And yet, this is what Sikh temples do every week. Jessica Mitchell reports.

Ask me anything, anything, go ahead. I'll answer. It was a most unexpected and enticing offer, and made by a venerable Sikh gentleman of 77 years I had met just five minutes before.

Ajit Singh Mann is an elder of the Gurdwara (temple) Sri Guru Singh Sabha – in Southall, west London and he was as good as his word. In a precious hour he started me off on a day I will never forget – with a talk about food and charity, looking after one's body and mind, eating together, and equality of all people.

I had come to the Gurdwara to find out about the Social Cooking Project, run by the British Heart Foundation over the past year, which has been working with Sikh and Hindu places of worship to encourage healthy eating by reducing salt and fat in communally cooked meals at places of worship.



The food at the temple is prepared, served and cooked seven days a week, from around 2.30am, by an almost entirely voluntary workforce. This temple recently hired a head chef due to the huge number of meals served. The head chef has been an essential part of adapting recipes to a healthier format.

And wow, do they eat communally at Sikh temples – more than 35,000, entirely vegetarian, meals are served each week between the Sri Guru Singh Sabha and another Gurdwara nearby. And, all of it is served entirely for free – yes, no charge.

Langar is the word for the free, vegetarian only food served in Gurdwaras to all people who come, as equals. The only requirement is that, at the entrance to the Gurdwara, you take off your shoes and cover your head. At the Gurdwara I visited, cooking starts at around 2.30am – with prayers and rituals – so that food can be ready for breakfast. There are main meals during the day, and snacks between times. Volunteer, Harjinder Gill, arrives at 3am almost every day to help with preparations, such as chapati making. “I then go home at 8am and have some sleep and then I come back again to help a bit more,” she says.

The meal I had at the temple was typical of what is generally on offer – chapati, rice, lentil dahl and a vegetable dish. There was also a rice pudding. It was absolutely delicious. Over lunch, the project dietitian, Baldeesh Rai, who has done all of the sessions in the kitchen to reformulate recipes, told me, “The food has always been delicious, but it used to be much more salty, and you would have found oil or ghee on top of the



Ajit Singh Mann, a committee member of the Gurdwara, who was kind enough to discuss the philosophy of Sikhism, particularly as it related to food charity and health.

dishes, you don't get that anymore.” As we ate, many people stopped by for a chat, including one temple elder who simply said, “This girl helps us too much, she has saved thousands of lives. It is true.”

“Everybody wants to live,” Mann chided me for my rather silly question about why the temple committee decided to support the project. But, food and Sikhism goes deeper than that, as Mann said, “On the one side you have food and religion and on the other it is important for survival.” One looks after the body and the mind, partly through good eating, because to do so is to honour life and God who created life. Mann himself was proud of

Volunteer Harjinder Gill and Project dietitian Baldeesh Rai often run a stall in the entrance to the Gurdwara where they offer information about healthy eating. The day I visited was very easy going, with many people stopping by for chats. They are pictured here before the entrance to the prayer room.



ousands

his fitness, gained partly through years of doing yoga, and of course, drinking no alcohol. As a teacher in state schools for around forty years, he told me he would challenge young people to do yoga poses that he could do, and that, “even GCSE age young people could not.”

“Sikhs are everywhere, potatoes and Sikhs,” joked Mann somewhat sardonically during our chat. They are a migrant people with no state of their own, around 800,000 live in the UK and Southall, west London, is the heart of the community. Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara is the largest Sikh temple in Europe.

The prayer room is an incredible space on the top floor of the temple, with a huge domed and beamed roof. Musicians play for much of the day next to the altar where the Guru – actually the holy book – is placed. There are prayers at different times of the day, but no specific holy day. According to Ajit Singh Mann, the temple is a social place because, “humans are a social animal and we need to see each other to learn.”

As for food and religious ideas, at the heart of it is the astounding sense of charity that goes back to the very founding of the Sikh religion. Sitting down to eat Langar is an experience that sums up equality between all people and the ethics of sharing and communality. Sikhism does not recognise caste, and all people are of

equal status, as Mann said to me, “You and I are the same aren’t we? The same.” Men, women, people who are not Sikhs, are all welcome, as Mann said, “You can come in for food and you do not even need to go and bow your head before the Guru if you do not want.”

He told me a story about a visit to a Gurdwara, by Akbar the Great, the Mughal emperor, to have a discussion with a Guru. The Guru told him that first he must go to the kitchen, he must wait in line, he must eat with all the others, then he could have a discussion. The communal eating is a direct challenge to the caste system; at a Gurdwara, everyone must eat together.

At the moment, Gill says the temple is feeding many, many asylum seekers, “They come, they have Langar, in this nice, peaceful place. When I speak to them, they tell me they feel at peace here, they don’t worry and they are not hungry anymore.” The food is vegetarian so that all people can share, regardless of their dietary practices. Sikhs are not vegetarian in their homes, but according to Mann, the religion has long believed that vegetarianism is healthier and that people are essentially vegetable eating animals.

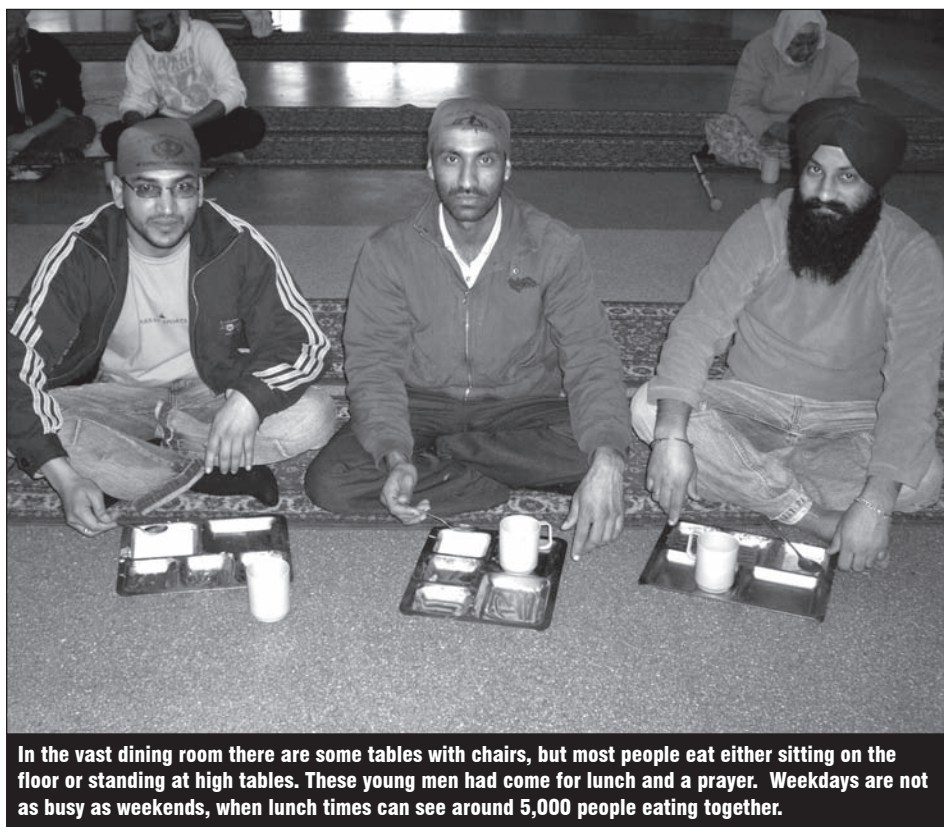
I wondered why it seemed that more people did not know about the vast level of charity, and



Jessica enjoys lunch at the temple. The food is paid for by donations from Sikhs – who are encouraged to tithe some of their income to the temple. Others give donations of actual foodstuffs. But, people do not have to give, and no one is turned away if they are respectful. Volunteer Harjinder Gill told me that the Gurdwara feeds many poor families, and many older people who are lonely and who find it hard to look after themselves.



This woman is giving out Prasad – a sugary, wheat paste, rather like a thick porridge – given out at the end of all ceremonies. According to Gill, it represents all of the basic ingredients for life.



In the vast dining room there are some tables with chairs, but most people eat either sitting on the floor or standing at high tables. These young men had come for lunch and a prayer. Weekdays are not as busy as weekends, when lunch times can see around 5,000 people eating together.

Mann told me he thinks, “It is racism, people call us Paki, they don’t want to know.” He wonders why charities that feed people for a week at Christmas get so much publicity, when the temples feed so many every single day of the year.

The Social Cooking Project officially winds up this spring, but Rai believes, “The changes put in place will stay and the Langar will remain healthier.” Rai is herself a Sikh, but says she has learned more about her own religion doing this project than she knew before, and that she has, “Got more out of it than I put in.”

Visitors to the Gurdwara are welcome, and, as well as being offered Langar, a tour and discussion can also be arranged if people phone ahead.

■ The Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha website is at www.sgsss.org

Meat eater's dilemma

Animal welfare concerns and meat scare stories have dominated the headlines since the 1980s. But finally, the environmental impact of livestock products is being officially recognised.

Meat consumption is at a record high around the world, having quadrupled in the last 50 years. There are 20 billion head of livestock taking up space on the Earth, more than triple the number of people. This explosion is having a staggering impact on the environment. But how?

Consider your average burger. Chances are that the cow that became the mince was fed not only on GM soya but that soya was transported half way round the world. Vast and pristine rainforest and species rich savannah in Brazil have been destroyed to grow soya and for ranching cattle. Animals like the giant anteater and puma are threatened by the loss of habitat to grow soya for UK animal feed. Beef ranching has exploded in the Amazon over the past few years causing irreparable damage to this vital ecosystem. Ten million head of cattle were reared in the Amazon area in 2007, 46% more than in 2004.

And, it is not just biodiversity and habitats that suffer. Not many people realise the climate impact when they take a mouthful of their juicy chicken tikka masala or bacon sandwich. But, nearly a fifth of all greenhouse gas emissions are created by the global livestock industry alone – that's more than transport; all this from burping cows, clearing land for feeds and using energy for fertiliser production.



This spit-roasted pig is an organic one. Organic livestock farmers produce less meat, but also have much less impact on the environment.

Extensive scientific studies also tell us to cut down on red meat and dairy consumption, particularly in the affluent west, to reduce cancers, obesity and other dietary diseases. The link between the environment and health in your diet has never been clearer.

But, down on the farm, incomes have been falling for far too long, due to unfair terms of trade and ever-decreasing farmgate prices, in a market place dominated by multinational traders, big retailers and huge fast food corporations. Farmers have to intensify, go under, or, if they are lucky, find a rare niche market to sell to. What they need is to get more for producing lower quantities, but of higher quality.

That means we need some control in the market place to ensure fair prices and higher standards. What else needs to happen? There are technical changes that could reduce emissions and improve meat production's environmental impact. Feed regimes can be changed so animals produce less methane, or breeds can be changed to ones which need different, less damaging feeds.

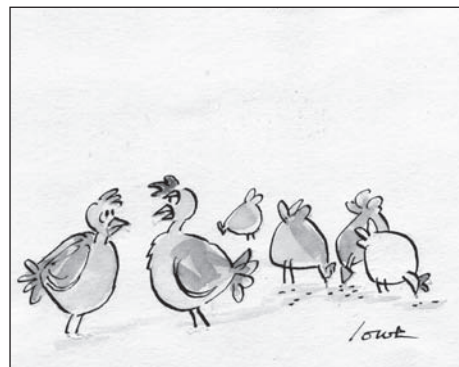
The United Nations reports that we need to cut the environmental cost of livestock by half, "to avoid the level of damage worsening beyond its present level." Given the scale of the impact and the rising global trends for eating meat it is likely that we need to do something far harder. Most research suggests we need to reduce production and consumption if we are to significantly reduce the impact of meat production on our environment.

■ Vicki Hird, Friends of the Earth

Sainsbury's says taking action would be a "form of communism"

Tara Garnett of the Food Climate Research Network attended the Meat and Livestock Commission's Outlook Conference in January, and explained how the environmental outlook would be bleak for all of us unless the meat industry took action to tackle its carbon emissions.

Garnett said that eating meat had to become more environmentally viable and suggested that perhaps, need should come before greed – with consumers getting the meat they need, rather than the meat they want.



"You can't have an equal opportunities pecking order Doreen."

In response, Mike Coupe, Director of Trading at Sainsbury's, said that, "Managing needs versus demand seems like a form of communism." He went on to say that, "It's something the world we are living in isn't ready for."

The world we are living in is not even remotely ready for climate change either, but that doesn't stop campaigners like Garnett pointing out the unpalatable facts to the livestock and meat industry.

What do you think?

The Food Team at Friends of the Earth would like to know what you think. Did you realise meat and dairy production had such an impact? What, if any, meat and dairy do you eat, and what would you consider doing to reduce the impact? What should government do? Energy inefficient light bulbs will soon be off the shelves – banned across Europe. Could damaging livestock products be going the same way?

You can write to the Food Team at Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N16 0SU or email Vicki.hird@foe.co.uk.



Jersey dairy calves on a farm in Somerset.

Legal, decent, honest and true?

Misleading food and drink advertisements are supposed to be regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). Here we report on recent adjudications.

X Palm oil – “A gift from nature, a gift for life”

Last year *The Food Magazine* reported how the Malaysia Palm Oil Council (MPOC) was about to spend half a million pounds on a public relations exercise. The PR was needed because pesky environmental campaigners kept pointing out how the clearance of lowland forests for palm oil plantations was threatening the survival of the orangutan.

The MPOC came up with a couple of majestic television adverts which screened on BBC World, a commercially funded, BBC TV channel, which reaches a weekly audience of 76 million.

Shots of palm oil plantations were interspersed with footage of natural rainforests and wildlife, whilst voice-overs stated, "Malaysia Palm Oil. Its trees give life and help our planet breathe, and give home to hundreds of species of flora and fauna. Malaysia Palm Oil. A gift from nature, a gift for life," and, "Malaysia Palm Oil. Its trees give life and help our planet breathe. Its fruit provides vitamins for our bodies and energy for our daily lives. Malaysia Palm Oil. A gift from nature, a gift for life." Both ads included onscreen text which stated, "Malaysia Palm Oil Sustainably produced since 1917."

Viewers, including Friends of the Earth (FoE), challenged the ads on several points. The ASA was told that one of the adverts misleadingly implied that palm oil plantations were as biodiverse and sustainable as the native rainforests they replaced. A conservation scientist challenged whether the claim, "its trees ... give home to hundreds of species of flora and fauna," could be substantiated. FoE complained that the claim, "sustainably produced," was misleading because much palm oil was

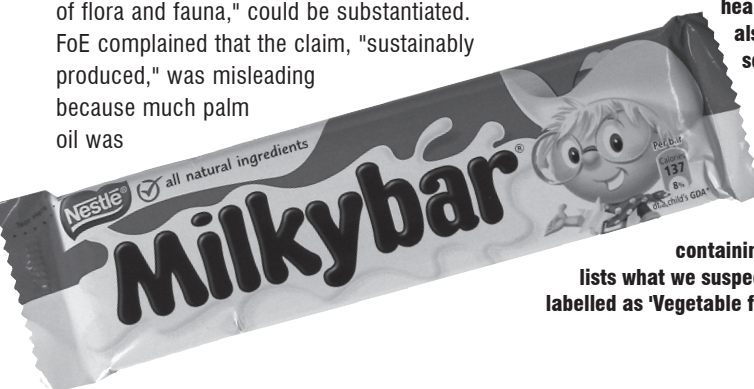


Unsustainably produced palm oil threatens Malaysia's lowland forests, one of the last habitats of the orangutan. Photo from the Orangutan Foundation.

produced in a way that was neither socially or environmentally sustainable. Viewers also challenged the claims that palm oil could benefit the environment.

The ASA agreed with every challenge and declared the advertising to be misleading, based on inaccurate evidence and inaccurate environmental claims.

■ **Note: The MPOC present palm oil as a, “gift for life,” but it is one of the least healthy vegetable oils available, being almost half saturated fat. The high saturated fat content makes it popular with food manufacturers because saturated fats remain solid and stable at room temperature, unlike healthier fats. Palm oil can also be labelled as healthy sounding ‘vegetable fat.’**



Palm oil turns up in all sorts of food and drink. This Nestlé Milky Bar, which is marketed as containing 'all natural ingredients,' lists what we suspect is palm oil, rather coyly labelled as 'Vegetable fat (from tropical plants)'.

X Ad “did not discourage... breastfeeding”

Campaigners at Baby Milk Action have threatened a judicial review over an ASA ruling that a television advert for SMA formula was not misleading and did not discourage mothers from breastfeeding.

More than 100 people complained to the ASA about an advert for SMA Progress, claiming it did not make it clear to viewers that it was for follow-on formula, which is aimed at infants over six months old.

Follow-on formula advertising is permitted by current UK law, but adverts aimed at under six-months are not allowed. This situation has been called a loophole by Unicef, the National Childbirth Trust and Save the Children.

SMA Nutrition defended the ad, pointing out that the text, "SMA Progress is a follow-on formula. Not intended to replace breastmilk," had appeared in the ad for five seconds. Although the ASA noted there were some scenes or images in the ad which could be interpreted as references to babies under six months old, such as a night-feeding reference, they considered that the ad as a whole, and particularly the on-screen text and pack shots, made it sufficiently clear that the ad promoted a follow-on formula for babies over six months only. As such, the ASA concluded that the ad was unlikely to mislead or cause harm.

X Not so ‘clever’ capsules

Omega 3 capsules for kids are big business. These little ‘capsules of cleverness’ have been aggressively marketed by Equazen, a company which has managed to fill countless newspaper columns with its own self-serving PR guff.

The ASA upheld two complaints about a recent press ad and leaflet for Equazen’s ‘eye q’ products. Equazen was told to remove the claims, "... may help maintain concentration levels and healthy brain development," "the Clever Capsule," "Scientifically tested in schools," "proven in schools," and, "proven by Science" from all future advertising for eye q.

The ASA also told Equazen to avoid implying that the advertised product could benefit the general population.

X Something to sneeze at?

An advertisement for Echinaforce on the London Underground told commuters they could, "Reduce your chances of catching a cold this winter by 65% with Echinaforce."

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (rather than the ASA) picked up on this unsubstantiated claim and told the manufacturer, Bioforce Ltd, that without any evidence, the advertisement was in breach of a number of regulations. Bioforce Ltd agreed to withdraw the advertisement.

Faking the

Flavouring is a frequently over-looked ingredient which crops up in much of our food and drink. But, why does our food need extra flavourings and what are they made from? Ian Tokelove investigates.

There are approximately 2,700 different flavourings currently allowed into our food, but few are ever identified on ingredients lists, other than by the description 'flavouring(s)'. Unlike food additives they do not need to be identified by their name or a number, so it is impossible to know exactly what is being added to our food and drink.

Safety testing is largely dependent on the companies that make the flavourings, but can we trust them? As flavourings remain unidentified on food products, how could we tell if they did cause problems?

What are flavourings?

Flavourings are purely cosmetic food ingredients with no nutritive value of their own. They are used in processed foods to replace flavours lost during processing or to 'bump up' the taste of such foodstuffs. They can also be used to mask

unpleasant flavours caused by other ingredients or additives. Some are artificial and others are derived from natural sources. In their pure, concentrated state they tend to be fairly unpleasant, necessitating the use of protective clothing, goggles and even respirators. However, once diluted sufficiently, they produce a flavour or aroma which encourages consumption of foods and drinks. Flavourings are used in so many food and drink products that they can be hard to avoid.

Labelling and the law

Specific legislation (and associated guidelines) regarding the use of flavourings are confusing and hard to access, although their use does have to conform with general food law (i.e. they should not be harmful to health). Where guidelines exist, they are haphazard and vary from country to country.

Even now, a flavouring that is approved in one country may be unapproved or banned in another.

Back in 1996, the European Parliament ruled that an EU-wide 'positive list' of approved flavouring substances should be created. The evaluation process was supposed to take five years but it is still ongoing and is unlikely to be completed until 2009 or 2010. As a consequence, there is still no positive list of approved flavourings. Even when such a list is published there will be no need to identify flavourings on food products as specific, named ingredients.

The ongoing EU evaluation of flavourings is reliant on the industry providing accurate testing and usage data. In a significant number of incidences the industry has been unable to provide sufficient testing data for evaluation, but in such cases the flavourings have remained on the market until further data is forthcoming. The Scientific Committee on Food has reported that intake estimates of flavouring substances are, "generally very poor," because of a lack of data on the concentrations of flavourings in foodstuffs.

Are flavourings safe?

As with all food ingredients, flavourings should be safe for consumption at the quantities in which they are used. However, as flavourings are not identified on food labels, if any associated health problems did occur they would be almost impossible to identify.

Flavourings may have a much wider, indirect effect on our health because of the way in which they are used to improve the appeal of low-nutrient or high fat, sugar, salt (HFSS) foods. Flavourings often replace genuine, nutritious ingredients (a strawberry flavouring is much cheaper than genuine strawberries). By encouraging the consumption of HFSS foods it is likely that flavourings directly affect our health – and not for the better.

Repeated exposure to flavourings may also negatively affect our reaction to the taste of fresh, unprocessed foods. A sweet, crunchy apple can taste pretty bland and dull when compared to a highly flavoured packet of crisps. Flavourings may thus discourage basic healthy eating, such as the 'five a day' consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Different types of flavouring

Artificial flavourings

These synthetic flavourings are a cheap alternative to natural flavourings and can also be used to provide flavours which are not found naturally. They are simply labelled as 'flavouring(s)'.

Natural flavourings

A 'natural' flavouring should have been derived from a 'natural' source material of vegetable, animal or microbiological origin, but the process by which it is manufactured may be fairly unnatural, using acids, microorganisms or enzymes, for example. Natural flavourings can also come from unexpected 'natural' sources, such as carcasses, rose wood, oak wood chips and strawberry leaves.

A natural flavouring in an 'apple' product may well be 'natural', but the flavouring will not necessarily come from an apple. In general, natural flavourings will not be evaluated for safety by the EU, as they are assumed to be safe. It is worth noting that some natural flavourings would have trouble being accepted as new flavourings if they were presented today. For instance, nutmeg is toxic in large doses.

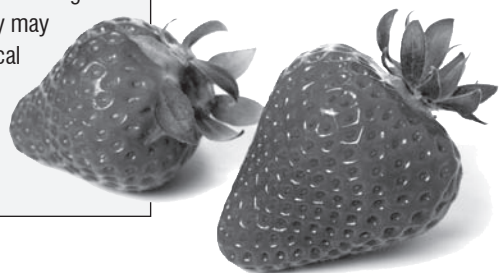
Natural flavourings are the only flavourings allowed into food certified as 'organic', as long as none of the ingredients are derived from genetically modified sources.

Named flavourings

If a flavouring is described as 'apple flavour' or 'natural apple flavour' it should have come wholly or mostly from genuine apples. During the production process most of the nutritional goodness of the apple will be removed from the final flavouring – so we end up with all the taste but none of the goodness. Named flavourings sound 'healthier' though, and many manufacturers now use such flavourings.

Nature-identical flavourings

Nature-identical flavourings are substances that are obtained by synthesis or isolated through chemical processes. Although they may be 'artificial' in nature, their chemical composition is identical to that of 'natural' flavouring substances, and thus they are known as 'nature-identical'.



flavour

The strawberry swizz

All of the products on this page appear to contain strawberries, but rather than getting their flavour from real fruit they rely on cheap flavourings. If you want proper strawberries it always pays to check the small print – you may not be getting what you think you are.

■ For more examples of strawberry swizzes, visit our website at www.foodcomm.org.uk/latest_news.htm

Fruit juice – or flavourings?

Products like this **Hartley's Quickset Strawberry Flavour Jelly** make big claims about their 'real fruit juice' content, but it is always worth checking the small print. This product contains just 1% strawberry juice, which works out at just over one gram of strawberry juice in an entire, half litre of jelly. The flavour in the jelly comes from unknown flavourings, not the strawberry juice.

Tesco Kids Strawberry Milk contains both flavours and 'strawberry juice from concentrate'. Tesco do not say how much real juice there is, but as the juice is listed below various food additives we can safely assume there is not very much (ingredients are listed in weight order, and food additives do not weigh very much!)

These **Jubbly Strawberry ice lollies** also make a 'real fruit juice' claim. However, it turns out that each lolly contains just 0.6% strawberry juice. Again, the flavour largely comes from unknown flavouring agents, not actual strawberries.

Strawberry shakes

● **Yazoo Strawberry Flavour Milkshake** loudly claims it is 'low in fat' but neglects to mention it is 'empty of strawberries'. Flavouring and sugar take the place of real fruit.

● **Moo Strawberry Flavour Milk** is made 'as simply as we can, with milk straight from our farmers' lovely cows, packed full of nutrients and natural goodness.' It is also made with flavouring, colour, stabiliser and sweetener – but not actual strawberries.

● **Nesquik strawberry flavour milkshake mix** is basically sugar (almost 98% we reckon) – fortified with a few vitamins and minerals to make it appear healthy. The 'scrummy yumminess' is apparently unaffected by the lack of actual strawberries, and few children will even stop to consider whether this is a good or bad thing. Nestlé actively encourages children to add 2-4 teaspoons to every glass of milk. Would you add four teaspoons of sugar to a cup of tea?

● **Ovaltine Max 4 Milk Strawberry** milkshake powder (40% sugar) also contains added vitamins and minerals to make it look healthy, and is described as 'Daily Nutrition' and 'wholesome goodness'. However, the closest thing to a strawberry in this product is the colouring, which comes from beetroot.

● **Alpro Soya Strawberry Flavour Drink**. Alpro have added calcium and vitamins but no actual strawberries. Instead, we find sugar and a mix of 'natural flavouring' and 'flavouring'.

● **ASDA Great Stuff Strawberry Milk** has been 'endorsed by ASDA nutritionists' – who apparently think children are better off consuming flavourings instead of real fruit.

Strawberry tea

Cranberry, Strawberry and Raspberry Tea Bags with 0.2% strawberry from Sainsbury's; Strawberry and Mango teabags with 1.0% strawberry from Twinings; and Tesco Fruit Infusion teabags with just 0.2% actual strawberry. Strawberries may feature heavily on the packaging, but appearances can be deceptive. All of these teabags contain larger doses of flavourings than real strawberry fruit.

● **While's Strawberry Flavour Shake** is fruit free, but that has not stopped them plastering the packaging with images of strawberries. The use of strawberry imagery is only allowed if strawberries are a 'characterising ingredient' – so this packaging could well be illegal.

However, there is a loophole, as the use of a natural strawberry flavouring would be sufficient to justify the use of such imagery (even though the actual strawberry content would be negligible).

This product does not specify the flavouring as either 'strawberry' or even as 'natural', so we have no way of knowing.

● **Friji strawberry milkshake** – no artificial flavourings in this product, but no strawberries either. Just another 'natural flavouring' from an unknown source.



Yoplait's Yop Strawberry Yogurt apparently comes with 'full on Calcium'. We wish we could say the same for the fruit content, which comes in at 'Zero'. This has been coloured with E124, ponceau 4R, one of the suspect artificial colourings featured on the www.actiononadditives.com website.



Liquid candy and

An international alliance of campaign organisations, including The Food Commission, is calling for tighter controls on the marketing of sugary drinks. But, soft drinks are not the only sugary problem, as we report.

The 'Global Dump Soft Drinks Campaign' aims to reduce consumption of high calorie carbonated sodas and other beverages as part of an international campaign to improve diet and health.

Multi-national food companies are exporting our diet-related ill health all over the world on the back of sales of western style junk foods and beverages. According to Dump Soft Drinks, this trend is blatantly illustrated by the Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo. The companies have vast media budgets, in 1999 Coca-Cola spent around \$154 million in the United States while the National Cancer Institute spent about \$1 million on five a day media promotion.

"The multinational soft drink giants, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, are flooding the world with beverages that are nothing more than 'liquid candy' and in the process contributing significantly to the global childhood obesity crisis. As a result, children are increasingly suffering diseases such as 'Type II diabetes' – traditionally referred to as 'adult onset' diabetes. If we don't take action, this generation of children may be the first in history to live shorter lives than their parents," says Bruce Silverglade of the Center for Science in the Public Interest based in Washington D.C.

What should be done

The international alliance of campaign groups has a platform of demands that includes: a cessation of all forms of marketing of sugary beverages to the under 16s, including banning of sales of drinks in schools; increased promotion of lower sugar drinks and a decrease in portion size of high sugar products; the imposition of warnings on products such as "High sugar – drink only occasionally" or "For occasional consumption. Drink water to quench thirst"; and imposition of VAT on soft drinks with governments returning the revenue to consumers in the form of nutrition and physical activity programmes.

UK sugar consumption

Here in the UK, there is still much work to be done. Dietary surveys suggest that, on average, processed sugar (the type in soft drinks) consumption is too high; for example, young people in the UK get around 17% of their daily calories from processed sugars when the maximum recommendation is 10%.

Processed sugars are consumed at shockingly high levels in certain sectors of the population according to data from the Food Standards Agency's *Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey 2007* (LIDNS). Tim Lobstein, of the International Association for the Study of Obesity, notes LIDNS indicates levels of 55% of dietary energy for some men, and, "Even higher figures of 59% of dietary energy are found among a small proportion of women in Wales and girls in Scotland."

Soft drinks and dental decay

Lobstein notes that LIDNS data indicates that beverages were the top source of processed sugars, contributing 43%, in the diets of men aged 19-34 in the bottom 15% for income of the UK population. According to the Expenditure and Food Survey (2001-2004), in Scotland, the

Savoury is sweet too

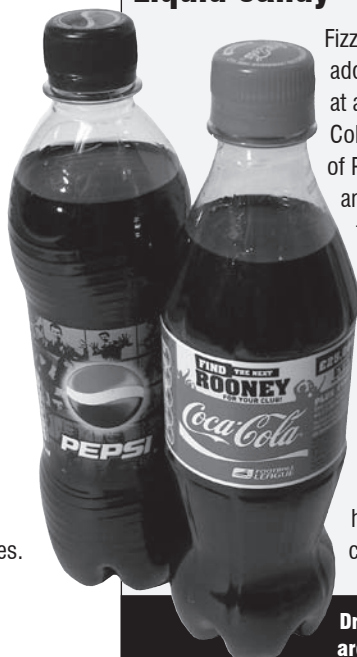
The ingredients list of these wholewheat pasta shapes in tomato sauce includes both sugar and glucose-fructose syrup. The label promises 'controlled sugar' – whatever that means, are there foods with uncontrolled sugar in them? It is a low sugar product, but surely it does not need sugar at all. If you ate the whole tin, you would get around 2½ teaspoons of added sugar along with your meal.



consumption of sugar containing drinks rises as you move down the social classes; with the wealthiest consuming 58% less than the poorest.

Professor Annie S. Anderson, of Dundee University's Centre for Public Health Nutrition Research, is a UK expert on food choice and health. According to Anderson, "The results of this in Scotland are borne out in rates of dental caries, with only children from the top two social classes currently meeting Scottish national targets for keeping children free of obvious dental decay. Almost 73% of children from the wealthiest groups had no obvious sign of decay, as compared to just 31% from the lowest income group."

Liquid candy



Fizzy drinks have a lot of added sugar. We looked at a 500ml bottle of Coca-Cola and a 500ml bottle of Pepsi, both of which are roughly the same in terms of the sugar and calories they give you.

Professor Annie S. Anderson, of Dundee University's Centre for Public Health Nutrition Research, has reflected on Coca-Cola consumption and here are some of her calculations:

Coca-Cola claims that a single 500ml bottle actually contains two separate servings, although most people would finish off the whole bottle in one go.

Even if we give Coca-Cola the benefit of the doubt, a single portion a day would contribute the following:

- You get 100 calories in every serving. Seven servings a week will give you 700 calories;
- So, in ten weeks, a daily 250ml serving of Coca-Cola will provide 7,000 calories;
- 7,000 calories is equal to one kilogram (Kg) of body fat;
- Drink the whole 500ml bottle daily as a 'treat' for ten weeks and that will equal two kilograms of body fat.

Drink a regular 500ml bottle of Coca-Cola or Pepsi and you will consume around 13 teaspoons of sugar.

crunchy nuts

Start the day the sugary way

The UK's leading cereal manufacturer, Kellogg's, makes great play about the health giving properties of its cereals; the boxes are awash in claims by so-called experts – a sports star, some TV presenters, and littered with sports give-aways and diet promotions.

We checked out seven different Kellogg's cereals: Special K Bliss Creamy Berry Crunch; All Bran; Bran Flakes; Crunchy Nut; Honey Corn Flakes; Frosties Reduced Sugar and Rice Krispies Multi-Grain Shapes.

All come out red for sugar under the traffic light labelling system, not that Kellogg's uses that system.

How can it have come to be regarded as an acceptable idea that so many of us start the day in such a sugary way?

FACT: People who eat breakfast tend to perform better in the morning.

Each 30g serving contains

Calories	Sugars	Fat	Saturates	Salt
113	8g	0.2g	Trace	0.4g
6%	9%	<1%	<1%	7%

of an adult's guideline daily amount

FACT: Breakfast cereals contain essential nutrients which are important for health and wellbeing

FACT: People who eat cereal for breakfast each day are less likely to be overweight than those who don't

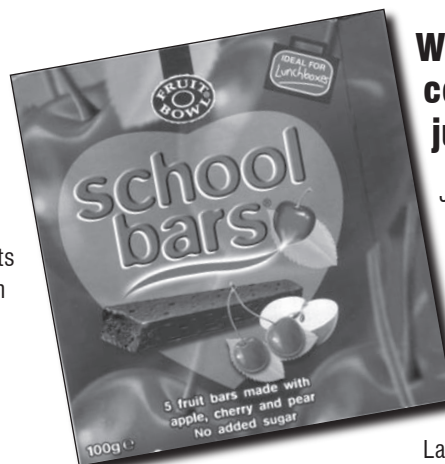
More needs to be done

Meanwhile, the UK Government still refuses to implement a 9pm watershed for junk food adverts, has not enforced extension of the traffic light labelling system and has not acted to prevent all forms of marketing of sugary soft drinks to young people.

Government budgets to promote programmes such as 'five a day' or to actively reduce soft drink consumption are dwarfed by the marketing spend of companies such as Coca-Cola.

Contradictions abound, for example, with Food in Schools legislation closely limiting the types of drinks on sale in canteens whilst companies are still allowed to sponsor sports teams. In Scotland, the Coca-Cola 7's is the

nation's biggest schools football tournament. Manufacturers of all types have not been set challenging targets for sugar reduction in their products.



"No added sugar" is the claim on these School Bars, which are, "Ideal for lunchboxes." These contain a whopping 45% sugar from concentrated fruit purees and juices.

Watch out for concentrated fruit juices

Just because a food is sweetened with a concentrated fruit juice does not mean that it is better for you than a food sweetened with plain old table sugar. Yet, there are manufacturers that seek to convince you this is so.

Labelling is a tricky old grey area, but manufacturers generally get away with putting 'No added sugar' on the labels of foods where they have in fact sweetened their product with another type of added sugar – in the form of a concentrated fruit syrup, often apple or grape.

Many fruit products aimed at babies and children make no sugar added claims and yet have these concentrated fruit juices added. Manufacturers might suggest that these are added for flavour, but they are also a processed form of sweetener which can add considerably to the sugar content of a product depending upon the degree of concentration.

Fresh fruit is naturally sweet, but many manufacturers cannot resist adding extra sweetness with concentrated fruit juices or syrups.

What is sugar?

Non-milk extrinsic sugars (NMES) are the ones that public health nutritionists are concerned about. These are so-called 'added' or 'free' sugars in foods such as breakfast cereals, cakes, fruit juices and fizzy drinks. They are in the form of white or brown table sugars, honey, concentrated fruit juice, sugar in fruit juice.

NMES do not include sugars which are integrally present in the cells of food, for example, fruit and vegetables or milk sugar (lactose). These sugars are not considered causal for dental caries or obesity.

If sugar is labelled on a product (and you will not see sugar labelled on products such as Mars Bars) there is no separation between NMES and other sugars. That means if a product contains white sugar and fruits, or concentrated grape juice and fruit, you cannot tell how much of the sugar content is NMES or not.

Processed fruit can be confusing: fruit juice, smoothies, fruit purees can all be counted only once towards your recommended five portions of fruit and veg a day. That is because when fruit is processed the sugars are released from the whole cell structure and become NMES. Whereas, you are encouraged to eat whole fruit frequently, it can count towards as many portions of your five a day as you like.



■ See the Global Dump 'Soft drinks' Campaign at www.dumpsoda.org

■ Thank you to Professor Annie S. Anderson, of Dundee University's Centre for Public Health Nutrition who gave generously of her time and information in support of this article. In particular, she has given us access to her recent presentation entitled 'Sweet talk – changing the nation's dietary intake of sugar'. www.dundee.ac.uk/medther/nutrition

Obesity – make industry solve the problem!

Respected US lawyer Stephen Sugarman wants to put a legal duty on food companies to reduce child obesity levels. Tim Lobstein reports.

A veteran of tobacco litigation and an expert in tort law – allowing consumers to sue for damage from environmental hazards – Professor Stephen Sugarman has a well-deserved reputation for using creative approaches to influence commercial practices. When the tobacco industry was being prosecuted by the US government under racketeering laws he suggested that instead of making the companies pay a big collective fine they should instead be required to lower smoking rates to the levels that would have prevailed if the companies had not been practising their decades of misconduct.

Around 20% of US adults were smokers, and Sugarman suggested that probably the rate would have been under 10% without the industry's illegal behaviour. He suggested that the judge in the case, "could tell the tobacco companies to do whatever it takes to bring the smoking rate down to single-digit levels and keep it there. This would mean cutting smoking rates for each company's brands by more than 50%, phased in over, say, seven years."

In this scenario, failure to achieve smoking reduction targets would be severely penalised. So long as the penalties outweighed the rewards in profits from continued smoking, the companies would have a financial motive to meet the targets.

The companies are also well placed to identify the best methods for assisting people wanting to quit, having invested in decades of research on how to increase smoking uptake. More successful companies could sell their smoking reductions to less successful companies, he suggested, just as energy companies trade carbon credits.

Making food companies pay
Sugarman's ideas were too bold for the US government, who have not taken such action against the tobacco industry, but that has not stopped him from extending the idea to tackling obesity. Writing in the *Duke Law Journal* he outlines a performance-based, regulatory approach to obesity reduction. In his vision, the principle food products identified as increasing risk of obesity – such as soft drinks, fast food, confectionery and snacks – would be considered equivalent to cigarettes, and the principle producers required to meet obesity reduction targets.

The focus, he suggests, should be on child obesity prevalence, with companies charged to reduce child obesity in a given area by a specified amount. As suggested for the tobacco companies, Sugarman adopts the principle of threatening large fines for a company's failure to meet the required targets. He acknowledges the need to set some arbitrary targets and levels of fine, and discusses the relationships between these, compared with notional social costs of obesity. Setting the fine too low would only encourage companies to factor in the fine as a cost against profits, while making the target too easy to achieve would have too little effect on public health.

Calculating the cost
As with many grand ideas, the devil is in the detail, but this does not stop Sugarman from making some bold proposals. He suggests that the major sources of excess calories in the diet can be identified by setting nutritional criteria and measuring the excess calories from fat and sugar that are provided by food products exceeding the criteria. Thus a criterion of 30% calories for fat is compared to a pizza which has 37% calories from fat. The 7% excess calories is multiplied by the annual amounts eaten in the population. This provides a reference point for pizza from which its share in the total excess calorific consumption can be calculated. In the examples shown in Table 1, pizza is deemed to account for 2% of

Table 1.

Allocating product responsibility for obesity

	A	B	C	D	E
Confectionery (non-chocolate)	60% (s)	20%	23,369	4,674	5%
Crisps	62% (f)	32%	39,680	12,698	14%
Ice cream	56% (f)	26%	19,200	4,992	5%
Chocolate	55% (f)	25%	31,416	7,854	9%
Pizza	37% (f)	7%	29,007	2,030	2%
Hamburger	47% (f)	17%	76,800	13,056	14%
Fried chicken	46% (f)	16%	4,004	641	1%
Cheese	74% (f)	44%	18,240	8,026	9%
Soft drinks	97% (s)	57%	57,540	32,798	36%
Chips/French fries	48% (f)	18%	23,177	4,172	5%
Total				90,941	100%

Columns:

A = Percent calories from fat (f) and sugar (s).

B = Percent calories in excess of a threshold (in this case 30% for fat, 40% for sugar).

C = Total average annual intake per person, in kcal.

D = Average excess kcal per person (column B times column C).

E = "Fat Index", the contribution to the total excess.



Table 2.

Allocating producers' responsibility by market share

Firm	Market share	Obesity reduction share*
Coca-Cola	43% soft drinks	15.5%
Dreyer's (Nestlé)	23% ice cream	1.3%
Burger King	18% burgers	2.6%

* This is the market share multiplied by the Fat Index, assuming the acceptance of the figures in Table 1.



the nation's excess calories. Pizza companies are then held responsible for 2% of the target reduction in child obesity, and this would be divided between the manufacturers according to their market share. The larger companies are thus required to achieve more of the total target reduction in obesity than smaller companies (see Table 2).

It can be seen that there is considerable room for argument. Even assuming a nutrient profiling scheme can be agreed, there will be quirks and anomalies. For example, oily fish (50% calories from fat) might be penalised, while salty pretzels and crackers might escape penalty. A profiling system would need to address these issues, but such systems are available, such as the one used by Ofcom to determine the suitability of TV ads

for children, and the profiles used by the FSA to allow red, amber and green traffic light signals in their labelling recommendations.

There will be arguments about contributions to the total: should this be based on the whole population or only the target population of children? There will be arguments about market share: which year, and divided by value or volume or profit?

Clearly, the proposal could provide a great feast for lawyers. But, there is no reason why the industry could not be left to devise its own Obesity Reduction Credit Allocation scheme, within generalised, government-set requirements.

The idea of regulating for performance-based targets has already been applied in the public sector in the UK, with Public Sector Agreements,

and in the US where schools are required to meet targets for equalising educational opportunities. Capping and trading pollution is also widely seen as a mechanisms for controlling industrial impact on the environment, where the trade in carbon quotas may become as common as trading milk quotas has become for farmers in Europe's Common Agricultural Policy.

The proposal also has one singular advantage: it transfers a share of the burden of obesity prevention from the state to the private sector. Although public health should and must remain a prime responsibility of the public sector, its implementation need not be left entirely to the public purse. Following a principle of 'polluter pays', the transfer of the public health costs of dealing with the obesity problem and its reduction could be effectively shifted on to the producers of obesogenic products.

Internalising costs (requiring the manufacturer to bear the cost of the consequences of their activities) is an argument used by economists to justify interference in the marketplace and regulation of industry. It can also reduce the financial burden on taxpayers and the state. These factors alone may win Sugarman's ideas some friends across the party spectrum.

■ **SD Sugarman and N Sandman. Fighting child obesity through performance-based regulation of the food industry. *Duke Law Journal* 2007, 56, 1403-1490.**

FSA challenged to define 'seasonal'

Consumer, environment and food groups have protested to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) about the misuse of food labelling terms that could otherwise help consumers to choose a diet that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The FSA issued a consultation in 2007, requesting views on the use of terms such as 'fresh', 'natural' and 'pure', with a deadline for comments in January. Sustain, the National Consumer Council and Natural England responded by saying that these terms are so widely abused – by companies such as Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's, M&S and Heinz – that the FSA should instead take pre-emptive action to protect terms such as 'local', 'seasonal' and 'farmers' market'.

Eating seasonal food can help us reconnect with the seasons and reduce greenhouse gas emissions – the food can be grown in natural conditions, and does not need to be stored or refrigerated for long, or transported very far. Eating local food can help us to use our

purchasing power to give farmers a decent income and to reduce how far food has travelled. Meanwhile, the booming popularity of farmers' markets demonstrates that consumers are increasingly interested in supporting local farmers, eating a more seasonal diet and making a personal connection with the people who grow their food.

"The food industry is already misappropriating the terms 'seasonal' and 'local', to promote foods with questionable environmental and ethical credentials, hoping to make their products seem more attractive to consumers," said Kath Dalmeny, Policy Director of Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming. "The FSA should issue guidance to Trading Standards officers and other enforcement authorities to ensure that such important terms are protected from abuse."

Regular readers of *The Food Magazine* might well wonder if government is capable of making any tangible progress on such issues. We reported in 2001 how the FSA and its

predecessors had already taken over 35 years to come to a guideline definition of the terms 'fresh', 'natural' and 'pure' in food labelling and marketing. Can we afford to wait over 40 years for an enforceable definition of the words 'local', 'seasonal' and 'farmers' market'?

■ **Sustain's report 'Ethical Hijack: Why the terms "local", "seasonal" and "farmers' market" should be defended from abuse by the food industry' is available at: www.sustainweb.org/pdf/Ethical_Hijack.pdf**

■ **Sign a petition to help defend local and seasonal food from hijack by marketers at: www.sustainweb.org/page.php?id=408**



Breaking the rules on baby food

A new report details the insidious ways companies undermine breastfeeding.

A report from the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2007*, graphically details the insidious ways in which a dozen heavyweight companies compete with breastmilk, and mislead those who use formula. It highlights the extent of formula marketing in the UK – a market now worth around £200 million. The report takes a worldwide look at violations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF backed *International Code on the Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*; sadly, companies operating in the UK do not do well.

The *International Code* bans companies from advertising, giving of samples, and other forms of promotion. Although some 70 countries have put most or all of the provisions of the *International Code* and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions into law or equivalent measures, these measures are often not as strong as they should be and are only effective if vigorously enforced. Part of the problem, in the UK, is that over stretched Trading Standards departments do not have the time to pursue all violations nor the money to bring offending companies through costly legal procedures. As we report on page 3, the UK also still has more to do in terms of putting tough

enough regulations in place to stop aggressive marketing practices by baby milk companies.

According to Yeong Joo Kean, Legal Advisor to IBFAN and co-author of the report, manipulative marketing strategies undermine breastfeeding and mislead those parents and carers who do use formula. "The marketing of infant formula, follow-on formula, complementary foods and feeding equipment continues to be such a very lucrative business that companies ignore WHO recommendations in order to compete intensely with one another and against breastfeeding."

Violations in the UK

Spot monitoring of company telephone 'carelines' by the Baby Milk Action shows how these advice lines promote products while failing to provide essential safety advice.

Key areas of misinformation

Powdered formula is not sterile and intrinsic contamination with a bacteria called *Enterobacter Sakazakii* has led to deaths and brain damage in a small number of cases. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) recommends mixing formula with water above 70°C. Experts say this is the single most effective decontamination step which could reduce the risk 10,000-fold. However, carelines often fail to give this information. Carelines also make idealising claims about additives in their products – suggesting these make them closer to breastmilk.



Leo Stephenson with his mum Jacqui take a half-time feeding break. Photo by Peter Stephenson, taken from the IBFAN calendar.

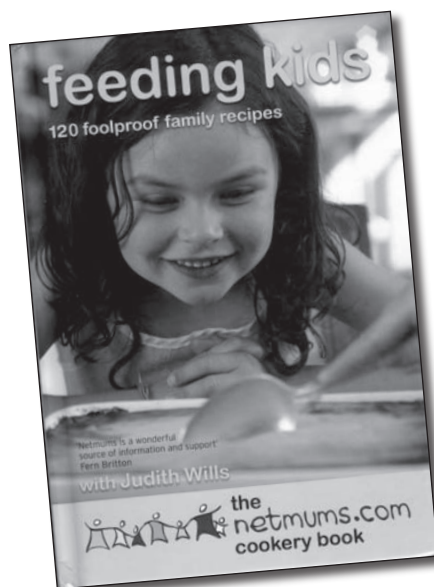
- **Aptamil's careline:** The Aptamil advisor described Aptamil's 'immunofortis' – inspired by breastmilk' as, "Soluble fibres found in breastmilk," which, "liaise with the immune system."
- **Cow & Gate careline:** The Cow & Gate advisor said that prebiotics are present in breastmilk, support the natural immune system and provide food for friendly bacteria. The advisor then went on to say that only Cow & Gate and Aptamil have them. Asked whether Cow & Gate formula was sterile, she said "No formula is sterile," and added that it made no difference.
- **Farley's careline:** Asked about the need to use hot water, as powdered formula is not sterile, her advice was: "Heat the water and let it cool. I don't know if it gives the temperature. It says 30 minutes." Asked if using hot water was important, she said: "It mixes better" and had nothing to do with sterility.
- **HiPP's careline:** HiPP claimed, "no-one does it at 70°C," and, "we certainly have no problems with bacteria."

■ Patti Rundall, Policy Director, Baby Milk Action

■ Contact Baby Milk Action if you would like to join in as a 'mystery shopper' at www.babymilkaction.org. You can submit complaints to Trading Standards via the Baby Feeding Law Group website: www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk/monitoring.html



Befelatanana maternity unit in Bogota, Columbia. Photo by Funcacion Canguro and Nathalie Charpak. Image taken from the IBFAN Calendar www.babymilkaction.org



Feeding Kids, 120 foolproof family recipes

Headline £14.99. ISBN 978 0 7553 1604 5, Netmums with Judith Wills

This book takes a clear and simple approach to feeding children, offering advice and recipes that are easy to understand without being patronising. Dishes such as cauliflower cheese, shepherd's pie and tomato sauce are easy to cook and do not require specialist or expensive ingredients. A very welcome message in the book is to enjoy food. Although it comes with the inevitable pages of dietary advice that so many cookbooks have these days, this is not a book aimed at making

you anxious or as if feeding your children is akin to understanding an advanced medical text or organising the moon landings. It is also the kind of book that you could imagine using with your children to cook together.

One feature is that the recipes come with traffic lights – for fat, saturates, sugar and salt – for clear information about the nutritional content of the meals. This is welcome support for the traffic light labelling system for food products supported by campaign organisations such as The Food Commission.

■ Netmums is the largest parenting organisation in the UK, with around 250,000 members who meet online to discuss all kinds of issues, including food. www.netmums.com

Protecting our orchard heritage

A good practice guide for managing orchard projects. Ida Fabrizio, Sustain; the alliance for better food and farming. Visit www.sustainweb.org to download or order.

This guide is full of advice about managing orchard projects developed during a study that gathered experience from sustainably managed orchards in six areas in England – Herefordshire Rivers, Somerset Levels and Moors, Teignbridge,



North West Devon, Mid Kent Downs and the Cumbria Fells and Dales.

In the foreword to the guide, Sue Clifford, of the campaign group Common Ground, notes, "We deserve better everyday surroundings which feed our need for meaning as well as survival. Orchards holding the suburbs together, orchards at the heart of the village, fruit trees in smallholdings colonising the green belt, espaliered trees along the walls of the city, roofs sprouting with coppiced nut trees, fruit farms in parks, linear orchards along waterways and railways, wild fruit in the hedgerows."

This lovely guide is full of useful information, and it is not just for experts.

Planet chicken

The Shameful Story of the Bird on your Plate. Hattie Ellis. Sceptre April 2007. Hardback £14.99. ISBN 978 0 340 921876

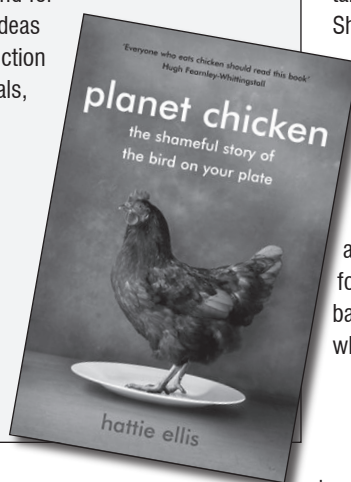
The poor old chicken; their meat is the most popular on the planet, but just what does that popularity get them? A lifetime nasty, brutish and short.

Denied natural light, crammed into iron sheds, riddled with sores from sitting on faeces covered floors – if you feel you have heard it all before, tough luck. Ellis does not shrink from presenting the horrible details of life for the factory farmed chicken or battery egg producing hen. And, she lets us know what that sort of life means for consumers of those factory farmed products: tasteless birds that may be cheap, but are often infected with campylobacter and salmonella.

The chicken itself takes centre stage as a character in this book as Ellis introduces us to farmers of all types, cooks and campaigners. For someone raised in a city, where chicken is shrink-wrapped on a shelf, it is almost unimaginable to think of these animals as akin to the proud jungle fowl they are descended from, grubbing for worms under tall tree

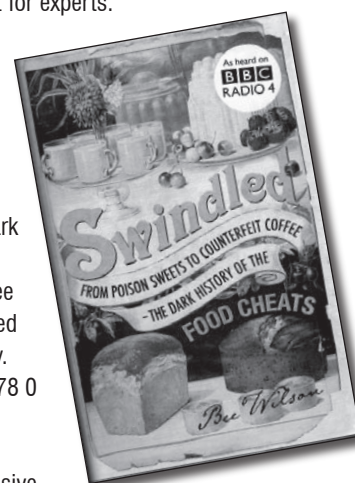
canopies. How can we have reduced them to the state they are in? Ellis makes it clear that we must bear the responsibility and take action for change.

She makes no glib assertions that we can all start purchasing free range or organic birds. Yes, definitely do so if you can; but she also calls for big politics. Governments and businesses must not keep getting away with supporting a factory farming system that has absolute cruelty at its heart and which makes affordable food reliant upon suffering. Ellis congratulates campaigners for working so hard to raise issues, and for developing new ideas about food production that benefit animals, the environment and of course, people. This is a well written book and surprisingly enjoyable, considering the topic.



Swindled

From Poison Sweets to Counterfeit Coffee – The Dark History of the Food Cheats. Bee Wilson. Published by: John Murray. £16.99. ISBN 978 0 7195 6916 6



In this witty, incisive and fascinating book, Bee Wilson roams the centuries to offer the reader tales of food fakers, swindlers and poisoners. She offers some good, and simple advice for protecting oneself from such cheats – really get to know and care about the food you eat. Use your senses, cook from scratch, buy food whole, meet the producer and have a bit of trust in your own judgement.

Food Magazine readers will already be aware of many of the modern day tricks that the food industry can get up to, this book takes us back as far as Roman times and lifts the lid on what our ancestors had to put up with.

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Is two years enough for organic?

I am concerned that the EU and the Soil Association will now allow food to be labelled as organic when the food may only have been so grown for two years. There is no evidence they can produce that this is good enough but they do expect consumers to pay extra for food which we believe to be of a better nutritional quality than food grown commercially.

There is evidence that food grown organically for five years or more does indeed have a higher nutritional value. But, the two year conversion rate has been set up to encourage farmers to convert to organic without incurring too much financial hardship. Fair enough. But where does that leave the consumer?

Hans Lobstein, Brighton

The Food Magazine requested organic farmer Charlotte Hollins to respond to this question. Hollins' father, Arthur Hollins, was passionate about soil quality and Charlotte has inherited his interest in this subject.

Yes, you are correct in saying that the conversion rate for all farmers, regardless of previous management practices, is two years. Fordhall Farm has been chemical free for over 65 years now, but we came out of the organic symbol in

the 1990s due to financial pressures during our fight to remain on the land. After placing Fordhall into community ownership and gaining long-term security on the land as tenant farmers, we have gone back into the Soil Association accreditation scheme. Even though Fordhall has been chemical free for over 65 years, we too have to undergo the two-year conversion period before we can officially use the word 'organic'.

Soil takes hundreds and sometimes thousands of years to form, and it is the top few centimetres that are the most fertile and the most easily degraded. A soil's fertility is normally measured through its physical attributes and its chemical properties. However, it is the biological element, which is much more difficult to measure, that enables soil to cycle and store nutrients.

When I was young, my father would take me into the field to admire his pastures here on the farm. It would not be long before he would drop to his knees and put his hands straight into a cowpat! Usually partly dry (one that had been there for awhile), he would lift the crust and show me the worms and life that survived beneath it. His passion for the mythical world beneath the soil radiated from him, we would sometimes spend an hour watching for new insects, flies, or worms to appear and do their magical work, breaking down the manure into nutrients that would feed them and in turn grow our grass, and subsequently, feed our cattle. He knew, without doubt, that it was the life in the soil that was the key to fertility and successful organic farming.

Did you know, for example, that there are more bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and nematodes in a teaspoon of soil, than there are people on the planet? Yet, humans have identified less than 1% of the biological component of soils. We do know that, collectively, they create the physical and chemical conditions that make soil, and provide it with the properties that create a suitable medium for plant growth. It is this biological component that organic farming works so hard to maintain, and that chemical farming destroys so easily, by removing the food source (organic matter); and by exposing the organisms to sunlight, which can



The Fordhall Community Land Initiative in North Shropshire is England's first community owned farm. It works to show that small-scale farming, connected to the community, can offer a viable way of life for generations to come. You can still buy shares in the farm, or visit on event/volunteer days, or walk the farm trail during weekends. All information is available on our website www.fordhallfarm.com or you can call us in the office on 01630 638696.

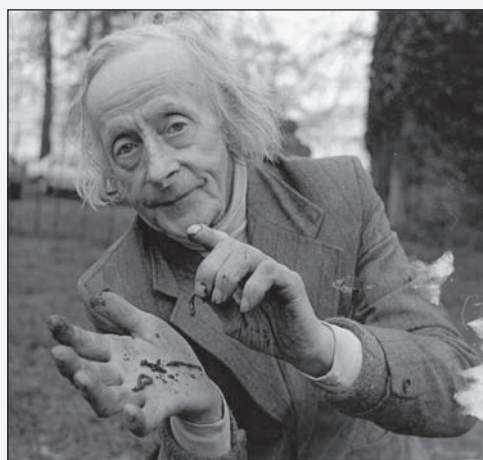
instantly kill them. Once lost, this biological web of organisms can take a long time to re-establish.

It makes sense to assume that food quality will be a reflection of the medium through which it has grown. Certification bodies also need to put a time period on conversion and this must not deter non-organic farmers from going organic. We do know that soil systems can take a long time to change and adapt, but we also know that non-organic soil systems have a drastically reduced biological section compared to organic soils, leaving only the chemical additions (fertiliser) to provide the plant nutrients. A scientist once said "man is made up of what he eats... he is indeed, created out of the earth."



This is a special species of ink cap, typical of the fungi growing on dung – but only where the cattle aren't heavily dosed with antibiotics. In summer, an organic cow pat will last for 7-10 days (depending on the weather), whereas ones with antibiotics and ivermectin have been known to last over a year.

Fungi on dung are really fascinating in that they grow in sequence. One grows and softens up the cellulose to allow another to grow. There are some fantastic dung specialists able to shoot their spore pockets over two metres, so they are away from the pat and will be eaten by cattle.



Arthur Hollins took over Fordhall Farm (as a tenant) when he was 14, in 1929, after his father passed away. It was very intensively farmed at the time and it was losing money by the minute. He initially continued to manage the farm how his father had done, but he saw that he was putting more and more fertiliser onto the land and his yields were getting poorer.

The worm, with its poo eating properties and its amazing efficiency at turning waste into food for other bacteria and plants captured his imagination. These are the indicators of a fertile soil, the more worms you have the better, and the more worms you have, the more microbe life you can be sure also exists in your soil.

Starch in a hurry

An unusually hasty bit of action from the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes, which slipped out a *Draft Opinion on an Application under the Novel Foods Regulation for Phosphated Distarch Phosphate as a Food Ingredient* four days before Christmas, saying it wanted the consultation to be wrapped up by January 3rd!

What is the hurry? This dull processed starch is an additive most often used to keep frozen soups, gravies and sauces looking thick and creamy after defrosting. Now a manufacturer, National Food Starch Innovation, wants to use the additive in huge quantities, up to 35% in biscuits, sweet breakfast cereal and white bread, and for this they need approval and have been waiting two years for the Committee to think what view it should take.

What good is this starch in our diet? The company will surely want to trade on the fact that our guts treat the starch as dietary fibre, so this ingredient can be touted as providing a high percentage of your daily needs, while you carry on eating a diet of biscuits and sliced white.

They should be reminded that the original recommendations to eat more dietary



Apples – a natural source of dietary fibre. Photo by Ida Fabrizio.

fibre, made by the COMA cardiovascular committee in the late 1980s, specified clearly that the fibre should come from foods naturally containing fibre, such as fruit, vegetables, pulses and whole grains. Not some synthesized substitute. But, with no time for public scrutiny and comment, the company can expect to get approval unopposed.

Tear free onions

Scientists in New Zealand have created a genetically modified, tear-free onion, by using gene-silencing technology to shut down part of the plant's own natural defense system. Research is ongoing, but they hope the onions will become the, "household and industry norm within the next decade." The scientists reckon the new onions will be tastier and healthier, but the onion produces tear-inducing compounds for a reason – to deter herbivores and other pests. The new onion may well prove to be popular, but if it requires greater use of pesticides in order to be grown, one has to wonder if we really need such 'progress'.

Interestingly, Dr Eady, the scientist behind the tear-free onion, says that although it is, "an exciting project, he is most interested in sustainable and efficient production and will want to be sure that the onions he is working on are also capable of being grown in an efficient manner." All of which basically means more biotechnical tinkering in order to 'improve' the humble, but perfectly efficient, onion.

Sympathy for baby food companies

We enjoyed reading Mintel's latest report on the baby food market. In its list of market 'Weaknesses' – ie things that are not good for baby food companies it includes:

- Breast-feeding rates – Government-backed campaign to raise levels of breastfeeding is having success;
- Healthy eating – Increased focus on healthy eating means parents want to know what is going into their children's food, and hence will be more inclined to prepare their baby's food from scratch;
- Food safety – Strict rules governing food safety make it more difficult to launch new products in the baby and child sector than within the mainstream food market.

Still, the companies are hoping for a new market – apparently celebrities such as Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon eat baby foods as part of their diets, it's the small portions you see. That is one advertising campaign *The Food Magazine* would like to see.

■ **Reference: *Baby Food, Drinks and Milk, Market Intelligence, November 2007***

Anna, from our Action on Additives campaign, tries out baby berry yoghurt before rejoining the grown-ups for some real lunch.

Read *The Food Mag* for heart health

For the past year staff at *The Food Magazine* have devoted themselves to eating only foods that have health claims on them. It has been a somewhat confusing time and we have spent forty two days each in supermarkets as the label reading is so time consuming. Jessica has been concentrating on bowel and colon health, Ian on inner beauty and Mel on her dentation and brain function. We haven't thoroughly analysed individual menus for the year, but a typical breakfast includes a high sugar breakfast cereal that is, however, low in salt and high in fibre; Mel sometimes includes omega

3 rich mayonnaise on a fortified, crustless, white bread toast (she hates whole grains) enriched with phospholipids (she thinks that is what they are called anyway) to lower her cholesterol and Ian eats his anti-oxidant lipstick if he hasn't had time to shop. Our doctors are somewhat concerned that we have had to mostly give up plain, old fruit and veg, but we're sure it will pay off in the end...

PS: If you are interested in following the same sort of diet, log onto the Food Standards Agency's website to see the full list of health claims just submitted by manufacturers in the UK for approval by the European Commission. Find out what inulin or oligofructose from chicory or psyllium can do for your well being or stool characteristics or inner Kate Moss.

■ **Disclaimer: *The Food Magazine* assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within this backbite.**

■ **To view the list of health claims go to www.food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/ull/claims**



British pilots during World War Two ate bilberries before night flights to support their vision – at least that is what one of the health claims suggests.