

## August 2004

### **Scientists herald BSE breakthrough**

**Date:** Mon, 02 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Researchers from Germany and the US have reportedly designed a synthetic protein (prion) that makes mice display symptoms similar to those of mad cow disease.

Scientists at the University of California, San Francisco, and Heinrich-Heine Universitat in Germany claim that the new prion, an infectious protein, offers the potential for new therapies and quicker diagnostic tests for the brain-wasting illness.

The findings suggest that prions are able to replicate themselves without the presence of viral DNA or RNA, damage brain tissue, and cause neurological diseases, according to Food Production Daily.

In disease, the malformed protein accumulates in the brain causing dementia. This can occur spontaneously, or, as in the case of BSE, as a result of being exposed to modified prions from an infected animal. BSE, a transmissible, neurodegenerative, fatal brain disease of cattle, has been linked to the human disease variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD).

Reporting in the July issue of Science magazine, Nobel Laureate Stanley B Prusiner and his colleagues demonstrated that mice injected with a synthetic prion began exhibiting symptoms of disease in their central nervous systems between 380 and 660 days.

"The finding represents a renaissance in prion biology," said Professor Prusiner. "For the first time, we can create prions in a test tube. We now have a tool for exploring the mechanism by which a protein can spontaneously fold into a shape that causes disease."

Further information: [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org)

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### **New antioxidant plum unveiled**

**Date:** Mon, 02 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Researchers in the US have developed a new late-ripening plum, rich in antioxidants.

The fruit, designed by scientist WR Okie and colleagues at the ARS Southeastern Fruit and Tree Nut research laboratory in Georgia, has just been released by the US Agricultural Research Service.

Ruby Queen, a high-quality plum, well adapted to the humid climate of the south eastern United States, was selected in 1985 for testing, after three years of testing.

The plum has reportedly performed well in central Georgia, New Jersey and New York, and has now been recommended by ARS for trial in areas with similar climates.

The Ruby Queen is dark-red to reddish-black, with firm red flesh and outstanding flavour. It is round and about two inches in diameter and tests conducted by research collaborators in New York show the flesh to have high antioxidant levels.

Fruit and vegetables are known to reduce the risk of some cancers through their antioxidant properties and food manufacturers and growers are keen to cash in on increasing consumer interest in healthier eating.

Further information: [www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)  
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### **Muslim approval for Ribena and Lucozade**

**Date:** Mon, 02 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A leading British organisation on Islamic law has ruled that Muslims can drink Lucozade, despite it containing alcohol.

Soft drink maker GlaxoSmithKline approached the UK Muslim Law (Shariah) Council to rule on whether Lucozade and Ribena were haram (forbidden by Islamic law). The ruling means that Lucozade and Ribena are the first British soft drinks declared fit for Muslims to consume.

Lucozade contains a trace amount of alcohol, permitted by UK food laws, and the company had been contacted by Muslims concerned that it might breach their religion, The Guardian reports.

The UK Muslim Law Council has now issued a fatwa on Lucozade, in a religious ruling welcomed by GlaxoSmithKline. Ribena, which uses a filter during its production process made from gelatin, derived from pigs, was also declared halal (clean) by the council.

Council chairman, Zaki Badawi, concluded: "I see no harm in consuming Ribena and Lucozade which contain traces of ethyl alcohol and animal ingredients that do not bear their original qualities and do not change the taste, colour or smell of the product."

GlaxoSmithKline recreated an incident from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, when he drank liquid produced from soaking raisins in water for several days, called nabith. Scientists found that the mixture would ferment, producing alcohol.

Further Information: [www.gsk.com](http://www.gsk.com)  
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### **Blood biscuits tested out**

**Date:** Mon, 02 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Scientists in Russia have reportedly developed biscuits, yoghurts and drinks made using blood.!

The researchers, from the Voronezh State Technological Academy in Russia, claim that mass production on the new products could in just six months and insist the blood-based foods taste as good as the real thing.

Dr Ludmila Antipova, the head of the academy's Department of Meat and Meat Products, and her team decided to find a way to use blood 12 years ago after discovering that a local meat plant discarded up to seven tons of it each day, The Daily Telegraph reports.

Dr Antipova explained: "When we were first working on the project we had 16 students involved, and the main problem was that they would keep eating the experiments. People should not be apprehensive. When you eat meat, there is blood in that."

Telegraph reporters visited the laboratories and sampled 'chocolate'-filled biscuits and a vanilla-flavoured 'yoghurt' drink, both containing cow blood. The writers described them as "delicious" and claimed it was impossible to tell that either contained blood.

The blood products are reportedly up to five times less expensive to manufacture than their dairy equivalents, contain virtually no fat, and red blood cells are a rich source of iron. It is not yet clear whether the food products will go on sale in Britain.

(no further information)

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**Hard working Brits increasing demand for convenience foods**

**Date:** Mon, 02 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Increased demand for the convenience food market is being created as more people work more hours than is stated in their contracts.

According to a new survey by Internet bank Intelligent Finance, three quarters of British workers complete additional hours and find it is having a big effect on their life and diet.

The study questioned 1,000 working people and saw that 18 per cent worked over 48 hours a week, whilst four per cent claim they work more than 60 hours.

Diet was a key problem area for British consumers that work so much, with 32 per cent claiming the extra hours were affecting their diet, according to BBC News Online.

Many people claimed that the additional work made them eat far more convenience foods and takeaways.

The results follow a recent study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which claimed that the average Britain works 1,673 hours a year.  
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### **New pig meat quality mark approved by EU**

**Date:** Mon, 02 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new quality level has been established for pork, ham and bacon products by the EU.

According to The Journal, the Quality Standard Mark has been changed after its launch five years ago and will be appearing on pig meat sold in supermarkets soon.

Chris Lukehurst British Pig Executive (BPEX) marketing manager explained: "The old mark served the industry well but the market has changed and a new one was needed. The idea is to make labelling clear and unambiguous."

The mark is the result of long negotiations between the EU and BPEX and will be launched with an advertising campaign early next year in order to allow change over time in the industry.

Chairman Stewart Houston argued that the new level was important since a recent report has shown that around 70 per cent of pork "is produced under conditions which would be illegal in the UK".

In addition it is hoped that the mark will boost BPEX's campaign to keep British pig meat separate from imports.

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### **Scottish haddock promoted**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Seafood Scotland (SFS) and the National Federation of Fish Friers (NFFF) are launching a campaign aimed at promoting Scottish haddock.

The new marketing campaign will reportedly be unveiled at the NFFF HQ in Leeds on September 21st 2004, featuring local celebrities and members of the industry.

The marketing strategy will involve the entire supply-chain, including fishermen, processors and friers, in promoting Scottish haddock in UK fish and chip shops, FishUpdate.com reports.

Regional tasting sessions will take place in fish and chip shops in England and Wales and consumers will also be asked for their feedback on the product. Information will also be provided on the availability of Scottish haddock and on the vessels and fishermen who caught it.

NFFF president Adrian Herdman said: "We need to make friers and their customers aware of the large and healthy stocks of haddock we currently have in the North Sea, as we are missing out on a great taste opportunity."

Libby Woodhatch, chief executive of Seafood Scotland, added: "It's a great opportunity to work with the whole supply chain, and to ultimately inform consumers that we have an abundance of top quality haddock being landed in Scotland for them to enjoy."

Further information: [www.federationoffishfriers.co.uk](http://www.federationoffishfriers.co.uk)  
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### **Asda boosts sales by using local produce**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Wal-Mart Stores has announced that its British supermarket chain Asda boosted revenue by £160 million, after doubling sales of locally produced foods.

Asda began selling local goods two years ago and now offers over 900 items, ranging from fruit and vegetables to ice cream and sausages, Bloomberg News reports.

Local products can cost as much as 30 pence more than premium brands, yet many of the items now outsell the national market leaders, according to Asda. British consumers are generally prepared to pay more for foods produced closer to home and supermarkets have begun selling more local foods following widespread criticism of their sourcing methods.

Karen Todd, Asda's head of local sourcing, explained: "Our customers on the whole tend to be price-sensitive, but not when it comes to local produce. They will spend a little more if they've grown up as a child knowing the product or know the farmer in the area that has produced it."

Asda has discontinued Haagen-Dazs ice cream in its store in Kendal after the company found it was selling as much as five times more locally produced ice cream, while Penderyn whisky sold out in Welsh stores when it was introduced in March.

Asda has more than 200 local produce suppliers with 15 per cent of them employing less than five people. The supermarket has local goods in 90 percent of its 266 stores nationwide and hopes to get local produce in all outlets by this time next year.

Further information: [www.asda.co.uk](http://www.asda.co.uk)  
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### **Salt free crisps launched by UK firm**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK snack firm Seabrook Potato Crisps has unveiled a new range of salt-free crisps.

The new snacks contain only potato and vegetable oil, The Times reports.

Bradford-based Seabrook developed the new range of crisps in response to growing concern about salt levels in food.

The salt-free crisps appeared on retailers' shelves over the weekend.

The UK's Food Standards Agency recently called on manufacturers to reduce the sodium levels of their products. Too much salt can raise blood pressure, increasing the risk of stroke and coronary heart disease.

Further information: [www.seabrookcrisps.com](http://www.seabrookcrisps.com)

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### **KitKat changes slogan**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Nestle Rowntree has announced that it is replacing KitKat's slogan of almost 50 years.

The popularity of Kit Kat has started to wane and the Swiss food giant has opted to ditch the infamous "Have a break ... have a KitKat" slogan in a bid to boost flagging sales.

The wafer bar saw sales fall nine per cent last year to £95.2 million and KitKat dropped to number two behind Dairy Milk as Britain's favourite confectionary product.

Nestle has insisted that the new KitKat slogan, "Make the most of your break", is not linked to disappointing performance, but merely reflects the "changing structure" of the British workplace.

A spokesman for Nestle Rowntree said: "Our findings indicated that the workplace break is now less structured and formal. The new slogan is acknowledging that a break is less formalised but, even it is for five minutes, you can maximise your enjoyment with a KitKat."

The new slogan will be supported by a £5 million television advertising campaign due to begin next month.

Nestle says 47 of the chocolate bars are eaten every minute and it has no plans to change the taste of KitKats, though the firm recently launched a new low-carb version.

Further information: [www.nestle.co.uk](http://www.nestle.co.uk)

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### **Charcuterie Continental purchased by ANM**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

ANM Group has revealed a new deal whereby it has acquired speciality and cooked meats company Charcuterie Continental.

The largest farmer-owned business in Scotland will take over the business near Glasgow which is nearly 20 years old.

According to This is North Scotland, the new firm is in line with the company's meat processing companies and follows the purchase of Highland Country Foods.

ANM chief executive Brian Pack commented: "The range of expertise and customers between the two businesses ensures that we can be a serious player in this marketplace and, therefore, offer our customers and those of Charcuterie a greater range and depth of service."

The new firm has a yearly turnover of over £2.4 million and employs 25 staff.

A number of meat companies throughout the UK are run by ANM including Yorkshire Premier Meat, Highland Country Foods and Highland Lamb.

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### **Calorie content a key concern for UK restaurant goers**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new survey has suggested that UK diners would now like to see calorie content information provided on menus.

According to online booking site Toptable, 81 per cent of respondents wanted calorific values, whilst 89 per cent would like to see healthier food options highlighted.

Karen Hanton, managing director of Toptable told caterer-online: "Restaurants are the obvious next target for tackling the obesity issue.

"Food manufacturers are already under pressure to provide more information and, according to our consumer feedback, restaurants will also need to be more pro-active."

The findings follow recent calls for traffic light labelling of food products in supermarkets and the popularity of dieting trends such as the low carb Atkins diet.

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### **Diet feeders highlighted at dairy event**

**Date:** Tue, 03 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Following reports suggesting that feed is an important issue for dairy producers, the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers has revealed that a key focus of this year's Dairy Event 2004 will be dairy feeders.

According to The Journal complete diet feeder demonstrations will be one of the main activities at the show, which is taking place on September 22-23.

Producers will be able to observe and compare different benefits of each mixer wagon, as well as getting guidance from a technical adviser on correct formulations.

BOCM PAULS national technical adviser Wyn Morris explained: "A mixer wagon represents a significant investment for the livestock farmer, so it's essential that it delivers a return to the business."

Already 12 companies have signed up for the demonstration, which is being sponsored by agricultural machinery supplier John Deere and is said to be the biggest ever held in the UK.  
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### **Danone sells biscuit operation**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food giant Groupe Danone has announced that it has finalised the sale of W&R Jacob to Fruitfield Foods.

The Irish-based biscuit operations will pass immediately into the hands of Fruitfield Foods.

Danone said in a statement: "Today's announcement of the sale to an independent local business with experience in the food industry but no biscuit operations to date, does not require the agreement of the antitrust authorities and is effective immediately."

W&R Jacob has sales of around €70 million (£46 million) and its brands include Kimberley, Mikado and Jacob's Fig Rolls.

Fruitfield is a privately-owned food manufacturer whose shareholders are Michael Carey, David Andrews, Michael Tunney and Gerry Murphy.

Further information: [www.danonegroup.com](http://www.danonegroup.com)

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### **New bread packaging at Co-op**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket chain Co-op has introduced new bio-degradable bags for its bread.

The new environmentally-friendly plastic bags are designed to fully break down in the ground after about four years.

Co-op has wrapped almost all its own-label loaves in the new packaging in what it claims is a first for a UK retailer. The company launched Britain's first degradable carrier bag in 2002.

About 1.67 billion bread bags are produced in the UK each year, creating 10,521 tonnes of waste, and a standard plastic bread bag takes 100 years or more to degrade.

Co-op currently sells around 55 million Co-op-branded loaves, generating 346 tonnes of household waste.

Company spokeswoman Christine Clarke said: "Our survey into the ethics of supermarket products demonstrated that on every count - including packaging - consumers are more concerned today than they were 10 years ago.

"As a result of this, we have committed to introducing more environmentally-sound packaging, such as degradable and bio-degradable materials, across our range by taking advantage of technological developments. This initiative clearly demonstrates this commitment."

Further information: [www.co-op.co.uk](http://www.co-op.co.uk)  
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### **Parents eating leftovers pile on the pounds**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

British parents are piling on the pounds after stuffing themselves with their children's leftovers.

A study of almost 200 parents by food waste disposer In-Sink-Erator found that a third of parents (34 per cent) will finish children's leftovers rather than throw them away.

Just ten per cent of parents said their kids always finished with a clean plate, while less than half (46 per cent) said the scraps ended up in the bin and one in ten used a food waste disposer.

In-Sink-Erator has christened parents who scoff children's leftovers WasteWatchers and claim this group retain an affection for favourite foods from their own childhoods.

In-Sink-Erator has created a list of the top ten childhood favourites, which includes Farley's rusks, alphabet spaghetti, jam sandwiches and jelly.

The research was commissioned to find out what UK householders do with their kitchen waste, the Newcastle Evening Gazette reports.

[www.insinkerator.com](http://www.insinkerator.com)  
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### **Innovative new teabags launched by TasteTech**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK food firm TasteTech has developed new tea granules that ensure the flavour cannot escape through the bag during packing, storing or delivering.

The flavour granules are reportedly much coarser than those typically used by manufacturers.

"If a manufacturer uses conventional spray dried flavourings, when the tea is infused and passes into the water, the carrier system - gum arabic or maltodextrin - goes with it. Our new technology means that the flavour still permeates but the carrier system remains in the bag," Roger Sinton, managing director of TasteTech told FoodNavigator.com.

The Bristol-based company, which exports 65 per cent of its output, claims the new technology helps manufacturer avoid costly wastage.

TasteTech Ltd is the world's leading flavour manufacturer, specialising in microencapsulated food ingredients.

Consumption of fruit and herbal teas increased by almost 50 per cent in Europe between 1997 and 2002, according to market analysts Datamonitor, while green tea consumption in 2002 was more than 20 times the 1997 figure.

Further information: [www.tastetech.co.uk](http://www.tastetech.co.uk)  
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### **Consumers offered seafood advice**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new website has been launched that aims to help consumers make informed environmental choices when buying seafood, according to Manchester Online.

The site is developed from the Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide that helps identify which fish are from well-managed sources and caught using methods that minimise damage to marine wildlife and habitats.

Although many consumers want to buy fish caught in "friendly ways", they are often confused by the sheer range of fish available. The new website has a simple online search facility, which will hopefully allow consumers to make a more informed choice.

The retailer Marks & Spencer also backed the scheme after it discovered that over-fishing was the number one environmental concern for many of its customers.

Andrew Mallison, seafood specialist at Marks & Spencer said: "Our customers want great fish products, sourced in a sustainable manner."

He added: "We view Fishonline as an integral part of meeting our customers' high expectations. It provides them with simple choices and underpins our wider commitment to source fish in the most responsible way possible."

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### **Cranberry health benefits supported in study**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new study has supported the long running claim cranberries act as a top antioxidant.

Research by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) could create potential products or ideas for the food market after finding cranberry had the best antioxidant capacity in a list of 100 common foods.

According to findings in the study cranberries could help to cut the risk of cancer and heart disease.

Martin Starr, PhD, Science Advisor to the Cranberry Institute commented: "This is just the latest in a significant body of research that confirms the great health benefits of cranberries."

Additional benefits of the cranberry include bacterial adhesion in the body and atherosclerotic plaques that lead to cardiovascular disease.

Other items included in the list were spices, nuts, cereals, fruit and vegetables.

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### **Local food authorities praised in FSA review**

**Date:** Wed, 04 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The FSA has identified good practice by local authorities in dealing with food issues in its review of internal monitoring, third party and peers.

A key aim of the audit scheme is to identify and share good practice conducted during the review and the agency has praised the authorities for sharing their information.

Among the places where positive findings were obtained were the London Borough of Harrow and North Kesteven.

FSA officers found food hazards had a detailed recording and that action in response was recorded and approved by a senior officer.

In addition, local authorities tested so far showed a comprehensive and effective internal monitoring process and framework and made sure problems that were found were dealt with as soon as possible.

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### **European Greens attack EU's GMO procedures**

**Date:** Thu, 05 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

## **Analysis**

The European Parliament's Green group has criticised the European Union's authorisation process for genetically modified organisms.

The Greens claim the process of authorising GMOs is "incompatible with the democratic ideals that the Union seeks to promote."

Under the so-called 'comitology' procedure, the European Commission can approve sales of GM maize when the EU Council of Ministers is unable to reach a decision within three months.

In a letter, the Green/EFA Group said: "The fact that the Commission can make such decisions (without) Council agreement and the backing of the Parliament is incompatible with the democratic ideals promoted by the EU."

The Commission has dismissed the Greens concerns, claiming that involving MEPs and ministers would unnecessarily delay such "technical decisions.

A spokesperson for health and consumer protection commissioner David Byrne told CORDIS News: "You cannot have every technical decision going through a two year codecision procedure. The decision making process would grind to a halt."

The Commission's decisions draw heavily on scientific assessments carried out by the European Food Safety Authority. In two recent cases involving GM maize, EFSA concluded that both varieties were as safe as conventional sweetcorn and the EC approved the applications.

Further information : [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)  
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## **Scientists launch database of potential carcinogens**

**Date:** Thu, 05 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

### **Analysis**

Researchers in Spain have compiled an extensive database of harmful compounds formed during food preservation and cooking.

Led by Paula Jakszyn at the University of Barcelona in Spain, the team aims to extend food scientists' understanding of potential carcinogens in food products.

The food composition database of nitrates, nitrites, nitrosamines, heterocyclic amines (HA), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) in foods details the name of the food, cooking method, preservation method and a host of others facts, Food Navigator reports.

The researchers conducted a literature search of the nitrates, nitrites, nitrosamines, HA, and PAH compounds in foods from 1980 onwards using the Medline and EMBASE databases.

The final database features 207 food items listing concentrations of nitrites, nitrates and nitrosamines, 297 food items giving concentrations of HAs, and 313 food items with listings for the concentrations of PAHs.

"This database will allow investigators to quantify dietary exposure to several potential carcinogens, and to analyse their relation to the risk of cancer," the scientists' report states.

The research appears in the August issue of the US Journal of Nutrition.

No further information

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### **George Weston seeks bigger bakery profits**

**Date:** Thu, 05 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Canadian food giant George Weston is aiming to boost its profit margins in premium bakery products.

The group's bakery division Weston Foods suffered a 54.4 per cent reduction in operating profit to \$91 million in the first half of 2004, while division sales, accounting for 15.5 per cent of the total group's revenue, were down 6.7 per cent to \$2.1billion.

The company's bakery profits have been hit by rising operating costs and a shift in consumer taste against traditional white flour based products, Confectionery News reports.

Many of George Weston's other divisions performed strongly over the year and the group is now reviewing strategy at its bakery unit in a bid to improve performance.

Weston Foods is broadening its product mix and increasing its line of premium bakery products, as the economy market becomes more competitive.

"We are well positioned to meet the consumers increasing demand for healthier and more convenient products," said group chairman Galen Weston.

The bakery market has been damaged by the current trend in low-carb diets and an increase in more conveniently packaged foods, such as cereal bars. Bakers have been forced to slash prices, while the cost of raw materials has soared, reducing operating margins.

Further information: [www.weston.ca](http://www.weston.ca)

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### **NBA slams subsidies to supermarkets system**

**Date:** Thu, 05 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The National Beef Association has launched an attack on supermarkets and processors, claiming EU subsidies are being used to make up for farm gate prices below the cost of production.

The NBA is now calling on beef producers to stop using their subsidies to help make life easier for shoppers, supermarkets and slaughterers when Europe switches to decoupled payments in January.

Speaking at Beef Expo 2004 near Edinburgh, NBA chief executive Robert Forster said: "For decades farmers have been falsely accused of growing fat on tax-payers' money because, contrary to popular opinion most, and occasionally all, of their subsidy income has been used to underpin the sale price of slaughter cattle and make beef cheaper in shops and catering outlets."

After decoupling, the Single Farm Payment (SFP) will be lower than previous subsidies and the European Union aims to phase it out altogether by 2012.

"Farmers who continue to use their support payments to routinely make up the gap between cost of production and market income will paint themselves into a financial corner from which it will be impossible to escape when SFP payments are finally withdrawn," Mr Forster added.

According to the NBA the average hill suckler herd earned around £270 per calf from the market in 2002/2003 but faced total costs per calf of £365. This left a loss of £95 that was only countered by £182 per head in subsidy.

Further information: [www.nationalbeefassociation.co.uk](http://www.nationalbeefassociation.co.uk)  
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### **Study claims certain labelling could boost pork and beef sales**

**Date:** Thu, 05 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new survey sponsored by the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the National Pork Board (NPB) has found that recipes, preparations tips and serving suggestions on package labels help to increase sales of fresh beef and pork.

The study by Shugoll Research was a move to get a better idea of consumer labelling needs in terms of meat.

Karen Boillot, director of retail marketing at NPB told The Pig Site: "We're building on the research that was conducted in the late 1990s. We think it's critical that we maintain a constant dialogue with consumers to ensure that we're delivering the kind of information that they really need."

Findings have suggested that consumers want more information on less familiar cuts and that there is a high demand for recipe ideas on more familiar cuts.

In addition results showed that consumers prefer on pack labels rather than those pre-printed or as part of the price label.

On pack labelling includes product photos, cooking charts, serving suggestions, recipes and preparation tips and is thought to boost sales by making consumer's meal routines more interesting and encouraging purchases of different meat cuts.

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### **Research centre develops innovative pasta packaging**

**Date:** Thu, 05 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Researchers at University of Wales Bangor's BioComposites Centre are taking part in a new EU funded project to help develop new food packaging for pasta products.

The centre looks for new ways to use renewable materials and is currently developing an alternative food packaging made from biodegradable materials.

Pasta is a fresh moist product that needs to look good in packaging and retain its condition and typically "protective atmosphere" packaging is used which helps keep an atmosphere around it.

However at present the plastic films being used are non-renewable which can cause problems for retailers and household refuse.

According to the University of Wales, it has now created a gas-barrier thin film made from modified starches in harvested agricultural produce and vegetable oil molecules, which works in the same way and makes the packaging biodegradable.

Trials are currently underway for the packaging, which will be made available to producers once complete

Among the companies to use the packaging will be Welsh vegetable oil firm C&C Oils, UK packer and distributor Organic Farm Foods and producers of fresh pasta and gnocchi Italgnochchi.

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### **New meat plant opened**

**Date:** Fri, 06 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new meat-packaging plant has reportedly opened in Carmarthenshire.

The first phase of the £32 million plant in Cross hands will supply 500 tonnes of pre-packed pork and beef for Asda stores each week.

The Dawn Group, part of the Irish-owned Queally Group, announced that the plant will eventually supply the supermarket chain with 1,000 tonnes of meat products per week.

The Western Mail reports that the plant will become one of the biggest private sector employers in West Wales when it is fully operational, employing a staff of 600.

The Dawn Group has already relocated and recruited about 200 staff to the new plant, which is the group's largest and most sophisticated site, featuring new technologies and the latest robotic and cutting machinery.

Angela Spindler, Asda's trading and marketing director, said, "Suppliers are the lifeblood of our business and it is only through innovative projects such as these that we are able to better serve our customers."

Welsh Development Agency executive director, Mike King, added: "This new partnership clearly illustrates how successful this has been and it is pleasing to see that one of the UK's leading supermarkets intends to stock an increasingly high level of food lines processed in Wales."

(no further information)

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### **Birdseye launches new health drive**

**Date:** Fri, 06 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Frozen foods company Birds Eye has reportedly relaunched its website in order to better promote the health aspects of its products.

The UK food group's redesigned and rebranded consumer site forms part of parent group Unilever's new push to promote healthy living in connection with its products.

Revolution Magazine reports that the new website is being backed by a £22 million advertising campaign, highlighting the "natural ingredients, naturally preserved" aspects of Birds Eye products.

The campaign is targeted at 18- to 35-year-old consumers and the website now features a large health and nutrition section, which instructs consumers about balanced diets and includes a healthy eating calculator and nutritional guidelines.

The site also features an expanded "your kids" section for parents and children, featuring Captain Birds Eye, games and healthy eating information.

Nikki French, brand communications at Birds Eye, said: "Since taking the brand online last year, we have discovered the medium has an important role to play in repositioning the brand with a key segment of our target audience who grew up on Birds Eye produce in the 70s, 80s and 90s."

The revamped Birds Eye website was developed by interactive agency Zentropy Partners.

Further information: [www.birdseye.com](http://www.birdseye.com)  
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### **'Wine Idol' contest launched**

**Date:** Fri, 06 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new talent quest is underway in Britain to find the UK's 'Wine Idol'.

Hardys Wine Idol, launched by TV presenter Carol Vorderman, reportedly aims to find a new personality who is "more of a wine whizz than a wine bore" to front new, fun and accessible programmes.

The Countdown star announced the new talent contest at St Katherine Docks in London this week. The quest will take place over two months and will be judged by industry experts.

Paul Hillier from Hardys Wines said: "We are seeking an ambassador for wine with the broad appeal of top TV personalities such as Carol Vorderman or Jamie Oliver - someone with a strong and likeable character who is able to enthuse and inform people about wine."

Nikki Cooper, producer of Good Food Live on UK Food added: "We're always looking for the next big name and it will be interesting to see the outcome of this competition. Television needs someone with a big personality who can make wine fun and accessible to a wide audience."

Wine Idol entrants should be aged between 25 and 35, be charming and theatrical, and have the personality to communicate aspects of the wine world.

The eventual winner will have a screen test as part of their prize, which also includes an educational course and a trip to South Australia to visit some of Hardys top wineries.

(no further information)  
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### **Goat farming booms in Britain**

**Date:** Fri, 06 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Goat farming is reportedly booming in Britain due to a sharp increase in the popularity of goat's cheese.

The number of goats in the UK has risen to an estimated 88,000, up from 75,000 three years ago, and the goat farming market is now worth an estimated £13.7 million, according to figures from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

"There is definitely a clear increase in the number of goat farmers," Emma Rutter, dairy adviser at the National Farmers' Union, told The Independent. "It's creating a new market rather than taking away from other markets and it's a trend that appears set to stay. It's

another example of British farmers looking at what consumers really seem to want and setting about providing it."

Goat's cheese has proved particularly popular in restaurants and among consumers with lactose-intolerance.

Supermarket chain Tesco reported this week that goat's cheese sales had increased by 52 per cent over the past three years and announced plans for the launch of several new products.

A spokeswoman for Defra also suggested that improvements in monitoring the goat population may also be a factor in the rise. "There may well be more goats in the figures," she said, "but this could be due to the means of tracking and tagging goats having improved."

(no further information)

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### **McDonalds stirs porridge into health drive**

**Date:** Fri, 06 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Fast food chain McDonalds has revealed it is to start offering porridge as part of its breakfast menu.

The food, part of moves to offer healthier dishes to customers, will be sold at 22 of its stores.

In addition other items including muffins, cereals, toast and yoghurts will be offered as part of a trial revamp of the breakfast menu.

A spokesperson person for the firm commented: "We are currently conducting a trial of a range of breakfast products. This trial includes the Oatso Simple porridge product.

"We cannot confirm a launch date but anticipate it being the last quarter of the year."

Results recorded so far have seen that porridge has been the second most popular choice.

Further information: [www.mcdonalds.co.uk](http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk)

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### **Experts reveal secret to nutty flavour in cheddar cheese**

**Date:** Fri, 06 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

US scientists have discovered a new system to help dairy manufacturers meet consumer demand and create the best-flavoured cheddar cheese.

Leading cheese food scientist Dr MaryAnne Drake and colleagues at North Carolina State University in the US have reportedly identified a number of the chemical ingredients that help create a nutty flavour in cheddar cheese.

Dr. Drake told Food Navigator: "We carried out the analysis on 15 cheeses aged between three and five years old with high intensity nutty flavours, and after a year and a half of study we identified a compound consistently present in nutty cheeses - the Strecker aldehydes 2-methylpropanal, 2-methylbutanal and 3-methylbutanal."

The findings will now add to the increasing knowledge as to how and why consumers identify and view the flavours in cheese.

Some results suggested that by adding Strecker aldehydes to older cheddar the nutty flavour perception was intensified, something that did not occur so strongly in those less than 8 months old.

"Our findings suggest that there is a symphony of volatile compounds in slightly older cheddar cheeses that is necessary to provide the background for the perception of the nutty flavours," Dr Drake added.

The study involved a panel of specially trained tasters who responded to flavours using a carefully developed cheese flavour wheel.

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### **Anti-depressant water warning**

**Date:** Mon, 09 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Britain's may be unwittingly ingesting the anti-depressant Prozac and other drugs, a new survey claims.

Research by the Environment Agency found that pharmaceutical residues can travel through the sewage system and end up in drinking water.

The Environment Agency is now calling on the drugs industry to prove its products are safe for the environment and consumers. The exact amount of the drug found in supplies is unknown.

The agency has ruled that Prozac in water could be potentially toxic and claims the presence of the drug in water supplies and rivers is a "potential concern".

A spokesman for the Drinking Water Inspectorate insisted the Prozac found in water supplies was highly diluted and unlikely to pose a health risk.

Prescriptions for anti-depressants in England have increased by 166 per cent since 1991 and now stand at up to 24 million a year.

Liberal Democrat environment spokesman Norman Baker called the situation "hidden mass medication of the unsuspecting public"

"The Government is quite simply not taking its responsibility to public health seriously. It is alarming that there is no monitoring of levels of Prozac and other pharmacy residues in our drinking water," he added.

Further information: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

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### **Home baking on the rise**

**Date:** Mon, 09 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Home-baking is becoming increasingly popular among young Britons, a new survey claims.

The rising popularity of the UK's celebrity chefs has contributed to the booming home-baking market.

Britons spent almost £267 million on baking their own cakes and bread last year, according to The Grocer magazine.

The home-baking market grew by an estimated six per cent in 2003, with renewed interest sparked by an abundance of recipe books and celebrity chefs, The Scotsman reports.

Tesco's home-baking buyer, Lisa Wiseman, told the magazine: "Lack of baking skills caused by fewer domestic science lessons at schools and in colleges had all but killed off the UK's cake-making culture back in the early 80s.

"But the past 12 months have seen a huge 106 per cent rise in sales of cake mixes and homebaking ingredients at Tesco, which has highlighted the revival of one of our oldest traditions."

(no further information)

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### **Low profits threaten organic industry**

**Date:** Mon, 09 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Almost two-thirds of Britain's organic farmers (63 per cent) rate their profitability as low or borderline, a new survey reveals.

A further 12 per cent of farmers claimed their business is no longer viable at current prices, as Britain's organic farming industry becomes increasingly concerned about its future.

The survey of 1,144 organic farmers by Organic Farmers and Growers (OF&G), one of the UK's leading organic certification bodies, found that almost 90 per cent of respondents expected to be farming organically in one year's time, but 30 per cent were unsure whether they would still be doing so in five years.

Richard Thompson, chairman of OF&G, said: "This survey highlights some quite alarming facts about the state of organic production in Britain today.

"Many farmers seem to feel they are not getting a good return for their efforts but are unsure about where the answer lies. Many supported the notion of better co-operation, but when margins are tight how many could afford to invest substantially in new or existing co-operatives?"

"There needs to be more co-operation throughout the industry and a more professional approach to getting across the message about the quality of British organic food," he added.

Further information: [www.organicfarmers.uk.com](http://www.organicfarmers.uk.com)  
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### **Fruit farmers urged to innovate**

**Date:** Mon, 09 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Global sales of fruit and fruit juices have reportedly fallen due to the popularity of the Atkins diet.

Atkins, which advocates eating lots of meat and protein and very little carbohydrate and sugars, has proved a hit with dieters.

However, as sales of products such as pork scratchings soar by as much as 20 per cent, sales of orange juice have dropped, The New Zealand Herald reports.

Food marketing expert Professor David Hughes told delegates at the Summerfruit New Zealand conference at Taradale that "the world is crazy".

The professor pointed out that junk food was still popular as well as diet fads, meaning that fruit and vegetable growers faced an uphill struggle. He pointed out that growers must know their market, as only 22 per cent of the market for fruit and vegetables now consist of the traditional family.

Professor Hughes urged growers to innovate, in order to keep up with market demands. He added that professional development of staff, volume and value growth to underpin their investment, operational excellence and effective performance measurement systems were essential.

Recent studies have shown that the health benefits of tomatoes and blueberries are highest when they are cooked or processed, rather than eaten raw, he added.

(no further information)

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### **New low calorie fat replacer launched**

**Date:** Mon, 09 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

European dairy firms are to be offered a new low calorie fat replacer to help make products such as fruit yoghurts healthier.

The maltitol syrup application has been designed by starch and starch derivatives supplier Cerestar and can reduce calorie content by as much as 40 per cent.

"C\*Maltidex has the advantage of enhancing qualities already inherent in a product: with fruit yoghurt, the product can enhance fruitiness and increase the sweetness profile. This means additional sweeteners are not needed, reducing the calorific level," the firm told Food Navigator.

The ingredient is widely used in sugar-free confectionery, ice cream and baked goods and it could also be used to replace fat since it gives a creamy texture to food.

"Traditionally, ingredients such as proteins and starches would be used to replace fat - but manufacturers try to avoid these ingredients as they can produce a heavy end product and aren't perceived to be healthy," Michael vom Dorp application co-ordinator for dairy ice cream food processing, Europe, explained.

"Now C\*Maltidex can be used to give a lighter, fresher, more healthy feel to reduced fat dairy products," he added.

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### **Flavour firm reports profit growth**

**Date:** Tue, 10 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The world's largest fragrance and flavour company Givaudan has announced a 69 per cent rise in profit for the first half of 2004, above analysts' expectations.

Givaudan predicts "substantially" improved results in 2004 after net income rose 220 million Swiss francs (£95.6 million), up from 130 million francs (£56.5 million) during the same period last year.

The Geneva-based group said that cost-cutting measures were starting to pay off and announced that a 3.6 per cent rise in flavour sales had helped the group offset a 1.6 per cent drop in fragrance sales.

"The margin improvement initiatives announced in January 2004 are well under way and had already a positive impact on half year performance. Major contributors were the improved sourcing and supply chain management, activity based staff reductions in all regions and efficiency gains in all areas," Givaudan said. "Additional positive factors were the stabilising currencies, lower pension charges and the enhanced savoury margins."

The firm achieved its goal of exceeding the industry's growth rate of two per cent in the second quarter of 2004, with sales up 3.5 per cent in local currencies. The flavouring giant is axing about five per cent of its workforce and expects annual cost savings of 67 million Swiss francs (£29.1 million) as of 2005, with around 47 million francs (£20.4 million) saved this year.

Givaudan is aiming for an operating margin of about 17 per cent in the flavour business by the end of the year, up from 15.3 per cent last year.

Further information: [www.givaudan.com](http://www.givaudan.com)  
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### **Scientists develop edible food film**

**Date:** Tue, 10 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A team of US researchers have reportedly developed a revolutionary new edible film that protects food from spoiling.

The innovative film is made from natural ingredients and can also hold vitamins and other nutrients within it to boost the nutritional value of the food.

Researchers at Oregon State University's department of Food Science and Technology used chitosan, a fibre found in crab and shrimp shell, and the protein from egg whites, lysozyme, to create the anti-microbial food wrap.

OSU researchers Yanyun Zhao, a food technologist and specialist in value-added products, and Mark Daeschel, a microbiologist and specialist in food safety, developed the film with postdoctoral research associate Su-il Park.

The anti-microbial food wrap looks like familiar sandwich wrap, but is made entirely from food products and is so thin that it doesn't interfere with the texture of the food it covers, the researchers report.

A patent application has been filed for the technology, which has many potential applications, such as packaging for ready-to-eat meats and cheese or coatings for sliced fruits and vegetables.

"You can use it as a film to wrap foods or you can use it as a spray or dip to coat foods," Zhao explained. "And you can enrich the film or coating with extra nutrients, such as vitamin E and calcium, to boost the nutritional value of the food."

(no further information)  
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### **Most dangerous fast food launched in Britain**

**Date:** Tue, 10 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

## **Analysis**

A new 1,000 calorie kebab being served in Glasgow comes with a health warning.

The Stonner has been labelled the most dangerous fast food in Britain and contains 46 grams of fat, double the calories in a Big Mac.

The kebab consists of a pork sausage, wrapped in doner kebab meat, coated in batter and deep fried, and the owner of the Ruby Chip Shop in Glasgow has put a health warning in its window about the new dish.

The warning notice reads: "Due to the severe health damage of this fine dish we can only supply one Stonner supper per customer per week."

Ruby proprietor and Stonner creator Saei Sangag, 37, has branded it 'the most dangerous supper in Scotland'. He said: "Scots love to go to the chippy and I was trying to think of something new. The Stonner has been flying out of our fryers and is becoming a favourite with customers."

The £3 Stonner supper, served with a portion of chips, has 1000 calories, half the recommended daily calorie intake for women and over a third of the 2.500 recommended daily intake for men.

Glasgow has some of the highest rates of heart disease and obesity-related diseases in Britain and health experts have criticised the new kebab meal.

Michael Lean, professor of human nutrition at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, said: "This type of thing leads to poor health. It doesn't take a lot of common sense to see that it is a stupid thing to be producing."

(no further information)

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## **PGI food status debates continue**

**Date:** Tue, 10 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

### **Analysis**

A further campaign to get Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) status for a local dish has been launched in Leicestershire.

Local residents are campaigning to have their regional delicacy - the Melton Mowbray pork pie - protected from imitation by European law.

The campaign, spearheaded by seven indigenous pie producers, aims to add the pies to the list of hundreds of European and UK products which are afforded protection from replication.

PGI status means manufacturers outside a specific area cannot replicate a product or trade on its name and heritage. The list of protected products includes champagne, Parma Ham and Cornish Clotted Cream.

A local councillor told The Western Mail: "This is intellectual property. It's part of our food heritage. And it should belong to the people that made it."

If granted protected status by the European Commission (EC), pork pies produced more than 25 miles from Melton could not use "Melton Mowbray" in their name.

A petition sent to the EC in January was signed by more than 10,000 people, including celebrity chefs Jamie Oliver and Anthony Worrall Thompson.

Further information: [www.porkpie.co.uk](http://www.porkpie.co.uk)  
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### **BRC urges end to food criticisms**

**Date:** Tue, 10 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The British Retail Consortium has issued a document today claiming that if some pressure groups keep creating unnecessary food fears not based on sound evidence then they will create a society in fear of food.

Richard Ali, the Director of Food Policy at the consortium explained: "When I go home at night I cannot find a single food that isn't targeted by one pressure group or another.

"Consumers already have enough on their minds without having to live in constant worry about the food they and their families are eating."

Mr Ali argued that food retailers knew how to meet the needs of consumers and would not provide them with inferior goods.

"Food retailers know they have to respond quickly and accurately to changing consumer demands and put their customers at the heart of their offer," he added.

The food essays are produced regularly to provoke informed debate across the whole food chain and to highlight the views of leading members of the food and retail sectors.

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### **Increase reported in food retail sales**

**Date:** Tue, 10 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Despite a slowdown in general UK retail sales, the food and drink sector has shown some growth.

Among the areas that did well were instore bakeries, fresh vegetables and meat, according to Food Navigator.

The findings come from a new report by analyst KPMG and the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

It is thought that the recent interest rate rise has affected sales, although promotions are helping to boost the sales of some products back up.

The sales monitor from the groups monitors changes in the value of retail sales from a host of retailers and measures the value of spending.

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### **Foodservice equipment manufacturer reveals boost in consumer confidence**

**Date:** Wed, 11 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Foodservice equipment manufacturer Enodis has reported a slight upturn in profits.

The world's largest manufacturer of commercial foodservice equipment said sales dipped slightly by 2.8 per cent during its third quarter, due to the weak dollar, increased steel prices and difficult UK and continental European markets.

Enodis said in third quarter revenues fell to £166.9 million, while operating profits were up five per cent at £12.5 million, largely as a result of an extensive restructuring and cost-cutting programme over the past year.

However, the company said sales recovered in North America, helped by demand from restaurant operators and price increases. Divisional sales decreased by 1.9 per cent to £101.1 million, but the cost-cutting programme saw operating profit soar by 8.5 per cent to £14.1 million.

Dave McCulloch, chief executive officer, said: "It is clear that North American restaurant operators now have the confidence to increase investment levels in equipment. Furthermore, our family of accelerated cooking systems and food preparation stations is attracting significant interest from a number of major chains."

Enodis' sells equipment including fryers, grills, steamers, ovens, ice makers and refrigeration equipment to manufacturing and food retail firms. Around 75 per cent of the company's sales come from North America and Enodis has seen sales slow in Europe recently.

Further information: [www.enodis.com](http://www.enodis.com)

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### **Olympics offer innovative food and drink opportunities**

**Date:** Wed, 11 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A number of global food and drink giants are due to unveil new products during this year's Olympic Games and the four-yearly sporting event will also provide a testing ground for high-performance products.

The Games open on Friday and companies including Coca-Cola and GlaxoSmithKline are planning to use the event to promote their high-performance brands.

Meanwhile, DSM, which has developed a protein ingredient available to the Dutch team is hoping that a trial using athletes is a success. If the ingredient is shown to boost performance, DSM will reportedly look for a beverage maker to market the drink in Europe.

There are a number of sports drinks with added protein available on the US market, but in Europe the ingredient is still much more common in bars. A recent statement from the US National Athletic Trainers' Association stressed that there is still a lack of evidence to support the benefits of protein in recovery drinks.

DSM Food Specialties' new drink, PeptoPro Sports, contains added casein that has been fragmented to allow for faster absorption. The company has also developed an enzyme that can 'almost completely neutralise' the bitter taste of the casein fragments.

Coca-Cola's UK division is spending £4 million on media advertising and a further £2 million on sponsorship deals this year for its isotonic Powerade brand, while GlaxoSmithKline has launched a £2 million promotion for its Lucozade Sport brand, foodproductiondaily.com reports. Both firms are targeting the 2004 Olympics.

Further information: [www.dsm.com](http://www.dsm.com)  
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### **Salmon farmers' group attacks academic's report**

**Date:** Wed, 11 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scottish Quality Salmon has accused US academic David Carpenter of scare-mongering, following the publication of new research.

The organisation representing Scottish salmon farmers said the study, which claims toxins were present in farmed fish was "highly irresponsible".

Brian Simpson, Scottish Quality Salmon's chief executive, told Fishupdate.com: "Listening to activists could be bad for your health. The publication of a paper by Americans Ronald Hites and David Carpenter, regarding PBDEs in salmon in Environmental Science & Technology is yet another example of the tactics being used by wealthy American anti-Scottish salmon farming campaigners to scare the public."

Mr Simpson pointed out that the UK Food Standards Agency had recently published recommendations that consumers should regularly eat Omega 3 rich fish such as farmed salmon.

Mr Carpenter produced a study earlier in the year about the presence of harmful chemicals in farmed fish. His latest research examines the presence of PBDEs, which are used as flame retardants in fabrics and are present in many electrical devices and appliances, in fish.

A statement from US pro-salmon farming group Salmon of the Americas insisted that the amounts of these chemicals found in the Carpenter samples were "trace" amounts.

Previous studies have put the presence of these chemicals at 1.6 parts per billion (ppb) for farmed and 0.7 ppb for wild salmon. A 2003 Environmental Working Group study found average levels of 17 ppb in bass and 22 ppb in perch in San Francisco Bay and other studies have demonstrated similar levels in a variety of marine and freshwater fish.

Further information: [www.scottishsalmon.co.uk](http://www.scottishsalmon.co.uk)  
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### **Christmas-pudding flavoured Kit Kat on the way**

**Date:** Wed, 11 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food giant Nestle has announced that it is launching a Christmas pudding-flavoured KitKat later this year.

The manufacturer also unveiled plans for a lime-flavoured version of the popular chocolate bar. The Luscious Lime white chocolate KitKats will be sold in a four-finger pack, while the milk chocolate Christmas Pudding variety will come in two-finger multi-packs. Both bars will be launched in October this year.

Trade magazine The Grocer reports that the new KitKat flavours are an attempt to reverse falling sales of the favourite UK snack.

Jon Lambert, marketing manager for KitKat, told The Grocer: "We're the only confectionery company being daring in innovation and trying new and exciting flavours."

Sales of KitKats plummeted nine per cent last year and Nestle has already launched a limited-edition lemon and yoghurt-flavoured Kit Kat and a low-carb version of the chocolate bar.

Data from analysts ACNielsen recently showed Kit Kat sales were up 10 per cent in the past eight weeks.

Confectionery giant Cadbury recently launched its Dairy Milk Wafer bar as a rival to the KitKat bar when it unveiled a new product called, while Nestle has unveiled a new block chocolate bar called Blue Label to take on Cadbury's Dairy Milk.

Further information: [www.nestle.co.uk](http://www.nestle.co.uk)  
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## **Fish registration scheme enters second consultation**

**Date:** Wed, 11 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

### **Analysis**

A new registration scheme for buyers and sellers of 'first sale' fish is going into its second round of consultation.

According to UK fisheries minister Ben Bradshaw, the new system will cover a wide area of the industry and will mean even sites where fish is available for inspection will need to apply.

Mr Bradshaw told Fish Update: "The providing of sales notes is not a new concept. However the proposed measures will provide greater accountability of those involved in the 'sales chain' to the customer and thereby assist the conservation of fish stocks by ensuring that landings of fish taken from Community and other waters are fully accounted for at first sale and capable of verification.

In addition it is claimed that the new initiative will allow consumers to be sure their fish and fisheries products have been legitimately caught.

The registration will also make those in the secondary processing or distribution of seafood more aware of the details of the fish.

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## **Fizzy fruit could encourage healthier eating in kids**

**Date:** Thu, 12 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

### **Analysis**

Food scientists in the US have developed a new technology that makes fruit pieces 'fizzy'.

The researchers from the Food Innovation Center (FIC) at Oregon State University claim the new technique could help encourage children to eat the recommended five pieces of fruit or vegetables a day.

The technology, developed over a three-year period, carbonates under pressure a wide range of fruit.

"We see great potential in this application and believe the technology can be used to elevate the food sensory experience for consumers," Dr Qingyue Ling, lead researcher on the project told FoodNavigator.com. "As such we're currently working on applying the technology to vegetables - tomatoes, celery, cucumber - with the aim to enhance the flavours for salad and vegetable dishes."

"The carbon dioxide brings no extra flavour, but it can enhance flavour profiles in a variety of food products."

The scientists suggested that the technology could also be applied to dairy products and canned foods. The research team is now looking at carbonating ice cream, yogurts and canned foods.

Government and consumer groups are aiming to encourage adults and children to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day in response to concern about rising levels of obesity and diet-related illnesses.

(no further information)

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### **Council figures show how much food UK consumers waste**

**Date:** Thu, 12 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Recycling bosses in Warwickshire are targeting unwanted food waste in a bid to reduce a three per cent average annual rise in household waste.

Council officials claim that the cost of coping with the increase alone is around £241,000 a year and are urging people to think twice about taking advantage of two-for-one offers at the supermarket.

The average family throws away one lettuce a week, with Warwickshire families spending an annual £259,000 to buy them and another £7,000 to dispose of them, creating 227 tons of waste, icCoventry.co.uk reports.

More food is wasted in the Midlands region than anywhere else in the UK and Warwickshire residents waste an average of £442 per person each year.

Warwickshire County Council claims 60 per cent of consumers throw out a loaf of bread each week, 57 per cent dump fruit, 45 per cent a pint of milk and 45 per cent cooked meat.

Warwickshire councillor Ken Browne said: "Soggy lettuces may seem a light-hearted way of showing how much waste we create, but we all pay for these items that we end up never using, and then pay again for them to be disposed of through our council taxes.

"The advice is to plan meals in advance and make a shopping list and stick to it, rather than get tempted by bargains," he added.

Further information: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk)

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### **Vimto company to focus on soft drink business**

**Date:** Thu, 12 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Nichols Foods, the Merseyside company behind soft drink Vimto, has announced plans to sell its food manufacturing arm.

Nichols reported that it had received an offer for Nichols Foods from its managing director, one of the original founders of the division. Nichols Foods makes products such as coffee, chocolate and whiteners for the vending, foodservice and retail markets.

Newco, a group set up by managing director Gary Unsworth, made the conditional offer and Mr Unsworth is now stepping down from Nichols with immediate effect.

Chairman John Nichols said sales of Vimto had boosted solid progress in the half-year to June 30th and the group posted a 10.4 per cent rise in underlying half yearly profits. Nichols reported a first-half pre-tax profit of £2 million, compared with a £2.17 million loss for the same period last year. Sales slipped to £46.9 million from £47.8 million.

"Market conditions remain extremely competitive, but trading is currently in line with our expectations," Mr Nichols said.

The decision to sell its food arm signals Nichols exit from the manufacturing industry. The company announced that it was outsourcing the manufacture of its Vimto and Sunkist brands earlier this year.

Further information: [www.nicholsplc.co.uk](http://www.nicholsplc.co.uk)  
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### **Jacob's launches Halloween biscuits**

**Date:** Thu, 12 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK biscuit company Jacob's has launched a range of biscuits for Halloween.

The Scary Faces range is a limited edition brand extension to the company's Happy Faces, which have been around since the 1960s.

According to just-food.com, the biscuit firm has also announced that it is investing in a revamp of the Happy Faces brand, with new packaging, a twin-pack re-launch and promotional support in the pipeline.

Jacob's operates from five locations in the British Isles and two overseas manufacturing sites and employs around 2194 people. The company was recently sold to United Biscuits by French food giant Danone.

Value sales of Happy Faces are currently worth in excess of £1 million a year.

(no further information)

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### **Consumers encouraged to continue eating cereals**

**Date:** Thu, 12 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The FSA is encouraging people to continue eating cereals following the banning of Kellogg's products in Denmark.

Authorities in Denmark have banned the cereals claiming that they can damage children's livers and kidneys if eaten regularly.

However Kellogg's has argued that all its cereals are within recommended daily vitamin allowances and there were "no issues" about people eating them in the UK.

A spokesman told BBC News Online: "They are well within the recommended daily allowances for vitamins and minerals and they have been well within those regulations ever since we launched 70 years ago."

The ban was the result of a request to Danish authorities from the food firm asking if it could add iron, calcium, folic acid and vitamin B6 to 12 cereals and six cereal bars.

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### **McDonalds reveals high demand for new meal**

**Date:** Thu, 12 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Fast food firm McDonalds has claimed that the demand for its new healthy Happy Meal for adults has been overwhelming.

The new product which contains a drink, salad and a Stepometer went on sale on August 2 and now the company is running out of the step counting devices because of the meal's popularity.

A spokeswoman for the company told Manchester Online: "The demand has been almost double what we thought it would be."

The promotion is due to stop at the end of August and is part of the many moves McDonalds has made to become more health conscious.

Children's Happy Meals have also been changed to be healthier and customers can now swap chips for a side salad or buy fruit bags.

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### **Campaign aims to attract Irish students to food sector**

**Date:** Fri, 13 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Loughry Campus, of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise in Cookstown, has launched a new campaign to encourage young people to train for a career in developing new foods.

The College is circulating promotional material over the coming months across Northern Ireland and is inviting young people to an open day on Thursday August 26th, where they will take part in a version of "Hell's Kitchen" and taste a range of innovative foods.

Ian Titterington, Head of Education Service in the College, said: "For too long career choices in this sector have not been perceived as attractive job options - often people interested in food look to the catering sector. However, Loughry is challenging this view with a new campaign that highlights the tasty and hot career choices available."

Almost 97 per cent of Loughry graduates move on to higher education or employment, with starting salaries of up to £19,000.

"Food specialists are at the forefront of developing such options and making them tasty and safe," Mr Titterington added. "This is why we consider working in food is a hot choice and one of the most stimulating options on the career menu."

The Loughry Campus provides education and training at all levels to young people interested in careers in food and works with many of Northern Ireland's leading food companies in developing new foods.

The food and drink processing sector accounts for an estimated 22 per cent of Northern Ireland's Manufacturing Sales, with sales for the sector valued at £2.3 billion.

Further information: [www.loughry.ac.uk](http://www.loughry.ac.uk)  
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

### **Usdaw battles to protect Caribbean banana growers**

**Date:** Fri, 13 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Usdaw (the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers) has launched a campaign to save Caribbean banana growers from the effects of a proposed European tax.

The union claims that introducing the tax would leave Caribbean banana growers unable to compete on the world market. The EU is planning to abolish quotas which have allowed Caribbean banana growers to compete with cheaper competitors from Latin America. Nearly all Caribbean bananas are sold in Britain.

Volunteers from the UK's fifth biggest union are fighting to protect the right of growers in four Caribbean islands - St Lucia, Jamaica, St Vincent and Dominica. At the Notting Hill Carnival 2004 (August bank holiday weekend), Banana Link and Usdaw will join forces to raise awareness of a looming crisis for the global banana trade.

Ruth Cross, Usdaw Women and Equalities Officer said: "Usdaw has participated in a number of ventures with Banana Link in recent years because we have a common interest in making sure workers are treated fairly - whether that be workers picking bananas in the Caribbean or workers selling them in shops and supermarkets here."

Renwick Rose, co-ordinator of the Winward Islands Farmers' Association, added: "This is our last chance to save the life-blood of our islands. We have the support of our governments, of our industry and of Latin American workers. Now we need the support of the British consumer to reverse this EU decision."

Further information: [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)  
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

### **Tasty Baking Company unveils new sugar-free range**

**Date:** Fri, 13 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Dessert firm, the Tasty Baking Company (TBC) has launched a sugar free alternative to its range of sweet desserts and snacks.

The Philadelphia-based company is reportedly marketing its new Sensables range as a healthier option, rather than simply low-carb, in a bid to increase sales beyond the dietetic market. The 90-year-old baking company has reported stagnant net sales since 2001, Datamonitor reports.

Tasty Baking, which owns the popular Tastykake brand, claims the new line took seven months to develop. The Sensables range includes six products, ranging from 100 to 180 calories and four to eight grams of carbohydrate each, compared to 320 calories for Tastykake's bestselling Butterscotch Krimpet cake.

Tasty Baking estimates that one million diabetics live within its core Mid-Atlantic market, and chief marketing officer Vince Melchiorre said the company has received requests from diabetics who could not eat their standard products.

Rather than linking its product to the waning low-carb market, TBC is attempting to tap into a general trend towards healthier eating. Rising obesity levels and increases in diet-related diseases have caused many consumers to reassess their eating habits.

Recent increases in the demand for low-carb foods have led manufacturers to produce reduced carbohydrate versions of their popular treats. Donut maker Krispy Kreme blamed a 10 per cent decrease in 2004 profits on the low-carb craze and recently launched a low-carb donut.

Further information: [www.tastykake.com](http://www.tastykake.com)  
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

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Further information: [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)  
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### **FFB seeks 2004 export stars**

**Date:** Fri, 13 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food from Britain is looking for nominations for its eighth annual Food and Drink Export Awards.

The 2004 awards for the UK's leading food and drink exporters, in association with The Grocer magazine, will take place at the Hotel Inter-Continental on Wednesday December 15th.

The Awards aim to recognise the best exporters of 2004 and this year sees the introduction of two new awards for Best International Exhibitor and Best New Exporter.

There are seven product categories in this year's Awards and four national Awards for English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish exporters.

Simon Waring, Marketing and International Management Director for FFB, commented: "Over the last year as new markets have opened up, and we continue to build on our reputation for innovation, we have seen companies of all sizes and all products sectors excelling internationally. Through our Awards we now want to hear from these companies so they get the applause and profile they deserve.

"Winning an award is not just about the glory on the day though, it helps enhance producers profile through media coverage, and serves as a seal of export excellence to help attract and secure new business."

The latest UK exports figures show a healthy increase in export during 2003, closing just short of £10 billion and FFB is hoping to attract a record number of entries this year. The

closing date for entries to the Food and Drink Export Awards 2004 is Friday October 1st 2004.

Further information: [www.foodfrombritain.com](http://www.foodfrombritain.com)  
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### **Food effect awareness scheme launched by WWF**

**Date:** Fri, 13 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Environmental group WWF is trying to raise awareness of the effect everyday foods have on the environment in a new campaign.

Consumers are used to produce being flown thousands of miles to Britain all through the year and an ever-increasing availability of a host of convenient meals.

However the organisation argues that despite this consumers know far less about the way in which food is produced.

Adam Harrison, the rural development policy officer for WWF Scotland told the Scotsman: "Thinking about where our food and its ingredients come from may help us to choose more sustainable foods.

"WWF's aim is to inform consumers about the impacts of the choices they make. Since every household spends hundreds of pounds every month on food, these choices are economically very powerful."

Among the problem foods mentioned by the scheme are bread, palm oil, sugar beet and tuna.

The group praised companies such as Pret a Manger as "all their coffee and tea is fair trade".  
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### **Record results revealed at baby food firm**

**Date:** Fri, 13 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Numico has revealed its results for the first half of 2004, with total net sales up by 9.2 per cent.

The firm specialises in baby food and clinical nutrition and claims a 8.9 per cent growth in baby food was particularly boosted by a strong performance in the UK.

In a statement the company CEO commented: " Numico's performance in the first half 2004 shows the strength of the people and the potential of the new Numico, fully focused on the growth of its core businesses, Baby Food and Clinical Nutrition."

As a result of the positive sales growth, the company has now raised its overall net sales growth target for 2004 to seven to nine per cent.

The Clinical Nutrition business also performed well with a second consecutive quarter of double-digit growth.

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### **Food scientists work on space meals**

**Date:** Mon, 16 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food scientists are starting work on developing new technologies designed to prolong space travel.

Researchers at NASA are examining possible solutions to the problems of supplying a six man Mars crew with enough food, ingredients, and equipment for three years.

"Development of highly acceptable, shelf-stable food items that the use of high-quality ingredients is important to maintaining a healthy diet," said NASA in a recent statement. "Foods should maintain safety, acceptability, and nutrition, for the entire shelf life of 3-5 years."

NASA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programme is currently investigating methods to process potential food crops on space flights. Potential crops cited by NASA include lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, strawberries, fresh herbs, wheat, soybeans, dried beans and rice.

"As the crew remains on the Moon or Mars surface, crops will be grown to supplement the crew's diet, using plants to revitalise the air and water supply. Methods are needed, therefore, for processing," the space agency said.

NASA added that it was also developing food systems which use chemical, physical, and biological processes to support "future human planetary exploration"

Space exploration has led to the development of a range of new food technologies, including dehydrated foods and space-saving packaging. A recent experiment by the European Space Agency has seen a batch of Mediterranean foodstuffs preserved under high pressure.

(no further information)

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### **PGI status for Scottish salmon**

**Date:** Mon, 16 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scottish Farmed Salmon has been awarded European protection.

The new Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) designation will assure consumers of the origin, quality and production standards of Scottish Farmed Salmon

The PGI rating gives the product legal protection against imitation throughout the European Union (EU).

A spokeswoman for organisation Scottish Quality Salmon (SQS), which represents around 65 per cent of the Scottish industry told Fishupdate.com that the European Commission had announced the designation in its official journal.

PGI status is "open to products which must be produced or processed or prepared within the geographical area and have a reputation, features or certain qualities attributable to that area."

Other products given PGI protection include Arbroath Smokies, Champagne and Parmesan cheese. A total of 36 UK products are now listed under the EU scheme, which recognises products tied to a specific geographical area or made to a traditional recipe.

About 150,000 tonnes of Scottish Farmed Salmon worth £1 billion is produced annually, providing 8,500 jobs in Scotland.

Further information: [www.scottishsalmon.co.uk](http://www.scottishsalmon.co.uk)  
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### **Innovative use for apples**

**Date:** Mon, 16 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A group of Herefordshire farmers are reportedly examining the possibility of using alcohol made from surplus apples to produce a bio-diesel.

The new fuel could soon be used to power diesel cars after the farmers secured from regional development agency Advantage West Midlands for a feasibility study.

The idea came from Herefordshire Council's environmental support department, the BBC reports.

Herefordshire Orchard Topic Group wants to protect orchards in the county and are investigating new uses for fruit that it not required for making cider.

(no further information)

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### **Low-GI chocolate developed**

**Date:** Mon, 16 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Danish ingredients firm Arla Food Ingredients has developed a new chocolate bar made with the probiotic ingredient tagatose.

The chocolate bar is reportedly very low in glycaemic load (GL) and glycaemic index (GI), increasingly used to calculate carbohydrate levels.

In 1996 Arla Food Ingredients won the worldwide rights to produce and commercialise the new sweetener tagatose from its inventor, US firm Spherix. The ingredient, sold under the brand name of Gaio tagatose, is now appearing in the marketplace.

Tagatose occurs naturally at low levels in the gum from *Sterculia setigera* (an evergreen tree) and in heated cow's milk and other dairy products. It can be used in a range of food and beverage formulations, including breakfast cereals, diet soft drinks, diet soft confectionery and chewing gum.

A recent study, conducted in conjunction with the launch of a new range of chocolate products made by Miada Sports Nutrition of New Zealand, found that the chocolate tested had a GL of one and an estimated GI of eight.

"These results, well below that of competing sweeteners, may make foods and beverages with tagatose even more attractive to a weight-conscious public that increasingly embraces lowering carbohydrates to lose weight," said Dr Gilbert V Levin, executive officer for science at Spherix.

Further information: [www.arla.co.uk](http://www.arla.co.uk)  
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### **TasteTech's innovative technology boosts UK dessert sector**

**Date:** Mon, 16 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new innovative development in technology at UK firm TasteTech means that food manufacturers will be able to inject flavours into products without them being lost in the process.

The new controlled release technology will help improve dairy desserts and allow white, milk and dark chocolate to have a better taste in mousses, custards, cheesecakes and cream.

According to Food Ingredients First, the technology microencapsulates the flavour in an invisible microfilm and converts them into a powder, which can be easily mixed with other ingredients.

In addition the flavourings can be programmed to be released at a particular stage such as during cooking, eating or processing.

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### **Convenience store acquisition announced at Sainsbury's**

**Date:** Mon, 16 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Sainsbury's is moving further into the convenience store sector with the new acquisition of a regional store chain.

The UK supermarket has now gained 114 stores belonging to British company Jacksons Stores.

According to latest figures the convenience store market is now one of the fastest growing areas of food retail and is worth £23 billion a year in the UK.

The new stores, which are based in Yorkshire and the North Midlands, will be run separately and all the company's staff will be kept on.

Sainsbury's now has over 250 convenience stores and completed a similar deal earlier this year with Bells Stores in Scotland.

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**Low carb KitKats and Rolos launched in Ireland**

**Date:** Tue, 17 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Nestle Ireland has announced that low-carb versions of its popular KitKat and Rolo brands are now available in Ireland.

The confectionary giant said that research indicates that almost one in three adults in Ireland is trying to lose weight "most of the time".

The low-card trend has become increasingly popular in Ireland, with the global spread of diets such as Atkins.

A comprehensive range of low-carb food products are now available in the US and many are now making their way across the Atlantic.

Nestle Ireland's marketing manager Louise Shortall said: "We are pleased to be the first to offer people a low-carb choice in two of Ireland's leading confectionery brands.

"Standard KitKat and Rolo are extremely popular products in Ireland. We can now offer low-carb versions of these chocolate favourites to people who wish to follow a low-carb lifestyle."

The low-carb chocolate bars are the first versions of a leading brand from a mainstream confectionery manufacturer, Nestle claims.

Further information: [www.nestle.com](http://www.nestle.com)

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### **Cadbury Flake changes image**

**Date:** Tue, 17 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Cadbury's Flake girl is finally retiring after 45 years on British television screens.

Bosses at the chocolate giant have decided to bring an end to the iconic image of a beautiful woman eating the snack and are reportedly seeking a more modern image for advertisements.

Cadbury's is also abandoning its famous jingle and slogan, which described Flake as the "crumbliest, flakiest milk chocolate in the world", ic Birmingham.co.uk reports.

The confectionary firm is believed to have decided to ditch its traditional campaign following concerns that the ads were putting off female buyers.

However, Cadbury bosses insist that the change forms part of a wider marketing plan to concentrate on the firm's Dairy Milk brand. The new Flake adverts will feature an actress talking to an animated puma which represents her "inner happiness", alongside the slogan "Your happiness loves Cadbury".

A Cadbury spokesman said: "This isn't about political correctness. We made the changes because if we had just done a pastiche of Seventies sensuality it would have looked dated."

Further information: [www.cadbury.co.uk](http://www.cadbury.co.uk)

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### **Scottish food to get image revamp**

**Date:** Tue, 17 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

VisitScotland has unveiled a new campaign targeted at dispelling the poor image of Scottish cuisine around the world.

The national tourist agency's new "EatScotland" drive will be launched in October and aims to highlight the nation's world-class produce, providing a showcase for the best chefs and restaurants.

EatScotland aims to counter Scotland's unhealthy image, symbolised by deep-fried Mars Bars, fish suppers and Scotch pies, The Scotsman reports. The campaign will instead highlight the high quality of "the world's finest seafood; succulent lamb and beef; soft fruits; game such as venison and grouse and a host of locally produced cheeses".

The multi-million pound campaign is being viewed by some industry leaders as a replacement for the similar "Taste of Scotland", which recently went into liquidation.

Carlo Coxon, owner and head chef at Edinburgh's Grain Store restaurant, said it was "time someone made a real effort to sell Scottish food properly". "There's so much honest, high

quality food being produced up here, but sometimes I don't feel it's really being given the time or recognition it deserves," he added.

Figures out last week indicated a fall in foreign visitors to Scotland, despite an increase across the UK.

Further information: [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)  
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### **Little Chef logo loses weight**

**Date:** Tue, 17 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Recent concern about growing levels of obesity in Britain has even inspired the Little Chef logo to slim down.

The portly chef has represented the restaurant chain since 1972, but has now been given a new slimmed down look as the company cuts down on salt and adds fruit to its menus.

Chief executive Tim Scoble told the BBC: "It (Little Chef) has not been developed to its full potential over the last 10 years - perhaps it has become a little bit dated, and we now want to take it forward into the 21st century."

"We have had a lot of customer feedback about the Little Chef's tummy," he added. "A lot of people have also written in to say they assumed it was a small child carrying hot food."

Mr Scoble also revealed that the chef logo would be re-examined in a few years to see if he should remain a part of the company's branding.

Little Chef, part of Travelodge Hotels, has 350 roadside outlets in the UK. The company was bought last year with the Travelodge chain by Permira.

Further information: [www.little-chef.co.uk](http://www.little-chef.co.uk)  
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### **Role of Welsh farmers in potato industry highlighted**

**Date:** Tue, 17 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

During this week's Pembrokeshire Show, consumers are being encouraged to take note of the role farmers play and the impact local potato growers have on the industry.

The NFU's new campaign to raise awareness of farmers has the slogan "Have you eaten today? Yes, then thank a farmer".

Chips and potatoes are a popular part of many consumer's diets and according to NFU statistics Welsh farmers produce 80,000 tonnes of potatoes each year out of a total six million tonnes produced.

One potato grower from Pembroke, Robert John, commented: "It is great to be part of this campaign to highlight the work that we do to the public."

According to latest figures British people eat around 103 kilos of potatoes each year and 38,000 tonnes of potatoes are used each week to make chips.

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### **Nestle reports slow first-half profit growth**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Nestle Group has slight increases in operating cash flow, sales, pre-tax and net profit for the first-half of 2004, below market expectations.

Nestle said consolidated sales rose by 2.5 per cent and first-half net profit rose 2.1 per cent, below the 2.95 billion Swiss francs (£1.27 billion) predicted by analysts, as poor weather and rising crop prices took their toll.

However, the firm repeated its outlook for underlying sales growth of five to six per cent this year, despite weaker than expected first-half growth of 4.6 per cent.

Switzerland's biggest company said first-half net profit rose to 2.84 billion Swiss francs (£1.25 billion), up from 2.78 billion a year earlier. Volume growth increased by 2.8 per cent in the first six months of the year and pre-tax profits rose to 5.12 billion francs from 5.05 billion.

Nestle is attempting to cut costs following the acquisition of a number of firms, including Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream and pet-food company Ralston Purina. The company admitted that 2004 conditions were particularly tough in its key European market, but insisted its efficiency programmes were "on track". Chief executive Peter Brabeck-Letmathe said profitability improved by 20 per cent in the first six months of 2004 after stripping out the impact of disposals.

Nestle shares have marginally underperformed the European food and drinks sector this year.

Further information: [www.nestle.com](http://www.nestle.com)

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### **Campaign launched to promote healthy Scottish food**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Scottish Countryside Alliance is aiming to repeat the success of its 2003 campaign to raise the profile of the country's regional food and drink.

Scottish Food Fortnight will take place from September 18th to October 3rd and will focus on game. The two-week festival is being sponsored through the alliance's educational trust and forms part of British Food Fortnight.

Last year more than 100 regional events were held across Scotland and more than half of the food and drink firms involved reported increased sales, according to The Scotsman.

Alliance chief executive Tony Andrews said that he hoped this year's event would be even more successful.

"We have such an abundance of high quality, nutritious food in this country, particularly Scottish game, yet we are plagued by the perception that this is a nation of obesity and fish suppers," he said. "With such a wealth of wonderful food, you would also think that our rural economies and smaller food retailers would be making big profits, but somehow that dream is not being realised."

Mr Andrews continued: "We hope that our website [www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk](http://www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk) will encourage more businesses to get involved, or even organise their own events."

Recent concerns about soaring levels of obesity in the UK have generated increased interest in healthy eating.

For more information visit [www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk](http://www.scottishfoodfortnight.co.uk)  
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### **Noodle bar chain changes business plans**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Wagamama has reportedly pulled out of discussions with a second venture capital firm.

Sources close to the noodle bar chain told Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine the firm had withdrawn from the proposed deal with Apax Partners.

Apax had been seen as the likely partner for the restaurant firm following the withdrawal of investment group Hutton Collins last month.

Analysts are predicting Wagamama will not return to its original plan to float on the Alternative Investment Market and suggest a trade sale is now a more probable option, with companies such as PizzaExpress owner TDR and The Restaurant Group touted as possible buyers.

Venture capital firm Graphite, majority shareholder in Wagamama, has refused to comment on sale rumours.

For more information visit: [www.wagamama.com](http://www.wagamama.com)  
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### **Scottish food retailers performing well**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scottish food retailers' sales rose 6.8 per cent during July, according to the latest figures.

Data from the Royal Bank of Scotland retail sales monitor for last month shows that Scottish retail sales defied expectations of a slowdown and grew at a faster pace than the rest of the UK.

Total sales grew by 7.4 per cent, only slightly down on the 8.2 per cent growth recorded in June.

Total like-for-like sales during the month rose 4.5 per cent, while those for food retailers increased by 3.1 per cent, boosted by a number of promotions, a boom in barbecuing and lower prices.

The RBS report said the figures represented a continued catching up by Scotland with the rest of the UK, following a period of Scottish sales increases falling behind those of the UK.

Fiona Moriarty, director of the Scottish Retail Consortium, said: "Retail sales continued to grow in July, reflecting a strong consumer sentiment in Scotland, coupled with what we expect to be revealed as a growth in domestic and European tourism spend in localised areas."

Jeremy Peat, the group chief economist at RBS, added: "This is yet another set of positive Scottish retail sales figures. It comes despite the significant monetary policy tightening experienced across the UK. While strong Scottish retail sales in part represent catch-up with the UK, they also demonstrate robust consumer confidence."

No further information

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### **EFSA claims zearalenone a low risk to humans**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

An investigation into the effect of the mycotoxin zearalenone has found human exposure to the food contaminant is likely to be low.

The study was completed by the scientific panel on contaminants in the food chain at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), after the EC called for an investigation.

According to Food Navigator, the panel said: "Due to the rapid biotransformation and excretion of zearalenone in animals, secondary human exposure resulting from residues in meat, milk and eggs is expected to be low, contributing only marginally to the daily intake."

However EFSA scientists have claimed that feed stuff and dose responses need to be monitored further to produce more accurate results on safe exposure levels.

The contaminant is an oestrogenic compound, which is made by a number of fungi species, commonly found in maize and maize products, as well as soybeans and other cereals and grains.

At present maximum levels for zearalenone in animal feed are not set up in the EU, but their content in foodstuffs is now under discussion by the EU.

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### **Sainsbury's acquisition to be investigated**

**Date:** Wed, 18 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) is calling for an investigation into the recent action of food retailer Sainsbury's and its acquisition of the Jacksons chain.

The recommendation comes on the back of concerns that the government's decision to treat the supermarket and convenience sectors as separate markets puts independent retailers at risk.

Through this policy, both Sainsbury's and Tesco have been able to grow their presence in the convenience market through a number of major acquisitions.

"The implications of this latest acquisition by a major multiple retailer will be felt widely and acutely in our sector," ACS chief executive David Rae told Retail Bulletin. "We must fight for fairness in our industry together, and I urge all independents to join us now to help our campaign for balance and true competition in the sector."

The ACS is currently looking to hold meeting with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in order to explain the impact of major supermarket acquisition-expansion bids on UK communities and small retailers.

They will be asking for greater transparency of buying prices and the prohibition of below-cost selling, in an attempt to achieve a fairer grocery market. Mr Rae also states that the ACS will be urging a review of rules used by the OFT in assessing acquisitions.

"The full impact of the loss of consumer choice and of the growing imbalance in buying strength between the major multiples and independent groups must be addressed," he said.

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### **New food labelling technology developed**

**Date:** Thu, 19 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Canadian firm IdeaPacked Communications has unveiled a new labelling technology for the nutraceutical and dietary supplements industry.

The Toronto-based company said the Rotating Label technology offers significant benefits for consumer packaged products, including cost-effective and user-friendly information, consumer interactivity and ease-of-use, co-operative branding opportunities and cross-merchandising.

The new technology involves covering a fixed "inner" label or printed base with a moveable partly-transparent "outer" label, through which parts of the fixed label or printed base can be seen by rotating the outer label.

"Rotating Label technology is perhaps the single most significant advance in labelling information delivery capabilities of the last century," said Leslea Macaulay, IdeaPacked Communications corporate director. "This system nearly doubles a manufacturer's 'real estate' and is perfect for leading companies working with branded ingredients or for innovative promotional campaigns."

IdeaPacked Communications claims the labelling provides further information opportunities, particularly when labelling space is limited and costs around 30 per cent less than existing extended content labels.

The company has engaged Marketwise Nutrition to actively pursue applications in the nutraceutical and supplements markets.

(no further information)

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### **Arla invests in Scottish milk plant**

**Date:** Thu, 19 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Arla Foods has announced plans to invest £10-15 million in a new dairy headquarters in the Scotland.

Arla, which won a lucrative contract this year to supply milk to Asda stores, said it intended to develop a new hi-tech dairy processing factory on The Cheese Company site in Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire.

The liquid milk processing plant will be a joint venture with Milk Link, which owns the site. The new dairy, due to open in early 2005, will be capable of processing around 150 million litres a year.

The liquid milk dairy will employ a workforce of around 100 and adds to Arla Food UK's existing investment in Claymore Dairies in the north of Scotland.

"The decision to invest in a new dairy in Lockerbie will strengthen our position in the Scottish market. We're confident that the move will benefit the entire Scottish dairy industry," said Neil Davidson, managing director of Arla Foods UK plc.

Nairn Glen, Milk Link Group finance director, added: "The expansion of Lockerbie, to process liquid milk in addition to the production of Scottish cheese, reaffirms our commitment to having a long-term presence in Scotland."

Arla now plans to apply to Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway for business development grants.

Further information: [www.arlafoods.com](http://www.arlafoods.com)  
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### **Innovative ways to improve chicken quality**

**Date:** Thu, 19 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Researchers in the United States have discovered that unwanted sensory changes in irradiated chicken can be minimised using grape seed and green tea extracts.

Scientists from the Food Safety Consortium at the University of Arkansas found that infusing grape and green tea extracts into skinless, boneless chicken breasts before irradiation reduced undesirable sensory results, such as changes in colour, odour and flavour.

Irradiation eliminates food borne pathogens from products but can have some unwanted side effects. The Arkansas researchers demonstrated that infusing a synthetic compound known as TBHQ into the chicken was effective in minimising oxidation, the chemical process that causes the sensory changes in the food.

"TBHQ is a pure synthetic compound," said researcher Navam Hettiarachchy. "Since it's a pure compound and an antioxidant, it has the optimum activity in preventing oxidation. Nobody so far has found anything as good as TBHQ."

She added that the infusion of plant extracts does not negatively affect the chicken's colour or water-holding capacity and the meat's texture is also improved by the infusion. Tests have also shown that the extracts can extend the meat's shelf life to 12 days.

The grape seed and green tea extracts are already used in a variety of food products and the requisite technology is cost effective and widely available.

(no further information)  
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### **Ex-Avenance chiefs launch new catering firm**

**Date:** Thu, 19 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Two former directors of food catering giant Avenance have joined forces on a new contract catering venture.

The new company, Thomas Franks, officially opened in Uxbridge, Middlesex, earlier this week, according to Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine.

Tom Barrett and Frank Bothwell joined Avenance in July 2003, looking after the City and South East respectively. They said they had opted to use their Christian names for the company rather than surnames to highlight the personal touch their firm will provide.

Thomas Franks will concentrate on the South of England, particularly London and Mr Barrett said the company was already in discussions with a number of prospective clients who were keen to work with them again.

He stated that Thomas Franks would be targeting a wider audience than many small contract caterers, focusing on business and industry, independent education, private health catering, and retail, as well as purchasing services for in-house caterers. Mr Barrett added that he was confident of securing the company's first contract before Christmas.

(no further information)

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### **Organic food for the lunchbox from Horizon**

**Date:** Thu, 19 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Horizon Organic has launched new smaller size organic food and drink products for children's lunchboxes.

The company produces and markets organic milk, certified organic dairy products, eggs and juices, which are available in both the US and the UK in supermarkets and natural food stores.

As part of the changes, Horizon is offering lunchbox size organic smoothies, single serve orange juices and organic banana single serve milk.

Nutrition consultant Julie H. Burns highlighted the benefits of organic food for families: "Organic foods are produced without the use of antibiotics, added growth hormones or dangerous pesticides.

"Families can help reduce their kids' exposure to added chemicals in food by incorporating organic products into their diets. An easy way to do that is by providing great-tasting, organic foods in your child's lunchbox."

Ms Burns claimed that the products suit everyone in the family, making lunchbox preparations easier and healthier for parents and easy to drink and tasty for children.

Additional small size products include organic low fat yoghurt cups, mozzarella and cheese sticks and yoghurt tubes.

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### **Consumers offered a more innocent ice cream**

**Date:** Thu, 19 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK firm Innocent Drinks is reportedly planning to expand its product range to include low-fat frozen desserts.

There are two main flavours currently being tested - vanilla bean and honey, and mango and passion fruit, which both claim to contain less than five per cent fat, according to Just Food.

It is hoped the new desserts will attract consumers that are looking for a healthier ice cream product.

The natural drinks maker currently produces fruit smoothies and juice drinks.

Feedback from the trials so far has been positive, but Innocent has not decided yet as to whether to begin a full product launch.

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### **New microencapsulation product for scones**

**Date:** Fri, 20 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

TasteTech has unveiled a new controlled release (CR) microencapsulation product that makes it possible for manufacturers to add a variety and mixture of flavourings to scones.

The humble scone is reportedly approaching its 500th anniversary and manufacturers are creating new variations on the classic theme, such as cinnamon and walnut, cranberry oat, rich raspberry, lemon and ginger and peach nutmeg.

UK-based TasteTech Ltd has developed a system by which a variety and mixture of flavourings can be applied to the popular food using the CR technology, Food Ingredients First reports.

The method works by microencapsulating the individual flavourings within an invisible and taste-free microfilm of vegetable oil. The microfilm can then be controlled to release flavourings either during processing, cooking or eating.

The control technology ensures that flavourings that would normally become 'lost' during the baking process remain intact and, with TasteTech's sequential flavouring, flavourings can be programmed to be released one after the other.

Further information: [www.tastetech.co.uk](http://www.tastetech.co.uk)

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### **New enzyme product unveiled**

**Date:** Fri, 20 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

## **Analysis**

Food ingredients firm Danisco and biotech company Genencor International have launched their first product together at this year's international baking expo in Las Vegas.

The new enzyme, called Grindamyl POWERSoft, reportedly doubles the shelf life of cakes, retaining their soft mouthfeel without becoming dry or sticky.

"We are proud of the enzyme because it allows us to target a new market that has not previously used enzymes to the extent possible. The solution has long been in demand with our customers, as it is able to fulfil a great need within the baking industry," Danisco Specialities president Jan Sindesen told delegates at IBIE 2004.

Danisco reportedly intends to focus on marketing the enzyme over the next few months and customers will work on implementing the solution in their bakeries.

Danisco and Genencor has had a co-operation agreement in place since 2000 on the development of new enzymes for food, giving Danisco access to patented technology and enabling Genencor to benefit from Danisco's extensive food knowledge.

The US has become the first country to approve the Grindamyl POWERSoft enzyme. Enzymes are proteins used in bread, juice, beer and wine in food production as processing aids.

Further information: [www.danisco.com](http://www.danisco.com)  
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## **McDonald's voices commitment to apple growers**

**Date:** Fri, 20 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

### **Analysis**

McDonald's bosses have pledged to drive economic expansion for apple growers by adding apple-based products to the company's US menu.

Speaking at the US Apple Association's 2004 Apple Crop Outlook and Marketing Conference, the association's vice president Jim Cranney said: "McDonald's has given the apple industry a significant boost with their exciting innovation around apples and apple slices. They've provided a whole new avenue on ways to increase apple consumption and to my knowledge, McDonald's is the leading purchaser of apples in the restaurant industry."

The conference in Chicago, Illinois, also heard from the president of McDonald's USA, Ralph Alvarez, who said: "The growing presence of apples on our national menu is part of our ongoing commitment to offering customers high quality, great-tasting food choices that meet their changing lifestyles.

"We will continue to explore new choices based on the feedback we receive from our customers."

McDonald's launched Happy Meal Choices in June, offering children new options such as Apple Dippers and Minute Maid Apple Juice, as well as traditional Happy Meal favourites.

McDonald's estimates that it will sell over 35 million pounds of apples annually through Apple Dippers and the company has sold nearly 118 million apple products in the first half of 2004 through the combination of Apple Dippers, Minute Maid Apple Juice and baked Apple Pies.

Further information: [www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com)  
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### **Guide to Irish food published**

**Date:** Fri, 20 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new all-island guide to small business and speciality food in Ireland has been released.

The guide, a joint project, between Bord Bia and Invest Northern Ireland, aims to increase the output and market share of speciality and small food firms in Ireland.

Food minister Noel Treacy launched the single point of reference guide for Irish trade food buyers in Drumshambo, Co Leitrim, the Irish Examiner reports.

Muiris Kennedy, Bord Bia director of Client Services, said the speciality food element of the €10.7 billion food purchasing budget in Ireland is increasing.

Currently, the output of small and speciality food firms in Ireland is worth around €450 million a year and the sector is growing at around 18 per cent per annum.

Mr Treacy said the strength and influence of local food initiatives with national impact is becoming a signature for the North West of Ireland and the area is seeing annual average growth rates of 28 per cent among small and speciality food businesses.

"This growth is a reflection of vibrant local food entrepreneurship and is being achieved through innovation and an ability to develop strong market niches for trade buyer and consumer benefit," he added.

Further information: [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)  
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### **Parents call for less food advertising in schools**

**Date:** Fri, 20 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scottish parents have called on big food companies to not advertise their products in schools in case they discourage healthy eating.

In the new study by the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC), the majority of parents resented companies advertising products in schools and want stricter guidelines.

However only a small amount wanted a complete ban on advertising in schools.

Judith Gillespie, SPTC development manager, told BBC News Online: "Although this does not seem to be a burning issue for many parents, it will be interesting to see whether there is increased awareness of the role of large organisations...when EMAs, Educational Maintenance Allowances, become established."

The payments are a plan to encourage pupils to stay on at school after their fourth year, with a certain amount paid into their account each month.

Concerns were also raised about branding when the 1,151 participants from 92 schools were surveyed.

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### **Students offered food advice by FSA**

**Date:** Fri, 20 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Following the announcement of 'A' Level results, the FSA has issued advice on its website for students, guiding them on diet and hygiene when away from home.

A key issue for students is money and the agency has addressed the issue claiming young consumers should plan a budget, use basic ingredients to prepare their own meals, shop seasonally and compare prices.

In addition the agency states that for a healthy diet lots of starchy carbohydrates should be consumed in the form of foods such as porridge oats, bread, potatoes, rice and pasta.

Fruit and vegetables and protein are also recommended with eggs, pulses, baked beans, canned fish and chicken suggested.

The advice also offers tips to ensure food does not go off or consumers do not get food poisoning.

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### **Sainsbury's plans HQ move**

**Date:** Mon, 23 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket chain Sainsbury's is reportedly considering a move from its London headquarters.

In a bid to cut costs, the UK's third largest food retailer is looking to leave its offices in Holborn, but has yet to make a firm decision.

Sainsbury's pays an estimated £16.4 million annually in rent on the property and new chief executive Justin King who is spearheading a review of the company's cost base, is examining the figures.

The group moved into the building three years ago and a decision on whether to move 3,000 head office staff is expected alongside a trading update due in October.

A Sainsbury's spokeswoman said: "As part of the work for the 19 October statement to the City, we are examining every element of our cost base."

Mr King joined the struggling supermarket group in March. The expensive move to the former 300,000 sq ft Mirror Group headquarters was spearheaded by his predecessor, Sir Peter Davis, who claimed it would improve "communications and efficiency" and reduce the number of London sites.

Sainsbury's has seen its market share fall in the past year due to stiff price competition and several of the other leading UK supermarket chains have chosen to base themselves outside the capital.

(no further information)

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### **Antimicrobial hopes for grape extract**

**Date:** Mon, 23 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Turkish researchers are reportedly developing a solution in grape extract, which they claim could provide an excellent antimicrobial agent

The agent, made from grape seeds, skin and stems (pomace extract), is potentially applicable to a variety of processed foods.

The scientists from Erciyes University and Suleyman Demirel University claim that the extract gave effective anti-bacterial results when tested on 14 types of common bacteria at a concentration of five per cent.

Writing in the Journal of Science of Food and Agriculture, the scientists said adding the pomace, from grapes left over from the wine-making process, could reduce the risk of ill health.

Two types of Turkish grapes were used in the tests and the bacteria tested against included E.coli and Staphylococcus aureus. The researchers found that grape pomace could destroy the bugs and suggested the leftovers could be used as a preservative to protect food from bacteria.

"The extracts can be used in food formulations to protect food against spoilage bacteria," said Dr Osman Sagdic. "People prefer natural preservatives in the place of synthetic counterparts in food."

Other natural foods are used as preservatives, including sugar, honey, alcohol, antioxidants and glycerine.

No further information

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### **Superfos welcomes UK accreditation**

**Date:** Mon, 23 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Danish packaging provider Superfos has announced that it has received hygiene standard approval from the Institute of Packaging and the British Retail Consortium.

The UK is the leading per capita consumer market for convenience foods in Europe, according to Superfos, and the company predicts the approval will help fuel further growth. The food packaging firm claims that UK consumers and the UK food industry set the trend in convenience food in Europe.

The BRC and the IoP have developed a hygiene standard (BRC/IoP) which ensures high levels of hygiene are maintained. The standard is not exclusive to UK producers and is now becoming frequently used in packaging for most European markets, Food Production Daily reports.

Superfos has gained accreditation to the standard at its 2 factories in UK, Tamworth and Runcorn, and also Randers in Denmark.

Superfos sales and market director, Martin Malmros, said: "We experience that packaging is of crucial importance for producers to gain acceptance for their convenience food products in the rest of Europe, and we use our experience from the UK market to develop new packaging for the European convenience food market."

Denmark-based Superfos is a European based international packaging business with 15 production facilities and sales offices in 18 countries. The company is owned by the European equity investment firm Industri Kapital Limited Partnership and the Swedish investment company Ratos.

For more information visit [www.superfos.com](http://www.superfos.com)

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### **Britvic plans stock floatation**

**Date:** Mon, 23 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Soft drinks group Britvic is reportedly planning to float on the stock market this autumn with a value of up to £700 million.

The company, whose brands include Robinsons and Tango, is currently discussing a stock offering with advisors. A number of City investment houses, including Merrill Lynch, are believed to be in the frame to organise the float.

Plans for a flotation were rolled out in March when InterContinental Hotels clinched a new 15-year bottling agreement with US soft drinks giant Pepsi. InterContinental owns 47.5 per cent of Britvic and has stated that a listing between 2005 and 2008 has the support of remaining investors, including Allied Domecq and Whitbread.

The timetable is now understood to have been brought forward following the successful floatations of Premier Foods and C&C Group earlier this year, according to The Mail on Sunday.

Britvic sells more than 1.1 billion litres of ready-to-drink soft drinks in nearly 400 different flavours, shapes and sizes and supplies more than 250,000 retailers. The firm, which made profits of £10 million during the first quarter of this year, employs more than 2,815 staff at offices in Chelmsford, Solihull, and at six factories and 15 depots around the UK.

For more information visit [www.britvic.com](http://www.britvic.com)

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### **Food costs a key spending factor for UK university students**

**Date:** Mon, 23 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new survey by the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) has found that British university students spend £670 million on supermarket food shopping each year.

The findings were part of the Student Living Index booklet, which has highlighted the most expensive university cities to study in, according to The Journal.

According to results, Durham was the most expensive area to live in, whilst Glasgow proved better value.

RBS claims that by studying in Glasgow a student could save up to £1,000 a year - the equivalent of 100 pizzas.

In addition the results could provide a new market and innovative ideas for the food sector.

Recommendations included getting accommodation where food was included as part of the renting cost.A

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### **Food being used to boost mood**

**Date:** Mon, 23 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new study has found that nearly half of UK adults say they eat food to help improve their mood or when they have argued with their partner.

Researchers at south west London's Priory Hospital are concerned that the figures show an unhealthy relationship between food and emotions.

Additional findings showed that up to 43 per cent eat food because they are bored, stressed or lonely and a third of women feel guilty afterwards.

However, nearly as many people have claimed that they are concerned about their weight and are worried they are overweight.

A total of 2,000 people were studied as part of the research, ranging from age 16-44.

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### **McDonald's welcomes Olympian sales**

**Date:** Tue, 24 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

US fast food giant McDonald's has reported that sales at its three restaurants at Olympic venues in Greece have surpassed expectations.

According to just-food.com, McDonald's said its recently launched salads and fruit and yoghurt products had sold particularly well during the Athens games.

The global food group announced that its outlets at the Olympic Village, Main Press Centre (MPC) and Athens Olympic Sports Complex (OAKA) had seen a steady increase in sales every day during the first week of the four-yearly tournament.

McDonald's is the official sponsor of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and this year announced the continuation of its sponsorship for the next four consecutive Olympics, through to 2012.

Further information: [www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com)

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### **Goats cheese popularity**

**Date:** Tue, 24 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Goat farmers supplying UK supermarkets with cheese are reportedly rapidly expanding their herds to keep up with demand.

Britain boasts more than 400 different varieties of cheese, but it is goat's cheese that is currently booming.

According to supermarket Tesco, government figures estimate that the number of goats in the UK has risen from 74,000 in 2001 to 88,000 in 2003, driven by the nation's growing appetite for goat's cheese.

The UK goat's cheese market is now worth an estimated £13.7 million a year and Tesco claims it has seen goat cheese sales soar by 52 per cent between 2001 and 2003.

Tesco cheese spokesman Mike Seymour explained: "Back in the '90s only absolute gourmets wanted to know about goat's cheeses and you would have to visit specialist delicatessens to find them. But over the last five years UK goat farming methods have improved which has led to better quality milk and cheese. It is this richer, cleaner and more lemony taste that has won over the public."

Mr Seymour also pointed out that a boom in cheap travel has whetted Britons' appetites for goat's cheese.

The current top five most popular goat's cheeses sold by Tesco are all British varieties and Somerset cheese Capricorn is currently the top selling goat's cheese in the UK as a whole. Made by Lubborn Creamery it is enjoying an annual 20 per cent growth in productivity.

(no further information)

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### **Tetra Pak milk deal**

**Date:** Tue, 24 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Finnish dairy firm Valio has teamed up with Tetra Pak to market its production technology for its patented lactose-free milk.

The joint agreement aims to generate sales of the milk outside the home markets of Finland and Switzerland. The two firms are expecting swift global results using Tetra Pak's global sales network.

Valio's production technology for lactose-free milk will be marketed worldwide and the companies will be separately responsible for agreements with those who purchase the technology. Valio will license the membrane technology manufacturing process to customers and Tetra Pak will deliver membrane filtration equipment and engineering.

The lactose-free milk drinks use new membrane technology to remove lactose completely (<0.01 per cent lactose), leaving none of the slightly sweet taste inherent in low-lactose milks, Valio claims.

A recent survey by Mintel predicted that the food intolerance and allergies market will more than double in value by 2007, reaching £138 million in the UK alone.

The Valio lactose-free milk will be in direct competition with soy milk, also consumed as an alternative to milk and increasing in popularity, and fermented milk, which has been shown to eliminate or drastically reduce symptoms related to lactose intolerance.

Lactose intolerance, or a diminished ability to tolerate milk sugar, is significantly more common in central and Southern Europe, Asia and Africa than in Finland. It is an inherited characteristic and the gene that regulates it was discovered a few years ago by a Finnish-American research team.

Further information: [www.valio.fi](http://www.valio.fi)

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### **Safety levels set for food mineral**

**Date:** Tue, 24 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) has established a safe level for the mineral boron.

However, boron is not included on the list of nutrients permitted in food supplements under the new directive.

A scientific dossier for borate/boric acid is currently being prepared, according to UK trade association HFMA, in order to support its addition to the list of approved nutrients.

Boron is a trace mineral found in foods like fruits, mushrooms, nuts, as well as wine and beer as borate and boric acid. It has not been established as an essential nutrient in humans but there is some evidence that it may influence the metabolism of other nutrients such as vitamin D, which in turn stimulates the absorption of calcium, Foodnaviagtor.com reports.

Some research suggests that boron may be essential in the conversion of vitamin D to its active form and may reduce body calcium loss by increasing the beneficial effects of oestrogen on bone health.

However, there is also evidence that at levels of greater than 13mg/kg of body weight the mineral can have developmental and reproductive effects in animals and a distinct lack of data regarding possible effects of the nutrient in humans.

The mineral is widely used in bone health formulations, many of which sell strongly in European markets.

EFSA has refused to confirm how new information about the nutrient would influence its status under the food supplements legislation.

Further information: [www.efsa.eu](http://www.efsa.eu)

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### **Food labelling forum to be held by FSA**

**Date:** Tue, 24 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

The FSA is to release details of the latest progress on its Food Labelling Action Plan at a public update in October.

Among the issues planned for discussion are food labelling enforcement, allergens and signposting of foods.

As well as explaining what action has been taken so far, the agency hopes to obtain views on what food labelling issues are still of concern to people.

The forum will be held in Aberdeen on October 20 and will be invitation only.

A similar event was held in January in London and an additional London forum is already planned for January 2005.

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**Quality on the up at London eateries**

**Date:** Tue, 24 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

A new guidebook of restaurants has claimed that the quality of restaurants in London has improved.

Findings in the 'Harden's London Restaurants' guidebook showed that the overall number of restaurants opening in the capital has slowed down, but the food establishments that have opened are much better.

The guide is out next month and was co-edited by Peter Harden who argues in the past restaurants in the area had been all hype and little substance.

According to caterer-online, Mr Harden believes that restaurants are now having to improve to cater for a better educated and more demanding dining market.

The ratio of openings slowed to one to one last year but has recently picked up to 1.6 to one, with 133 openings and 82 closures this year.

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**Nestle revamps coffee range**

**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Coffee company Nestle is planning to relaunch its Cafe Style home coffee range.

According to reports in the Grocer, Nestle has reformulated the Cafe Style range, which includes three types of Cappuccino, a Mocha and a Latte, "to make them more frothy than before".

The firm is launching a new television campaign that is will run until the end of September.

The advertisement portrays Italian cafe society drinking authentic Italian cappuccinos that leave frothy moustaches. It is designed to raise awareness and interest and form an effective precursor for a sampling campaign that will target 2.5 million people through direct mail shots and in-store activity.

The 'Taste of Cafe Culture' campaign will be visiting five UK cities, inviting people to enjoy a coffee break in a relaxing lounge area.

New packaging is also being introduced to reinforce the message that consumers can use the brand to enjoy a bit of cafe culture at home.

Nestle has experienced disappointing sales with its mainstream Nescafe brand recently and is keen to boost profits with its other brands.

Further information: [www.nestle.co.uk](http://www.nestle.co.uk)  
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### **Health drive spreads to McDonald's Indian outlets**

**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Fast food chain McDonald's has extended its healthy eating drive to India.

The restaurant giant is trying to shed its junk food label and wants to start educating consumers about the nutritional values of its products. McDonald's has launched a low-fat health menu and has seen global sales soar as a result of the new salad and fruit options.

According to Rediff.com, the company has no plans to introduce the diet menu in India yet, but is paving the way with the new health awareness campaign, which includes leaflets highlighting the nutritional values of its food products.

Amit Jatia, managing director of Hardcastle Restaurants, the western region arm of McDonald's India, said: "We want to create awareness among consumers about the nutritional values of our products. This is also part of McDonald's global corporate social responsibility programme.

"For instance, our soft serve has less than three per cent fat content. But, consumers are hardly aware of this fact. We now want to educate and highlight these facts about our products."

McDonald's is also planning to launch a line of products from its international portfolio in India in conjunction with food and beverage companies Cadbury Schweppes and Nestle. The chain has secured a tie-up with Nestle for Milo drinking chocolate in South East Asia and has joined forces with Cadbury India to provide the chocolate for its McSwirl ice cream.

The company has reportedly seen a compounded annual growth rate of 40 per cent in India since it opened operations there in 1996 and has opened its first outlet in Bangalore. McDonald's currently has 54 outlets in the country.

Further information: [www.mcdonaldsindia.com](http://www.mcdonaldsindia.com)

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### **Brits spend £6.5 billion on chocolate and booze**

**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK supermarket shoppers have spent more than £5.1 billion on alcohol and just over £1.3 billion on chocolate in the past year, a new report reveals.

Beer and lager, wine and spirits accounted for three of the four biggest food and drink categories, with chocolate in a close fifth place.

The study published in trade magazine Marketing lists the top 50 brands bought from supermarkets. The list shows that traditional snacks are as popular as ever, despite recent fears about soaring obesity levels.

Walkers crisps are Britain's biggest food and drink brand, with 86.5 per cent of British households buying at least one of their products in the past year. Frozen food company Bird's Eye came second, followed by cereal firm Kellogg's, confectioner Cadbury and Heinz.

"Consumer desire for premium products, even in their everyday shop, is driving significant rises in value sales for the UK's top grocery brands," the article stated.

Wine was the biggest category in terms of value in the year to June, with sales up 17 per cent to £1.915 billion. Soft drink sales from supermarkets rose three per cent over the same period to £1.9 billion, making it the second largest category with beer and lager in third place at £1.81 billion and spirits taking fourth place, with sales up five per cent to around £1.39 billion.

(no further information)

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### **Waitrose to cut organic prices by 25 per cent**

**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket chain Waitrose has announced plans to slash the prices of its organic produce by 25 per cent from August 31st to September 12th.

The retailer said the price promotion would apply to every single organic fresh fruit, vegetable and salad in its stores. More than 100 different products will be reduced, with some below the price of their conventional counterparts.

John Foley, head of buying for fruit, vegetables and horticulture, said: "We hope these fantastic price cuts will tempt even more people to try out organics or persuade existing customers to extend the range of organic products they are buying."

The promotion has been designed to overlap with the Soil Association's Organic Week, which takes place from September 4th - September 12th this year.

Waitrose was one of the first supermarkets to sell organic products in 1983 and is now the market leader. The company has a policy of sourcing its organic produce from the UK where possible and many of the products on promotion have been grown in the UK by growers with whom Waitrose has a long term relationship.

Further information: [www.waitrose.com](http://www.waitrose.com)  
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### **Farmers given single payment booklet by Defra**

**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Defra is sending out the latest information to farmers on how to claim money under the new Single Payment Scheme.

The new method was issued as part of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the free brochure contains the latest changes that farmers need to know.

Food and Farming minister Larry Whitty said: "Defra and the Rural Payments Agency will do whatever they can to help farmers through the changes. We want to communicate with all those in England who may be affected by these reforms."

One issue that had been causing confusion was the term "at the farmer's disposal" and this is one item explained in the new advice.

In addition, the brochure includes extra information on measures announced by Margaret Beckett and what farmers need to do if they do not know if they are entitled to claim payments.

Additional help will be issued over the next few months to help farmers with business plans.  
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### **Profits up at DFB**

**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Dairy Farmers of Britain (DFB) has published its annual report and accounts today for the financial year ending March 31.

The figures show that the group has made considerable progress in the last year, reporting an operating profit of £12.2 million and an 11 per cent increase in turnover to £436.3 million.

Chief executive, Malcolm Smith, said: "We have seen significant improvement in turnover and profit and this puts us in a strong position as we work to deliver our strategy for the future.

"The next year will see huge consolidation in the dairy industry and with change comes opportunity. We are ready to seize opportunities and we look forward to playing our part in building a sustainable industry for all."

Additional information highlighted in the report is the company's acquisition of a share in two new businesses and the £1.5 million investment into new cheese quality and range improvement facilities.

According to the company, action has been approved by the board to help lead DFB into becoming the leading broad-based dairy company in the UK within the next three to five years.

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### **Paramount plans to expand restaurant chain**

**Date:** Thu, 26 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Restaurant group Paramount has unveiled plans to expand its business operations in the UK by opening further spin-offs from its Chez Gerard and Bertorelli brands.

According to Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine, the group is currently turning a former storage room adjacent to its Bertorelli restaurant in London's Charlotte Street into a second Deli Bertorelli, which will feature a bakery and wine store.

Paramount chief executive Nick Basing told the magazine that the group plans to test another product, Brasserie Chez Gerard, in a Greater London location "quite shortly", and is interested in rolling out a number of stand-alone delis.

"We're aggressively seeking to grow the business and add sites," he explained. "The turnaround is nigh on complete, and we're really excited about going into the next phase, which is to grow the business."

Paramount also opens its first Caffè Bertorelli in Bristol next month, lower-cost, more informal version of its new Deli Bertorelli concept, featuring a pizza oven and a "mini version".

The ambitious expansion plans follow Mr Basing's success in turning around the struggling chain, which recently reported a 5.6 per cent jump in like-for-like sales for the year to June 30th.

(no further information)

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### **Salt levels drop at Heinz**

**Date:** Thu, 26 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food giant Heinz has announced that it has slashed the salt content of all the soups in its classic tinned range by at least 20 per cent.

The company said in a statement it had increased the "quantity of ingredients" while reducing fat, salt and sugar levels.

The new Heinz tomato soup now contains 84 per cent tomato, up from 74 per cent, and the salt level has been reduced by 20 per cent to 1g per serving. Sugar has been reduced slightly from 5.2g per 100g to 4.9 and the quantity of vegetable oil added has also dropped.

Heinz has accompanied the revamp of its tinned soups range with price rises of up to 20 per cent to account for the cost of using more "real" ingredients. A tin of tomato soup costing 49p to 56p in supermarkets will now sell at 59p.

Recent concerns about soaring obesity rates have sparked sharp criticism of the food industry and companies have come under increasing pressure to reduce salt, sugar and fat levels.

A Food Standards Agency carried out in July found that many popular food brands contained unhealthy levels of salt. The recommended daily intake of salt for adults is six grams or about one teaspoon, but British adults consume an average of about 9.5g of salt a day.

"We are working towards the Food Standards Agency guidelines on salt, which are pretty tough, and to achieving them over three years," Heinz marketing manager Dan Ince said.

Further information: [www.heinz.com](http://www.heinz.com)

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### **Landec unveils new low-carb vegetable tray**

**Date:** Thu, 26 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food technology firm Landec Corporation has launched a low carbohydrate vegetable tray product.

The new mini 19 oz vegetable tray, which includes cut vegetables and dip, has been produced by Landec's food subsidiary Apio for sale to retail grocery chains. Apio holds a leading market share position in vegetable trays with its existing line of retail products.

The Eat Smart Carb-Count tray contains celery, carrots, broccoli and the new Lighthouse Brand 'One Carb Plus' ranch dip. Each four-ounce serving of vegetables and dip has a low carb-count of only six grams.

The tray has been designed to offer a simple and convenient way for consumers to enjoy fresh vegetables whenever they want and the new tray began shipping to retailers and mass merchandisers nationwide in July as an expansion of the existing Eat Smart family of vegetable tray products.

California-based Landec claims that the new tray product "recognises the demand from retailers and mass merchandisers to provide healthy options for individuals following a low-carb lifestyle, as well as for consumers looking for healthy vegetable choices.

"With this new Carb-Count mini tray, along with our other vegetable trays, we are successfully transitioning vegetable tray products from their traditional role as a special occasion purchase to an everyday purchase for consumers. By increasing variety in both ingredients and size of trays, we have created daily options that provide solutions for people on the go," said Michael Casazza, Apio's senior vice president of sales and marketing.

[www.landec.com](http://www.landec.com)

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### **Sainsbury's stops Arla milk supplies**

**Date:** Thu, 26 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Dairy firm Arla Foods will no longer supply Sainsbury's supermarkets with fresh milk, as the food retailer announced it will be consolidating its supplies.

Following the announcement, Arla will stop supplying Sainsbury from January next year, but the company claims the contract loss will not affect profitability.

A trading update is set for release on September 30 by Arla and it remains positive about future results.

The company also revealed that its rationalisation programme is continuing as planned and that already it is benefiting from this.

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### **Tesco's market share still on the up**

**Date:** Thu, 26 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket chain Tesco is still increasing its share of the market, according to the latest figures.

The Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) Super panel survey shows that the food retailer now controls 28.1 per cent of the market in the 12 weeks to August 15. The company's takings in the 12 weeks were £430 million ahead of the same period in 2003.

Tesco's main rival is the Wal-Mart-owned Asda, which currently holds 16.6 per cent of the market share, an increase of just 0.1 per cent.

Meanwhile, the troubled Safeway and Morrisons partnership saw its share of the food retail market drop from 14.6 per cent to 13.9 per cent, whilst Sainsbury's market share fell from 16.1 per cent to 15.4 per cent.

The TNS Super panel bases its figures on purchasing information submitted from 15,000 UK households.

For more information visit [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)  
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### **Food retailers set to receive wage increase**

**Date:** Thu, 26 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food retail staff are set to experience a considerable increase in their salaries, according to a new survey.

The study by Mercer Human Resource Consulting claims that next year staff are set to receive an average 2.8 per cent rise in salary.

David Wreford, European principal at Mercer, told Personnel Today: "If interest rates continue to rise there could be more pressure on companies to offer larger salary increases.

"It's particularly important for retail companies to ensure their pay structures are regionally competitive, as they risk losing staff to other local retailers."

The survey was based on 7,000 employees and 18 major UK organisations which included food, furniture and fashion retailers.

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### **Firm buys into up-market biscuit business**

**Date:** Fri, 27 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Yorkshire food firm Humdinger has secured the purchase of luxury biscuits outfit A Taste of Luxury, in a move that underlines the growing profitability of the luxury goods market.

The company, which supplies customers including Weetabix and Tesco, says it is seeking to enter the lucrative biscuit market - currently worth an estimated £1.7 billion.

The cost of the acquisition remains undisclosed, but Phil Whitfield, managing director of Humdinger, told the Yorkshire Post that the move was a significant strategic step.

"This acquisition is a perfect strategic fit for us and is a key step towards Humdinger becoming a pan-European food supplier with a broad product portfolio and an enviable customer base," he explained.

A Taste Of Luxury specialises in niche up-market luxury offerings, boasting a turnover of £2.5 million.

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### **Ginger nuts crowned the biscuit dunking champion**

**Date:** Fri, 27 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food scientists have turned their attention to the conundrum of biscuit dunking, publishing a league table of the nation's favourites.

Organised by Waitrose Food International, the study encompasses a range of technical evaluations to determine which biscuits are the best for dipping in tea or coffee.

Waitrose's William Sitwell explained to the Guardian: "As well as relatively straightforward physical tests we needed to establish the mean duration of the individual dunk episode of the average Briton."

"Most of us need guidance these days, when so many different types of biscuit are available," added Mr Sitwell.

The ginger nut came out on top, closely followed by the chocolate Hobnob, with digestives claiming the bronze.

Further information: <http://www.waitrose.com/>

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### **Diet helps dictate asthma rates**

**Date:** Fri, 27 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Diet could be a key factor in determining asthma according to a new study published by the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

Using data from three Chinese cities - Hong Kong, Beijing and Guangzhou - the researchers sought to explore the reasons behind the differentiated rates of asthma across the world.

By using statistics from coastal and mainland China, as well as the distinction between the rural areas and the most westernised city in the form of Hong Kong, scientists were able to pinpoint a range of determining factors.

A mixture of environmental factors and diet were identified as the reason behind the higher rates of asthma seen in developed countries.

Factors significantly associated with wheeze included cooking with gas, while those factors protecting against wheeze included frequent consumption of fruit and raw vegetables.

The study involved 10,902 primary school children with diet recorded, as well as any change in asthmatic symptoms.

For further information: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/>  
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### **Welsh assembly scrutinises bovine collagen**

**Date:** Fri, 27 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Welsh Assembly has announced plans to examine the regulations concerning the use of UK bovine collagen in food.

The consultation will look at increasing difficulties being experienced by the UK collagen industry as a result of having to source all their products from non-UK animals.

It is expected that the current regulations will be updated to reflect the developments in scientific views on the matter.

The World Health Organisation, International Veterinary Organisation and the EC's Standing Scientific Committee now believe that collagen derived from bovine hides presents a negligible risk as long as the hides come from safe cattle and the appropriate production processes are used.

The UK Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) recently said it was "content with the proposed use of UK collagen for food use as the potential risk would be minimal given that the collagen would be sourced from animals fit for human consumption".

The consultation is expected to conclude by the 17 November this year and is in addition to the consultations currently being carried out in England and Scotland.

Further information: <http://www.wales.gov.uk/index.htm>  
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### **Supermarkets turn to self-scanning technology**

**Date:** Fri, 27 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Self-scanning is continuing to take hold in the British supermarket industry, with Co-Op the latest firm to emphasise the new technology.

The West Midlands branch of the Co-op has just opened its door, with the branch seeking to deliver a state-of-the-art service - including self-scanning checkouts and electronic shelf-edge labels.

Store manager James Sheldon told the Birmingham Post that the store's innovations were part of a wider progression in the industry.

"Self-scanning is a popular new innovation that has worked well at other Co-op stores," he said.

The £160,000 refurbishment follows the completion of a £7 million deal with Morrisons for the store - a by-product of the competition rules governing the firm's £3 billion takeover of Safeway back in March, which called for Morrisons to sell off a number of branches.

Futher information: [www.sainsbury.co.uk](http://www.sainsbury.co.uk)  
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### **DoH seeks to improve over-40s diet**

**Date:** Tue, 31 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Department of Health has launched a practical guide to local services that seeks to target factors such as diet as a means for improving personal health.

Known as Prime, the guide will be given out free of charge to men and women across the UK who are over 40 from September.

Celebrities and real life case studies are used in an effort to connect with the British public, with problems such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity singled out for explanation.

Typical features include tips to improve your diet and how to maintain a healthier lifestyle.

Health Minister Lord Warner said the strategy was about targeting the causes of diseases such as obesity, as much as it was about treating them.

"We need to make sure that the NHS becomes more than just a sickness service, and that everyone has the chance to live a healthy life - fostering prevention as well as providing cures," he said.

Harry Cayton, the Department's Director for Patients and the Public, agreed, noting that it was a way of providing patients with more information to help them make the choices "that are right for them".

Further info: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/Home/fs/en>  
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### **GI winning expert backing**

**Date:** Tue, 31 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The latest diet to be capturing the public attention - the Glycaemic Index method - has been winning support from a range of nutritionists and diet specialists in the UK.

Experts say that by monitoring the rate at which of carbohydrates raise blood sugar levels after eating, they can identify those foodstuffs that are more readily absorbed.

The resulting Glycaemic Index can then be used to identify those foods which release their energy more slowly - which can help to reduce weight, as well as cut the associated risks of diabetes and heart disease.

Natasha Ede, a care adviser for Diabetes UK, told the Western Mail: "When you eat foods high in GI, like sweets or sugary drinks, your blood sugar levels go up very quickly, filling you up, but you quickly feel hungry again."

"Picking foods with a lower GI can help you feel full for longer - low GI foods are quite often healthy choices, although portion size plays a part."

Dr Wyndham Boobier, a nutritionist at the University of Glamorgan, agreed, declaring that "the principles of using the GI diet are sound".

"It is not a fad diet but is based on eating unprocessed foods," he commented.

One of the UK's leading supermarkets, Tesco, has lent its support to the new diet, with the retailer set to introduce GI scores on certain products.

Further information: <http://www.diabetes.org.uk/faq/GI.htm>  
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### **Tesco dips toe in broadband waters**

**Date:** Tue, 31 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK supermarket giant Tesco has begun selling its own broadband package as the firm continues to widen the range of services and products it stocks.

Tesco says it has launched its own broadband package in an attempt to increase its market share.

A monthly charge of £19.97 will allow users to access the internet at 512 kilobits-per-second and unlike many rivals, including BT and Wannadoo, the service will allow unlimited data downloads.

Customers will be able to pick-up a CD with the appropriate software in 700 Tesco stores across the UK.

Tesco's venture into broadband will complement the supermarket's other telecoms offerings. Alongside its existing dial-up internet, the supermarket already has a residential telephony offer and a partnership with mobile phone company O2.

Users of the new broadband service will also be able to collect points on Tesco's loyalty Clubcard.

Further info: <http://www.tesco.com/corporateinfo/>  
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### **Food sales falter amid summer slump**

**Date:** Tue, 31 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The CBI has released its latest quarterly Distributive Trades Survey which shows that food retailers endured a particularly bad month in August.

Figures from the CBI's study, which covers 20,000 outlets from firms responsible for 40 per cent of employment in the UK retail sector, underlines a difficult period for the food industry.

Food sales are reported to have plummeted, falling at the fastest rate since the survey began 21 years ago.

Successive interest rate rises and the ongoing bad weather were blamed for the figures.

Nevertheless, there is some encouragement for the industry with the news that retailers' expectations remain "reasonably good", with rising employment and investment set to continue.

Further info: <http://www.cebr.co.uk/>  
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### **Stores remain resilient in face of chain competition**

**Date:** Tue, 31 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Large chain stores are not driving small shops out of business, according to the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

The BRC was responding to research by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) that claimed local stores were being forced to close down by large supermarkets and their uncompetitive practices.

"Chains do offer competitive prices and its natural that this, in addition to brand recognition, will attract custom," the BRC said in a statement. "But that doesn't mean chains are 'taking over' nor does it mean customers are turning their backs on local businesses.

"Its competition - this is what keeps the retail sector thriving and variety and choice is what keeps the customer happy."

The NEF report claimed that local stores made a greater contribution to the local economy and offered a better deal for consumers.

Further information: <http://www.brc.org.uk/>  
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### **Local producers bolster economy**

**Date:** Tue, 31 Aug 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Buying food from local producers rather than supermarkets benefits both the local economy and the consumer, according to a leading think tank.

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) claimed that supermarkets had been guilty of anti-competitive practices and had forced smaller producers out of business.

NEF director Andrew Simms told the Today programme that supermarkets often pushed up prices once smaller rivals had gone out of business.

"For some of the pilot studies that we've done it shows that for every pound you spend on local and organically produced food, you get about double the value back to the local community than the same pound spent in a large supermarket," he said.

"That's because the local businesses are better connected back into their community.

"So it's good food and it's healthy and it's actually nice to know the people that you're buying from, but it's actually economically much better value for the community as well," Mr Simms added.

NEF research found that large supermarkets led to the creation of "clone towns" when local stores close down.

Sean Rickard, an advisor to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs responded by saying that what consumers wanted was more choice.

To suggest that people would pay more for locally produced food was, he claimed, "madness".

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