

2004 FDIN December news

Clapham House makes third acquisition

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Restaurant company Clapham House Group has purchased the Gourmet Burger Kitchen (GBK) chain, which has six outlets across London, for a reported £10 million.

The acquisition of GBK is Clapham House's third since its creation and the chain has acquired the entire issued share capital of Wisconsin UK, which trades as Gourmet Burger Kitchen, for an initial consideration of £2.6 million in cash and a further earn out consideration capped at £7.4 million, based on the chain's performance over the next two years.

The Clapham House Group, run by David Page and Paul Campbell, the former CEO and finance director of PizzaExpress respectively, also owns The Bombay Bicycle Club and Real Greek restaurant chains.

GBK's existing senior management team, Greg Driscoll, Brandon Allen and Adam Wills, will retain operational control of the business. The burger chain was founded four years ago with the aim of creating "a range of nutritious, delicious and sophisticated burgers using quality fresh ingredients."

Mr Page, executive chair of Clapham House, said: "During the six months to September 30th 2004, we have successfully integrated The Bombay Bicycle Club and The Real Greek into Clapham House and both these businesses are trading well.

"Having now completed our third acquisition, Gourmet Burger Kitchen, just over a year since the company's admission to AIM, we will focus our resources on growing these formats through site expansion and further improving their profitability."

Further information: www.claphamhousegroup.com

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Tetra Pak outlines environmental plans

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Consumer packaging giant Tetra Pak has updated its environmental policy and has pledged to run its business in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

The Swiss-Swedish firm said its revised environmental policy, which comes into force on January 1st, sets goals for continuous improvement in development, sourcing, manufacturing, and transportation.

"Our environmental policy describes our environmental engagement at every step in the consumption and production chain - from society to raw materials," the firm announced in a statement.

Tetra Pak said that recycling will be a major pre-occupation in the future, adding, "We are committed to facilitate and promote local collection and recycling activities for post-

consumer carton packages." An increasing number of packaging firms have become environmentally aware and are launching products made of 100 per cent recycled materials, Food Navigator reports.

"We endeavour to support our customers on finding environmentally acceptable solutions for their packaging material waste. And in terms of product development: all our packages shall be suitable for recycling," Tetra Pak declared. "New developments will include, when needed, the development and identification of appropriate recycling technologies."

Tetra Pak claims to that in 2003 93 per cent of the waste generated at the company's plants was recycled and a just 3.6 per cent was sent for final disposal (landfill or incineration without energy recovery).

The packaging company also plans to promote renewability, improve energy efficiency and open lines of communication on key environmental matters with the communities in which it operates.

Further information: www.tetrapak.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New food grade wrapper unveiled

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

George Gordon Associates has launched a seven-axis, servo-controlled, food-grade wrapper with wash-down capability.

The company claims that its new AccuWrap FG-2000W concept is one of the most user-friendly wrappers in the industry.

The modular design, wash down capability and small footprint mean that the system is easy maintenance.

The AccuWrap food grade inverted horizontal wrapping system is being targeted at food applications such as pizzas, food trays and individually wrapped jumbo cookies, Food Navigator reports.

The new system machine is designed for high speed production and greater efficiency, allowing food particles to fall through and removal of all modules providing the maximum in accessibility for cleaning.

The system features independently adjustable servo control of linear fin sealing, main cross sealing, rotary knife, conveyors and unwind for a number of food packaging applications and is highly automated.

Further information: www.ggapack.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Heart protection benefits found in Israeli fruit

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research has suggested that consumption of an Israeli fruit called pomelit can help to lower blood cholesterol levels and boost blood antioxidant activity.

According to researchers, findings could help food firms promote the fruit as a key product to protect heart health.

The fruit is between a pomelo and a grapefruit and could help prevent heart attacks and blocked arteries, according to Nutra Ingredients.

Similarly fruits such as grapes, pomegranate, kiwi and berries are all being studied for their heart health benefits.

The market for foods helping prevent heart diseases is continually growing and sales are predicted to reach £145 million in 2007 in the UK alone.

Participants in the study for the University of Jerusalem were split into three groups and given varying levels of the fruit and its juice, with those given the highest amount showing the better heart protection qualities.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Drinking water helps balance blood pressure

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Researchers from Imperial College London and St Mary's Hospital have released a new study, which claims that drinking water can help people who suffer from low blood pressure.

By drinking two glasses of water, people can raise their blood pressure, which can offer a possible solution to people with low blood pressure who faint while standing.

Professor Christopher Mathias, the senior author of the research, comments: "This surprising discovery that water can have such an effect on blood pressure could help us to treat both sufferers of autonomic failure, and many people who suffer from low blood pressure generally, especially those who faint."

A total of 14 patients with autonomic failure were studied for the project and those who had consumed water before standing experienced an increase in blood pressure.

"While autonomic failure itself is generally not life threatening, it can have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life," Professor Mathias added.

The findings could offer a new market for bottled water manufacturers.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Pesticide level name and shame list planned by EU

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The EU has revealed plans to create a 'name and shame' list to highlight EU food retailers, producers and traders who break rules on pesticide residue limits.

According to Just Food, those firms who regularly break rules concerning their food products will be revealed, after a call for such a list from MEPs.

New legislation would cover all such rules across the EU and include 160 food commodities and 1,000 pesticides.

The environment committee wants companies to be displayed by national food regulators online.

If the proposals are supported the plans will be written into a new directive on setting maximum pesticide residue levels for food and feed.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Cadbury Schweppes is Britain's 'most admired'

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Cadbury Schweppes has been named the UK's most admired company

The confectionary and drinks giant ousted last year's winner Tesco after announcing record results and projected profits of £2 billion this year.

Tesco has won the "most admired" accolade four times, but this year slipped to fourth place, behind Unilever and BP, scoring low on community and environmental responsibility. The supermarket chain's chief executive Sir Terry Leahy retained the title of Most Admired Business Leader.

The poll of the UK's biggest companies across 22 market sectors was conducted by Nottingham Business School for Management Today magazine. Firms rate each other on a range of criteria, including quality of management, financial soundness, quality of goods and services, innovation and corporate social responsibility.

Brewing and pubs group Greene King rose from 113th to 11th place this year, while supermarket group Morrisons, down from 9th to 75th place.

It is the second time that Cadbury Schweppes has won the Most Admired award and it has rarely been outside the top 10 since the award was established.

Cadbury Schweppes chief executive, Todd Stitzer, said the accolade was the result of "unrelenting focus on working together to create brands people love".

Further information: www.cadburyschweppes.com

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Food labelling 'may be extended to caterers'

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA) has refused to say whether or not the catering industry will be exempt from its new system for labelling food.

The "traffic light" scheme aims to highlight healthy food to consumers and simplify the current food labelling system. Under the proposals, food would be labelled as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' in fat, salt, sugar and saturates, with red, amber and green labels. More detailed labels will also compare content with recommended daily intake.

An FSA spokeswoman said: "The system could apply to catering. It would be complicated to implement, but nothing's been decided yet."

The agency has stated that any decision on whether or not the labelling system is to be applied to the catering sector will be taken after consumer trials are completed next summer, *Caterer & Hotelkeeper* magazine reports. The FSA has also stressed that the any decision will be taken in conjunction with stakeholders.

The British Hospitality Association deputy chief executive Martin Couchman claimed that the 'traffic light' system would be "irrelevant" to the industry and insisted that consumers eating only "green light" foods risked not having a balanced diet.

Further information: www.food.gov.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

EU food agency releases GM guidance

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The European Union's food risk assessment agency has produced a new guidance document for GM ingredient suppliers.

A panel of experts at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has put together a comprehensive guidance to applicants wishing to introduce GMOs or derived products to the EU market, *Food Navigator* reports.

Before any genetically modified organism (GMO) or GM derived product can enter the EU market, it is required to pass a strict series of safety tests.

"Upholding its commitment to involve stakeholders in the risk assessment process, the guidance document has substantially benefited from comments received during a four-week period of public consultation as well as feedback received during a stakeholder consultation held in May 2004," EFSA said in a statement.

The guidance document covers the full risk assessment of GM plants and derived food and feed, although risk management of GMOs (traceability, labelling, co-existence) are 'outside the remit of the GMO Panel'.

The European Commission requested the guidance after pushing through approval of GM sweetcorn, supplied by Swiss biotech firm Syngenta in May this year, the first approval granted for a GM product since 1998. MON810, a biotech maize engineered by Monsanto to be resistant to the European corn borer, was the second product to be cleared shortly afterwards.

EU consumers remain sceptical about the safety of GM food and most food makers are opting to leave GM ingredients out of their products.

Further information: www.efsa.eu
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Christmas food safety tips released by FDF

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

As part of moves to raise awareness of food safety and hygiene, the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) is to launch a fun quiz and top cooking tips on its website throughout the festive period.

A special fun quiz will be available to consumers to test their knowledge of food safety and the site will help consumers avoid food poisoning from undercooked turkeys or unsafe foods.

According to recent studies, 20 per cent of food poisoning outbreaks are poultry related and the majority of them occur within December.

Details and information will be displayed on the foodlink website, www.foodlink.org.uk.

A specially created list of 12 top Christmas tips will also be on offer - including storage, cleanliness, thawing meat and correct use of utensils.

The FDF claims that over one in ten consumers cook Christmas dinner for over ten people, which is often a key factor that leads to undercooked meat or incorrect temperatures for various dishes.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Green tea may combat prostate cancer

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

An extract found in green tea could help tackle prostate cancer, new research has found.

A study published in the December 1st issue of Cancer Research revealed that the polyphenols present in green tea help prevent the spread of prostate cancer by targeting molecular pathways that shut down the proliferation and spread of tumour cells, as well as inhibiting the growth of tumour nurturing blood vessels.

A team of researchers from the University of Wisconsin and Case Western Reserve University, Ohio, documented the role of green tea polyphenols (GTP) in modulating the insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) driven molecular pathway in prostate tumour cells in a mouse.

"Consumption of GTP led to reduced levels of IGF-1," said lead researcher Hasan Mukhtar.

"GTP also led to increased levels of one of the binding proteins for IGF-1, the insulin growth factor binding protein-3.

"These observations bear significance in light of studies that indicate increased levels of

IGF-1 are associated with increased risk of several cancers, such as prostate, breast, lung and colon."

GTP modulation of cell growth via the IGF-1 axis coincides with limited production or phosphorylation of key cell survival proteins, including PI3K, Akt and Erk1/2, the research indicated.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Big Food Group announces interim results

Date: Thu, 02 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Big Food Group has released its 2004 Interim Report today, with results showing an operating profit of £27.1 million and a rise in profit to £13.4 million.

In addition, the company expanded its food retail outlets, with the Booker cash & carry business increasing its service to more than 1,700 Premier customers and Woodward Foodservice sales rising by 27 per cent.

Meanwhile, Iceland trading has been boosted by 224 new format stores and a number of new efficiency programmes have been implemented.

According to the company, the first half of the year saw the effects of increased competition and more adverse weather conditions.

The company explained large supermarket chains have influenced retail prices throughout the period, but the firm had responded by boosting its strategic investment plans to drive sales and ensure margins and costs are controlled.

Big Food revealed it was still in talks with Baugur and a decision is set to be made within the next few weeks.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Conservation expert urges farmers to maximise potential of CAP reform

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A leading conservationist has called on UK farmers to make the most of opportunities being opened up by the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Speaking at the Smithfield Show in Earl's Court, London, Peter Nixon, director of conservation at the National Trust, declared that farmers needed to move towards meeting consumers' demands and adding value to their produce.

"Farming only has a future if our critical natural resources, soil, air and water are managed well," he said.

"This is nothing new, previous generations of farmers have long been guided by the principle of good husbandry. But decades of CAP-orientated farming have undermined this principle.

"CAP reform offers a real chance for change - from which everyone in the long run will benefit."

Reform of the CAP begins in January 2005 and, under the changes being introduced, many nature conservation organisations like the National Trust will be able to claim a Single Payment for the land they own, The Journal reports.

Conservationists are expected to look to conservation grazing to improve and maintain grassland with benefits for wildlife and farmers will have the opportunity to provide and manage herds as "grazing services".

Mr Nixon said changes to the CAP payment system mean farmers needed to examine all the possible options to make use of their assets.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Warning over cereal and dairy margins

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A leading farm consultant has warned farmers that margins may be squeezed further next year, as pressure remains on the cereals and dairy sectors.

Andersons said government projections of total income from farming for the 2004 calendar year of £3.24 billion were higher than expected, The Scotsman reports.

"That is largely due to the total income from farming being calculated on a calendar-year basis - so the low cereal prices from this summer's harvest have not yet fed through," Francis Mordaunt, a partner with the firm, explained at the Smithfield show.

Mr Mordaunt predicts that next year's total income figure will be closer to £3 billion when this year's low grain prices are taken into account and he added that there is currently no evidence to suggest that combinable crop prices will recover in 2005.

The farming expert added that dairy prices were weakening further, in spite of European markets remaining strong and exchange rates fluctuating.

Decoupling of farm subsidies next year from production is expected to have a widespread effect on the industry. Mr Mordaunt claims that only the most efficient beef farmers will make a profit without using the single farm payment and predicts that many might decide to quit the industry.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Naked chef begins cooking in schools

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

TV chef Jamie Oliver has gone back to school, only this time he is cooking the dinners.

Mr Oliver's latest television venture, Jamie's School Dinners, takes him to Kidbrooke comprehensive school in south-east London. He worked for a week in the school

kitchen, according to the Guardian, developing new recipes with the canteen staff.

The chef and Trisha Jaffe, the school's headteacher, have used the programme to improve the eating habits of children in one of the country's most deprived catchment areas. More than half of the pupils are on free meals and many of the parents are unemployed, single or on disability benefit.

Meals produced on the school's limited budget include Mediterranean braised lamb with cous cous, lasagne with mixed leaves, and spicy cheese tortillas with salad. The menu had previously featured burgers, chicken nuggets, sausage rolls, beans and chips.

However, some of the 1,400 pupils are resisting the changes and there has been a noticeable dip in the number of children using the canteen.

Ms Jaffe said: "If you are on free school meals or on restricted money, are you going to take the risk of using that up and getting something you don't like? Many vote with their feet. We are slowly working on the kids. We don't expect to wake up one morning and for every child to have gone through the barrier."

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Robinsons revamps product range

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Robinsons is to change bottle designs and flavours of its High Juice and Barley Water ranges, as the result of a £30 million investment from Britvic.

New bottle designs were first introduced in June on added value squashes, but new packaging will be rolled out after research showed the easy grip style was popular amongst consumers.

In addition, a new flavour 'Blood Orange' is being introduced to the High Juice range.

Britvic's brand controller for Robinsons, Jonathan Gatward, told EDP24: "The new packs and new flavour take us one step closer to achieving our goal of making Robinsons the number four grocery brand in the next five years.

"We are building on our strengths in line with Right Choice, making squash easier to understand, encouraging consumers to trial the sector through innovative new flavours while offering more choice for shoppers and building sales for our retail customers."

Robinson's is currently the number eight grocery brand in the UK and its parent company Britvic has been shortlisted for a Food from Britain Export award.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Simultaneous BSE ban lifting called for

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Following the announcement of changes to BSE control measures by the Government,

the English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX) have called for the lifting of bans to be completed simultaneously.

According to the group, the ban on cattle over thirty months old from entering the food chain and restrictions on exports to Europe, should happen at the same time to ensure there are no problems in the flow of the market.

Andrew Garvey told the BBC: "The first point is to say we and the industry are lobbying to have the bans lifted simultaneously because it's quite critically important to the flow of the product."

Mr Garvey claims that there are export markets awaiting the product and that major buyers in Europe are constantly calling on EBLEX for a supply of English cow beef.

Once bans are removed, approximately half a million extra animals will enter the market place.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

UK experiencing demand for sugar free sweets

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new study by Euromonitor has shown that there is an increasing demand in the UK for sugar-free confectionery.

According to results, combined sales of sugar free items including gum, confectionery and chocolate, increased by 26 per cent from 2002 to 2004.

It is thought the sector has been boosted by innovative product launches and increasing consumer demand for healthy products, Food Navigator reports.

The sector has taken around £229 million in sales and sugar-free gum on its own has accounted for £174 million.

However, research has suggested that UK food manufacturers still place sugar free confectionery low down on its list of priorities.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Continued government efforts against obesity

Date: Mon, 06 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The English public health White Paper spells out a wide range of measures which apply either to England or the UK.

The paper 'Choosing Health' is focused firmly on reducing obesity rates and improving diets.

The White Paper states that by mid 2005 a simple code indicating fat, sugar and salt content in processed foods will be created across the UK, The Western Mail reports.

The government has also started to work with the food industry to reduce portion sizes

and cut salt, fat and sugar content and communications regulator Ofcom will examine food advertising aimed at children, with legislation due for consideration in 2007.

More than 110 national organisations already support the Children's Food Bill which aims to improve the health benefits of children's food and protect children from the junk food and drink marketing.

The Welsh Assembly has also established a Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People and officials are currently drawing up a coherent plan, which includes improving primary and secondary school meal standards.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Honey can fight cancer

Date: Mon, 06 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Honey and royal jelly could be used to fight cancer, new research claims.

Scientists from the University of Zagreb, in Croatia, found that a number of natural products from honey bees, propolis, royal jelly, caffeic acid, honey and venom, such as stopped tumours growing or spreading in tests on mice.

Writing in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture this month, the research team said the way in which the bee products work to combat the tumours is not clear.

The team suggests that the chemicals cause apoptosis (cell suicide) or necrosis of the cancerous cells, or they exert directly toxic or immunomodulatory effects. The honey bee products may also reduce harmful oxyradicals in cells or body fluids.

But they said the products should be considered for use along with, not instead of, chemotherapy treatment.

Dr Nada Orsolic, who led the study, said: "These results suggest the benefits of potential clinical trials using propolis or honey, combined with chemotherapeutic agents."

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Technology contributing to obesity

Date: Mon, 06 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The development of new technology is making us fatter, according to health economists.

Carol Propper, professor of economics at Bristol university, claims that technology is making the production of food cheaper and has made work far less strenuous.

Delivering the 2004 Royal Economic Society Public lecture, Professor Propper said that advances such as the microwave oven, preservatives and packaging had cut down the time taken to prepare food and caused us to eat more.

However, our average calorie intake has not risen much and more people are on diets than ever before. Exercise has become more expensive and has to be done in free time rather than forming part of work.

An American study recently concluded that 40 per cent of Americans' average weight gain was due to advances in agriculture and processing that had made food cheaper and 60 per cent was due to technical progress in workplaces.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

EU commissioner says GM seed levels should be "as low as possible"

Date: Mon, 06 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The new European Union farming commissioner, Marianne Fischler Boel is recommending that GM seed levels mixed with non-GM seeds should be as low as possible, ahead of an EC decision on GM seed levels in 'GM-free' seed batches.

Previous estimates of the level of GM seeds allowed to mix with non-GM seeds have been between 0.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent, a threshold that has prompted opposition from organic campaigners, anti-GM campaigners and the Green Party.

"In my opinion [GM seed levels] must be as low as possible because otherwise I think that you'll have the GMO spread anyway," Ms Boel commented to the BBC.

"It's very important that we consider the balance between the price of the seed and the risk of mixing up. If we have to go at zero the seed will be so expensive that it will not be possible for the organic producer to be in the market," she added.

The commissioner suggests a framework on legislation for the 'co-existing' of GM crops, organic crops and other types of crops in EU member states.

The Bright Project, which has been studying the result of rotating between the crops of Herbicide tolerant oil seed rape and GM modified herbicide tolerant varieties of sugar beet, has found that GM crops are no more harmful to the environment than normal crops.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Expert denies scientific case for low GM seed levels

Date: Mon, 06 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A Cambridge University professor is arguing that there is no scientific case for there to be low levels of GM seeds mixed with non-GM seeds.

Professor Derek Burke's comments come in response to comments made by the farming commissioner Marianne Fischler Boel, who stated that that the level of GM seeds contained with non-GM seeds, under the label of non-GM, should be as low as possible.

"As a scientist I'm saying there 's no scientific case for these low limits," asserted the

Professor to the BBC. "I don't quite understand why she's saying that remark. It's certainly not for safety reasons.

"If people want to stigmatise GM and say it's so dangerous, quote on quote that we have to treat it as a poison, then that's a political decision."

The European Commission is due to make a decision over the level of GM material allowed to be mixed with groups of seeds labelled as GM free.

Previous estimates of the level of GM seeds allowed to mix with non-GM seeds has been between 0.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent, and anything above those levels would need to be labelled GM.

Earlier this year, the Government allowed the growing of a commercial variety of GM maize and oil seed rape.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Red meat linked to arthritis

Date: Mon, 06 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food researchers in Manchester are suggesting that eating lots of red meat can significantly increase the risks of developing rheumatoid arthritis.

In a study of 88 rheumatoid arthritis patients those eating the most red meat were found to have twice the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis than those with lower red meat intake.

Those consuming red meat as well as other types of meat had similar higher risk factors, but higher levels of dietary fats, including saturated fat, did not appear to have an effect, according to Medical News Today.

Though researchers are unsure as to exactly why red meat has this effect, it is thought that the high collagen content of meat may provoke an immune response in individuals with a predisposition for rheumatoid arthritis.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

GSK seeks green light for anti-obesity drug

Date: Tue, 07 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK-based pharmaceuticals group GlaxoSmithKline is planning to seek approval from US regulators for the first non-prescription anti-obesity treatment.

The president of the company's consumer healthcare division, Jack Ziegler, told the Financial Times that he was preparing an application to the Food and Drug Administration for an over-the-counter equivalent of the company's prescription-only Xenical.

Mr Ziegler said he was hopeful that FDA approval could be won within a year, with the possibility of launching the drug by early 2006.

Xenical, which GSK acquired last year under licence from Roche for sale in the US, was approved by the FDA in 1999. The drug works in the intestines by blocking the body's absorption of about one-third of the fat of digested food.

Sales of the prescription drug generated around \$120 million last year and it is not advised for pregnant women or anyone with gallbladder problems. GSK is optimistic that lower doses in the non-prescription equivalent will reduce side effects and increase the drug's popularity in the United States, when combined with diet and exercise.

Mr Ziegler said: "This is an extraordinarily safe drug and appears to also have an effect in easing cardiovascular disease and diabetes."

The anti-obesity market is estimated to be worth \$400 million (£205 million) a year.

Further information: www.gsk.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Phytopharm in talks over hoodia appetite-suppressant

Date: Tue, 07 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK firm Phytopharm is reportedly in talks to licence an appetite-suppressing compound to a food industry partner.

Phytopharm has invested more than \$18 million in isolating the appetite-suppressing ingredients in the desert plant hoodia, a rare cactus native to the Kalahari desert.

The P57 molecule in the core of the Hoodia plant convinces the brain the body is full. In clinical trials, Phytopharm claims that obese patients who took Hoodia ate an average of 1,000 calories less than their counterparts who took a placebo.

Phytopharm initially struck a deal with drug company Pfizer to bring the product to market. However, the deal fell through and the company turned its attention to the booming meal replacement market, Nutra Ingredients reports.

The pharmaceutical firm reported growing losses last week, but analysts predict that a deal with a major food company could be worth more than \$50 million a year in royalties as interest continues to grow in anti-obesity products.

The Hoodia Gordonii diet pills are available on the internet and are organic and completely free of ephedra, ephedrine and caffeine, with no known side effects.

Further information: www.phytopharm.co.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

British cookbook released in France

Date: Tue, 07 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The wife of the British ambassador to Paris has written a new cookbook in French designed to lay French misconceptions about UK cuisine to rest.

Lady Penny Holmes and her co-author, Susan Mallet, are taking French disdain for Britain's culinary standards head on.

"Simply British!" gives simple instructions on how to prepare traditional dishes like bubble and squeak, mash de pommes de terre, trifle and poulet tikka masala. The French-language cookbook also includes British classics such as fish and chips, scones and trifle.

"We want to change the general opinion held by people in France that British food is dire; that 'nice country, shame about the food' attitude," Ms Holmes told Reuters.

"For a long period British food was a bit dull and unadventurous, but recently there has been a real renaissance," she insists.

Lady Penny's cookbook has reportedly been largely welcomed by France's food community.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Calls to reform European legislation

Date: Tue, 07 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new UK report urges the European Union to take immediate action in order to get plans for regulatory reform back on track.

Concentrating on laws relating to food labelling, pollution and data protection, the Better Regulation Task Force calls on the EU to create an ad hoc body that can simplify legislation where regulations are shown to be unworkable, conflicting or overly complex.

The UK lobby group attacked the "over-complex and unnecessary EU red tape", claiming that the cost of European red tape has been estimated at €1.3 trillion (£700 billion), or 12 per cent of European GDP.

The report states that food labelling legislation has burgeoned so that information on labels is in microscopic print and calls for clearer labelling, using graphics and giving priority to key information such as allergens.

The taskforce suggests setting up an informal body made up from the EU's three institutions to fast-track simplification proposals that do not alter the underlying policy behind directives.

David Arculus, the chairman of MmO2, and the head of the task force is currently in Brussels. He said: "We expect our report, with its practical guidance, to be welcomed with open arms." Mr Arculus insists that half of all key legislation in the UK now originates in Brussels.

The report has been welcomed by EU officials. Gunter Verheugen, the EU commissioner for enterprise and industry, praised it for its "constructive and thorough recommendations".

Further information: www.brtf.gov.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Nestle moves into frozen pizza market

Date: Tue, 07 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Frankfurt-based Nestle Deutschland AG, has announced it is to acquire 49 per cent of frozen pizza producer Wagner Tiefk hlprodukte GmbH.

It will give Nestle access to roughly 33 per cent of the German frozen pizza market and a turnover of around 200 million euros.

"We are delighted to be able to contribute from now on to the unique Wagner business success story," Patrice Bula, chairman of the Nestle Deutschland AG board, stated.

"We see together great opportunities to develop the business further, combining the Wagner management strengths, their strong brand equity and their product quality with Nestle Group's global sales reach, our marketing know-how and research & development competences."

Gottfried Hares, spokesman for Wagner described Nestle as the "ideal partner" for developing Wagner's business in new European markets.

Pending approval by the appropriate authorities, the transaction will go ahead on 1 January 2005.

The German frozen pizza market was worth more than 700 million euros in 2003 with average growth rates of around eight per cent.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

British pig industry will not be ham-handed

Date: Tue, 07 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Guidelines on antibiotics launched by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) alliance show the British pig industry is committed to the highest standards.

British Pig Executive (BPEX) chairman Stewart Houston, a pig producer in North Yorkshire, said: "The industry is committed to producing top quality, safe food and this is an integral part of that.

"It is, however, important to remember that antibiotics have an important role to play in treating disease in animals so there is a large welfare component there.

"Antibiotics can only be administered to pigs under the supervision of the vet and there are many other controls to ensure safety.

"The industry has also responded positively to the challenge of removing antibiotic growth promoters from feed in January 2006.

"BPEX has an extensive research and farm advice programme on achieving this change while maintaining high standards of pig health and welfare," Mr Houston added.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Real Good results reported at food company

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food manufacturer The Real Good Food Company has announced that it is "very pleased" with the performance of all its businesses

The company said its Five Star Fish business, which was acquired in May this year, has performed in line with expectations, despite increasing raw material costs.

The Real Good Food Company reported that increased sales, currently 17 per cent higher than the same period last year, and operating efficiencies have offset the impact of higher input costs, according to just-food.com.

The group is currently undergoing a major period of restructuring and, having announced "substantial strategic and financial progress" with its interim results at the end of August, predicts that strong growth will continue over the remainder of 2004 and the early part of 2005.

"We are confident that robust foundations are now in place in all the businesses which will enable us to drive growth both organically and through further acquisition to achieve the full potential of the significant opportunities we see in our market. We are confident about the group's ability to broadly meet market expectations in the current year and 2005," the company said.

Real Good Food makes chilled and ambient products for food retailers.

Further information: www.realgoodfood.com

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Tate & Lyle on the up

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tate & Lyle is reportedly expected to return to the FTSE 100 following a seven year absence.

At the close of trading on Tuesday, Tate & Lyle was ranked as Britain's 90th biggest company.

Experts predict the company will now re-enter the top flight when the quarterly reshuffle comes into effect on December 20th, replacing engineering firm Tomkins, which has seen its market value decline.

Tate's shares have leapt by 55 per cent this year, boosted by strengthening sugar prices and solid sales of its artificial sweeteners.

An original member of the historic FT-30 index in 1935, Tate & Lyle dropped out of the

FTSE 100 in September 1997.

The FTSE index revises its membership list four times a year, with changes based on the market capitalisation of eligible stocks. Inclusion in the FTSE 100 raises a company's profile among investors.

Further information: www.tateandlyle.co.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Coca-Cola stops UK drinks launch

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Drinks giant Coca-Cola has decided that it will not launch its C2 brand in the UK.

The mid-calorie soft drink was unveiled in North America and Japan six months ago. C2 has half the calories and carbohydrates of regular Coca-Cola and is targeted at health-conscious consumers.

Britain forms one of the company's biggest markets and the decision not to launch it in the UK has led analysts to question the future of the C2 brand.

Sales of C2 in the US and Canada have been disappointing and rival mid-calorie brand Pepsi Edge has also struggled to establish itself.

Coca-Cola said it remained committed to C2 in North America and Japan and would consider its expansion into other markets on a case-by-case basis. A spokeswoman for Coca-Cola in the UK said the company had decided to focus on the no-calorie Diet Coke brand, which outsold regular Coca-Cola in British supermarkets for the first time last year.

The world's biggest soft drinks producer has seen sluggish sales this year and a number of management upheavals.

Further information: www.coca-cola.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Campina Arla decision planned in Spring 2005

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Dairy companies Arla and Campina have released an update on their intentions to merge and create the largest farmer-owned dairy company in the world.

The newly created company would be called Campina Arla and would include strong leading brands in consumer and business-to-business markets.

According to both companies, the General Assemblies of their companies have now both been informed of plans and a decision on the merger will be made in Spring 2005.

Justinus Sanders, the new CEO of Campina Arla, commented: "This merger will unite the best of both companies and is a crystal clear example of the power of synergy.

"With Campina Arla, we will establish a dairy co-operative with even more competitive and innovative power for the benefit of our member-farmers, customers, consumers and our employees."

The businesses believe that the new firm will experience turnover of around €10 billion and will have a workforce of around 28,000 employees.

It is thought both company's key principles and product categories will be used as the basis for Campina Arla.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

NFU appoints new horticulture adviser

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The NFU has announced that it has appointed a new horticulture adviser.

Formerly working at Defra, Dr Chris Hartfield has been selected for the position, which will include advising on fruit and protected crops.

Dr Hartfield said: "It's good to be back in the horticultural sector and I'm looking forward to working with NFU members and industry stakeholders."

With a background in horticulture research, Dr Hartfield has worked at Defra for the last four and half years.

"We are delighted to have Chris joining the team. He has a strong background in horticulture and a good knowledge of the farming industry in general. He'll be a real asset to the food and farming advisory team at the NFU," Phil Hudson, chief horticulture advisor, added.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

EU creates online traceability system

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food producers are to receive further help to meet new traceability requirements through a new Internet solution.

Funded by the EU, E-Fruitrace is a technology initiative that is aimed to help food producers and combines a mix of traceability systems used by processors, distributors and agricultural cooperatives across the EU.

The system is aimed at the fruit sector and is worth €1.5 million, created in response to new EU food hygiene regulations which are set to come into force on January 1st, according to Food Production Daily.

Trials were conducted last year and revealed that the system helps to boost efficiency and cost effectiveness for food firms and farmers.

The online data also allows information to be exchanged quickly and easily throughout

the food distribution chain.

"With the system comprehensive data covering everything from where the fruit was grown, what fertilisers were used, where it was stored and what trucks transported it can be easily accessed and distributed between different actors," Pedro de la Pena, technical manager of E-Fruitrace at Agromare in Spain explained.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Tesco to be number 3 in world for food by 2010

Date: Thu, 09 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK supermarket chain Tesco will overtake both Metro and Ahold to claim third place in the global grocery retail league by 2010, a new survey claims.

IGD's new report 'Tesco: Driving Global Capability' predicts that Tesco's global sales will grow from £30.8 billion today to £58.9 billion by 2010, an annual growth rate of 9.6 per cent.

Tesco's international business has increased from £1.3 billion to £6.1 billion over the past five years, and IGD expects this figure to reach £17.3 billion by 2010. By 2010, IGD forecasts that the UK will account for 71 per cent of Tesco's global sales, Asia 17 per cent and the rest of Europe 12 per cent.

Joanne Denney-Finch, IGD chief executive, said "Tesco's international success has been driven by a clear policy of identifying the right business in a given market and ensuring that all areas of that business are as efficient as possible, to underpin future growth."

The number of international markets in which Tesco is present has more than doubled over the last seven years from six to 13 and the company is currently focusing on start-up operations in China, Turkey, Japan and Malaysia.

IGD considers that an underdeveloped retail environment will be a critical factor in selecting future market entries and suggests that Tesco may move into Russia, Indonesia, Vietnam and further markets in Eastern Europe, such as Romania over the next six to 10 years.

Ms Denney-Finch added: "Although trading internationally is not without its challenges, Tesco has managed to grow its international business by more than 350 per cent in sales terms in the past five years (from £1.3 billion to £6.1 billion) establishing itself as the fastest growing retailer in the global top 10 in 2003.

"IGD believes that other key international trading opportunities include developing its position as a key global account for suppliers and rolling out retail services, such as financial services and internet home shopping, to international operating markets in order to broaden and deepen Tesco's relationship with its customers."

Further information: www.tesco.com

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New EU policies on food information

Date: Thu, 09 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new European Union regulation will allow a category of previously prohibited claims relating to the reduction of disease risk to be made on food.

In July 2003, the European Commission adopted a new legislative proposal aimed at tackling unsubstantiated claims made on food.

The proposal, which builds on the international guidelines of Codex Alimentarius, sets out how food can be described. The Codex rules prohibit a list of claims, such as unsubstantiated claims, as well as claims regarding the suitability of foods for use in the prevention, treatment or cure of a disease (with exceptions).

The proposal covers two categories of claims: nutrition claims (such as "rich in vitamin C" and "low in fat") and health claims (such as "good for your beauty and your inner harmony"), Food Ingredients First reports.

Under the new regulations, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will carry out scientific evaluation of health claims on the basis of proposals by food manufacturers.

EU citizens have become increasingly interested in healthy eating in recent years.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

UK government and fishing industry fight new EC plans

Date: Thu, 09 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fishermen's leaders and UK government ministers have reportedly vowed to fight European Commission catching plans.

The Commission's proposals, unveiled in Brussels, include plans for a "systematic" approach to fish stocks for next year's catching according to their biological state.

Fishing industry leaders described the proposals as "out of date and too extreme", fishupdate.com reports.

The proposals include "necessary" increased restrictions on fishing effort for stocks subject to recovery plans, adapted TACs and associated measures in anticipation of recovery or management plans for stocks for which recovery plans are in the pipeline, such as southern hake and North Sea plaice, and restrictions to protect the associated depleted stocks for stocks in mixed fisheries, such as haddock and whiting.

Scottish Fisheries Minister Ross Finnie has restated the Scottish Executive's opposition to closing areas of the North Sea to fishing activity where there is no evidence of conservation benefit.

George MacRae, the secretary of the Scottish White Fish Producers' Association said that they had been told not to pay too much attention to the Commission's closed area proposals, which were based on science now superseded.

"Significant strides have been taken already to assist cod recovery and the maintenance of other stocks which are in good heart and in these circumstances, closed areas are a sign of desperation on the part of the Commission who have apparently run out of ideas and have a mindset that you have to have management and control or nothing can happen," he declared.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

A-Z decision draws nearer

Date: Thu, 09 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The decision on the acquisition of the A-Z UK restaurant chain is set to be made this week.

According to Caterer Online, 29 offers had been made for the group and a decision on the chosen company will be made on December 10th.

Possible names thought to be in the running for the firm are the co-founder of the group, the owner of the Greenhouse restaurant and previous partners involved in A-Z.

Restaurants set to be affected are seven venues in London - Aubergine, Zafferano, Alloro and L'Oranger.

In addition, the Spiga and two Memories of China restaurants will also be involved.

The firm was moved into administration in November after funding for the firm was removed.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Agreement on brands reached by Premier and Kraft

Date: Thu, 09 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Premier Foods has announced today that it has now reached agreement with Kraft Foods to purchase a number of its brands.

The deal for £70 million includes products such as Angel Delight, Bird's Custard and Rowntree's jelly.

Robert Schofield, Premier Foods CEO explained: "It will extend our product range in the desserts category and enhance our position as one of the UK's leading suppliers of ambient grocery products.

"The acquisition is expected to be earnings and margin enhancing in the first full year of ownership and meets the acquisition criteria we outlined at the time of our IPO."

The move will also increase the company's position of household names in the grocery sector with brands such as Branston, Tophoo and Branston.

Money for the deal will come from unused bank debt facilities and the acquisition is still subject to approval by the board.

The deal is the first for Premier since July 2004 and it will also include brand rights, intellectual property, stock and packaging machinery.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Chicken data could lead to product innovation

Date: Thu, 09 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A better understanding of how to produce healthier birds for food consumption is being offered from a new report by US scientists.

The International Chicken Sequencing Consortium has produced a report on the biochemical 'code' in bird's cells which make up chickens and can help give a better biological understanding of salmonella and bird flu.

A key area of interest is the threat posed to humans from illnesses experienced by both chickens and humans and the new data may help with explaining the resistance involved.

According to the BBC, the information could help to make changes in the food industry, including helping to develop more productive birds.

Other researchers hope there will be additional benefits for agriculture such as helping to identify how to create the traits for bigger eggs and leaner, tastier meat.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Overseas expansion for celebrity chef

Date: Fri, 10 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK chef Gordon Ramsay has revealed he is planning to broaden his business overseas, with a new restaurant in Japan.

According to Caterer Online, the famous chef will open a restaurant in the new Conrad Tokyo hotel and it will accordingly be named Gordon Ramsay at The Conrad Tokyo.

The restaurant will open when the hotel opens in spring and other food establishments are also set to be opened in the hotel.

Known for his bad temper and foul mouth, the chef already has a restaurant in Dubai and is said to be looking at Las Vegas as a next potential option for business.

Restaurants owned by the chef in the UK include Petrus, Gordon Ramsey in Chelsea and Gordon Ramsey in Claridges.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Sugar industry reform called for by Oxfam

Date: Fri, 10 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new report out today has called on changes to be made to the British sugar industry.

According to Oxfam, sugar trade rules are unfair and huge profits at British Sugar this year were due to "support from UK consumers and taxpayers and a hugely protected market".

The report has been released to correspond with British Sugar's Annual General Meeting.

Anna Macdonald, Oxfam's campaigns director said: "British Sugar are the winners from a very unfair regime.

"They have almost a complete monopoly of sugar beet production in the UK and are only so profitable because of Europe's grossly unfair sugar trade rules."

According to reports, British Sugar made £175 million in profits for 2004, which Oxfam claims is due to their monopoly of the market and money paid out under CAP.

Oxfam now wants EU sugar rules to be changed to be fairer and more ethical and it also wants an end to export dumping.

In addition, the group has called for increased access to Europe's markets for the world's poorest countries.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New grain business planned by top UK firms

Date: Fri, 10 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Two of the biggest agricultural companies in Britain have announced they are to combine to create a huge grain buying business.

Allied Grain and Banks Cargill are hoping to form Frontier next March and it will be owned equally by each company.

Although the deal is still subject to approval it is expected to be approved by regulatory authorities since it is thought to help "provide certainty for farmers".

The managing director of Allied Grain, David Irwin, explained that the deal would help give farmers the chance to exploit the supply chain and minimise food miles.

In addition, Mr Irwin also feels that for the food industry the new firm will mean the ability to offer high-quality, locally-sourced grain anywhere in the UK.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Starbucks expands food offerings

Date: Fri, 10 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Coffee chain Starbucks has expanded a hot foods test programme in its West Coast stores.

The coffee shop giant plans to roll out the new menu, which includes breakfast and

lunch sandwiches, nationally and has now quadrupled the number of test stores to 80.

Starbucks has not revealed when it plans to introduce its hot food menu countrywide, but it could be as early as next year.

"We've been pleased with the test results so far and our customers have responded favourably. We continue to believe our food program is an opportunity for growth going forward," said Starbucks spokeswoman Valerie Hwang.

Starbucks reported that 12 per cent of its \$4 billion in sales during 2003 was down to food. The shops currently sell a range of cold items like cookies, cakes, muffins and salads.

The chain has boomed over the past decade, with 6,300 US locations and a further 2,400 abroad. Profit growth over the past five years has averaged 31 per cent.

Further information: www.starbucks.com

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Food makers turn to speciality breads

Date: Fri, 10 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Retailers and suppliers are increasingly turning to high quality, speciality breads in order to appeal to consumers.

Britain's bread sector has been hit by the rising popularity of low-carb diets, such as Atkins and South Beach.

In recent months, supermarkets have increasingly focused on premium own-label bread and Tesco has launched a new range of burger baps topped with cheese, onion and mustard seeds, while Sainsbury's has unveiled a cheddar cheese and caramelised onion bread.

Mediterranean breads are continuing to enter the market, with a roasted tomato and mozzarella Fougasse from Sainsbury's and a sun dried tomato and basil bread topped with extra basil oil from Asda, according to Confectionery News.

Leading baker Rank Hovis estimates that annual sales in the UK bread retail market are worth around £2.2 billion. However, market analyst group Mintel predicts growth will be slow and steady as manufacturers look for profitable new market niches.

Mintel claims that a third of wrapped bread sales are now from the premium category and own-label has become the biggest collective brand in the speciality sector.

The UK's Federation of Bakers attributes a 13 per cent rise about £130 million, in the bread sector over the last three years to speciality breads. The traditional sliced and wrapped bread retail market has declined by around 1.5 per cent in volume over the same period.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Nestle enters frozen pizza market

Date: Fri, 10 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Swiss food giant Nestle is reportedly purchasing half of German frozen pizza firm Wagner.

The company plans to tap into the lucrative German market and expand Wagner's brands abroad,

If German authorities approve the deal, the deal is expected to complete on January 1st 2005. It will give Nestle a 49 per cent in Wagner.

Based in Nonnweiler-Braunshausen, Wagner has a 33 per cent share of the €700 million German frozen pizza market and annual turnover of around €200 million. Frozen pizza is now Germany's favourite frozen food, but the market continues to grow by around eight per cent each year.

Wagner also exports to several European countries, including Austria, where it has a market share of approximately 25 per cent.

"We see together great opportunities to develop the business further, combining the Wagner management strengths, their strong brand equity and their product quality with Nestle Group's global sales reach, our marketing know-how and research & development competences," said Patrice Bula, chairman of Nestle Deutschland.

Gottfried Hares, Wagner spokesperson, added: "Nestle is the ideal partner for developing our business further in Europe and in new markets."

Further information: www.nestle.de
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New gluten-free bread launched

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Irish scientists claim to have developed a new gluten-free bread with dramatically improved taste and quality.

Eimear Gallagher, who led the research at Ireland's Teagasc National Food Centre, said a new combination of potato starch and rice flour had been used to improve the taste, texture and volume of the bread. Two hydrocolloids, xanthan gum and HPMC, a derivative of cellulose, were also used to help bind ingredients together.

The project, completed in tandem with similar research into other gluten-free baked goods, including pizza bases, at University College Cork, is expected to prove particularly important for people suffering from coeliac disease, Food Navigator reports.

The new development provides opportunities for bakers, as well as the growing number of people with gluten intolerance. Professor Gallagher claims that recent figures in

Ireland estimated that one in every 150 people may have coeliac disease and a similar medical study in the UK found that around one in every one to 200 people may have the disease but be undiagnosed. Milder intolerances cause uncomfortable symptoms such as headaches and abdominal pains.

"We have only touched the tip of the iceberg in identifying such people. Therefore, the need for quality bread to meet their dietary needs is of huge importance," Professor Gallagher said.

The formula has taken the Teagasc team three years to perfect and five or six Irish bakeries are now testing the new version of gluten-free bread with a view to launching it on the market.

Further information: www.teagasc.ie
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Iberian ham comes to Britain

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A young entrepreneur is bringing a taste of Spain to the UK by importing ham and other delicacies.

Company bosses across the Iberian peninsula traditionally don Father Christmas outfits during the festive season and hand out whole shoulders of ham to their workforce.

Jamon iberico, or Iberian ham from acorn-fed pigs, dates back centuries and is described in The Telegraph as "the most meltingly sublime meat in the world, with a luxurious, almost sweet flavour unlike any other." The cured and marbled ham of the pata negra (black-hooved) pig costs around £15 for a plateful in restaurants.

George Scott, 21, was born and brought up in Spain, and his mother, Charlotte, owns Trasierra, a hotel near Seville. Mr Scott is passionately committed to the Spanish countryside and food. "I love Spain and Spanish produce," he told The Telegraph "but I think it could be done a lot better in England."

Mr Scott has now set up his own Spanish food company, selling organic goat's cheese, olive oil, quince paste, olives, vinegar, preserved fish and Iberian ham, his core business. He sells over the telephone and via his website to private customers, delicatessens and restaurants, including Fino, a Spanish restaurant in Bloomsbury, London.

A 7.5kg leg is priced at between £25 and £30 per kilogram and will provide a nuclear family with several weeks' worth of ham. Ham can also be ordered pre-sliced and vacuum-packed, but Mr Scott claims that it tastes best when freshly sliced off the bone.

Further information: www.george-scott.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Drinks giants turn to flavoured water

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Drinks corporations Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestle are all reportedly planning to launch their own brands of flavoured water in the United States.

Drinks firms bet on flavoured Lemon and raspberry versions of Coke's Dasani water brand will be available in US stores in the first quarter of 2005, the world's largest soft drinks maker has announced.

"This would appeal to people who don't want to drink the same water all the time," Ray Crockett, a spokesman for Coke's Dasani water brand, told Reuters news agency. "We have research that indicates consumers like flavoured waters."

PepsiCo has also announced that it will launch a new Aquafina water drink called FlavorSplash next year, which will be available in raspberry, wild berry and citrus flavours.

Nestle, which already markets Perrier, Poland Spring and other water brands, is launching lemon, orange, strawberry and raspberry flavoured Nestle Pure Life Splash. All the flavoured waters being launched by the drinks giants contain zero calories.

The US water market is worth an estimated \$11-billion (£5.7 billion) a year. Flavoured waters account for about 4 per cent of US water sales by volume and about 10 per cent in dollars and the sector is growing rapidly. Gatorade's Propel Fitness Water is currently the market leader in enhanced waters. Gatorade is a unit of PepsiCo.

"That segment is just beginning to emerge, and it's unclear how it will do," said John Sicher, editor of Beverage Digest. "I would estimate that it will gain some traction next year."

Large drinks companies are now targeting the growing enhanced water market, but Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are likely to tread carefully after Vitamin-enhanced versions of Dasani and Aquafina flopped in recent years. Industry observers have been warning of a pricing downdraft in the water business, but firms can charge more for flavoured or enhanced brands.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Food retailers display big health differences

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new report out today from the National Consumer Council (NCC) has revealed that there are significant differences between UK food retailers in terms of the types of healthy food they stock and the information they provide.

The council rated the top nine supermarket firms in the UK based on their approach to healthy eating.

When comparing the main stores, Waitrose, Sainsbury's and the Co-op were found to be the best at conveying the healthy eating message and helping consumers to eat healthily and more easily.

Among the issues used for ratings were labelling, in-store healthy eating promotions, food on sale and customer advice.

However the council believes that even those retailers that performed well can still do more to promote healthy eating to their shoppers.

Overall, Waitrose was claimed to be the healthiest supermarket chain, whilst most of those retailers known for their low prices did badly in the study.

The British Retail Consortium, responding to the survey, claimed that food retailers have already made "huge efforts" to help promote healthy and balanced diets.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Celebrity chef promotes festive food packaging recycling

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK consumers are being encouraged to recycle their food packaging this Christmas with a new scheme by British Glass and celebrity chef Kevin Woodford.

The popular TV star is helping to promote a new campaign, which is hoping to remind consumers to recycle their glass food jars and bottles after the festive season.

According to figures from the group, people will consume around 5.5 million jars of mincemeat, 6.5 million jars of cranberry sauce and 12 million jars of pickle in the UK this Christmas.

However, whilst last year some European countries recycled more than 90 per cent of their glass packaging, the UK recycled just 37 per cent.

Speaking at the launch Mr Woodford said: "Many people remember to recycle empty bottles at Christmas, but forget about recycling all the empty jars of mincemeat, cranberry sauce, mayonnaise, pickles and even the curry sauce jar they use to make left-over turkey curry.

"The great thing about glass is it can be recycled again and again to make more bottles and jars, so after the celebrations don't bin your glass, bank it at your local recycling centre or put it in your kerbside box."

According to Andrew Hartley from British Glass, the material is preferred to other types of packaging and is environmentally friendly and so many more products in glass packaging are bought during Christmas.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Polish cake firm acquired by Inter Link

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK cake firm Inter Link Foods has announced it has acquired a Polish cake maker for £1.17 million.

Cukiernia Mistrza Jana (CMJ) is a private company, which produces cakes and will now be wholly owned by Inter Link.

CMJ produces a collection of small cookies and cakes and recorded turnover of £3.76 million during the nine months to September 30th.

Executive chairman Alwin Thompson told Just Food: "The acquisition of CMJ is a very exciting first move for Inter Link Foods into Europe and complements our ambition to be number two cake supplier in the UK."

An advantage of the site is that products made there can be shipped to arrive in the UK within 24 hours and the acquisition will help Inter Link enter mainland European markets.

"CMJ operates from a well-invested 70,000 square foot factory with considerable spare capacity. It is our intention to use part of this new capacity to manufacture a range of products in Poland for UK customers," the company added.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Link between memory and food demonstrated

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Researchers in the US have found that the memory of a food can influence the eating habits of consumers.

UC Irvine psychologist Elizabeth Loftus suggests there may be ways for food makers to tackle false beliefs about a food product and influence eating habits.

"We discovered that food is a surprisingly easy target for memory manipulation," she wrote in the February issue of *Social Cognition*.

For the millions of Americans who worry about overeating during the holiday season, there may be hope: A new study suggests changing their memories of food may be a way to influence their eating habits.

Ms Loftus and her research team claim it is the first scientific demonstration of the effect of false beliefs on people's subsequent thoughts and behaviours.

The team conducted two experiments using a series of questionnaires and false feedback to convince people that, as children, they had become sick after eating hard-boiled eggs or pickles. As a result, these people later indicated they would avoid these foods. More than 25 per cent of the 336 volunteers confirmed that they "remembered" getting sick or "believed" that they did.

However, Ms Loftus explained that there may be limits to influencing eating habits. In another study using similar methods, people were convinced they had become sick from eating potato chips as children, but did not alter their behaviour towards the popular food.

"The idea that we can tap into people's imagination and mental thoughts to influence their food choices sounds exciting, but it's too preliminary to tell how this might be

applied in the dieting realm," the psychologist said. "Our next step is to obtain grant funding to experiment with real food."

Further information: www.uci.edu
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Call for grain innovation ideas

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Home Grown Cereals Authority is calling for applications from businesses with innovative ideas for the use of grain.

The organisation is holding its twice yearly Enterprise Awards and is inviting businesses from all food and non-food sectors to apply for finance to develop, market and launch new or existing products.

The Western Mail reports that the Home Grown Cereals Authority will be issuing grants of up to £50,000 in the latest funding round.

Julian Gibbons, chairman of HGCA's market development committee called particularly for applications from Wales.

She said: "Although we have had many applicants from all over the UK in both food and non-food categories, none so far have come from Welsh businesses so we're keen to encourage them to apply."

Further information: www.hgca.com/enterprise
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Scientists bake traditional Christmas fayre

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Scientists at the Royal Society of Chemistry in London have baked mince pies based on an ancient recipe dating back to 1648.

The Cromwellian recipe features mincemeat, as well as cloves, mace, dates, currants, orange peel and raisins.

The pies, dedicated to Sir Robert Boyle, the Father of Chemistry, contained a liberal portion of minced beef and the society claimed the Christmas treat was precisely what Sir Robert would have enjoyed at his coming-of-age party in 1648.

The recipe, taken from Gervase Markham's cookbook, *The English Huswife*, first published in 1615, is believed to have been used widely throughout the reign of Charles I.

Professor Anne Murcott, who revived Markham's recipe, said: "Tastes changed, and by the 18th century, a division was emerging between 'sweet' and 'savoury' that would be recognised today. Mostly, savoury meat pies lost their sweet flavouring. The exception was the mince pie which lost its meat, retaining suet as its sole ingredient of animal

origin."

In the 18th century, it was discovered that the spices and fruit mixture in mince pies could be combined with brandy or sack months before Christmas and stored safely in stone jars.

Further information: www.rsc.org
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Parkinson's could be prevented with low calorie diet

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new study from America has suggested that eating a low calorie diet could help consumers to reduce their risk of getting Parkinson's disease.

Conducted by a team at the US National Institute on Ageing, a team of monkeys were tested for the research, which concluded long-term reduction in calorie intake can stop the disease developing.

As well as helping to slow down the ageing process it is thought that limiting calories can help switch on mechanisms that help to protect brain cells which can be lost through Parkinson's.

The researchers explained to the BBC: "The present findings suggest that long-term caloric restriction can protect the monkey dopamine motor system against environmental toxins associated with Parkinson's disease.

"However, the impact of caloric restriction and other dietary manipulations on the course of Parkinson's disease in patients who are already symptomatic remains to be determined," they added.

Findings were welcomed by the Parkinson's Disease Society and they said results were encouraging but that more research on the effect on humans was needed.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Food enjoyment may be good for weight

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Latest advice from nutrition and diet experts has suggested that eating slowly and not feeling guilty over treats at Christmas could help consumers to keep the weight off.

According to ic Wales, the average Brit puts on five pounds over the festive period and many people often do not diet to shed this, despite countless New Year resolutions to diet.

However, experts are now claiming that indulgence, within reason, can actually be quite good for people and by worrying and feeling guilty only makes people feel unhappy and put on more weight.

Nutritional therapist Alison Cullen agrees and claims: "Guiltily counting every calorie or

sitting there desperately trying to find the resolve to refuse the Christmas pudding or chocolates is highly stressful.

"All that worry really achieves is to put a brake on our digestive system, which actually prevents the body from dealing with the food we've eaten in a healthy, normal way and getting rid of the toxins and fats."

According to Ms Cullen, if consumers are "uptight and tense" even the best organic and pure food will not do them any good.

In the same way a balanced diet is healthy throughout the year, during the festive season consumers can balance their food and drink intake to minimise the effect of Christmas dining.

The main tip for festive food is to chew it properly since it is easier for the body to deal with, the effect of the fat in the system is minimised and recent work has found links to this and a lower rate of coronary disease.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Packaging waste cut down at Tesco

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food retailer Tesco has revealed the first fully automated recycling machine in the UK today.

The machine has been designed to help encourage consumers to recycle more of their packaging waste and works by sorting the materials out and using new technology to process around 80 items per minute, according to Food Production Daily.

According to the supermarket chain, the machine will considerably increase the amount of waste that is recycled in the UK and it is hoped will help triple the amount people bring to stores for recycling.

"I am delighted to see retailers using their unique position to help encourage their customers to recycle," said Margaret Beckett, secretary of state for the environment, food and rural affairs.

"With nine out of ten people saying they would recycle if it was easier to do so, the new Tesco facility will hopefully attract a new generation of recyclers and encourage those who already do to recycle more."

Recycling is becoming a key issue for manufacturing firms, including food businesses, due to increasingly tougher rules, fines and regulations.

The UK's food and drink sector produces between seven and eight million tonnes of waste each year, but it is thought food retailers can help to achieve waste reduction targets from packaging.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Novelli plans cookery school television series

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Michelin-starred chef Jean Christophe Novelli is reportedly considering setting up his own television production company.

The French chef plans to make a series about his cookery school when it opens in February next year. He said he is also in discussions with the BBC and is studying "many options" on how to make the programmes.

Groups of up to ten cookery students will pay £250 plus accommodation costs to spend 24 hours with Mr Novelli at his 14th century Hertfordshire farmhouse near Luton, according to Caterer Online.

The 43-year-old patron of the Auberge du Lac restaurant at Brocket Hall has spent £200,000 expanding the original six-bedroom house to accommodate guests and further refurbishment work will cost around £300,000.

Mr Novelli said: "They are with me all the time - if they don't want to go to bed, we will stay in the kitchen all night talking."

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New meat safety test developed

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food analysis giant Biacore International has unveiled a new food safety kit for testing drug residues in meat products.

The company claims that its new Qflex Kit is capable of rapidly detecting 14 different β -Agonists, potentially toxic veterinary drugs used as growth promoters.

Biacore Q and Qflex Kits offer automated, label-free analysis and the company insists they provide significant time saving and reduced risk of experimental errors compared to similar testing methods, Food Production Daily reports. All Biacore instruments utilise Surface Plasmon Resonance (SPR) technology as the basis for detection and monitoring of protein interactions.

"In order to prevent ingestion by consumers, the use of β -agonists as growth promoters in farm animals is prohibited in many countries," said Esa Stenberg, vice president and head of Biacore's food business unit.

"It is therefore essential for producers to have an efficient test available for rapid, routine detection. Our new, simple to use Qflex Kit provides an extremely sensitive assay with broad specificity."

Traces of a nitrofurantoin, a banned veterinary medicine, were discovered in organic chicken in the UK earlier this year and up to 23 tonnes of the affected meat had been distributed across the country.

Further information: www.biacore.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Poultry and meat help site launched

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Meat and Poultry Communications Alliance has unveiled a new website aimed at offering consumers and the media quick and easy nutrition information.

The new site, set up by the coalition of three industry organisations, was developed with assistance from leading nutrition expert Michele Tuttle, who will periodically answer nutrition questions submitted to the website.

www.meatpoultrynutrition.org will provide detailed nutrition on meat and poultry, The Pig Site reports.

The new website includes scientifically referenced sections on dietary fat, protein, weight loss and portion size; a recipe section; frequently asked questions; and a list of third-party experts who can provide background information and grant interviews.

The Meat and Poultry Communications Alliance is a joint project of the American Meat Institute, the National Chicken Council and the National Turkey Federation.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Portuguese food business increased at Unilever

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Unilever has announced that it is moving further into Portugal's food sector by restructuring its Portuguese foods business.

The food firm is currently in a joint venture with Jeronimo Martins Group and the new deal will see food businesses FimaVG and Unilever Bestfoods Portugal join together.

In addition, the deal will see the joint venture shares re-balance so that Unilever will hold 49 per cent of the combined business and Jeronimo Martins Group will own 51 per cent.

Up until this new restructuring Unilever Portugal had a 40 per cent stake in FimaVG.

Although the deal is subject to regulatory approval, if successful Unilever will receive around €80 million as a result.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Asda dairy protests put on hold

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Farmers for Action (FFA), which has been protesting against Asda, has called a

temporary stop to its protests.

For the last fortnight dairy farmers have brought sections of the distribution network for Asda to a standstill, demonstrating against an Arla milk contract, which they deem to be unfair.

However the campaigning group has claimed that action is currently suspended as it hopes a further round of talks can help resolve problems over farm milk prices.

It is hoped a meeting between FFA, Asda and Arla will be held before Monday, when the group will decide on its next plan of action.

Defending the firm against complaints about dairy prices, a spokesman for Asda told the Press and Journal: "We're giving £2.5million to 600 farmers.

"We know it's only 600 farmers and we know it's not the rest of the industry. Farmers have been asking, as have the NFUs in England and Scotland, that we get closer to the farmers and that's what we are doing."

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Moo appoints new ad agency

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Milk brand Moo has announced it has appointed a new agency for its marketing and latest advertising campaign.

Lawson Dodd will launch a 'Make it with Moo' campaign and promote the product as the perfect store-cupboard ingredient.

The campaign will convey the humorous approach of the brand and a host of series will be held to emphasise Moo's relevance to nearly every cooking occasion.

Belinda Lawson, director at Lawson Dodd, commented: "Moo is a very appealing brand. Anyone that uses milk should always have Moo in their cupboard.

"The strategy is delightfully simple but works on every level - use it to cook with, put what's left over in the fridge and you'll find its great in coffee, on your cereal. That's the way to get volume up and create a favourite brand in an unbranded market sector."

Moo was launched in January this year and is owned by the UK's third largest integrated dairy business Milk Link.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Poor service dogs UK restaurant industry

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Rude or hapless service continues to be the major complaint by diners, a new report claims.

Restaurant customers were also left fuming over the year by table-turning, rushed meals,

cramped surroundings and overpriced food, according to the annual report by London-based guide Square Meal.

The survey of 8,000 diners, mainly in London, found that 40 per cent of respondents complained about bad service, compared with 24 per cent about food and drink, the second-largest area of grievance.

The guide names and shames a number of the most fashionable London restaurants, including Jamie Oliver's Fifteen, The Wolseley in Piccadilly and Chez Gerard at the Opera Terrace, for having the worst service of all the capital's smartest restaurants.

Comments from diners included: "Basic food at a very full price, shockingly snotty service; they tell you in no uncertain terms to turn up at an awkward time but the table is not ready." Another commented: "Our dining experience can only be described as appalling."

"People want that old thing - service with a smile," Gaby Huddart, editor of Square Meal. "London beats Paris hands down for its restaurants, but in France service is as important as the food and I'm not sure we've got that in London."

Restaurants with the best service included Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's, the Greenhouse, Le Gavroche, The Square and Chez Bruce in Wandsworth.

Objections to rushed service and cramped surroundings almost doubled this year (rising from 5 per cent of complaints in 2002 and 2003 to 9 per cent) with diners attacking "crazy table-turning policies".

The number of grievances about the food also increased during 2004, with 19 per cent of diners complaining about the quality or the temperature of their meals. Other gripes included decor and ambience (18 per cent) and high prices (also 18 per cent), with a number of newer complaints emerging, such as the increasing use of automated telephone reservation systems and expensive bottled waters.

Square Meal found fewer complaints about smoky restaurants, and fewer diners reported the value on credit card slips being left open.

Further information: www.squaremeal.co.uk

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Somerfield calls off anti-Co-op campaign

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Supermarket group Somerfield has axed its 'store wars' campaign against the Co-op and apologised for any offence caused.

Somerfield chairman John von Spreckelsen admitted the campaign was misguided and unhelpful and claimed that it was masterminded at junior level. He has reportedly been in contact with Co-op group chief executive Martin Beaumont.

Pete Williams, head of press at Somerfield said: "Somerfield regrets any offence that may

have been caused by the unauthorised circulation of a document outlining a recent stores campaign.

"The document involved was intended to be light-hearted and was meant for Somerfield employees only.

In a controversial document entitled "Flock Off" Somerfield urged managers of its branches to treat their local Co-op retailers as "lambs to the slaughter".

The confidential memo, reported by the Manchester Evening News, used a cartoon image of Colin the Sheep, featured in TV commercials by the Co-operative group, being hanged at the gallows.

The dirty tricks campaign targeted 200 Co-op stores across the UK and offered a £5,000 incentive to store bosses who managed to close down their local Co-op and £500 to anyone who could successfully entice a Co-op employee to move to their store.

Martin Henderson, head of public relations for the Co-op group, said: "Although it was recognition of what we already knew all along, that we were beating them hands down on prices, quality and ethical trading. It's pleasing to see they have stood down."

Further information: www.co-op.co.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Turkish experts visit Cheddar on PDO mission

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A delegation of Turkish government officials is visiting two members of the West Country Farmhouse Cheesemakers group this week.

The three trademark specialists will visit Westcombe Dairy and Brue Valley Farms, the makers of real Cheddar cheese, in a bid to find out more about the EU Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) scheme.

Turkey is aiming to join the European Union soon and the officials will be looking at ways in which the PDO scheme could be used to protect certain traditional foods from Turkey.

The scheme was created to protect the authenticity of foods that are specific to a region, such as farmhouse Cheddar, Cornish clotted cream and French Champagne.

The PDO designation also ensures that all foods bearing the endorsement are using traditional methods and traditional ingredients.

West Country Farmhouse Cheesemakers comprises 14 of the 16 dairies that are allowed to describe the cheese they make as 'West Country Farmhouse Cheddar'.

Philip Crawford of West Country Farmhouse Cheesemakers said: "We're looking forward to showing our Turkish visitors around the farms and demonstrating just how much care we take in producing a real farmhouse Cheddar cheese."

Further information: www.farmhousecheesemakers.co.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Chip and PIN criticised at UK restaurants

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK restaurants have been complaining over the use of chip and PIN, claiming that it is causing a host of problems.

One London restaurateur has claimed that staff are losing £300 a week in tips due to the system at his establishment in Marylebone, according to Caterer Online.

A key problem is the fact that food takes longer to be served as a result of the system and especially at lunchtimes when consumers want fast service.

Similarly, Michael Moore who owns a restaurant nearby has refused to have the machines in his venue because he is concerned service will be affected and customers could be lost.

The Hospitality Users Discussion Forum on chip and PIN have now provided some suggestions in response on how to make chip and PIN easier in food establishments.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Cadbury predicts sweet results

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Cadbury has claimed that it is performing well and is not threatened by new competition with fellow food firm Nestle.

Although Nestle has recently boosted its sales of the KitKat chocolate biscuit, Cadbury has seen Dairy Milk sales increasing considerably, according to Financial Times Online.

Giving an update on its future financial situation, Cadbury has confirmed its financial guidance for 2004 and explained its performance will be as stated.

However, the confectionery firm admitted results would be at the lower end of its targeted range.

Cadbury expects financial results to show £1.5 billion of free cash flow and annual sales growth of between three and five per cent.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Premier brand deal becomes unconditional

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Premier Foods has revealed today that the sale of the Bird's Custard and Angel Delight brands have been approved by the board of Kraft Foods parent company.

According to Premier, Altria has approved the sale and there are now no further conditions that need to be met for completion of the transaction.

The deal is set to take place during February next year.

By acquiring the brands, which also include Rowntree's jelly, the company will be able to move further into the grocery sector.

Money for the deal is set to come from unused bank debt facilities.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Gowrings takeover approved

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A takeover bid by Burger King franchisee Caspian for rival Gowrings has been approved by shareholders.

Shareholders representing more than 90 per cent of motor dealerships-to-restaurants group Gowrings have backed the £9.6 million deal, meaning the bid has been declared unconditional.

Caspian, a private company that operates 12 Burger King restaurants in the south of England, announced its recommended cash offer, of 106p a share, in November.

Gowrings, based in Thatcham, Berkshire, operates 41 Burger King franchises in the Midlands and the south of England. The restaurant has struggled against high overheads in recent years, prompting the decision to sell.

The firm sold its accident repair centres business in June, planning to focus on its restaurant operations.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

A-Z founders snap up chain

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Founders of the A-Z Restaurants chain have agreed a £7 million deal, warding off bids from rivals including Hush owner Jamie Barber and partners.

Claudio Pulze, Franco Zanellato and an unnamed third partner beat counterbids to purchase the chain. Mr Pulze originally launched a bid in partnership with Cafe Med owner Simon Binder, who then dropped out when "it all got a bit expensive".

Mr Pulze then teamed up with restaurant magnate Marlon Abela, but the deal was scuppered by a higher offer from Mr Zanellato. At the last minute, Mr Pulze joined Mr Zanellato's bid, although he claimed that previous discussions had taken place, Caterer magazine reports.

"We had talked a few weeks ago but had different ideas about how we saw the deal progressing," said Mr Pulze. "At the end of the day I wanted a piece of the action."

A-Z has seven restaurants, which will be kept together for the immediate future, though analysts predict that Mr Pulze, who originally wanted to bid for only the two Memories of China restaurants in Victoria and Kensington, may push to sell off some individual properties.

Administrator BDO Stoy Hayward took control of A-Z Restaurants after bankers pulled the plug on funding last month and around 29 offers for the group of restaurants were received by the first deadline of November 18th.

The seven London restaurants in the deal are Aubergine in Fulham; Zafferano in Knightsbridge; L'Oranger in St James's Street; Alloro in Mayfair; Spiga in Soho, and Memories of China in Victoria and Kensington.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Fried Mars Bars 'typify Scottish diet'

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Foods such as deep-fried Mars Bars, chocolate-coated nougat-caramel bars dipped in batter and fried in vegetable oil or lard are typical examples of trends in the Scottish diet, a new study claims.

Published in medical journal *The Lancet*, fried sweets are more popular than previously thought and found that one in five fish-and-chip shops surveyed sold fried Mars Bars. The NHS-backed survey of half of the 627 fish-and-chip shops in Scotland revealed that 22 per cent of Scottish take-aways had the foodstuff on its menu and a further 17 per cent used to sell them.

Researchers found that children are the main buyers of deep-fried candy bars, with one shop reporting sales of up to 200 a week. The shops interviewed also reported they have been asked to deep-fry food such as pickled eggs, pineapple rings, Snickers, Creme Eggs, and pizzas in the past. The average shop sold an average of 23 deep-fried Mars Bars a week, while the average price was 60p.

The first report of battered Mars bars being up for sale appeared in the *Scottish Daily Record* in August 1995, but many people outside the country believed it to be an urban myth. However, the health service findings have debunked that idea by proving that sales are widespread.

"We thought they might be fictitious. But the Scottish diet is a major health issue and it's important to know what the facts are," David Morrison, consultant for public health medicine at the NHS of greater Glasgow and lead researcher of the study, said. "We can now confirm that there is no doubt, the deep-fried Mars bar is not just an urban myth."

A fried Mars Bar has about 423 calories, which is about a fifth of a day's normal caloric intake.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Traditional favourite still number one

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fish and chips remains the nation's favourite takeaway grub, according to a new survey.

Despite the growing popularity of Chinese and Indian food, the humble fish and chip supper is the top nosh for most Britons.

At least half of those interviewed by market analysts Mintel said they had visited a chip shop in the past three months.

A traditional meal at a local pub came second in the poll, with Chinese restaurants and takeaways coming third, followed by pizza shops. The Indian curry house came fifth.

In the "premium versus budget eating out" survey, Mintel estimated Britons would spend £25 billion on pre-prepared food in 2004.

Linda Haden, an analyst at Mintel, said there was still a discernible tendency towards eating British food.

"Pubs have been at the forefront of reviving and rejuvenating interest in British cuisine. Gastropubs, chain pubs and dedicated pub restaurants, which serve reasonably priced meals, have inherently transformed how the public view pub food today," she said.

Mintel interviewed 1,974 adults about their eating habits in the three months to November.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

FSA reveals big differences in soup salt content

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new survey out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has revealed wide variations in salt content between different soups available on the market.

According to the agency report, some soups contain as much as half of the recommended daily intake for an adult in just one serving.

Gill Fine, director of consumer choice and dietary health said: "The results show a considerable variation in the level of salt in soups.

"We welcome the commitment that some manufacturers and retailers have made to reduce salt content in soups but the fact that such a popular and convenient food can provide more than a third of the daily salt limit shows that continued effort in this area is still needed."

Salt content was studied in canned, chilled, dried and fresh soups and findings suggested that soups also varied considerably in flavour.

In total 77 soups were surveyed during November, featuring big brands and retailers'

own brand products.

The survey was conducted as part of the agency's regular set of surveys looking at salt content of everyday foods, with a recommended maximum daily salt intake issued of six grams.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

easyGroup launches new pizza service

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The easyGroup has moved into a new sector by launching its own delivery only pizza service.

Trying to offer something a little different, the service will offer lower prices for online, off peak and advance orders and claims it has "re-engineered the pizza preparation and delivery service".

easyPizza has now opened its first franchise in Milton Keynes and has attempted to reduce overhead costs in order to cut prices.

A total of ten pizza varieties will be offered as part of the company's menu, along with a range of side orders.

easyPizza plans to expand throughout the UK and hopes to franchise the brand to third parties.

The new business is the third new project for the firm in the last week and it is also looking into a new music service.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Co-op gets new food chief

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Co-operative Group has announced the appointment of Eoin McGettigan as chief executive of its food retail division.

Mr McGettigan, who is currently executive chairman of Musgrave UK and chief executive of its Londis food subsidiary, will take up his new post in February.

The Co-op has experienced recent falls in profits in its food division and the new boss will be expected to boost sales. The group has also seen internal supply chain problems affect on-shelf availability.

The Co-operative Group's food retail division includes 1,200 Welcome convenience stores as well as 500 supermarkets.

The company recently acquired the Alldays, Balfours and Conveco convenience store chains but has found the sector difficult in recent months as the UK supermarket giants increasingly move into the convenience store business.

Profits from the Co-op's food stores fell from £62 million to £36 million during the first half of this year and the company has issued a profit warning for the second half.

Announcing Mr McGettigan's appointment, Co-op group chief executive, Martin Beaumont said: "Eoin joins us at a particularly challenging time for our food retailing business, which is suffering short-term indigestion following recent acquisitions and is subject to fiercely competitive market conditions."

Mr McGettigan added: "The Co-op is a well-known and trusted brand with a strong retail proposition - this is one of the most exciting roles in food retailing."

Further information: www.co-op.co.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

US scientists develop biodegradable baking pan

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

US researchers claim to have developed a pioneering biodegradable packaging for ovenable and freezable baked goods.

A team of ex-aerospace engineers and geologists at Biosphere Industries insist the new disposable baking pan is cheaper than aluminium and most plastic alternatives.

The baking pan is made from the company's newly developed Primary Packaging Material 100 (PPM100) which consists mainly of starch with a small amount of organic additives and non-wood fibres to add structure. No non-organic fillers or plastics have been used, according to Bakery & Snacks.

The new product is reportedly suitable for a range of baked foods such as pies and cakes and could sell for half the price of ovenable plastics, producing cost savings of 20 to 30 per cent compared to aluminium trays.

Elie Helou, Biosphere's chief executive, said: "We are seeking our own protection for the mix and mould systems which produce steam as the only by-product of manufacture. We believe that our technology is several years ahead of current competitors and intend to take advantage of this lead."

Biosphere is also working on another similar material called PPM200, which has been designed to meet high moisture and steam generating conditions such as noodle bowls, coffee cups, soup bowls, frozen prepared meals, and other hot or cold moisture food products such as meat trays.

The company was set up three years ago to develop environmentally friendly packaging. Biodegradable packaging can be produced without burning fossil fuels and is expected to become more popular as interest increases in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and waste. The European Union recently proposed taxes on packaging waste produced by companies.

Further information: www.biospherecorp.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Plant oils may reduce heart disease risk

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Consuming plant-derived sterols (or oils) may benefit those who are at risk of coronary heart disease, when combined with exercise.

New research conducted by a team from McGill University in Canada found that fat and cholesterol levels in the body can be reduced by combining the consumption of plant-derived sterols (or oils) with exercise.

The scientists assessed 74 non-active individuals between the ages of 40 and 70 and placed them in four different intervention groups: combination (consumed margarine containing plant sterols and exercised), exercise (consumed plant-sterol -free margarine and exercised), sterol only (consumed margarine containing plant sterols and did not exercise) and control (consumed plant-sterol free margarine and did not exercise).

"In comparison with plant sterols or exercise alone, the combination of plant sterols and exercise yielded the most beneficial change in the volunteer's cholesterol and lipid levels," said lead author and McGill doctoral student, Krista Varady.

"This combination therapy favourably altered their lipid profiles by decreasing total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, and triacylglycerol levels and by increasing high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol levels."

The study, supported by funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, is featured in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Foodservice set-ups boosted by TV chefs

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The number of new businesses being set up in the catering sector could be due to celebrity chefs, according to a new report today by Barclays.

By appealing to consumers and making dining out a trendy activity, TV chefs have helped towards increasing the number of people eating out more than once a week to one fifth of consumers.

In addition, people are increasingly experimenting with different cuisines and dishes, according to ic Wales.

Louise Fowler, marketing director of small business at Barclays, commented: "Food-obsessed Britons are increasingly adopting a lifestyle of eating out, with dining at a restaurant no longer just for a special occasion.

"What these TV programmes are doing is showing us the array of food on offer and this is having a knock-on effect on the choice and number of restaurants opening up."

For the first three quarters of 2004, the number of catering businesses set up, reached 16,000 and just under 11,000 were opened for the period the year before.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Thousands of Walkers' packets mislabelled

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has released a food alert today, warning about nearly 11,000 wrongly labelled Walkers crisps packets.

According to the agency, a number of packets of salt and vinegar flavour French Fries crisps have actually been mistakenly filled with the cheese and onion flavour variety of the snacks.

The agency is concerned that people who are allergic to mustard, wheat and milk may suffer a reaction to the cheese and onion flavoured crisps.

Bags affected are those that are sold individually, but the company has not been able to confirm where the packets have been distributed.

However it is thought the product is most likely to be found in smaller retail outlets, pubs and vending machines.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

EU trials innovative food labelling

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The EU has revealed that trials have been conducted for a new soluble label, which would indicate whether a product has been open to unsuitable conditions or if it has been tampered with.

Tests on the new food labelling are now nearly complete, according to Just Food.

According to researchers, a British electronics manufacturer, which is currently unnamed, will market the system by the end of the year.

It is hoped the labelling could be used commercially during the first quarter of 2005.

Working as a non-refixable security seal, the labelling also changes form in certain conditions if the moisture or humidity is not correct.

Customers can adjust resistance and the different levels to suit their individual needs.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Security tightened up in food industry

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new product has been designed to try and ensure terrorists cannot target the food

supply.

According to Food Production Daily, supply chain safety is now an extremely important issue for the industry and regulations such as traceability laws planned in January in the EU are an example of typical protection measures.

One company, Operations Technologies has spent 18 months developing a software solution to offset the cost of new compliance standards with automated real-time data tracking and documentation.

Named 'SupplySync', the product is set to be launched in the first quarter of 2005 and will allow food firms to meet traceability requirements whilst still improving customer service and cutting administrative costs.

Operations Technologies' president claimed that the food supply is vulnerable, but by using a software such as this, considerable improvements in food chain security can be achieved.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Middle class ignoring healthy eating messages

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Britons are eating less and less healthily, particularly the middle classes, according to a new study.

Research by scientists at University College London shows that up to one-third of Britons, 20 million people, have increased their consumption of fried food, while the same number were taking less exercise.

The government has spent millions of pounds on healthy eating campaigns but they have failed to deter people from eating junk food, The Sunday Times reports.

The study looked at the eating and exercise habits of more than 11,000 "baby-boomers" for almost a decade and discovered that the consumption of vegetables had fallen, while the middle classes were eating more chips and fried food.

Over the eight years the study was conducted, 40 per cent of the men and women were found to have increased or maintained their intake of fried food and 17 per cent ate more chips. 40 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women had seen their fruit and vegetable consumption slip to less than one portion of either a day.

Tim Lang, professor of food policy at City University, London, said: "Health education is a discredited approach to changing people's diet and behaviour. If you want to improve public health, you need to take a much tougher line with food manufacturers and catering."

Spending on health promotion is at an all-time high and the food standards agencies in England, Scotland and Wales cost £150 million a year to run, with a further £80 million being devoted solely to promoting fruit in schools.

(no further information)

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Food companies criticised over salt levels in soup

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Many soups contain as much as half of the advised daily intake of salt and food makers must do more to reduce sodium levels, the UK food agency reports.

A study by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) found that, while many food firms continue with their commitment to reduce salt levels in processed foods, more action is needed.

A survey by the government-funded agency showed that some of the 77 soups tested contained as much as half of the 6g recommended maximum daily intake for adults and many more contained as much as a third of the advised intake.

The agency looked at the salt content in canned, fresh and dried soup, both branded and supermarket own-label and also at fresh, or chilled, soups which have grown in popularity.

Gill Fine, director of consumer choice and dietary health at the FSA, said: "We welcome the commitment that some manufacturers and retailers have made to reduce salt content in soups but the fact that such a popular and convenient food can provide more than a third of the daily salt limit shows that continued effort in this area is still needed."

The FSA recently launched a nationwide campaign aimed at dramatically reducing salt levels in consumer diets. Diets rich in salt are linked to high blood pressure which increases the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Further information: www.food.gov.uk

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Beef industry seeks end date for OTM ban

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The UK beef industry is calling on the government to provide clear information on exactly when the Over Thirty Months (OTM) rule will be changed.

The National Beef Association has asked the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to tell the industry when beef from cows born after July 1996 can move back onto the market and has called for a late summer 2005 start rather than an autumn one.

"There is much to look forward to and the industry will be able to take maximum advantage of this welcome development if it is given the earliest possible notice of when the change is due," the Association's vice-chairman, Keith Redpath told The Cumberland News.

Mr Redpath said he accepted that a 2005 start date would take a lot of work. The ban on

the sale of cattle over thirty months old followed the BSE outbreak in Britain.

He added: "Everything depends on the dovetailing of a number of legal and administrative procedures the most important of which is the report by the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on OTMS testing implementation which is expected in late April or early May.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

EU cod plans criticised by fisheries minister

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The fisheries minister has announced there is strong opposition against plans to close cod fishing grounds and that he will reject recommendations to close some grounds.

Ross Finnie is to head negotiations for Scotland when Brussels attempts to set catch limits for 2005 and claims that many EU countries support Scotland's position.

The European Commission is planning to close whole fishing grounds in the North Sea and is looking into proposals to make further cuts in days at sea, both of which have angered Mr Finnie.

In addition, areas of the Irish seas and off of western Scotland have also been recommended for closure.

It is thought the plans could have a "devastating effect" on the white fish industry and Mr Finnie claimed he did not accept scientific evidence provided.

According to the minister, the areas which may be closed will not help conservation and the cod-recovery plan set up two years ago should be allowed more time to take effect first.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New director selected at Tesco

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food retailer Tesco revealed today that it has chosen a new non-executive director for its board.

Carolyn McCall, who has worked for Guardian Newspapers for 18 years, will replace Veronique Morali.

Ms Morali is stepping down after four years on the company's board and will now focus on business commitments in France.

Tesco Chairman David Reid said: "I am delighted that Carolyn McCall is joining the Board of Tesco.

"In her 18 years with Guardian Newspapers she has helped build the Guardian brand and taken it into new areas. Carolyn's strategic and brand marketing experience will be an asset to our Board."

Ms McCall will begin her new position with effect from March 1st 2005.
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Iceland changing focus back to frozen foods

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The reappointed boss of Iceland, Malcom Walker, has announced that the UK food retailer is to refocus its efforts on frozen food.

Mr Walker, who is set to become chief executive, is planning to sell his CoolTrader business to Baugur when he takes on his role.

He told Just Food: "It is a question of emphasis. Iceland's strength is in frozen food but it has been going down the convenience store route."

Iceland moved towards fresh produce and bread to increase sales and reap the benefits of the convenience retail trend, but found that sales continued to struggle.

Mr Walker now wants to return to the firm after the Baugur and Big Food Group deal, although certain issues still have to be finalised.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Coffee Republic reduces losses

Date: Wed, 22 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Coffee bar operator Coffee Republic has announced that losses for the six months to September 26th have narrowed.

The chain is coming to the end of a lengthy restructuring programme that has seen it close 23 outlets in the past year.

Coffee Republic reported that pre-tax losses for the six months came in at £880,000, down from £990,000 for the same period last year. Total sales were 22 per cent lower at £8.9 million, as expected following the closure of a number of sites.

The firm attributed its improved results to the popularity of its new deli outlets. A number of sites have been converted from standard coffee bars to delis as part of the overhaul and Coffee Republic said these outlets had seen sales rise by more than a fifth.

London-based Coffee Republic has been moving towards a deli format, offering fresh sandwiches and hot food counters as well as coffee and six of its 49 sites are now trading under the new format.

Chairman Bobby Hashemi said the format was popular with "time-pressed" people and he expected the majority to be converted in the next few years.

"We are fine-tuning the deli model and have evolved the concept to ensure that the offering continues to be differentiated and profitable," he said.

Further information: www.coffeerepublic.co.uk
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

European ministers reject GM crop application

Date: Wed, 22 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

European environment ministers have refused to approve a GM food crop designed by US biotech giant Monsanto.

Ministers failed to reach a majority decision on a European Commission proposal to approve the importation and feed use of Monsanto's GT73 GM oilseed rape into the EU.

At a council meeting in Brussels this week, 19 out of the 25 environment ministers voted against approval of the crop, genetically modified by Monsanto to resist the company's own herbicide, glyphosate. Experts from EU member states failed to reach an agreement on GT73 in June.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has declared that GT73 is "as safe as conventional oilseed rape for humans and animals, and in the context of the proposed uses, for the environment." However, there remains a great deal of public mistrust in EU nations about GM food.

The final decision on the approval of GT73 will now be left with the European Commission, which has stated that it believes the introduction of the crop for industrial processing and animal feed should be authorised. If GT73 is eventually approved, it will be the third GMO to be authorised for use in the European Union since May this year.

The European Commission broke a de facto moratorium on GM foods earlier this year and pushed through approval for a GM sweetcorn supplied by Swiss biotech firm Syngenta, the first approval of a GM foodstuff since 1998.

Further information: www.monsanto.com
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

UK sausage firm takes control of Biofilm

Date: Wed, 22 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK sausage casing company Devro has announced that it has acquired control of Biofilm, a 50/50 joint venture between itself and partner Westone Products.

Devro will now hold a 90 per cent stake in Biofilm. Under the terms of the deal, Devro did not receive any financial consideration, but has instead "released Westone Products from certain contingent indemnity obligations and all future financial commitments".

Biofilm was created in 2003 to develop products based on dissolvable thin film technology used to deliver ingredients and other active ingredients, such as breath strips, Food Navigator reports.

The technology involves a fast dissolving substrate that can incorporate ingredients into

its matrix. The technology is currently still in the development stage, but the company has seen interest from the retail segment,

"A commitment to this edible film technology will broaden the base of our business, that currently has a 55 per cent market share of collagen casings," Devro's CEO Dr Graeme Alexander told the website.

Biofilm's original test facility in Devro's Moodiesburn plant, has since been upgraded to a pilot production unit near to Glasgow in Scotland, which will be capable of supplying commercial volumes of products.

Further information: www.devro.plc.uk

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Starbucks launches website to boost business

Date: Wed, 22 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Coffee company Starbucks has launched a new website to celebrate 20 years of its Starbucks Christmas Blend.

Digital agency Wheel has created the site, which has been developed to inform and educate people about Starbucks' heritage and to boost the company's position as "the coffee experts".

Cathy Heseltine, marketing director at Starbucks, told Revolution: "The Internet allows us to produce engaging content for our target audience and create a third place for Starbucks customers outside of the stores, the office and home.

"Wheel has produced a warm and exciting website that shows Starbucks' heritage and passion for coffee."

An online advertising campaign is also being run to attract people to the site, aimed at women aged between 25 and 35.

Features of the site include a coffee table book full of background information, the option to send cards or invites and perfect things to have with a Starbucks beverage.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

ABF increases brand marketing spending

Date: Wed, 22 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Associated British Foods (ABF) has announced that it has centralised all its media planning buying into one place with Zenith Optimedia, as part of plans to increase media budget by 50 per cent.

The firm is looking to up media spending to £20 million next year, in order to support a number of new product launches, according to Media Bulletin.

Previously activity was split between four marketing agencies, with Zenith holding around £8.5 million of the company's account.

ABF produces brands including Twinings, Silver Spoon sugar, Ovaltine and Ken Hom

stir fry sauces.

Zenith has already held responsibility for marketing for brands such as Kingsmill, Ryvita, Allinson and Sunblest at ABF.

With group sales up five per cent during this financial year and operating profits increasing by 12 per cent, the company's chairman believes the firm is strongly set for further growth.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

EU takes action over olives

Date: Wed, 22 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new research project is being conducted by the European Commission to help reduce the environmental impact of olive production.

Brussels is keen to establish a balance between boosting olive consumption for its health benefits but also making sure environmental impacts are lessened, according to Just Food.

Olives are particularly recommended for their health benefits, which include helping the cardiovascular system.

However, according to the EU's TDC-Olive (technology dissemination centres) project, olive production can use up huge amounts of water in semi-arid areas and also produce residues that are hard to recycle and dispose of.

The new scheme will now set up a company with qualified staff to support new technology which will maximise olive production waste recycling and cut water use.

It is thought previous problems have been worsened by the small average size of producers.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Retailers set for Christmas rush

Date: Thu, 23 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food retailers are preparing for two of the busiest days in their stores this Christmas, with latest evidence suggesting people are leaving their food shopping to the last minute.

Asda and Tesco are both expecting high numbers of customers today and tomorrow, with Tesco already having sold 250,000 frozen turkeys, 800,000 packs of smoked salmon and one million Christmas puddings.

In addition, Tesco has announced that it is offering a sale today on over 1,000 products online and so far 44 per cent of British households have shopped there.

A survey by KPMG International revealed that because Christmas occurs on a Saturday this year consumers have left it a lot later than usual and around 13 per cent claimed they would wait until Christmas Eve to buy their Christmas food.

"Expect a surge on fresh food today and on Friday as shoppers get their final bits and pieces," said Edward Garner, an analyst at Taylor Nelson Sofres, told Bloomberg.

In the UK, Tesco has 1,878 stores and Asda owns 265.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Innovative food firms receive more support from EU

Date: Thu, 23 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food companies that develop new plant varieties, to stop rivals copying their innovative work, are to get better rights under new EU plans in 2005.

The European Commission has called on the EU Council of Ministers to comply with the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants and help to increase its scale throughout the EU.

According to Just Food, the new moves will provide "breeders of new plant varieties an exclusive property right, on the basis of a set of uniform and clearly defined principles".

With further EU support it is hoped that all EU companies will get protection and not just those firms from the countries that were part of the convention in the past.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Consumers opting for farm shop food

Date: Thu, 23 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK farm shops are experiencing a sales boom this Christmas, whilst many high street retailers are still yet to see record shoppers.

The Country Land and Business Association (CLA), has welcomed the results, as consumers choose to purchase locally produced or fresh foods from farm shops.

The regional director of the CLA, Dorothy Fairburn, told the BBC: "I think people have realised actually just what a pleasure it is to shop locally.

"They can go to their local farmers market and their local farm shops and get really good fresh quality produce without any of the hassle."

In fact, some farm shops have actually struggled with stock and are selling out because of such high demand for the festive period.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

NFU issues response to Defra's cattle consultation

Date: Thu, 23 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The NFU has called for a review of categories today at Defra, in response to its cattle disease compensation consultation.

Helping to provide industry opinion, the NFU hopes to provide the government with organised information and help to identify key problems in Defra's proposals.

NFU President, Tim Bennett, said: "There is a need for review, however, the government's proposed category system is too narrow and does not take into account the differing breed values that exist in the market place.

"The NFU believes it is essential we retain professional valuers in the compensation process, which is still the best approach to ensure accurate valuations. The lack of an appeals mechanism is not acceptable."

The consultation is hoped to gain comments on the rationalisation of the compensation arrangements for the control of notifiable animal diseases, which the government feels needs a complete overhaul.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Brits revealed as the true chocoholics

Date: Thu, 23 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A report from market analysts Datamonitor has stated that the British are the biggest consumers of chocolate in Europe.

Brits eat 24 pounds of chocolate a year, about the weight of 154 Mars bars.

Cadbury Schweppes, Masterfoods and Nestle are the main competitors for the chocolate bar market in the UK.

Chocolate bars make up 44 per cent of all chocolate sales by volume, and the most popular bars are Kit Kat, Twix and Mars Bar.

Datamonitor has predicted that as People become more health and diet conscious, the major confectionery companies will launch low carbohydrate and sugar free products.

UK manufacturer Nestle has recently launched a low carbohydrate version of the Kit Kat in the UK.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

NFU allows producers to stay in energy scheme

Date: Fri, 24 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has announced that it will allow poultry, meat and egg producers that have just missed energy targets to stay in the Climate Change Agreement scheme.

The scheme run by Defra is aimed at saving energy through producers and on farms, which the NFU agreed to in 2000.

Through the scheme, producers were entitled to an 80 per cent reduction from the energy levy if they aimed to save energy with the NFU.

Charles Bourns, chair of the NFU poultry board, said: "Farmers may have missed their goal for all sorts of reasons, for example, a change in management or a reduced stocking density from legislation (for conventional egg producers). That's why the NFU is advising members to take stock after Christmas and work out what is the best policy for their business in the new year."

Since energy prices are rising, the NFU has agreed that members in the scheme who are not meeting their targets at present should evaluate the benefit of buying carbon to stay in the scheme against the discount they currently receive.

Producers will all be sent a letter over the Christmas period about the current situation and farmers will be sent an update of their performance data early next year.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Twin process key to cutting obesity risk

Date: Fri, 24 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Regular exercise alone is not enough to cut the risk of death from obesity, according to new research.

The study which followed 116,000 nurses over 24 years was published in the New England Journal of Medicine and found that a twin process of exercise and weight loss is the key to lowering the risk of dying from obesity.

Obese women who work out for 3.5 hours per week have a death rate 91 per cent higher than lean women who exercise for the same amount of time, according to the study, yet this figure rises to 142 per cent for obese women who do minimal exercise, thus underlining the importance of regular exercise.

Lean women who only exercise for 3.5 hours per week or less also increase their risk of premature death from obesity and by 55 per cent compared to more active females.

These findings were summed up by lead author Dr Frank Hu, who said: "If you are overweight or obese, exercise is good for you even if you don't lose weight.

"For people who are lean and sedentary, it's really important for them to get out of the couch and exercise, even if they don't have to lose weight."

Professor Neil Armstrong, from the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre in Exeter, told the BBC that as obesity is linked to a range of diseases, it is crucial that the problem is tackled.

"If you really want to do something about obesity, it really needs to be a two-fold process, which includes aerobic exercise and a reduction in energy intake.

"Obesity is related to many diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, so it's a very important issue."

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

UK ready meals sector continues to grow

Date: Fri, 24 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new report out today by food and grocery think tank IGD has revealed that the ready meal sector in the UK is now worth £1.5 billion.

According to findings from the 'Food Consumption 2005' report, the sector is now growing at a rate of six per cent each year and is set for further growth.

Joanne Denney-Finch, IGD's chief executive told Just Food: "The UK food industry is a world leader in terms of offering convenience foods. It has innovated through applying new food and packaging technologies.

"Consumption trends, changing demographics and lifestyles indicate that the pace of change is only likely to get quicker. Shoppers also want greater customisation (i.e. products that suit their specific needs) and success will go to those players that offer new and innovative food solutions."

Figures indicate that more than half the population now spends less than 30 minutes preparing their main meal and 11 per cent spend even less with under 10 minutes.

Further consumption figures show that poultry still remains the preferable meat to beef, fish ready meals have higher consumption than white fish and tinned fish and potato consumption is dropping whilst pasta and rice is rising.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Food fads for 2005 introduced

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Latest reports have suggested that the Atkins Diet is no longer the key diet in the slimming world.

Although in the past over three million Brits were thought to have tried the diet, sales of the book, which advises which foods and drink to consume, have dropped.

Now as the New Year approaches a number of alternative eating plans are being introduced.

Among the new food fads that have appeared is 'The X Factor' which works by limiting carbohydrates and blood sugar levels to help boost weight loss.

In addition, there is 'The Body' which works by timing food intake with your body clock, the 'No Carbs after 5pm Diet' and the 'GI Plan', which advises people to consume foods with a low glycaemic index value.

Overall most diets encourage people to consume lean fish and meat and lots of fruit and vegetables.

Whatever diet proves to be the food fad of 2005, it is sure to help boost UK food sales, in the similar way that sales of red meat and potatoes were increased as a result of the Atkins plan.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Northern food store proves more popular than big supermarkets

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Latest reports show that northern supermarket Booths is proving a real success in the UK, whilst main retailers such as Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer report that they are struggling.

Booths started out as a single shop in 1847 and now has 26 stores across the UK.

Chris Dee, a buying director at Booths, explained: "We are conscious that customers are interested in where the food is from and how it is made, and many of them will know of the producer."

A number of awards have been presented to the retailer for its recognition of local producers and how it uses foods made from the area in which each store is located.

Preference for various regional items is also reflected in each store, with those in Ikley said to prefer Wensleydale cheese to Lancashire, Cumbrians preferring meat produced in their region and Yorkshire's bottled beer and Bowland Milk proving popular across a number of stores.

According to the food retailer, 25 per cent of its stock is produced locally such as Mumtaz curries from Bradford and Hendersons Relish from Sheffield.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Innovation mushrooms in Yorkshire

Date: Thu, 30 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Farmers in Yorkshire have launched a new experiment to try and cultivate innovative mushrooms for outside trade and local restaurants and food stores.

Varieties of mushroom such as shiitake, morel and chicken-of-the-woods are being grown in a remote area of the North York Moors National Park, according to the Independent Online.

Now the first yields of the scheme are being harvested, with items produced that can make some farmers in China up to £500 and should bring £25 a kilo from fine food restaurants and shops in Yorkshire.

The mushrooms are grown in felled trees and not only offer top profits for local food producers and foodservice establishments, but may also help the local woodland.

Rachel Wood, the North York Moors National Park sustainable development officer, explained: "The mushrooms we've cultivated on our own land are winter fruiting so we have them already.

"A market is developing in pubs and restaurants but equally this is about proving a future for the woodlands; about seeing the value in things [not yet] seen as of value."

The National Park has put £20,000 into the project, for the cultivation of seven 100-log farms and has been helped by Gourmet Woodland Mushrooms.

The company has helped update technology and is working on a similar project with the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New laws to take-away late night trouble

Date: Thu, 30 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New laws are to be introduced for fast food outlets in order to protect customers and workers late at night.

According to the Mirror online, similar laws that shut pubs and clubs if they appear to be trouble areas for violence and trouble, will be extended in 2005 to all fast food venues.

Minister Richard Caborn, who will announce the changes today, said: "Late- night takeaways are often a magnet for violence and anti-social behaviour on Friday and Saturday nights.

"Beered-up revellers spill out of bars and pubs at the same time in search of a burger or a doner kebab. From next year we're going to give local residents a say in whether they have a late-night chippie or kebab shop on their street corner."

Currently only takeaways in London can be closed under the Licensing Act, but this will be extended and will apply in England and Wales.

All late night takeaways will need to apply for a license under the new law, even if they do not sell alcohol.

In addition, pubs, clubs and restaurants are to get new laws next year too.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Scottish butchers offered competition advice

Date: Thu, 30 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A butchery specialist with the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC) has been visiting a host of Scottish food retailers to help butchers try and improve their competitiveness.

Master butcher Div Van Leeuwen, has been offering guidance through a training scheme set up by the Scottish Federation of Meat Trade Associations (SFMTA).

Mr Van Leeuwen told the Journal: "The number of butchers has been in decline and those that are left have already embraced a rake of changes to remain competitive.

"However, the market and consumer expectations are constantly changing and the butcher needs to reflect those changes to stay ahead and remain in business."

The aim of the advice is to help highlight to butchers ways in which they can make shops

more attractive to customers and provide more of what is needed or wanted.

In addition, help was offered on how to market and promote businesses, reviewing product ranges, shop layout and tips on modern butchery techniques.

SFMTA chief executive Douglas Scott said: "His knowledge and experience were very much appreciated by the firms and trainees he visited."

"It was made possible through a European Social Fund Grant and it is something we hope we will be able to repeat," he added.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

UK food firm creates new jobs for Cumbria

Date: Fri, 31 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A UK food firm is to help create ten new jobs in Cumbria through a revamp of the store.

The Your More Store, a discount food retailer located in Maryport, will be transformed by Heron Frozen Foods, which sells a range of 300 grocery and chilled food products and 350 frozen food items.

Your More is just one of the stores being refurbished as part of an UK wide expansion and 24 similar stores are also planned for development.

David Wallgate, one of the owners of Heron Frozen Foods, told the Times & Star: "I like Cumbria and we are looking forward to operating our business from there. We saw there was a good trading opportunity and felt we could add something to the range of shops.

"Our goods are at the bottom end of the price range but of high quality."

It is hoped four stores will be opened in Cumbria in total, although approval from Allerdale council planners is still needed.

However, Maryport councillors have already shown their support for the plan and local councillor Angela Kendall, chairman of the town's planning and economic development committee, described the deal as "good news".

The newly revamped store should be opened by March.

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

MLC offers explanation for UK lard shortage

Date: Fri, 31 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC) has tried to offer information for consumers and food firms about the current shortage of lard stocks in the UK.

Lard is typically used for making mince pies and Christmas pudding during this period, but recent reports revealed that this year supermarkets have had a lot fewer packets available for sale than normal.

It is thought the lard shortage is due to a stockpiling of the product in Eastern European countries where the food is regularly eaten and since joining the EU, a levy is now charged on non-EU imports.

Mick Lyon, a spokesperson for the commission explained to the BBC: "What's happened is since the succession into the EU, countries like Poland and Hungary have actually seen a decline in the actual amount of pigs they produce and that's been because they've had to change from the old system that they had, that supported their markets, to a EU system where there's no support at all for pigs.

"As a consequence, they're producing an awful lot less. Pigs are getting a lot leaner than they were a few years ago, so that's led to a shortage."

However, according to Mr Lyon although over the next five to six months lard stocks will be "tight" in the UK, he believes that after this time the market will begin to settle and production in Eastern Europe should increase.

As an alternative, consumers have been advised to use olive oil, cooking oil or margarine.
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New study looks into over consumption of fast food

Date: Fri, 31 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new study in the US has claimed that fast food consumption could increase the risk of diabetes and obesity.

According to authors of the study, eating fast food more than twice a week can lead to the conditions and be bad for health, highlighting the fact that a balanced diet is important.

Experts from Boston Children's Hospital looked at over 3,000 young people and their eating habits and followed them for 15 years.

The results follow the controversial documentary 'Supersize Me', but others are claiming those who consume a lot of fast food tend to have unhealthy lifestyles generally which can add to the risk of the conditions and that results were flawed by relying on people's accuracy of their eating habits.

Overall results showed white women eat the least amount of fast food and those people who visited fast food restaurants more than twice a week put on an extra 4.5kg compared to those who ate it once a week.

One of the researchers, David Ludwig has claimed that given the results priority should be given to "further research into the effects of this dietary pattern".

Mr Ludwig praised the efforts so far of food firms such as the major fast food companies, for launching healthier choices including vegetables, fruit and porridge and hopes "that this trend continues".

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

New medical tips encourage healthy eating

Date: Fri, 31 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The chief medical officer for England has been encouraging consumers to eat more healthily in the New Year.

Sir Liam Donaldson, has issued a list of top ten health tips to help consumers get healthier in 2005.

Among the advice given is to eat more fruit and vegetables and ideally to eat five portions per day, as advised by the government's Five A Day plan.

In addition, he also advises consumers to cut down on their fat and salt intake.

Sir Liam said: "At the start of the New Year, people often make resolutions about how to improve their lives."

"Following any or all of the tips...will help you to improve your health."

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Obesity funding announced

Date: Fri, 31 Dec 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Government will provide £3 million in a bid to tackle the growing problem of obesity in the UK.

Public health minister Melanie Johnson announced the package yesterday, stating that deprived areas will be targeted for funding, which will be used to train healthcare professionals to provide information and support for people seeking to lose weight.

With over half of the population either obese or overweight, the Government has realised that measures need to be taken to tackle the problem, especially as obesity is linked to diseases such as diabetes.

"We can't force people to be healthy nor tell them how to lead their lives. What we can do is provide them with the information, advice and support to make their own choices. And this job starts with the healthcare professionals," said health minister Melanie Johnson.

Department of Health research has found that GPs and other healthcare professionals are often not comfortable at raising the issue of weight with their patients or fully aware of the options for referral. A directory is being produced for primary care trusts, outlining obesity prevention and management training courses.

Dr Ian Campbell, chairman of the National Obesity Forum told the BBC that he welcomed the funding.

"It is much needed, and overdue, but it will make a difference," said Dr Campbell.

"There is growing evidence that people can be helped to lose weight and keep it off in a primary care setting, and that GPs and practice nurses are best placed to deliver weight management to the community."

(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.