

November 2004

Lidl purchases Yorkshire Safeway store

Date: Mon, 01 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food retailer Morrisons has announced it has sold another Safeway store as part of the requirements of its acquisition deal.

The store in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, is being purchased by Lidl and will be redeveloped over a period of time by the company.

As part of its acquisition, Morrisons was told it would have to sell a total of 52 stores by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in December 2003.

The book value of the net assets attributable to the store is £5.34 million, but the contract is still subject to OFT approval.

In addition, the lease on a Safeway store in Bond Street, Leeds, is being given up and it will closer later this month, with net assets of £1.76 million.

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Image revamp for Spam

Date: Mon, 01 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tinned meat product spam is to relaunch itself with a new advertising campaign, after management concerns that people just associate spam with junk emails.

The company is launching a £2 million campaign to change the image of the food as a typical British treat, according to the Telegraph Online.

According to the senior brand manager for Spam, Marianne Pollock, a key reason for the revamp is to remind people the product is still around.

"We want a greater share of the 15 million households that buy cold canned meat. Spam is presently bought by two million of them," she explained.

Advertising will involve different scenes featuring British people all enjoying the pork and ham product, such as builders and a family at the dinner table.

Sales for the canned meat stood at £13.3 million in Britain last year.

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British palate opting for exotic foods

Date: Mon, 01 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Traditional British meals such as fish and chips, shepherd's pie and roast dinners will have all but vanished within a generation, according to a new report.

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The report entitled The Future of Food claims that alien and exotic-sounding new foods from Morocco, Peru and Vietnam will be as popular in 30 years as Indian, Chinese and Italian food is today.

Food scientists at Sainsbury believe that traditional British fare will be replaced by more exotic dishes like moonfish, quinoa and hiziki and suggest that the British palate is changing so quickly that some long-established meals are already being consigned to history.

The panel, which included chefs, a food scientist, technologist, and product developer, used focus groups and surveys to predict that in 2034 foods exotic foods will be commonplace in the average British kitchen. The experts forecast that by 2034 only one in four meals at home will be UK recipes, compared with three quarters today.

Sales of shepherd's pie and chicken casserole have plummeted as children's tastes change and they increasingly opt for Italian, Chinese, Indian and Mexican dishes. The report states that sales of cannelloni soared by 37 per cent last year, while roast lamb dropped by 13 per cent.

However, the British sausage has seen sales rise by four per cent, as Brits ate 1.8 million bangers last year.

"In 1974 the average shopper would have been horrified to know that by 2004 a clove of garlic would be a regular in their basket," Sainsbury's executive chef John Wood said. "But the British palette is becoming more experimental. As the world gets smaller and we travel further, so our desire for diverse tastes gets bigger."

Further information: www.sainsbury.co.uk
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New technique analyses heat stability of milk

Date: Mon, 01 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new cutting edge technique analyses the heat stability of milk and reportedly promises higher precision and continuous monitoring.

Ultrasonic Scientific's High-Resolution Ultrasonic Spectroscopy (HR-US) has been developed to assist the dairy industry during processing.

Through the use of HR-US, coagulation can be detected during the real time monitoring of milk subjected to high temperatures. High precision measurements can be carried-out and monitoring of structural transitions in the sample, Food Navigator reports.

Heat stability is usually defined as the time needed to cause visible coagulation of milk at a given temperature. Spectroscopy is the study of molecular structure and dynamics through the absorption, emission and scattering of light.

HR-US uses the two parameters of velocity and attenuation of the ultrasonic waves to access new information about both the chemical dynamics and structure of the sample.

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The technique requires a small sample volume and allows the analysis of a broad variety of sample types, chemical reactions and processes.

The continuous monitoring of changes in the composition and structure of the sample is extremely difficult with other analytical techniques due to the opacity of milk, the high temperature and the excessive pressure at which the experiment is carried out.

Further information: www.ultrasonic-scientific.com

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Confectionery the most popular food gift

Date: Mon, 01 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The IGD has produced new consumer research stating that confectionery is now the most popular food to be bought as a gift.

'Consumer Watch: Food for Special Occasions' claims that 92 per cent of consumers now buy food and drink as gifts, with 63 per cent giving boxes of chocolates.

Joanne Denney-Finch, chief executive of IGD told Just Food: "The gift market is clearly competitive and open to more than just producers of confectionery and alcohol.

"Industry must communicate with consumers to build awareness of the breadth of possibilities for food and drink gifts from across categories, and innovation is essential to continually build the gift category as affluence and familiarity grows and gifts that were once a treat become everyday products."

The food and grocery think tank also found that women prefer food gifts more than men and particularly like receiving cakes, smoked salmon and food hampers.

In addition, it appears older consumers prefer food as a gift and as people get older their taste for sweet foods turns to biscuits and cakes.

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Pulze acquires former Fleur site

Date: Mon, 01 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Restaurateur Claudio Pulze has reportedly agreed in principle to purchase the site of Marcus Wareing's former restaurant, Fleur.

Mr Pulze is the man behind Aubergine, Zaika and Al Duca and has agreed to buy the restaurant in St James's, London for an undisclosed sum, Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine reports.

Rent on the short lease property owned by Ramsay Holdings will be 10 per cent of turnover or £150,000 a year.

Mr Pulze is taking on the restaurant fully fitted, but has decided to change its name to Fiore, the Italian for flower.

The new restaurant is expected to open next month with a respected Italian chef heading the kitchen and partnering Mr Pulze.

A spokeswoman for Mr Pulze told the magazine that the restaurant would not be aiming for Michelin stars immediately, and the atmosphere would be more relaxed than under the previous ownership.

(no further information)

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Sensitive tasters 'weigh less'

Date: Tue, 02 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

People with sensitive palates tend to be thinner, new research claims.

Researchers at Rutgers University found that those who were especially sensitive to bitter compounds in broccoli and other foods, dubbed "super tasters", tended to be 20 per cent thinner than "nontasters," those not sensitive to bitter tastes.

The study of nearly 50 women in their 40s suggests that super tasters eat less food overall. The report states that super tasters had an average body-mass index of 23.5, medium tasters an average of 26.6, and nontasters an average of almost 30.

"People who are nontasters tend to like foods that are fattier, sweeter, hotter and more bitter," said Beverly Tepper, a professor of food science at Rutgers.

"They tend to eat more fatty foods. What we believe is that if nontasters pursue this kind of dietary pattern over time that this would lead to higher body weight."

The scientist said about 50 per cent of Americans were medium tasters and 25 percent each were super tasters or nontasters. The classifications are based on sensitivity to a chemical, known as PROP that is very similar to compounds that make foods like broccoli and brussels sprouts taste bitter.

Professor Tepper's study is currently awaiting publication. It is her fourth with similar findings, including one involving New Jersey preschoolers, and researchers at Yale University and University of Connecticut have also produced similar results.

(no further information)

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Chr Hansen launches blue food colour

Date: Tue, 02 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Leading colours supplier Chr Hansen has unveiled a new blue food colour product derived from natural ingredients.

The new natural food colour can be used in the EU as well as in the US and Australia, Food Ingredients First reports.

Chr Hansen claims it has produced the first stable blue food colour for use within the EU. The new blue is stable within a very broad pH range 5.5 - 8.

Annette Mollgaard, Marketing Manager for Chr Hansen said: "Our clients in Europe and in the United States have been requesting natural blue food colour for a long time. Blue is the only colour that has been lacking from our collection. It has been complicated to formulate, but now that it is finally ready to launch, we are very much looking forward to introducing it to the market."

"It has taken a great deal of creativity, effort, and man hours over the past couple of years, and we are very proud of the result," she added.

The new blue colour is primarily targeted at EU and US manufacturers of candy and ice cream, as well as a variety of candy coating and icing for cakes and chocolate.

The market for natural food colour is growing twice as fast as the market for artificial food colour, largely due to increasing health-consciousness among consumers. As a result, Chr Hansen has developed a large assortment of natural food colour in recent years.

Further information: www.chr-hansen.com
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New fairtrade coffee chain launched

Date: Tue, 02 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fair trade is the fastest growing segment of the UK coffee market and the first outlet of a proposed chain of entirely fair trade coffee bars has opened this week.

Progreso (progress in Spanish), is the brainchild of UK charity Oxfam and a Honduran grower co-operative called La Central and the first cafe is now open in the Thomas Neal Centre in London's Covent Garden.

Oxfam owns 50 per cent of the company, three co-operatives - from Ethiopia, Honduras and Indonesia - own 25 per cent and the remaining quarter will be held in trust and used to benefit the wider coffee growing community.

A second Progreso cafe is planned for London's Portobello Road before the end of the year. Oxfam has spent £120,000 setting up the first outlets and hopes to open 20 such shops during the next three years.

Every cup of coffee sold in Progreso is certified Fair Trade and organic and the cafes will also offer fairtrade smoothies, chocolate, honey and tea. Despite a boom in coffee consumption, coffee growers have seen prices slump by 70 per cent since 1997.

"Ten years ago it would have been very hard to set up a caf like this but now the moment is right," said the chain's managing director, Wyndham James. "People want to know where their food is coming from."

Earlier this year, Marks & Spencer switched the coffee used in its 198 Cafe Revives to

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certified Fair Trade blends and Costa cafes offer fair trade coffee if customers ask for it.

Further information: www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/fairtrade/progreso.htm

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Bovine TB measures extended by Defra

Date: Tue, 02 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Defra has announced that it is to introduce additional protective measures to prevent the spread of bovine TB.

Every cattle farmer in the UK is being notified of the changes and will be sent letters explaining them.

Among the new methods being considered are a recalculation of the period between tests for bovine TB so that it meets EU legislation and more testing for new and reformed herds.

The main focus for Defra now is on prevention and the importance of reducing the risk of the TB spreading to clean areas.

Tests are due to begin from February 16 onwards.

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Which raises concerns over healthy eating foods

Date: Tue, 02 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Further changes still need to be made to 'healthy eating' food ranges, according to Which?

Findings from new research by the consumer group show that benefits described on packaging are misleading and choosing foods from diet brands may not actually benefit calorie conscious consumers.

Sue Davies, principal policy adviser for Which? said: "Our latest research shows that if you are trying to eat healthily, there is still a lot of potential to be misled."

However, the group does acknowledge that a number of food manufacturers and supermarkets have made progress since its last report.

"Several retailers have told us they are reviewing these ranges. Consistent and transparent criteria are needed so that consumers can be clear what they are getting - and without having to scour the small print to check that they are what they seem," Ms Davies added.

Among the problems discovered with healthy eating ranges were higher calorie or sugar levels compared to standard products due to size, considerably higher costs for healthier products and misleading packaging.

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Potential new opportunities for sugar-free drinks

Date: Tue, 02 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Sugar free drinks are being highlighted as the next big product in the food and drink sector.

One soft drinks company, Sangs, based in Scotland, is now focusing on healthy drinks to help increase business growth.

Sales director John Donald told The Press and Journal: "This year's sales have been held back a bit by poor summer weather, but we hope to keep building our business through new products."

The firm itself achieved top turnover during 2003 with figures rising to £12.75 million and the company's latest pre-tax profits stood at £1.46 million.

Mr Donald argued that sugar-free products appear to be the way ahead and the company hopes focusing on this sector will create even further growth as it obtains a bigger share of the flavoured drinks market.

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Pernod Ricard sells Orangina

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Paris-based Orangina owner Pernod Ricard announced in a statement that it had sold its remaining interest in the Orangina soft drinks business, operated by its subsidiary CFPO, to Cadbury-Schweppes for 31 million euros (£21 million).

AG Barr, the maker of Irn-bru, controls the rights to market and sell the brand in the UK, but has been frustrated by Pernod Ricard's previous refusals to sell.

Orangina operates as a brand in the UK, Eastern Europe, Africa/Middle East, South America and Asia.

Cadbury-Schweppes was already the owner of the brand in several other international markets and is likely to invest in the brand in the UK, after British sales of Orangina crashed 30 per cent in the six months to July this year.

It is not yet known what effect the deal will have on Barr's relationship with the fizzy orange drink, The Scotsman reports.

In 2003, the Orangina brand accounted for 12.4 million euros of Pernod Ricard's net sales.

The latest transaction completes the disposal process in relation to Pernod Ricard's worldwide business interest in Orangina which commenced in 2001.

Further information: www.pernod-ricard.com

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Carr's doubles flour business

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK milling company Carr's is reportedly planning to double the size of its flour business through the acquisition of two new flour mills.

The firm, Carr's Milling Industries, has conditionally agreed to buy Meneba UK Holdings, based in Kirkcaldy, near Fife, and another mill in Maldon, Essex.

The group is paying around £4.7 million for the two mills, according to Confectionery News.

If Carr's shareholders endorse the move, it will give the company the opportunity to expand its business into new sectors and help keep up with ever increasing customer demand.

Chris Holmes, Carr's chief executive, said: "The Meneba UK business represents an excellent strategic fit for Carr's. Meneba UK will more than double the size of our flour business and provide an entry into some exciting niche markets. We fully expect the acquisition to be increasing company earnings in the first year of ownership."

The Robert Hutchinson mill at Kirkcaldy has an annual capacity of 90,000 tons of flour, while Green's Mill in Maldon has a 45,000 ton capacity.

Carr's will be looking to raise Meneba's average operating profit, which has hovered at the break-even point for the past three years and the firm will have to repay approximately £5.4 million of Meneba's debt owed to parent company Maxeres if the deals go ahead.

(no further information)

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Study highlights benefits of organic milk

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Organic milk has significantly higher quantities of vitamin E than its conventional equivalent, new research suggests.

A study conducted by Danish researchers found that in seven out of 10 samples the organic source contained significantly more of the vitamin, a key component in contributing to the shelf-life of milk, than conventional milk.

Food scientists at the Danish research centre for organic farming studied the content of potential antioxidants and vitamins in conventional and organic milk over several months, Food Navigator reports. The researchers claim the origins of the difference between organic and conventional milk are rooted in the feed.

"The results indicate that less synthetic vitamin E is added in the organic milk production, and in spite of this, the content of vitamin E is higher in organic milk than in

conventional milk," the scientists concluded.

"The most important reason for the observed differences is presumably the large amounts of maize silage used in the conventional production, whereas a considerable amount of grass and leguminous plants are used in the organic production."

In addition to vitamin E, the researchers investigated the level of carotenoids found in the two milks and discovered that the content was higher in organic milk; with levels of the powerful antioxidant beta-carotene two to three times higher in organic milk than in conventional milk.

(no further information)

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Electricity-free food production system unveiled

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new production system that requires no electricity, generator or running water has reportedly been developed by a small Canadian-based non-profit organisation.

Malnutrition Matters, which focuses on food technology applications in developing countries, claims the VitaGoat system

The charity claims that the new system could be widely used for food applications in the developing world where the electrical supply is often expensive, unavailable or unreliable.

The VitaGoat system uses pedal power for grinding and mashing, and an innovative, energy-efficient steam boiler and cooking section, according to Food Production Daily.

The system provides dry or uncooked products such as flour, meal, and peanut butter, and cooked products such as soymilk, tofu and yogurt, fruit and vegetable purees, sauces and juices. An extra food-preserving vessel is in also development to allow for long shelf-life.

Malnutrition Matters says that the daily output can serve 500 to 1,000 people, while improving food security and health, and creating additional local employment and micro-enterprise development.

The project has achieved critical support with a corporate sponsorship from Alpro, Europe's leading soyfoods producer and the first three VitaGoat beta systems were installed in Africa recently, in a partnership with the US-based humanitarian organisation Africare.

Further information: www.malnutrition.org/vg_intro.htm

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Tate & Lyle announces new director

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tate & Lyle has announced that it has appointed a new non-executive director on its DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

board, taking effect from December 1.

The renewable ingredients firm, which has UK operations in London and Yorkshire, has selected Kai Nargolwala who currently works as a group executive director of a leading bank in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Sir David Lees, Tate & Lyle chairman, commented: "I am delighted that Kai is to join the Board as a non-executive director."

In addition, Tate & Lyle's current non-executive director, Larry Pillard, is set to retire from his role on December 31 after 12 years at the company.

Tate & Lyle produces products including cereal sweeteners, sugars, citric acid, starches and sucralose.

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UK to open innovative restaurant lab

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Well-known creative chef Heston Blumenthal has revealed a new way to develop his experimental and innovative dishes - with a lab attached to his restaurant.

The lab will be the first in the country and will help to study 'molecular gastronomy' and the effects of sound, texture and vision on how food tastes, according to Telegraph Online.

The triple Michelin star chef's work has been recognised by the Biotechnology and Biological Science Research Council who are supplying the funding for the lab.

Among the wacky dishes Mr Blumenthal has come up with so far are fish flavoured and bacon and egg ice creams, lamb burnt on the outside and cauliflower risotto with chocolate jelly.

A number of new ideas are also planned for the future and should hopefully be helped with the new lab, in particular the chef wants to try and produce three flavoured sweets such as those seen in Roald's Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

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Inter Link secures new funding

Date: Wed, 03 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Inter Link has announced new funding plans to help it achieve a higher level of traditional and extra capacity.

The UK manufacturer of branded, private label and licensed cake products is aiming to raise £8 million through a share placement.

Alwin Thompson, executive chairman of Inter Link Foods, told Just Food: "We have stated our objective of becoming the largest private label cake supplier in the UK and the second largest cake supplier in the UK and we believe this funding will provide us with

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the increased flexibility to take advantage of the changes that are currently taking place in the market."

Sales performance at the firm was very strong for the first four months of the current financial year, with overall sales up by 31 per cent.

According to the company there are opportunities to expand its private label cake business and it is keen to secure further supply deals.

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Just Deli snapped up by OCS Group for rumoured £7m

Date: Thu, 04 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Property support services company the OCS Group has reportedly purchased Reading-based contract caterer Just Deli for a substantial sum, believed to be in excess of £7 million.

Just Deli was set up in 1996 by John Duffield, who will remain in a senior management role, and is forecast to generate turnover of up to £11 million this year.

OCS, which has an annual turnover of more than £500 million, claims the new deal makes it the UK's sixth largest contract caterer and will boost its turnover from catering to £55 million a year, Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine reports.

OCS Catering currently deals predominantly with hospital catering and the new deal will give the support services giant a bigger presence in the business and industry sector.

Just Deli specialises in staff catering, primarily in the London and Thames Valley region. Mr Duffield said the sale would enable the company to use OCS's national infrastructure to expand its business to other parts of the country.

OCS has not revealed the sale price it has paid for the catering firm.

Further information: www.ocs.co.uk

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Key UK fishing body contests science on fish stocks

Date: Thu, 04 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Scottish Fishermen's Federation has questioned the validity of fisheries research conducted by scientists.

SFF chief executive Hamish Morrison has written to Poul Degenbol, chair of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management, pointing out alleged deficiencies of its research.

The SFF claims that, if the research stands uncorrected, the European Commission may cut the number of days of fishing for cod down to just five days a month.

"The scientific advice on the North Sea cod stocks is seriously flawed," Fish Update

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quotes a statement from the federation as saying.

"The problem seems to arise from a wholly unjustified estimate of increased mortality during 2003 leading to an absurd forecast for 2005."

The SFF statement continues: "This is no mere statistical quibble. If this advice is accepted the European Commission will have no option but to reduce trawl fishing to five days a month or to close selected areas of the North Sea.

"The Cod Recovery Regulation insists that fishing effort must be reduced in direct proportion to mortality reductions required by ICES. Fortunately the stock assessment process was monitored by a panel of independent international scientists and their advice and assistance is being sought to correct these problems."

Further information: www.sff.co.uk
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Olive oil 'good for blood pressure'

Date: Thu, 04 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Consumption of olive oil is inversely proportionate to high blood pressure, according to a new study.

The researchers from the University of Athens Medical School, Harvard School of Public Health and Sotiria Hospital in Athens recorded arterial blood pressure and other variables like sociodemographic, dietary and physical activity, among participants in the Greek arm of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) study, Nutra Ingredients reports.

Of the participants studied, 20,343 had never received a diagnosis of hypertension. The analysis was based on adherence to the Mediterranean diet and the individual components, and the Mediterranean diet score was significantly inversely associated with both systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Mutual adjustment between olive oil and vegetables, which are frequently consumed together, indicated that olive oil has the dominant beneficial effect on arterial blood pressure.

The new study, reported in the October issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, suggests that olive oil may act in a number of ways to protect people from heart disease. The ingredient has also been shown to have a beneficial effect on blood lipids.

The Greek researchers now plan to investigate whether the Mediterranean diet has beneficial effects on people who already have coronary heart disease.

About two thirds of strokes and half the incidence of heart disease are attributable to raised blood pressure, according to data from the World Health Organisation.

The food industry is coming under increasing pressure to tackle the rising burden of heart disease, using heart healthy ingredients.

(no further information)

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Innovative seafood marketing ideas in new guide

Date: Thu, 04 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new guide has been produced to advise UK and Irish seafood promotion bodies, providing advice and offering up to date information on the sector.

The CD-Rom was developed by The Irish Sea Fisheries Board, BIM and The Sea Fish Industry Authority in response to the information needs of the industry.

Aquaculture development manager with BIM, Donal Maguire, told Fish Update: "Two years of hard work and research by dedicated BIM and Seafish staff has gone into the making of this practical and user friendly CD.

"As we move into an increasingly 'food-safety' conscious era, it is imperative that our customer, the consumer, be confident in what we supply. We will only manage this if our industry, at all levels, is fully informed."

The guide focuses on a number of areas in an accessible and easy way, including unique underwater footage, innovative marketing ideas, recipes for consumers and harvesting techniques.

It is hoped people in the industry, promotion groups and people with a marine interest will all benefit from the reference point.

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Tate and Lyle reveals rise in profits

Date: Thu, 04 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The sugar company Tate & Lyle has reported a rise in half-year profits and announced that it plans to build another sucralose plant to help meet market demand.

Tate & Lyle's pre-tax profits before amortization and one-time items for the six months to September 30 increased by 9.2 per cent to reach £130 million.

The company also released details of plans to build a sucralose manufacturing plant in Singapore, that will cost £97 million and is expected to be completed by 2007.

Tate & Lyle, who make sugars and syrups, soft drink sweeteners and industrial starches, is benefiting from high demand for its Splenda- brand sucralose sweetener, following the worldwide success of low-carb diets.

However, the company warned that second-half results could be affected by a number of short-term factors.

A statement from Tate & Lyle said: "In the second half of this financial year higher energy costs and the outcome of the annual pricing negotiations will influence the overall results for the period.

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"Nevertheless, we expect the results of the group for the year as a whole to reflect satisfactory progress."

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Flavouring evaluation results announced by EFSA

Date: Thu, 04 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has released new opinions today on a selection of flavouring substances for the food industry.

As part of commission regulations, the authority has to evaluate flavouring substances for use in or on foods.

Currently, over 1000 substances need to be evaluated by July 2005, with 77 being evaluated in this report.

All of the 77 flavouring substances passed the evaluation process, after the authority concluded that there was no indication of genotoxic or carcinogenic potential.

However, for 33 of the substances, the panel believes that more specific data was required in order to ascertain exposure levels.

The selected flavourings will now be reconsidered but do not pose any threat or risk, according to the authority.

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United Biscuits launches health drive

Date: Fri, 05 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

United Biscuits, owner of classic brands such as Jaffa Cakes, McVities and KP, has challenged its 12,000 workers to walk 1,000 steps every day.

The company is supplying employees with personal pedometers and conducting a six month poster campaign as part of its drive to improve the health of staff. The poster campaign will provide information on issues such as obesity, excess sugar intake and advertising to children.

The United Biscuits health strategy is based on a recent study by the Institute for Health and Productivity which indicated that fit and healthy workers are up to 20 per cent more productive than their ill or unhealthy colleagues,, Confectionary News reports.

Clive Harker, company medical advisor, said that there was "increasing pressure on food manufacturers to show that they are actively informing customers and staff about the importance of having a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle"

Workers at United Biscuits' Halifax plant are being asked to take a health pledge to stop smoking, drink less alcohol, eat more healthily and lose weight where necessary. Volunteers will then be weighed every week until Christmas.

Mr Harker pointed out that United Biscuits was one of the first food producers to direct such a campaign at employees. Promoting healthy workplace schemes on diet and lifestyle was included in the UK Food and Drink Federation's recent Food and Drink manifesto and the 10,000-step challenge is in response to a recent Department of Health recommendation that people should walk at least 10,000 steps per day.

United Biscuits has reduced salt content by 20 per cent in its best-selling biscuits, including McVities Chocolate Digestives, Rich Tea, and Hob Nobs and has also removed trans fats, widely associated with raising the risk of heart disease, from its biscuit doughs, though not from its cream filling.

Further information: www.unitedbiscuits.co.uk

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Glisten off to a good start

Date: Fri, 05 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK confectionary group Glisten has reported a 45 per cent increase in turnover for the first four months of the 2005 financial years, compared with the same period last year.

The increase is largely due to a spate of acquisitions over the last 12 months, including Sunya, F Fravigar and House of York. Glisten has also continued to push up volume sales, supplying an ever broader range of British retail operators with own label and branded goods.

Company chairman Jeremy Hamer announced the latest figures to shareholders at the firm's AGM and said like-for-like turnover for the first four months of the year was ahead by eight per cent, with the major UK retail chains accounting for around 30 per cent of Glisten's business.

The autumn months are key for confectionery producers as they account for most of the Christmas orders and the Glisten boss said that early demand was very encouraging, and would help the company end the first half of the year on a high.

"We expect the second half to be underpinned by a series of new product listings at existing and new customers as well as the further development of the sales potential of the products acquired with the group's recent acquisitions," he added. "We also expect to benefit from the impact of last year's capital expenditure programme."

Blackburn-based Glisten Confectionery makes chocolate- and sugar-based confectionery, edible decorations and confectionery ingredients. Its products include chocolate-coated raisins, peanuts and brazils, mint imperials, popcorn, mini-eggs and sugar-coated almonds.

Further information: www.glistenconfectionery.com

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Top chocolatier wins another award

Date: Fri, 05 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

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An award-winning chocolatier and pastry chef has shown he is worth gold after winning an Olympic gold medal for his food.

William Curley, who has recently opened a new patisserie in Richmond, London, took part in the Culinary Olympics in Germany and won gold in the Restaurant of Nations category.

Mr Curley told This is Local London: "Pastry and chocolate are two of the wonders of the food world and my pastries embody the spirit of the great people I've worked with."

The chef creates his products using hand-sourced ingredients and has also won awards for British Dessert of the Year and Pastry Chef of the Year.

Mr Curley has also worked in Michelin-starred venues and the Savoy and worked with top chefs such as Marco Pierre white and Raymond Blanc.

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Increasing demand for lighter meals

Date: Fri, 05 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new report out today by Datamonitor has revealed an increasing amount of consumers are choosing to consume light meals.

The higher demand for the meals is thought to be due to consumers becoming more aware of health concerns and an increasing demand for convenience.

Daniel Bone, consumer markets analyst at Datamonitor and author of the report, commented: "When life gets busy, planning and cooking meals become lower priorities. Lighter meals facilitate the diet regimes of many health conscious consumers and offer a quick, convenient solution for busy lifestyles."

The report claims lighter meals are also more popular since eating frequency has changed and meals have become more informal.

According to findings, more than four in ten meals will be light meals by 2008 and British consumers are the biggest spenders in Europe for the meals with an average spend of £286 per person per year.

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Snacks becoming more substantial

Date: Fri, 05 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

As findings suggest the demand for light meals is increasing, Datamonitor has announced that for many consumers in-between food consumption consists of substantial meals rather than small snack occasions.

At present 23 per cent of consumers eat such meals, but a new report suggests that it will rise to 26 per cent by 2008.

Daniel Bone, consumer markets analyst at Datamonitor and author of the report

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commented: "Consumers skip more and more meals and they often seek to compensate for their nutritional and calorific deficits by consuming more substantial snacks or light meals."

However, breakfast and lunch occasions are more likely to be light and demand can be seen in the growing cereal bar market, which was worth £220 billion last year.

Datamonitor believes that food manufacturers have not yet capitalised on the new "flexi-eating trend" and ready meals could be re-marketed to appeal as both "a fully hearty meal" and a "suitable, light snack".

Among the sectors doing well as a result of light meal trends are hot snacks, prepared sandwiches, small ready meals, meal replacement bars and salads.

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Milk supply payments to increase at Asda

Date: Fri, 05 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food retailer Asda has revealed it is to pay farmers an additional 0.5p per litre for fresh milk supplies.

The supermarket claims the move highlights its commitment to entering a "meaningful dialogue" with farmers at an important time.

The NFU had recently called on retailers to help dairy farmers out and has welcomed Asda's announcement.

NFU Dairy Board chairman, Gwyn Jones, said: "The NFU and others have engaged extensively with Asda and other retailers in recent weeks and this is a positive result."

The new deal will come into effect on December 1 and will involve around 600 farmers that are part of the Arla foods milk partnership.

"Asda's decision is the kind of result we were hoping would emerge from the recent dairy re-shuffle. There has been a lot of speculation recently on the impact of supermarket supply contracts and this decision finally sends some positive messages to dairy farmers at a time when they're seriously considering their futures," Mr Jones added.

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New gum assists cocoa suspension in beverages

Date: Mon, 08 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food additives firm Gellan CP Kelco, bought by JM Huber last month, has launched a new gum designed to provide suspension of cocoa and minerals in ready-to-drink dairy based beverages.

Kelcogel HM-B gellan gum is a new hydrocolloid system, which the claims can be used at low use levels, providing minimal mouthfeel and having no adverse impacts on flavour.

Gellan CP Kelco said in a statement that, although chocolate-flavoured beverages are popular with customers, there can be stabilisation problems with neutral pH dairy beverages and, without proper stabilisation, cocoa powder dust can form on the bottom of the container.

"Suspension of insoluble minerals and fibres in milk-based dietary and fortified beverages can also be a challenge," the company added.

According to Gellan CP Kelco, the gum disperses well without lumping, hydrates easily and is heat stable, making it compatible with dairy UHT and HTST equipment.

Further information: www.cpkelco.com
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Danisco launches innovative new low-carb flavour range

Date: Mon, 08 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Flavour firm Danisco has reportedly unveiled a new line of flavours aimed at food manufacturers developing artificially sweetened and reduced sugar beverages and dairy products.

"Formulating products for these dieting trends requires more than just sugar replacement," the company said in a statement.

The firm claims it has created a line of colours that deliver on mouthfeel and avoid the bitterness associated with artificial sweeteners.

Danisco said that the flavours performed well in trials in a variety of beverage and dairy applications including fortified waters, zero and mid calorie carbonated beverages, 10 per cent and 25 per cent juice no-added sugar beverages, ice-cream, yoghurt, yoghurt drinks and flavoured milks.

The new range will go under the Aura Flavors brand name and be available in the following flavours: apple, blueberry, chocolate, fruit punch, lemon-lime, orange, peach, raspberry, strawberry, tropical and vanilla, according to Food Production Daily.

The trend for low-carb foods is still going strong and 2004 is expected to be a record year for low-carb food and beverage products launched in the US.

Further information: www.danisco.com
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Innovative solution to eating peas

Date: Mon, 08 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Scientists have developed a new version of the popular pea that stays on the fork.

The pea shoots look like clover and are being grown in West Sussex.

The shoots, which are produced like cress, are due to go on sale in British supermarkets
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for the first time.

The pea shoots, the tips of ten-day-old pea plants, reportedly taste the same as conventional peas.

The shoots, which are available in some specialist Chinese food shops as dau miu, are already popular in parts of Asia and Africa.

UK supermarket chain Sainsbury's plans to sell the shoots for £1.39 per pack. The chain said the shoots had the same flavour and nutritional value of the conventional pea.

The vegetable can be eaten raw, steamed, sauteed, or stir-fried, and like the traditional pea, it is a good source of folic acid.

"Peas are one of the nation's favourite vegetables but can be quite tricky to eat," Sainsbury's fresh-produce buyer, Clancy McMahon, was quoted by The Times as saying.

(No further information)

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NFU claims SPS info not enough

Date: Mon, 08 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Following the recent release of details on the single payment scheme (SPS) by Defra, the NFU has argued that more information is still needed.

The latest information explained how the SPS would apply to land grazed by horses, orchard eligibility and exemptions of particular measures.

However, the NFU claims that there are still a number of issues that have not been covered.

NFU vice-president, Meurig Raymond, told The Journal: "Defra's announcements are a good first step but farmers still require further information on how SPS will apply to cross border holdings and common land. Some issues surrounding National Reserve and traditional orchards also remain unclear.

"We are expecting further announcements and it is important that these decisions are made as soon as possible."

Defra claims that the scheme will dramatically cut down the administration strain on many farmers, since it simplifies payment schemes by reducing them from ten to one.

According to the Food and Farming Minister, Larry Whitty, the scheme will remove uncertainty facing farmers and will allow them to plan businesses with a better knowledge of how the system works.

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UK economy helped by food sector

Date: Mon, 08 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

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Analysis

A new analysis by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has revealed that the food sector makes a significant contribution to the UK economy.

According to food sector information displayed in 'Economic Trends', cultural changes in food consumption have led to a greater influence on the economy, with increasing numbers eating out and consuming a wider range of dishes.

In addition, consumers are spending more money in bars, cafes and restaurants, with the food sector providing £74 billion for the UK economy in 2002.

Different areas in the food sector are also reporting varying rates of growth, with the catering and pubs industry one of the top ten growing industries in the period studied.

Additional figures revealed that the value of imported food products has increased each year and household spending on food has also grown.

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Food subsidiary sold at Nichols

Date: Mon, 08 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Nichols has announced it has sold its food subsidiary Nichols Foods to its former group managing director.

The food section of the UK food and soft drinks firm was sold for £11.6 million to Gary Unsworth, according to Just Food.

Funds made from the sale will be used to reduce group borrowings at the company and will leave the business relatively debt free.

Nichols Foods produces branded and private label products including powdered soups and beverages, dilutable drinks, jams and fruit pie fillings and whiteners.

The company supplies the UK foodservice, vending and retail sectors.

This sale marks the last stage of the company's strategic review and is hoped to allow the company to focus on the future marketing and development of its soft drinks business.

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EU tightens food chain tracing procedures

Date: Tue, 09 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The European Commission has co-ordinated the tracing of the chain of deliveries through the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed in response to the discovery of dioxin-contaminated potato by-products in the Netherlands.

Potato by-products, such as potato peels, were recently found to be contaminated by high levels of dioxins at a Dutch potato processing company.

As a result, the authorities have blocked all movement of animals from 162 farms in the DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Netherlands, eight in Belgium and three in Germany, which received the animal feed. National authorities in the EU member states are currently tracing the problem through the food chain.

Dioxins are long-lasting environmental pollutants formed as unwanted by-products of combustion processes and concerns have been raised about the potential risk to health evolving from long-term consumption of foods containing high levels.

David Byrne, the European commissioner for health and consumer protection said: "Member State authorities and the Commission are co-operating closely to ensure that safety of consumer is not jeopardised. Together we will act swiftly yet responsibly. So far, our system of traceability and alert notifications is working well. It is vital that the confidence of the consumer in our food chain is maintained."

Mr Byrne's White Paper on Food Safety, passed in January 2000, established a framework of new laws designed to minimise risk to the food chain in Europe.

(no further information)

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UK company develops revolutionary ice cream packaging

Date: Tue, 09 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A British firm has developed a new packaging and processing solution that will allow smaller retailers to create their own branded ice-cream products at the point of sale.

In recent years, the UK market has seen rapid growth in the impulse products sector, focused on luxury products targeted at adults. Products are often available in freezers supplied by large firms free of charge to smaller retailers on the agreement that they remain stocked only with their products.

However, Kent-based company One-Shot has created a new ice cream dispensing system which allows small stores to create high quality products at the point of sale without the need for large freezer cabinets or a substantial outlay.

The firm claims the invention will give small retailers the opportunity to penetrate the highly-consolidated UK ice cream market.

The system involves a patented single serve container which comes with a star shaped extrusion nozzle. When the ice cream is required, the tab is removed and the container inserted into a small wall-mounted dispensing unit, which then squeezes the ice cream out of the nozzle.

The dispensing system also allows the incorporation of nuts, fruit, chocolate chips and multiple flavours.

Speaking to DairyReporter.com Shane McGill, managing director of One-Shot, said: "Today, the industry is turning to higher quality products with total product integrity by supplying it in smart packaging suitable for dispensing or blending on simple and inexpensive equipment that requires no cleaning process."

(no further information)

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German dairy processor modernises packaging

Date: Tue, 09 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

German dairy processor Hassia Verpackungsmaschinen has introduced more innovative packaging in a bid to modernise its operations.

The firm has installed a cup form fill seal machine which produces tailor-made packaging at record speeds.

The packaging machine type THM 16/80 from Hassia offers a working width of 800mm and is equipped with an 18up format (2 rows of 9 cups each). The cups are made of Polystyrene bottom material 700-1,200 m thick depending on the forming depth for 250g and 500g.

The machine also features an ink-jet coding on the cup bottom with EAN code and expiry date, which codes the cup bottom "head first". Data and batch changes are fed in via the electronically programmable control of the machine, according to Food Production Daily.

Another feature of the FFS machine THM 16/80 is the filling unit with 18 filling positions and a filling range of 220-580 ccm. The CIP filling system is characterised by its high accuracy in weight. The single control of each filling valve guarantees a filling weight that is clearly below the legal tolerance levels.

Further information: www.hassia.de

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Barnado's calls for better school meal funding

Date: Tue, 09 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Barnado's has released a new report calling on the government to provide more funds for better ingredients in children's school dinners and to listen to children's views.

According to the charity, children are given too many "unhealthy" choices at school dinner time and a survey across England, Wales and Scotland showed that they accepted junk food as the "staple school diet".

Neera Sharma, author of the report, 'Burger Boy and Sporty Girl', told BBC News Online: "If we are really serious about making a difference to the food children eat in schools, we have got to start listening to what they say so that we can understand the meaning food has for them."

"As a society we must reclaim responsibility for what our children eat," she added.

However, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) claimed that work is already taking place to improve school meal quality.

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Barnado's also found that many children were influenced by school stereotypes and possible bullying as a result of what they eat, with boys associated as liking burgers and one child called names for eating chicken everyday.

Children in primary, nursery and secondary schools were all surveyed as part of the study.

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Christmas food advice launched by FSA

Date: Tue, 09 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Food Standards Agency has issued advice for consumers on how to ensure they eat and cook safely during the festive period.

In addition, members of the public can obtain more advice and information from the agency's new consumer website eatwell.gov.uk.

Among the guidance issued by the agency is to try and keep salt levels low, in line with its recently launched campaign.

A host of experts including Antony Worrall Thompson, FSA Nutritionist Sam Church and Nick Nairn, all help to provide healthy eating advice and ways to cut down on salt in cooking.

In addition, recipe advice and new ideas are also provided, along with healthier options for Christmas dinner and treats.

Ensuring consumers eat safely, the advice also includes tips on how to cook and store items properly and safely and how to avoid food bugs.

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Over £26 billion spent on lunch and snacks

Date: Tue, 09 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research out today from Prudential has revealed that British workers spend £26.8 billion per year on snacks and lunch.

Findings from the study show that only 29 per cent of workers take their own lunch to work with them every day, but if they did so they could save around £6.8 billion a year.

The average worker spends around £5.10 each day on lunch and snacks, and whilst the average cost of a cheese and pickle sandwich is £1.80, the average cost to make it at home would be around £0.25, according to Prudential.

However, the healthy eating messages appear to be getting through to consumers, with just two per cent claiming they bought lunch from fast food outlets.

The most popular areas to buy lunch were the supermarket and the staff canteen (20 per cent), followed by cafes and sandwich bars (13 per cent).

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Kraft to sell Bird's Custard

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Bird's Custard has been put up for sale by US owner Kraft.

According to the Financial Times, the US food giant is about to sell a number of dessert brands, including Angel Delight and Dream Topping.

Kraft bosses have remained silent on the rumours that the company plans to sell the quintessential British custard, while UK food manufacturer Associated British Foods and Premier Foods has refused to comment on speculation that it is interested in purchasing the brands.

"We are a very large company and demergers do happen from time to time, but obviously we would not comment on this speculation," said a spokesman.

Bird's custard was created by Alfred Bird, a Birmingham pharmacist, in the mid-19th century. His wife loved desserts, but was allergic to eggs and so was unable to eat traditional custard. Brits reportedly consume 235 million pints of the custard each year.

Angel Delight, first manufactured in 1967, is also a firm favourite with UK consumers.

Kraft is in the middle of an overhaul which will involve closing or selling 20 factories and losing 6,000 of its 100,000 workers. The company is also expected to sell a number of other products, such as Altoids breath mints and Life Savers sweets.

Further information: www.kraft.com

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British catering and pub industry on the up

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The catering and pub sector is one of the top ten fastest growing industries in the UK, according to new figures from the Office for National Statistics.

Cultural changes in food consumption between 1992 and 2002 have had a significant impact on the UK economy, as Britons increasingly eat out, enjoy a wider range of dishes and spend more cash in cafes, bars, and restaurants.

Analysis of the food sector published in the ONS's Economic Trends suggests that the food sector contributed £74 billion to the UK economy in 2002, eight per cent of the total gross value added (GVA).

Household spending on all food sector products stood at £160.3 billion in 2002, up 61.5 per cent since 1992, while households spent £80.0 billion on eating and drinking out in 2002, an increase of 85 per cent over the decade.

Growth in the agriculture and food processing industries is failing to keep pace with that

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of the whole economy, while the hotels, catering and pubs industry was among the top ten growing industries between 1992 and 2002.

The government analysis of the food sector also shows that the value of imported food products has increased every year since 1992. Between 1992 and 2002, imports of food have risen by 24.6 per cent and exports have fallen by 10.1 per cent.

The growth of eating out is also reflected by the growth of the number of businesses in the hotels, catering, pubs and restaurants industry. There were less than 109,000 businesses in 1995, rising to over 122,700 in 2002.

Further information: www.statistics.gov.uk

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Unilever food plant awarded Factory of the Year title

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Unilever's food factory in Lowestoft has been named UK's Factory of the Year after saving 10.4 million over four years by revolutionising its business philosophy.

The site, the largest frozen food plant in Europe, employs 950 staff and has undertaken a four-year world-class manufacturing plan that has resulted in it beating Unilever's internal efficiency targets by 22 per cent, Food Production Daily reports.

Unilever was presented with the trophy at the Best Factory Awards ceremony run by Cranfield School of Management last week and the firm also scooped the prizes for the Best Household and General Products Plant and the Best Factory in the East of England.

"Since we initiated our Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) programme in 1998, we have received a Unilever Excellence Award, a Consistency Award and a Special Award on the basis of achieving zero loss," plant general manager Graham Cooke told the website. "We look to achieve absolute perfection."

Investing in the workforce has been a key factor and Mr Cooke has ensured that management works in partnership with the unions, and that staff are as highly trained as possible. 1,500 externally accredited qualifications have been issued over the past few years.

The factory has also invested in automated equipment, enabling it to make 110 different types of food packages, and has dramatically improved its safety record.

The Lowestoft plant is in effect a site containing four factories and produces all of Birds Eye's red meat, poultry, frozen vegetable and potato products.

Further information: www.unilever.com

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ABF reports increase in group sales

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

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Analysis

Associated British Foods (ABF) has published its preliminary results today, reporting a 12 per cent increase in operating profit and group sales of £5,165 million.

The firm claims that good performance has helped to boost strong profit growth during the year ending September 18, 2004.

Peter Jackson, ABF's chief executive commented: "These results again demonstrate our ability to deliver strong underlying profit growth from our businesses against a backdrop of adverse commodity pricing and currency movements."

Additional figures also show profit before tax was up by ten per cent to £494 million.

"We are well placed for future success with our new yeast businesses giving us further growth opportunities," Mr Jackson added.

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Dairy Crest releases strong first half results

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Dairy Crest has reported strong first half results today as it released its interim results for the six months ending September 30.

Turnover for the dairy firm increased to £676.4 million and profit before tax reached £31.9 million.

Drummond Hall, Dairy Crest chief executive, commented: "Dairy Crest has delivered a solid first half with results in line with expectations across all of our businesses, and we continue to be encouraged by the performance of our major brands."

The company also managed to reduce its net debt from £340.6 million to £260.5 million.

Among the positive results reported for the period were encouraging progress in key brands, the whole ownership of the Country Life brand and the Davidstow cheese creamery was successfully commissioned on schedule.

"We are continuing to invest in developing the business at the same time as taking action to address the ongoing profitability of the fresh milk business. Overall we expect a satisfactory outcome for the full year," Mr Hall added.

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New gastropub menu launched at GNER

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

GNER has launched its new winter menu today, inspired by the UK's popular gastropubs.

The new menu features exclusive dishes made by chefs at two of Britain's top gastropubs - The Blue Lion in North Yorkshire and The Anchor & Hope in London.

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New offerings are part of the railway company's ongoing scheme of local food producers and guest chefs.

Dishes will be served in the GO EAT catering service and is the first time that gastropub chefs have worked with the company.

Among the food on offer will be chicken and bacon terrine, baked duck leg, creme caramel, poached fresh haddock, beef and onion suet pudding and baked apple crumble.

All passengers will be entitled to try the new dishes and all meals are made with the best ingredients and prepared and cooked on board.

GNER claims the joint venture is a sign of the rise of the gastropub phenomenon and provides updated versions of popular classics, as well as modern British dishes.

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Danone plans UK launch of plant sterols product

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food giant Danone is reportedly due to unveil a new product containing plant sterols in the UK this month.

The UK launch of Danacol will be supported by a £3 million marketing campaign aimed at building on the existing success of probiotic drink, Danone Actimel. Targeting the over-40's, Danacol will appeal to those who want to reduce their cholesterol and do not want to be reliant on pills and medicines.

The five-week TV campaign will be supported with in-store support through POS and education material, as well as both consumer and medical PR and a direct mail campaign to 750,000 consumers.

Sonia Lesne, brand manager at Danone, said: "The launch of Danacol is an incredibly exciting addition to our existing portfolio of health products and we have ambitious plans for this brand. We believe that Danacol has similar potential to Actimel, which we saw grow 73 per cent, year on year, in 2004.

Cholesterol remains the single biggest modifiable risk factor for coronary heart disease and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the potential benefits of cholesterol-lowering foods and plant sterols. Active extracts of pure plant sterols are clinically proven to reduce cholesterol.

More than 120,000 people die of coronary heart disease every year in the UK alone and half the population is believed to have high cholesterol levels.

Danacol will be available in both Original and Strawberry 4-packs with a recommended retail price of £1.99.

Further information: www.danone.com

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New luxury rice carton for premium market

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Swiss firm Riseria Taverne has unveiled a new rice carton as part of its strategy to market rice as a luxury instead of a commodity.

The designer packaging has recently won an award in the ECMA/Pro Carton competition 2004 after the number of added functions to the basic product impressed the jury.

The carton features a window that displays the content on the front and small windows on the side to help consumers to easily see how much rice is left, according to Food Production Daily.

A pouring spout can be opened and closed time and time again and the 'collect and keep' recipe card on the back of the carton, removed with the aid of perforations, ensures the packaging has useful afterlife.

"Rice, which is positioned in the premium segment, can only be successful with an appealing package," said Ernst Amstutz, Riseria Taverne chief executive. "Being a low cost product the amount of sold rice won't increase much. But with the premium touch a new or special market segment - the bon vivants - can be attracted."

A recent Euromonitor report found that shelf appeal is increasingly the key to good packaging and food firms are increasingly turning to luxury packaging to boost sales.

Further information: www.riseria.ch

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Expert hails increased supply chain traceability

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The increased move towards complete supply chain traceability is a golden opportunity for companies to build client trust and increase profits.

Scot McLeod, vice president of marketing at software provider Ross Systems, told Food Production Daily that pressure on food manufacturers and suppliers had always been present and the increasing pressure from traceability was a "greater emphasis on safety."

Mr McLeod said: "In the past, retailers have perceived customers as being primarily concerned about price, quality and customer service, but I think now you could add to that brand protection."

Retail giants are rolling out RFID (radio frequency identification) mandates to all their suppliers, while Wal-Mart is currently working out traceability standards for all fresh products. Private label manufacturers are under greatest pressure in the drive towards brand protection.

Mr McLeod believes most of the pressure for change is coming from industry and not regulatory bodies.

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However, he continued: "So many good things can come from this. With a proper system of record in place, companies have more visibility of their operations. This means that traceability is not just another cost, but something that can improve the firm's profitability."

The expert gave the example of Berner Foods, a private-label dairy processor that is now using Ross Systems' iRenaissance traceability software, reducing the length of time to carry out a complete trace from a day to less than an hour.

(No further information)

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Foodservice sales increase at BFG

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Big Food Group (BFG) has reported an operating profit of £27.1 million, as it released its interim results today for the 24 weeks to September 17.

In addition, the company has experienced positive results for its food businesses, with Woodward Foodservice performing particularly well.

The business saw sales increase by 27 per cent, with grocery products contributing to 50 per cent of the growth.

Chief executive, Bill Grimsey, commented: "The UK food retailing market has undergone significant changes over the last two years with the large supermarkets entering the convenience and neighbourhood markets and consolidation driving prices down.

"The group has responded robustly to these challenges with the accelerated roll out of its strategic initiatives and further cost efficiency measures. Due diligence with Baugur is progressing."

In addition, new format Iceland stores have continued to be rolled out and new stores have also been opened during the period.

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Rachel's Organic launches new production extension

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Rachel's Organic will open its multi-million pound extension today, creating 50 new jobs for the food industry.

Britain's first organic dairy has undergone a £3 million scheme that will treble production capacity and allow the firm to target mainland Europe.

Gareth Rowlands, who founded the company with his wife Rachel, told BBC News Online: "The expansion is absolutely wonderful news. The company is able to continue where we left off and in the way we wanted it to."

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The firm has now been running for 20 years and as well as producing organic yoghurt it also produces 4.5 million litres of milk ever year.

Rachel's Organic creates organic yoghurts, milk creme fraiche, butter and cream and its products are sold throughout the UK and top outlets such as the Ritz Hotel in London.
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Baby food promotion launched at Heinz

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food firm Heinz has revealed it is to start a three stage direct marketing campaign to help promote its baby food ranges.

The business is using agency EHS Brann Cirencester to create the campaign, which it hopes will set up an ongoing relationship with mothers to help boost sales of its products.

According to Brand Republic, a special 'TINYTUMS' customer relationship programme will be created which will provide advice on appropriate food for babies and suggest a range of products the company offers.

In addition, a special pack will offer a DVD, a sachet of cereal, a money off coupon and a special card to offer reductions on particular foods.

A second and third phase will see updated information on different age groups and the foods relevant to them.

The company also offers information online and its products include cereal, rusks, baby food in jars and the Farley's range.

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Prince of Wales promotes mutton

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Prince of Wales has stated that he wants to put mutton back on the menu of British diners and is backing a campaign to restore the dish's popularity.

Speaking at a gala luncheon at the Ritz Hotel, London, Prince Charles recommended slow cooking to produce a "whole new culinary treat" and get the best results from mutton.

The Prince attacked the UK's growing fast-food culture, claiming he wanted to protect family farmers and prevent the rural landscape becoming "rank and ungrazed".

Prince Charles, Patron of the Academy of Culinary Arts, which is backing the campaign with the National Sheep Association, said: "In a world where fast food seems to be the order of the day, this may be a message that takes time to percolate beyond the restaurants. But I know from the huge numbers of people who watch the cooking programmes on television that there are some who truly care about how they prepare

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and cook their food and so, for them, there is a whole new culinary treat in store."

Mutton's popularity in Britain declined after the last war and by the 1970s it had fallen out of favour with consumers. Traditionally mutton is meat from a sheep aged over two and to be at its best, the meat must be hung for at least two weeks.

The new campaign, Mutton Renaissance, has won the backing of the farming, food and catering industry. Some of Britain's best known chefs, including Mark Hix, Michel Roux, Marco Pierre White, Anton Mosimann, Gary Rhodes and Antony Worrall Thompson, have all spoken out in defence of mutton.

(no further information)

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Organic festive food list produced by Soil Association

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Soil Association has published its 'Organic Christmas List' for 2004.

The list aims to help British consumers plan a stress-free organic Christmas and covers dozens of local and national suppliers, farm shops, delivery services and supermarkets, selling thousands of festive items.

The Soil Association said in a statement: "Everything you need for an organic Yuletide is available: from Christmas trees and hampers to turkeys, geese and ham, puddings and pies.

"Vegetarians and vegans are also well catered for with a number of delicious non-meat alternatives to choose from."

Further information: www.soilassociation.org

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Takeover deal approved by Urban Dining shareholders

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Urban Dining has announced that its shareholders have given the go-ahead for its takeover of the Tootsies burger restaurant business.

The £31 million reverse takeover will be Urban Dining's first purchase, according to Caterer Online.

Since floating on the Alternative Investment Market in May, the company has now raised £27.9 million to fund the acquisition of the chain.

The burger chain has 23 outlets and new shares will join the group's existing shares, bringing the total up to 57.6 million.

Urban Dining was set up in 2003 by two former PizzaExpress directors and it aims to buy around three established restaurant brands that could be expanded to 100 sites.

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FARM targets Tesco on milk price

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Farming campaign group FARM has called on food retailer Tesco to offer dairy producers a better price for their milk.

The new "independent voice for farmers" said it is focusing on Tesco since it is deemed to be the leading UK supermarket chain.

Speaking to BBC Radio Four's 'Farming Today', spokesman John Sherrell, said: "We are simply asking Tesco as the market leader to exert its power and market influence to ensure that dairy farmers get a good deal.

"We believe that Tesco is in a very strong position to be able to do something if it really wants to - it would be good if they could."

The move follows last week's announcement by Asda that it will increase its milk supply payments.

FARM argues that the margins being made by supermarkets is thought to be over three pence per litre, but no one is entirely sure.

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Amount of children's food ads dropping

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research has suggested that the number of junk food adverts aimed at children has reduced significantly within the last few months.

According to latest figures, the amount of food and soft drinks commercials has decreased by 20 per cent in a year as companies try to help government targets and avoid obesity related regulation.

Analyst Nielsen Media has claimed that the number of food adverts went from 45,000 to 34,703 in September this year, including chain restaurants, soft drinks and food brands.

Chris Hayward of Zenith Optimedia, which buys TV slots for food companies told This is London: "Food advertisers have begun to act responsibly because they realise the obesity issue is gathering momentum."

"There are adverts from a year or 18 months ago that firms would never do now," a Food Advertising Unit spokesman added.

Among the products said to have been advertised less are Dairylea Lunchables, McDonald's Happy Meals and Ribena.

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Vegetarian labelling guidance to be issued by FSA

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has announced it is to draft new best practice advice for vegan and vegetarian labelling.

According to the agency, the advice will include advisory definitions of the terms as well.

"The Agency has been aware of consumer concerns relating to food being labelled as suitable for vegetarians and vegans, and held a stakeholder meeting to discuss vegetarian and vegan labelling on October 12th 2004," the agency told Just Food.

Draft advice will be distributed for a full public consultation in summer next year.

In addition, details of the meeting are available on the agency's website.

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UK Chefs support sustainable fish project

Date: Mon, 15 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Top Chefs and restaurateurs from Devon and Cornwall have met with fishermen, fish merchants and processors to discuss the importance of ensuring the future of sustainable fish stocks.

The meeting, held at Rick Stein's Padstow Seafood School in Cornwall last week, was organised by Invest in Fish South West and examined the future of Britain's coastal waters, Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine reports.

Invest in Fish South West is a £1.6 million three-year project which is looking at the best way to secure sustainable wild fisheries and ensure that quality fish remains available. The scheme is funded by the European Union, public and private funds.

The three-year project is developing a strategy that will present sustainable solutions to managing fish stocks, ensuring a viable future for fishing communities in the South West and informing future fisheries policies.

"I am very much in favour of anything that helps to make sure we can maintain sustainable supplies of good British, or in my case Cornish, fish," Mr Stein said. "This is a serious organisation designed to help the long-term sustainability of fish and it should be supported."

Caroline Bennett, managing director of Moshi Moshi, sits on the steering group for Invest in Fish, added: "Restaurants are a key part in communicating to our customers and if we want sustainable fish stocks for the future and a fishing industry to supply us, then this is something we can do to support it."

Many leading chefs in the South West, including Stein, Michael Caines and Tina Bricknell-Webb, already deal directly with local fishermen, fish merchants and auctioneers, and promote fish caught by sustainable methods.

(no further information)

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Soy protein 'can benefit cholesterol levels'

Date: Mon, 15 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Soy protein intake can have a beneficial effect on cholesterol levels, according to new research.

A cross-sectional study of 1033 pre- and postmenopausal women selected from the Oxford arm of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition found that soy protein intake was inversely associated with total and LDL-cholesterol concentrations.

Carried out by a team from the Cancer Research UK Epidemiology Unit at the University of Oxford in the UK, the study found that women who consumed at least 6g of soy protein per day had mean blood levels of LDL-cholesterol 12.4 per cent lower than that in women who consumed less than 0.5g per day.

Cholesterol remains the single biggest modifiable risk factor for coronary heart disease, which kills more than 120,000 people every year in the UK alone, and is the leading cause of death around the world.

This new study backs previous evidence of soy's cholesterol-lowering properties and is published in this month's American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

A survey of food industry executives by Reuters Business Insight indicated that cholesterol-lowering foods will be the most profitable health food by 2009.

Further information: www.ajcn.org

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Taste linked to alcohol consumption

Date: Mon, 15 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Alcohol consumption in men and women varies according to their sense of taste, new research claims.

A study conducted by researchers in the US found that people with a poor ability to detect bitterness on their tongues drank more per week than those who recoiled from bitter tastes.

Those who drank large quantities were also found to have weak versions of a newly discovered bitter taste gene called TAS2R38.

The survey of 31 men and 53 women rated the taste of different concentrations of a bitter chemical called 6-n-propylthiouracil (PROP) and DNA blood tests were also carried out to determine what kind of TAS2R38 genes they had. The volunteers were then interviewed about how often during the year they drank beer, wine or spirits.

Dr Valerie Duffy, from the University of Connecticut, said: "For example, using PROP as a marker of taste genetics, those who tasted the least bitterness from PROP averaged consuming alcoholic beverages five to six times per week, whereas those who tasted the most bitterness from PROP averaged consuming alcoholic beverages two to three times per week.

"This work suggests that genetics can influence our alcohol drinking behaviour, probably based on how pleasant or unpleasant we perceive the oral sensations from alcoholic beverages."

The study focused on light to moderate drinkers, so it is unclear whether the results have a bearing on alcohol dependency or abuse.

The findings are published in the journal *Alcoholism Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Further information: www.alcoholism-cer.com
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Sales of organic food on the increase

Date: Mon, 15 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New figures released by the Soil Association today have shown that organic food sales are increasing, with sales up by over 10 per cent last year.

According to the organic food and farming group, organic sales are growing by £2 million a week and are now worth £1.12 billion - double the growth of the total food market.

However, the amount of food sold through supermarkets continues to increase, with consumers now buying food directly from organic farmers.

Organic baby food and box schemes continue to perform well and the association believes that poultry is to become the fastest growing area of organic meat throughout the next year.

Although around 56 per cent of organic food sold in Britain is imported, the group praised retailers such as Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer for helping to stock organic food from British farmers.

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Farmers' markets report rapid growth

Date: Mon, 15 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Producers have claimed that farmers' markets are about to make a break into the mainstream and are expecting to make a huge £25 million from sales in December.

Set up seven years ago, the sector now has 500 certified markets in Britain and it is thought pre-Christmas takings will break the view of the markets as a middle class idea.

Gareth Jones, of the National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association (Farma), said: "The growth in the sector is massive. There is no doubt about it that December is by far the most important month of the year - and we are gearing up to the busiest December we have ever had."

It is thought that farmers' markets are particularly popular since they offer fresh food, better health benefits and better traceability, according to Telegraph Online.

Farmers set up the markets to go past supermarkets, make sure only quality food is sold and to increase profits.

According to Farma, British homes spent £1.5 million last year in farm shops and £120 million in farmers' markets.

"People are finding they prefer the taste of fresh food - it's a revival of wonderful foods that many people have not had for years," Mr Jones added.

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Water brands focus on health conscious consumers

Date: Mon, 15 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Drink companies are building on the increasingly health conscious views of consumers to help boost water sales, according to new findings from Zenith International.

The UK drinks consultancy claims that companies are promoting water as a healthy product as people grow more concerned about the obesity issue in the UK, with bottled water growing by 18 per cent in 2003.

However, according to research director Gary Roethenbaugh, 63 per cent of soft drinks consumed already contain no calories or a low amount.

Mr Roethenbaugh told NutraIngredients: "Water itself is a zero-calorie product that benefits from the everyday hydration concept.

"But it can be extended to the wellness concept with the addition of minerals and vitamins. We are expecting this trend to grow increasingly."

Another popular way for firms to boost water sales is to target young women who are more body and health conscious.

Zenith's 2004 UK Bottled Water Report also revealed that sales of the product more than doubled from 1998 to 2003.

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Profits down at Northern Foods

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Northern Foods has reported a first-half loss after sales fell and the company took a one-time charge to cover restructuring costs.

The company, whose brands include Fox's biscuits and Goodfella's pizzas, announced a net loss of £31 million in the six months ended Sept. 27, compared with a net income of £19.2 million a year earlier.

Northern Foods also revealed that sales fell by 1.9 per cent to £708.1 million as customers such as Tesco's continued to force food suppliers to cut costs.

The Hull-based company has sold five of its businesses since September 2003 in an attempt to focus on prepared meals, one of the fastest-growing parts of the food sector and Northern Foods remain optimistic about the future.

"We are now entering the Christmas trading period, which is always critical to our results for the year," Chairman Peter Blackburn said in the statement.

"Our markets remain extremely competitive."

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Kraft confirms brand sell-off

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Struggling US food giant Kraft has announced that it has sold yet another of its brands.

The American food group has agreed the \$1.5 billion (£810 million) sale of its Life Savers and Altoids confectionery division to Wm Wrigley Jr.

Kraft is aiming to streamline its portfolio of brands after seeing its earnings fall for five consecutive quarters. The company is reportedly also looking to sell British favourites Bird's Custard and Angel Delight and has announced the closure of 20 plants internationally and the loss of 6,000 jobs.

Chewing gum business Wrigley saw off challenges from firms including Cadbury Schweppes, Mars and Nestle for the Kraft deal and the company is keen to move beyond the gum market.

Sales of Life Savers have fallen by about 16 per cent over the past four years, while Altoids have seen sales of the mints grow by around 14 per cent over the same period, according to market research firm AC Nielsen. The division, including a number of smaller regional brands, such as Cr me Savers and Trolli gummy candies, generated around \$500 million in sales last year.

Bill Wrigley Jr, chairman and chief executive of the chewing gum business, said: "There are only a handful of confectionery brands around the world that have the combination of heritage and vitality that can match up with Wrigley brands. Altoids and Life Savers are two such brands."

The deal is expected to be granted regulatory approval by mid-2005.

Further information: www.kraft.com

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Boost for UK organic milk production

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Mid Wales firm Rachel's Organic has unveiled a new £3 million extension.

Welsh first minister Rhodri Morgan opened the extension at the company's headquarters in Aberystwyth on Thursday. He declared that the extension, which should lead to the creation of 50 new jobs in the area and treble the firm's production capacity, was great news for Wales.

Rachel's Organic expects the new extension to treble its processing capacity from its current five million litres of fresh organic Welsh milk per annum, to 15 million litres. The existing plant produces more than 10 million pots of GM-free organic yoghurt per year, sold in supermarkets such as Sainsbury's, Safeway and Tesco.

Mr Morgan said: "Projects such as this benefit the Welsh dairy industry, by continued investment, to ensure constant production of an innovative high quality product - surely a hallmark of Rachel's Organic success."

The first minister added that he would like to see more companies like Rachel's Organic in Wales. The company produces key branded Welsh products, in a clean and green way.

Rachel's Organic was started by Rachel and Gareth Rowlands as a dairy farm diversification project after tankers failed to get their milk out from the first organic dairy at Brynlllys in Borth, during heavy snowstorms in 1982.

The extension project attracted a processing and marketing grant from the Welsh Development Agency, using Welsh Assembly and European funding.

Further information: www.rachelsorganic.co.uk

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Growing need for food packaging guidance

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The integrity of packages used to contain heat processed foods is crucial in maintaining product safety, a new report claims.

The study by UK-based CCFRA is designed to help packaging firms appreciate the key factors influencing product safety issues.

The researchers believe that the report will help ensure compatibility between process and package and assure the safety of end products, according to Nutra Ingredients.

As filling technologies and container types evolve new challenges emerge, the study, entitled 'A review of the integrity of heat processed containers through manufacturing and distribution' points out.

The report goes on to describe good practice for maintaining the integrity of containers going through heat pasteurisation and sterilisation processes and covers any defect that

could occur from container reception at the packer through to retail.

In pulling together existing information from disparate sources, CCFRA believes that the review should be of interest to anyone working with heat process foods and with responsibility for or concern about package integrity.

Further information: www.campden.co.uk
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Plans to tighten food advertising guidelines

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The government is planning to introduce new legislation to restrict food advertising.

Reports suggest that the white paper on public health will include measures to ban the advertising of certain foods on television before the 9pm watershed.

The move is intended to support the government's drive to improve the dietary habits of British consumers.

However, the proposals have been criticised by the Conservatives, who claim that Labour is turning the UK into a nanny state.

"The government's own advisers Ofcom made a report earlier this year. They said a ban on advertising of junk foods or so-called junk foods would be ineffective and disproportionate," Tory health spokesman Andrew Lansley.

"So I'm afraid the government is reaching for these kind of nanny state solutions without actually looking at the evidence."

The advertising industry has also expressed concern at the proposed changes, claiming that there is no evidence to suggest that a ban would help tackle obesity.

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Northern Foods reports first-half loss

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

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Northern Foods also revealed that sales fell by 1.9 per cent to £708.1 million as customers such as Tesco's continued to force food suppliers to cut costs.

The Hull-based company has sold five of its businesses since September 2003 in an attempt to focus on prepared meals, one of the fastest-growing parts of the food sector and Northern Foods remain optimistic about the future.

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"We are now entering the Christmas trading period, which is always critical to our results for the year," Chairman Peter Blackburn said in the statement.

"Our markets remain extremely competitive."

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Food and drink exports remain positive

Date: Tue, 16 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The 2003 recovery in food and drink exports is continuing, according to the latest set of figures released by the market development consultancy, Food from Britain (FFB).

Sales of food and drink from the UK were up one per cent in the year ending June 2004, and FFB predicts that this upward trend will continue.

These figures reflect robust exports over the last two years. In fact, the food and drink sector outperformed total UK exports, which for the same period were down one per cent.

This is good news for British exporters who have earned a reputation across the world for producing quality convenience and processed foods.

The EU continues to be the strongest region accounting for an impressive 65 per cent of all food and drink exports and the North American market continues to buy large volumes of whisky, beer, cheese, sauces and condiments.

Cheese continues to recover strongly from the effects of foot and mouth and meat exports are also up.

"These latest results are really encouraging and certainly show the strength and commitment of our food and drink export industry," said David McNair, chief executive of Food from Britain.

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Spending on mushrooms soars

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food makers could be set to cash in on the increasing popularity of mushrooms.

New figures from Ireland have shown that spending on the vegetable has risen by 13 per cent over the year.

Bord Bia, the government-supported Irish food and drink organisation, said its data indicated that consumers spent €34 million on mushrooms in retail outlets for the year to May 2004, with the average spend per buyer reaching €31 per annum.

Michael Maloney, director of horticulture, commented: "Mushrooms are only purchased on average once a fortnight by each household and 82 per cent of households buy mushrooms, an increase of four per cent on the previous year."

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The Irish Mushroom Growers' Association (IMGA) and Bord Bia have launched a promotional scheme for mushrooms, pointing out that the foodstuff is low in fat, has no cholesterol and contains a range of key minerals and vitamins, such as potassium and vitamin B2.

The Minnesota department of agriculture, Eagle Bluff, claims that studies from Japan suggest that the shiitake species of mushrooms is more nutritious than most species and may play a role in lowering blood cholesterol. The vegetable has become Japan's number one agricultural export with gross sales of a billion dollars per year.

Further information: www.bordbia.ie

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Australian processors launch fish recycling scheme

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new scheme to recycle thousands of tonnes of fish processing waste could benefit the environment and save processors money.

Millions of tonnes of fish waste is produced by processors every year, as around 60 per cent of the product is discarded and often ends up as landfill.

A group of key stakeholders in the Australian seafood industry have now formed Australian Seafood (ASCo) in a bid to increase efficiency and cut out waste, according to Food Production Daily.

The association considered a range of options for the utilisation of seafood waste, and decided that processing the waste into organic fertiliser was the most suitable option. ASCo has now formed a partnership with Sieber, a New Zealand fertiliser company, and has made deals with other established fertiliser companies and the agricultural industry.

ASCo is confident that its strategy of recycling fish waste into fertiliser is not only workable, but also highly attractive to fish processors.

A feasibility study into the installation of a fish silage processing plant at Sydney Fish Market has just been completed, concluding that the concept was attractive from both an environmental and financial point of view.

Trials have also been carried out to examine the efficacy of BioPhos, a phosphate-based fertiliser product developed by ASCo's joint venture company with Sieber (ASCoF), called BioPhos. ASCo claims that all the trials conducted to date in Australia have had positive results.

(no further information)

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Apples 'contain anti-Alzheimer's chemical'

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

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An antioxidant found in apples and some other fruits and vegetables appears to protect brain cells against Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative disorders.

According to a new study, the antioxidant reduces oxidative stress, a tissue-damaging process associated with Alzheimer's. Quercetin is an antioxidant mainly concentrated in the skin of apples.

Carried out on rat brain cells, the research by US scientists substantiates other recent animal studies, that the risk of developing Alzheimer's and similar diseases may be reduced by dietary intervention, particularly by increasing one's intake of antioxidant-rich foods.

Scientists found that brain cells treated with quercetin had significantly less damage than those treated with vitamin C or not exposed to antioxidants.

"On the basis of serving size, fresh apples have some of the highest levels of [the antioxidant] quercetin when compared to other fruits and vegetables and may be among the best food choices for fighting Alzheimer's," Dr CY Lee, professor and chairman of the Department of Food Science & Technology at Cornell University, said.

The professor added that people should eat more fresh apples, but cautioned that protection against Alzheimer's using any food product is currently theoretical. There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease and no one is sure of its exact causes.

The study will appear in the December 1st issue of the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

(no further information)

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Fruit and veg may influence behaviour

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new study from the US has suggested that people who enjoy eating vegetables have different habits and preferences to fruit fans.

According to the team from the University of Illinois, people who consume more vegetables prefer spicy foods and wine and cook elaborate dishes for friends.

However, those who prefer to eat fruit tend to be big fans of desserts, are less adventurous with their cooking and tend to entertain a lower amount of people.

The report, which interviewed 800 people, claimed that the findings could help consumers cut down on their intake of junk food.

Lead researcher Professor Brian Wansink explained to BBC News Online: "If they say they like to cook, like to entertain, like to try new recipes, and like spicy food, tell them how vegetables can make their meals even better.

"If they say they like desserts and foods that do not take much time or talent to cook, tell

them how fruits can quickly and sweetly add something to their routine."

It is thought the findings could also help campaigns such as the Government's 'Five A Day' scheme and help food firms when marketing their products.

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Organic food meeting planned by EU

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A discussion on future research in the organic sector is to be held next year, funded by the European Union.

The event is being organised by leaders of the EU funded project Quality Low Input Food (QLIF) and the Soil Association and will focus on organic food quality, farming and human health.

"Researchers involved or interested in agricultural research are urged to attend and to contribute to discussions," organisers told Food Navigator.

Recent findings have suggested that the quickest growing organic area is dairy, with milk and yoghurt showing the highest growth.

One area which is thought to have helped the sector is innovation, with a host of innovative new products being launched in recent years and scientific research on health benefits thought to boost growth even further.

Discussions will take place in the UK from January 6th to 9th.

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Cabbage substance studied for health benefits

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research is being planned to investigate the effect cabbage could have on cervical cancer.

If positive benefits could be identified they could help create a new way for food firms to market cabbage and products containing it, according to Nutra Ingredients.

UK researchers from the Wales College of Medicine are particularly looking at a supplement found in substances found in cabbage, which it is hoped could also reduce the incidence of cervical abnormalities.

The new trial is sponsored by Cancer Research UK and will use women who have borderline or mildly abnormal test results.

Research follows findings that a chemical in broccoli and kale can slow down the growth of prostate cancer cells.

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Nutrition experts hold conference

Date: Thu, 18 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

More than 600 nutrition experts have gathered in Shropshire for a conference.

The British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition meets in Telford this Wednesday and Thursday, the BBC reports.

The meeting at the town's International Centre will discuss whether hospital meals are improving in quality and the latest thinking on food for babies.

A range of other topics will be covered during the conference and delegates will also hear from a malnutrition action group to look at ways of improving nutrition in the NHS.

The government is becoming increasingly concerned about nutrition in the face of soaring obesity rates and cases of diet-related diseases in the UK.

Further information: www.bapen.org.uk

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Food manufacturers improve inventory processes

Date: Thu, 18 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food manufacturers and distributors have been presented with a new way of meeting high customer service levels and keep inventories down by optimisation software firm ToolsGroup.

Four European food companies have reportedly adopted ToolsGroup's DPM inventory optimisation software to create the right mix for their businesses.

The four - canned seafood company Conservas Garavilla, food distributor Gallina Blanca, pasta manufacturer Pastas Gallo, and cheese producer Mantequeras Arias - join food and beverage companies such as pasta manufacturer Barilla, Coca-Cola bottler Casbega, and yogurt and bottled water provider Danone in using the new technology.

Food firms can improve customer service levels and reduced global finished goods inventory by 10-50 per cent, ToolsGroup claims.

Conservas Garavilla, one of the leading food companies in Spain, has added ToolsGroup's DPM inventory optimisation solution to its SAP R/3 system to optimise inventory for its products. In nine months, the company increased its service level (or line fill rate) to 98.3 per cent, without increasing inventories, improved customer satisfaction and reduced administrative costs by 20 per cent.

Says Patxi Gomez, Director of Logistics for Conservas Garavilla, commented: "With DPM, not only have we improved the service to our clients without having to increase inventory levels, but we are better able to predict the effect of new launches and promotions."

Further information: www.toolsgroup.com

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Subway introduces toasted subs

Date: Thu, 18 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Sandwich giant Subway is now offering customers the chance to have their submarine sandwiches toasted.

Subway Fresh Toasted Subs are currently available in many areas in the United States and Canada and the option is set to be introduced to the company's UK restaurants in the near future.

In keeping with the Subway chain's tradition of customising each new offering, any sandwich from the menu can be toasted in a special oven that was built exclusively for the firm to heat the sandwich all the way through. All Fresh Toasted Subs are made to each customer's specification, right before their eyes.

Chris Carroll, vice president of marketing for the Subway Franchisee Advertising Fund Trust, said: "Introducing toasted subs brings our sandwich artistry to a whole new level."

"Toasting our subs will further our 39 year tradition of offering the best tasting submarine sandwiches in the world," Subway restaurants' executive chef Chris Martone added. "You can see the hot bubbly cheese, taste the warm tender meat and delight in the crunch of the bread. And, best of all, like all Subway sandwiches, you can order a toasted sandwich on a variety of breads baked in the store, topped with your favourite choice of fresh vegetables, condiments and sauces."

The Subway restaurant chain has more than 22,000 locations in 77 countries and is one of the largest franchise companies in the world.

Further information: www.subway.com
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Nostalgic desserts proving popular

Date: Thu, 18 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Traditional desserts such as jam roly poly and spotted dick are making a comeback, according to new research by Mintel.

Latest findings suggest that consumers are growing tired of exotic cuisine and turning back to old favourites, including jelly and rice pudding.

The trend offers new marketing opportunities for food firms, with some companies already catching on and promoting products as old fashioned and nostalgic, according to Mintel.

Food firms are also bearing in mind the popular convenience market and offering the classic puddings in microwavable versions.

Mintel's dessert consumption report explains: "A few years ago this sector had all the

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hallmarks of a traditional market in long-term decline.

"However, the entry of old-fashioned foods into the sector, with twin-packs of microwaveable sponge puddings in plastic pots, has helped to bring the sector back into growth. Another factor has been a general renewal of interest in traditional British food."

'Ambient sponge pudding' sales are now increasing by eight per cent a year and the products are attracting younger customers with their easy-to-cook format.

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New members appointed at appeals panel

Date: Thu, 18 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Independent Agriculture Appeals Panel has announced that 28 new members have been chosen to join its existing 16-person panel.

Panels meet to discuss appeals from farmers and traders on decisions made by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and the way it operates its various schemes, according to the Journal.

Among the new members on the panel are the NFU chairman for Cumbria Alistair MacKintosh and a regional chair of the NFU Dairy Board.

The appeal procedure was introduced in April 2002 and two further appeal procedures have since been introduced with respect to the RPA and the Single Payment Scheme (SPS).

In addition, a new appeal procedure is set to be introduced next year for farmers unsatisfied with decisions on the ongoing administration for the SPS.

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Contaminant consultations launched by EFSA

Date: Thu, 18 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A public consultation has been launched by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to deal with contaminant exposure.

The consultation is hoped to develop harmonised risk assessment procedures, which balance the benefits of eating particular foods against the dangers of contaminant exposure.

According to Just Food, the authority hopes action will help create an EU wide approach to dietary guidance that is based on strong scientific evidence.

A number of discussion papers have been released by the authority on the subject on a host of food concern areas.

One example is a paper from the FSA on eating too little oily fish, which is good for health and is recommended in higher amounts, but should be consumed in lower amounts by pre-menopausal women and girls.

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Starbucks unveils recycled packaging

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Coffee giant Starbucks has announced that it has been granted approval by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to use recycled content in food packaging.

Starbucks supply chain member, Mississippi River Corporation, is the first company to receive approval for recycled packaging from the FDA, granted for the Starbucks hot beverage cups.

Following successful testing, to take place in early 2005, Starbucks expects to convert its hot beverage cups to 10 per cent recycled material, in a bid to integrate more environmentally-friendly practices into its business.

The hot beverage cups will look and perform the same, but the new cup is expected to lower the company's dependence on tree fibre annually by more than £5 million.

Starbucks collaborated for more than two years with its suppliers Solo Cup Company, MeadWestvaco, and Mississippi River Corporation to obtain approval from the FDA.

Starbucks Corporation is the leading retailer, roaster and brand of specialty coffee in the world, with more than 8,700 retail locations in North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific Rim.

Further information: www.starbucks.com

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Bidding interest grows for A-Z restaurants

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The sale of the seven A-Z restaurants in central London reportedly garnered "significant interest" from both chain restaurants and individual operators.

Administrator BDO Stoy Hayward said enquiries were coming from all over the country.

According to Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine, a strong contender for the restaurants include Luke Johnson, an investment executive at Risk Capital Partners, current chairman of Signature Restaurants and former chairman of PizzaExpress, as well as The Chez Nico chain.

Both Giorgio Locatelli and Gordon Ramsay are also thought to be considering the purchase of their former A-Z restaurants, Zafferano and Aubergine, and A-Z boss Guiliano Lotto is also considering options to regain the restaurants.

Claudio Pulze, joint founder of the A-Z group, has reportedly teamed up with ex-Cafe Med owner Simon Binder to bid for all seven sites and Knight Frank, which is acting for the partnership, said a successful bid might be followed by the sale of certain parts of the group.

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The high-profile restaurants are likely to form the centre of a bidding war by London's eateries.

Outside the M25, NW Hotels and Leisure, which owns St Michael's Manor hotel and D'Arcy's restaurant in St Albans, Hertfordshire, is also believed to have its eye on the A-Z sale.

(no further information)

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IFT defends use of food irradiation

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) has defended the use of food irradiation in food production, denying accusations that the technology could harm human health.

The food science body insists that food irradiation is a proven, beneficial method of improving the safety of the food supply.

In a recent article, the organisation wrote: "The summary supports the use of this technology as a means to inactivate pathogens, maintain quality, and increase shelf life, as part of an effective overall food processing management system."

The IFT report, published this month in Food Technology, calls for new research to focus on: pathogen reduction protocols allowing for standards in pathogen control levels; inactivation of viruses in ready-to-eat foods and minimally processed fruits and vegetables; irradiating packaged meals; packaging advancements affecting sensory attributes.

Irradiation, the physical treatment of food with high-energy, ionising radiation, is used to prolong the shelf life of food products and reduce health hazards. The process has been used in the United States since 1963 to control mould and insect infestations, but European consumers remain sceptical.

Each European member state currently has its own rules governing the application of irradiation on foods. In the UK and Germany only dried herbs, spices and vegetable seasoning can use irradiation processing technology, Food Navigator reports.

The European Commission has the power to approve new food categories for irradiation throughout the EU, but the only food category currently listed as suitable for treatment is dried herbs, spices and vegetables.

Further information: www.ift.org

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Management changes planned at Unilever

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Consumer products group Unilever, which makes food including Lipton tea, SlimFast
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diet foods, Flora and Magnum, is considering changing its top management structure.

The company has announced plans to change its top management to just one chief executive representing both its British and Dutch businesses instead of the current two.

However, at present there has been no mention of merging the two parent companies.

Currently, the British arm is headed by Patrick Cescau and the Dutch arm is run by Anthony Burgmans.

Reports have suggested that an "internal debate" is ongoing within the firm concerning the management change.

The firm is also considering reducing the amount of people on its executive committee from seven to five.

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Penguin receives prestigious food award

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food firm Penguin has announced it has been given the prestigious Food Manufacture Excellence Award for 2004.

The frozen food processor, based in King's Lynn, was rewarded due to the turnaround it has made since acquiring business Albert Fisher.

According to EDP24, the site was taken over in 2002 and Penguin has now developed it into one of the UK's leading vegetable processors.

Stuart Robinson, marketing manager for Penguin Foods, said: "This is an enormous achievement for us. We are proud of all the hard work we have put in and to be recognised like this is a great boost for everyone here."

Over £1.4 million has been invested in improving the site during the last 18 months.

The company was also highly commended in the Excellence in Frozen Food category, which was won by Tryton Foods - the owner of the Aunt Bessie brand.

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Consumers growing increasingly aware of GI

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research has revealed that consumer awareness of Glycaemic Index (GI) is increasing, suggesting a greater demand for foods displaying the information on their labelling.

Figures suggest that there is still the opportunity for a market for specifically labelled GI products in Europe.

Now UK based Leatherhead Food has conducted Internet-based primary research on DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

the products.

'The Glycaemic Index - The New Form of Diet Control?' has shown that around one third of consumers are now aware of GI.

In addition, figures showed that the majority of consumers had learnt of GI through magazines and newspapers.

Food firms are likely to start looking more closely at the sector now, with experts claiming it could be a potential rival for Atkins and other low carb diets.

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Cutting calories without increasing hunger

Date: Mon, 22 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

It is possible to cut down calorie intake without feeling hungry, new research claims.

A four week experiment by scientists from Penn University found that women who ate 800 fewer calories per day felt just as full and satisfied as when they were served higher calorie meals and larger portions.

The study of 24 young women aged 19 to 35, published by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity, saw participants follow a diet set by the scientists on two consecutive days of each of the four weeks.

The same menus were served but foods were varied in energy density (calories) and portion size. By reducing the calorie content of the food by 30 per cent, the experts reduced daily calorie intake by 23 per cent, while reducing portion size by 25 per cent led to a 12 per cent decrease in calorie intake.

However, despite the calorie reduction, the women rated their hunger or fullness the same.

Lead researcher Dr Barbara Rolls said: "The results suggests that home cooks and restaurants could take an easy step toward obesity prevention by adding more fruits and vegetables and trimming the fat to decrease energy density without having to serve tiny portions."

Dr David Haslam, chairman of the National Obesity Forum, added: "There are certainly changes in our diet that we can make that are utterly sustainable and that you would never dream about going back on."

Further information: www.naaso.org

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Coffee giants 'become ethically aware'

Date: Mon, 22 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Coffee giants Nestle and Kraft Foods are both reportedly planning to launch sustainable brands next year.

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The two firms are hoping to cash in on the growing success of Fairtrade-certified products and The Guardian claims to have seen details of proposals being considered by Kraft for a new brand - Kenco Sustainable Development.

Kraft, which owns Kenco, Carte Noire and Maxwell House, reportedly plans to pay farmers who adhere to its ethical criteria a 20 per cent premium on the price of green coffee beans on the open market.

However, this sum is considerably less than the flat rate of \$1.21 paid to farmers under the Fairtrade scheme. Kraft has asked New York-based charity Rainforest Alliance to provide its ethical certification.

Market leader Nestle, which makes Nescafe and Alta Rica, is also believed to be preparing its own sustainable product.

The companies' plans have angered the Fairtrade Foundation, which believes a rise in rival certifications could damage the consumer appeal of Fairtrade-approved products.

"We think it is bound to confuse people," said the foundation's deputy director, Ian Bretman. "When people suggest these initiatives are 'like Fairtrade', we have to point out they are, in fact, not Fairtrade."

Further information: www.kraft.com
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Link established between sleep and weight

Date: Mon, 22 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Too little sleep can increase people's chances of becoming fat, a new study claims.

Research by scientists from the Mailman School of Public Health and the Obesity Research Center at Columbia University showed that people who slept four hours or less per night were 73 per cent more likely to be obese.

The scientists analysed data on 18,000 people aged between 32 and 59 who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey during the 1980s.

Published by the American Association for the Study of Obesity, the study suggests that sleep may have an effect on appetite hormones.

According to the research, people who got only five hours of sleep were 50 per cent more likely to be obese than those who were getting a full night's rest, while those who got six hours of sleep were 23 per cent more likely to be substantially overweight.

Dr James Gangwisch, who led the research team, said: "The results are somewhat counterintuitive, since people who sleep less are naturally burning more calories."

"But we think it has more to do with what happens to your body when you deprive it of sleep as opposed to the amount of physical activity that you get."

Previous research has indicated that sleep deprivation is linked to a decrease in levels of the hormone leptin, which regulates appetite and weight and tells the brain how much energy is available in the body. Levels of the hormone grehlin, which makes people want to eat, have also been seen to increase in people who are sleep-deprived.

Further information: www.naaso.org
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Obesity and brain tissue link discovered

Date: Mon, 22 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research has revealed that there may be a link between obesity and the loss of brain tissue, prompting food firms to develop more healthy eating products and promote foods such as fruit and vegetables.

According to researchers from the Sahlgrenska University Hospital, in Sweden, carrying extra weight and conditions such as diabetes can be a key factor in tissue loss in women, which then leads on to the development of dementia.

Lead researcher, Deborah Gustafson, told BBC News Online: "Obesity may also increase the secretion of the hormone cortisol, which could lead to atrophy.

"If overweight and obesity contribute not only to diseases of middle age, but also to degenerative diseases of later life, the health ramifications of excess body fat will stress healthcare systems for many years to come," she added.

The researchers argue the findings provide even further evidence for the need to address the issue of obesity and to promote healthy eating.

As part of the research nearly 300 women aged between 46 and 60 were studied over a period of 24 years.

Based on tests every six years, results showed the higher a woman's Body Mass Index (BMI) the more likely their chances of developing brain tissue loss.

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Chef creates innovative sprout cake

Date: Mon, 22 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Good Food Show always includes some innovation, but this year's event will see a cake showcased that is actually good for your health.

Created by the British Sprout Growers Association, the 'Sprouty Cake' contains sprouts, walnuts, eggs and cinnamon.

The official chef of the association, Felice Tocchini devised the product, which also includes many healthy and all natural ingredients.

Consumers can tuck into the cake and boost their health, with vitamins C and B9, fibre
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and two possible cancer protective compounds all included in the cake.

In addition, the cake is not only good for health but also tastes good, according to recent public taste tests held by the association.

The Good Food Show is running from November 24th to the 28th and is being held in the NEC.

Founded in 2000, the association works to promote the health benefits and culinary versatility of British grown sprouts.

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Sugar reform considered by EU

Date: Mon, 22 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The European Union (EU) is proposing to cut Europe's sugar prices by a third to protect producers in developing countries.

EU agricultural ministers are meeting in Brussels today to reach a solution on reforming the continent's multi-million dollar sugar industry.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruled last month that governments unfairly subsidise the industry, meaning Europe is able to sell sugar at sub market rate levels.

In addition to the price cuts, the EU is also proposing to reduce the amount of sugar it produces so the excess is not dumped on other countries.

Research from Oxfam shows that if the EU limits the subsidies, some of the world's poorest countries would benefit significantly.

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Research shows chocolate may cure coughs

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new study has found that a key ingredient in chocolate could prove effective in stopping persistent coughs.

A team of researchers from Imperial College London found that theobromine, a derivative found in cocoa, was nearly a third more effective in stopping persistent coughs than the leading medicine codeine.

The study, which also involved London's Royal Brompton Hospital and St Bartholomew's Hospital, involved 10 healthy volunteers who were given either theobromine, codeine or a dummy pill.

The researchers then measured levels of capsaicin, which is used in research to cause coughing and found that, for volunteers given theobromine, the concentration of capsaicin needed to produce a cough was around a third higher than for the placebo group.

Prof Peter Barnes, from Imperial College London and Royal Brompton Hospital, said: "Coughing is a medical condition which affects most people at some point in their lives, and yet no effective treatment exists.

"While persistent coughing is not necessarily harmful it can have a major impact on quality of life, and this discovery could be a huge step forward in treating this problem."

The scientists also found that theobromine causes fewer side effects than conventional treatment and does not leave people drowsy. Theobromine works by suppressing vagus nerve activity, which is responsible for causing coughing.

The study is published in the latest issue of the FASEB journal.

Further information: www.faseb.org
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Experts list top 20 cancer-beating foods

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A leading cancer prevention charity has produced a list of the 20 best foods to prevent the disease.

The list from the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) is based on the "Food Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer" report, based on thousands of studies.

The 20 health-enhancing 'superfoods' identified are vegetables, fruits, nuts, oily fish and whole grains, which contain the highest levels of antioxidants, the vitamins and minerals that help protect the body from the damaging effects of carcinogenic oxygen-free radicals.

For example, peppers are an excellent source of vitamin C, flavonoids and beta-carotene, while Brazil nuts are rich in the mineral selenium and tomatoes contain the antioxidant lycopene, vitamins C and E, flavonoids and potassium.

Up to one-third of cancers are thought to be associated with diet and eating more vegetables and fruit is believed to be the second-most effective way to reduce the risk of cancer, after not smoking. However, in a recent survey, more than half of people questioned said they were unaware that diet could influence their risk of cancer.

The Royal Marsden Hospital in London is also due to publish a book next year called "Cancer: The Power of Food", The Independent reports.

Written by the hospital's chief dietician, Clare Shaw, the book contains recipes for dishes full of cancer prevention foods and tips on how best to cook them. It also includes advice on weight-loss regimes and states that: "All the evidence for diet being protective indicates that it should contain plenty of starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, with small portions of animal protein."

Further information: www.wcrf.org
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Fortification 'a growing trend'

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fortification of food and drinks products is a growing trend and reportedly played a role in eight per cent of all new products introduced in the sector last year.

David Jago, director of Mintel's Global New Products Database, told a seminar on 'vitamin enrichment in drinks' at Health Ingredients Europe that fortified waters, juices and carbonates are at the forefront of this growth, according to Nutra Ingredients.

Mr Jago added that sports and energy drinks continue to rely on B vitamins for energy boosting and energy drinks now account for the largest share of fortified beverages, closely followed by fortified juices (28 per cent).

However, waters are showing the fastest growth, while the fortified fizzy drinks market is also booming with the recent launches of Coca-Cola's Fanta with vitamin C and 7UP with vitamin C and calcium.

"Fortification is declining in most segments except for soft drinks and dairy," he noted, adding that the daily dose concept would also continue to expand.

A report published in the US last week by Fitch ratings suggested that adding nutrients to fizzy drinks will be part of the push for further creativity and attempt to make them appear healthier.

(no further information)

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Dairy farmers issued advice by Eblex

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The English Beef and Lamb Executive (Eblex) has issued farmers with advice to help make an additional £12 million in margins.

According to Eblex, with dairy bull finishing, the industry could save more than £160 million in lost retail sales.

MLC beef economics manager, Duncan Sinclair, told the Journal: "Dairy bull calves are trading at just £20 per head. This makes the cost side of the bull finishing equation particularly attractive.

"This approach could well offer a valuable extra margin-earning opportunity for many, as well as a way of reducing overhead costs on all the animals," he added.

Mr Sinclair recommended intensive beef finishers to consider "finishing several pens of dairy bulls alongside their existing cross-bred stock on the basis of careful individual costings".

According to costings from Eblex, the majority of the 250,000 bobby calves that are set

to be lost the food chain next year are capable of generating 2005 gross margins of more than £80 per head.

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McDonalds appoints new chief exec

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fast food chain McDonalds has announced that its chief executive is resigning due to his ongoing battle with cancer.

Mr Bell will be replaced by vice chairman James Skinner, after becoming chief executive in April.

According to reports, Mr Bell was diagnosed with cancer just two weeks after accepting his new position.

Mr Skinner, the new chief executive, is a long-term employee of McDonalds, like Mr Bell, joining the business in 1971 as a restaurant management trainee.

McDonald's also revealed that US chief executive Mike Roberts will become the company's new president and chief operating officer.

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First Reducol product planned in UK in 2005

Date: Tue, 23 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food firm Fayrefield Foods has announced it will be the first company to launch foods containing innovative cholesterol lowering plant sterols created by Canadian firm Forbes Medi-Tech.

The Reducol brand will be launched next year, as the first of its kind in the UK and Ireland, and will build on the popularity of GM free and health boosting foods.

The firm based in Cheshire has signed a five year sales and licensing agreement with Medi-Tech whereby it will use the Reducol brand sterols in milk-based drinks.

To help stand out from other cholesterol lowering products Fayrefield is going to use the 'GM-free' claim on product labelling.

Chris Swire, marketing director at Fayrefield, told NutraIngredients: "Existing proprietary brands are not making this claim currently and we plan to do so.

"We can work within the existing regulatory framework to move outside the products currently available on the market. We have an excellent quality product that will be competitively priced and we hope to be able to grow this market too," he added.

Fayrefield makes and exports branded and private label dairy products throughout the Middle East, Europe and North America.

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Little Chef up for sale

Date: Wed, 24 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Roadside restaurant chain Little Chef is being put up for sale for between £30 million and £50 million.

Private equity group Permira, which purchased Little Chef from catering group Compass last year as part of its acquisition of Travelodge, is reportedly looking to offload the bulk of the restaurants and has decided to focus on its hotel business.

The Scotsman claims that Permira will hold on to the 115 outlets situated next to its hotels and will put the Little Chef brand and the remaining 182 restaurants up for sale early next year.

Little Chef recently withdrew plans to slim down its famous tubby cook logo after a public outcry earlier this year. The chain was founded in 1958 in Reading with an 11-seat snack bar.

Permira's subsidiary TTLC will use the proceeds of the sale to pay off debt incurred when it bought Travelodge and expand the 250-hotel chain.

Travelodge chief executive Grant Hearn said: "As the group's focus is our core low cost hotels business, it makes strategic sense for us to devote our full financial and management resources to this objective."

Mr Hearn denied suggestions that Little Chef was being sold because the brand had lost its appeal and said Little Chef would appeal to private equity groups.

Further information: www.little-chef.co.uk

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Baby food goes gourmet

Date: Wed, 24 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new generation of parents are reportedly feeding their offspring gourmet baby food.

As Briton's tastes become more exotic, so too do the foods parents feed their children.

The Telegraph reports that, among last month's best-selling foods for the under-ones at supermarket giant Sainsbury's were, Italian vegetable and star pasta with creamed chicken, butternut squash risotto cereal and tomato and chicken Neapolitan.

"Good food and good cooking are now regarded by many parents as essential for their children, right from the moment they are born," said Sainsbury's baby food buyer, Guy Meakin.

A report by the store chain reveals that the best-selling baby food 25 years ago included minced beef with vegetables, potato and carrot with beef, turkey with vegetables, and country vegetables with rice, while today's top 10 includes moussaka, vegetable chicken

and coconut korma, rigatoni, and lamb risotto.

Further information: www.sainsbury.co.uk
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Danisco unveils ice crystals-busting technology

Date: Wed, 24 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Danish food ingredients firm Danisco has reportedly launched a new patent pending technology, which it claims makes ice crystals in ice cream a thing of the past.

The company estimates that ice cream produced with Grinsted IcePro stabilisers had ice crystal growth 37-57 per cent smaller than ice cream produced with conventional stabilisers. The life-span of the ice cream is also extended in the sense the product appears to taste better longer.

Grinsted IcePro is a stabiliser/emulsifier system that protects ice cream through multiple heat shock cycles. The technology is currently undergoing mini-plant trials and will be marketed in the US as Grinsted Ice-Pro and in the rest of the world under the Cremoaen brand.

Heat shock is one of the greatest problems faced by ice cream makers, as temperature fluctuations in the environment surrounding the ice cream cause ice crystal growth. Ice crystals continue to form throughout the product's shelf life, making the ice cream rough textured and affecting the flavour.

"Most stabilisers, such as galactomannans, xanthan, CMC and MCC have little to no impact on the ice crystal nucleation process, and only limited impact on the recrystallisation process," Danisco said in a statement.

"Cold extrusion can suppress initial ice crystal size, but does not reduce recrystallisation. ISP's generally change the texture of the ice cream in which they are used, resulting in hard, brittle desserts. Finally, ice crystal growth suppression through an increase of solids in an ice cream mix, and through high locust bean gum stabiliser/emulsifier systems have proven only marginally effective and are expensive alternatives."

Further information: www.danisco.com
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GMO detectors to be created by EU

Date: Wed, 24 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The EU is to conduct new research into genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and hemoglobinopathies.

Project work will take place through Turkey's Middle East Technical University, and Romania's National Institute For Laser, Plasma and Radiation Physics.

The EU's research network Eureka, which the institutes have joined, will develop quartz crystal microbalance-based diagnosis systems and instruments for detecting the

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organisms.

Systems will be developed from now until June 2007, using protein and nucleic acid to help find GM ingredients.

According to Just Food, the project could be potentially very useful for the food industry and it is looking for more partners at present to take part in the project.

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Image revamp planned at Pizza Hut

Date: Wed, 24 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Pizza Hut has announced that it is to review its marketing strategies to help bring more customers to its restaurants and home delivery outlets.

The company's retail marketing director Simon Wallis and a host of agencies including Minerva are to help renew the firm's image, according to Brand Republic.

Among the changes taking place will be a new £1.7 million television campaign beginning on November 29.

New advertising will promote the restaurants as a place for "family therapy".

Last month Pizza Hut launched a healthy option on its menus in line with current health concerns, including the line of 'Hi-Light' lower-fat pizzas.

The firm reported a three per cent increase in like-for-like sales growth during September, with its high street brands broadly maintaining their position.

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Netto expands UK stores

Date: Wed, 24 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Value food retailer Netto has announced it is opening a new store and helping to create 25 jobs.

The company now has over 130 stores in the UK and is proving increasingly popular with consumers, for its good value and more efficient shopping experience.

Netto is investing £2 million in the new store, which will be based in Darlington and has over 10,000 sq ft of floor space.

According to recent research it only takes 25 minutes to do a weekly shop at Netto, yet trips to most other retailers take 45 minutes.

Managing director for Netto UK, Claus Waedeled, explained to the Journal that the company does so well by cutting overheads and having a Europe-wide purchasing power, which allows the firm to buy high quality groceries with big discounts.

He commented: "Netto has a UK buying team who understand the British consumer's

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tastes and they work hard to source the best-value local products for our customers, including locally sourced meat and fruit and vegetables."

Netto first opened in the UK in 1990 and offers 1,100 lines in food and other items.
(C) DeHavilland Information Services plc, 1998-2003.

Enodis welcomes healthy eating boom

Date: Thu, 25 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Catering equipment firm Enodis has welcomed the recent trend towards healthier eating.

The company, which sells equipment to restaurants and chains including McDonald's, claims that the demand for healthier food has increased demand for its products.

The London-based firm posted a six per cent increase in annual pre-tax profits to £41.2 million and said a number of large groups were trying out equipment that lets them cook hot "deli" sandwiches in less than 90 seconds.

Enodis added that it expected a recovery in demand for fast food equipment in North America to continue over the current financial year, as fast food customers become more health-conscious.

Chief executive David McCulloch said: "The momentum that we have gained over the past year in our North American food service equipment markets is expected to continue into next year."

Enodis, which employs 5,800 people globally and 500 in the UK, has two main divisions - food services equipment, which makes industrial equipment and fryers, and food retail, which supplies chiller cabinets and other retail display equipment.

Further information: www.enodis.com
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FSA launches nutrient consultation

Date: Thu, 25 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The UK's Food watchdog has launched a formal 12-week consultation on its research to develop a scheme to categorise foods based on the nutrients they contain.

The Food Standards Agency claims the nutrient profiles research could be put a wide range of uses, including identifying options for use in school vending machines and tackling the current imbalance in TV advertising aimed at children.

The research, led by a team from the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group at Oxford University, was overseen by an expert group of nutrition scientists, dieticians, food industry and consumer organisation representatives, and policymakers.

The project has developed an approach for children aged 11-15 based on the balance of selected micro and macro nutrients in individual foods. The new method takes account
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of the positive contribution to the diet of foods such as cheese and dried fruit, as well as their fat, salt and sugar content.

The researchers believe that the approach could be adapted to other age groups.

The consultation runs until February 25th 2005 and the Agency is inviting comments on the research.

Further information: www.food.gov.uk
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UK dairy farmers under pressure

Date: Thu, 25 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A number of British milk producers have successfully lowered their unit costs of milk production recently, a new report claims.

Financial group HSBC, in conjunction with UK management consultancy firm ADAS, conducted a survey among 97 specialist dairy farms - UK dairy producers with more cows and higher milk output than average UK farms.

The study found that the majority of farmers questioned in the survey had successfully managed to lower their production costs by an average of 0.5p per litre in response to growing competition in the UK and Europe.

However, two in five of those surveyed had also seen their owner equity, 'value of a farm owner's assets after all liabilities have been met', eroded over the past year and nearly 75 per cent had increased their borrowing spend.

The European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform will see the implementation of single farm payments in 2005 and dairy farmers are increasingly seeking new ways to boost their milk quotas. UK farmers are also facing rising fuel, power and insurance costs.

"The spotlight data confirms the pressures currently facing the sector. Both the HSBC and ADAS teams will be working closely with individual farmers to help them review their unit costs and improve efficiency," said Steve Ellwood, head of agriculture at HSBC bank.

"We shall also be sharing the data with manufacturers, processors, food retailers and food service companies so that they are fully aware of the pressure at farm level."

Martin Wilkinson, head of business management for ADAS, pointed out that there "still is a 26 per cent range in the cost of production between the top and bottom 25 per cent of producers" and warned that farmers wishing to remain in the dairy sector must drive inefficiency out of their business.

(no further information)

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Tesco reports continued strong growth

Date: Thu, 25 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food retailer Tesco has released its third quarter results today, with a 12.2 per cent increase in group sales.

The company claimed that results were boosted by growth from all four parts of its strategy, including international operations, UK business and retailing services.

Sales in the UK have risen by 12.3 per cent during the 14 weeks to November 20th and the UK business has experienced like-for-like growth of 9.8 per cent and 2.5 per cent from net new stores.

Tesco believes that new space through the opening of more stores will help increase sales growth in the final quarter.

The retailer is also being discussed by investors since there are rumours it may be in merger talks with French retailer Carrefour.

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FSA to release food labelling options

Date: Thu, 25 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is to reveal a number of options today for nutritional information on food and drink packaging.

It is hoped that one format can be chosen that will make it easier for consumers to view nutritional information quickly and clearly, following considerable research conducted by the FSA.

The Food and Drink Federation, told PA News: "We know that FSA is looking at a number of potential proposals. However, clearly we need to avoid simplistic schemes which categorise products into good and bad.

"We should be wary of shoe-horning ever more information on to already crowded packs, and will provide FSA with expert advice on this important aspect."

Among the options suggested or currently being trialled by food retailers are traffic light labelling, a wheel of health logo or general labelling of fat, salt and calorie content.

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Pub grub proving popular

Date: Thu, 25 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new report out today by hospitality consultant Horizons has claimed that the UK pub food market is worth £3.4 billion.

'This is Foodservice' estimates that the 60,000 pubs in the UK serve on average 405 meals at week, with average cover prices of £4.70.

An extensive survey of the managed pub sector and tenanted estates was conducted for the report, according to The Publican.

Finding also suggest that UK food and brands are most popular and the report warns that US fast food brands looking to move into the UK through pub franchises will find it hard to adapt to the current business model.

Food has been described as one of the biggest growing areas for the pub industry.

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Profits soar at Carr's

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Cumbria-based Carr's Milling Industries has reported a 26 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £5.13 million over the year to August.

The firm, one of the county's biggest employers, also reported a 4.7 per cent rise in annual turnover and a 12.3 per cent boost to underlying profits over the 12 month period, the Cumbria Times & Star reports.

The Carlisle-based group, which owns Carr's Flour Mills in Silloth, the Bendalls and Hinds engineering business, and 15 shops selling farm supplies, said sales of animal feeds and fertilisers continued to improve with operating profit up £0.7 million.

However, the food section's operating profit was halved at £0.27 million, down from £0.6 million in 2002-03, largely a result of soaring wheat prices in the first half of the year.

Carr's recently announced plans to purchase Menuba UK Holdings, which owns and operates two flour mills, for £10 million, potentially doubling its flour mill production.

David Newton, Chairman of Carr's, said: "Despite having to absorb higher energy costs across the group, mainly for electricity, the current year is expected to show further progress in all three divisions, especially in food.

"With the growth of the existing business combined with the Menuba acquisition, the Board considers Carr's is well placed for further progress."

Further information: www.carrs-milling.com

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Charles Jackson Chef

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Restaurant concept Charles Jackson Chef has purchased a second site in London.

The company, which claims to provide restaurant-quality dishes that customers can either eat in, take home to cook or take away already cooked, predicts the new outlet could be the start of a wider expansion.

Charles Jackson Chef has been operating out of a shop on Goodge Street for the past 15

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months and has now bought an 800sq ft former Bagelmania site in New Row, Covent Garden.

The new site, purchased for an undisclosed sum through agent Davis Coffey Lyons, is expected to open in early January.

Charles Jackson Chef owner Rick Butcher told Caterer magazine that he planned to open up to 30 sites by the end of 2006 at a cost of about £200,000 a unit

"We are going to run with the New Row site for a couple of months and see what happens from there," Mr Butcher explained.

Charles Jackson Chef operates out of kitchens in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, making Birmingham another potential target for growth.

(no further information)

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(no further information)

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Supermarkets to be investigated by OFT

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has been called on by groups representing consumers, shops, farmers and small suppliers to complete a new investigation into supermarkets and their effect on the grocery market.

According to groups including Friends of the Earth (FoE), the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) and FARM, the industry has had damaging impacts on small stores, consumer choice and farmers.

ACS chief executive, David Rae, said: "This application for a market review has brought together a range of organisations who share a concern for the future of a UK grocery market which is increasingly dominated by a handful of big players.

"This application aims to question what the Government and competition authorities want to market to look like in years to come, and to take action now."

The groups, which also include the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI), are urging the OFT to not approve any more takeovers by the biggest four supermarkets while the study takes place.

Issues to be addressed in the report include convenience store take-overs, choice of non-food goods, below-cost selling and the supermarket code of practice.

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"The domination of the grocery market by the biggest supermarkets has been allowed to increase, unchecked, since the last investigation over four years ago," FoE's supermarket campaigner Sandra Bell argued.

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M&S reveals new food supplier

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Retailer Marks and Spencer has appointed a new company to supply products for its food business.

One of the biggest employers in north Shropshire, Palethorpes, which is part of Northern Foods, will now take over manufacturing of products such as sausage rolls.

The move will also create 100 jobs for the food industry, when the company begins supplying Marks and Spencer from January next year, according to BBC News Online.

At present the products are manufactured at Northern Foods' factory in Evesham, Worcestershire.

The new business is welcomed by Palethorpes, since just 18 months ago it lost an important contract with Sainsbury's.

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Confectionery filled advent calendar pulled by Haribo

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

German sweet manufacturer Haribo has had to pull nearly 800,000 advent calendars.

The confectionary firm was forced to act because of a change in taste in the candy, in a major overhaul of its output.

While stressing there was no safety risk, Haribo said changes to the manufacturing process had necessitated the move.

Agence France Presse said the liquorice and jellied fruit sweets were the main products affected by the change.

It is thought the move will cost around €10 per calendar, a total of €8 million.

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Gary Rhodes to head new hotel team

Date: Mon, 29 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Celebrity chef Gary Rhodes is due to take over the management of food and drink at London's Cumberland hotel.

The revived deal with Restaurant Associates will see the chef and his team based at the DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Cumberland.

An agreement was originally drawn up between Mr Rhodes' team and then owner of the Cumberland, Meridien, but the hotel group had its assets seized a year and a half ago.

New owner of the Cumberland, Thistle Hotels, has now resurrected the contract, Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine reports.

Thistle chief operating officer Beverly King commented: "It will be Gary Rhodes in the kitchen. He will be based at the Cumberland, along with the majority of his team."

Further information: www.thecumberland.co.uk

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UK's largest independent contract catering firm launched

Date: Mon, 29 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Wilson Storey Halliday and BaxterSmith are reportedly teaming up to form BaxterStorey, the UK's biggest independent contract catering company.

The new company, which officially starts trading in the New Year, will have an annual turnover of around £105 million and employ 2,400 people.

The new company will service an estimated 200 contracts in Britain and Ireland and will be the fifth biggest contract catering company in the UK, according to Caterer & Hotelkeeper magazine.

The new BaxterStorey management team, headed by chief executive Alistair Storey and deputy chief executive William Baxter, will focus on the business and industry market.

"It is a really exciting prospect," said Mr Baxter. "The new company will be the biggest privately owned contract catering company in the UK and this will be a unique selling point."

Other company stakeholders include Linda Halliday, who will look after human resources, Keith Wilson, who will head commercial finance, and joint managing director Mike Smith. Joint managing director Noel Mahoney, formerly of Baxter & Platts, will not hold a stake in the company.

(no further information)

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Pomegranates may help the heart

Date: Mon, 29 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Pomegranates can protect against heart disease, a new study claims.

Researchers in Israel found that drinking a glass of pomegranate juice each day can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The Rambam Medical Center in Haifa discovered that pomegranate juice slowed down cholesterol oxidation, which leads to hardening of the arteries, by almost half, and reduced the retention of 'bad' cholesterol LDL.

"Pomegranate juice contains the highest antioxidant capacity compared to other juices, red wine and green tea," said Professor Michael Aviram, who led the team.

Antioxidants are naturally occurring substances in plants that protect the body from free radicals, chemicals which can cause cancer and speed up hardening of the arteries.

A research team at London's Hammersmith Hospital are also conducting a study into the effects if pomegranate juice on heart disease.

Researcher Dr Richard Bogle said: "This study will test the idea that drinking a glass of pomegranate juice every day improves the function of blood vessels, reduces hardening of the arteries and improves heart health."

(no further information)

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Food and farming promotion launched by NFU

Date: Mon, 29 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Farmers are to directly address the public and promote the part they play in food production, through a series of new advertisements.

The adverts will help to market farmers and food production and the first set of radio adverts will promote the Little Red Tractor logo from today.

NFU president, Tim Bennett, said: "The new campaign to reaffirm the status of the Little Red Tractor begins now. We know consumers recognise and trust the Red Tractor logo but our research shows people don't really understand what it stands for."

Named 'The Promise Campaign', the scheme hopes to introduce real farmers to consumers and unite the food chain, and farmers will be making promises and pledges about their produce.

Adverts will feature real farmers' voices discussing their animals and crops and the quality of food produced in England and Wales.

More than 3,600 pledges have been made so far, and the NFU hopes they will be used on posters, packaging, at food shows and in school canteens.

Five adverts will be aired today containing topics such as milk, sugar, chicken and potatoes.

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GM groups await new report results

Date: Mon, 29 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

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A new report due out on GM crops and their impact is hoped to provide support for the commercial growing of the crops.

The Agricultural Biotechnology Council predicts that the new BRIGHT project will help to promote the idea of GM crops, providing results of the four-year study show no problems in crop rotating.

Speaking to the BBC, Dr Julian Little, a representative of the council, commented: "What we expect is this report will lend further weight to the already large amount of evidence that GM crops can be grown in the UK, would be good for UK farmers, and they should at least be given the opportunity of trying it.

"We believe as a company that farmers should have access to this technology and shouldn't be denied the opportunity of trying it."

The study looked into the impact of GM crops on agriculture and biodiversity and tested the rotation of herbicide tolerant oil seed rape and GM modified herbicide tolerant varieties of sugar beet.

Dr Little admits the growth may not take place for a number of years in large quantities, but that the report could help boost current campaigns for GM crop growth in the UK.

However, leaders of anti-GM schemes such as Five Year Freeze, believe that the results on their own will not provide enough evidence and they have highlighted the fact that crops have already failed a key test this year.

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Seafood sector reveals new product

Date: Mon, 29 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK consumers are to be offered a new seafood choice from Tuesday, with the launch of Choice prawns.

The company based in India is to enter the British market with two prawn varieties - King and Jumbo, with products sold through convenience store chains, according to PII.

Already performing well the company has recently exported \$40 million worth of prawns to the US.

Choice produces seafood from the best sources and uses advanced technology to process its products in modern factories.

"This not only ensures competitive prices but also assures high food quality standards," Nanda Kumar, vice-president of European Operations at the company explained.

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FSA examines mycotoxin levels in baby food

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

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Food Standards Agency tests on a round-up of different foods for babies and children have revealed that they all comply with legal limits for fungal contamination.

The UK's food watchdog performed the tests in the run-up to EU talks to set limits of mycotoxins foods for babies and children. The survey showed that mycotoxins were not present in the majority of samples of infant and baby foods and none were over legal limits.

"Overall, the levels of mycotoxins found were very low - less than 10 per cent of the samples tested had a detectable level," the agency said.

Mycotoxins are undesirable natural chemicals produced by moulds that grow on foods such as cereals, nuts, dried fruits and legumes and their products. The mycotoxins analysed in this study were aflatoxins B1, B2, G1, G2, ochratoxin A and patulin.

High levels of exposure to these mycotoxins have been found to cause a range of adverse health effects in laboratory animals and there is concern that similar effects may occur in humans.

Mycotoxins are believed to have caused sickness, and in extreme cases death, in people and farm animals since ancient times. It is estimated that 25 per cent of all agricultural crops worldwide are contaminated by moulds that produce mycotoxins.

A total of 199 samples of infant and baby foods were bought and analysed between November 2003 and January 2004 from a wide range of brands and retailers, including supermarkets and smaller shops.

Further information: www.food.gov.uk
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Jacob's to launch healthier crackers

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK biscuit manufacturer Jacob's has unveiled a new range of healthier crackers.

The crackers, launched under the brand name Essentials, will be available on shelves from January 2005

Jacob's hopes the Essentials brand will tap into the £6.5 billion healthy foods market, Just-food.com.

Jacob's is backing the launch of the new range with a £3 million marketing campaign, including trade, consumer and online press, retail website advertising, in-store sampling, and a TV advertising campaign.

Essentials will be available as in Wholewheat with Sesame Seeds & Rosemary or with Pumpkin Seeds & Thyme, and Rye with Sesame Seeds or with Oats.

Jacob's claims the crackers in the range are high in fibre and lower in fat and salt.

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Mitie Catering sees turnover soar

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Support services group Mitie has announced that its Mitie Catering subsidiary has seen turnover grow by more than £2 million in the six months to September 30th.

The company's turnover rose from £4.4 million for the same period last year to £6.5 million following successful bids on a number of new contracts, particularly in the London area.

Mitie Catering established a London base earlier this year and contracts in the capital include managing food and drink in the restaurants and room service at the 266-bedroom Le Meridien Piccadilly hotel and the European headquarters of property firm GVA Grimley in Mayfair, Caterer magazine reports.

Robin Hay, managing director of Mitie Catering, said there were a number of large contracts in London still in the pipeline and added that he hoped to announce plans for a new subsidiary covering the north of England and Scotland in January.

The Mitie Group reported pre-tax profits up by 22.1 per cent to £22.5 million, while the catering division's annual accounts to March 31st saw turnover increase from £4.2 million in 2003 to £10.6 million.

Further information: www.mitie.co.uk
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Compass Group reveals latest profits

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Foodservice firm Compass Group has released its preliminary results today, for the year ending September 30th, 2004.

The company is the largest foodservice organisation in the UK and Ireland, providing high quality support and catering services at more than 9,000 locations.

Results showed an increase in turnover to £11,772 million, compared to £11,286 million in 2003.

However, the company experienced some difficulties said to be due to costs for opening in-store restaurants and a lack of profits from children's school meal contracts.

Chairman, Sir Francis Mackay, commented: "2004 was a challenging year for the group with a number of trading issues which had an impact on performance. Actions have been put in place to address these issues and I remain confident about the future prospects for the group."

Additional figures showed profit before tax reached £370 million and that new contract gains have raised £1.2 billion during the year.

Compass serves nearly three million meals a day and is currently looking into developing additional Moto Marks & Spencer Simply Food units at its UK motorway service areas.

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Arla results in line with expectations

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Arla Foods UK has released its results today for the 18 months to September 30th, 2004.

Results were in line with expectations according to the firm, with sales up from £1.4 billion to £1.7 billion and underlying pre-tax profit increasing from £42 million to £52.1 million.

Sir David Naish, chairman of Arla Food, commented: "The first full year of trading as Arla Foods UK has been one of very good progress towards all our key objectives: building our brands, forging ever stronger relationships with milk producers, developing our leadership in technology and providing growth potential for our customers."

The food firm also reported continued strong growth in a number of its brands including Lurpak and Cravendale.

Arla also revealed its share of the supermarket fresh milk sector has been maintained and its major investment programme on a technologically advanced dairy is on track.

"With our rationalisation programme nearing completion, ahead of schedule and in line with our original cash cost projections, we will realise the full projected synergy benefits of the merger almost a year ahead of plan," Mr Naish added.

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Food retailers offered hope from new survey

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 04 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new poll has claimed that warnings of slow sales in the high street this Christmas are premature.

Conducted by accountants Deloitte and Touche, results suggest that the average consumer in the UK will spend an extra two per cent on food and drink for Christmas 2004 compared with last year.

Overall, consumers are expected to spend a total of £614 over the festive season on food and drink, gifts and socialising, up from £602 in 2003.

The Deloitte and Touche findings will offer high street retailers some respite following widespread predictions of a slowdown this Christmas.

Early signs from the high street indicated that consumer confidence had weakened on the back of a number of interest rate rises over the year.

Despite the modest increase, Sharon Fraser, consumer business partner at Deloitte, explained that the consumer was in control this year.

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"People increasingly seem to know what they want, they're prepared to research the best deal and they have little loyalty to retailers who don't provide the magic combination of convenience, good customer service and excellent price," she stated.

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