

New egg test will eliminate farm visits

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK scientists have developed a new technique to determine whether eggs have been laid in battery conditions.

The procedure targets the dust picked up by the eggshell and can be applied at any stage of the supply chain without the need to inspect farms.

Testers will be able to identify the conditions an egg is laid in by examining it under an ultraviolet light.

Because the eggs are laid wet, their surfaces pick up dust which forms different patterns depending on whether they are produced in cages, barn nestboxes or outside.

The scientist behind the new method hope it will help rat out battery farmers who pass off their eggs as free-range or barn produce.

Research by Mintel has found that while volume sales rose by ten per cent between 1999 and 2003, value sales increased by 23 per cent as customers traded up to premium brand eggs.

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Key laser technology promises improved production line sorting

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food processing technology firm, Key, has developed a new, laser detection system to help manufacturers identify defects or foreign bodies in their produce.

The Optyx G6 3000 Series Sorter with Raptor Laser Technology uses cutting-edge colour cameras and laser technology to analyse size, shape and the subtlest of colour differences in food products, with which information it can detect microscopic flaws.

The sorter is targeted at production lines and features up to three sensors above and below the product stream.

It also boasts a 24-inch wide scan width and can handle up to six tonnes of food produce per hour.

Key claims the Optyx G6 3000 is the only Class I laser sorter available to the food industry, and therefore offers unparalleled efficiency and safety levels.

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Unilever unveils organic Ragu for US market

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Anglo-Dutch conglomerate Unilever has responded to US demand for healthier food with the launch of a new range of organic sauces under its existing Ragu brand.

The consumer goods giant this morning unveiled plans to produce Ragu Organic Sauces in three flavours: Traditional, Garden Veggie and Cheese.

Unilever claims all the sauces are 100 per cent natural and have been certified as organic under guidelines set by the US department of Agriculture.

"We understand that today's parents are concerned with their kids' eating habits more than ever," Ragu director Jill Denison told Just Food.

"As a result, parents need nutritious food options that their kids will eat and enjoy. Serving Ragu Organic will help appease the often picky appetites of children while helping your kids eat well," she added.

Unilever's move taps into a burgeoning market for organic and additive free convenience food.

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Aussies farmers to exploit UK mango demand

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Australian mango producers are looking to cash in on the UK's exotic fruit sector following the success of trials.

The European demand for mangos has rocketed over the past 12 months, according to Western Australia's Department of Agriculture (WADA).

"We grew the market 450 per cent this year alone from last year and it's been growing at that sort of rate and we can see that the growth rate is achievable over the next five to ten years," WADA spokesman, Peter Johnson, said on ABC National Rural News radio this morning.

He added that Australian farmers are looking to cash in on the UK market in particular: "Ultimately the market is as big as you can make it, it's so different from what they're currently used to."

Farmers from WA and the Northern Territory have been exporting limited quantities of mangos to Britain for the last five years, using controlled environment shipping containers that stop the fruit ripening.

For more information visit: www.abc.net.au

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Pomegranate green tea hits UK market

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Drinks producer AriZona has today launched its Pomegranate Green Tea in the UK.

The innovative beverage targets an upmarket, health-concerned audience and retails at £1.99 in an oriental-style glass bottle.

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Its manufacturers claim the tea is "all natural, has no preservatives, no artificial flavours or colours and is made by brewing the finest green tea leaves and blending with pomegranate juice."

AriZona Pomegranate Green Tea is already a hit in America, counting Jennifer Lopez among its devotees.

It joins a growing trend for pomegranate products and is the fourth flavour to join a range of AriZona green tea drinks sold in the UK, including Asia Plum, Mandarin Orange and Ginseng and Honey.

Scientific research suggests that green tea protects the body against heart disease, Alzheimer's and certain types of cancer.

For more information visit: www.responsesource.com
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McDonald's: remote call centres may take drive-thru orders

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

International fast food giant McDonald's is testing the use of call centres to handle orders at its drive-thru restaurants.

The trials are initially being run in America but could change services in Britain if they are successful.

McDonald's hopes the remote call centres would help process orders faster and minimise the number of errors made at drive-thru restaurants.

"You have a professional order taker with strong communication skills whose job it is to do nothing but take down order," the chain's chief financial officer, Matthew Paull, says.

A "heavy percentage" of the complaints McDonald's receive come from drive-thru customers who receive the wrong food.

"Even if 95 per cent of the time it is right, those five per cent are very upset with us," Mr Paull claims.

A spokeswoman says it is too early to say whether the outsourcing strategy will be applied across the chain.

For more information visit: www.forbes.com
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DNA test breakthrough could cut food poisoning risks

Date: Mon, 04 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Scientists have developed miniature sensors for analysing DNA which may help food manufacturers quickly identify bacterial strains in food-borne illnesses.

According to developers at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, the sensors are the same size and thickness as a fingernail, and capable of identifying DNA chains within several minutes of a few hours depending on the strain.

The miniaturised electrochemical genosensors feature a probe containing fragments of the sought for DNA which, if present in the sample, will combine with complementary fragments and trigger an electric current.

The sensor follows recent nanotechnology developments as the latest discovery with the potential to radically improve food safety at every stage of the supply chain.

If successfully applied, the miniature apparatus, which scientists say would cost as little as a home pregnancy test, could save the industry millions in product recalls, legal proceedings and damaged brand reputations.

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Tesco makes £67 million price cut investment

Date: Mon, 04 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tesco has announced plans to sink £67 million into lowering the cost of its products, in a bid to knock Asda from the top spot as Britain's cheapest supermarket.

The move comes less than 24 hours after Wal-mart-owned competitor, Asda, revealed more than £100 million worth of price cuts across its stores.

Tim Mason, Tesco's marketing director, said: "Today's cuts will make some really staggeringly low prices even lower."

Some one in six of the 300 price cuts have been targeted at the supermarkets own Value brand, bringing the cost of shopping from the economy range down by 14 per cent.

Following the cuts, one kilogram of Value baking potatoes will cost 40 pence, compared to 68 pence previously, and Value plums will be 66 pence, down from 70 pence.

And the Tesco has gone head to head with Asda on the price of jeans, with both supermarkets charging just £3 a pair.

Tesco claims to have invested a total of £1.6 billion in price, compared to Asda's £1 billion, but Asda has still beaten Tesco on spending for 2005, with yesterday's pledge pushing price-cut spending to £231 million - nearly £100 million more than Tesco's £147 million.

For more information visit: www.independent.co.uk

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Software supply/demand trackers could help release £1.6 tn locked inventory

Date: Mon, 04 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Some £1.6 trillion of inventory is locked in US and European supply chains, but much can be released with better supply/demand predictions, according to new research.

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Market analyst, AMR Research, claims companies can reduce the amount of stock held between the manufacturer and the final retailer, as well as the 20 per cent order error rate in supply chains, by installing specialist computer programmes to help track supply and demand figures.

Manufacturers can integrate supply and retail networks using existing ERP applications from SAPO, Oracle, SSA Global and others.

"The focus on manufacturing is back and companies are increasingly realizing that manufacturing productivity is directly related to the ability to intelligently synthesize real-time information across the supply network and accordingly adapt their operations," said vice president of SAP manufacturing solutions, Sudipta Bhattacharya.

"AMR Research has identified the need for global manufacturers to undertake a fundamental top down review of how to achieve predictable product supply from distributed plant operations in today's high velocity demand driven economy."

Food manufacturers are under increasing market pressure to respond to demand at short notice, but this has become more difficult as production operations expand to include more nodes.

For more information visit: www.foodproductiondaily.com
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Heart health claims push peanut consumption to two-decade high

Date: Mon, 04 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Peanuts are making a comeback, with consumption figures at their highest level for two decades and more doctors recommending nuts as part of a heart healthy diet.

Global peanut consumption rose to 1.7 billion pounds last year, compared to 1.5 billion pounds in 2003.

Some 415 million pounds of snack peanuts and 900 million pounds of peanut butter were consumed in the crop year 2003/2004 - the highest levels since the mid 90s.

Analysts claim people are turning to peanuts as the 90s trend for low-fat weight-loss diets wanes in favour of sustained, all-round healthy eating.

Various studies suggest the nuts help prevent heart disease, as well as lower cholesterol and, according to one Harvard report, the risk of diabetes.

"Now we know that the type of fat found in peanuts is actually good for us," said Lona Sandon for the American Dietetic Association. "It doesn't clog our arteries like saturated fat. It helps keep the arteries clean."

For more information visit: www.timesargus.com
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Cranberry studies suggest heart health link

Date: Mon, 04 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Cranberry juice may help protect high cholesterol sufferers from heart disease, new research has claimed.

Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who dosed pig sufferers of high blood cholesterol or atherosclerosis with concentrated cranberry juice powder, found after six months that the animals' vascular function (the ability of the blood vessels to relax) was dramatically improved.

According to lead researcher Kris Kruse-Elliott, good vascular function is a key contributor to heart health.

"Since the abnormal functioning of blood vessels is an important component of heart disease, finding ways to improve vascular function in patients with high cholesterol and atherosclerosis is critical to helping protect these patients from consequences such as heart attack or stroke," she told Medical News Today.

Early research attributes cranberries' heart-health benefits to high antioxidant, flavonoid and polyphenol levels, but Ms Kruse-Elliott says further studies are required to determine which components are most effective and how they can most easily be consumed.

Previous studies have identified cranberries as preventing or ameliorating urinary tract infections, gum disease, ulcers and even cancer.

For more information visit: www.medicalnewstoday.com

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Tesco personal shopper service offers nutritional advice in supermarket aisles

Date: Mon, 04 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK supermarket leader Tesco has today launched a personal shopper scheme that will offer customers nutritional advice tailored to fit with their lifestyle and preferences.

Shoppers at stores in London, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff and Glasgow will be able to book a 30-minute consultation with registered nutritionists who will offer them dietary and fitness advice in the supermarket aisles.

One of the Tesco consultants, Kate Garden, said the scheme aims to raise awareness among customers of the link between what they eat and how they feel.

"Recently published research concludes that around half of all cancers diagnosed in the UK could be prevented by changes to lifestyle, such as paying more attention to the food that we eat, and this has added impetus to introducing the service," she told the Scotsman.

According to Tesco, the shopping service was conceived in response to customer demand for more nutritional direction.

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The launch comes amid heightened public concern over healthy eating and obesity risk, and follows celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's high profile Jamie's School Dinners series, in which the poor nutritional content of many processed foods was highlighted.

For more information visit: www.responsesource.com

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Vimto says goodbye to Purple Ronnie

Date: Tue, 05 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Vimto has ditched Purple Ronnie, its cartoon character trademark of seven years, ahead of a renewed advertising push.

A spokesman for Vimto brand owner Nichols, told Brand Republic: "We can confirm that the new campaign will not involve Purple Ronnie.

"It was felt that the partnership had run its course and it was time to try something new."

Vimto is expected to launch a major new advertising campaign across television, cinema and print media next month, although the company has not yet released any details.

The brand redesigned its cordial packaging last year, in a bid to highlight the drink's health benefits, and also launched a lunchbox-size, 250ml sports-cap bottle version of the drink.

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GM breakthrough produces disease-resistant cows

Date: Tue, 05 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

US scientists have used gene-transfer technology to produce pathogen-resistant dairy cows that could help boost milk yields.

The biotechnology has allowed scientists to breed milk-producing cattle capable of resisting mastitis, a widespread bacterial infection that blights dairy herds.

Mastitis costs dairy farmers more than any other disease and affects both the quality and quantity of milk produced.

Scientists genetically-engineered three cows to produce greater quantities of naturally-occurring, antimicrobial protein, lysostaphin.

The gene derives from a non-pathogenic strain of Staphylococcus and uses the protein to repel its cousin, Staphylococcus aureus - the bacterium most often at the root of mastitis.

According to research leader Robert Wall, "All three transgenic cows showed little or no sign of infection after repeated exposures to Staphylococcus aureus - and one, named GEM, never became infected, indicating complete protection."

"This research is an important first step in understanding how genes can be used to

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protect animals from disease," said Edward Knipling for the US government's agricultural research service.

Current vaccines, antibiotics and the cow's own immune system have proved insufficient to fight off *Staphylococcus aureus*,

Studies show that dairy cows with mastitis lose between 110 and 552 kilograms of their potential milk yield over their entire lactation period. Daily loss during the first fortnight of infection varies between one and 2.5 kilograms.

For more information visit: www.foodproductiondaily.com

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Tetra Pak presents new packaging for liquid dairy producers

Date: Tue, 05 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tetra Pak has launched a new packaging concept for liquid dairy producers, aimed at cutting processing costs and achieving better brand recognition.

The Tetra Brik Square Mini and 250 ml and 200 ml is the company's first portion-sized, square-shaped package and a radical departure from the sector's traditional gable-top cartons and plastic bottles or cups.

Tetra Pak says the development will help liquid dairy producers attract brand attention and target children's markets with its child-friendly dimensions and hard-to-spill design.

Product manager Bo Pettersson said: "The problem with plastic cup containers and even some rectangular portion packs is that children can accidentally spill or squeeze the liquid out of the top whereas the Tetra Brik Square Mini is more difficult to spill or squeeze."

The new packages' other plus is their low production costs. The Tetra Brik Square Mini can be run through the same machinery as the Tetra Brik Square 1000 ml and 500 ml, as well as Tetra Brik Base 1000 ml and 500 ml.

According to Tetra Pak, producers can switch machinery to handle different packaging types in as little as 15 minutes, so they are not tied to just one carton size.

"What liquid dairy producers need, now more than ever, is a highly cost-efficient packaging format that will help them compete for consumer attention, and that's exactly what the Tetra Brik Square Mini delivers," Ms Pettersson said.

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Defra strategy to help improve food sector sustainability

Date: Tue, 05 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has published a strategy paper to help make the food and drink sector more sustainable.

The Food Industry Sustainability Strategy (FISS) sets out how food manufacturers, retailers and food service providers can save on energy, water, waste and transport to

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help cut costs and minimise environmental impact.

The draft strategy builds on work by the Food and Drink Federation and the British Retail Consortium and was developed by ministers in discussion with a stakeholder group composed of food industry, food safety and environmental representatives.

Food and farming minister, Larry Whitty, said: "Sustainability is about a better quality of life for everyone, and the food and drink industry has a major role to play in this given its huge economic, environmental and social importance.

Improved resource efficiency is a win-win as it saves the environment and improves businesses' bottom line."

The DEFRA report gives sustainability targets as well as key performance indicators to help food sector firms measure their progress.

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British pubs hit back at minimum pricing proposals

Date: Tue, 05 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The British Beer & Pub Association has slammed government recommendations to set minimum prices on drinks, claiming the plans are illegal.

Its warning comes in response to recommendations made today in a Home Affairs Committee's report on the causes of anti-social behaviour.

The proposals include a minimum price scheme on alcohol, in a move to put an end to cheap drinks promotions.

But the director of communications at the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA), Mark Hastings, claims: "The Office of Fair Trading has consistently stated that price fixing or minimum pricing is prohibited under UK and European Law."

He added: "Any pub or bar participating in such activities would be breaking the law... the position on minimum pricing schemes could not be clearer."

The Home Affairs Committee report also recommends that warehouse-style pubs are banned from city centres and drinking establishments pay more towards policing.

The BBPA also defended the industry on this front, arguing that pubs already invest heavily in community safety and corporate responsibility.

According to his figures, the drinks industry pays more £22 billion in taxes every year for policing, as well as investing over £60 million per annum in CCTV, door staff and security.

Mr Hastings asserted: "As an industry we have already banned dodgy promotions, such as entry fees linked to unlimited free drinks, drinking games and reward schemes redeemable over short periods.

"Irresponsible promotions and bad publicans have no place in our sector."

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Lemon twist for UK Coke fans

Date: Tue, 05 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Coca-Cola is to trial a new lemon flavour drink on British consumers before it is unleashed on the rest of the world market.

According to Brand Republic, the international drinks conglomerate will launch a limited-edition citrus variant on the traditional Cola brand, Coca-Cola with Lemon, in the UK this summer.

Cola GB's marketing director, Julia Goldin, claims the move is a response to consumer demand for more innovative products.

The multi-million-pound rollout will mark an unprecedented move for Coca Cola, which has never before launched a limited-edition spin off from the core brand in the British market.

Coca-Cola are hoping the new drink will replicate the success of its low calorie counterpart, diet Coke with Lemon, which has been available in the UK for some years.

Rival cola company, Pepsi, launched lemon variant, Pepsi Twist, in 2002, but withdrew the product late last year following poor sales.

For more information visit: www.brandrepublic.com

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FPB backs food suppliers in face of price war pressure

Date: Wed, 06 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Forum of Private Business (FPB) has pledged its support food producers, to help them maintain reasonable prices in the face of supermarket giants.

The group, which represents 25,000 small and medium-sized firms, says it will protect the trade of food suppliers against price wars between big name chains.

Tesco recently announced proposals to reduce prices on 300 items, and Asda has said it will cut millions of pounds from its food lines.

"Supermarkets are market leaders and have enormous power," explained Nick Goulding, chief executive of the FPB. "Countless food producers and suppliers are at the mercy of these corporate puppeteers. The government must keep a close eye on how the supermarket war develops."

Mr Goulding claims the FPB has already led Sainsbury to retract plans to terminate supplier contracts and increase the time it takes to pay them.

The organisation is now urging the public to offer continued support to high street and
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local food stores, which "provide quality, personal service and wealth creation for the local area and the country".

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Lift ban on British beef, says Defra minister

Date: Wed, 06 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A minister from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has criticised export restrictions on British beef.

Ben Bradshaw slammed the embargos as unjustified "in the light of science and the BSE controls by the UK".

He claims ministers are working with the European Commission to downgrade British beef from "high risk" to "moderate risk" status.

Some 84 countries still ban British beef imports, including America, Australia, Japan, Switzerland, India and Sri Lanka.

Rural affairs minister, Alun Michael, last month reported that BSE cases fell to 309 in 2004, following a peak of over 36,000 in 1992.

According to the Food Standards Agency, there have been no cases of BSE in animals under 30 months old since 1996.

For more information visit: www.bbc.co.uk

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Guinness signs £20m rugby sponsorship deal

Date: Wed, 06 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Beer manufacturer, Guinness, has signed a £20 million deal to become the new title sponsor for the UK's premiership rugby union competition.

The Zurich Premiership will be rechristened The Guinness Premiership at the start of the 2005/2006 season as part of the four year contract.

The deal builds on a longstanding association between Guinness and rugby. The company is the principal sponsor of London Irish RFC, a sponsor of Sky Sports rugby broadcasting, and the Official Beer of the 2005 British & London lions.

Premier Rugby commercial director, Jon Varney, said: "Our partnership with Guinness is an exciting one and we look forward to working together in the coming months. To have a global brand with the stature of Guinness on board is a ringing endorsement of the success and growth of Premiership rugby in England."

Nick Robinson, Guinness marketing director said: "We are delighted to have signed this agreement with Premier Rugby to become title sponsor of The Guinness Premiership, the world's leading domestic rugby union competition, in what is the number two sport in the UK.

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"We have a long and happy association with rugby in the UK, and rugby fans will find us a dedicated and responsible sponsor with a passionate and genuine interest in the game. Our aim is to work with the clubs to build excitement around the games themselves to enhance the fans' experience as much as possible."

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NFU welcomes new quality assurance mark

Date: Wed, 06 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has welcomed the launch of a new quality standards logo.

The Red Tractor symbol, designed by the Assured Food Standards (AFS) group, will endorse British food products that meet rigorous safety and welfare standards at all stages of the food chain.

NFU President Tim Bennett, said: "Consumers need an easily recognisable logo which allows them to identify and select food which is safe and has been produced to sound animal welfare standards.

"The Red Tractor logo assures consumers that their food has been produced to a set of standards and has been independently inspected along all stages of the food chain.

"With the introduction of the union flag, British farmers can be confident that consumers can seek out their produce."

AFS was specifically set up by the NFU to manage the scheme, following consumer workshops in 1999.

Some £5 billion worth of food is already signed up for the badge, and the NFU has pledged to work with the AFS to see it adopted market wide.

For more information visit: www.everysite.co.uk/casi

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Fullers lands massive veggie supply deal

Date: Wed, 06 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fullers Foods International has won a multi-million pound deal to supply Asda's frozen vegetables.

The Leeds-based frozen foods processing facility will benefit from 80 new jobs, taking responsibility for the processing and packaging of stock for all Asda's distribution centres.

Asda has announced it will double the amount of vegetables sourced in the UK as a result of the contract, and predicts 120,000 food miles will be saved by sourcing all vegetables from UK producers.

Fullers' sales director, Jason Fuller, told the Yorkshire Evening Post: "This deal represents 30,000 tonnes of vegetables and is reward for over a year's worth of planning and hard work.

"We can now raise the bar in terms of improved quality, and ensure we always deliver 'best ever' availability for Asda's customers."

The deal will also secure a future for over 80 UK producers, who will be contracted to grow vegetables specifically for Asda, and at a fixed price.

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Plastic flexibility offsets expense

Date: Wed, 06 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Manufacturers find that the versatility and flexibility of plastic packaging outweigh the expense, new research has revealed.

Market analysts, Frost & Sullivan, claim that plastic offers more design flexibility at lower costs than any other packaging material - an asset that stands to benefit food manufacturers looking for distinctive brand identifiers in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

"Participants need to consistently upgrade in an intensely competitive scenario," senior Frost and Sullivan analyst, Dr Donald Rosato, told Food Production Daily.

According to the company, the gains offset growing plastic costs, which have suffered the knock-on effects of price hikes in raw materials like petroleum and natural gas.

The food sector also benefits from plastic packaging's toughness, ease of colouring, finishing, resilience and resistance to corrosion, as well as the annual fuel savings that come with the material's light weight.

For more information visit: www.foodproductiondaily.com

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Sainsbury's set to rise from the ashes?

Date: Thu, 07 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Struggling Sainsbury's seems to be making a comeback.

The UK supermarket has grown faster than Wal-Mart-owned Asda for the first time in a decade, according to TNS figures for the 12 weeks to March 27th this year.

"This is the first time Sainsbury's growth has led Asda's in the past ten years, indicating an intensifying battle between the leading grocery retailers for market share," TNS Superpanel director, Peter East, told Just Food.

Sainsbury's year on year sales period grew by 4.1 per cent, compared to three per cent at Asda.

Analysts attribute Sainsbury's recovery to well-publicised price competitiveness and availability issues.

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Jamie set to scoop second Sainsbury's ad deal

Date: Thu, 07 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Jamie Oliver looks set to cash in on his new status as Britain's food hero, with a second £1 million-plus deal to advertise Sainsbury's.

The celebrity chef fell out of favour with the supermarket last month after he criticised it for selling Bernard Matthews's famous Turkey Twizzlers in a TV debate.

But now Sainsbury's is happy to forgive and forget.

"Jamie could well be staying with us. His contract is up for renewal next month," claimed a spokeswoman for the supermarket.

An advertising chief told the Metro: "Sainsbury's would be mad to let Jamie go at this time when he is the nearest thing to a living saint over his school dinners campaign."

"Presumably Jamie will be able to name his price," he added.

Industry insiders estimate Mr Oliver's association with Sainsbury's has attracted in the region of £1 billion in extra sales and £200 million in profit.

Jamie Oliver has become the golden boy of British food following his high profile campaign to improve the quality of food served in schools.

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More school kitchen applicants than ever before

Date: Thu, 07 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Jamie Oliver's campaign to improve school meals has attracted a flood of applications from would-be dinner ladies.

According to Roberta Bremerkamp, head of catering at Greenwich - the borough whose school meals were made over in Jamie's School Dinners - more people want to get in school kitchens than ever before.

"We've never had anything like this," she told the Guardian. "There are more males than usual too, and the applicants are generally younger."

"It just goes to show how Jamie Oliver has raised the profile. Kitchen staff have always been well thought of in schools, but he's changed what the public think of them," she added.

Greenwich advertised for 60 new cooks to staff its school kitchens, but had to turn people away after more than 200 application forms ran out. The post offers £6.75 an hour.

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Ms Bremerkamp's assistant, Angela Clifton, stressed that the new generation of school caterers are not dinner ladies, however: "They are Cook 2s. Or we call them kitchen assistants, but never dinner lady."

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Home-cooking for hotel guests

Date: Thu, 07 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Two American-style hotels aimed at long-stay business travellers are to open in London.

The Staybridge Suites, to be managed by hotel giant, InterContinental Hotels Group, will offer guests the same cooking facilities they would find at home.

Each room is to be equipped with a cooker and fridge-freezer, and visitors will be able to buy groceries on site.

A buffet-style breakfast will also be available for those who prefer not to cook.

Intercontinental Hotels Group already runs 79 similar establishments in North America, and the two UK additions are expected to open late in 2006.

One will be located at Southwark on the south bank, and the other in Brentford, west London.

According to Reuters, InterContinental chief executive Andrew Cosslett said the company would use its American experience to extend the brand into the UK market.

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Onions may help protect bones

Date: Thu, 07 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Eating onions may be good for bones, new research reveals.

Scientists at the Swiss University of Bern say that a compound present in onions appears to retard the bone loss associated with osteoporosis.

The findings could help boost onion farmers, as well as producers of functional foods that target bone health.

Rat bone cells that had been treated with a hormone to stimulate bone loss were exposed to peptide compound GPCS extracted from white onions.

According to the scientists, the GPCS treatment "significantly inhibited the loss of bone minerals, including calcium, when compared to cells that were not exposed to GPCS."

Forecasts by Datamonitor claim that the bone-targeted functional foods market is set for 7.6 per cent annual growth, with UK figures to reach £86.4 million in 2007.

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Zinc research highlights market gap in fortified foods

Date: Thu, 07 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

US research into the benefits of zinc points to new opportunities for manufacturers of fortified food.

Scientists at the US Agricultural Research Service's Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Centre found that eleven-year-old children who boosted their zinc intake performed better mentally.

The children were given a 20mg zinc supplement on five days a week for three months.

Their mental performance improved across the board, regardless of their previous zinc status.

Although the cognitive benefits of zinc are well documented, this is the first time scientists have collected data about teenagers.

The departure highlights new opportunities for manufacturers of value-added foods to develop zinc-fortified products targeted specifically at the age group.

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Research establishes Med diet/longevity link

Date: Fri, 08 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Eating a Mediterranean diet prolongs life by an average of a year, according to new research.

Scientists at the University of Athens have found that a diet based on plentiful fruit, vegetables, legumes, grains, fish and olive oil promotes longevity - findings that could eventually permit manufacturers of foods popular in the Mediterranean to make longevity claims.

Although previous studies have linked Mediterranean-style eating to lower risks of heart disease, some cancers and other afflictions, this is the first time scientists have established a positive correlation between the diet and life span.

The study took in 75,000 people aged 60 and over from nine European countries, and found the most pronounced links between diet and longevity in Greece and Spain.

Lead researcher, Dr Dimitrios Trichopoulos, said: "Adherence to the Mediterranean diet reduces mortality."

Why this is the case is as yet unclear, but Dr Trichopoulos highlights a reduced intake of saturated fats, and high levels of meat and dairy products which may modulate blood lipid levels.

Whatever the reasons, Dr Trichopoulos claims, "To increase life expectancy by one year is a considerable accomplishment."

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He added that younger people who stuck to Mediterranean-style eating regime could expect a bigger benefit.

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Renewable energy from chicken waste

Date: Fri, 08 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A Norfolk poultry plant has installed pioneering pyrolysis and gasification technology to processes waste so that it can be used as a renewable energy source.

The system, devised by Banham Poultry's energy subsidiary, Banham Power, is capable of powering the factory, as well as an producing an additional two megawatts for sale.

It uses pyrolysis to dispose of waste material, which is then shredded, dried and burnt in an oxygen-free environment to produce a combustible gas.

Although the technologies have been used before, this is the first time they have been applied in combination, and the scheme has been backed by the CRed carbon reduction campaign, as well as the National Farmers Union, the poultry industry and Environment Agency.

Banham Power development engineer Bob Waterson said: "Nobody has put all these parts together before, but we thought why can't we do it at our plant. Every abattoir could have its own generator on site - they could all have their own modular power plant providing all their electricity."

Banham's poultry plant employs 750 people and processes up to 600,000 birds per week.

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GM foods will play major role in public health

Date: Fri, 08 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Genetically enhanced functional foods are set to become a major part of the public diet, according to a new report.

Scientists at the not-for-profit US Institute of Food Technologists claim that genetically modified foods have a big role to play in the future of public health, as research reveals how nutrients function on a molecular level.

"The functional foods currently available represent only a fraction of the potential opportunities for consumers to manage their health through diet," said Fergus Clydesdale, report co-author and department head of food science at University of Massachusetts

Researchers have identified food components that relieve arthritis and improve memory, and say that future benefits might include foods to boost energy, mental performance and even sleep.

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Styrene production breakthrough could lower cost of food packaging

Date: Fri, 08 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Dow and Snamprogetti, the engineering company, have announced they are jointly developing a new styrene production process that promises to cut packaging costs for food manufacturers.

As its name suggests, styrene is a key component in lightweight packaging material, polystyrene.

It is commonly used to box fast food products, as well as with cling film wrap to retail fresh fruit and vegetables.

Dow and Snamprogetti believe that the combination of their methods and skills could signal a change in the way styrene is produced, cutting costs and using different raw materials.

The usual process for styrene monomer today, ethylene and benzene react to form ethylbenzene, which is then dehydrogenated to styrene.

"We, and others, have refined and improved this process over the last 65 years and industry is now approaching the point of diminishing returns on incremental improvements," said Carol Dudley, vice president of research and development for hydrocarbons and chemicals at Dow.

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Fat Lady sings for Melton's food

Date: Fri, 08 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Clarissa Dickson Wright, one of TV's Two Fat Ladies, is mounting a campaign to make Melton Britain's official rural food and drink capital.

The old-school gourmet will speak up for the region at a press and industry conference on April 19th organised by Melton Promotions to attract more food businesses, tourism and funding to the area.

Development manager, John Elliott, told the Leicester Mercury: "We know there is a fireball surrounding food and drink in Melton and we want to make it even bigger."

Melton Food Partnership chairman Matthew O'Callaghan added: "Clarissa Dickson Wright is the ideal person to launch our bid - she is a regular visitor to the area and big supporter of local food."

The stout chef is also backing a campaign for protected regional status for the region's famous Mowbray Pork Pie and says she was delighted when the government announced it would back an application to the European Commission.

"I was so thrilled when I heard the news of Melton's success on my car radio that I sang all the way home and ate a Melton pork pie," she said.

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"I believe this is the way forward to protect our artisan British foods and hurrah for Melton Mowbray - where they lead, I hope others will be inspired to follow."

The region's famous Stilton cheese has already been granted protected geographical status.

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Food manufacturers top the market

Date: Fri, 08 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food producers and processors were the best-performing sector on the stockmarket last month.

According to the monthly stockwatch report from Halifax, the sector gave the best shareholder returns on the FTSE 100, with a total shareholder return (TSR) of four per cent.

Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever performed particularly well, delivering a TSR of five per cent.

An early Easter also saw strong March figures for confectionery company Cadbury Schweppes.

With the rest of the FTSE 100 experiencing a disappointing month, the food industry can be said to have outperformed the market.

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Tesco's European plans

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Britain's leading supermarket, Tesco, is seeking to expand further into central Europe by opening extra stores this year, according to a Financial Times report.

Tesco already has 194 outlets in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary but plans to increase its presence by adding at least 40 more.

Some will be larger hypermarkets, a format that has served the company well since it developed them in Europe in the mid-1990s.

The company is expected to post profits in excess of £2 billion for the first time. Last year the supermarket made a profit of £1.7 billion.

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Microwave packaging offers crisp, brown food

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

US packaging engineers have developed a new line of microwavable packages that promise to brown food.

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Graphic Packaging's Quilt Wave uses laminated cells that expand on exposure to microwaves and gently push against the food product.

The hot surface drives moisture away from the contact area and causes the food to crisp and brown.

Graphic Packaging claims the Quilt Wave allows food to cook evenly throughout, whilst browning the outer extremities.

The packaging is currently in use by Canadian company Sepp's Gourmet Foods, whose bakery division president told Food Production Daily: "We were looking for a way that's both effective and practical to re-heat and crisp our frozen grilled sandwich products.

The response from the retail trade has been very enthusiastic."

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Dairy farmer wins cash boost for milk campaign

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A dairy farmer campaigning for children to drink more milk has been awarded £200,000 to help fund her crusade.

The South East Development Agency (Seeda) awarded the grant to Judi Griffin, a farmer from the Isle of Wight, to help her promote the health benefits of milk for another year.

Ms Griffin told the BBC: "For the last three years I've been explaining the health benefits of drinking milk."

"Milk really is good for children but there is more to it than that.

"After the major Foot and Mouth outbreak a few years ago, we all realised that much of the tourist industry is dependent on a pastoral landscape.

"From that crisis, the regional development agency, Seeda, and Defra produced a 'Sustainable Farming & Food Delivery Plan' for the South East.

"Hopefully my project will help make some of that plan happen both on the Island and on the mainland."

Shaun Leavey, Farming and Rural Issues Group chairman, said: "It is particularly appropriate that this project is starting at a time when the government is waking up to the benefits of better school meals."

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Support British organics, Soil Association urges

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The UK's leading campaign organisation for organic food and farming is urging supermarkets to source organic beef and pork from British suppliers.

The Soil Association told the Telegraph Online: "Buying British organic food supports British farmers, guarantees the highest standards of animal welfare and helps British wildlife thrive."

In a survey of 1,200 shoppers published last November, the organisation found that big-name UK supermarkets were shunning British organic beef and pork in favour of cheaper imports.

Morrisons and Asda imported eighty per cent of their organic beef and pork from abroad, whilst Tesco imported half.

Stocking British organic produce "also cuts down unnecessary food miles, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions," a Soil Association spokesman claims.

A Tesco spokesperson said: 'Sometimes we do need to import to meet customer expectations. All of our organic lamb, chicken, milk and eggs are from the UK.'

A Morrisons spokesman said: "Our preference is to source from the UK, however this isn't always possible.'

For more information visit: www.soilassociation.org
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Tesco launches peel-able grapefruit

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK supermarket giant, Tesco, has launched a grapefruit which it claims is as easy to peel as an orange.

The dragon citrus, a natural cross between a grapefruit and an orange, will be available at more than 500 stores across the UK until the end of June.

Tesco's grapefruit buyer, David Chamberlain, claims the fruit is slightly sweeter than a pink grapefruit, boasts the same nutritional value and is easy to peel.

"While grapefruit is very popular, especially with dieters, there's no doubt that more people would buy them if they were easier to eat," he told the Press Association.

"We believe that dragon citrus could interest all those people interested in the dietary benefits of a grapefruit but who are put off by effort needed to eat it.

"The fruit is so simple to peel that it can be eaten while on the move such as on a train or car or at a picnic."

Tesco suppliers discovered the fruit, also known as a huyou, on a citrus buying trip to China's Zhejiang province.

"We were knocked out when we heard about this because there can't be many undiscovered varieties of fruit left in the world to find," Mr Chamberlain added.

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School meal investment for hot dinners only

Date: Mon, 11 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Primary schools that do not offer hot food are to miss out on the new investment for school meals proposed by the government.

The loophole affects 340,000 children at around 1,500 English schools and could trigger a new wave of pressure on the government to ensure all school children are given good quality, healthy, hot meals.

It has been revealed that the money to be given to schools to improve school dinners only applies to those schools offering hot meals, which is not compulsory for primary schools.

It is understood that 21 local education authorities (LEAs) have no area-wide contract for primary schools to provide hot meals, with some pupils as young as four being given a cold packed lunch instead of a hot dinner.

While some of the LEAs told the Times Education Supplement that all their primaries received hot meals through individually negotiated contracts.

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Eel prices soar as Asians get a taste for love

Date: Tue, 12 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Baby common eels are the new caviar, according to a BBC report.

Asian consumers are eating so many "glass eels", so called because they are transparent for the first years of their life, that they have become more expensive than the prized sturgeon eggs.

The glass eels are fished in French rivers and sold at around £480 a kilo to China and Japan where gourmets believe they have aphrodisiac powers.

Environmentalists are concerned the demand is endangering the immature common eels and have called on the European Union to ban the practice.

But eel expert Eric Feunteun says the fishermen are crucial to providing information about river stocks and eel fishing should remain legal.

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Ten-a-day fruit and veg targets?

Date: Tue, 12 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables should be doubled, according to new research.

US scientists say people should aim to eat ten fruit and vegetable portions a day, compared with current recommendations in the UK and America that we should aim for

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five.

The advice comes as part of a report on new research that found the chances of contracting breast cancer could be cut by up to 70 per cent by eating the right diet.

According to the report published in Nutrition Journal, vegetables like broccoli and carrots, as well as fish, were identified as particularly beneficial.

Dr Michael Donaldson, who led the North Carolina study, claims: "With the correct diet it is likely that there would be at least a 60 to 70 per cent decrease in breast and prostate cancers, and even a 40-50 per cent decrease in cancers at other sites."

The French government already recommends that people eat ten fruit and vegetable portions a day.

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Food sales boost M&S performance

Date: Tue, 12 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Marks & Spencer today reported a rise in food sales for the three months to 2nd April, although total sales were down.

Food sales climbed 1.2 per cent over the final quarter, bringing full year growth to 2.3 per cent.

Chief executive Stuart Rose attributed the rise to the company's dedicated Simply Food chain and a strong performance by food at its out-of-town stores.

"Overall, food sales are growing and market share has been maintained," the company said. "While like-for-like food sales in our major city centre stores have declined, sales at Simply Food (M&S's food only stores) and food sales out-of-town remain strong."

Total sales at the food and clothing retailer fell by 2.3 per cent over the quarter, and 2.0 per cent over the year.

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Tesco tops £2 bn

Date: Tue, 12 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Supermarket colossus, Tesco, has become the first UK retailer to report annual profits of more than £2 billion.

The grocery retail chain this morning announced pre-tax profits of £2.03 billion for the twelve months to 26th February, up 20.5 per cent on the year before.

Tesco chief executive Terry Leahy attributed the bumper profits to overseas expansion and the development of non-food products like insurance.

Analysts also credit the supermarket's enormous buying power which, they say, enables Tesco to strike better bargains and reflect this in their stores.

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Tesco has firmly bucked the trend for slowing retail figures, reporting a 12.4 per cent sales rise to £37.1 billion. One in every three pound spent in Britain's supermarkets, is spent in Tesco.

Its new profits records comes just four years after the supermarket broke through the £1 billion mark.

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Cloned cow meat and milk good enough to eat

Date: Tue, 12 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Milk and meat from cloned cattle appear safe for human consumption, according to new, nutritional research.

The findings, by scientists in the US and Japan, bolster hopes that food products from cloned animals will eventually be allowed onto the market.

Researchers found that meat and dairy products from a bull and cow cloned using the "Dolly" technique are almost identical in composition to those from conventionally bred cattle.

Scientists tested four cuts of meat from the two cloned cattle for more than 100 quality criteria, while two milk samples from the cow were analysed for protein, fat and other variables.

Meat from the cloned cattle was slightly higher in fat and fatty acids, but the levels were within beef industry standards.

Researchers say the results suggest that food products from cloned animals could be used to boost food production in developing countries.

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Backing for research into why oily fish helps prevent alzheimers

Date: Tue, 12 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Scientists have received funding to investigate why eating oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel appears to reduce the threat of the onset of dementia.

The Alzheimer's Research Trust has given scientists at Cardiff university £300,000 to lead an investigation into the effects of the fish, by monitoring the results of different diets on mice that have been genetically designed to have an Alzheimer's like affliction.

It is hoped the findings will help food manufacturers harness oily fish benefits in functional food products.

Preliminary research has shown that brain functionality was improved in mice that were fed oily fish.

Professor John Harwood, who is leading the team, said: "We put the mice through a maze, and the ones with normal brain functions learn quickly when to turn left and right,

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but the Alzheimer's mice are absolutely hopeless at remembering.

"When we put them on a diet rich in these fatty oils, their ability to learn improved greatly."

It has been suggested in the past that omega 3 oils contained in the fish could prevent the build-up of a protein called amyloid. Amyloid grows on the brain of Alzheimer's sufferers, slowing it down.

The study is expected to last three years.
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Lactose intolerance vastly exaggerated, UK Dairy Council claims

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The growing rate of lactose intolerance is vastly exaggerated, the UK Dairy Council has claimed.

"Around 45 per cent (27 million) of the UK population claim to be lactose intolerant, when in fact only two per cent (1.2 million) have actually been clinically diagnosed," said UK Dairy Council communications manager, Michele Stephens.

Sufferers of lactose intolerance experience bloating, abdominal pains and diarrhoea because they lack lactase, an enzyme which helps break down lactose - one of the sugars found in milk and some dairy products.

But the UK Dairy Council claims people who believe they are lactose intolerant are often confusing their condition with a food allergy.

Rising rates of real or perceived lactose intolerance are credited with a fall in consumer demand for milk and dairy products.

The problem is exacerbated by a lack of knowledge among lactose intolerance sufferers about what they can and can't eat. Hard cheeses contain less than a quarter of the lactose content of fresh milk, and fermented milk products like live yoghurt contain virtually none.

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Fruit and veg could help protect against strokes

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants could limit strokes, according to new research.

Scientists at the University of South Florida who induced strokes in rats found they were 50 to 75 per cent smaller in animals that had been fed on a diet of spinach, blueberries or antioxidant-rich algae, spirulina.

"I was amazed at the extent of neuro-protection these antioxidant-rich diets provided," research leader Paula Bickford told Scientific American. "The size of the stroke was 50 to 75 percent less in rats treated with diets supplemented with blueberries, spinach or

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spirulina before the stroke."

Previous studies have documented the heart-health and cholesterol-fighting benefits of antioxidants, but this is the first time scientists have established a link with limiting the size of strokes.

Antioxidants are found in many fruits and vegetables, and are especially prevalent in cranberries as well as the foods used in the rat experiment.

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Kellogg's to cut salt in cereals

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Breakfast cereal manufacturer, Kellogg's, has pledged to reduce the salt content of three of its flagship brands.

The company will cut salt by a quarter in its Corn Flakes, Frosties and Crunchy Nut Cornflakes cereals, in response to taste tests which revealed consumers preferred less salt.

Alyson Greenhalgh-Ball, health and wellbeing manager at Kellogg's, told the Manchester Evening News: "Although breakfast cereals on average contribute a very small amount of salt in the diet - no more than five per cent of the average adult intake of salt - we are committed to helping consumers reduce the amount of salt in their diets in line with government policies on salt reduction."

A standard, 30 gram serving of the new recipe Kellogg's Corn Flakes will provide nine per cent of the recommended daily allowance, with 0.55 grams of salt.

The reduced salt cereals will go on sale this week.

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Joint product launch from Tate & Lyle and Soreen

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK ingredients manufacturer, Tate & Lyle, has struck a deal with malt and fruit loaf producer, Soreen, to launch a new product that both companies hope will direct consumers back to their brands.

Lyle's Golden Syrup Fruit Loaf is flavoured with Tate & Lyle's flagship syrup and targeted at the morning goods sector of which Soreen already has a 12 per cent value share.

"It is a very good fit between two brands with great heritage, strong appeal and consumer trust," Lyle's Golden Syrup franchise development manager, Virginia Lana, told Food and Drink Europe.

Tate & Lyle's joint venture with Soreen marks the third product partnership for the company's golden syrup brand.

The firm already has franchises with McVities and treacle tart and flap jack producer, Hoppers.

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Scots salmon sales survive health scare

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Last year's Scottish salmon health scare had little impact on sales of the fish, with a 22 per cent increase in the amount of fresh salmon eaten at home between 2002 and 2004.

Shoppers bought £310 million of chilled salmon in 2004, compared with £254 million in 2002, and sales are expected to continue growing by 10 per cent a year, according to a new report.

The news follows a spate of bad press last year, after US and Canadian researchers identified carcinogenic ingredients in salmon feed at Scottish farms.

Analysts attribute the rise to increased consumer awareness of the health benefits of oily fish.

"Health is the factor driving the market for oily fish with enjoyment growing slightly and practicality slipping. Salmon, with its numerous health benefits, is ideally placed to take advantage of such trends," Grenville Wall, senior market analyst at TNS Global told the Scotsman.

Julie Edgar, of Scottish Quality Salmon, the body that quality-assures farmed salmon, also credited the versatility of salmon.

"Salmon is unusual in that it is an everyday meal but also a food for special occasions, because it's so versatile and can be presented in so many ways," she said.

"Salmon is quick, easy and tasty, and when you cook it you know that both children and adults will enjoy it."

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Baugur pools resources to launch new Somerfield bid

Date: Wed, 13 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Icelandic investment group, Baugur, has entered into a consortium to purchase the Somerfield supermarket chain.

According to the Financial Times, the decision ends Baugur's efforts to launch an independent bid and is likely to keep the price down.

The group, which includes property magnate Robert Tchenguiz, is the front-runner for Somerfield, although property groups London Regional and Topland are also expected to bid.

Verdict Research analyst, Gavin Rothwell, said: "This appears to be something of an all star line-up and I think it puts them in pole position. It also reduces the chances of a bidding war, which is possibly bad news for Somerfield shareholders."

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Somerfield, which also owns the Kwik Save chain, rejected Baugur's £1.03 billion purchase offer in February.

It is understood that Baugur will sell its stake in supermarket group, Iceland, should the Somerfield deal go ahead.

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Greenwich burger van follows Jamie's health trend

Date: Thu, 14 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A burger van opposite the Greenwich school where Jamie Oliver filmed his school dinners crusade has jumped on the healthy food bandwagon.

Pupils who snubbed the celebrity chef's better quality lunches turned to Martin Lloyd's mobile Castaway Café for their junk food fix instead.

But according to the Mirror online, Mr Lloyd has expanded his lunch menu to include a range of healthy sandwiches in a bid to back Mr Oliver's campaign.

"The most popular thing I sell now is a tuna and mayonnaise baguette. I do still sell burgers, but I've changed the type of meat I use to a healthier one after Jamie spoke to me," he said.

"Now I don't just sell rubbish like chips and I use fresh vegetables, meat and bread every day. The kids have told me they appreciate the new menu and they like the variety."

Mr Lloyd's revamped menu comes as part of a wave of change triggered by Mr Oliver's school meals experiment.

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Election fever hits the bottle

Date: Thu, 14 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Asda has launched a range of politically aligned bottled beers to tie in with the general election.

The supermarket is selling brews to represent the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, as well as Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party.

According to Asda's tongue-in-cheek tasting notes, Labour Landslide Bitter is coloured red but "with a blue tinge".

Tory Triumph Bitter is described as "recently out of favour but looking for a return to popularity", while Lib Dem Lift-Off Bitter is a "cheeky, young and pretentious beer".

The beers are supplied to Asda by Branded Drinks.

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Healthy boost for McDonald's following menu revamp

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Date: Thu, 14 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fast food conglomerate, McDonald's, today announced it expects first quarter profits to exceed predictions following the success of its healthier menu options.

The hamburger chain hopes to announce profits of 56 US cents a share, marking a 40 per cent rise on this time last year.

According to a Thomson Financial survey, analysts' predictions had pinned McDonald's profits at 42 cents a share.

The better than expected results follow a radical menu makeover in response to consumer concerns about obesity and other diet-related health problems.

McDonald's now offer salads, low-fat wraps, yoghurt parfaits and bottled water as well as the usual hamburgers, fries and thick milkshakes that have made the restaurants' name.

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UK wastes one third of food

Date: Thu, 14 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Around a third of UK food ends up in the dustbin, new statistics have revealed.

According to BBC research, British adults waste an average of £420 worth of food each year, with that figure set to grow by 1.5 per cent annually.

The wastage comes in part from Britons who are unwilling or don't know how to use up leftovers or who are nervous about using ingredients that is very close to or has exceeded its best before date.

But the food service and food retail sectors are also responsible. The catering industry throws away around a third of all the food it purchases, whilst supermarkets dispose of any produce that is not in top condition.

The news highlights opportunities for caterers and food retailers to cut waste and costs by keeping closer tabs on supply and demand.

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Litten Tree launches menu for the blind

Date: Thu, 14 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

An SFI-owned food pub has launched a Braille version of its menu.

The Hereford Litten Tree has worked with the Royal National College for the Blind to produce the menu for its visually impaired customers.

General manager, Paul Neades, told the Publican: "This is a must for every restaurant. Not only does it fall in line with the Disability Discrimination Act, but as a service provider it opens another market up to us.

"It gives our customers the freedom to enjoy a meal out without the fuss of having to rely on a staff member to sit and read the menu out, giving the customer more independence."

The SFI group owns 58 Litten Tree establishments, as well as the Slug and Lettuce, Bar Med and Fiesta Havana chains.

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Future of livestock tagging may lie with UHF technology

Date: Thu, 14 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Ultra high frequency (UHF) technology could be used in the livestock industry to help trace animals and eliminate the possible spread of disease.

Scientists at the Kansas State University Animal Identification Knowledge Laboratory are testing UHF equipment from developers Advanced ID, in response to sector calls for an RFID-based tracking system.

The livestock industry wants to install measures which will guarantee the safety of food supply, and guard against future export bans or market collapse.

Scientists are testing the viability and advantages of UHF technology compared to low frequency (LF) alternatives.

Barry Bennet, president of Advanced ID, believes the future of livestock tagging lies with UHF technology.

"We continue to hear from current RFID users in the livestock industry... that low frequency technology is not meeting their needs," he said. "LF scanners are very large and bulky, not user friendly, unreliable in operating environments with machinery, and can only read one tag at a time."

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Oliver is key figure in winning consumer trust

Date: Fri, 15 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Jamie Oliver did more to win back consumer confidence in Scottish salmon following last year's health scare than any other person or organisation.

Scottish Quality Salmon's head of communications, Julie Edgar, yesterday told a conference that more people had listened to recommendations from the celebrity chef than even the Food Standards Agency.

"People know about the Food Standards Agency (FSA) but didn't look at it as a source of advice. Then celebrity chef Jamie Oliver spoke up and people seemed to listen about that," she said at the Aquaculture Today 2005 conference in Edinburgh.

Mr Oliver has firmly established himself as the golden boy of British food, following his successful, high profile television crusade to improve the quality of school dinners.

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Both he and the FSA spoke up for Scottish salmon after US and Canadian researchers identified traces of carcinogenic PCBs in salmon feed at Scottish farms last year.

The market has already made a healthy recovery, with sales for 2004 up 22 per cent of 2002.

A recent report found claimed shoppers bought £310 million of chilled salmon in 2004, compared with £254 million in 2002, and sales are expected to continue growing by 10 per cent a year.

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New chromogenic substrates could eliminate need for repeat food tests

Date: Fri, 15 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Culture media supplier, Oxoid, has developed a new range of chromogenic substrates for food analysis that could eliminate the need for repeat testing.

Chromogenic technology detects pathogens that could contaminate the food supply by targeting specific enzyme activity.

According to Food Production Daily, the enzymes leave a colourless substrate in the medium, which reacts to release colour and highlight the colonies of interest.

Oxoid claims its new chromogenic substrates, to be launched as part of its chromogenic media range, will prove cost effective to food manufacturers by reducing or eliminating the need for confirmatory testing.

Pathogen testing is a key issue in the food industry, where a food scare can incur millions of pounds in product recall costs, legal bills and loss of consumer confidence.

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Scientists discover the key to unpopping popcorn

Date: Fri, 15 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Scientists have discovered why some popcorn kernels are stubborn about popping.

Apparently, a key crystalline structure in popcorn's outer shell determines the 'popability' of each piece - news that could be manipulated by popcorn manufacturers to help cut waste and produce more satisfying microwave-able popcorn products.

"We think the secret to maximising 'popability' is found in the special chemistry of the corn kernel," said lead researcher Bruce Hamaker at Purdue University's Whistler Centre for Carbohydrate Research.

Mr Hamaker expects the discovery to help scientists develop a better-popping strain of popcorn.

"Through this study, we now have a better understanding of the science behind why unpopped kernels occur and how we can use this knowledge to go about reducing their number," he said.

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Besides being irritating, unpopped popcorn kernels have been known to break teeth and cause choking, and manufacturers have for some time been trying to produce better-popping corn through trial and error breeding.

According to Food Production Daily, some popcorn manufacturers have already expressed strong interest in this research.

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Laser-sealed food trays point to cheaper packaging future

Date: Fri, 15 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new laser sealing and inspection system has been developed, which could offer huge benefits to food manufacturers.

Launched by Packaging Automation (PA), the method is designed to seal lidding film to food trays without the need for conventional tooling.

It allows different tray shapes to be processed on the same production line and ensures quick and easy product changeovers, Food Production Daily reports.

According to PA, the system will cut tooling costs and wastage, and improve seal quality.

It was developed as part of a Defra-sponsored Foodlink project

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Garlic may help fight colon cancer risk

Date: Fri, 15 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Colon cancer could be controlled with garlic, Japanese researchers have found.

According to a study by a research team at Hiroshima University, a constituent found in garlic could be used to control the growth of polyps in the colon, often responsible for the development of colon cancer.

The study used a pilot test team of 12 people, who had polyps identified in their colons after an examination. Using a garlic extract, eight people were given an average of 2.4 millilitres a day, while the remaining four were given 0.16 millilitres.

Polyp numbers and size in five subjects in the first group decreased after one year, while in the second group, the polyps increased by an average of 3 millimetres.

Researchers presented their results at the International Garlic Symposium in the United States. Professor Shinji Tanaka, from the university, said that the results of the research indicated that garlic was useful in fighting cancer.

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Fortnum & Mason to devote itself to food

Date: Fri, 15 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fortnum & Mason, the world-famous department store in London's Piccadilly, is set to undergo a massive reformation.

Plans to scrap the fashion department and create a huge food hall on the ground floor have been put forward, and if approved, the 80-year-old building will see a multi-million pound interior refurbishment.

Food accounts for 70 per cent of store sales, and Fortnum & Mason is expected to launch a range of gourmet ready meals to accompany the creation of the food hall on the ground floor of the store.

"There is a real buzz about the ground floor," explained new managing director Beverley Aspinall, according to the Evening Standard. "Our challenge is to be better than the best specialist cheese shop, better than the best coffee shop, better than the best deli."

Ms Aspinall predicts that the proposed developments would help the brand appeal to younger shoppers, as well as tapping into the demand for high quality food - and could boost sales by £50 million.

Fortnum & Mason began as a Piccadilly grocery store way back in 1707, and is known as the "Queen's grocer" because of its history of supplying the royal household.

If the developments go ahead it is hoped they will be completed ready for the company's tercentenary celebrations in 2007.

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Tesco may develop superstore on Rover site

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tesco has its eye on the Longbridge manufacturing site of failed car producer, Rover.

The supermarket giant has confirmed it is considering building a new superstore where the plant currently stands.

"We've been interested in looking at sites in that area and would be interested in looking at early plans," a spokeswoman for the supermarket said.

"But nothing has been decided and nothing is definite," she added.

Last week Tesco posted profits in excess of £2 billion, setting a new British retail record.

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Consumer choice better than ever, leading author claims

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

British shoppers have more choice than ever before, according to the author of a new account of supermarket history, Trolley Wars.

Judi Bevan, whose newly published book charts the rise of big names like Asda and Sainsbury's, claims consumers have "forgotten" the benefits the supermarket revolution has brought them.

"The fact remains that when you go into a supermarket there are more choices than

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ever," she said.

Ms Bevan also defended supermarket super-giant, Tesco, against claims that it is squeezing independent stores out of the UK grocery market.

She said consumers have nothing to fear from the chain, which last week announced profits exceeding £2 billion and is looking to buy up independent stores to expand its Tesco Metro brand.

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Dairy industry campaigns for health claims

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The UK dairy industry has stepped up pressure to allow it to make health claims on their products.

The sector has begun to submit proposals to the Joint Health claims Initiative (JHCI), the independent body responsible for authorising health claims by food.

The Milk Development Council, the government-appointed marketing body for the UK milk industry, together with the Dairy Council and Dairy UK is applying to the JHCI to have two health claims approved.

The first is for cheese, which the industry claims promotes dental health and hygiene when eaten after a meal or sugary snack.

The second, which will be submitted shortly, links milk consumption to bone health and claims it helps protect against bone disorders like osteoporosis.

If the health claims are approved, dairy manufacturers will be able to use the information to label and market their products.

Current legislation prevents food producers from claiming produce can cure, prevent or treat a disease, but with sufficient scientific evidence, they are allowed to make generic health claims.

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FPB lobbies Brussels to clarify abattoir regulations

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Forum of Private Business (FPB) is to call on Brussels to clarify its abattoir regulations, in a bid to save small animal slaughterhouses.

According to the FPB, which represents 25,000 small- to medium-sized firms in Britain, the UK government's stringent interpretation of European Commission (EC) regulations will force small abattoirs out of business.

Bob Salmon, FPB spokesman for the food sector, is to lead a delegation of abattoir owners to Brussels, where they will ask the EC to make its complexly-worded slaughterhouse regulations document clearer and more fully explained.

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"Small abattoirs are in great peril because of the Food Standards Agency's inflexible interpretation of the EC's regulations," he told the National Pig Association.

"In particular the FSA is imposing tough rulings on building modifications which small businesses simply cannot afford.

"Figures seen by the FPB indicate that some 37 percent of the remaining small red meat abattoirs in England are now at risk of closure and 16 per cent are at high risk. If these were to close the knock-on effect on other businesses would be devastating."

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Pork manufacturer announces major production investment

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food manufacturer, Grampian Country Food Group, has unveiled a £16 million plan to redevelop its pork processing plant near Edinburgh.

The company claims it wants to establish a "centre of excellence" for pork and sausage production at Broxburn, "enabling the business to maintain and grow its position in an increasingly competitive market place".

Under the plans, Grampian will relocate its processing plant at Buckie, Morayshire and part of its sausage production facility at Elmswell, Suffolk to the Broxburn site.

"This is a significant investment which creates an opportunity for us to consolidate and add value to our Scottish pork business," said Stephen Heslop, regional director for Grampian's Scottish pork operations. "It will help safeguard the future of the Scottish pig herd and we look forward to continuing our close relationship with producers."

The move represents Grampian's biggest single investment in Scotland and is expected to be completed by the end of October this year.

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Obese toddlers should diet Atkins-style, leading nutritionist claims

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A leading nutritionist has advised that obese children as young as three should be put on a low-carb, Atkins-style diet.

Dr Jeff Volek from Connecticut University told an Aberdeen anti-obesity conference: "There is no real reason why a three or four year-old should not be on a low-carb or low-fat diet."

"These diets can be very effective in encouraging weight loss and fat loss, and are particularly effective when it comes to cardiovascular health," he added.

Dr Volek has spent six years studying the effects of different diets and believes regimes like the Atkins plan have been unfairly criticised as unhealthy.

According to the Sunday Mail, one in five Scottish children are clinically obese by the time they reach Primary Seven, while one in ten are overweight by the time they start primary school.

Dr Volek's British colleagues were less convinced that obese toddlers should be put on Atkins-style plans, however. "Advice about children's diet needs to be justified by long-term studies," said Professor Annie Anderson, of the Centre for Public Health Nutrition Research at Dundee University.

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Britain hailed as gourmet capital of the world

Date: Mon, 18 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Britain's gourmet scene has been recognized as one of the world's best.

In a shortlist of the 50 best restaurants on the planet, 14 are located in England - giving the UK more entries than any other country.

Celebrity haunt The Ivy, in the heart of London's West End, is one of the favourites, offering simple British and European cuisine with a modern twist.

TV chef Gordon Ramsay's eponymous establishment on Royal Hospital Road is also a contender, as is Nobu, at the Metropolitan Hotel on Old Park Lane.

The award was created by Restaurant Magazine, with a view to providing a definitive guide to the best places to eat.

A panel of 500 chefs, food critics and restaurateurs from around the globe will decide the result, which is to be announced later today at The Royal Exchange.

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ABF reports half-year profits leap

Date: Tue, 19 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food manufacturer, Associated British Foods (ABF), has announced a 16 per cent profits rise for the half-year to 5th March.

The company, whose portfolio includes leading brands like Twinings tea and Silver Spoon sugar, posted pretax profits of £268 million for the 24-week period and value sales of £2.62 billion - a ten per cent rise on last year.

The results are in line with analysts' forecasts and the group says it expects a further profits advance for the full year.

"Although the operating environment will be no less demanding in the second period of the year, we nevertheless expect to report good progress in operating profit for the full year," ABF said in a statement.

The company's half-year dividend rose 14 per cent to six pence a share.

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Fat Duck swoops in for top global award

Date: Tue, 19 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Fat Duck has been crowned the best place to eat in the world.

A panel of 600 chefs and critics last night voted for the restaurant in Bray, Berkshire, to take the top award at a ceremony organised by Restaurant magazine.

Its owner and head chef, gastronomic innovator, Heston Blumenthal, is renowned for his scientific approach to cooking, as well as unorthodox dishes like snail porridge or green tea and lime mousse dipped in liquid nitrogen.

He said at the awards ceremony: "There are so many very good chefs in the world I cannot believe my name is even in the running for the top. It is fantastic for Britain, though this is all down to the Roux brothers, who first put England on the gastronomic map."

The Fat Duck rose to first position after it won a runner-up ranking last year, and toppled Thomas Keller's The French Laundry, in Yountville, California, in the process.

The restaurant celebrates its tenth anniversary this year.

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Fresh look for 'junk' burger

Date: Tue, 19 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A trendy Leeds restaurant has introduced a new kind of regional delicacy to its menu - the "Yorkshire Burger".

Chefs at Room, on Boar Lane, say they have put some of the county's finest local ingredients into creating the 8oz burger, which the restaurant hopes will satisfy even the most refined taste buds.

Made from the pure 100 per cent Yorkshire beef of RP Setchfield family butchers of Harrogate and Moortown, Leeds, the burger is served covered in melted Swaledale cheese, inside a sun-dried tomato bagel supplied by Chalutz bakery in Moortown.

"Whenever someone mentions the word 'burger' these days, most people tend to think 'stodge'. We're trying to get away from that, and to strike a blow for local produce at the same time," restaurant boss John Pallagi explained to the Yorkshire Evening Post.

The menu has been updated to mark the opening of the Courtyard, the restaurant's outdoor eating and drinking area, and the Yorkshire Burger will go on sale from tomorrow.

Room was recently named one of the best restaurants in Yorkshire, and specializes in serving modern classics with a contemporary twist.

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Cranswick ups sausage output with new pork production facility

Date: Tue, 19 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food group, Cranswick, has opened a new sausage production facility in Hull.

The company, which has a 20 per cent share in the UK sausage market, produces the sausages for Sainsbury's "Taste the Difference" range, as well as for Morrison's "Best", Lazenby's "Best of British", and Prince Charles' brand Duchy Originals.

According to Cranswick, the new factory is equipped to produce 400 tonnes of sausages every week.

Its range includes the traditional pork chipolata to more adventurous sausages, such as chicken and sweet chilli jam, pancetta and parmesan, and venison and red wine.

In recognition of the 20-year relationship between Cranswick and the supermarket giant, Sainsbury's chief executive Justin King officially opened the factory.

Mr King told the Yorkshire Post that Cranswick's expansion "represents a major investment by them, and endorses its continued relationship and confidence in Sainsbury's for the future".

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Coffee Coke

Date: Tue, 19 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Drinks manufacturing giant, Coca-Cola, is to branch out with a new coffee-flavoured beverage which can be drunk at room temperature or heated in a microwave.

The US company has already registered three potential names for the innovative products - Coca-Cola Blak, Makkio and Maquio - and claims the new drink could be on sale in Europe and America by next year.

Coca-Cola Asia already sells a coffee-flavoured beverage in Japan, where it is the biggest-selling non-carbonated soft drink on the market.

The move comes as part of a strategy to diversify the company's range of products in a bid to retain consumer interest in a waning fizzy drinks market.

Carbonated beverages have suffered from the burgeoning trend for hot, take-away coffee bars like Starbucks, Caffe Nero and Costa Coffee.

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Splenda rival around the corner

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Goldman Sachs has forecast the hasty launch of no-calorie sweeteners to rival Tate & Lyle's wildly successful Splenda.

The broker told the Independent: "Generics could circumvent Splenda patents by 2009. Our in-depth patent study reveals important expiry dates in 2006 and 2009 that could motivate generic manufacturers."

Industry chiefs are looking to China for the development, where two sweetener manufacturers say they have already cracked the formula to produce commercial quantities of a zero-calorie sugar-substitute.

Goldman Sachs' prediction will unsettle UK manufacturer, Tate & Lyle, which has seen its shares rise by more than 60 per cent over the last 12 months following the launch of Splenda.

The sweetener has been snapped up by numerous food and drinks conglomerates, including Coca-Cola in its new, no-calorie formulation, Coca-Cola Zero.

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Tate & Lyle strikes North American Alleggra deal

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK sugar and sweeteners firm, Tate & Lyle, has signed a deal with Unilever-backed company, Alleggra Foods, to launch its full function soy-based egg alternative in North America.

The contract gives Tate & Lyle, who backed Unilever in developing the product, exclusive rights to manufacture, distribute and market Alleggra in America, Canada and Mexico.

"Securing this licensing agreement is terrific news for Tate & Lyle in terms of diversifying our North American ingredients portfolio and offering our customers more choice," said Tom Doxsie, vice president of food ingredients, Tate & Lyle.

"Alleggra interacts well with many other Tate & Lyle ingredients which means we will be able to tailor specific ingredient solutions for our customers. Alleggra is a great-tasting product with superb functional benefits and we look forward to building its success in North America."

The low-fat, high-protein, soy-based egg replacer opens new doors for food manufacturers seeking to cut the risk of salmonella infection or looking to develop healthier products.

Its developers claim Alleggra contains 75 per cent less saturated fat than a normal egg, with ten per cent extra protein and no cholesterol.

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Green vegetables and red chillis may help protect against cancer

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Chemicals found in red chilli peppers, cabbage and broccoli could be used to help fight cancer, according to new research.

US scientists at the University of Pittsburgh have found that natural ingredients in the
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vegetables slow or prevent the growth of cancerous tumour cells.

In red chilli, the hot chemical, capsaicin, was found to target cancer of the pancreas - an affliction that affects some 7,000 Britons every year.

"Our results demonstrate that capsaicin is a potent anti-cancer agent, induces apoptosis (programmed cell death) in cancer cells and produces no significant damage to normal pancreatic cells," said lead researcher, Sanjay Srivastava.

In a second study, scientists identified phenethyl isothiocyanate (PEITC), found in cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage, as an effective inhibitor of cancer of the ovaries.

The findings are expected to boost sales of the vegetables, as well as open the door to new opportunities for manufacturers of functional foods - one of whose targets will be to make red chilli more palatable in large quantities.

Professor Srivastava added that diet plays a major role in the fight against cancer. "The contribution of diet and nutrition to cancer risk, prevention and treatment has been a major focus of research in recent years because certain nutrients in vegetables and dietary agents appear to protect the body against diseases such as cancer," he said.

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Children's eating habits linked to mother's wealth and education

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Children's eating habits are linked to how much their mothers earn and how educated they are, according to new research.

The study, by scientists at the University of Glasgow, identifies mothers as a key marketing target in shaping the consumer habits of the coming generation.

Researchers found that 57 per cent of children identified as less healthy eaters and 32 per cent of those who admitted unhealthy snacking came from deprived backgrounds and had mothers with few academic qualifications.

"Less healthy eaters" were defined as children with a higher fat than fibre score whilst "unhealthy snackers" were those children who consumed five or more portions of sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cake, crisps or fizzy drinks in a single day.

Researchers also found that children with mothers who work, full- or part-time, were less likely to be unhealthy snackers, and that unhealthy eating habits were more prevalent among boys (60 per cent) than girls (53 per cent).

The study also overturned an implication made by Lord Tebbit, commenting on the House of Commons Health Committee report, that food habits are linked to family structure.

"There was no evidence that family structure or meals were associated with children's diets," said lead researcher, Helen Sweeting.

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Laser printing breakthrough to spark fresh produce marketing revolution

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new solution for laser-marking edible products has been unveiled by Sherwood Technology.

DataLase Edible utilises an additive that allows the formation of a safe, high-contrast image directly on the surface of edible products.

Eggs, fruit, and hard-shelled confectionery are all examples of products that will benefit from the technology. They are marked by spraying or tumble-coating the food surface with a dry powder or water-based solution, and applying a low-power CO2 laser.

The image is stable and produced completely from edible components, and the low energy of the laser means the surface of the food product is preserved.

According to Food Production Daily, many sectors within the food industry are turning to "on-product" marking as a means of improving traceability.

Sherwood says the new technology will remove the need for pre-printed labels, which are costly to produce and maintain, and often leave adhesive residues on products.

DataLase Edible gives manufacturers the opportunity for the precision marking of data-rich, variable information on a wide range of fresh produce.

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Honeyed future for calcium foods

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Eating honey may help the body absorb calcium, according to new research.

Scientists from Purdue University found that rats fed supplemental calcium in conjunction with honey, absorbed more of the bone-strengthening mineral.

Test results showed that calcium absorption rates increased by up to a third in the rats eating most honey, and rose in direct correlation to the amount of honey consumed.

The findings present new opportunities to functional foods producers who may be able to harness honey to help consumers hit their recommended daily calcium intake target.

"Many adults struggle to get the recommended amounts of calcium in their daily diet," said Dr Katherine Beals, nutrition consultant to the US National Honey Board which funded the study.

"Although this study was done with rats, the preliminary results are very compelling. Of course we would have to replicate the experiment in a human sample to see if the same holds true for people."

The rodents were either dosed just calcium, or calcium plus 200 mg, 500 mg or 800 mg of honey, 10.75 mg or 200 mg of raffinose, or 800 mg of a glucose fructose mixture designed to taste like honey.

Compared to the control group, the calcium absorption rate of those rats on 800 mg and 500 mg of honey showed 33.6 per cent and 25.5 per cent respective increases.

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Nestle: The battle of the trans fats

Date: Wed, 20 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Nestle has revealed a number of ways it is responding to demands to reduce trans fat content in food products.

The world food player, like other food firms across the UK, has been under increasing pressure from new regulations and legislation to cut trans fat content and make products as healthy as possible.

According to the company, the main issue with removing the fats from its products is to "retain the texture and taste of the product", with baked product "crispiness" and bouillon cube binding particularly affected.

In addition, keeping the product from spoiling is an issue, since trans fats are very stable from an oxidation point of view.

The food firm explained to Food Navigator, that zero per cent content will never be achieved, since tiny amounts of the fats and acids are formed whenever oils are deodorised.

However, it did state that the trans fat content in all brands is being reduced in any products that contain them.

It also claimed that customers may notice some difference in products, but they should not be negative.

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Scotland's £2 billion farming industry

Date: Thu, 21 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Scottish farming industry is worth £2.16 billion a year, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) has claimed

According to a survey by the industry promotional board, output from beef, lamb and pig farms accounts for nearly £1 billion of the Scottish exchequer, whilst some 10,000 farmers and crofters underpin 43 per cent of total Scottish farming production and its associated industries.

Jan Polley, chief executive for QMS, told the Herald: "Until now there has been no guide documenting the contribution that the farming and processing industries make to the economy.

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"This publication sets out a range of information on a wide range of topics that will help those who want a better understanding of the industry.

"We have to connect with all parts of the chain."

In 2004, Scottish abattoirs processed some 500,000 cattle, with a net value of £450 million.

Around 1.5 million sheep were slaughtered, producing £100 million worth of lamb, and 772,000 pigs were processed, bringing in a further £150 million.

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Pernod's £7.4bn Allied bid

Date: Thu, 21 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Spirits group Pernod Ricard has bid £7.4 billion for UK rival Allied Domecq.

The announcement of the French company's "friendly" offer lifted its share price by over three per cent at Thursday's Paris market opening. Allied shares were also up.

Pernod's offer is made in partnership with US conglomerate Fortune Brands, the owner of Jim Beam bourbon.

Pernod plans to sell certain of Allied's brands to Fortune, including Sauza tequila and Canadian Club.

The French beverage group is keen to expand its spirit brands in the US. Buying Allied would complete its global coverage and narrow the gap with market-leader Diageo.

The offer will be made up of 80 per cent cash, and values one Allied share at 670 pence. Pernod will issue new shares to cover the remaining 20 per cent.

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Food sector buoyant despite general retail decline

Date: Thu, 21 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food sales experienced further growth in the first quarter this year, despite the continuing slowdown across other retail sectors.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), volume sales climbed by 1.3 per cent in the three months to March 2005, compared to a 0.6 per cent decline across non-food stores.

Food also showed the strongest annual growth of any retail sector.

Volume sales for the quarter are up 4.4 per cent on the same period last year, compared to a 3.2 per cent retail average and just 2.5 per cent annual growth for household goods.

Value sales for the food sector have increased five per cent on the same period last year,
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significantly higher than the 1.6 per cent annual growth reported for non-food stores.
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Omega-3 fatty acids in nursing years may help beat cancer in daughters

Date: Thu, 21 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids through pregnancy and breastfeeding may help protect daughters against breast cancer, new research has found.

Omega-3 fatty acids occur in fish - most especially cold-water varieties like tuna, salmon and mackerel - as well as in canola and flaxseed oils, soybeans and nuts.

The new findings highlight opportunities for producers of these foods to market their high omega-3 fatty acids content to pregnant women and new mothers, as well as avenues for functional food makers to harness their health benefits.

According to Medical News Today, US scientists at Louisiana State University fed diets rich in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids to two groups of mice bred with a genetic predisposition to develop breast cancer.

Fewer than 60 per cent of the mice on omega-3 acids formed mammary tumours by the age of eight months, compared to 100 per cent of a group of control mice and those on omega-6 acids after just six months.

Elaine Hardman, who led the study, presented the results to a conference of the American Association for Cancer Research earlier today, saying: "Diet matters, Mom. Inadvertently, we may be setting up our daughters to develop breast cancer 50 years from now."

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New crisp helps hit five-a-day target

Date: Thu, 21 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Scientists have developed a healthy alternative to crisps, which promises to help junk-loving consumers hit their five-a-day fruit and veg target.

Researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University mixed fruit and vegetable leftovers with flour and passed them through a high-pressure machine to make them crisp.

The development opens a new avenue for food manufacturers who want to target parents looking to tempt their children with healthier snack, and the university has confirmed that an un-named corporation has already approached the university about the product.

In an initial survey of 150 consumers aged 13 to 50, just six said they wouldn't buy them if they saw them in the shops, and lead researcher, Dr Paul Ainsworth, expects the snacks to hit supermarket shelves within the year.

"Children weren't getting enough fruit and vegetables," he told the Manchester Evening
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News. "This way, they probably lose some of the nutrients and it can't be as good as the real fruits, but if we are looking at what children will eat, then this is good."

The new snacks contain more nutrients than many other fruit- or vegetable-based processed products because they use their skins and cores as well as the main flesh.

"These parts contain important healthy chemicals and so much flavour and colour," Dr Ainsworth added.

"You can lose 50 per cent of these products as waste and it just gets put into landfill, which is expensive and highly wasteful."

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Tim Smith to be Arla's new chief executive

Date: Fri, 22 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Dairy producer, Arla Foods UK, has announced the appointment of Tim Smith as chief executive with effect from 1st June.

He will be joined at the board by Haane Sondergaard, executive director for marketing, and Martin Gilbert, executive director for operations, also with effect from 1st June.

The appointments follow current chief executive, Neil Davidson's, announcement that he will retire. He will leave the board on the same date as the new members are to join but will continue working with Arla as a consultant on specific projects.

"We are delighted with the appointment of Tim as Chief Executive," chairman Sir David Naish told Just Food.

"After Neil informed the board of his retirement, it was felt appropriate to conduct a full review of potential candidates.

"After extensive research and the use of outside consultants, the board unanimously decided because of Tim's experience, leadership qualities and industry knowledge that an internal appointment was the correct route to follow."

Sir David added: "We would like to thank Neil for his considerable contribution first to Northern Foods, then Express Dairies and more recently to Arla and the milk industry over the last 27 years where there have been significant changes and many challenges. We wish him well in his retirement."

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Nestle wins airline deal

Date: Fri, 22 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Nestle has won a deal that will see its products enjoyed all over Europe.

The company has signed a contract with Swiss Airline to provide the complimentary food and drink service on all the carrier's European flights.

Passengers will be offered a selection of free hot and cold snacks and beverages on Swiss Economy flights across its European network, as part of a "product enhancement initiative" by the airline.

Nestle, which is based in Yorkshire but has Swiss roots, is working together with Dutch in-flight foodservice company, Supplair, to develop the new products.

The deal takes effect from May 25th this year.

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FSA warn of Para dye contamination

Date: Fri, 22 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has issued an alert after some batches of the seasoning mix in Old El Paso dinner kits was found to have been contaminated with illegal dye, Para Red.

General Mills, the food company which manufactures Old El Paso products, has taken immediate action to withdraw the affected enchilada and burrito kits from sale.

Para Red is chemically very similar to the Sudan I dye that caused an alert in February and, according to the FSA, may be carcinogenic.

"The agency's independent scientific experts have advised that, although there is very limited data available, it would be prudent to assume that it could be a genotoxic carcinogen," an FSA spokesman said.

"At the levels found, any risk is likely to be very small, but it is sensible not to eat either of the two affected products."

The contamination is thought to be an isolated incident.

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Ohmic OJ has longer shelf life and better flavour

Date: Fri, 22 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Orange juice treated with ohmic heating has double the shelf life of pasteurized products and an improved juice flavour, scientists have found.

Researchers investigating the treatment at the Technicon-Israel Institute of Technology have found that the sensory shelf life of orange juice can be extended to more than 100 days when it is exposed to ohmic heating.

Scientists compared juice that had been heated at 90 degrees Celsius for 50 seconds to samples that had been treated in an ohmic heating system at 90, 120 and 150 degrees for 1.13, 0.85, and 0.68 seconds respectively.

All the samples showed the elimination of bacteria and the preservation of pectin and vitamin C, but the ohmic heated juice also retained more flavour immediately after the treatment and over time.

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When tested after a period of storage, the ohmic treated juice had significantly higher levels of five flavour compounds (decanal, octanol, limonene, pinene and myrcene) than pasteurized samples.

The research, published in the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry, presents major opportunities to food manufacturers looking to improve the quality of products marketed in the premium category.

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Pie fight for Northern Food

Date: Fri, 22 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

UK food manufacturer, Northern Foods, is fuelling the debate concerning the future of pork pie production.

The company has a 25 per cent share in the pork pie market, but this is under threat from European legislation, as the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) appeals for Melton Mowbray's "protected geographical status".

If the application goes through, pies marketed as the Melton Mowbray variety can only be manufactured in the 1,800-square-mile area of Leicestershire where the namesake town is situated.

Northern Foods has threatened to appeal in the High Court if Defra continues to pursue its case on behalf of the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie Association.

"What defines a Melton Mowbray pork pie is its quality, style, ingredients and presentation - not the location of its production," a spokesman from the company told the Yorkshire Post.

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Monkhill to re-launch Butterkist popcorn

Date: Fri, 22 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Cadbury division, Monkhill Confectionery, is to re-launch its classic Butterkist popcorn range.

Newly shaped packs due to hit shelves by the end of this month will feature images of popcorn and a heart-shaped update of its iconic "kiss" logo which the company claims will help "emphasise the UK's love of popcorn".

Monkhill has also gone back to the drawing back on the recipe for its leading toffee flavour, and claims to have found an "even creamier" formula.

The re-launch comes after a year-long study highlighted growing trends for home entertainment and company bosses sought to cash in on consumer desire to replicate the cinema experience at home.

Monkhill Confectionery is part of Cadbury Trebor Basset, which is in turn a subsidiary of DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Cadbury Schweppes.

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Asda rumoured to be considering Somerfield bid

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Asda is reported to be considering entering the bidding race for rival supermarket chain Somerfield.

The Wal-Mart-owned chain is thought to be either planning an outright bid for Somerfield, or intends to join forces with one of the two consortia currently bidding.

Already in the race are Icelandic retail group Baugur and Robert Tchenguiz on one side, and London and Regional Property - backed by Japanese investment bank Nomura - on the other.

Somerfield shareholders last rejected a takeover bid in 2003, when John Lovering offered a reported £594 million for the group.

Analysts have suggested that the bids currently being discussed could be worth as much as £1.1 billion.

Somerfield owns 664 stores nationwide, having acquired some of the smaller Safeway stores sold on by Morrison.

It also owns 560 Kwik Save stores.

Asda has refused to clarify the situation, and told the Yorkshire Post newspaper: "We don't comment on market speculation."

However, the firm has already been involved in takeover activity once before this year, reportedly having made a £500 million unsolicited bid for the Littlewoods chain in January.

For more information go to asda.co.uk

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Schools already buying healthier dinners

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

School meals were already getting healthier before Jamie Oliver - and subsequently the political parties - became interested in the subject, new figures show.

Market researcher ACNielsen has compared 2005's figures for catering wholesalers supplying schools with those for the previous year, and detected a marked shift towards more nutritious foods.

Sales of frozen chips dropped by £521,000, frozen turkey sales fell by £463,000 and chocolate sales were also down by £267,000.

Sales growth was recorded for drinking yoghurt, fruit and vegetables, still water, and frozen fish.

Eleni Nicholas, managing director of ACNielsen UK, explained, "following a year of constant media interest in health and obesity in children it seems that the sector has already begun to re-evaluate what is being served to our children."

The recent Channel 4 series, "Jamie's School Dinners", triggered an explosion of interest in school meals, culminating in the government pledging £280 million to improve food in schools, and the leading opposition parties also promising action on the subject.

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Diet has stunted brain development, research claims

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New scientific research suggests that our eating habits have hindered our latent mental abilities since the very dawn of humanity.

The study claims that higher levels of consciousness have been denied to humans by virtue of the "hormone environment" developed over thousands of years.

Plant biologist Tony Wright has argued that human mental evolution ground to a halt at roughly the time when our primitive ancestors left the forests as a result of climate change, and moved onto the savannah grasslands.

This resulted in a change of diet, from one predominantly comprised of fruit, to one dominated by seeds, tubers and meat.

Mr Wright's study claims that a diet of fruit generated chemical reactions in the brain, generating a more conducive hormone environment.

The shift to grassland foods halted this development, and lead to the rise of degenerative disorders.

"I realise that my theory might challenge a lot of current thinking, but following my initial experiment at MMU [Manchester Metropolitan University], I'm absolutely convinced that I'm right. I believe it could be possible for our brains to start to develop again and to operate on a higher level", Mr Wright declared.

" I think we could be on to something quite extraordinary, but I just need the funding to prove it. And if I can get that, the world will never think of the human mind in the same way again", he added.

For more information:

www.kaleidos.org.uk

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Dairy industry welcomes CDI launch

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Analysis

British dairy farmers are now able to access up-to-date and comprehensive performance and breeding records on cattle, through an innovative new national database that has been five years in the making.

The Centre for Dairy Information (CDI) contains records on more than 75 per cent of the UK's mild-recorded cows, and brings together information from the leading dairy cattle breed organisations and two of the three milk recording bodies.

It is hoped that the database will reduce costs and duplication in record-keeping, while improving the accuracy of data held on stock.

"A single information resource has long under-pinned the successful improvement efforts of Sweden, Holland, Denmark, Italy and other leading European dairy countries", Holstein UK chief executive, David Hewitt, explained at the official launch of CDI.

"As well as fulfilling the widely-acclaimed Wilson Vision for UK animal data management, CDI represents a major step towards meeting the Curry Commission's challenge of better co-operation and integration throughout our industry", he went on.

CDI is being run by an independent board as a not-for-profit venture, chaired by vice-chairman of the Defra Science Advisory Council, Professor Sir John Marsh.

An open database, CDI can be accessed by farmers with a secure password, enabling them to obtain accurate and complete herd data.

At the same time, aggregate information is available to industry bodies and a website for CDI is due to be launched over the summer.

"With the core functions of CDI up-and-running, individual producers and the industry at large now have a hugely valuable nationwide information and improvement resource at their disposal", Mr Hewitt added.

No further information.

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Strong first quarter performance reported at Nestle

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food giant Nestle has today announced its first quarter results for 2005, reporting figures that meet the company's own expectations.

The firm has reported organic first quarter sales growth of 4.6 per cent, and consolidated sales of 20.5 billion Swiss Francs.

"Our satisfactory first quarter growth is in line with our expectations. It allows me to confirm our full-year organic growth target of between five and six per cent," chair and CEO Peter Brabeck-Letmathe stated, announcing the results

"While the first quarter, as expected, still showed some upward pressure in raw material

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prices, we were able to compensate this through price increases. I therefore believe that we will be able to reach our target of an improved constant-currency EBITA margin for the full year."

Growth was weakest in chocolate and confectionery, where organic sales rose by 1.9 per cent. However, real internal growth in this sector was down by 0.3 per cent.

For more information go to nestle.com
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Nestle cereals go whole grain

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

From Monday, all of the breakfast cereals produced by Swiss food giant Nestle in the UK will be made with whole grains, the company has announced.

Recent studies show that as many as 90 per cent of British people are not eating the recommended levels of three portions of whole grain substances per day, while a further 25 per cent are not eating any at all.

Dr Clare Chapman, chief nutritionist for Nestle explained, "in the UK nearly half the population chooses cereal for breakfast, with 30 million bowls being consumed every day(3). Those people who choose Nestlé breakfast cereals will now benefit from the inclusion of whole grain in their diets."

"The addition of whole grain to Nestle breakfast cereals will provide consumers with 2.6 billion servings of whole grain every year", she went on.

In addition, Nestle has reduced the sugar and salt content of many of its products - without comprising flavour, the company insists.

Furthermore, from June, Nestle cereal packets will feature "calories per serving" information, along with data on guideline daily amounts of total fat, sugar and whole grain per serving.

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Chocolate starting to win over cheese and wine

Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Fashionable diners are increasingly eschewing conventional digestifs and desserts, opting instead for chocolate and beer.

Many pubs and restaurants are finding that their clientele are demanding less port and stilton, and rounding off their meals with chocolate puddings and beer.

"The roasted, smoky flavours of malted barley are the perfect match for chocolate. There's the sensuous, smooth, silky texture of beer which apes the lingering taste of chocolate. Beer tastes best with high-quality chocolate - they have complementary flavours," Mark Dorber of the White Horse gastropub in Parson's Green, West London, told the Scotsman online.

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"Chocolate is one of the better matches as regards food and beer. Beer cleans and refreshes the palate better than wine with chocolate. We will be offering some beer-and-chocolate combinations," Hamish Anderson, manager of the Tate Galleries' restaurants agreed.

So, with cheese and wine on the wane, simpler tastes seem to be prevailing.

Founder of the Chocolate Society, Alan Porter, is anticipating a revolution in postprandial preferences.

"Chocolate is a comfort food and beer is a comfort drink. We drink beer at home in this country and eat chocolate at home - so why not put the two together? Wine doesn't go with chocolate," he declared.

For more information go to: <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/uk.cfm?id=443512005>
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Body clock disorders may contribute to obesity

Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

New research from the USA suggests that disrupted body clocks could play a part in causing obesity.

The internal body clock regulates the need for sleep and food, scientists at Northwestern University and Evanston Northwestern Healthcare argue in their study.

A misaligned or malfunctioning clock can disrupt the body's operations, including metabolism, thereby increasing susceptibility to obesity and diabetes.

As such, the researchers propose that what we eat and how much we eat may be less important than previously thought, compared to when we eat.

"The body clock is clearly controlling the elaborate brain signalling system that regulates appetite", Joseph Bass, head of the division of endocrinology and metabolism at ENH, explained.

The study made use of a genetically-modified mouse, with an imperfect body clock gene, or "circadian dysregulation", and found evidence of metabolic disorders, including obesity and abnormalities in insulin secretion.

Lead author Fred W Turek argued: "This provides new genetic evidence that physiologic outputs of the biological clock, sleep and appetite are interconnected at the molecular and behavioural levels."

The research group's findings are due to be published in full in the April edition of the journal, "Science".

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Tesco opts out of traffic lights labelling system

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Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Tesco is to abandon the government-backed "traffic light" food labelling scheme.

The food industry has been reluctant to endorse the system, and the withdrawal of the UK's largest supermarket chain poses a serious question mark over its future.

Having piloted the Food Standards Agency's proposals in its stores, Tesco has announced that it will replace the "traffic lights" that aim to indicate to customers the levels of sugar, salt and fat in products, with its own system of "signposting".

Customers were confused by the meaning of the amber light, the company claimed.

Under the traffic light system, which the government had hoped to see in widespread use by 2006, a green signal means that a food can be eaten in large quantities; an amber signal means eat in moderation; and a red signal means eat sparingly.

Tesco's new system will detail the sugar, salt and fat content of products in grams, and compare these to the recommended daily amounts.

The opting-out of Tesco seriously undermines efforts to install a single, comprehensible system of food labelling, supported by the government, the FSA and the Food Commission.

£1 in every £8 spent by British consumers in the entire retail sector is spent at Tesco, recent figures show.

For more information go to: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4484195.stm>

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Fingerprinting technology joins battle for school meals

Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

State-of-the-art fingerprinting technology is to be employed in the battle against unhealthy eating in schools.

A Leicestershire school has purchased a machine to scan the prints of children in its canteen, so that a complete account of what each one has purchased can be sent to their parents.

Almost a thousand pupils will take part in the scheme at Humphrey Perkins High School in Barrow-on-Soar.

The £50,000 programme is aimed at helping parents to keep their children's diets healthy.

Catering manager Tom Edwards told the Mirror online: "We think this will encourage the kids to go for the healthier options on the menu if they know that mum and dad will find out exactly what they buy."

The school is collaborating with Cyclone Industries in piloting the fingerprinting programme.

Since the screening on Channel 4 of "Jamie's School Dinners" earlier this year, in which celebrity chef Jamie Oliver worked in a school canteen, school food has leapt to the top of the political agenda.

The government has pledged £280 million for improved training and facilities, while the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have both featured the issue in their election manifestos.

For more information go to:

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=15444216&method=full&siteid=94762&headline=fingerprint-scans-to-track-school-dinners-name_page.html

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New weigher offers improved packing performance

Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new range of multihead weighers, produced by Ishida Europe, aims to improve efficiency and consistency in the prepacked food sector.

The R Series of weighers achieves accuracy in weighing of 0.5 per cent above the best currently available equipment, and top speeds 20 per cent above the market leaders.

Moreover, Ishida claims that the R Series weighers reduce energy consumption by 50 per cent as against previous models.

Making use of the Windows XP operating system, Ishida's new equipment is easily integrated with other high-speed production line and packaging equipment.

Paul Griffin of Ishida Europe explained: "In today's competitive markets, maximising production throughput is more vital than ever but at the same time consumers and retailers can be very unforgiving if the finished product does not match up to their expectations.

"The new R Series gives manufacturers the reassurance of fast, reliable and accurate weighing to help ensure that pack quality and weighing consistency are never compromised."

The Birmingham-based firm puts the high performance of its new range down to an improved weighing algorithm, which can make calculations up to five times more quickly than before.

Ishida claims that the new 14-head single discharge weigher can achieve rates of 200 wpm.

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Superfos lid concept offers benefits for producers and consumers alike

Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

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Analysis

A new concept in lid technology on display at Interpack 2005 claims to offer benefits to both the packaging industry and consumers.

The SuperSeal, produced by Superfos, is being aimed at the ready meal sector, but its manufacturer argues that it also has applications for the dairy industry.

The ultra thin polypropylene lid and seal design will cut costs for manufacturers, by removing the need for aluminium seals, without the need for redesigning production lines.

Moreover, it also permits short sealing times at low temperatures, and Superfos claims that SuperSeal will withstand in-pack pasteurising, autoclaving and hot filling.

"All the consumer needs to do is just peel it off," Superfos communications director Annette Gottsche told www.foodproductiondaily.com.

"But importantly, you still have the feeling of sealing, and when you reclose the tub, you can here it click. And there is no need for aluminium foil, which is something I've never seen before."

Finally, SuperSeal is environmentally friendly.

"PP is environmentally friendly as it is 100 per cent recyclable", Mr Gottsche added.
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Coke buys out Danone

Date: Tue, 26 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Groupe Danone has reached an agreement with drinks giant Coca-Cola.

Under the new deal, Coca-Cola will buy out Danone from their joint venture business in the US, CCDA.

French firm Danone said the agreement regarding the distribution of retail bottled water products in North America would see Coca-Cola become the sole owner of CCDA's business and continue to sell Danone's brands.

The two companies' existing arrangement will be amended to boost US advertising and promotion spending for Danone's Evian mineral water brand by about 20 per cent.

Food group Danone recently appointed Antoine Giscard d'Estaing, 44, to replace Emmanuel Faber as finance director. Mr Faber will head up the company's fast-growing Asia Pacific zone.

Danone chairman Franck Riboud told shareholders at the firm's annual meeting that Coca-Cola had agreed to buy out Danone's 49 per cent share in CCDA. "Discussions have been concluded with Coca-Cola," he said.

Danone and Coca-Cola have operated their joint venture since 2002, but the partnership

has failed to ignite Danone sales. The business sold and marketed Dannon, Sparkletts and other water brands in the US.

Financial details of the deal have not been disclosed.

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Bradman Lake showcases three new machines

Date: Wed, 27 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Bradman Lake has showcased three new machines at a leading food packaging event.

Interpack 2005 attracts representatives and buyers from throughout the industry.

The Bradman Lake stand was dominated by a fully automated packaging line for confectionary bars.

According to Food Production Daily, all three of the new machines make use of the latest technology like ABB pick and place robots.

The company claims to have been the largest integrator of these types of robots in 2003.

Bradman Lake is hoping investment in new machinery will pay off as demand is set to continue to rise.

World demand for packaging machinery is set to rise by over four per cent a year over the next three years to over \$31 billion, Food Production Daily said, citing figures from analyst Freedonia

For more information go to: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/news-ng.asp?n=59651-bradman-lake-unveils>

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New risk management for food manufacturers

Date: Wed, 27 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new risk management service has been launched in a bid to help food manufacturers in the wake of Sudan 1.

Sudan 1 is a banned food dye that was detected in some food products earlier this year.

The scare prompted a major recall of a range of different processed food products from shops and supermarkets.

Now the food industry research body, the Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association, and crisis communications specialists, Razor PR, have launched a new risk service for the food industry.

"This is the only service of its kind available to the food industry," Razor PR director Debbie Parriss told just-food.com.

"By combining operational, technical and reputation risk analysis in this way, companies can tap into impartial best practice advice and make sure that their thinking and contingency plans are fully integrated and complimentary."

For more information go to: http://www.just-food.com/news_detail.asp?art=60561
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Brewer Jennings set for sale

Date: Wed, 27 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Brewer Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries (W&DB) has announced plans to buy its smaller rival, Jennings.

The deal is set to be worth £45.8 million, valuing the company at 430p per share.

Jennings brews Cocker-Hoop, Cumberland Ale and Cross Buttock and operates more than 100 pubs, mainly in the north of England.

News of the sale has prompted concern from real ale enthusiasts and the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) has reportedly called on shareholders to reject the bid.

However, Jennings maintained that the deal would help protect the 177-year-old brewer.

"We believe that W&DB will provide a good home for Jennings," Jennings' chairman John Rudgard said.

For more information go to: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4488369.stm>
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Pilgrim's Pride targets health conscious consumers

Date: Wed, 27 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Pilgrim's Pride, the US-based provider of poultry products, is seeking to cash in on the growing demand for healthier food.

More and more Americans are becoming concerned about their health and paying more attention to what they eat.

In response, Pilgrim's Pride has launched a new range of products called EatWellStayHealthy to offer consumers a clear healthy choice at the supermarket.

"As a country, we are exercising more and becoming more aware of what we eat," said Bo Pilgrim, chairman and founder of Pilgrim's Pride.

"There is, in fact, a growing body of medical evidence in support of healthy eating's impact on wellness. In short, consumers want healthy foods but are unwilling to trade off convenience or taste to get it."

Up to 65 per cent of American adults and 15 per cent of children between six and 19 are overweight.

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For more information go to: http://www.just-food.com/news_detail.asp?art=60564
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Processed meat up to 30 per cent water

Date: Wed, 27 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Some processed meat products on supermarket shelves are up to 30 per cent water, a report has warned.

The Food Commission found that some types of ham, hot dogs, chicken and gammon are pumped up with water to increase their weight and volume.

The report warned that consumers could be getting a raw deal, as the amount of water in a product is often hidden away in the small print.

"Many shoppers are unaware that processed meats can contain anything from ten per cent to 30 per cent added water," said Ian Tokelove, spokesperson for the Food Commission.

"Although companies are required to declare added water, they don't have to say how much. The information given on the labels is inconsistent, sometimes hard to find, and often very confusing."

In response, the Food and Drink Federation (FDF), which represents food manufacturers, said water was often a key element of the manufacturing process.

For more information go to: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4489425.stm
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Healthy eating message confusing consumers

Date: Wed, 27 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

British consumers are tired of being told what to eat by "do-gooders", a new survey has revealed.

MINTEL found that almost half of respondents (48 per cent) were suffering from health education overload.

The survey also revealed that Brits are getting confused about what is healthy and what it isn't.

Around seven in ten (69 per cent) adults said it was "hard to know, which foods are healthy as advice from experts keeps changing", while almost three in five (58 per cent) say that "it is difficult to work out if foods are healthy from the labels or information on the pack".

"There is clearly a large number of adults who are suffering from chronic information overload when it comes to healthy eating issues," said James McCoy, senior market analyst at MINTEL

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"Today, there is a wealth of information, which bombards the public in matters of health and diet and given the complexity of many of these issues, it is hardly surprising that so many consumers feel confused."

Campaign groups and the government have been keen to promote healthier eating habits amid growing concern about obesity.

For more information go to:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/04/27/nfood127.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/04/27/ixhome.html>

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Welsh food company seeks share of global coffee market

Date: Thu, 28 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The Welsh food manufacturer Vin Sullivan is seeking to break into the global coffee market.

The Blaenavon firm is hoping a uniquely Welsh brand will be a hit with consumers in an already crowded sector.

John Sullivan, managing director of Vin Sullivan foods, believes Caf Cymru will enable his company to secure a share of the coffee market, which is worth an estimated £30 billion a year.

"Caf Cymru specialises in fresh, roasted coffee using 100 per cent Arabica beans that have been roasted less than 48 hours before the customer receives them," Mr Sullivan told the Western Mail.

"To guarantee freshness we hold no stock and only place our orders when orders are confirmed by our clients."

In 1990, Vin Sullivan became the first food producer to sell crocodile meat in the UK.

For more information go to:

http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0300business/0100news/tm_objectid=15452545%26method=full%26siteid=50082%26headline=wholesaler%2dpercolates%2da%2dwelsh%2d%2dbrand%2dof%2dcoffee-name_page.html

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New diet products from Kraft

Date: Thu, 28 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Food giant Kraft has announced the launch of a new range of healthy eating options.

The US-based company has strengthened its ties with Dr Arthur Agatstan's South Beach Diet with new breakfast, lunch and dinner offerings.

The move is intended to offer customers clearer choice when looking for healthy

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options.

"The new research reinforces what I've been witnessing in my practice for years - my patients are able to enjoy a variety of foods without counting calories or feeling deprived," said Dr Agatston.

"My goal is to help change the way America eats, and these great-tasting, nutrient-rich products from Kraft are convenient, making it easier for people to follow the South Beach Diet - whether for a healthy lifestyle or weight loss."

Obesity is a major issue in the US effecting more than half of the adult population.

As a result there is growing interest in healthy eating options and the latest diets.

For more information go to:

<http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release_html_b1?release_id=85231>

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Research 'predicts' quality of meat

Date: Thu, 28 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Research in Spain has suggested two new means of testing the quality of meat.

A study headed by Gregorio Indurain Banez, who presented his PhD to the Public University of Navarra recently, suggested measuring the thickness of the dorsal fat mass and the veining in cuts of veal using ultrasonic technology.

These two tests, the research suggests, could enable assertions to be made about the fat content and flavour of the meat.

Such a move could offer better guidance for consumers, who are becoming increasingly interested in what they are eating.

The study follows a report in the UK this week warning that some processed meat contains up to 30 per cent water.

For more information go to: <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/news-ng.asp?n=59645-meat-quality-study>

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Starbucks brews bigger profits

Date: Thu, 28 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Starbucks, the Seattle-based coffee chain, yesterday announced a 27 per cent rise in quarterly profits following strong sales of new lines.

Profits in the company rose to £52.8 million from last year's figure of £41.5 million.

The company bettered its annual forecast and shares, which have languished this year over investor concerns of slowing growth, were lifted by nearly three per cent to \$48.

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Sales of own-brand chocolate drink Chantico, and a new range of caramel drinks helped boost revenue 22 per cent to over three quarters of a billion pounds.

Starbucks plans to open 1,500 worldwide outlets this fiscal year, including expansion of its 300 shops in China.

For more information go to:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4491963.stm>

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Real ale campaigners seek to block Jennings sale

Date: Thu, 28 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Real ale campaigners are seeking to block the planned sale of Jennings brewery to larger rival Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries (W&DB).

W&DB has offered to pay £45.8 million for Jennings, valuing the company at 430p per share.

Despite assurances from W&DB and the backing of the Jennings board, the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) is concerned that the deal could have ramifications for famous ales like Cocker-Hoop, Cumberland Ale and Cross Buttock.

"Despite W&DB's assurances to keep the Cockermouth brewery open, I think the only way to guarantee the future of the brewery is to defend its independence as a vertically integrated company," said Camra chief executive, Mike Benner.

Camra has called on shareholders to block the deal.

Yesterday, Jennings chairman John Rudgard said the sale would help maintain the brewery's future, describing W&DB as "a good home" for the 177-year-old company.

For more information go to: <[http://www.politics.co.uk/press-releases/camra-seeks-block-takeover-jennings-brewery-\\$8371387.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/press-releases/camra-seeks-block-takeover-jennings-brewery-$8371387.htm)>

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US winemaker ponders Allied bid

Date: Thu, 28 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Constellation Brands, the US winemaker, is considering a bid for Allied Domecq, adding a new twist to the drinks company's sale discussions.

UK-listed Allied accepted a takeover offer of £7.4 billion last week from France's Pernod Ricard and Fortune Brands of the US.

However, Constellation said yesterday that it might mount a rival bid with US spirits firm Brown Forman and buyout specialists Lion Capital and Blackstone.

Responding to the news, Allied stated: "It is too early to ascertain whether this

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preliminary approach will lead to an offer for Allied Domecq."

Reports suggest that Allied could face penalty charges of around £37 million, should Constellation's bid prove more attractive than Pernod's.

Pernod is confident in its bid. However, competition may mean it has to raise the amount offered to ensure it keeps hold of Allied.

For more information go to: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4491327.stm>
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Newcastle Brown leads the way for S&N

Date: Fri, 29 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Newcastle Brown Ale is spearheading Scottish and Newcastle's thrust into the US premium beer market, the Edinburgh-based brewer has announced.

Although the company's performance in 2005 to date has been in line with expectations, due to weak consumer demand for beer across Europe, the Tyneside ale is reported to be "gaining ground" in the USA.

S&N - which owns the Foster's, Strongbow, Kronenbourg and John Smiths brands - also announced strong results for its East European joint venture, Baltic Beverages Holding (BBH), in which it is a partner with Carlsberg.

BBH sales by volume have risen by 18 per cent since the start of the year, particularly in Russia and the Ukraine.

Nevertheless, the group's famous Tyne Brewery in Newcastle is set to close next month, saving S&N £60 million.

For more information go to:

http://icnewcastle.icnetwork.co.uk/0500business/0100local/tm_objectid=15457941%26method=full%26siteid=50081%26headline=us%2dsales%2dhelp%2dto%2dcheer%2ds%2damp%2dn%2dresults-name_page.html

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Coca Cola signs up Rockstar

Date: Fri, 29 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Drinks giant Coca Cola has concluded a distribution agreement with energy drink manufacturer, Rockstar Incorporated.

The deal, announced on Thursday, covers the bulk of the USA and Canada, and will see Rockstar Energy Drink distributed by Coca Cola from the end of May.

Rockstar hit the shelves in 2001, as the first 16-ounce energy drink on the market.

Since then, it has experienced massive growth, year-on-year.

By bringing Rockstar into its portfolio of beverages, which includes Coca Cola, Diet Coke, Fanta and Sprite, Coca Cola has achieved a significant foothold in the energy drinks sector.

"We are serious about the energy drink category, and Rockstar and Full Throttle propel us into a strong number two position," said Terry Marks, president of the North American Business Unit at Coca-Cola Enterprises.

For more information go to: <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=109&STORY=/www/story/04-28-2005/0003491181&EDATE=>
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Soy soars thanks to Tetra Pak

Date: Fri, 29 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

The aseptic technology perfected by Swedish packaging giant Tetra Pak has helped the soy food and beverages industry to become the \$3.65 billion business it is today in the USA.

What was once seen as the preserve of "health food nuts" and vegans is today found in many ordinary people's shopping baskets, thanks to the wider range of channels and outlets Tetra Pak's processes and packaging have opened up to soy, the company has contended.

"Tetra Pak's aseptic process and packaging allow manufacturers to create and distribute soy-based beverages that are flavourful, healthy, shelf-stable and address consumer demands for a greater variety of products," claims Jeff Kellar, vice president of strategic business development at Tetra Pak Inc, celebrating Soy Month.

Key to the acceptance of soy milk into the mainstream, Tetra Pak contends, was its distribution in its familiar gable-topped "milk cartons", which permit it to be sold via refrigerator sections and conventional grocery aisles.

"The aseptic processing and packaging available from Tetra Pak keeps the flavour as the brand owner intended it, while protecting the natural nutrients, balance and integrity of soy products, without the need for preservatives," Mr Kellar added.

"Buying British organic food supports British farmers, guarantees the highest standards of animal welfare and helps British wildlife thrive. It also cuts down unnecessary food miles, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emission," commented Peter Melchett, policy director at the Soil Association.

The association says it will repeat the survey later this year, to ensure individual supermarkets are continuing to promote British produce.

For more information go to: <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=109&STORY=/www/story/04-27-2005/0003489626&EDATE=>
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Brits take their food outside

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Date: Fri, 29 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

Britons are expected to spend a colossal £8.8 billion on barbecues this year, according to new research published today.

Once restricted to the brief and fleeting summer, barbecues are now taking place all year round, the study by supermarket chain Somerfield shows.

Almost 25 per cent of respondents to the survey admitted to having braved the elements this year already, while 61 per cent confirmed that they barbecue outside the summer months.

And with 182 million al fresco grills due to take place this year, almost a third of the 1,000 people questioned stated that they will have more than ten barbecues during 2005 - and more than £35 will be spent on a third of all of those.

Somerfield spokesperson, Pete Williams, commented: "The British are becoming far more Antipodean in their barbecuing style and are beginning to regard al fresco eating as an all-year-round experience.

"The barbecue provides a unique taste and with the increased availability of exotic ingredients and gourmet recipes, the outdoor grill is becoming more popular than ever."

But other British habits die hard too.

Around 28 per cent of respondents admitted that they would complain about a neighbour's noisy barbecue.

For more information go to:

http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=DB2812096V&news_headline=brits_going_bbq_bonkers_-_survey

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Chocolatier claims to produce healthy chocolate

Date: Fri, 29 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A Swiss-based chocolatier is claiming to have discovered the Holy Grail of the industry: chocolate that is good for you.

The key to this seemingly miraculous breakthrough is natural substances that occur in cocoa beans, but which are typically destroyed in the chocolate manufacturing process.

Those substances are polyphenols, and chocolate manufacturer Barry Callebaut believes these are what lie behind the "French paradox" - the fact that, despite drinking a lot of wine and eating a lot of fatty cheese, Mediterranean France has higher rates of longevity than more apparently healthy regions.

Polyphenols are also present in red wine, but in lower concentrations than in cocoa beans.

Barry Callebaut claims to have developed a process that does not destroy the polyphenol content of chocolate, and plans to launch a "good for you" chocolate under its Acticoa brand.

A UK launch is not yet scheduled, but the products have been test-marketed in Belgium and will shortly go on sale in Germany. Meanwhile, more tests are planned to perfect the process.

Milk chocolate lovers may be disappointed, however.

"There is a debate about milk chocolate as it is not certain that the polyphenols are still active in combination with milk proteins," head of research Dirk Poleman told Reuters news agency.

For more information go to:

http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2005-04-29T065950Z_01_SIN925069_RTRUKOC_0_FOOD-CHOCOLATE.xml

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Glass technology offers boon to drinks industry

Date: Fri, 29 Apr 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

Analysis

A new venture in glass coating technology has been set up by one of Wales' most well-established companies.

The innovations developed by Fiddes Glass Coatings are already being used by some of the world's best-known drinks manufacturers, such as Bacardi and Smirnoff.

Unlike other methods of introducing decorative finishes to glass, the processes developed by Fiddes are water-based, and therefore do not have the same environmental side-effects.

The company also claims to have developed finishes that will dramatically improve the durability of glassware, reducing the risk of bottles cracking.

Fiddes Glass Coatings is a venture set up by Fiddes Wood Finishes, which has pioneered a similar chemistry-led approach to furniture coatings.

For more information go to:

http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0300business/0100news/tm_objectid=15457168&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=drinks-companies-raise-glasses-to-fiddes-coating-name_page.html

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