

## News stories

### January 1<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> 2005

#### **Vitamin C 'may protect against allergies'**

**Date:** Tue, 04 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Women who eat a lot of foods rich in vitamin C while breastfeeding may be protecting their children from developing allergies, according to a new study.

Scientists writing in the latest edition of the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition claim that a higher concentration of vitamin C in breast milk is associated with a reduced risk of atopy. The study of 34 infants found that Vitamin E had no relationship with the condition, in contrast with previous research.

The researchers examined mothers with atopic disease at the end of gestation and assessed their sensitisation to allergy and food records and breast milk samples were collected when the infants were one month old.

The research also showed that only dietary intake of vitamin C, but not vitamin supplements, was shown to influence the concentration of vitamin C in breast milk, Nutra Ingredients reports.

Higher levels of vitamin C, as well as the antioxidant beta-carotene and trace mineral selenium, were associated with a lower risk of asthma in a large study by Cornell researchers and a report from a team at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore showed that children with asthma tended to have lower blood levels of vitamin C than children with healthy lungs.

The researchers warned that low antioxidant levels may be markers for socio-economic variables such as race, poverty, tobacco exposure, or general nutritional status.

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

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#### **UK chocolate consumption slows**

**Date:** Tue, 04 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Chocolate consumption in the UK is expected to continue to slow down in response to growing health and diet concerns, a new report claims.

Research conducted by market analyst Datamonitor claims that the market for sugar free and low carbohydrate products is growing as Britons become more health conscious.

Brits eat an average of around 10 kilos of chocolate a year, the equivalent of 154 chocolate bars annually, and are Europe's number one chocolate consumer, followed by Germany and France with 8.3 and 5.8 kilos respectively.

Datamonitor predicts that the pace of growth in the chocolate market will slow down

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over the decade, after figures for 2004 suggested that overall chocolate volume sales rose by less than one per cent to 605 million kg.

UK shoppers spend £6.30 per kilogram on chocolate, compared with £7.50 per kilogram in Italy, but just £2.80 per kilogram in Spain.

The analyst forecasts that the major players on the UK market - Cadbury Schweppes, Masterfoods and Nestle - will launch new low carbohydrate and sugar free products in order to achieve price premiums and attract adult consumers, according to Food Navigator. The UK chocolate market is expected to be worth £3.6 billion this year.

Datamonitor reports: "This trend has already been seen in the US. As the childhood obesity controversy rolls on, food and beverage manufacturers are increasingly aiming new product developments at adults. Indeed, Nestle has recently launched a low carbohydrate version of the Kit Kat in the UK."

Further information: [www.datamonitor.com](http://www.datamonitor.com)  
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### **New food packaging rules enforced**

**Date:** Tue, 04 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New rules governing materials used by food packaging firms came are now in force.

Repealing the former framework Directive 89.109/EEC, the new regulation ((EC) No 1935/2004) lays down stricter demands on the purity of materials which come into direct or indirect contact with food in the packaging chain.

The rules also impose tighter requirements relating to the traceability of food-contact materials and outline definitions for active and intelligent packaging materials, Food Production Daily reports.

The majority of international packaging firms will not be strongly affected by the changes, as their products and systems already meet the requirements of the new regulation.

However, smaller companies that have supplied materials for secondary packaging and were not previously covered by the rules could now be forced to implement extensive measures in order to continue supplying materials for food packaging.

The new regulation also define active and intelligent packaging materials as well as certain requirements for the use of these materials in the EU and calls for them to be the subject of a specific directive governing their use, including labelling requirements.

A new provision for a specific directive on active and intelligent packaging materials has already been proposed by the European Commission.

(No further information)

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### **Organic milk preferred at UK hospital**

**Date:** Tue, 04 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A hospital in the North East has started to serve organic milk to patients, in a move that could encourage other hospitals to follow suit.

The Darlington Memorial Hospital is thought to be one of the first in the country to start serving the milk, following a deal with a local organic dairy.

The move follows positive feedback from patients who were given the dairy product and studies that suggest it has better health benefits.

Ron McKenzie, head of catering at the hospital: "We have a duty to our patients based on improving health and well-being and, as organic milk seems to have enhanced nutritional benefits, the small increase in cost is more than justified."

However, the hospital has saved on transport costs, since the company it is using for supplies is based only three miles away.

Mr McKenzie claims that the milk probably has the most health benefits of all organic produce on the market.

Acorn Dairy will supply a total of 5,000 pints a week to the hospital.

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### **Sheep quality to be improved**

**Date:** Tue, 04 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Sheep farmers have been urged to improve the way they present their sheep for slaughter, in order to improve quality and food safety.

Livestock auctioneers, the abattoir sector and the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) are all working together to encourage the farmers to belly clip their sheep if they are to go to slaughter.

Abattoirs claim that unclipped sheep carrying dirt and debris may cause a risk to the food chain and break the Clean Livestock Policy (CLP), according to the Journal.

Auctioneer Robert Whitelock, chairman of the LAA, said: "The onus is on us as an industry to take a responsible attitude to any issues surrounding the Clean Livestock Policy. The more preventative measures we can take the better for the industry as a whole.

"We appreciate some farms don't have the manpower or equipment to carry out the belly clipping, but some markets will be offering the service on site at a charge."

Mr Whitelock claimed that from now "abattoirs will not buy dirty sheep" and farmers need to make sure sheep are clean, else they may alienate some buyers and miss out on sales.

The MHS has official veterinary surgeons (OVSS) to apply the CLP, which covers five main categories of cleanliness and allows only categories one and two to go through to slaughter.

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### **Report predicts future for food retailers**

**Date:** Tue, 04 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new grocery report by Verdict has shown that Tesco is still experiencing the main share of growth in the food retailing sector.

The report suggests that Tesco is in line to hold over half the total market growth of £5.7 billion during 2004.

In addition, the report reveals that Tesco experienced a sales increase of £3.1 billion in the UK during the year.

According to Verdict, 2005 is now a "crunch year" for the UK's top four grocers including Morrison, Iceland, Sainsbury's and the Co-op.

However, despite strong competition and high pressure for food retailers, the report states that results indicate over nine million shoppers will shop at a new store in 2005.

To help to gain a bigger share of the retail sector, firms will need to make a number of changes, and Verdict predicts the grocery sector will see a revamp in 2005, with Somerfield and Morrison responsible for the majority.

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### **Get Fit Foundation walking drive**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new drive to get Britons active has been launched by the Get Fit Foundation (GEFF), the National Governing Body for physical activity.

The scheme aims to encourage people to do regular and sustainable exercise at least five times a week, including walking. Launching the campaign, experts claimed that walking could extend lives by 15 years and highlighted the importance of tackling rising obesity levels in the UK, BBC News online reports.

The government wants to get at least 70 per cent of Britons exercising to reduce growing levels of obesity. If current trends continue, at least a third of adults will be obese by 2020 and an estimated 30,000 people in the UK die each year from obesity-related problems.

GEFF is working with government, the private sector and charitable organisations over the next 15-years to combat inactivity and insists that even small changes, such as walking to work or the shops, can make a difference. The foundation hopes to encourage people to start walking through online support and texting.

Launching the initiative, record marathon runner Rory Coleman, said: "Eleven years ago

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I was overweight - I was 15 stone - and I smoked and drank too much.

"I decided then that I had to make a change. I might have been dead now if I hadn't."

Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Fiona Adshead, added: "Walking is a great way to get more exercise as part of daily life and it's easy for people to make a small change to their daily routine by walking that little bit further every day."

(no further information)

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### **Women 'more prone to eating disorders'**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Women's brains process information about body image differently and are more prone to eating disorders as a result, a new study claims.

Japanese researchers at Hiroshima University found that women are more likely than men to be hurt and insulted by unpleasant comments about their weight, as they use a different part of the brain to process the information.

Women use an area which warns of threats by recognising signs of fear to process such comments, receiving negative words associated with body image as "fearful information", according to the study in the British Journal of Psychiatry.

Scientists took 13 men and 13 women and exposed them to a series of tests in which they were asked to read two sets of words.

Each person was asked to score the words in terms of how pleasant and unpleasant they were and, at the same time, researchers scanned their brains using magnetic resonance imaging, to measure which parts of the brain became active during the experiment.

The results showed that the unpleasant words stimulated a part of the brain called the amygdale in women, which is thought to become active when a person feels under threat. The researchers concluded: "Our results suggest men processed the words more cognitively than emotionally. On the other hand, women processed them more emotionally."

Eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, are 10 times more common in women than men. It is estimated that at least 165,000 people in the UK, 90 per cent of them women, are affected and one in ten will die as a result of their condition.

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

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### **McDonald's looks into more humane end for chickens**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Fast-food giant McDonald's is studying the possibility of implementing a more humane way of killing chickens.

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"Controlled atmosphere killing" sees the birds gradually deprived of oxygen achieved through the use of an inert gas, such as nitrogen or argon.

Most McDonald's chickens are currently hung upside-down by their legs on a moving conveyor line and pulled through an electrified vat of water to stun them.

Animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is a McDonald's shareholder and claims that many chickens are still fully conscious when their throats are slit and they are immersed in scalding-hot water for feather removal.

PETA insists that "controlled atmosphere killing" is the least cruel method of slaughter available and some of McDonald's European suppliers already use the method. PETA is also pressing fast food chains KFC, Wendy's and Applebee's to switch to the newer slaughter method.

Bob Langert, McDonald's senior director of social responsibility, said that the company's animal welfare council had suggested that a study of the newer method be carried out. Results of the study will be published before the end of June 2005.

McDonald's is the world's largest buyer of beef and pork and the second largest global buyer of chicken.

Further information: [www.peta.org](http://www.peta.org)  
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### **KFC owner offers customers exercise with fast food**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Yum Brands, one of the largest fast-food chains in the United States, has announced that it is offering customers free gym membership in January.

Diners at the company's Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) outlets in America will be encouraged to succeed with their New Year's resolutions with a free four week health club membership of Bally Total Fitness, valued at \$50.

Fast food companies are facing increasing pressure to promote healthier eating in the face of soaring obesity figures and many have responded by offering more options for health conscious customers.

Yum Brands customers are required to produce just one proof-of-purchase receipt at one of 400 health clubs run by Bally Total Fitness until the end of the month, in order to claim the free membership offer. Yum operates 18,000 restaurants in the United States.

The fast food firm has also announced plans to start placing "keep it balanced" posters in restaurants, along with nutritional brochures, and customers will also be able to download an "activity calculator" on the internet to find out how much work they need to do in the gym in order to burn off the fat in their chosen meal.

Marilyn Schorin, chief nutritionist at Yum!, said: "What better way to help people to

achieve their new year's fitness resolution than to offer a free, four-week membership at the nation's leading fitness company?"

An estimated 64 per cent of US adults are either overweight or obese and the cost of giving medical treatment to overweight patients reached \$75 billion (£40 billion) in 2003.

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

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### **Premier reveals positive results**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Premier Foods has announced that its 2004 earnings before interest, tax and amortisation of intangible assets (EBITA) is set to be in line with market expectations.

The firm has released a trading update today, covering the year ending December 31st and claims that grocery sales are set to rise by eight per cent for the year.

Robert Schofield, Premier Foods CEO commented: "2004 was a tremendously exciting year for Premier with the IPO, and a significant acquisition.

"We expect to produce a sound set of results and we enter 2005 with our business, brands and trading plans in good shape to deliver ongoing growth."

Operating profits and margins are also set to be within the range of market expectations and spreads, desserts and potato sales are set to beat expectations.

Additional results show that convenience foods, pickles and sauces are set to be slightly behind 2003 sales, but figures are set to improve with production now restarted following a fire at the Bury St Edmunds factory.

Premier offers branded products including Ambrosia, Branston pickles, Hartley's preserves and Waistline salad dressings.

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### **Consumers call for more visible chefs**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new survey has revealed that head chefs are increasingly needed to be the face of their restaurant.

The Chess Partnership survey of 45 chefs also indicates that chefs often need to be financially confident partners in their business.

As consumers become more sophisticated, they are looking for more open communication between themselves, service teams and the kitchen.

In fact, according to the study, whether a chef is visible to diners could affect whether people decide to eat at a restaurant or not.

According to Caterer Online, the report also calls for better pay in the industry, with huge differences evident in the use of traditional culinary titles and salary.

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### **Authorities concerned about tsunami seafood**

**Date:** Wed, 05 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK restaurant owners, retailers and consumers have been warned not to buy seafood from the areas hit by the tsunami last week.

Health authorities in Hong Kong have issued the warning, fearful that the seafood may be contaminated with pollutants stirred by the huge waves.

Experts are worried that agricultural contaminants could have washed into the seas or heavy metals may have been ripped from the seabed.

The tsunami took place on December 26th and has caused huge devastation, with emergency aid continuously being collected and sent out.

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### **New milk aids growth**

**Date:** Thu, 06 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scientists in Argentina have produced a genetically modified Jersey cow that produces a human growth hormone used to treat thousands of children with growth problems.

The cow, called Pampa Mansa, could help reduce the high cost of human growth hormones, which currently costs around \$30,000 a year to produce, a report in New Scientist magazine claims.

Human growth hormone once had to be extracted from human cadavers but is now made in genetically modified bacteria; a safer but more expensive process.

The cow produces so much of the hormone in her milk that just 15 such cows could meet the current world demand, according to the research team led by Daniel Salamone at the University of Buenos Aires.

The researchers added the human gene to cow cells growing in a dish and Pampa Mansa was created by cloning one of the modified cells. At the age of one, the cow was already producing five grams of the hormone per litre of milk, 10 per cent of the milk's protein content.

The team are due to present their findings to a meeting of the International Embryo Transfer Society in Copenhagen next week.

(no further information)

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### **Carrefour sees future in alternative forms of packaging**

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**Date:** Thu, 06 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

French retail chain Carrefour France has unveiled a new range of alternative packaging formats to the tin can for processed vegetables.

The range has been developed using an innovative new multi-layer polypropylene pack from RPC Bebo UK Corby, which takes up one third of the space required for metal cans of equivalent capacity.

Manufactured by Gelagri Bretagne, the new Conserves Pratiques range of vegetables is said to have an ambient shelf life of up to two years with the added consumer benefit of individually separable compartments that can be easily and quickly reheated in the microwave, Food Navigator reports.

Each transparent pack consists of two or four individual portions in lightweight sealed trays and is designed for ease of filling. The packaging maintains its shape during sterilisation and is sealed with a peelable transparent multilayer film from LPF Flexible Packaging. The rectangular form makes the pack easy to store.

The Conserves Pratiques range includes beans, peas and mixed vegetables and is being launched across France in Carrefour hypermarkets, Champion supermarkets and local stores under the 'Grand Jury' label. The metal packaging sector has seen a move away from more traditional methods of packaging towards new innovative plastics in recent years.

"Conserves Pratiques represents a real breakthrough in providing a vegetable concept that meets the convenience requirement of today's consumer," said Luc Fevrier, Carrefour preserved products category manager.

Further information: [www.carrefour.fr](http://www.carrefour.fr)  
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**Waste disposal system targets increased recycling**

**Date:** Thu, 06 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

A new automatic waste transportation and sorting system has been developed in Finland.

The XMIT system operates economically and ecologically on virtually any kind of premises transporting pre-separated waste in biodegradable bags through a sealed pipeline and delivering each type of material to an appropriate container for recycling, disposal or use as an energy source.

The system, developed by Protekno Puzair has been in use at a shopping-residential complex in Espoo, Finland, since 2001 and another is now being installed in downtown Helsinki, serving a shopping mall, department store, three blocks of flats and three office buildings.

"The main innovation of the XMIT system is that different waste fractions can be transported in the same pipe, making separation easy," said Pertti Varto, managing director of developer [www.puzer.com](http://www.puzer.com) Protekno Puzair. "Investment costs are 20 to 40

per cent lower and maintenance less than half of that of competing systems."

In the UK, supermarket Tesco recently launched the country's first fully automated recycling machine, developed by Norwegian company Tomra. The machine automatically sorts the plastic, metal and glass, using the latest technology to process up to 80 items per minute.

Further information: [www.puzer.com](http://www.puzer.com)  
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### **Red ketchup best for health benefits**

**Date:** Thu, 06 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new study in the US has claimed that certain varieties of ketchup could actually help to ward off cancer.

The Agricultural Research Service in California looked into whether different colourings of tomato ketchup could be indicative of varying lycopene content.

According to New Scientist, organic varieties contain three times as much of the chemical as non-organic brands, which is known to help fight cancer.

Lycopene can help protect against pancreatic, breast, intestinal and prostate cancer and evidence has also been produced to show that it can help reduce the chance of a heart attack.

Results showed that the organic ketchups had the highest levels of lycopene and for the best health benefits consumers should opt for the darkest red ketchup.

Lycopene levels and antioxidant activity were tested in 13 ketchup brands, ranging from organic to store brands and fast food chain varieties.

In the US a number of colours are available, including purple and green varieties and green varieties of ketchup have also been trialled in the UK in the past.

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### **Organic potato sector becomes more innovative**

**Date:** Thu, 06 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Consumers are increasingly being offered a greater amount of organic potatoes and at affordable prices, according to a new study.

According to the European study by the Nafferton Ecological Farming Group, at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, several varieties of potato are now available on supermarket shelves, offering choices for a number of tastes and traditional dishes.

Designer composts were created as part of the project and were shown to increase yields by up to 40 per cent and revealed that there are now up to ten varieties of organic potatoes that can be grown.

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Professor Carlo Leifert, leader of the Nafferton Ecological Farming Group at Newcastle University, commented: "From a European perspective, you can't really find a 'one size fits all' solution to the organic problem.

"Essentially, the Blight-MOP project has ensured that organic potatoes of the future will be more widely available and of an equal, if not better, quality and closer to the price of potatoes grown using chemicals."

Results of the Blight-MOP project will be presented today in a conference held by the Soil Association.

New varieties include Lady and Eve Balfours and a "purple" potato from Hungary.

The farming group hopes to encourage more consumers to buy organic items and more farmers to grow them, since only four per cent buy organic vegetables at present.

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### **FSA encouraged to offer better advice**

**Date:** Thu, 06 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New research from Which? has revealed that consumers are in confusion over food scares and food safety advice.

According to the consumer watchdog, most people get their information on food scares from newspapers and the television, but many are being left with a mixed message.

Although Which? recommends that consumers go to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for official, trustworthy information, it has called on the agency to do more to publicise the information it has and respond more to 'obscure' scares with little evidence.

In fact, research indicated that only five per cent of people questioned actually turn to the FSA for advice.

Results showed that although people don't want to feel they are being told what to do, they do want information to help them make informed choices about the food they eat.

In addition, they want to be made aware of what the government is doing to control the various risks occurring.

The survey also looked at a number food scares such as dioxins in oily fish, BSE and acrylamide in baked and fried foods, and studied how they were handled by both the media and the FSA.

Figures showed one of the most trusted methods used by consumers to gain food information was the Internet and less than one in ten look in newspapers for trustworthy advice.

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### **Hi-tech solution to help boost corn crops**

**Date:** Fri, 07 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

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### **Analysis**

A team of US scientists have developed a new computer program for predicting mycotoxin levels in corn.

Mycotoxins are natural carcinogens produced by certain moulds, particularly *Aspergillus flavus* and *Fusarium moniliforme* and the new software will help food manufacturers adhere to strict regulatory controls regarding the sale and use of mycotoxin-containing corn.

The computer program, developed by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists,

The carcinogens are potentially dangerous to humans and livestock and corn with mycotoxin levels above the allowable limit may be rejected. Micotoxin-related losses cost the US corn industry hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

Copyrighted by collaborators at Illinois Central College, the Windows-friendly Mycotoxin Predictor 1.1 software program uses equations to mathematically predict mycotoxin levels by measuring factors that contribute towards production of the molds, such as temperature, soil type and numbers of insects.

Patrick Dowd, an entomologist at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, explained that, by entering such data into the program, a farmer can predict the likelihood and projected levels of mycotoxin contamination more than a month before harvest.

ARS is now seeking a software company that can market Mycotoxin Predictor 1.1 to farmers, millers, refiners, and others.

Further information: [www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)  
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### **UK dairy industry hampered by fragmented thinking**

**Date:** Fri, 07 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The UK dairy industry is being left in an increasingly vulnerable position by fragmented thinking, a farming expert has warned.

Speaking ahead of the 2005 Semex Dairy Summit, conference chairman Steve Ellwood said the UK industry was increasingly at risk from international competition. The UK dairy industry is now facing a £700 million annual trade deficit.

Mr Ellwood pointed specifically to the proposed 2005 merger between Europe's largest dairy processors, Arla Foods and Campina, as a particular future threat.

He said: "The UK dairy industry is facing unprecedented and, in many cases, overnight challenges. EU enlargement, CAP reform, and WTO talks are effectively stripping back international trade barriers and the result will be an even more crowded and competitive domestic market, both at production and processing level."

Mr Ellwood, head of agriculture at HSBC, said that he intended to table the issue to the

conference in an attempt to generate a more joined up approach involving processors, producers and industry influencers, the Newcastle Journal reports.

He added: "In the long-term, if the UK dairy industry is successfully to challenge international competition, all the players need to work much more closely together to focus on what the consumer wants and how to deliver this."

However, the agriculture expert also suggested that the Arla/Campina merger could provide opportunities for UK dairy producers and highlighted a number of new initiatives already in place.

The three-day 2005 Semex Dairy Summit starts on January 16th and is expected to attract around 350 delegates from across the UK.

(no further information)

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### **Low-carb potatoes unveiled**

**Date:** Fri, 07 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new low-carbohydrate potato is due to go on sale in supermarkets in the United States at the end of this month.

The Sunlite potato, developed by University of Florida researchers and Florida farmers, aims to appeal to the millions of people following low-carb diets in America.

The potato will be available in grocery stores and restaurants and has 30 per cent lower carbohydrates and 25 per cent fewer calories than a standard Russet Burbank potato.

The potato is also fat free and has high levels of potassium and vitamin-C, First Coast News reports.

SunFresh, a co-operative formed by six Florida farmers, hope to make the SunLite potato a success with increasingly health conscious Americans.

(no further information)

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### **Asda boosts health drive for 2005**

**Date:** Fri, 07 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket chain Asda has announced new plans in its ongoing healthy eating drive, due to take effect this year.

The retailer today announced a £117 million package of price cuts for the year, including £17 million worth of cuts on healthy food products. This includes a number of leading health brands such as Evian and Weight Watchers.

This is being met with a £7 million healthy eating promotional campaign, and the offer of 110,000 free health checks for customers.

The campaign will include TV and press advertising and the launch of a new quarterly health magazine called 'Good For You!'.

The company hopes that these measures will result in Asda customers consuming 180 tonnes less fat, 130 tonnes less sugar and 189 tonnes less salt this year.

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### **Organic milk "offers greater health benefits"**

**Date:** Fri, 07 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new study is extolling the health benefits of organic milk, claiming that it contains a higher level of vitamins than its non-organic counterpart.

According to research from the Danish Institute of Agricultural Research presented to the Soil Association, organic milk contains significantly higher levels of vitamin E, omega 3 essential fatty acids and antioxidants.

In tests on cows farmed organically and conventionally, those farmed organically produced milk found to be 50 per cent higher in Vitamin E, on average, as well as 75 per cent higher in beta carotene, which humans convert to Vitamin A.

"This new research adds to a growing body of evidence proving the health benefits of organic food," Soil Association Director Patrick Holden told the BBC.

"A number of schools are now serving organic milk, and there is now a strong case for the Government to ensure that such initiatives are extended across the country," he added.

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

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### **European seafood project making progress**

**Date:** Fri, 07 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

An EU-sponsored seafood research project is making progress in its aim to meet consumer demand for healthy, safe seafood.

The 'SEAFOODplus' initiative involves over 70 partners from 16 EU member states, with total funding of almost €14.5 million.

Under the project wild and farmed fish and shellfish of marine and freshwater origin are being examined.

"The total value chain is addressed by developing consumer driven tailor-made, functional seafood products to improve health and to ensure nutritional quality and safety by full utilisation of raw materials from aquaculture and from traditional fisheries," claims the project manifesto.

Plans to carry out extensive research on the health benefits of seafood against various diseases, including cancer, have also been outlined.

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Furthermore, future research will address traceability in a bid to guarantee consumer confidence, reports Food Navigator.

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### **Olive oil 'cuts risk of cancer'**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New research is suggesting that ordinary olive oil can help lower the risk of developing cancer, due to naturally occurring oleic acid.

Researchers in the US maintain that in recent tests, the acid significantly cut levels of a gene thought to trigger cancer, Her-2/neu.

The gene, associated with highly aggressive tumours with a poor prognosis, occurs at high levels in over a fifth of breast cancer patients.

The new findings have been met with scepticism from various parties.

Tim Key, deputy director of Cancer Research UK's epidemiology unit, argues that the only established diet-related risk factors for breast cancer are obesity and alcohol.

"Some previous studies among women have suggested that Mediterranean-style diets might be associated with a lower risk, but the data are not consistent and there is currently no strong direct evidence that olive oil can reduce breast cancer risk," he told the BBC.

Though the findings have been described as "interesting" Professor Key states that more research needs to be carried out to fully assess potential benefits of olive oil-rich diets.

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### **Sainsbury's supply dogged by technical problems**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Difficulties with Sainsbury's stock forecasting software last week left some of its key London stores with empty shelves.

Around seven of the struggling supermarket's Local convenience stores suffered shortages of fresh fruit and vegetables, and other fresh foods when they reopened after the New Year holiday.

A company statement issued last week explained: "There is an isolated problem in some of our Central London stores that closed over the Christmas period and most of these stores will be fully recovered before the weekend."

The glitch is unlikely to have a serious impact upon the supermarket as investors are already aware of broader supply chain problems.

Sainsbury's flawed IT and supply chain systems resulted in £260 million being written off by the company last October, which contributed to its recent poor financial

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performance.

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### **Food safety on the EU agenda**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The new European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection has stressed the importance of maintaining high levels of food safety throughout the European Union.

Markos Kyprianou, who has just started his five year reign, told the European Parliament that protecting consumers at a manageable cost would be a key priority, Food Production Daily reports.

In this respect he will follow in the footsteps of his predecessor David Byrne, who made food safety a salient issue.

Mr Kyprianou said he would ensure the "effective implementation of legislation within the EU", whilst also helping to "raise food safety standards and practices in the EU's trading partners."

The White Paper on Food Safety published in 2000 outlines the Commission's plans for an integrated approach that will cover all sectors of the food production chain.

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### **Scots businessman plans food sector return**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scottish entrepreneur Bill Hazeldean has announced plans to return to the food sector within the next few months.

Mr Hazeldean said he had been looking at a number of propositions over the last few months and revealed that his new venture would be in the food sector, but not in fish.

The former boss of Macrae Food Group, the UK's largest producer of ready-to-eat seafood, has formed Food Investment Group with Peter Macielinski, former chief executive of Geest, and mergers and acquisition expert Pat Pocock, the This is North Scotland reports.

He said that he has had a long-standing relationship with the Bank of Scotland and it was "very likely" the bank would be involved in backing the new venture.

Mr Hazeldean formed Macrae Food Group in 1994 to launch a management buyout of Foodmark's Peterhead factory and continued to make a series of acquisitions over the decade, selling the company to Young's Bluecrest last year for more than £40 million. Last November, Scottish business organisation the Entrepreneurial Exchange awarded Mr Hazeldean entrepreneur of the year.

(no further information)

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### **Nestle announces new commitment to healthy metabolism**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Food giant Nestle has announced plans to help tailor diets to people's metabolism.

The Swiss firm said it hoped that, by recommending an appropriate diet, consumers will be able to delay or prevent some diseases and generally lead a healthier life. Nestle's announcement is a response to growing concern about spiralling levels of metabolic diseases, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis and hypertension.

Scientists meeting at Nestle's research centre near Lausanne claimed that the majority of these problems are caused by metabolic dysregulation or imbalance and suggested that the imbalance varies from individual to individual, according to Swiss Info.

"Diet is a health issue around the world, and Nestle is a part of the problem so it could also be part of the solution," said one of Nestle's senior science advisors, Bruce German.

The multinational is already developing products, but Mr German pointed out that the company does not yet know what its business model will be or how to incorporate added value into its products. The company has already launched a range of functional foods.

Nestle plans to carry out information on metabolics from around the works and develop maps that will help tailor an individual's nutritional requirements, allowing people to make informed choices about what they eat.

"The technologies we are considering are consistent with a well-developed social, cultural and health system, but they are not inherently expensive," Mr German told Swiss Info. "We can imagine that areas in the world without proper health infrastructure could be among the greatest beneficiaries of future developments."

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### **Irish food and drink firms promote healthy eating**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Irish food and drinks companies are encouraging consumers to identify gaps in their knowledge about healthy diets and start eating better.

The sector has pooled funds to launch a new project designed to increase healthy eating, which will carry out research on Irish consumers to identify gaps in their knowledge about healthy diets and ways in which their understanding of nutritional labelling can be increased.

"There are a number of gaps in attitudinal research," Louise Sullivan, manager of the foundation, told NutraIngredients.com. "Often the government and media goes by research carried out in the UK and US but that's not good enough. We want to do our own."

Studies will be coordinated by the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA), the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) and the Exercise and Sports Science Association

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of Ireland (ESSAI).

The Nutrition and Health Foundation involves more than 20 firms, including many subsidiaries of international companies like Unilever, Kellogg, Masterfoods and Nestle, as well as Irish groups IAWS, Dawn Farm Foods and Greencore Sugar. The companies have donated €1 million to the project for the first three years and more groups are expected to join.

Ireland is experiencing a rapid rise in obesity rates. An IUNA Food Consumption Survey report in 2001 found that 46 per cent of Irish adult males and 33 per cent of Irish adult females were overweight, while 20 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women were obese.

The foundation aims to tackle soaring obesity rates and rates of obesity-related disease without the need for strict legislation and labelling laws.

(no further information)

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### **TNA unveils new bagging system**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Equipment manufacturer TNA has launched a new triple jaw version of its groundbreaking Rotary Jaw bagging system, which it claims can achieve speeds in excess of 220 bags per minute (bpm), faster than any other bagger on the market.

The company said in a statement that the product is more flexible and more efficient, offering customers a wide range of bag widths and wastage rates of under one per cent.

The Triple Jaw version of the ROBAG 3 was recently exhibited at Pack Expo International in Chicago, Food Production Daily reports.

Also on show was TNA's new Gateless Roflo distribution system, a product discharge system designed to eliminate product breakage, maintenance, breakdown and cleaning, while ensuring that products are not shaken, rattled or bounced whilst in transport across the factory.

TNA already has a Rotary Double Jaw version of the ROBAG 3, which is currently packing bags of Mini Pretzels at speeds exceeding 180 bpm in a Pennsylvania production facility.

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

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### **APV launches new range of bulk butter packing lines**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

APV has launched a new range of bulk butter packing lines that it claims is ideal for small, medium and large-scale carton filling applications.

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The new FMG range, targeted at the dairy and food industries, includes three different fully automated models. FMG-1 operates at a maximum rate of 180 cartons/hour with 20, 25 and 31kg cartons, giving a peak production of 4500 kg/hour (based on 25 kg cartons).

FMG goes up to 290 cartons/hour with the same carton sizes, giving a peak production of 7250 kg/hour, while FMG+ operates at 440 cartons/hour with 20 and 25 kg carton sizes and maximum production of 11,000 kg/hour, Food Production Daily reports.

All three machines come in a standard design that includes carton unfolding, tare weighing, lining with parchment paper or plastic, primary dosing and precision dosing, check weighing and liner closing and sealing.

The butter packing line is automatically cleaned in place (CIP) and a CIP loop also cleans the connected silo and piping system from the continuous butter-making machine. All three models are delivered with Allen-Bradley or Siemens PLCs and InTouch is used as the human machine interface (HMI).

Orders totalling more than £2 million have already been placed for the new lines in Asia and Europe.

Further information: [www.apv.com](http://www.apv.com)  
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### **Growth predicted for global packaging market**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

World demand for packaging machinery is projected to rise by more than four per cent by 2008 to more than £31 billion.

A report by market research firm Freedonia claims that accelerating macroeconomic growth in developing regions and Eastern Europe will drive the market, increasing manufacturing output and creating opportunities for packaging machinery suppliers.

In 2003, the world packaging machinery market was valued at \$24.7 billion, with 38 per cent of the total accounted for by Asia/Pacific countries, followed by North America with 26 per cent and Western Europe with 24 per cent., Food Production Daily reports.

Emerging markets now include Latin America and India, where populations and industrial output are growing, stimulating demand for packaging machinery in industries such as food, beverage, chemicals, pharmaceutical and personal care products.

The Chinese packaging market is expected to record some of the strongest increases, with packaging machinery demand rising over eight per cent annually through 2008. Mature markets such as North America, Western Europe and the Asia/Pacific region are also expected to see an increase in demand for packaging.

Among product groups, labelling and coding machinery will remain the fastest growing product, Freedonia claims, while advances in the sector will result from the increasing number of labelling regulations in many parts of the world. Widespread use across a

range of industries and new product development activity is expected to continue in all product categories.

Further information: [www.freedoniagroup.com](http://www.freedoniagroup.com)  
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### **MDC to tackle dairy misconceptions**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The European Commission has awarded the UK Milk Development Council (MDC) a £1.5 million grant to raise awareness of the benefits of dairy food consumption.

Research conducted last year by the MDC found widespread misconceptions about the nutritional value of dairy products especially amongst young girls.

Nearly 75 per cent of girls aged between ten and 20 failed to eat enough dairy products to guarantee a sufficient intake of calcium because they believed foods such as cheese, milk and yoghurt were too fattening.

However, a deficient calcium intake can cause the onset of the development of osteoporosis later in life.

Philippa Stagg of the MDC told DairyReporter that the Government's traffic light initiative designed to highlight foods high in fat, salt or sugar would portray dairy foods in an unfair light.

"The traffic light initiative will focus on the negative nutritional qualities of food, providing a one-sided argument," she explained.

"Although cheese, for example, contains a high fat content, it also contains a significant amount of calcium."

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### **Vitamin C study launched**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new study to determine the safety of high doses of vitamin C is to use state of the art gene expression technology in an attempt to gain more accurate results.

Scientists are currently undecided as to the maximum level of vitamin C that can be consumed by humans.

While at lower doses vitamin C is an antioxidant associated with the prevention of cardiovascular disorders and cancer, at higher doses it has been linked with side effects such as stomach cramps, diarrhoea and flatulence.

One laboratory based study also suggested that the vitamin could produce toxins damaging to DNA at high doses.

However, many experts believe that high doses only serve to multiple its antioxidant

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qualities and are hoping the new study will clarify the matter.

Professor Joseph Lunec head of the Genome Instability Group at the University of Leicester, who is heading up the trial, told Food Navigator: "Nobody has used gene expression data before.

"We hope it will be more accurate as it will take into account all potential expressions of genes. Other studies have looked at very specific effects."

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### **Tesco.com reaches record sales**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Tesco has announced that online sales reached record levels over the holiday period, making Tesco.com the UK's largest online food retailer.

December was officially the business' busiest month, during which over 600,000 orders were placed.

Rival online grocer Ocado saw a similar festive boost, with sales almost three times higher than average in the week before Christmas.

Ocado, among other products, sells Waitrose branded goods.

Tesco continues to battle for market share with other leading supermarket groups including Asda and Sainsbury's.

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### **Safeway posts mixed sales results**

**Date:** Tue, 11 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Sales at Safeway stores that have yet to be rebranded after acquisition by Morrison, are continuing to fall according to new figures, though converted outlets have seen an increase.

Food sales at the unconverted stores have fallen by over eight per cent, largely due to a poor performance over the Christmas holidays.

Morrison completed its £3.2 billion acquisition of the Safeway chain in March 2004 and highlights the conversion of Safeway outlets as a priority. To date 56 stores in total have been converted, with 180 more to go.

According to the company food sales at converted stores were up by seven per cent in the six weeks to January 9th.

"We believe the performance of core Morrison stores is acceptable in the short term, especially given the tough 2003 comparatives of 9.6 per cent like for like main store growth," commented chairman Sir Ken Morrison.

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### **France reports drop in BSE deaths**

**Date:** Wed, 12 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

France has announced a fall in confirmed cases of mad cow disease during 2004.

The number of cases of the disease fell more than 60 per cent to just 54, following tests on around 2.9 million cattle, according to Reuters news agency.

The French farm ministry said eight of the 54 BSE cases last year were detected in the framework of a national surveillance system, 29 under the animals at risk programme and 17 from the compulsory screening of older cattle at slaughterhouses.

The ministry added that the rising average age of cattle found with the brain-wasting disorder showed that measures introduced in 1996, including testing all cattle aged over 30 months that are destined for the food chain, had proved effective.

"This removal of SRM (specified risk material) is still in force and will remain so for as long as the health situation requires it," the ministry said.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) spread to France after the mad cow epidemic in Britain in the 1990s, causing a national crisis in 2000.

(no further information)

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### **Firm pioneers 'E-wrap' food packaging**

**Date:** Wed, 12 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A Mid Wales firm is aiming to take the European packaging sector by storm with its range of environmentally-friendly packaging materials.

Compak is targeting the fresh produce market with its netting, trays, films and flower pots. The firm is developing a substantial joint venture with Korean partners in the food packaging industry and plans to establish a major manufacturing operation in Wales to supply European food markets with its new "E-wrap" product.

The plant will manufacture the new film-wrapping, which is similar to cling-film, but delivers the environmental benefits of Compak's GM-free product range, The Western Mail reports.

E-wrap is made using a unique plastic compound and will retail at the same price as conventional films used in food packaging. The wrap is currently undergoing a series of final trials.

"There's undoubtedly a large market for E-wrap, but attacking it in the right way is the big challenge," said Compak founder and managing director Dave Holbourn. "We feel this collaboration will allow us to get it right from the outset, and our partners feel that Wales will make an ideal base from which to supply European customers."

The Lampeter-based company has received a substantial round of equity investment from a syndicate of two private investors and now plans to extend the scope of its activities and cement relationships with customers. Compak is starting to receive orders from several well-known UK supermarket and food retailers.

(no further information)

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### **GI diets latest trend**

**Date:** Wed, 12 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The new GI (Glycemic Index) diet has taken off in the UK, with sales of diet books soaring.

Supermarket giant Tesco has produced its own GI book and re-labelled 1,000 of its food products to show GI ratings. Marks & Spencer has also added a GI label to its Count on Us range.

Rick Gallop's GI Diet has sold 600,000 copies worldwide and has been translated into 12 different languages, entering the bestseller lists in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The book advocates a balanced diet where followers watch their glucose intake by cutting back on white bread and rice, replacing them with wholegrains and vegetables.

Unlike stricter diets, such as Atkins, GI allows three meals a day and puddings, while an animal study published in the Lancet last August found that a low GI diet can lead to weight loss, as well as reducing the risk of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease, The Scotsman reports.

Mr Gallop, the former president of Canada's Heart and Stroke Foundation, commented: "As unhappiness grew with the low-carb high-fat diet, there was a need for something new. But it is more than that. There is a certain logic and simplicity to the GI diet that people can understand and easily incorporate into their lives."

Dr Jenkins, a nutrition professor at the University of Toronto, created the Glycemic Index in 1981 and his findings were used to help people with diabetes to regulate their blood sugar levels. Dieticians have welcomed the popularity of GI diets and the accompanying health benefits.

(no further information)

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### **Tesco commits to RFID**

**Date:** Wed, 12 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Tesco has indicated that it is prepared to roll out radio frequency identification (RFID) technology across its store network.

The implementation would represent the world's largest single order for Electronic DeHavilland Global Knowledge Distribution plc, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Product Code (EPC) RFID.

The first phase of the contract will see ADT supplying more than 4,000 readers and 16,000 antennae by autumn 2005.

This order will cover dock doors and merchandise receipt points at approximately 1,300 Tesco stores and 35 distribution centres across the UK.

Colin Cobain, IT director at Tesco, said: "ADT successfully came up with the solution that meets the specific requirements of our supply chain and we have been extremely impressed with the trials run to date.

"Their pan-European capabilities are key to meeting our ambitious roll-out plans."

RFID is a key part of Tesco's Radio Barcode and Secure Supply Chain programmes, which aim to reduce prices, increase product availability, and improve customer service.  
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### **New efforts to combat food allergens**

**Date:** Wed, 12 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New research being carried out in the UK is working to identify the factors which make a protein more likely to become an allergen, with a view to eventually helping food producers eliminate allergens from new products.

According to researchers at the Institute of Food Research (IFR) over 65 per cent of all food allergens can be grouped into just four protein families.

They argue that knowledge of what exactly makes a protein more likely to become an allergen could make it easier for manufacturers to identify potential allergens in novel foods and ingredients, at the advantage of the consumer.

"By modelling surface features of proteins from a range of flowering plants, we were able to explain why cross-reactions can occur between species that otherwise seem dissimilar," explained Clare Mills, head of the IFR allergy research team. "This is especially important to help us understand why people with allergy to birch pollen can suffer related allergies to fresh fruits and vegetables"

Recent figures indicate that allergy levels are rising in general among the population, with eight per cent of children and three per cent of adults affected throughout Europe.

It is thought that some 2.5 million individuals in Europe and the US are affected by peanut allergies.

To help protect prone consumers, legislation has come into effect requiring manufacturers to provide adequate warning on the packaging of potentially harmful products.

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### **Fewer UK BSE deaths anticipated**

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**Date:** Wed, 12 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Researchers in the UK are maintaining that there will not be high numbers of deaths resulting from the human form of mad cow disease, vCJD, but warn that future fatalities are likely.

A research team from Imperial College London estimate that the disease may claim 70 lives in the future, or up to 600 in the worst-case scenario.

Last year saw nine UK vCJD-related deaths in total, down from 28 in 2000.

In related news reports confirm that a new case of BSE has emerged in Canada, the second to do so in ten days.

The new case has been discovered in a young Alberta cow and marks the third occurrence of BSE in Canada in total, the first having emerged in May 2003.

The first instance of BSE led to the removal of ruminants in feed, commonly believed to be the cause of the disease. Due to the fact the latest instance comes after the implementation of this ban, it is feared that future outbreaks may be difficult to trace.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency states that no part of the animal has entered the human or animal food chain.

Further information: [www.ic.ac.uk](http://www.ic.ac.uk)

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**UK snacks most**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

People in the UK eat more savoury snacks than any other European nation, averaging 7.2kg each per year, new figures claim.

Research by market researchers Key Note found suggests that the value of the British snack market will rise from £2.4 million to £2.6 million by 2009, despite increased fears about levels of obesity and diet-related disease.

The report warns manufacturers: "There is no doubt that the future of snack foods is beset with potential obstacles to growth, including the cost of developing substitutes for fat, sugar and salt, moves to reduce the availability of snacks and a possible ban on advertising food to children."

Governments are starting to consider new ways of encouraging healthy eating and food labelling proposals, such as the traffic light system in Britain, are likely to label many savoury snacks as unhealthy, due to high salt content. France is banning vending machines from schools in a bid to reduce soaring obesity rates and obese consumers in the United States have even launched lawsuits against food manufacturers.

Key Note insists that producers must embrace healthier products, such as reduced fat and salt ranges, but admits that "smaller UK operators may find it difficult to weather

these problem", having less cash to spend on product development, AP-foodtechnology reports.

However, the research firm added: "The fact remains that the British love their savoury snacks and are generally unwilling to compromise taste for health."

Further information: [www.keynote.co.uk](http://www.keynote.co.uk)  
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### **Anti-cholesterol drug nears launch**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Federal advisers in the United States are considering whether the Food and Drug Administration should approve a popular cholesterol-lowering drug to be sold over the counter.

Merck & Co's bid to make Mevacor the first of a class of cholesterol-lowering drugs called statins to be available over the counter.

More than 10 million Americans take statins, which reduce "bad" cholesterol while modestly boosting "good" cholesterol.

"The majority of consumers who would choose to use Mevacor would gain a clinical benefit, are appropriate for self-management, and would have a minimal potential for safety risk," said Tony Plohoros, a Merck spokesman.

US regulatory staff insist that the advisory panel should weigh the risks of people taking higher-than-recommended doses before approving the drug.

Data "supports the conclusion that risks of muscle and (liver) toxicity are rare events that do not offset the benefits associated with long-term use" in otherwise healthy patients, Food and Drug Administration reviewers said in documents posted on the FDA's Web site.

The joint advisory panel, made up of experts in the field, will review Merck's material for two days and their recommendation will guide the FDA's decision. The FDA rejected Merck's application to sell Mevacor over the counter in 2000 because the company failed to prove people would benefit from taking a 10 milligram dose without a doctor's guidance.

If approved by the FDA, Mevacor would be recommended at a higher dose of 20 mg to men older than 45 and women older than 55 for those with moderately high levels of bad cholesterol. Those people would have to have at least one additional risk factor, including smoking, a family history of heart attacks, or high blood pressure.

Further information: [www.merck.com](http://www.merck.com)  
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### **'No link between vitamin A and bone health', claim researchers**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

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### **Analysis**

A new survey suggests there is insufficient evidence of the association between bone health and vitamin A intake.

A report by independent experts for the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) concluded that there is not enough evidence of a link to justify a change in dietary advice to consumers.

The research follows a study Commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) during 2003, which warned that high intakes of vitamin A might increase the risk of bone fractures in the long term.

The FSA's expert group on vitamins and minerals recommended that consumption of vitamin A should not exceed 1.5mg per day, but the latest survey claims that evidence of the bone fracture risk was not robust enough to set a Safe Upper Level, but should only inform a 'guidance level'.

The report recommends that people who eat liver once a week or more should avoid taking supplements containing vitamin A and concludes that it may be advisable for people at risk of bone fractures, such as post-menopausal women and older people, not to have more than 1.5mg of vitamin A per day.

The draft document, published on the SACN website, also reinforces current advice for women who are pregnant or thinking of having a baby to avoid taking supplements containing vitamin A.

Comments received by the committee over the next three months will be considered before it publishes the final report this summer, after which the FSA will review its advice to consumers.

Further information: [www.sacn.gov.uk](http://www.sacn.gov.uk)  
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### **Farmers urged to sign up to meat quality mark**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX) has organised a seminar for North-east livestock producers about a new assurance-backed quality standard.

At the event in Hexham Mart this evening, farmers will be encouraged to sign up to the standard, which is designed to reassure consumers about the quality of beef and lamb and thereby benefit English red meat producers.

Clive Brown, regional manager of EBLEX, told the Teesside Journal: "The new EBLEX Quality Standard will be a really visible way for English meat producers to identify and promote quality beef and lamb to consumers who are increasingly keen to have confidence in the provenance of their food.

"It means that now beef and lamb that meets the requirements of the scheme can be identified as having been born, raised and slaughtered in England and will be identified as

English."

Tynedale Council, Defra RDS and One NorthEast are also involved in tonight's talk as part of their commitment to the region's Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy.

Further information: [www.eblex.org.uk](http://www.eblex.org.uk)  
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### **Half of all parents 'neglect school lunches'**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New reports are claiming that parents in the UK are failing to adequately monitor the foods their children are taking to school in packed lunches.

Research carried out by Mintel found half of all mothers to be 'unperturbed', taking little or no interest in their children's lunches.

However, though a quarter of mothers surveyed were found to be 'persisting parents', aiming to provide the best lunches, less than half (42 per cent) regularly pack their child's lunches for them.

These reports have been offset by the fact that the majority of children surveyed understand the importance of eating healthily.

The majority of 11 to 16 year-olds surveyed (70 per cent) stressed the importance of eating a balanced diet, though 22 per cent admitted to finding it difficult to resist sweets.

"Recognising the importance of healthy eating is only half the battle, as children now need to be encouraged to put this into practice," commented one Mintel consumer analyst. "The message is still not getting through to all children, and there remains further scope for education."

The FSA agrees that more needs to be done by way of educating children on food health, stating: "It's widely known that many children know how to eat healthily, but the problem is translating that knowledge into actually eating more healthily."

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### **New Bill addresses school meals and nutrition**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new school meals and nutrition Bill has been introduced to the House of Commons with a view to improving the diets of UK schoolchildren.

The Bill, introduced by Geraint Davies, calls for greater provisions to ensure high nutritional standards in school meals as well as regulations over the type of food sold to pupils.

In particular, it recommends more stringent regulation on vending machines, which typically sell so-called 'junk' foods such as crisps, chocolate bars and fizzy drinks.

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Furthermore, the Bill recommends that restrictions be placed on pupils during school hours to prevent them from buying unhealthy foods during lunch and breaks.

It also states that nutritional information should be required in school reports and inspections.

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### **Uniq sales slide slowing**

**Date:** Fri, 14 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Uniq is reporting that continuing sales are sliding at a slower rate than in previous quarters.

The convenience food group reports that sales in the third quarter slid by 0.6 per cent as opposed to 4.8 per cent in the first half.

The recovery has been attributed partly to increases in Southern European sales, which rose by 0.5 per cent in the 13 weeks up to December 25th. However in Northern Europe third-quarter sales fell by 3.6 per cent.

This was still an improvement on an 8.4 per cent dip in the first half.

Bosses are confident that sales will continue to pick up in the future, highlighting the winning of a new £20 million desserts deal with Tesco.

Uniq recently lost £12 million worth of business with Sainsbury.

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### **Northern invests €23m in plant**

**Date:** Fri, 14 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Northern Foods has announced plans to invest €22.6 million in a pizza manufacturing plant in Ireland, in a bid to improve production and increase output.

The Hull-based company has outlined plans to develop a new bakery, expand packaging lines and hire 130 new factory workers.

"We need to become more efficient given the competitiveness of the environment we're in," commented chief executive Pat O'Driscoll. "Keeping costs down is important."

Northern's client base includes Tesco, William Morrison Supermarkets and Wal-Mart-owned Asda.

Group profits before tax are expected to fall by £6 million to sit in the region of £80 million in total, following indifferent holiday sales.

The new development drive is expected to be completed in the third quarter.

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**FSA announces further Sudan dye recalls**

**Date:** Fri, 14 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has announced a new wave of product recalls regarding the illegal Sudan colour food dye.

The latest product to be recalled is the All Natural Palm Oil Foods (Ngopa) range, a brand that has already been involved in a recall last year.

Since the identification of Sudan dyes I, II, III and IV ('Scarlet Red') as potentially harmful a growing number of products have been recalled, primarily spices and powders used in ethnic foods.

January 2004 saw the extension of restrictions of Sudan and other chemical dyes to include curry powder.

"We have undergone a constant process since July last year - tracing products throughout the chain and building up a picture of where contaminated products could have ended up," stated the FSA in 2004.

The EU's Rapid Alert System is being used to help member states raise awareness of potentially harmful products before they can proliferate among consumers.

Further information: [www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk)  
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**Canadian opposition to mad cow slaughter**

**Date:** Fri, 14 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Canada's chief veterinarian has condemned a proposal to slaughter an estimated 960,000 cows born before August 1997.

Brian Evans told reporters during a briefing at the Canadian Embassy in Washington that the proposal was not "scientifically valid" and a mass cull was not a consistent response to the discovery of two cases of mad cow disease this year.

"We believe in the system that we have in place in Canada' to manage the risks of mad cow disease," Mr Evans said. "We feel we can firmly demonstrate to everybody's satisfaction that the system is doing what it is designed to do."

Alberta premier Ralph Klein announced this week that the country might be forced to kill older cattle in order to restore confidence in the country's beef industry. A ban on feed containing ground-up parts of ruminants was introduced in Canada in mid-1997.

About six per cent of Canada's 16 million head of cattle were born before the ban and the animals concerned are worth an estimated C\$350 million.

The two latest cases of mad cow disease or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Alberta follow on from one in May 2003.

The most recent case, disclosed on January 11th involved an eight-year-old animal born just after the ban. Wilhelm Vohs, the owner of the farm affected, in Innisfail, Alberta, suggested that a supplement purchased in early 1998 might have been responsible for the infection.

BSE has been linked to variant Cruetzfeldt-Jakob Disease, a similar brain-wasting ailment that affects humans.

(no further information)

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### **A cup of broth a day keeps listeria away**

**Date:** Fri, 14 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A UK firm has developed a new broth that could accelerate detection time for the harmful foodborne pathogen Listeria.

Oxoid has designed a broth that detects *Listeria monocytogenes* in the food chain. Identifying low levels of the pathogen in food is difficult and the industry is required to use enrichment techniques, such as broths.

Food makers are required to test each food batch where Listeria might be present, such as soft cheese and processed meat products, and in particular those kept refrigerated for a long time.

The broth encourages growth and is generally repeated twice, on both occasions for 18 to 24 hours. A spokesperson for Oxoid explained to FoodNavigator.com that their new product, launched last month, reduces the detection procedure by one day, cutting back the broth time to just 24 hours.

Oxoid's latest product 'One broth' is sold as a powder in 500g pots that provides 11.3 litres of the final broth. Standard food protocol usually requires 225ml of broth for 25g of food tested.

"We're able to combine two days into one, and then provide a chromogenic plating with various diagnostic features to give higher confidence in the result," added the spokesperson.

Food safety experts estimate that 100 to 1,000 cells can cause the illness. Cooking kills most of the Listeria cells that can grow at refrigeration temperature, but ready-to-eat products, such as pates, smoked fish, cheeses and hot dogs, are not always cooked by consumers before consumption.

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

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### **Fortnum continues to focus on food**

**Date:** Fri, 14 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

London department store Fortnum & Mason has announced that it will make a loss this year following a decision to focus on food.

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

The retailer, privately owned by the Weston family, decided last year to close its menswear, ladies clothes and antiques departments.

In a statement, the company also said profits almost halved last year after it changed its international supply strategy. The company saw profits fall from £638,000 to £351,000 pre-tax, despite marginally higher sales. The firm has also seen sales rise slightly from £3.6 million, up from £3.4 million the previous year.

The department store has stopped supplying products internationally via local wholesale distributors and opted for a smaller number of exclusive supply arrangements in key markets. The company reported that international sales were down £2.1 million, with an operating loss of £387,000 compared with a profit of £288,000 in the preceding year.

Fortnum & Mason chairman Jana Khayat said: "As a private company we are in the fortunate position of being able to invest in our future which is what we have been doing in the current year.

"Approaching our 300th anniversary in 2007 we are focusing on our core departments in the areas of marketing and brand packaging ensuring we remain as irreplaceable to our customers in the future as we have in the past."

Fortnum & Mason is due to file its annual accounts for the year to July 11th in a few weeks. Company sales for the 25 weeks to January 2nd fell 3.6 per cent.

Further information: [www.fortnumandmason.com](http://www.fortnumandmason.com)  
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### **Tesco to develop non-food store chain**

**Date:** Mon, 17 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket chain Tesco is planning to develop a new chain of non-food stores, buoyed by continued strong food sales.

The market leader is reported to be considering opening a store that will offer customers a range of clothing, music and electrical goods.

The new format store is likely to be launched this year and is expected to be located at an out-of-town retail park, although Tesco has declined to give more precise details on its location within the UK.

"It is early days but we will trial a non-food store at some point this year," a Tesco spokesperson said.

"Our Extra stores are very popular with customers, but shoppers expect us to try out new ideas."

The current local planning regime is making it harder for new supermarkets to obtain permission and the development of a non-food chain would provide Tesco with another route to increase UK sales growth.

Industry figures state that Tesco currently holds a 29 per cent share of the UK market.  
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### **Low-carb potatoes may enter UK market**

**Date:** Mon, 17 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new variety of potato claiming to be lower in carbohydrates and calories than average is due to possibly go on sale in the UK.

According to reports four UK-based growers are set to plant the Adora potatoes this spring, and the final crop could be on public sale by summer.

The Adora is thought to contain somewhere in the region of a third fewer carbohydrates and a quarter fewer calories than most standard varieties.

Dutch company HZPC is supplying the innovative new seed to UK growers.

"The Adora appears to have less starch because it is an early potato and is ready after 80 days," commented Robert Graveland, research breeder at HZPC.

"We also know that with high nitrogen in the soil this leads to lower dry matter so it is possible we may be able to lower the starch content even more," he added.

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### **Slow energy-release ingredient pioneered**

**Date:** Mon, 17 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

German firm Palatinit has applied for regulatory approval to launch a new slow energy release carbohydrate on the European market.

Palatinit claims that Palatinose, also known under the generic name isomaltulose, opens up innovative and interesting opportunities for the food and drink industry, due to its low glycaemic response, prolonged energy supply and toothfriendliness.

Already available in the United States, sucrose-derived disaccharide isomaltulose will be targeted at European food manufacturers looking to enhance the nutritional value of their finished foods.

Palatinose, like sucrose, is fully digested and provides the same caloric value, but it is toothfriendly and digested much slower, providing a 'better energy' in food and drinks for consumers.

The slow energy release carbohydrate allows developing wellness and functional drinks, sports drinks, breakfast cereal and dairy drinks, and instant tea and coffee specialties. Technical trials have also indicated that Palatinose can be used in cereals and nutritional bars.

Palatinit is currently testing and doing trials to determine what percentage levels of Palatinose must be added.

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(no further information)

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### **Defra reports increased wheat output**

**Date:** Mon, 17 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has released figures showing a significant increase in UK crop production in 2004, compared with previous years.

Overall production for the year rose by 8.3 per cent to sit at almost 15.5 million tonnes, up from 14.3 million in 2003.

It has been stated that the increase stemmed from an 8.4 per cent crop planting increase.

However, it has been estimated that UK barley output will fall to 5.8 million tonnes, based on a 6.3 per cent drop in annual plantings.

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### **Starch-based packaging developed**

**Date:** Mon, 17 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scientists have developed a new technique for changing the water repellency of plastic films using coatings of steam-jet-cooked starch.

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists in the United States are confident that this technique improves plastic's retention of water-based dyes and printing inks, such as those used on food labels, as well as reducing build-up of static charge.

Commercial polymers like polyethylene are hydrophobic, or water-repelling, until rendered otherwise (hydrophilic) with chemical reagents, but steam-jet coating could offer a cheaper, easier and safer alternative.

ARS scientists Fred Felker and George Fanta at the ARS National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Illinois showed that tiny particles of starch comprising the one-micrometer-thick coating hold water in place, preventing it from beading and rolling off the plastic's surface.

If a film of polyethylene is thin enough, the scientists observed, the coating will temporarily change the film's shape when the coating dries.

The scientists made the hydrophilic coating as part of an ARS research effort to develop new, value-added products from agricultural commodities, especially cornstarch.

Further information: [www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)

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### **Low-carb diets falling in popularity**

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**Date:** Mon, 17 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

The trend for low-carbohydrate diets is reportedly on the wane.

The peak of low-carb diets' popularity came in February 2004 when 27 million Americans were watching their carbohydrate intake, and it has been slowly declining since then

Market research group Mintel claims that there were only 400 low-carb products available in 2003, soaring to 2,378 products in 2004.

Many of the products launched have quickly sunk without trace, such as Atkins Nutritionals' low-carb pasta with American Italian Pasta Co and some of Kraft's CarbWell product lines have struggled to attract consumers.

However, food makers are continuing to release low-carb products. This month, Kraft expanded its line of cereal, meal-replacement bars, sandwich wraps, frozen entrees and pizzas for The South Beach Diet.

Experts believe that, while fewer people will follow the Atkins Diet and other low-carb eating plans, many will modify their eating habits, which is where low-carb products will find their market. The low-carb sector is worth a estimated \$1.5 billion annually.

(no further information)

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**Concerns raised over UK dairy sector**

**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

A number of concerns have been raised regarding the UK dairy industry at the annual conference of cattle-breeding company Semex.

Speaking in Glasgow yesterday Sir Don Curry, chairman of the Government's sustainable farming and food strategy implementation group, argued that more needs to be done to promote the relationship between farmers, processors and retailers.

Sir Don also cautioned that the Office for Fair Trading's interpretation of competition law "could become a serious obstacle to further rationalisation within the milk sector.

"I cannot understand the logic of allowing some of the major retailers to continue their relentless expansion ... while regarding further consolidation of milk processing as being anti-competition," he added, according to the Scotsman.

He also highlighted the fact that dairy producers are likely to find themselves under increased environmental pressure, further restricting activity and necessitating government aid.

However despite these qualms Dairy UK asserts that the milk industry is potentially in a strong position, pointing to increased interaction between farmers, markets and customers.

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### **Porridge returns to popularity**

**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New reports reveal that porridge is fast becoming one of the most popular breakfast food products in the UK, as health-conscious Britons make a return to the traditional favourite.

Figures indicate that porridge currently accounts for £79 million of all breakfast cereal sales, outsold only by Weetabix at £83 million.

Notably, new ranges of instant porridges are proving particularly popular, accounting for sales of over £41 million, an increase of almost 25 per cent on the previous year.

Microwavable porridge products offer reduced preparation times and increased convenience, giving consumers an incentive to opt for porridge over cold cereals.

"Porridge was uncool," comments the British Nutrition Foundation. "But people are now realising it's quite tasty. If made with milk, it is a great way to boost calcium and by adding fruit it provides one of the five recommended daily portions.

"Porridge is ideal for those trying to lose weight as it releases fibres and carbohydrates slowly," it was added.

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### **Tesco posts strong Christmas sales**

**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The supermarket giant Tesco has announced record sales over the recent festive period.

The UK's leading chain reported that in the seven weeks to January 8, the company experienced a sales increase of 13 per cent with UK sales up 12.1 per cent in total, including like-for-like growth of 9.3 per cent and a 2.8 per cent contribution from new store space.

"The group's strong sales performance means that, despite higher energy and fuel costs and adverse movements in exchange rates, we remain confident that our out-turn for the year will be in line with current market consensus," a statement from the company said.

Tesco is expected to surpass the £2 billion profits barrier in this financial year, following its continued domination of the industry, increasing its share of total consumer spending to 29 per cent.

The supermarket chain is also steadily increasing its 6.5 per cent share of sales of the non-food market, with rising sales of DVDs, homeware, own-label clothing ranges, and electrical goods.

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### **Chamomile tea brews good health**

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**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Chamomile tea protects drinkers from a host of complaints, including colds and menstrual cramps, new research claims.

Scientists at Imperial College London tested the urine of 14 healthy volunteers who drank five cups of chamomile tea every day for two weeks and found that drinking tea produced changes in the urine that suggested there was an increase in a substance that helps the body fight off colds, as well as higher levels of a substance called glycine, which can ease muscle spasms.

Study author Dr. Elaine Holmes cautioned that it is still unclear whether the changes in the body caused by drinking large quantities of chamomile tea are good or bad overall and called for further testing.

Chamomile tea has been used as an anti-inflammatory, a mild sedative and as an anti-ulcer remedy for years. However, it can also cause a severe reaction in people allergic to ragweed and affect the absorption of iron. The tea used in the study was made with the flowers of German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*), also known as manzanilla.

Professor Ron Eccles, from the Common Cold Centre in Cardiff, said: "This interesting but it really is a very long way off evidence that chamomile tea will have effects on colds and menstrual pain. There may be something there, but what we need are controlled clinical trials."

The research, funded by Oxford natural Products, will appear in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

Further information: [www.ic.ac.uk](http://www.ic.ac.uk)

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**EU invests EUR12.7 million into diet research**

**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

The European Commission is reportedly spending €12.7 million on research into the relationship between diet, lack of exercise and the development of diabetes.

Cases of type 2 diabetes and obesity have soared in recent years and the European Union is facing a massive health bill as a result.

Increased consumption of processed food and a fall in the amount of exercise people take have been blamed for rising levels of ill health.

NutraIngredients.com reports that this is the first time the European Commission has committed such a large amount of funding to this research topic. The new Exgenesis project is designed to improve understanding of the underlying mechanisms that could be treated by diet and exercise and identify better exercise and diet regimes.

The European Union project will involve 26 laboratories in 13 different countries and includes companies in the areas of food production, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology.

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Learning more about how the body responds to exercise at a molecular level could help tackle not only type 2 diabetes, but also diet-related conditions such as obesity and heart disease.

UK researchers will focus primarily on an enzyme called AMP-activated protein kinase, known to play an important role in co-ordinating energy metabolism.

(no further information)

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### **Ampac acquires food packaging firm**

**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Ampac Packaging has acquired food packaging firm Flexicon for an undisclosed amount.

Flexicon is a leading manufacturer of high-performance, flexible packaging materials and the purchase comes on the heels of Ampac's July 2004 purchase of Kapak, which specialises in a wide variety of flexible packaging structures.

Flexicon also produces technologically advanced, custom-engineered structures, including adhesive laminations, Flexi-Free solventless laminations, heat-seal coated rollstock, pouches, perforated tear products and 10-colour, high resolution, flexographic printing, according to Food Production Daily.

"We are looking to grow our consumer packaging business both organically and through synergistic acquisitions," said John Baumann, chief executive officer and president, Ampac Packaging.

"We believe that Flexicon is an ideal strategic acquisition and will be an important cornerstone in helping Ampac achieve its long-term consumer packaging growth goals."

Robert Biddle will continue as president of Flexicon, overseeing the company's sales and manufacturing operations, after the purchase is completed.

Ampac continues to produce a wide range of high-performance film structures for bags and food packaging and the company recently co-operated with Dow to develop and produce high barrier co-extruded films containing Saran resins, and multilayer films for retort packaging.

The diversified flexible packaging company has seven operating sites in North America and Asia employing approximately 700 people worldwide.

(no further information)

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### **Warning issued over beef imports**

**Date:** Tue, 18 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The director general of the British Retail Consortium has warned that imports of beef  
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from countries like Brazil will increase if recent UK cost inflation is sustained.

The cost of beef in Britain rose in the New Year by almost eight per cent, with some markets seeing an increase in the costs of live cattle of as much as 15 per cent.

Speaking on BBC Radio Four's 'Farming Today', Kevin Hawkins said increases in the cost of beef to the consumer depend on whether a shortage of British product continues.

The price increases will cool fears that British beef would be unsustainable after agricultural subsidies based on production were stopped at the beginning of this year.

However, some industry experts are concerned that increases in the cost of the domestic product could harm the sector at a crucial moment.

Mr Hawkins explained: "Different retailers will react in their own way as they see their supply terms developing but I suspect that savvy retailers may not easily accept that kind of uplift in supply cost."

The BRC head explained that BSE and Foot and Mouth had both severely impacted the British industry's ability to supply the UK market and opened the door to imports, particularly from South America.

"I suspect that if the price of the home produced product gets too high then that will obviously attract in imports particularly from Brazil because the Brazilians are producing some good quality beef and they are doing it on a very large scale," he said.

Mr Hawkins said he expected British retailers to continue to support British product and noted that prospective rises in the retail price of beef seem to be broadly supported by the British public.

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### **Little Red Tractor comes under criticism**

**Date:** Wed, 19 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New accusations are being levelled at UK farmers over complacency in securing consumer trust.

According to the Sustainable Development Commission not enough is being done to ensure shoppers are aware of high product standards.

The Commission in particular highlights the Little Red Tractor (LRT) scheme, whereby a logo is used to identify high product standards.

A new report, Sustainability Implications Of The Little Red Tractor Scheme, highlights a number of areas in which the LRT has failed to meet its original purpose, including relating to aspects of sustainable food production and land management, referring to broader public health issues and encouraging farmers to improve practices.

"The scheme is a floor, not a ceiling. It's a baseline standard, the minimum necessary, not the maximum achievable," states the report. "It's far too static and unambitious."

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"A lot of the farming establishment hasn't really woken up to the realities of the new structure provided by reform of the European Union's common agricultural policy," it was added.

However, the report stress that the report is not a failure but many consumers do not understand its aims.

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### **UK consumers 'prefer fruit to veg'**

**Date:** Wed, 19 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New reports suggest that shoppers in the UK are opting for fruit over vegetables.

Figures released by food and grocery think-tank IGD show that fruit consumption has risen up by almost four per cent compared to a decline in vegetable consumption by more than two per cent.

According to IGD over a third of Britons prefer fruit because vegetables require substantially more preparation.

Last year, over 40 per cent of lunches were found to contain fruit, as opposed to 33 per cent featuring salad and fresh vegetables. In addition, trends reveal that more people are eating fruit for breakfast at home.

"Shoppers want convenient foods," said IGD according to Just Food. "The food industry has been responding by providing diced, chopped, shredded and peeled vegetables and fruit that are ready to eat and cook.

"This will be the next challenge and will be an important approach for targeting lunch and increasingly breakfast occasions," it was added..

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### **FoE rejects new GM study**

**Date:** Wed, 19 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Friends of the Earth (FoE) has announced its rejection of a new study claiming that GM farming can be of environmental benefit.

Reports from the Royal Society argue that changing the timing of the use of herbicide on sugar beet crops could allow a limited number of weeds to grow between crop rows, providing feed for wild birds.

However, FoE is doubtful over the validity of these claims.

"Friends of the Earth is obviously keen to see the most environmentally sustainable form of farming encouraged in Britain but unfortunately this is more about bolstering a failing biotech industry than finding that sustainable alternative," commented FoE official Clare Oxborrow to the BBC.

"We already know from the farm scale trials that growing GM sugar beet damages wildlife."

Debate continues over GM farming, its benefits and potential problems.

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### **Broom's Barn insists new GM beet benefits environment**

**Date:** Wed, 19 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Broom's Barn Research Station, part of Rothamsted Research in Hertfordshire, claims that recent research suggests that GM sugar beet can be beneficial to biodiversity if it is managed in the right way.

Mike May, senior liaisons officer at Broom's Barn, said scientists at the station modified the recommended growing regime for the sugar beet.

The changes reduced the number of applications of herbicide, resulting in a 16 fold increase in the crop of weeds in either summer or autumn and providing farm birds with the seeds and insects that they need to survive.

However, environmental groups have attacked the study, insisting that the research combines two approaches, only one of which can be used, which would leave farmland birds without food at some point during the year. The Five-Year Freeze Campaign is calling for a moratorium on GM farming.

Speaking on BBC Radio Four's 'Farming Today', Mr May admitted that, initially, GM crops had led to a dip in the numbers of insects and birds in fields, but added, "Things have changed and now we have this system where we can actually do both."

He explained: "We have actually got a system now that would have actually provided more benefit but we haven't actually got the means of marketing that at the moment."

Further information: [www.rothamsted.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.rothamsted.bbsrc.ac.uk)

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### **New Weight Watchers products from Anthony Alan**

**Date:** Wed, 19 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK low-fat cakes and savouries company Anthony Alan Foods has announced that it developed and launched 20 new products in 2004 under the Weight Watchers brand.

The company predicted that it would double turnover within the next two years, from £25 million last year, and revealed plans to launch a further nine new lines in January 2005 alone.

Technical manager Richard Oliver said the company generally plans its new product development 12 months in advance.

However, he added that new ideas can be fast-tracked when required. The food executive said: "We're currently working on a totally new range of products. We drove  
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them from concept to production samples to a signed contract with a major multiple retailer in under four weeks."

The company's new range of Weight Watchers savoury pastries includes Sausage Roll, Pork & Apple Roll, Cheese & Onion Slice (suitable for vegetarians) and Chicken & Stuffing Slice.

Sarah Morgan, marketing manager at Anthony Alan's, said: "As with our established cakes range, the new Weight Watchers savouries are high-taste, premium, no-compromise products, as good as any on the market - but with significantly reduced saturated fat and fewer calories."

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

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### **FSA issues food safety guidance**

**Date:** Wed, 19 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The UK food watchdog has published a new guidance document to help the food industry negotiate rules on food safety which came into force this month.

The Food Standards Agency guidance relates to the Food Safety Act 1990 (Amendment) Regulations 2004 and the General Food Regulations 2004.

The new regulations are in compliance with the European framework regulation EC/178/2002 laid down in January 2002 and set out general provisions for imposing tougher food codes, particularly relating to the traceability of food and feed.

From this month, firms are formally required to notify the local authorities should a food or feed withdrawal from the market arise. The FSA announced last week that it had set up a rapid access channel for food and feed businesses to signal any new product withdrawals from the market.

"This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Food Safety Act 1990 (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (No. 2990) and the General Food Regulations 2004 (No. 3279)," the FSA said in a statement.

The number of food-linked alerts in the European Union reportedly leapt by more than 40 per cent in 2003, compared with the previous year. Food makers are increasingly under pressure to implement rigorous food safety checks and quality systems.

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

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### **Alcohol-free beer "protects against cancer"**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Drinking non-alcoholic beer may help prevent cancer, a new study claims.

Research by a team from Okayama University in Japan suggested that mice given

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alcohol-free beer, while exposed to cancer-causing chemicals, had 85 per cent less damage to their liver, lung and kidneys than those given water.

Some cancers are caused by heterocyclic amines, DNA-damaging chemicals found in cooked meat and fish. Head researcher Sakae Arimoto-Kobayashi believes that unidentified compounds in lager and stout prevent the amines binding to and damaging DNA.

"The total benefits and risks of beer with alcohol are still under consideration," he said, suggesting that, if the compounds are identified, brewers could then produce beer rich in anti-cancer agents.

Heavy alcohol consumption is blamed for around six per cent of all cancers in western countries, though moderate consumption reduces the risk of heart disease. The research findings do not indicate whether moderate consumption of normal beer has any anti-cancer benefits.

The study is published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.  
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### **Rachel's Organic launches new yoghurt range**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK organic dairy producer Rachel's Organic has announced details of three new yoghurt multi-pack ranges.

They include a new range of yoghurts for toddlers called 'Little Rachel's Organic', fat free 'Fruits of the World', and 'Low Fat Natural', Just Food reports.

The new lines represent the first of a range of new products to be launched since the company opened its new £3 million extension.

David Stacey, trading director for Rachel's Organic, explained that the products have been developed following extensive market research.

"We have seen a clear rise in demand for organic multi-packs over the last 12 months and have always tried to supply the market with innovative flavours and exciting concepts," he stated.

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### **EU takes action on food advertising**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The European Union (EU) has announced plans to introduce new measures aimed at curbing the promotion of unhealthy foods to children, and improve product labelling.

According to the EU health and consumer affairs commission action is needed to address rising obesity levels among the young.

Food companies are now being warned that legislation will be introduced unless

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voluntary steps are taken.

Health and consumer affairs commissioner Markos Kyprianou has admitted that obesity is now as much of a European problem as an American problem.

Last month the UK Government launched a £3 million package of funding targeted at cutting obesity levels, and last year threatened a complete ban on junk food advertising unless manufacturers made changes in their marketing schemes.

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### **Defra invests £1 million in rural research**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has provided £1 million in rural research to support economic and social development in the countryside including farming and agriculture.

The research will combine social and natural science, promoting environmental protection and conservation in rural areas, in addition to supporting economic development.

The funding will go towards the Rural Economy and Land Use (RELU) programme, with the aim of creating "thriving rural communities". According to Food and Farming Minister Larry Whitty, this entails: "affordable housing, access to local services and an economic boost for areas lagging behind the relative prosperity of the majority of rural England.

"It means tackling social exclusion and it means protecting and enhancing the countryside, vital to the health of the rural economy."

Defra will provide Regional Development Agency's with £72 million in 2005/2006 in its bid to create and maintain thriving rural economies.

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### **Say it with chips this Valentine's Day**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

National Chip Week starts on February 14th this year and Brits are being encouraged to embrace their love for potatoes.

The 14th National Chip Week celebrates chips of all shapes and sizes, from homemade to takeaway, frozen from the supermarket to restaurant portions.

Running from February 14th to 20th, National Chip Week has been organised by the British Potato Council. Last year, the council helped Hereford chippie 'Mr Chips' break the world record for the biggest bag of chips (57 stone).

A portion of chips (175g) contain five times more vitamin C than a bunch of grapes (100g) and a portion of fish & chips has fewer calories, one-third less saturated fat and three and a half times less salt than a cheese and tomato pizza so, contrary to popular

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belief, chips can form part of a healthy balanced diet.

Celebrity chip fans include Orlando Bloom, Davina McCall, Denise Van Outen and Kate Winslet, who told the Daily Mirror in December, "The perfect Saturday night for me is to get the kids to bed, pour myself a glass of wine and send Sam for fish and chips."

According to a recent survey by the British Potato Council, one in three women admitted that they did not know that oven chips were made from potatoes.

Nicholas Parsons, a devoted fish and chips fan, commented: "The British have turned a simple, nourishing dish into a national institution. Fish and chips are now as synonymous with our country as Shakespeare, cricket and the Tower of London."

The British Potato Council has designed a recipe that virtually guarantees great oven chips every time and it can be found on the National Chip Week website at [www.lovechips.co.uk](http://www.lovechips.co.uk). The council advises consumers that thick chips absorb less oil than thin ones, so chunky chips are healthier.

Further information: [www.potato.org.uk](http://www.potato.org.uk)  
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### **Uniq implements new UK integration technology**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

European premium chilled convenience food manufacturer Uniq has installed Magic Software Enterprises' iBOLT Business Integration Suite at its UK offices.

The initial deal, recognised early last year, is worth more than \$250,000 (£134,000) and is expected to expand to cover Uniq's European operations.

Uniq UK had recently invested in a new planning and forecasting system, Infor, and chose iBOLT, after considering offerings from a number of other industry vendors to draw together its disparate operations.

This iBOLT implementation enables Uniq plc to send data from six heterogeneous applications into the food manufacturer's new planning and forecasting system, in order to plan the production volumes within their factories.

Netherlands-based Magic Software Enterprises is a leading provider of state-of-the-art development and integration technology. Food firm Uniq employs 8,700 people and has a turnover of over \$1.6 billion.

"We were looking for integration technology that would not only solve our issues in the UK, but one that we could use as a strategic tool to support growth throughout our European operations," said Gareth Robson, group IT director of Uniq.

Further information: [www.uniqplc.com](http://www.uniqplc.com)  
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### **JO Sims expands exotic fruit range**

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**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

UK food ingredients firm JO Sims has unveiled a new range of tropical fruits from South America in response to soaring demand for exotic flavours in food formulations.

The firm announced that it has linked up with Columbian firm International Freeze Dried (IFD) and will now import exotic fruit ingredients like uchuva, strawberry, mango, pineapple and Andean blackberries into the UK market.

Fruit pieces can add sweetness, colour, mouthfeel and texture to brands and are being used increasingly in food products, Food Navigator reports. Fruits can also extend the shelf life of many foods and contain a host of phytochemicals linked to benefits for human health.

Lincolnshire-based JO Sims is confident consumer demand for more 'unusual tastes and flavours' will continue to grow.

"There is considerable scope to expand the range of exotic freeze-dried fruits used in products such as cereals, desserts and bakery mixes," the company said.

Berries currently account for 80 per cent of JO Sims' total ingredient sales.

Further information: [www.josims.com](http://www.josims.com)  
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**Asda unveils new 'Smartprice' brand**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

UK supermarket group Asda has launched a new, value range of fruit, vegetables and dried nuts.

The 'Smartprice' range features the lowest ever produce prices offered by Asda, including 1kg of bananas for just 65p, four oranges for 58p, 500g of tomatoes for 68p and a whole melon for 78p.

The supermarket is initially introducing 12 products into the rebranded Smartprice range with more to follow in the coming months.

Asda, which is part of US retail titan Wal-Mart, is using more flexible product specifications to use a greater proportion of its growers' crops. For instance Smartprice oranges are the same variety as standard Asda brand oranges, but are smaller in diameter.

Angela Spindler, Asda's trading and marketing director said: "We're committed to making it easier for our customers to lead a healthy life. Our Smartprice produce range will enable millions of customers, who are on a tight budget, to buy top quality fruit and veg at the lowest possible prices."

The launch follows price reductions on Asda's Good For You! healthy range earlier this month, and further reductions on brand names including Evian water and Weight Watchers ready meals.

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**Report aims to set maximum safe levels for nutrients**

**Date:** Thu, 20 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

The first attempt in Europe to set maximum safe levels for nutrients in supplements and fortified foods has been published.

Scientists at Germany's Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) gathered data on dietary habits in Germany and nutrient levels in the current food supply and subtracted them from the upper safe levels (USL) of nutrients determined by the EU's Scientific Committee on Food.

The report, designed for review by German food authorities, is also expected to be considered by European regulators. Maximum safe levels for nutrients are being set under the 2002 food supplements directive and a proposed regulation on fortified foods.

Numerous products could reportedly be considered unsafe if the same approach is adopted across the European community. No other member state has carried out such work.

The research team's conclusions, published in a 341-page report, suggest that supplements should contain a maximum level of 225 mg vitamin C, 5.4 mg of vitamin B6 and 9 mcg of vitamin B12. All of these vitamins are sold at considerably higher dosages in supplements on several European markets.

Natural healthcare association the Alliance for Natural Health (ANH) attacked the report claiming that the data used is "meaningless for the majority of the population".

Dr Robert Verkerk, executive director of the ANH, told NutraIngredients.com: "We have always been concerned that this approach, [as proposed in article 5 of the food supplements directive], would end up with very low levels and the German report shows that it does."

The UK's Food Standards Agency produced guidance levels for supplement nutrients in 2003, resulting in a system of advisory statements, currently found on supplement labels in the UK to warn consumers of potential risks.

(no further information)

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**Increased turnover for Inter Link**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Inter Link Foods has announced a turnover increase of 33 per cent for the six months ending October 30th 2004, rising to a total of over £44 million.

The cake product firm, which manufactures private label, branded and licensed products, reports that EBITDA saw an increase of 31 per cent to £4.5 million.

Profit before tax rose by 16 per cent to £2.8 million, with trading said to be in line with expectations.

Christmas was a notably busy period for the company, which is reported to have used more than 1,500 tonnes of mincemeat during the holidays.

Like-for-like sales growth was 14 per cent over the six-month period. In light of these developments the company is anticipating continued strong performance "with considerable confidence".

Earlier this week, cake firm Finsbury Food announced that it has a positive outlook for 2005, stating that trading for 2004 was in line with expectations.

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### **Farmers concerned over late SFP forms**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New concerns have arisen that farmers may not have adequate time to complete application forms for the new Single Farm Payment (SFP) scheme, due to late arrival.

According to reports the forms may not arrive until the end of March, giving farmers little more than six weeks to complete them.

"When you realise we are still waiting for a whole raft of guidance on key aspects of the new scheme, it's easy to imagine how difficult it will be for farmers to meet the deadline," commented senior food and farming adviser James Ede to the Teesside Journal.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is worried that farmers will find themselves under mounting pressure to complete their applications, in addition to the fact that many farmers are unsure of the details of the new scheme.

To this end the NFU recommends that the Government should do more to communicate details to UK farmers.

Defra maintains that all is being done to despatch the forms as quickly as possible, and has established regional seminars in Newcastle and Thirsk to help inform farmers. A special "roadshow" is also talking place to advise concerned farmers.

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### **BPEX unveils new pork standard**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A new website from the British Pig Executive (BPEX) is giving consumers the opportunity to trace the origin and provenance of pork products in an effort to improve traceability and encourage producers to maintain quality.

The website, [www.lookforthemark.co.uk](http://www.lookforthemark.co.uk), lists supermarket-sold products originating from pig farms in compliance with UK welfare standards.

Launched this week at a National Pig Association meeting, the initiative was described as  
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"impressive" by food and farming minister Lord Whitty.

"This website isn't about telling shoppers they must buy British," explained BPEX/NPA chairman Stewart Houston to the Pig Site.com, in response to concerns that the new standard may compel shoppers to buy British. "It's about showing them where they can buy pork, bacon, ham and sausages that come from pigs raised to British standards."

The website is based upon the NPA's best practice code for retailers, which requires that all pork, bacon, ham and sausages in supermarkets should meet the legal standards for pig production in Britain.

To date, the retailers that have signed up to the code are Asda, Budgens, Co-op, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tesco and Waitrose.

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### **Defra backs UPG partnership**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Defra is officially endorsing the Undergrazing Programming Group (UPG), a partnership between farmers, landowners, conservationists and Defra itself aimed at boosting the UK livestock industry.

The initiative is being funded by the regional Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, intended to give livestock farmers aid and advice to improve profitability and efficiency.

Schemes in this include training courses, action plans and regional support schemes.

UGP comes in response to mounting concerns over a number of factors including increasing imports, a decline in local abattoirs, consolidation in meat processing and retailing and changes in support payments made under the Common Agricultural Policy.

"Our beef and sheep industry is small but it is critically important to the correct management of the region's grassland," commented Michael Mack, project manager for Defra.

"The recent decline in cattle and sheep numbers and the diminishing infrastructure on which the industry depends is creating increasing environmental and economic problems for the region."

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### **Danisco launches innovative packaging material**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Danisco has announced that it has received authorisation to use and sell a new vegetable oil-based plasticiser in the European Union.

Grindsted Soft-N-Safe has been included in the EU's positive list for the so-called super directive and is a safe solution for use with no quantitative restrictions in food contact materials.

A plasticiser is a substance which when added to a material, usually a plastic, makes it flexible, resilient and easier to handle and is used extensively in food packaging and equipment manufacturing.

Consumers have long called for an alternative to plasticisers such as phthalates, which have been linked to health concerns.

"One of the most positive benefits of Grindsted Soft-N-Safe is that it shows no signs of hormone-disrupting effects. Therefore, we can now offer an alternative to the plasticisers that have caused the most concern - and our product is suited for all areas of application currently in demand. We see a huge potential in our plasticiser," says Torben Svejgard, COO, Danisco.

Grindsted Soft-N-Safe builds on known food technology, using ingredient is a vegetable oil already used in foods such as margarine and chocolate as its main ingredient.

The plasticiser has been approved for food contact materials and will expectedly be used in toys and medical equipment at a later stage. US approval is expected at the beginning of 2005 and several other markets, including Japan, are expected to follow suit. Potential new customers have tested the product and confirmed that it can be used without changes to their existing production equipment.

Further information: [www.danisco.com](http://www.danisco.com)  
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### **Eurofins acquires ERGO**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

European life sciences firm Eurofins has announced that it has acquired ERGO (Hamburg).

ERGO is one of the largest and most advanced dioxin-testing laboratories in Germany and Eurofins now to become the largest dioxin-testing laboratory in the world.

Eurofins said in a statement that ERGO has earned an international reputation in the analysis of dioxins and the German firm's sales are in excess of €2 million a year, just-food.com reports.

Dioxins are cancer-causing chemicals that appear in low concentrations in food products.

Eurofins said recent dioxin scares concerning potato peel contamination in The Netherlands and egg contamination in Germany emphasised the need for monitoring and accurate analysis.

Together with GfA, Oekometric and MPU, Eurofins now carries out more than 15,000 analyses of dioxins and furans per year for customers including leading international producers of food and feedstuffs.

Further information: [www.eurofins.com](http://www.eurofins.com)  
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### **Experts outline trends for 2005**

**Date:** Fri, 21 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The UK-based Centre for Food & Health Studies has unveiled a list of the top ten food trends for 2005.

Food and nutrition and health specialist Julian Mellentin claims that health and wellness will drive food markets this year and consumers will call increasingly for products to come with some form of positive nutritional values.

Other key trends identified include the importance of marketing the intrinsic healthfulness of foods and tackling soaring levels of obesity and diet-related disease.

The food expert also predicts that low glycaemic index (GI) foods and low-carb products will continue to prove popular and whole-grains will gain a larger market share, The Ferret reports.

Mr Mellentin points to the announcement by BASF, one of the world's leading ingredient companies, and Fonterra, one of the world's biggest dairy groups, that they would jointly fund a multi-million dollar research programme. The programme will, Fonterra claims, "allow customers to choose a snack that meets particular health needs such as low-fat for calorie management, low cholesterol for heart-health, high calcium for osteoporosis, or low in sugars for diabetics."

Markets expected to boom during 2005 include nutritional bars and beverages, daily dose, probiotic and functional products, beverages offering dietary supplements. New products are likely to emerge from Asia and children's nutrition will become increasingly important.

Julian Mellentin is director of The Centre for Food & Health Studies, an international organisation based in the UK that provides research, analysis and forecasting of the global nutrition business.

Further information: [www.new-nutrition.com](http://www.new-nutrition.com)

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### **Plant diet 'protects against cancer'**

**Date:** Mon, 24 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A Mediterranean-style plant-based diet can protect against cancer, new research claims.

Three separate studies in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggest that eating large quantities of fruit and vegetables, combined with smaller amounts of red meat and sugary foods, is the best way to ward off bowel and colon cancer.

The studies also reveal that a plant-based diet is good for the heart, but offers no protection against breast cancer.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr Walter Willett of the Harvard School of Public Health

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in Boston, said: "Reductions in blood pressure and epidemiological evidence for lower risks of cardiovascular disease provide sufficient reason to consume these foods in abundance."

A study by researchers at Johns Hopkins in the US and Yonsei University in Korea followed more than 1.2 million people for ten years and found that people with higher blood sugar levels, regardless of whether they were diabetic or not, were at increased risk of developing and dying from cancer.

The second study, by Dr Ann Choa and colleagues at the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, examined the relationship between meat consumption and colorectal cancer risk among nearly 150,000 people and discovered that people who ate the highest amounts of red meat were 50 per cent more likely to get colon cancer than those who ate the least amount.

Meanwhile, researchers at the University Medical Centre in Utrecht, the Netherlands, claim that eating fruit and vegetables or drinking juices had no effect on breast cancer risk.

The World Cancer Research Fund is currently compiling all the available data on diet and cancer, involving some 10-20,000 studies in total, and plans to publish the results in 2006.

Recent Japanese research has suggested that alcohol-free beer can also have properties that protect against certain cancer types.

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### **Breyers unveils low-carb ice-cream**

**Date:** Mon, 24 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Breyers ice cream has launched the first light ice cream products for use as part of a low-carbohydrate diet.

The Unilever subsidiary's 'CarbSmart' range includes Light Vanilla Fudge Sundae and Light Chocolate Peanut Butter.

They have half the fat of regular ice cream and 40 per cent fewer calories, as well as only 4g net carbs per half-cup serving.

Dan Hammer, vice president of marketing at Good Humor- Breyers, stated: "The new light products meet the needs of the many consumers who are customising their low-carb diets by cutting back on fat as well as carbs.

"According to our own research, 66 per cent of carb-conscious consumers are seeking products lower in fat."

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### **EU moves to ban health food supplements**

**Date:** Mon, 24 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

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The European Union is seeking to pass a directive that will ban a number of popular vitamin and mineral supplements.

The supplements concerned are used by thousands of people across Europe every day and campaigners are fighting hard to stop the ban being brought in.

On Tuesday, a court case from the National Association of Health Stores and the British Health Foods Manufacturers Association will argue that Brussels is exceeding its powers by imposing a blanket ban. The UK Conservative Party is also calling for the ban to be scrapped, describing it as an "unnecessary interference".

The directive lists just 28 vitamins and minerals and 112 sources that can be used legally for use in food supplements after it comes into force on August 1st. More than 5,000 products, containing more than 200 nutrients, will be affected by the new legislation and campaigners insist the directive will force smaller firms into bankruptcy.

Sue Croft, a spokeswoman for Consumers for Health Choice, said: "If this directive comes into force it will affect the lives of millions. To have these supplements removed and to put more strain on the NHS is nothing short of a crime. At the election we will be targeting those MPs who do not vote to stop this."

The campaign against the EU directive has a number of high-profile supporters, including Cherie Blair's former lifestyle adviser Carole Caplin, actresses Jenny Seagrove and Dame Judi Dench and Bianca Jagger.

Manufacturers who submit detailed scientific dossiers by July this year that prove their ingredients are safe will still be allowed to sell their products and some large chains, such as Boots, have already reformulated their products to meet the new EU rules.

A third of women and a quarter of men take health food supplements in the UK and the market is worth an estimated £350 million a year.

(no further information)

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### **Tests find no evidence of foot-and-mouth**

**Date:** Mon, 24 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Tests to detect foot and mouth disease in Ireland have come back clear after the country suspected it may be witnessing another outbreak of the disease.

Samples taken from pigs in Co Carlow underwent preliminary tests and there was no evidence found of foot and mouth disease.

A Department of Agriculture and Food veterinary official noted symptoms similar to the highly infectious disease in a batch of 12 pigs delivered to Ballon Meats near Tullow.

Department officials and gardai sealed off the plant and farm, as the Irish agri-business sector feared it was facing its second foot and mouth crisis in four years, the Irish Examiner reports.

The samples were rushed to a laboratory at Pirbright in Surrey, England, for scientific analysis where initial findings showed there was no evidence of the presence of the virus.

The remaining stages of the testing process will be completed over the next few days, during which access to the Carlow plant and farm will remain restricted as a precaution.

(no further information)

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### **Legalisation of food labelling to be reviewed**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The European Industry Committee is to discuss legal issues surrounding food labelling in order to stop consumers being misled.

The move follows concerns raised by Welsh Labour MEP Eluned Morgan that labels describing items as '90 per cent fat free' and 'light' actually have no legal meaning.

Various terminology used in food labelling will be investigated by the committee and the implementation of labelling laws will be discussed.

Ms Morgan told the BBC: "The strict food labelling laws already in place have come through European rules. We have, for example, the strictest GM labelling in the world. However, there are some loopholes that need closing.

"When you claim something is 'light' or 'extra light' it also sounds very healthy - but it effectively means nothing."

Ms Morgan believes that supermarkets will also need to address their 'healthy' ranges.

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### **Top performance continues at Tate & Lyle**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Tate & Lyle has announced that trading is continuing to perform well and the company's outlook for the year to March 31 has not changed.

Business is being helped by a continuous demand for sucralose and expansion projects at the food firm are all running on track.

The sugar business has issued the update following yearly annual sales contract pricing rounds at two of its key businesses.

Interim results for Tate & Lyle were released on November 4th 2004 and positive results are set to continue, with margins expected to be slightly lower this year.

Based in the UK, the company produces sugars and syrups, proteins and food starches.

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### **Chef creates the world's most expensive haggis**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Scottish consumers can truly celebrate Burns Night in style with the creation of the world's most expensive haggis.

The £2,850 traditional treat has been created by a Scottish chef, using one of the rarest whiskies in the world.

Made by the head chef at the Albannach Scottish restaurant in London, the haggis contains finest Scotch beef boiled in a sheep's stomach and it is claimed the flavour is set to impress even sceptics.

Mr McLachlan, who was trained by UK celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, told the Telegraph Online: "I never thought I would use a 50-year-old whisky for cooking. Putting the whisky inside is a new thing and I think it is fantastic."

Enough food for ten servings will be provided by the haggis, which will have five drams of whisky injected into it.

Money made from the dish, which costs £285 a head, is to go towards the tsunami appeal.

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### **Satellite to monitor CAP payments**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Hi-tech satellite technology will monitor farmers receiving payments under the reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

This Is Devon reports that the satellite, which is being tested at the European Commission joint research centre, can identify small details, such as furrows in a ploughed field and will be used to determine the funding which farmers receive.

Under the reformed CAP, some of the funding received by farmers will be determined by them taking care of their land, addressing environmental concerns, opposed to the amount of food that they produce.

National Farmers Union (NFU) president Tim Bennett believes that the technology will ensure fairness yet can understand the apprehension expressed by some farmers.

"I think this is a great anti-fraud measure, especially for countries where past administration of farm payments has not been as rigorous as in Britain. It will be really useful in this respect," said Mr Bennett.

"Most farmers are honest and want cheats to be caught. But we have to make sure there are safeguards on people's privacy."

The reformed CAP policy was agreed in June 2003 and started to come into force on

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January 1st 2005.

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**Celebrity chef opens new restaurant**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

TV chef Brain Turner is reportedly opening a new restaurant in Slough.

The 36-seat restaurant at the Copthorne Hotel has been created by Mr Turner and the hotel's executive chef Robert Prendergast, Caterer magazine reports.

The Turners Grill restaurant will serve a range of speciality grill dishes in a "traditional British" vein.

The restaurant replaces an existing eatery at the hotel and has been refurbished and rebranded.

Mr Tuner has vowed to maintain a presence at the restaurant, visiting it regularly to oversee the cooking and ensuring standards are maintained.

(No further information)

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**New low-carb ice cream range launched**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

**Analysis**

Unilever subsidiary Breyers Ice Cream has introduced a range of new light flavours for use as part of a low-carbohydrate diet.

Breyers CarbSmart Light Vanilla Fudge Sundae and Breyers CarbSmart Light Chocolate Peanut Butter have half the fat and 40 per cent fewer calories than regular ice cream, with 4g net carbs per half-cup serving, according to a statement from Unilever.

Breyers line of CarbSmart ice cream products was first introduced in late 2003 and expanded last year.

"The new light products meet the needs of the many consumers who are customising their low-carb diets by cutting back on fat as well as carbs," Dan Hammer, vice president of marketing and development, Good Humor- Breyers, said.

"According to our own research, 66 per cent of carb-conscious consumers are seeking products lower in fat," he added. "These new CarbSmart products are lower in fat than regular ice cream and indulgent-tasting, which makes them an ideal choice for carb-conscious dieters."

New Breyers CarbSmart Light Vanilla Fudge Sundae pairs vanilla ice cream with crunchy chocolate-covered peanuts and a satisfying fudge swirl, while Breyers CarbSmart Light Chocolate Peanut Butter combines chocolate ice cream with a thick peanut butter swirl.

New Breyers CarbSmart Light products will be sold in US supermarkets from early

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February. A 1.75 quart container has a suggested retail price of \$5.09.

Further information: [www.unilever.com](http://www.unilever.com)  
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### **Irn Bru firm expects to reach expectations**

**Date:** Tue, 25 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

AG Barr, maker of Irn Bru, has announced that it is on track to hit full-year profits expectations of around £15.5 million.

The company said that, despite challenging market conditions and last year's disappointing summer, it had performed well.

The Glasgow-based soft drinks maker said that both Irn-Bru and Tizer had increased their market share in September and lifted its half-year sales marginally to £66.3 million.

Analysts had predicted that Barr's profits would have been hit hard by the poor summer weather, Irn Bru was the third best-selling soft drink during the long, hot summer in 2003.

Barr chief executive Roger White said in a trading update, ahead of the group's full-year results on March 30th: "Market conditions have been very competitive but despite this AGBarr has performed well. Our increased marketing activity combined with strong sales execution and a continued focus on operating costs have delivered improved performance across the year."

Barr last year posted a 14 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £12.2 million on a turnover of £120 million. The company has also indicated it could follow its success in Russia by launching Irn Bru in Poland and Hungary, following successful market testing in both countries.

Further Information: [www.agbarr.co.uk](http://www.agbarr.co.uk)  
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### **Elderly recommended to cut down on salt**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Elderly people have been recommended to cut their salt intake, as part of advice from National Salt Awareness Day today.

In line with current efforts from the food industry to reduce salt content in foods, older consumers are advised to take note of the salt they consume in order to reduce the chance of a stroke or heart attack.

Myrtle Neil, the director of health at the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, told the BBC: "It's important to remember that the effects of salt increase as we get older.

"This is the time of life when we are most at risk from heart attack and stroke anyway."

Although the food industry, education initiatives and the government are working together to inform people about salt, many are still unaware of health effects and do not fully understand salt content shown on food labelling.

Advice has also been issued to consumers to not add salt to their meals at the dinner table and instead use other flavourings such as herbs and spices.

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### **UK juice sales rocket**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The popularity of fruit juice and drinks continues to soar, as latest figures reveal Brits spent over £2.3 billion on them last year.

According to a report published by Mintel today, although orange and apple juice still make up more than 70 per cent of the market, consumer demands are now changing.

UK consumers are more likely to opt for exotic juices, with those containing kiwi, passion fruit and various berries up by 133 per cent in terms of volume.

However, tomato and grapefruit juice decreased by 60 and 23 per cent respectively.

James McCoy, senior market analyst at Mintel, explained to Manchester Online: "Trends towards healthier eating as well as an increasing interest in more natural, organic products, are key reasons for the phenomenal growth we have seen in this market.

"What is more, British consumers are now demanding more top quality, premium products and produce with added vitamins, minerals and functional ingredients."

Mintel looked at both pure fruit juices and drinks that contain a percentage of juice, with figures revealing the overall market value has now increased to £2.32 billion.

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### **Food retailers to offer healthier snacks**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarkets have been defending themselves, following a new report on snack foods by the Food Commission.

According to the report, supermarkets place too many 'unhealthy' snacks by the checkouts, tempting consumers and small children to eat chocolates, sweets and crisps.

Morrisons, which was accused of being the worst supermarket, told the Mirror online: "We offer a range of products at checkouts based on customer demand and convenience."

Asda had only seven per cent of its checkouts free from convenience foods, based on 3,500 tills in 300 high street supermarkets.

However, food retailers are making moves to make checkout options healthier, with  
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Asda adding two dried fruit lines and confectionery space being reduced in stores.

Waitrose was deemed to be the most responsible with its product placement.

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### **Biggest ever acquisition for Inter Link**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Inter Link Foods has acquired the trading assets of Yorkshire Cottage Bakeries today for a maximum consideration of £12.25 million.

The UK cake manufacturer produces branded, private label and licensed cake products and this deal is its largest acquisition so far, providing new products and complimentary items for its range.

Alwin Thompson, executive chairman of Inter Link Foods, told Just Food: "This latest acquisition brings a very successful, well invested, growing business with excellent plant, machinery and spare capacity into the group.

"We have very clear plans as to how we will be able to capture the full range of opportunities presented by this latest acquisition and I look forward to reporting on our progress."

Yorkshire Cottage Bakeries Group operates from three main sites, with two in Bradford and one in Manchester, producing items such as Christmas cakes, small buns, mini rolls, slab cakes and cake bars.

Operating profit at the firm is estimated to be £2 million and it has sales of £19.9 million.

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### **Bakery workers warned of asthma risk**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Supermarket bakery workers are at considerable risk of developing work-related asthma, according to a new study.

Researchers at Imperial College London and Royal Brompton Hospital found that up to nine per cent of bakers, four per cent of bakery managers and three per cent of bakery assistants may have symptoms of asthma caused by working in supermarket bakeries.

The study, published in the European Respiratory Journal, also found high levels of sensitisation to ingredients involved in the baking process, including flour, with around a quarter of workers demonstrating sensitisation to one or more allergens.

Researcher Dr Paul Cullinan, from Imperial College London and Royal Brompton Hospital, said: "While bakers' asthma is unlikely to prove life threatening it can have a significant impact on quality of life, leading to poorer health and forcing most to change jobs. We discovered high levels of sensitisation to various ingredients, including flour, potentially increasing the likelihood of bakery workers developing work-related

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symptoms."

The research team looked at 239 employees from 20 in-store bakeries for a supermarket chain and collected data from questionnaires on a number of respiratory symptoms, including chest tightness, breathing difficulties, chest wheezing or whistling, running or itchiness of the nose and eyes and sneezing.

They also used skin prick tests to check for allergies associated with baking and discovered that 15 per cent of employees reported work-related asthma symptoms, and 26 per cent had eye or nose work-related problems.

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

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### **Baked fish cuts stroke risk in elderly**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Regular consumption of baked or boiled fish can reduce the risk of a stroke in the elderly, new research claims.

Scientists from the Harvard School of Public Health also found that eating fried fish or fish sandwiches is linked to a higher risk of strokes.

The study, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, tracked the diet of 4,775 adults for 12 years and discovered that eating broiled or baked fish one to four times per week, or five or more times per week was associated with a respective 28 per cent and 32 per cent lower risk of ischemic stroke.

By comparison, fried fish and fish sandwich consumption was associated with a 37 per cent higher risk of all types of stroke and a 44 per cent higher risk of ischemic stroke.

The research team wrote: "Although the observed associations may reflect dietary habits earlier in life, our findings suggest that diet may influence stroke risk beyond the earlier development of cardiovascular disease in young adulthood and middle age."

"Our findings also suggest that...preparation methods may be important when considering relationships of fish intake with stroke risk," they added.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death worldwide, with nearly one in three global deaths, about 16.7 million, linked to a form of cardiovascular disease.

(no further information)

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### **S&M Cafes to raise £1 million ahead of flotation**

**Date:** Wed, 26 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The London-based S&M (Sausage and Mash) Cafes group is reportedly planning to raise £1 million through a private placing

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The company, which hopes to float on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) towards the end of the year, hopes to use the cash raised to open between two and three new S&M cafes in London within a year.

S&M Cafes communications manager Joanna Hall told Caterer magazine that the chain expects to open a new outlet within the next few months in the Fulham Road area, followed by a second in Camden.

The group, which aims to fill a perceived gap in the market for good-quality licensed cafes, was founded in 2001 by Kevin Finch after he sold seven restaurants, including the south-west American-themed Montana, to the Hartford Group in 1999.

S&M cafes sell traditional British dishes at low prices and follow a 1950s and 1960s theme.

(no further information)

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### **Dairy Council offers portion guidance**

**Date:** Thu, 27 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK consumers are being encouraged to consume dairy products in the same way the government recommends they eat five portions of fruit and vegetables.

According to the Dairy Council, three portions a day of milk, cheese or yoghurt would be beneficial to people of all ages.

In a bid to boost awareness of the health benefits of dairy products, the council has provided daily portion recommendations and highlighted the benefits products offer such as being a rich source of calcium.

Portions include a glass of semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, a small piece of cheese or a small pot of low-fat yoghurt.

It is thought the council is also promoting products since the amount of milk consumed per head has dropped, with overall consumption decreasing by 25 per cent over the five years up to 2002.

Ursula Arens from the British Dietetic Association told Telegraph online: "One problem is that we see a sharp drop in dairy food, such as milk, cheese, butter and yogurt when children move away from parental control and have an opportunity to express their own ideas about what they eat. They wrongly perceive all dairy products as high in fat.

"Many do not realise that they need to make sure they absorb plenty of calcium. What is eaten as a teenager has a critical influence on the peak bone density level between the ages of 25 and 30."

The council is also keen to show that dairy can be beneficial in other ways by offering protein, B vitamins, zinc and vitamin A.

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### **BSE precautions are sufficient**

**Date:** Thu, 27 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

BSE experts have offered reassurance to UK consumers by claiming today that current safety measures are sufficient to protect humans.

According to scientists from the Commissariat a l'Energie Atomique, banning spinal tissue, brain and older cattle from the food chain has worked.

Lead researcher Dr Jean-Philippe Deslys, told the BBC: "To become infected you would need to eat an enormous amount of brain, which is not possible.

"The measures taken now really give a guarantee of food safety and future crises can be avoided."

The team studied monkeys to ascertain how much infected tissue a human would need to eat to be at risk and concluded it would be more than anyone could consume.

In addition, even if the UK changed to screening cattle older than 30 months for BSE, as is the case in some parts of Europe, then food would still be safe to eat.

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### **Healthier eating boosts fruit juice sales**

**Date:** Thu, 27 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Britain now consumes 2.2 billion litres of juice drinks a year, around 36 litres per person, according to new data out this week.

Research company Mintel found that orange and apple juice still account for more than 70 per cent of the market, but Britons are buying more exotic juices. The market for exotic juices grew by 133 per cent last year, while grapefruit juice fell 23 per cent and tomato juice dropped by 60 per cent.

The company predicts that sales of both fruit juice and juice drinks, including fresh or from a concentrate and drinks that contain a percentage of juice, will continue to rise and forecasts that the market will grow to almost £3 billion by 2009.

James McCoy, senior market analyst at Mintel, said: "Trends towards healthier eating as well as an increasing interest in more natural, organic products, are key reasons for the phenomenal growth we have seen in this market."

However, fruit juices and smoothies should be combined with a diet including a range of fruit and vegetables, experts have advised.

The British Dietetic Association has warned that some drinks, particularly dairy-based smoothies, are high in calories and consumers should be ensuring they drink unsweetened fruit juices.

Dr Frankie Phillips of the BDA, explained: "With fruit juice, unsweetened juices such as

orange or apple are fine and will count towards having five portions of fruit and vegetable a day.

"It's fine to have it as one of your portions, but it can't count as all five - no matter how much you drink."

Further information: [www.mintel.com](http://www.mintel.com)  
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### **NFU executive calls for environmental focus**

**Date:** Thu, 27 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The deputy president of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) has declared that farmers must highlight the environmental benefits of British agriculture.

Peter Kendall said many organisations will have the public believing that farmers as an industry are not environmentally conscious and it is vital to put the record straight.

"It is vitally important for farmers to inform the public of the fact that we are doing plenty to preserve and enhance the environment and many of us are voluntarily signing up to agri-environment schemes," he told NFU members in Monmouthshire.

With regards to pollution Mr Kendall said he believed that it was important that individual farmers continued to be responsible for their actions, but, that the industry, as a whole, should not be held responsible through pollution taxes.

"If an individual factory pollutes then it is individually punished and not the whole industry and this is the approach that farming must take," he insisted.

Mr Kendall also spent time during the conference listening to the concerns of local members, particularly regarding the current plight of Abergavenny market and members reiterated the need for a livestock market in Monmouthshire.

Further information: [www.nfu.org.uk](http://www.nfu.org.uk)  
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### **Bakery industry needs better training**

**Date:** Thu, 27 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Workers in Britain's bakery industry need better training to fully understand the processes involved in producing baked goods, according to industry experts.

John White, director of the UK Federation of Bakers, said that Britain's bakery sector was struggling to attract new food science and technology personnel and added that increasing job rotation meant that many workers were not getting sufficient training.

Mr White told BakeryandSnacks.com that the situation "gives the industry cause for concern" and pointed out that workers increasingly needed to know about a range of technical issues as the industry becomes more innovation driven.

The UK's recently established food and drink sector skills council, Improve, said it was aware of shortages in food science and technology across the entire food industry and the group's newly appointed director of employer engagement, Karen Brown, plans to lead a team identifying skills gaps in employers' workforces.

Paul Catterall, baking business manager at the Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association (CCFRA) helps to run short courses on a range of topics from biscuit technology to pastry products and shelf-life for both young and experienced industry workers. He claims that general knowledge of baking processes and ingredients is possibly worse than it was 10 years ago.

He told the website: "There's a serious lack of training within the bakery industry. Understanding what ingredients do is vital. Every area relies on understanding the processes involved and you can also use that knowledge to develop new products."

A recent bakery industry report by Improve, using mainly 2001 data, found that bakery production was one of the top three most commonly reported training needs, alongside food hygiene and communication.

(no further information)

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### **Greggs reveals new £13 million facility**

**Date:** Fri, 28 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

UK bakery firm Greggs is to invest £13 million in a new central savoury facility in the North East.

The investment is the result of continuous growth in sales of pasties and sausage rolls and will create more than 50 new jobs over time.

Sir Michael Darrington, Greggs' Group managing director explained: "As we invest and grow our business throughout the country, it is particularly pleasing to be able to announce this major investment in the North East where the business started and our head office is based."

It is hoped the new factory will also help to provide additional capacity for the company's successful range of savouries and support ambitious new business plans.

Funding and support for the investment have been provided by One NorthEast, North Tyneside Council and the Tyne and Wear Development Company.

The new facility will be situated in Longbenton, on the Balliol Park site and will use the same leading edge processes and equipment as the current factory.

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### **NFU predicts positive future for farming**

**Date:** Fri, 28 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The NFU has reassured farmers that they should still be positive about the future of the  
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industry, following latest total income from farming figures released today.

According to official figures, the modest recovery in farm incomes over the last few years is now faltering, as the NFU predicted.

Chief economist for the NFU, Derrick Wilkinson, said: "We were seeing a slight recovery from the low point of 2000, but the figures show this is now beginning to tail off. One of the major reasons for this downturn has been the increase in costs and this highlights the need for farmgate prices to rise."

However, the NFU claims the CAP reform is a key opportunity for the industry to regroup and will help the situation.

Mr Wilkinson explained that farmers are starting to reassess their business, look for new markets and improve efficiency because of the CAP reform and single farm payment will offer support too.

In addition, the union believes that farmers will continue to focus on food, claiming that non-food profits are "unlikely to provide an alternative to their core business which is producing quality, good value food".

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### **Researchers look into CLA-rich foods**

**Date:** Fri, 28 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Meat and dairy products high in the healthy fat conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) have been the focus of ongoing research in Scotland, posing potential competition to existing added-CLA products.

Scientists at the Rowett Research Institute in Scotland have been investigating the health benefits of red meat, which, though containing significant amounts of saturated fat, also contains omega-3 fatty acids and CLA.

"Our research has shown that it's possible to control the microorganisms in the cow's stomach to make healthier fatty acids," commented research leader Dr John Wallace to Nutra Ingredients.

"But those present in the diet are not necessarily transferred directly into the meat and milk produced by these animals," he added.

"We feel it is better to produce [CLA] fat naturally."

It is thought that naturally CLA-rich foods could pose significant competition to CLA-supplemented goods. However in clinical trials undertaken by ingredient firms Cognis and Loders Croklaan it has been demonstrated that their products can help reduce body fat.

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### **New food fads for 2005 revealed**

**Date:** Fri, 28 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

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### **Analysis**

Mintel has revealed the latest results in its Global New Products Database (GNPD), with trends set to focus on health and more exotic flavours.

According to the GNPD, carbohydrates are to come back in favour in 2005 as low-carb diets start to fade away and consumers are encouraged to eat bread, rice and potatoes.

Whilst in 2004 consumers got more adventurous and tried various cuisines such as North African flavours, this year foods are set to include flavours from sub-Saharan Africa and the combination of fruit and spice and sweet and hot flavours are likely to increase.

David Jago, director of GNPD Consulting, commented: "Overall, we should see more exotic flavours going into everyday products like snacks, often as limited edition flavours.

"Flavour blends will also continue to appear and we expect growth in sweet & spicy flavour combinations."

A key issue in the UK will be to look at the glycaemic index of products and mid-positioned products such as half-caffeine and mid-calorie drinks and foods are likely to prove popular.

"Such products fit the growing trend towards 'balance', and represent a useful compromise between the luxury, full-fat end of the market and the fat-free or very low fat option, which often only appeals to the very health conscious," Mr Jago added.

In line with health concerns, the King Size product is also set to end, with portion control becoming a big trend and bigger items being relaunched as 'Share Size'.

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### **Innovative packaging service launched**

**Date:** Fri, 28 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

A US firm which helps UK food firms deal with contaminated product batches is to offer new support for packaging.

Thermo Electron has a special, purpose-designed unit that meets a number of hygiene standards and allowing the inspection of a wide range of food and drinks.

The company is now moving onto packaging inspection, since this can also cause lost or reduced sales with destroyed overall images or price discounts occurring as a result.

Darren Eaton, product inspection services manager, told Meat Process: "By inspecting the suspected batches thoroughly, product loss is drastically reduced, not only helping with the bottom line, but also reducing the problems incurred when a member of the public discovers a contaminated item

"In the long term, we can closely examine the occurrences of contamination or product defect to get to the source of the problem enabling the customer to take preventative action."

Product contamination and food safety is an important issue for the food industry and the threat of terrorism has added to the seriousness of the issue.

The new system uses manual checking and visual inspection and the service repackages any item with faulty packaging or highlights those with faulty data on them.

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### **Industry looks forward to Beef Expo**

**Date:** Mon, 31 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

The arrangements for Britain's national beef event this year have been announced, with Wales set to host the event for the first time.

Beef Expo 2005 is set to attract a large amount of beef farmers from all across the UK, Ireland and from overseas.

The event is seen as the top specialist technical event for beef farmers and is organised by the National Beef Association (NBA).

Expo chairman Robin Gibson Watt told the Journal: "This year's Beef Expo is attracting tremendous interest and support and will be the most comprehensive specialist event for beef producers ever held in Wales.

"The beef industry is at a crossroads following the decoupling of subsidies from production and Beef Expo will provide producers with the ideal opportunity to glean all the latest technical and marketing information to meet the challenges which lie ahead."

Beef Expo will be held on June 8th at the Royal Welsh Showground and will include special shows, competitions, machinery demonstrations, trade stands and seminars, as well as offering good trading opportunities.

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### **Scientists to study food production and taste link**

**Date:** Mon, 31 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New research from food scientists has suggested that the link between the production of a food crop and taste needs to be greater explored.

The US researchers from Ohio University became aware of a link when researching potatoes and found that organic and conventional potatoes taste differently but only when the skins are left on.

Dr Kleinhenz, who led the study, told Food Navigator: "The results provide additional evidence that linkages exist between the methods used to grow crops and the responses consumers may have when eating them."

He has now called on science to further investigate these links within the context of management systems such as organic.

Depending on the results, further study could help in the design of cultivation systems

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that could optimise vegetable and crop quality and their nutritional properties.

The group used fifteen taste testers for their research, who were all asked to evaluate various samples of boiled potatoes.

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### **Innovative tortilla chips 'lower cholesterol'**

**Date:** Mon, 31 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

New tortilla chips may help consumers lower their cholesterol levels, according to new research.

KC Hayes and his team at Brandeis University in Massachusetts fried chips in oil spiked with an ingredient from plants called phytosterol, which can soak up cholesterol without harming the taste.

"I'm not trying to advocate eating chips," the scientist told the Associated Press. "They have their place, and let's make them better -- that's all."

The Brandeis researchers developed a method of using sterols in oil for fried processed foods and found that volunteers were unable to tell the difference between the special chips and those without the additive.

The US Food and Drug Administration is reviewing an application for the new use of a sterol additive and Warnock Food Products, a Californian snack food research company, bought the licensing rights to the process and is now reviewing marketing strategies with food product developer Mattson & Co.

Phytosterols, which can be extracted from plants such as soybeans, have long been used as a cholesterol-lowering additive in some margarines, and the American Heart Association and National Cholesterol Education Program recommend their use in food to help reduce cholesterol.

(no further information)

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### **Mars uses technology to preserve health benefits of chocolate**

**Date:** Mon, 31 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Chocolate giant Mars has announced that it has developed a special process for preserving the heart health benefits of chocolate.

The New Jersey company has spent nearly fifteen years researching cocoa flavanols and has developed the only patented and proprietary Cocompro that preserves them during standard processing.

According to a number of recent studies, naturally occurring cocoa flavanol compounds may help to maintain heart health, healthy blood flow, extend life expectancy and improve elasticity in blood vessels. However, only certain cocoas and chocolates are specially processed to retain the flavanols naturally occurring in cocoa beans.

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This Mars Cocopro process, used in chocolate products such as Dove Chocolate, retains the natural goodness of the cocoa bean and the delicious taste of chocolate, the company claims.

Dr Harold Schmitz PhD, director of science at Mars, said: "It's understandable that everyone wants to share in the good news, but the important thing to remember is that specific scientific research can't automatically be applied across a category of products that are processed differently, have different ingredients, and use different recipes. One thing we have learned is that not all chocolate is created equal."

Mars is one of the world's top producers of chocolate and a global leader in the science of cocoa, chocolate and health.

Further information: [www.mars.com](http://www.mars.com)  
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### **Lyondell launches new packaging technology**

**Date:** Mon, 31 Jan 05 **Type:** DirectNews Item

#### **Analysis**

Lyondell Chemical has unveiled two new resins designed for use in moulding and extrusion applications including blow moulding, sheet, injection moulding and film, where enhanced clarity is essential.

The new PP30HF01 and PP33HF04 polypropylene-ethylene copolymer resins can be used to make food containers and beverage bottles.

The resins feature Milliken Chemical's Millad 3988 clarifying agent, one of the most widely used clarifying agents for polypropylene, offering superior clarity, reduced density, increased strength and enhanced cost effectiveness, according to Food Production Daily.

PP30HF01 and PP33HF04 polypropylene-ethylene copolymer resins are compliant with the Food and Drug Administration regulations and have been cleared for storage and to come into contact with food.

"We wanted to offer a superior product with exceptional clarity," said Chuck Shearn, Lyondell's marketing manager for blow moulding. "By incorporating Millad 3988 clarifying agent into our resins, we can offer our clients products with outstanding clarity, faster cycle times, dimensional stability and toughness."

Lyondell Chemical is the third-largest independent, publicly traded chemical company in North America. It operates on five continents and employs approximately 10,000 people worldwide.

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