

Nestle to enter fair trade coffee market

Swiss food group Nestle will begin selling a new brand of fair trade coffee in a UK trial this month, according to reports.

The firm has filed for the official certification of its new brand, Partner's Blend, with the British fair trade federation, thereby assuring customers that the coffee beans used in the manufacture were bought at a price that allowed the coffee farmers to make a profit.

The UK is the world's largest market for fair trade coffee, generating annual sales worth £142.5 million.

Nestle and its US competitor, Kraft Foods, account for around a third of global green coffee bean purchases.

The launch of Nestle's Nescafe in 1938 marked the birth of "instant", soluble coffee.

Particularly popular with the US military during the Second World War, the entire output of the firm's US plant was then reserved for the armed forces for a whole year.

Further information: <A href="

http://www.nestle.com/Our_Brands/Beverages/Overview/Overview+Beverages.htm"

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http://www.nestle.com/Our_Brands/Beverages/Overview/Overview+Beverages.htm

Chocolate found to ease diarrhoea

Flavonoid-rich dark chocolate has recently attracted a lot of attention for its health-giving properties, and it now emerges it may also offer some relief for sufferers from diarrhoea.

A study carried out at the Children's Hospital & Research Centre in Oakland, US, has found that the flavonoids in cocoa beans can inhibit the intestinal protein CFTR.

CFTR is responsible for the regulation of fluid secretion in the body's small intestine.

Scientists spent a year studying cocoa extracts in cell cultures designed to replicate conditions in the small intestine, and found that all had lower fluid levels.

Study co-author Horst Fischer explained: "Our study presents the first evidence that fluid loss by the intestine can be prevented by cocoa flavonoids.

"Ultimately, this discovery could lead to the development of natural treatments that are inexpensive, easy to access and are unlikely to have side effects."

The study confirms the science behind an ancient remedy that was used by South American and some European cultures as far back as the sixteenth century.

Conducted in collaboration with experts from Germany's Heinrich Heine University, the research was published in the October issue of the Journal of Nutrition.

The antioxidants in flavonoids, also present in red wine, have previously been proved to combat free radicals, improving heart health by helping blood vessels to dilate, resulting in better blood flow.

Further information:
http://www.foodconsumer.org/777/8/Dark_chocolate_helps_diarrhea.shtml

EU packaging deadline too tight, says CIAA

Five new EU laws requiring all packaging to bear an identification mark from 2008 onwards have been described as "unworkable" within the given timeframe by the Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU (CIAA).

The mark will be introduced for the purposes of traceability, and will apply to all food operators in the UK as part of a single hygiene policy to be introduced in January next year.

The packaging requirement in question involves all current wrapping, packaging materials to be used up before the beginning of 2008.

Manufacturers are therefore being asked to buy up all existing stocks of this material, with an old identification mark, by the end of 2005.

CIAA spokesperson, Thierry Habotte, told FoodProductionDaily that this timing was too tight, explaining: "While the CIAA welcomes the introduction of the implementing regulations, it is concerned that the measure...remains unworkable for manufacturers and is of no benefit to the consumer".

The other implementing rules agreed include guidelines for increasing the amount of information required for tracing products, as well as information on methods of testing for marine toxins.

Further information:
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=62922-ciaa-hygiene>

Fruit and vegetables give boost to bones

An additional benefit of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables in adolescence is that it aids the formation of healthy bones, a new Canadian study has found.

A team from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon tracked the diets of 85 boys and 67 girls, aged between 8 and 20, for seven years.

Their total bone mineral content was recorded in the autumn each year using a technique known as dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry.

Independent of their calcium intake, the study found that boys eating at least 10 portions of fruit or vegetables each day had an average 40.6g of extra mineral content in their bones by the end of the investigation.

This figure is as compared with those boys who only ate one portion each day.

Although the link could not be established in the case of girls, Dr Hassanali Vatanparasat observed that adolescent girls had a tendency to underreport their daily food intake.

As well as containing calcium, Dr Vatanparasat pointed to fruit and vegetables as a source of minerals that regulate levels of acid in the body to prevent bone loss.

Forming strong bones when young is key to the prevention of the brittle bone disease osteoporosis in later life.

Published in the September issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, the research found that the majority of the children on the programme were not eating a sufficient quantity of fruit and vegetables.

Further information:
<http://www.nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?n=62944-fruit-bones>>
<http://www.nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?n=62944-fruit-bones>

Palsgaard to launch new low-fat emulsifier

Danish firm Palsgaard has announced that it will be displaying a new emulsifier-stabiliser system at Food Ingredients Europe (FIE) 2005.

Containing beef gelatin, modified starch, mono and di-glycerides and sodium citrate, the additive is designed to be used in the manufacture of chilled, quark based, aerated desserts, responding to consumer demand for sweet products that remain low in fat.

In fact, Palsgaard claims that its system can be used to produce a dessert "with 2.5 per cent fat, or even with no fat at all", according to FoodProductionDaily.

However, it also "maintains organoleptic characteristics similar to those of a standard high fat version", the firm says.

European labelling requirements will mean the listing of numbers E1422, E471 and E331.

Emsulsifiers have been found to be one of the areas at the forefront of growth in the additives market, the market having increased by around 5.6 per cent since 2001, according to market analysts Frost & Sullivan.

FIE Europe 2005 will take be held in Paris from November 29th to December 1st.

Adfero Ltd, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Tel: 0800 917 8 917 web: www.adfero.co.uk

Further information:
<http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=62937-palsgaard-emsulfiers>

A starch made of stronger stuff

Avebe has launched a new type of GMO-free potato starch that it claims is the first of its kind to be developed, according to Food Ingredients First.

The amylopectin potato starch, Eliane, is obtained through conventional breeding techniques, and contains at least 99 per cent amylopectin, which is a type glucose found in plants.

Avebe says that the higher concentration of amylopectin provides the food producer with a functional starch, which has a better texture and offers cost saving opportunities.

It suggests that Eliane can be used as a new food ingredient to improve existing products because it freezes easily, is stable when baked, and can be utilised in a wide range of food applications such as sauces, soups, bakery products and snacks.

Avebe comments that less starch is needed when making powdered sauces, because of Eliane's "superior thickening characteristics", and when used as an ingredient, it allows the flavour of the food to come through.

When re-hydrating products, the new starch does not need to be heated to as high a water temperature as current starches on the market.

Avebe says it has met consumer and industry demand for new and innovative food solutions.

Further information:
http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?fSite=AR283&nw=hd&siz e=ld&sno=1&main_page=1&id=221

Danone to launch third water brand in UK

French Danone is reported to be preparing to launch its third water brand in the UK, looking to establish a young customer base from both sexes.

The unflavoured water is expected to hit the shelves in spring next year, and will be available in 250ml and 1.5 litre bottles.

The market for bottled and flavoured waters is growing, along with juices and other healthy alternatives to carbonated beverages.

Consumers are turning away from such fizzy drinks, as government and media focus on eating and drinking more healthily appears to be being accepted.

However, the youth market is one yet to be tapped, particularly as the government recently announced a ban on "junk food" being dispensed from school vending machines from next September.

"Fizzy" drinks will have to be replaced with bottles of water and other more healthy alternatives, such as milk and fruit juices.

An industry spokesperson told Brand Republic: "It's not a case of supermarkets delisting existing water brands to make way for new products; they are increasing the space given to water at the expense of high-calorie carbonated drinks."

Danone currently sells the Vittel and Evian brands in the UK, aimed at men and women respectively.

Further information:
<http://www.brandrepublic.com/bulletins/br/article/520180/danone-paves-major-water-brand-launch/>

School meals report published

The School Meals Review Panel has published its report, outlining recommendations for radically improving the nutritional value of food served in the UK's schools.

Key stipulations include that by 2006 daily meals should contain at least two portions of fruit and vegetables, omega-3 rich oily fish should be served regularly, and clean, fresh drinking water should be abundant.

Specific nutrient requirements would need to be met by 2008 in the case of primary schools, and 2009 for secondary schools.

The report also calls for strict monitoring of eating patterns, with suggestions that headteachers stop pupils from leaving the school grounds at lunchtime, and advice issued to parents on the contents of school lunchboxes.

Compulsory cooking classes for 11 to 14 year-olds have also been proposed, with an emphasis on health, food safety and hygiene in preparation.

The panel's head, Suzi Leather, explained: "All school food should be good food. School meals should be an important source of nutrition for children, especially those from low income households.

"By redressing the current imbalance in children's diets, schools can contribute towards a reduction in childhood obesity and tooth decay and, in the longer term, reduce the likelihood of our children suffering from chronic diseases later in life."

There will be a 13-week consultation period on the panel's report.

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.4rfv.co.uk/nationalnews.asp?id=44709>">
<http://www.4rfv.co.uk/nationalnews.asp?id=44709>

Phytoestrogen consumption linked to lung cancer prevention

A diet rich in the plant-derived compounds phytoestrogens can cut the risk of developing lung cancer, a study has concluded.

Researchers from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Centre in the US, took data from 1,674 lung cancer patients, and 1,735 healthy individuals, and found those eating the largest amounts of foods such as soya and other vegetables were less likely to have developed lung cancer.

The risk was found to be reduced by as much as 46 per cent across the sample being studied.

The scientists asked the participants detailed questions about their diet for the year before embarking on the trial for lung cancer, and assumed that to represent their general eating habits.

They acknowledge, however, that more research is necessary, as the trial relied on the participants' memories stretching back over a year.

The belief is that phytoestrogens may bind to oestrogen receptors present in normal and malignant lung tissue, thereby helping to regulate cancer growth.

The results of the research were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.dominicantoday.com/app/article.aspx?id=5212>">
<http://www.dominicantoday.com/app/article.aspx?id=5212>

New sensor detects quality and quantity

Cognex has announced that its new stainless steel vision sensor, In-Sight 5400S, will be available from November.

Particularly useful for the food industry in verifying the quality of packaging, it can be used to inspect labels, caps and safety seals, and ensure label text and dates are correct.

In general, it can sort all manner of objects, detect correct fill levels, and verify products that are contained in cartons.

It features software including In-Sight Explorer for simplifying application, and the performance standard for feature and object location, PatMax, is available if desired.

Designed specifically for harsh industrial conditions, the device meets the IEC specifications for shock and vibration, and can undergo a chemical wash down and submersion.

Kris Nelson, senior vice president for vision sensors, commented: "The In-Sight 5400S provides protection from harsh manufacturing environments without the added cost and complexity of an accessory enclosure."

He added that its "combination of performance and ruggedness" made it "ideal" for application in the food industry.

Further information: <A href="

[http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=62973-cognex-vision-fill-levels">](http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=62973-cognex-vision-fill-levels)

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=62973-cognex-vision-fill-levels>

Beer brewed to beat the cravings

A new functional beverage has been developed, marketed by its German manufacturers as the world's first anti-smoking drink.

As the government continues with its efforts to win support for a ban on smoking in all public places, including pubs and restaurants, Nautilus GmbH Laboratoriumsbedarf has announced a lager that contains nicotine.

Dubbed "NicoShot", each 250ml can will contain 6.3 per cent alcohol and 3mg of nicotine alkaloids.

Three cans will therefore contain approximately the equivalent of a standard packet of cigarettes.

Similar to patches or nicotine chewing gum, it is designed to help smokers to give up the habit gradually, offering "cigarette satisfaction in a beer without the smoke", the makers claim.

Richard Davis, president of Beverage Marketing USA, explained: "NicoShot is a smoking-cessation brew designed to satisfy the nicotine urge whenever you want a cigarette, but can't smoke - providing a realistic way to quit smoking."

Preparations are currently underway for the beer to go on sale in Ireland, and it could then be rolled out across the rest of the UK.

Further information: <A href="

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/health/thehealthnews.html?in_article_id=364311&in_page_id=1797

All salt's the same, says Cash

Consumers are increasingly seasoning their food with sea and rock salt rather than standard table salt, believing that it is better for them, according to new market research.

Although sales of salt have decreased recently, apparently in favour of herbs and black pepper, sea and rock salt sales have actually increased.

The Consensus Action on Salt and Health (Cash) spoke to 51 people on a London street, and found that 65 per cent of those who bought sea salt cited health as the reason for their decision.

The same explanation was given by 43 per cent of consumers who opted for rock salt.

The perception that these are more luxurious and "natural" has also played a part, as has the endorsement of certain celebrities, including Delia Smith, according to Professor Graham MacGregor, Cash chairman.

Professor MacGregor singles out Delia's recipes that highly recommend the use of Maldon salt.

Cash's campaign to lower salt consumption has won the backing of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), and has also brought pressure to bear on food manufacturers to lower the salt content of their processed products.

The message put forward by Cash is that all varieties of salt contain approximately the same amount of sodium chloride, and it is this that increases blood pressure.

Further information:
<http://www.999today.com/foodanddrink/news/story/2029.html>

A golden age for beetroot

Beetroot has officially been awarded superfood status, joining the likes of garlic, blueberries and oily fish as a good all-round source of essential, health-giving nutrients.

UK supermarket sales of the purple root vegetable have increased five per cent this year, having previously shown no sign of moving for five years.

Rich in iron and magnesium, it can therefore provide protection against cancer and anaemia, as well as being known for boosting flagging energy levels, referred to as the "vitality veg" in the past.

The current trend among healthy eaters is to buy it raw to add to mashed potato, and it is particularly popular with TV chef, Delia Chef, who says it is "vastly underestimated" on her website.

High Street retailer Marks & Spencer has also announced that a new "golden" variety is going on sale this week.

Peter Ireland, the chain's beetroot buyer, said the beetroot would "add a really distinctive flavour and colour to salads", adding that it was "one of the star's of our organic range".

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/48242.html>">
<http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/48242.html>

Increasing demand for non-dairy drinks

The market for soya milk and similar non-dairy drinks is enjoying significant growth in Europe, where the UK currently leads the way, according to a new report.

Organic Monitor states that the sector is growing by more than 20 per cent year-on-year, with total sales expected to top €600 million by the end of 2005.

The report concluded that the reason for this rapid growth was that the products' customer base was broadening.

Where previously the majority of consumers had been sufferers from lactose intolerance, many are now turning to the drinks for a more general array of health benefits.

"Soya milk in particular is popular because of its link to low incidence of heart disease, osteoporosis and breast cancer," Organic Monitor said.

Consultant, Angelique Anthian, said: "Fresh soya milk, which competes directly with dairy milk on retailer shelves, is the fastest growing segment in the British non-dairy drinks market," according to just-drinks.com.

The report also predicted that Germany would overtake the UK to become the dominant player in the market in 2005.

Further information:
http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28714

Physics integral to functional food

Scientists working for the food group Nestle have published a paper arguing that modern physics will be key to developing future food products, particularly with the increase in demand for so-called "functional" foods.

It calls for the 10 most suitable techniques for optimising structure and functionality to be identified, and stresses the importance of understanding the behaviour of soft condensed matter (SCM).

"Soft Condensed Matter Physics will contribute to the understanding of physical properties of natural proteins, lipids, polysaccharides and colloids, such as casein micelles in milk," the report states, according to Foodnavigator.com.

The challenge, however, lies in applying these physics-based techniques on the vast industrial scale required by the food industry, according to Professor Raffaella Mezzenga.

Nestle hopes to use the structural optimisation required for functional food design to create products such as butter, milk, ice cream, bread, coffee, and even salad dressings.

Structure becomes a factor when considering how health benefits are to be released into the body without negatively impacting on taste or texture.

Professors Raffaele Mezzenga and Peter Schurtenberger, from Fribourg University, and Doctors Adam Burbidge and Martin Michel, working for Nestle's Research Centre, published the paper in the recent issue of 'Nature Materials'.

Further information:
<http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?id=63003>

Old-age energy drink set for relaunch

An energy drink targeting the over-70s is being relaunched in the UK this week with the support of an advertising campaign that will feature 1970s Top of the Pops dance troupe Pan's People.

Complan Active Hypotonic Energy is designed to appeal to an older generation that is living longer, is more affluent, and wants to stay active into their retirement.

There are two varieties, the original having been designed for those aged over 70, and a new variation for the over-50s.

Screened for the first time this evening, the TV adverts reassemble the dancers to remind older viewers of the fun they used to have and can continue to have.

The dancers were selected because, although older, they are still fit and healthy.

A spokesperson for Complan told the Scotsman that the drink was designed to keep the joints and bones strong, "allowing you to turn back the clock and remember the old moves".

Further information: <A href=" <http://news.scotsman.com/uk.cfm?id=2028452005>">
<http://news.scotsman.com/uk.cfm?id=2028452005>

Product differentiation in the can

A new hourglass shaped can has been launched, which makers hope will sales.

Crown Food Europe says the new cans should provide a point of differentiation with other products, designed to be compatible with existing filling and retort food processing machines.

The newly designed can has recently been utilised by the canned food company Premier Foods in its new range of Crosse & Blackwell diet foods, to convey the low-fat content of the product.

The introduction of the Waistline products marks the first time the cans have been used in the commercial market.

Martin Hall, head of brands and strategy, convenience foods at Premier Foods, says that the company is pleased with the new "unique" packaging.

He explained that the innovative shape "visually reinforces the healthy nature of our products".

Steve Thomas, marketing manager of Crown Food UK and Ireland, also explained the benefits of the new cans to food manufacturers.

"Using Crown's can shaping technologies, a wide variety of shapes can be produced with fine detail and significant expansion capability, allowing food brands to generate significant shelf impact."

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.packagingessentials.com/news.asp?id=2005-10-04-22.47.52.000000>">
<http://www.packagingessentials.com/news.asp?id=2005-10-04-22.47.52.000000>

DiamondClear delivers increased beverage shelf life

An American company has developed a new material for use in the plastic bottling industry, designed to increase the shelf life of juices, ready-made teas and flavoured water.

Constar International claims its product, DiamondClear, can be blended with a mono-layer PET to bind oxygen and stop it from permeating the container. Oxygen can have a negative effect on the flavour, colour and vitamin content of many beverages.

The product is currently undergoing tests before going before the regulatory board.

Paul Prinko, Constar's marketing manager, said the company's DiamondClear is at the forefront of PET oxygen scavenging technology, combining the clarity of glass with an economical monolayer structure.

"The economics of the DiamondClear monolayer solution is superior to other barrier methods," he told FoodProductionDaily.com

Constar says it will market the product to juice, ready-made teas and flavoured water bottlers, as well as condiment manufacturers, as soon as it has been approved by the regulatory board. It expects DiamondClear to be on the market from next year.

Constar is one of the top five PET manufacturers in the US, and also has joint-venture production plants in Holland, the UK, Turkey and Italy.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=62961-constar-pet-bottling>

Packed lunches no healthier than school dinners, says survey

Children who bring packed lunches to school are no healthier than those who eat meals cooked at school, according to new research.

Researchers at London's St George's University examined the health of a sample of over 1,000 secondary school pupils from across England and Wales, and found that those who ate meals prepared by their schools actually had lower levels of insulin, blood sugar and cholesterol.

The team also measured the pupils' height, weight, waist and hip circumferences, and markers of possible obesity such as percentage body fat.

Although the level of the hormone leptin, connected to fat tissue, was also lower among the group who ate school dinners, levels of the important vitamin folate were higher among the group who ate at home.

Although this fact led them to recommend that folate content be increased in school dinners, the general conclusion was that sending children to school with packed lunches did not automatically make them healthier.

Lead author of the study, Professor Peter Whincup, explained: "to improve the diets of British children and adolescents, we need to look beyond school dinners to address overall dietary patterns and their societal determinants."

The findings were published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ). The study focused on pupils aged between 13 and 16, drawn from 72 secondary schools.

Further information: http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=RP518311J&news_headline=school_dinner_s_as_healthy_as_packed_lunches

Tesco pie goes topless

Supermarket chain Tesco has introduced a new pie without a lid of pastry, which it says is partly targeting consumers looking for a slightly healthier option.

"By removing the top, the pie will have 10 per cent less calories and 10 per cent more filling," the company explained, according to Food Business Review.

It also announced that the traditional pie was seeing a rise in sales for the first time in 30 years, spearheaded by innovation in ingredients and more health-conscious consumers, who now see it as a tasty alternative to less healthy convenience foods.

Sales have actually risen by as much as 26 per cent, the chain said.

Tesco's "Topless" pies, as they have been branded, are going on sale across the UK, initially in two flavours: chicken and steak.

Further information: http://www.food-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=FF1F1250-A089-4381-B7D7-773E53584BEA

Cranberries and oregano: a powerful combination

A concoction of superfood cranberries and the herb oregano could provide a powerful remedy for seafood poisoning, scientists have found.

A team from the University of Massachusetts in the US has tested various ratios of the two foods, both known to contain phenolic compounds, on the seafood bacterium *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*.

A 50:50 mixture was found to be most effective in trials on the bacterium's presence on cod fillets and shrimp samples.

The scientists also discovered that the addition of lactic acid could make the antibacterial remedy more effective still

Vibrio parahaemolyticus has been known to lead to two-day bouts of illness, with effects including diarrhoea, vomiting and stomach cramps.

The report in *New Scientist* was taken from a study published in 'Innovative Food Science and Emerging Technologies'.

Further information: http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=OM518313G&news_headline=cranberries

Adfero Ltd, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

[and oregano beat seafood bugs">
http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=OM518313G&news_headline=cranberries
and_oregano_beat_seafood_bugs](http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=OM518313G&news_headline=cranberries_and_oregano_beat_seafood_bugs)

Four Emus wine range comes to UK

Constellation Europe is to introduce its quirky wine brand, Four Emus, to the UK, and will be looking to capitalise on the increasing number of drinkers switching to wine, as well as the trend for so-called "fun" wines.

The range includes four wines, each with a bold, distinctly coloured label, and all will be sold at the Asda and Somerfield supermarket chains from the end of October.

The wines in question are a Shiraz, with a red label, Cabernet Sauvignon, coloured blue, a Rose, which understandably has a pink label, and a yellow-labelled Chardonnay.

Brand manager, Brigitte Xelot, said: "Emus are quirky, fast and funny, they are highly sociable, adventurous birds with individual personalities and a lively nature. The Four Emus range is all about having fun with great tasting wines," according to just-drinks.com.

All the bottles are priced at £5.99, and include a detachable "Wine Find" tab for ease of identification.

The Four Emus follow the launch of the "Little Penguin" range of Australian wines, which also utilise a colourful label concept to attract a younger, predominantly female generation of wine drinkers

This range is also set to introduce boxes of six "fun" size (187ml) bottles, dubbed "Littlest Penguin".

Further information: http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28726 > http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28726

Nutraceutical makers must meet regulations

Regulatory compliance is emerging as a critical issue for companies seeking to capitalise on the burgeoning "nutraceuticals" market, according to a new report.

Analysts Frost & Sullivan state that the European Union food supplements directive (FSD), which came into force in August, is expected to have a notable effect on nutraceuticals such as beta-carotene, lycopene, lutein and astaxanthin.

Food manufacturers now have to ensure that health claims can be sufficiently proved, and vague advertisements, such as "improves memory", are no longer permitted.

Analyst Anil Naidu warns companies that they will need to focus on meeting the conditions of the EU's FSD, as well as other regulations and amendments, if they are to take advantage of the growing consumer demand for functional and health-giving food products.

"Many companies whose nutraceuticals products do not feature in the approved list or on the directive's annexes, will have to invest considerable resources in terms of time and money to compile an expensive scientific dossier," he says.

Another recent report from Datamonitor claimed that while the European market for nutraceuticals is expected to grow to around US\$7 billion by 2009, some 50% of consumers are mistrustful of manufacturers' health claims.

Further information:
<http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=155236>
<http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=155236>

Time for truly British tea

The first home-grown tea leaves have made their debut on the speciality tea market four centuries after the drink was first introduced to Britain.

The Tregothnan country estate in Cornwall produced the first commercially-available tea after seven years of cultivating the leaves in secret.

They are offering one variety consisting of purely their own leaves, and others that blend the leaves with those from traditional tea producing countries.

Tregothnan now hopes to target the niche market of speciality teas, which is currently growing at around seven per cent a year. In contrast, the traditional tea industry has seen a gradual decline in its fortunes.

The tea was launched at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, south west London, with an international expert on hand to deliver his verdict on the flavour.

Jonathan Jones, head gardener at Tregothnan said the Camellia Sinensis plants were compatible with the mild Cornish climate.

'This brings together a sort of romance -- this is English tea on English soil,' he said.

Britons drink the most tea per capita in the world, even out-drinking citizens of other tea-loving nations such as India and China.

Most tea drunk in Britain is imported from Kenya, with India and Sri Lanka also providing large volumes.

Further information:
http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,16820990%255E1702,00.html">

http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,16820990%255E1702,00.html

Alcohol ads fail to target "midlifers"

In spite of much talk from politicians about the blight of binge drinking, alcohol sales are actually in decline across Europe and the US, a new report claims.

This means that if companies are to claim a share of this increasingly competitive market, they will need to target the 22 to 44 year-old age group more effectively, say market analysts, Datamonitor.

These "midlifers" account for as much as 42 per cent of Europe's estimated US\$226 billion alcoholic drinks market, but they are failing to be targeted.

Unlike the younger age group, the midlifers are found to be more concerned with the quality of their beverages, with "connoisseurship" emerging as a key market driver.

The report also finds that 59 per cent of the age group have health concerns, with 60 per cent specifically troubled by smoking in pubs.

And 63 per cent believe that the majority of advertising targets younger drinkers, refusing to reflect their changing lifestyles.

Analyst Matt Adams argues that the decline in alcohol sales is likely to continue, concluding that a "failure to tap into the 'midlifer' group could potentially spell the end for some players in this market."

Further information: http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28757

Artois Bock to benefit from advertising

InBev UK is rolling out its specialty Artois Bock beer brand throughout the UK, accompanied by a national advertising campaign.

Artois Bock used to be brewed in the 1950s, and was a model for the later Stella Artois brand.

The company expects that it will benefit from the increasing UK trend favouring "premium" alcoholic beverages, such as specialty beers, as well as the association with Stella Artois.

However, it has also courted some controversy for its 6.2 per cent ABV, which some have argued could cause confusion, misleading drinkers to exceed the drink-driving limit, as well as their own tolerance levels.

It will also only be served in half-pint glasses.

InBev has a range of Belgian beers with typically higher ABVs in its portfolio, including Leffe, with 6.5 per cent.

Advertisements to appear in The Times, the Guardian and the Observer, among other national newspapers, will refer to the life of Edmond Willems, the man who launched the brand on its first outing in the nineteenth century.

"The nature of the campaign will strike a chord with beer drinkers who will appreciate his achievements and the unique brewing heritage of the brand," says UK marketing director, Phil Rumbol, according to just-drinks.com.

Artois Bock will only be available via 1,000 fonts, in selected outlets across the UK

Further information: http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28759

Folate could foil breast cancer

Australian research has found that increasing folate intake could mitigate the risk of breast cancer in women who have a high level of alcohol consumption.

Scientists from the University of Melbourne worked alongside a team from Cancer Council Victoria to assess the amount of dietary folate and alcohol in the diet of 17,447 middle aged Anglo-Australian women.

This was performed using a food frequency questionnaire and interview session, which was repeated until either diagnosis of breast cancer, death, departure from Victoria or December 31st 2003.

Although no link could be established between breast cancer and either alcohol or folate, "women who had a high alcohol consumption and low intake of folate had an increased risk of breast cancer, but those women who had a high alcohol consumption and moderate to high levels of folate intake had no increased risk", according to Nutraingredients.com.

The conclusion drawn was that women could limit damage sustained from excessive alcohol consumption by increasing the amount of folate in their diet, perhaps with a supplement or fortified food product.

The findings were published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

At the same time, Reuters has reported that the consumption of soy to ward off breast cancer may be counterproductive and actually increase the risk of the disease.

In a series of interviews carried out by the Fox Chance Cancer Centre in Pennsylvania in the US, seven per cent of 452 women said that they thought plant estrogens in soy-based foods could promote breast cancer, in some cases having been advised by clinicians.

Further information: <http://www.nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?n=63070-folic-acid-alcohol-breast-cancer>> <http://www.nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?n=63070-folic-acid-alcohol-breast-cancer>

Low temperature ice cream solution launched

Tetra Pak has unveiled a new low temperature ice cream solution named Hoyer DeepBlue.

The processing and packaging solutions group claims that the new product provides "smoother mouth feel and creamier taste" compared with traditional ice cream, offering firms "excellent opportunities in new products, consumer satisfaction and economical production", according to FoodProductionDaily.

Tetra Pak expects Hoyer DeepBlue to generate considerable interest in the industry, as the company's Microform Technology, a unique cold kneading freezing process, produces improved product quality and healthier ice cream.

The Hoyer DeepBlue concept allows manufacturers to reduce the amount of expensive ingredients such as cream fat or butterfat in ice cream or use less expensive ingredients such as vegetable fat instead of cream fat or butterfat, offering significant cost savings.

The new low temperature ice cream concept comprises a complete range of modules dedicated to all the processing steps of low temperature ice cream production. Two Hoyer DeepBlue line solutions are being launched - one for filling cups and containers and one for extruding between sandwich biscuits.

Production steps covered by the solution are continuous freezing, ingredient addition, filling, extrusion and cutting, and Tetra Pak is also developing additional solutions for other extruded products.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63038-tetra-pak-ice-cream-temperature>> <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63038-tetra-pak-ice-cream-temperature>

Ishida Europe invests in UK training

Ishida Europe has announced that it is supporting a new training initiative for the UK food industry.

The company has donated a state-of-the-art packing machinery line to a new Technical Food Training Centre at the University of Lincoln.

The centre, located at the university's Holbeach campus, aims to tackle the shortage of well-trained technical operators in the food manufacturing industry.

Improve, the Sector Skills Council for the food manufacturing industry, estimates that around 19 per cent of the sector's workforce has no qualifications, compared with 11 per cent in the UK workforce as a whole.

As well as Ishida, a number of leading food companies in Lincolnshire have also backed the centre, which will form part of a new specialised building.

Paul Griffin, marketing director of Ishida Europe, said: "We are delighted to be able to help with this important initiative which will keep the UK food industry at the leading edge of development and competitiveness."

The Technical Food Training Centre will be completed by January 2007 and will be run as a food manufacturing site. The university campus holds Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Food Manufacture status and will help train more than 3,000 part-time students from 96 companies.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63040-ishida-training>
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63040-ishida-training>

William Grant moves into brandy

Scottish whisky firm, William Grant & Sons, has acquired the French brandy producer Raynal & Cie.

The new purchase by the independent family distillers is part of an ongoing strategy to "broaden our route to market", according to a statement from the company.

Cognac-based Raynal & Cie, previously majority owned by financial institutions, has started to develop a presence in Eastern Europe and Asia in recent years, as well as enjoying strong sales in the US and Europe.

William Grant & Sons now owns two leading French brandies - Three Barrels and Raynal - with a combined global volume exceeding 530,000 cases. Raynal & Cie employs 56 people and is based in Cognac, where the brands are produced and bottled.

The Scottish firm claims the brandies have considerable growth potential and plans to work with the Raynal et Cie management to develop strategies for building the value of the business. Details of the sale have not been disclosed but it is rumoured to have been in the region of €60 million.

In a statement, Roland van Bommel, Chief Executive of William Grant & Sons, said: "Whilst the foundation of our business continues to be our great Scotch Whisky brands, we are committed to expand into other categories through acquisition and new brand development.

"In recent years this programme has included the acquisition of Gibson's Canadian Whisky, and the development of Hendrick's Gin, Innis & Gunn, Monkey Shoulder and Reyka Vodka."

Further information:
<http://business.scotsman.com/agriculture.cfm?id=2050612005>

New vending machine to offer health advice

An innovative new design of vending machine that matches products to consumers' specific nutritional requirements could be on its way to the UK in the future.

Developed by German joint venture POSIFoods, the machine would present the user with 20 questions, requesting information relating to their level of physical activity, age, weight and sex, as well as any particular conditions, such as asthma or diabetes.

Based on the responses, the machine would then automatically mix a smoothie or milkshake incorporating the necessary amounts of important nutrients, including essential fatty acids such as Omega 3, vitamins and probiotics.

Flavourings or sweeteners could be added at the user's discretion.

Researched by German dairy and chemical firms, Fonterra and BASF, the machine is not expected to be ready for a commercial launch before three years have elapsed, but a spokesman said "I could see it being used in schools", according to the Daily Mail.

The UK's School Meals Review Panel gave its verdict on the nutritional quality of food served in the UK's schools this month.

Chief amongst its recommendation were a ban on all junk foods and drinks in schools' vending machines, a measure that will be implemented from the start of the next school year.

Further information:
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/health/thehealthnews.html?in_article_id=364821&in_page_id=1797

FSA targets labels in salt reduction campaign

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has stepped up its campaign to reduce the average person's salt intake to just 6g a day.

The FSA is putting particular emphasis on the amount of salt that may be hidden in processed foods, such as ready-meals, and is urging consumers to check labels carefully.

A £6 million TV and poster campaign will be launched to this effect, featuring animated food products.

The current market for ready-meals hit an all time high of £900 million in the year to July 2005, as demand for convenience foods has accelerated along with the faster pace of modern living.

This represents an increase of five per cent compared with a year previous, and it has been estimated that as much as three quarters of salt intake can be attributed to the ready-meal sector.

Illustrating the problem behind its new campaign, the FSA has published research showing that 63 per cent of 2,000 shoppers did not know that the recommended limit on salt is 6g a day.

No more than 34 per cent checked the labels on products for salt content, with the result that men are eating around 11g a day on average, which is almost double the recommended maximum.

Although it was promising that sales of table salt for home cooking had fallen by 10 per cent in a year, women are also still eating too much salt, an average 8g a day.

Speaking to Radio Five Live's "Wake Up To Money" programme, Gill Fine, director of dietary health and consumer choice at the FSA, said: "The campaign that we are launching today is first of all to remind people that too much salt is bad for their hearts because it raises blood pressure, which is an increased risk factor for heart disease.

"Secondly to remember to look at the labels and chose the ones that are low in salt."

Ms Fine also criticised the fast food chain Burger King for its decision to withdraw from a salt-reduction initiative, adding that it would not encourage other companies, more than 70 in total, to do the same.

Further information:
<http://www.brandrepublic.com/bulletins/br/article/521322/fsa-drives-home-6g-salt-message-6m-campaign-/>
<http://www.brandrepublic.com/bulletins/br/article/521322/fsa-drives-home-6g-salt-message-6m-campaign-/>

Text the kettle on

The UK tea company, PG Tips, and mobile firm Orange have developed a labour-saving kettle that can be switched on remotely via a message form a mobile phone.

The innovative design allows the thirsty individual to text the words "switch on", whereupon a signal is sent to an electronic circuit in a radio receiver located in the kettle's base.

This triggers a set of miniature levers to activate the switch.

Going on sale in January, the silver and black coloured "ReadyWhenYouR" is likely to popular with people who don't want to miss part of their favourite TV programme, as well as tired commuters stuck in traffic jams or subjected to delays.

Being called the greatest invention since the Teasmade by PG Tips, a spokesperson said that it "could revolutionise tea-time".

Further information:
http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=16229176&method=full&siteid=66633&headline=am-on-my-way---have-brw-redy--name_page.html>
http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=16229176&method=full&siteid=66633&headline=am-on-my-way---have-brw-redy--name_page.html

Golden Kaan wines come to UK

The South African winery KWV is planning to launch its Golden Kaan wine brand in the UK, according to just-drinks.com.

Comprising a Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz, Pinotage and a Pinotage Rose, the wines will be priced at £5.49 a bottle at a selection of retail outlets around the country.

The range is a joint venture with European-based Racke.

Gary Proctor, managing director of the KWV subsidiary ECS, commented: "Following its launch in mainland Europe in 2003 and 2004, Golden Kaan has achieved the status of the No. 1 brand in Germany in the South African category in just 12 months.

"The success of Golden Kaan in mainland Europe, Africa and overseas has resulted in the growth of the South African category as a whole."

The firm is also planning to release a Reserve range in 2006, and mentioned the possibility of a super-premium Reserve for continental Europe.

First launched internationally in June 2003 at the Vinexpo exhibition, KWV says Golden Kaan had sold in excess of 3 million bottles by August this year.

Further information:
http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28765> http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28765

Fair Trade coffee gets a starring role in the US

Starbucks has announced that it will be making its new Fair Trade certified coffee, Cafe Estima Blend, "Coffee of the Week" in its North American stores

The decision is timely, as October is Fair Trade Month, organised by TransFair USA.

Cafe Estima Blend is a combination of washed coffees from Latin America and East Africa, and it will be brewed throughout the day at participating US and Canadian outlets from October 10th until October 16th.

Starbucks teamed up with TransFair USA in 2000, and since that time it has proceeded to grow into the largest roaster and vendor of Fair Trade coffee in North America, as well as in some international markets, supplying 23 in total.

Starbucks' involvement with Fair Trade encompasses offering coffee growers loan funds, liaising with Costa Rica's Farmer Support Centre, and working towards the widespread adoption of Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) practices.

Starbucks senior vice president, Dub Hay, said: "Cafe Estima Blend is a complex coffee with a dark roast, so it's delicious when brewed in an automatic drip coffee maker and when prepared using an espresso machine.

"Purchasing Fair Trade Certified coffee is one of several ways we seek to ensure the economic sustainability of small-scale coffee farmers and ensure the long-term supply of high quality coffee."

Further information:
<http://www.socialfunds.com/news/release.cgi/4525.html>>
<http://www.socialfunds.com/news/release.cgi/4525.html>

Celebrity chefs call for junk ad clampdown

More than 20 well-known TV chefs and food writers have sent an open letter to the prime minister, calling for the government to protect the nation's children from junk food advertisers.

The likes of Anthony Worrall Thompson, Nick Rhodes, Raymond Blanc and Sophie Grigson are among those imploring the government to take action against advertisements that specifically target children with such products.

The letter also calls on food education to be given more weight in the school curriculum, so pupils do not leave education "knowing only how to open a packet or a tin".

Food writer, Sophie Grigson, commented: "To change children's attitudes to food, we need to improve their food environments both in and out of school.

"As well as presenting good appetising food on their plates, we must protect children from advertisements which promote unhealthy food and drinks, and make sure they learn the skills that enable them to prepare delicious healthy food from fresh ingredients."

The letter has been timed to coincide with National School Meals Week and the launch of the children's food bill in the House of Commons on Wednesday.

The letter's proposals mirror those of the children's food bill, which is supported by 200 MPs, 150 national organisations and thousands of parents nationwide.

Further information:
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/health/healthmain.html?in_article_id=364925&in_page_id=1774

Narrow pattern air nozzle launched

A new air nozzle is the smallest currently available, according to its manufacturers.

The fact that it extending less than an inch beyond the mounting surface means that Exair's Micro Air Nozzle can be used in food and high temperature blow-off, cooling and drying applications where there is limited space available.

The stream of air emitted measures only 1.25 inches in diameter when six inches away from the nozzle's target, and it is capable of a blowing force of 12 ounces.

The nozzle itself is compliant with OSHA dead-end and noise specifications, and a standard male compressed air inlet means that replacement for existing nozzles or open pipes is straightforward.

Installation can be achieved using standard wrenches or sockets, and there is a range of configurations to meet the requirements of the specific plant application.

Further information:
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63086-cooling-air-nozzle>

C&C sees cider sales soar on London launch

The UK's drinkers are showing a growing preference for cider, according to Irish drinks and snacks group C&C.

A nine per cent increase in first half revenues to €419.5 million was attributed to the 28 per cent growth in sales of its flagship cider brands, Bulmers and Magners.

Although Bulmers benefited from the notably good Irish summer weather, Magners was a hit in London, following a six-month marketing campaign that saw sales double.

The promotion entailed a 34 per cent increase in investment compared with the year before, and included poster advertisements placed in the London Underground.

Elsewhere in the firm's portfolio of products, volume sales of the Irish whiskey brand, Tullamore Dew, increased by 15 per cent.

The firm said it expected cider sales would continue to impress into the second half, although soft drinks and snacks had already showed signs of suffering.

C&C also manufactures Ballygowan mineral water, which leads its soft drinks brands, and Tayto crisps, as well as Carolans Irish Cream and Irish Mist Liqueur.

Group chief executive officer, Maurice Pratt, commented: "This financial performance reflects a better than expected contribution from the Group's cider division.

"Magners has exceeded our expectations in the UK while Bulmers, with the benefit of good summer weather, delivered strong growth in Ireland."

Further information:
<http://breakingnews.iol.ie/news/story.asp?j=12139902&p=zy39956>

EU allergy project launched in UK

A new EU food project was launched in London today, aiming to identify and understand the process by which allergens enter the food chain.

One of five EU food projects to be led by UK institutions in the year of the presidency, the EuroPrevail project will focus on the differences and similarities between the peanut and the pea.

Closely resembling each other in structure, the peanut is however notorious for causing allergens, while the pea is harmless.

Led by the Institute of Food Research (IFR), based in Norwich, scientists from 16 EU member states, and other countries, will also attempt to estimate just how many people suffer from food allergies.

The £9.6 million project will also seek to arrive at a figure for the cost of allergens in terms of the quality of human life.

The IFR's Dr Claire Mills said: "For the first time, we will tease out the role of diet, environment and infections in the development of food allergy and whether early signs of predisposition to allergy can be found in our genes."

Further information:
<http://new.edp24.co.uk/content/news/story.aspx?brand=EDPOnline&category=News&tBrand=edponline&tCategory=news&itemid=NOED10%20Oct%202005%2022%3A26%3A47%3A403>

Omega-3 to help the aged

Eating oily fish like salmon or tuna once a week prevents the onset of mental decline in older people, according to new research.

The study by the Rush University Medical Centre in Chicago found that omega-3 fatty acids found in oily fish were responsible for better brain functioning and that one fatty acid in particular, known as docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) could lower risk from stroke and dementia, and was shown to enhance memory performance in older animals.

The study reported: "Dietary intake of fish was inversely associated with cognitive decline over six years in this older, biracial community study.

"The rate of decline was reduced by ten percent to 13 percent per year among persons who consumed one or more fish meals per week compared with those with less than weekly consumption.

"The rate reduction is the equivalent of being three to four years younger in age."

The study, published in the Archives of Neurology, followed the dietary habits of over 6,000 adults in a mixed race Chicago community over a six-year period.

Self-assessments were performed three times a week and focused on four types of seafood - fish sticks or fish cakes, fresh fish as a main meal, shellfish like shrimp, lobster and crab, and tuna fish sandwiches.

Those who ate fish once a week remained sharper and demonstrated the lowest instances of mental decline, according to the study.

Further information:
http://www.foodconsumer.org/777/8/Eating_fish_slows_cognitive_decline.shtml

Harrods to open convenience store

London department store Harrods, usually associated with an expensive, premium range of goods, is to enter the convenience market with the opening of a new outlet serving into the night.

Sited opposite the current store in Knightsbridge, Harrods 102 will cater for busy people who don't have the time or inclination to fight their way around the main shop.

Opening in February, the 7 - 11 format will still feature the array of gourmet goods and health foods that the store's consumers have come to expect, and will also include a cafe, something that is increasingly to be found in more mainstream supermarkets.

"You will be able to order coffee with your croissants. It won't just be a luxury convenience store," a spokesperson told the Independent.

In line with the 'lifestyle' concept, there will also be an 'oxygen spa', where shoppers can pay for masks and be revived with 10 minute blasts of high concentration oxygen.

There are also suggestions that Harrods 102 could be rolled out to other major cities across the UK.

Further information:
http://www.food-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=68841047-39CB-4E12-B82E-7821395CEA3F

Tayto triumphs with Tesco deal

Northern Irish snack manufacturer, Tayto, has been awarded a landmark \$10 million deal to supply crisps to the supermarket chain Tesco.

The contact will involve the supply of the company's own brand crisps, which will comprise some of Tesco's 'Finest' and 'Temptation' ranges.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain, visited the firm's factory at Tandragee in County Armagh, and paid tribute to its investment in research and development, leading to the creation of new products with innovative methods.

He said the contract was "clearly the result of Tayto's commitment" to the Fit for Market report compiled by the Food Strategy Group, according to UTV.

"The report highlights the need for local food companies to develop innovative products, focus on providing solutions for the market place and in particular, to increase the level of exports," he said.

Further information: <A href= <http://u.tv/newsroom/indepth.asp?id=65912&pt=n>>
<http://u.tv/newsroom/indepth.asp?id=65912&pt=n>

UK fast food sales still growing

The value of the UK's fast food, takeaway and home delivery market grew by 3.9 per cent in 2004, up from three per cent in 2003, according to a new report from Research and Markets.

Estimated to total £8.38 billion, this growth can largely be attributed to increased demand for convenience in food, with ever faster paced lifestyles.

However, the growth in the sector's sales for the period from 2005 to 2009 is still predicted to be less than in the previous five years, as consumers' current concern for health matches their need for fast options.

Sandwiches have led the way in such snack sales, claiming a 36.5 per cent market share.

The report finds that this is likely to be the result of a culture of longer working hours with shorter lunch breaks.

An expansion of filling and bread options has also helped, as has the burgeoning of fast-food sandwich chains such as Subway.

Elsewhere, burgers were the second largest category, although negative publicity meant that traditional varieties were performing worse in 2004.

The strongest growth overall was in the pizza market, with more home delivery sales and new product developments (NPDs).

Coffee shops were the only other area to demonstrate notable growth.

Just over half (54 per cent) of the UK's adults patronised a fast food outlet in the year from 2003 to 2004, which is encouraging considering the impact of publicity such as the ongoing debate surrounding school meals.

Further information:
<http://www.restaurantnewsresource.com/article18933.html?NID=d59fc0bf8aaf698bb0629cade3cae37e>>
<http://www.restaurantnewsresource.com/article18933.html?NID=d59fc0bf8aaf698bb0629cade3cae37e>

Asda to trial biodegradable packaging

Stanelco has announced that its biodegradable packaging product Starpol 2000 has been approved for use that brings it into contact with food.

After testing procedures carried out by the Packaging International Research Association (PIRA), the plastic can now be used in food production facilities throughout the European Union in all food categories.

Based on sustainable crop production, Starpol is available in flexible and rigid varieties, and is particularly well suited to being thermoformed into food trays for the convenience ready-meals market.

Stanelco will now trial the product in conjunction with its Greenseal food tray lidding technology on products supplied to the Asda chain in the UK and Ireland.

The two companies have agreed to a 30-day exclusivity period for the product to be approved.

Starpol 2000 has been approved for use in fruit and vegetable applications in the US, and awaits approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for all other foodstuffs.

Further information:
http://www.just-food.com/news_detail.asp?art=62121> http://www.just-food.com/news_detail.asp?art=62121

Greaseproof packaging prevents leakage

A company has developed a new greaseproof barrier material that could improve food packaging techniques.

Air Products Polymer hopes that its new Airflex EF9100 emulsion could prevent grease from leaking on to paperboard packaging as well as improving the overall freshness of a number of different food products.

The coating can be applied to the surface of packaging to stop any possible leakage of water, oil or grease, ensuring that packaging remains secure and clean.

"This product keeps unwanted elements out of your end-use product," said Marna Schmidt, market development manager for Air Products Polymers.

"The properties of this product keep water from intruding, grease from getting through your printed packaging, or oil from creating stains. This is important when you are talking about packaging for a wide range of products that are handled daily by consumers," she added.

It is hoped that the coating could provide a more cost-effective solution to companies' packaging needs as well as reducing demand for less environmentally- friendly wax and polyethylene containers.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63120-air-products-emulsion-barrier>> <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63120-air-products-emulsion-barrier>

RSPCA launches farm animal welfare week

Consumers are being urged to give more thought to the products they put into their shopping trolleys this week.

However, rather than human health, it is animal welfare that is the focus.

The RSPCA has launched its first "Farm Animal Week", which aims to make ordinary people more knowledgeable about the processes that lead to the production of their meat, dairy products and eggs.

Part of the animal charity's "Freedom Food" project, the launch of the special week follows on the heels of a survey that found 75 per cent of shoppers would use their consumer spending power to safeguard animal welfare if they had more information.

Jackie Ballard, RSPCA director general, said: "Nearly one billion farm animals are reared in the UK each year for food, and there is something each of us can do to help improve their lives."

People are being encouraged to do seven things over the course of the week, from reading labels to check whether products use "battery" eggs, to writing to their local MPs on the subject.

If eating at restaurants, they are being encouraged to ask whether produce comes from farms with high standards of animal welfare.

Further information: <A href="

http://iccoventry.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0150swarksnews/tm_objectid=16234562&method=full&siteid=50003&headline=charity-launches-farm-animal-week-name_page.html">

http://iccoventry.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0150swarksnews/tm_objectid=16234562&method=full&siteid=50003&headline=charity-launches-farm-animal-week-name_page.html

Baileys to get marketing boost

The popular beverage Baileys Irish Cream Liqueur is to benefit from a new UK marketing campaign, with TV ads offering innovative serving suggestions in the run up to the traditionally busy Christmas season.

The £5 million investment includes print and radio advertisements, as well as a series of short TV ads, known collectively as "Served Chilled".

The first ad in the quirky series shows a man repeatedly trying and failing to pick up an ice cube with a pair of tongs.

He eventually abandons his effort, and pours the Baileys into the ice bucket instead, before inserting a straw and starting to drink.

This approach is followed up in the second instalment with the idea of serving Baileys blended together with Ice, similar to such drinks popular in coffee shops.

To this end, Diageo Great Britain, which owns Baileys, has partnered with Moulinex to manufacture Baileys-branded blenders.

These will go on sale in a number of high street stores, including Tesco, Asda, Dixon's and Argos.

Matt Hunt, senior brand manager, told just-drinks.com: "Baileys Irish Cream Liqueur is Britain's most popular take-home spirit brand.

"This campaign is aimed at encouraging consumers to enjoy Baileys in new ways and in less-formal, more-relaxed occasions."

Further information: http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28804

Ultra-thin screens to lead to moving instruction labels

German technology firm Siemens has developed the technology to create ultra-thin miniature colour display screens that could revolutionise how food products are packaged, marketed and labelled.

The displays would be significantly cheaper than liquid crystal display panels, the company said, and could be printed onto paper or foil used in food packaging.

The technology applied hinges on the use of an electrochromic material, which is one that changes colour when an electric voltage is passed through it.

The voltage affects the image by altering the charges of the particles that comprise the electrochromic material.

The material contains electrodes, with the other provided by the transparent plastic foil screen, and batteries to charge the labels are already on the market.

Currently in the process of adapting the materials so that video images could be shown, Siemens hinted at the possibility of packages with small computer games on the side, or instructions that can be switched on by pressing a button.

They also said they were working with a partner company on integrating the displays into the packaging and production process.

However, owing to the relatively short battery life the technology would only be suitable for food products with comparatively short shelf lives.

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.amonline.com/article/article.jsp?id=14656&siteSection=1>"> <http://www.amonline.com/article/article.jsp?id=14656&siteSection=1>

Typhoo tea goes to India

A staple of British larders, Typhoo tea, has been sold to Indian firm Apeejay Surrendra by its owner Premier Foods.

The household perennial was sold along with Premier Food's entire tea business to Apeejay Surrendra for £80 million.

Appejay will also gain other brands from the sale, including London Fruit & Herb and Lift.

Premier Foods intends to use the proceeds from the sale to reduce debt.

Chief executive Robert Schofield said: "Typhoo is a great brand but after a thorough review we believe it will benefit from the focus and investment a vertically integrated tea business like Apeejay can bring."

The Indian firm is among India's largest businesses with interests in tea, retail, shipping and property.

Further information:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/story/0,3604,1591368,00.html>

PepsiCo UK announces new president

PepsiCo has appointed a new president to oversee its UK and Ireland subsidiaries.

Salman Amin will replace Martin Glenn who has left to pursue other avenues after 13 years with the company. Mr Glenn had been offered senior positions with PepsiCo outside the UK but had turned them down.

Mr Glenn said he had enjoyed his time with the company but now he felt ready to move on. "I believe that PepsiCo UK has a great future and, while the decision to leave has been very difficult, I feel that now it is time to seek a new challenge," he commented.

Mike White, PepsiCo International chairman and chief executive officer said: "Salman Amin is extraordinarily well-equipped to assume the reins of our businesses in the UK and Ireland.

"He's a very strategic thinker with extensive international experience developing markets for a range of consumer products. He also brings extensive first-hand knowledge of both our snack and beverage businesses."

Mr Amin had previously worked as the senior vice principal of marketing for PepsiCo International outside the US and Canada. He joined PepsiCo as vice-president of marketing in 1995. Mr Amin will take up his post by February next year.

Further information:
http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?idNewsMaker=9319&fSite=AO545&next=2

UK food industry facing skilled labour shortage

The UK's food industry finds itself facing an increasingly serious shortage of employees who are adequately trained with sufficient skills to do the job, a new report states.

The shortfall is expected to reach 200,000 within eight years, according to the government-founded training venture, Improve.

Furthermore, although the food industry is one of the UK's most productive, almost a fifth (19 per cent) of the workforce don't have any qualifications in the work they perform.

Within the processing sector this figure rises to around a third, and compares to the total UK workforce average of 11 per cent.

The shortage is most severe in terms of technical operators and food and drink managers, and could seriously impact on productivity if not properly addressed, the report claims.

Specifically, Improve is concerned at the number of companies choosing to relocate to Europe, when the majority of employees are concentrated in a relatively small percentage of firms.

"It only takes a few big companies to leave to have a knock on effect on the infrastructure," said Improve's commercial director, Paula Widdowson, according to FoodProductionDaily.

"Many are relocating to the food and drink cluster forming around Prague," she added.

To address the problem, Improve has compiled a list of all jobs in the industry, along with a list of the skills essential for each.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63181-improve-employee-skills>

TLC announces food and beverage division

The UK's The Licensing Company (TLC) has announced the creation of a new global food and beverage division.

The move comes in response to the increase in demand for brand representation among food and drink manufacturers, and the division will be led by Daniel Avener, current global brand director at TLC.

In particular, the division hopes to build on the success enjoyed by the brand extension programme undertaken on behalf of client Allied Domecq, which Mr Avener oversaw.

"Food and beverage is the fastest growing sector within the licensing market place," Mr Avener said.

"With our proven success in this sector through the Allied Domecq brands we have created a specialist division for FMCG brand owners looking for innovative ways to strengthen their presence in the highly competitive grocery market."

TLC was also recently selected to design and implement a brand extension strategy for US-based Jelly Belly Candy Company, manufacturer of jelly beans in 50 different flavours.

TLC's work will focus on extending these flavours to other product areas, such as soft drinks, ice cream and snacks.

With the first licensing agreements currently being discussed, the first new products are expected to be launched globally in 2006.

No further information.

Nanotechnology nearing mass markets

An EU-funded research team has found that nanotechnology products are beginning to play a greater role in food packaging.

Researchers say that nanotechnologies are being utilised in a variety of ways in food packaging, such as in modifying the permeation behaviour of foils, increasing barrier properties, and improving mechanical and heat-resistance properties, according to FoodProductionDaily.com.

Researchers also say that materials containing nanoparticulate substances with anti-microbial properties are already being used and are set to become a mass application.

"This would endow packaged foods with an additional level of safety and functionality," the researchers said of these new nanotechnologies.

"Additionally, it would offer advantages along the supply chain and would potentially increase the shelf life of foods."

There are, however, concerns that these nanotechnologies could be a health risk and it is anticipated that they will not enter the mass-market until it can be proved otherwise.

This research on the usage of nanotechnology products in food packaging is being carried out in conjunction with the European Commission's development of a ten-year strategic plan for using the technologies.

No further information.

Marriage of convenience for M&S

The high street retailer Marks and Spencer has begun selling its food products from the forecourts of petrol stations.

The chain has joined forces with BP's Connect stations, opening mini convenience stores that will stock its 'Simply Food' range of products.

A pilot of the link up has seen the first two outlets open in Dumbarton, Scotland, and Hammersmith, London, with six more set to follow shortly.

The Simply Food brand includes "luxury" ready-meals, sandwiches and wines, and will aim to attract a significant slice of the UK's burgeoning market for convenience, or "on the go", food and drink.

It will seek to differentiate itself from current petrol station offerings with its stamp of "quality", targeting cash-rich, time-poor consumers such as tired businesspeople stopping for petrol on their way home from work.

Although Marks and Spencer this week reported its first positive growth in sales for two years, the move into the convenience sector is likely to have been prompted by an attempt to turn around its fortunes.

The news coincides with an announcement this week that Harrods is to open a late night, 7-11 style store opposite its famous London site.

Harrods 102 opens in February next year, and will include an exclusive "oxygen spa".

Britain's convenience food market is estimated to be worth approximately £23 billion.

Further information:
>
http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/news/article.html?in_article_id=404335&in_page_id=2

Chilli champions a good night's sleep

Contrary to the commonly held belief, a spicy evening meal could help you to a better night's sleep, according to Australian research.

Scientists from the University of Tasmania in Launceston tested the blood and studied the sleep patterns of 20 volunteers, switching from a relatively bland diet to one spiced up with chillies.

The participants spent four weeks on a diet lacking chillies and others spices, followed by a further four weeks eating food containing a daily dose of 30g of chopped fresh chillies.

Although they initially experienced some trouble adjusting to the change in diet, the experiment ultimately found the chilli diet meant people required 20 minutes less sleep each night.

It also seemed to heighten energy levels the day after, with people recorded as being as much as 30 per cent more active.

The scientists concluded that the observation could be attributed to capsaicin, which is the "spicy" chemical in chillies.

This is thought to act on sensors in the brain that regulate sleep.

Chilli may also serve to protect against the risk of heart disease, according to researcher, Dominic Geraghty.

Although he said he was "not talking about a vindaloo every day", he explained that it "may just have small effects on a variety of cardiovascular risk factors".

The results of the study were published in New Scientist.

Further information:
<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2005/s1478424.htm>>
<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2005/s1478424.htm>

Automatic label dispenser launched

A new label dispenser has been launched, which its manufacturers claim meets "the special labelling and sanitary needs of the food and pharmaceutical industries".

LabelMate's stainless-steel LD-100RS-SS is convenient for plant operators, and is sealed to ensure liquids and other materials do not enter the unit and potentially contaminate the packaged food products.

Able to be either free standing or bolted down onto a plant's operating surface, the machine can feed labels as much as 4.5 inches wide, says FoodProductionDaily.

The labels are fed onto the label web leading to the take-up spindle, and as each is dispensed, the next fills its place automatically.

The labels are dispensed from the front of the device, making it simple to operate whether left or right handed, and it is also easy to clean and resistant to rust, the company claims.

The LD-100RS-SS Automatic Label Dispenser comes with a three year parts and labour warranty.

Further information:
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63182-label-dispenser-safety>>
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63182-label-dispenser-safety>

Toast of the breakfast table

A Sony engineer has invented a breakfast table device that professes to produce the ideal width toast "soldiers" for dipping into a soft-boiled egg.

The hand-held, plastic cutter is pressed against a slice of bread, creating a series of perforations that form strips 22mm wide.

Once the bread has been toasted, each strip can then be torn off and is ready to accompany the egg.

Mike Minton, 37, explained that he had been working on his device for around a year, and had tested five models prior to the final version.

"I love egg soldiers but the one thing I hate is cutting up the toast, because it is fiddly, messy and time consuming," he said, adding that there was also a danger the sections would be too wide or too narrow.

He also said that the "secret" was to make the cuts before the bread is toasted, ensuring that each strip has a sealed edge.

This also makes the toast stronger, which means it is less likely to collapse under the weight of the yolk.

The Perfect-Soldier cutter will go on sale in February next year, priced £5.99.

It is one of the designs that will be on display at London's three-day betfair.com British Invention Show from October 21st.

Further information:
http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_1572201.html

Robinsons packaging gets Narnia revamp

The maker of Robinsons juice drinks has said that it will spend £2 million on a campaign to promote its tie-up with the forthcoming Disney film: "The Chronicles of Narnia: the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

Britvic announced that the Narnia promotion will feature on bottles of Robinsons' squash and Fruit-Shoots, as well as point-of-sale displays and in TV advertising. The company is the only drinks producer in the UK to have secured such a deal.

The promotion includes the opportunity to win holidays to Prague, where the movie was filmed, where winners will join a dinner with some of the film's characters.

Jonathan Gatward, brand controller at Robinsons', said: "This is a superb opportunity for retailers to tap into the potential of a major film partnership.

"The Narnia franchise will generate huge media and public buzz and as a major promotional partner, Robinsons will be providing consumers with a unique opportunity to engage with this exciting and magical film through a variety of activities."

Other companies will also offer promotional deals in conjunction with the film, which Disney hopes will be this year's Christmas blockbuster. McDonald's is thought to be producing action figures, which it will sell at its restaurants, according to the Tallahassee Democrat.

Further information: http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28810

Fake food posing problem

There has been a huge increase reported in the amount of counterfeit food and drink products entering the EU.

The amount of counterfeit goods entering the EU trebled last year, with the higher quality of these forgeries being cited by the European Commission as the reason for the greater difficulty in detecting them, according to website Foodproductiondaily.

In reaction, the commission is now planning measures to be introduced over the next two years to combat this, including the formation of a new business-customs working group to consider improving anti-counterfeit legislation and the formation of a new task force of customs experts.

"Most fakes are now household items rather than luxury goods and the high quality of fakes often makes identification impossible without technical expertise," the commission explained.

"One of the reasons for this explosion in trade in fakes is that criminals can now produce them on an industrial scale. This provides not only increased profits but also a new mechanism for efficient money laundering."

Imitations of Nestle, Lipton and Coca Cola products were the most common fakes found to be flowing into the EU, the commission said.

Faked food and drink products account for around four per cent of all counterfeit goods entering the EU.

No further information.

ClearForm copolymer cuts packaging costs

US-based Alliantz Flexible Packaging has launched its first product since forming as a joint venture of Rollprint Packaging Products, and Acme Packaging, based in Singapore.

ClearForm is a copolymer blend that its manufacturers claim offers cost savings for applications involving the thermoform filling and sealing of plastic frozen food packaging.

As a thermoformable bottom web, it is an alternative to the PE-based polymeric blends more frequently used, such as EVA/Surlyn/EVA and nylon coextruded films.

It also has a notably wide "thermoforming processing window", and can be used together with Rollprint's 'Allegro' range of peelable top webs to create a seal that will highlight any attempts at tampering.

Suitable for use in conjunction with food industry procedures such as gamma sterilisation and those involving ethylene oxide gas, the range of frozen goods for which it is designed include meat, poultry, seafood, baked goods and vegetables.

Further information: http://www.jobwerx.com/news/rollprint_biz-id=947604_993.html

UK children developing fear of food

The UK's newfound love affair with healthy eating may be responsible for children developing food phobias, according to a US expert in eating disorders.

Dr Sreve Bratman argues that parents who refuse to allow their children to eat any processed foods, and militantly monitor their intake of salt, sugar and fats, could lead to a condition he has dubbed "orthorexia nervosa".

An obsession as with other eating disorders, it is an unusual for being an obsession with improving health.

Following their parents' well-intentioned advice, some cases have found children starving themselves in their desire to consume only the purest food.

The deficiency in vital nutrients that could arise from a rigid diet has also been found to lead to skin problems, stomach and headaches and irritable bowel syndrome.

Speaking to the UK's Big Issue Magazine, Dr Bratman said he received quite a number of e-mails from children resident in the UK, some of which were "terribly painful to read".

"Generally they contact me without their parents' knowledge", he continued.

"Interest in healthy food as opposed to a healthy or attractive weight creates an overreaction."

Further information: <A href=" <http://news.scotsman.com/health.cfm?id=2086412005>"> <http://news.scotsman.com/health.cfm?id=2086412005>

Low carb link to Alzheimer's

A high fat, low carbohydrate diet, such as the controversial Atkins, may be linked to a decrease in the risk of contracting Alzheimer's Disease, a study suggests.

In tests carried out on mice, scientists from the US and Belgium found that production of the brain protein known as amyloid-beta was reduced when mice were put on a so-called "ketogenic" diet.

Amyloid-beta is taken to be an indicator of the Alzheimer's condition.

The key factor in the diet is the low concentration of insulin, and related hormone insulin-related growth factor-1 (IGF-1).

Although often associated with the storage of fat, the team concluded that insulin could also promote production of amyloid-beta.

Lead researcher, Samuel Henderson, said: "This work supports the premise that key aspects of Alzheimer's disease can be altered by changes in metabolism."

The research was published in the journal Nutrition and Metabolism.

Editor, Richard Feinman, commented: "Although it is too early to tell how the results will fit into the treatment of AD, the implication for diet in general is also important."

Further information: http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2005-10/bc-ahf101105.php

New food conveyor cuts down cleaning time

A new sanitary food conveyor frame has hit the market, dispensing with fastener bolt heads to prevent moving food from becoming lodged.

The use of smooth welding in the construction of Dorner's mainline AquaPruf 7400 sanitary conveyor platform also means that there is less chance of bacteria accumulating, leading to improved food safety standards and faster cleaning times.

The firm claims that the system can be completely dismantled by a single person within three minutes, leading to cost savings for processors looking to reduce the time required for daily cleaning routines.

Speaking to FoodProductionDaily, the manufacturer said: "Since mainline conveyors transporting food through any process are particularly vulnerable to bacteria growth, cross contamination and allergens, they often have to be washed down several times a day, a necessary, but time consuming delay in production."

The stainless steel device also makes a point of having no flat surfaces so that it drains as it is cleaned.

All pieces are identical for simple replacement, and cutouts can be included to improve access to the equipment's underside.

Having previously focused its attention on packaging innovations, this is Dorner's first move further up into food processing.

Adfero Ltd, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Tel: 0800 917 8 917 web: www.adfero.co.uk

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63187-dorner-conveyor-safety>

Vegetable snacks to capitalise on sweet association

A Spanish confectionery manufacturer has unveiled plans to launch a range of vegetable-based snacks for children.

Key Enterprises hopes that children will associate the packaging and brand, "FreeKee", with the familiar sweet products, and they have therefore kept the images of vegetables on the packaging out of focus.

Coming with an Omega-3 stamp of approval, the snacks are made using a mixture of linseed, sunflower and olive oils, and are labelled as both trans fat and gluten free.

They are composed 66 per cent of vegetables such as peas, spinach, tomatoes and carrots, and 12 per cent brown rice.

Set for launch internationally early next year, the firm has particularly high hopes for those countries that are banning junk foods from being served in schools.

For example, the snacks could replace the packets of crisps that will not be allowed in vending machines in the UK's schools from next September.

The product is also expected to perform well in countries where the FreeKee brand is well established, including the UK, Ireland and Australia.

The firm's director, Brendan Ara, told BakeryAndSnacks.com: "Part of the reason children go for the unhealthy options is that these are what are most available and appealing to them."

"The more countries that ban junk food in schools, the better," he added.

The product was introduced at the Anuga food fair in Cologne.

Further information: <http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=63256-key-enterprises-children-s-nutrition-healthy-snacks>> <http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=63256-key-enterprises-children-s-nutrition-healthy-snacks>

Rexam looks to RFID

Leading packaging company Rexam is investigating the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology in a number of its food packaging materials.

It is hoped that the use of RFID could allow producers to ensure that their products are handled correctly during the supply chain, reports FoodProductionDaily.

"The technology to incorporate RFID right into packaging is not there right now," said Rexam's director Felix Helander.

"It's in the future. We are looking at this as a possibility."

A number of retailers, including US-giant Wal-Mart, have already investigated the use of RFID but there has been concern that it could prove expensive and unworkable for many smaller companies. Consumers are also wary that it could present a threat to their privacy.

However, the technology could prove helpful to the food sector as a whole as it could be used to prevent on-shelf tampering or any possible counterfeiting.

No further information.

Beer prices lowest for 10 years

The price of beer sold in the UK's supermarkets is the lowest it has been for 10 years, according to figures released today.

As former beer drinkers continue to switch to wine and spirits, chains such as Asda and Tesco have been competitively reducing their prices to the extent that a litre of lager is now an average six pence cheaper than it was in 1995.

While standard lager has decreased from an average £1.24 to £1.18 a litre, premium lagers have seen even more significant reductions, in some cases down 24p to £1.77.

And as the wheels of the Christmas retail period are set in motion, reports predict that the increased competition could lead to further price cuts still.

Stuart MacFarlane, head of take-home beer sales at brewer inBev, said: "If prices had risen in line with inflation over the past decade consumers would expect to pay around £2.19 a litre for premium lager."

In recent years beer sales have been hit by consumers' perception that it is a less sophisticated beverage than wine and spirits, hence breweries' focus on so-called "premium" beers.

Wine is also seen as a healthier option, with red wine becoming particularly well known for its antioxidant properties.

Cider is also enjoying a resurgence in popularity, shedding its common association with being a cheap way to get drunk.

Further information:
<http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/hi/news/5044631.html>

Food for your mood

A new idea for the marketing of food and drink products could be opened up by the revelation that there is a strong link between a person's mood and the food they eat.

American psychologist, Cynthia Powers, has analysed the daily diaries of 500 of her patients, having requested them to include a record of the foods they ate on a daily basis.

Stressed individuals tended to opt for salty foods, prompted by the increased hyperactivity of their adrenalin producing glands, she found.

At the same time, it hardly comes as a surprise that those going through a particularly difficult period in their lives, such as the break up of a marriage, choose soft and sweet foods reminiscent of the innocence of childhood.

The sexually frustrated were found to have a high intake of carbohydrates, such as pasta, bread and biscuits, while angry people needed to take it all out on "mastication" foods such as steak.

"Food can be used to change feelings the person doesn't want to have," Ms Powers explained, which would suggest this is something food firms might consider.

"Only hard, crunchy mastication will suffice when someone needs to take out their anger."

Further information:
<http://dailytelegraph.news.com.au/story/0,20281,16955192-5001021,00.html>

Bottle tester measures carbonate gas loss

US-firm Mocon has unveiled a new device that allows plastic bottlers to quickly identify the recommended shelf life of carbonated drinks.

Prior to the development of its new Permatran-C Model 10, this required lengthy, time-consuming calculations, the company claims.

However, in what it says is a first for the marketplace, the Model 10 can predict shelf life in as little as three hours.

The device works by calculating the rate at which the plastic bottles lose their carbon dioxide.

A "loss limit" is specified for the bottle and beverage in question, which is the amount of gas that can be allowed to pass before the drink is deemed unsuitable for consumption, and the optimum shelf life is then displayed graphically.

Suitable for application with bottles sized between 250ml and 2.5l, the device can also be used in an environmental chamber, allowing the loss limit to be assessed under different temperatures.

The testing procedure is non-destructive, the data gathered can be transferred and stored on a computer, and the device is also portable.

Further information:
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63253-mocon-shelf-life-tester>

Average sugar intake three times recommended target

People do not realise they are eating the equivalent of an average 33 teaspoons of sugar a day, and many believe their diets are in fact healthy, new research reveals.

Weighing in at 132g, this is more than three times the recommended limit of 10 teaspoons, which is enough to account for 10 per cent of a person's daily energy needs.

Just as a recent Food Standards Agency (FSA) campaign highlighted in the case of salt, much of this intake is disguised in the form of processed and canned foods, but not necessarily sweet ones, and in some cases foods that are purportedly "healthy".

A cereal bar, for example, can contain as much as 16g, or four teaspoons of sugar, while a standard lunch of a sandwich, packet of crisps and a piece of fruit, could add the same amount again.

While it may not come as a surprise that a 330ml can of carbonated drink contains the equivalent of 8.75 teaspoons of sugar, even a fruit smoothie can have almost six teaspoons hidden.

Carried out by Go Lower, the survey interviewed 3500 people about their daily diets.

Founder, Hannah Sutter, said: "It is a disappointment that people, including the government, are under the illusion that eating many so-called healthy snacks are good for you."

Further information:
http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/tm_objectid=16261406&method=full&siteid=66633&headline=sugar-bloated-name_page.html

Sound sensor detects decomposition

Scientists have developed a new device that can test whether food waste recycling technology is working efficiently.

Food waste is often recycled in processing plants by digesters, technology that decomposes food waste and turns it into biogas.

Digesters help food processors to meet tight food waste regulations, and the biogas produced as a result of the breakdown of waste provides a free energy source, which can power machinery.

Miguel Horta and Steve Garrett, scientists at Penn State University, have developed a new sound sensor that is able to detect how much gas is being produced as a by-product of the waste breakdown, reports FoodProductionDaily.com.

The sensor should alert companies to any irregularities in their recycling programmes, as well as monitoring the efficiency of waste breakdown.

The team hopes that further research into acoustic sensors can help to make advances in food waste recycling, by developing better eco-friendly power sources and making recycling more efficient.

Further information:
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63252-digester-recycle-waste>

Conference looks at London's food links

A one-day conference that looked at the state of food in Londoners' diets could boost links between regional food producers and the capital.

The Mayor Of London Ken Livingstone hosted the conference at City Hall yesterday to mark World Food Day.

Organised by a number of food groups in association with London Food, the conference studied the demand for locally-produced, organic, healthy food, the dangers of monopoly control of the food chain and misinformation about food.

Richard Ehrlich, chair of the Guild of Food Writers, one of the groups attending the conference, highlighted the need for greater recognition for food producers.

Mr Ehrlich said: "The capital's continued gastronomic resurgence depends on the work of people all over the world – and of the viability of the land they farm.

"Our lives are inextricably linked with the lives of those who grow our food, both at home and abroad."

No further information.

According to Jenny Jones, chair of London Food, the recently-launched draft London Food Strategy aims to "address the iniquities of the food system using a wide range of partners".

RFID roll-out to pose a challenge

The global market for radio frequency identification (RFID) technology will hit US\$,4,169.7 million in 2011, up from US\$400.2 million in 2004, a new report predicts.

Designed to enable goods, including food and drink products, to be tracked through the supply chain in real-time, more and more retailers are fitting out their outlets and distribution centres with the equipment behind it.

However the trend is likely to pose significant challenges for food suppliers.

At the current stage of development, analysts Frost & Sullivan explain that only the very largest retailers have the necessary upfront resources to pilot the technology, generally those with revenues of more than \$5 billion a year.

US-based Wal-Mart and Tesco in the UK are two firms to have started testing the technology.

The idea behind the move is to improve customer satisfaction by streamlining the food supply chain, reducing inventory and out-of-stock conditions.

"Better marketing of the technology has certainly been an effective driver for this market and is likely to be one in the years to come as well," said research analyst, Shyam K.

Further information: <A href="

http://www.morerfid.com/details.php?subdetail=Report&action=details&report_id=814&display=RFID>

http://www.morerfid.com/details.php?subdetail=Report&action=details&report_id=814&display=RFID

Dairy not "essential", rules ASA

The need for health food manufacturers to take care over the claims they make was highlighted recently, when the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) upheld a complaint about a Nestle UK product.

The UK's Vegan Society and a member of the general public both drew the ASA's attention to an advertorial on AOL's website discussing the benefits of Nestle's Sveltesse Optimise dairy drink, targeted at women.

One section discussing dairy products included the phrase "Essential for healthy bones", which was objected to on the grounds that it is not necessary to eat dairy products to acquire the level of calcium require to maintain healthy bones.

Although Nestle UK argued that they had not meant to imply that dairy products, including milk, were the only source of calcium, the ASA ruled that the use of the word "essential" expressed this view.

London nutritionist, Yvonne Bishop-Weston, said: "Manufacturers and agencies that promote cow's milk products will have to be far more careful in the future."

It is widely accepted that one of the most significant challenges for food producers looking to benefit from growing demand for health and functional foods, is ensuring that such health claims can be verified.

The nutritional value of milk also received attention recently when it emerged that the Food Standard Agency (FSA's) new profiling system would award whole and semi-skimmed milk the same "0" rating as diet carbonated drinks.

Further information:
http://newsroom.eworldwire.com/view_release.php?id=12877

UK bagel market looking healthy

Bagels are growing ever more popular with UK consumers, according to website BakeryAndSnacks.com.

They are benefiting from the nation's changing eating patterns, including demand for greater variety, more "on the go" options and healthier alternatives to standard snacks and sandwiches.

Bagels are generally low in salt and sugar, and high in fibre, backing up their health appeal.

Bagel Nash, which recently launched a new low-GI variety of bagel, sees the trend towards bagels continuing to grow.

"Nutritionists have even started recommending the product," said the firm's sales director, Karen Mizrahi.

Sales may also be being driven by the item's recent inclusion in the McDonald's range and the portfolios of other big name firms, she added.

Bagel Nash's new recipe includes seeds and grains, both emerging health foods, and has a lower wheat content than conventional bagels. It was launched for the first time at the recent Anuga conference in Cologne.

The UK bagel market is growing at a rate of 22 per cent a year, according to market research firm TNS, with 17 per cent of households regularly including the products in their shopping baskets.

Further information:
<http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=63316-mr-bagels-bagel-nash-bagels>

Can creates nutritional drink on opening

A new beverage container has been developed that allows nutrients to be added and dissolved as the product is opened.

FreshCan contains a blend of minerals and vitamins that are stored in a wedge, and only released when the ring pull is lifted.

It is a packaging innovation that is likely to prove popular both with functional food producers, looking to differentiate their offerings in a burgeoning market, and increasingly health-conscious consumers.

Developed by the Degussa unit of FreshTech Beverages, formed in June this year to market FreshCan, the wedge device enables time and liquid sensitive nutrients to be kept in a dry state, which will also increase product shelf life.

Research scientist, Stewart Gibson, explained: "Scientific studies have clearly demonstrated that vitamins are not stable in normal beverage products and that the longer they stay in contact with liquid, the weaker they become."

The first beverage to utilise the FreshCan concept was New York-based BrainTwist's "Defense" Vitamin & Mineral Supplement, marketed as an immunity-boosting, anti-flu functional drink.

Containing zinc, vitamins C, A, B2 and E, and calcium, "Defense" was launched in the US earlier this month.

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.nutraingredients-usa.com/news/ng.asp?n=63293-degussa-vitamins-fresh>"> <http://www.nutraingredients-usa.com/news/ng.asp?n=63293-degussa-vitamins-fresh>

Analyser detects carbon monoxide in meat packaging

US-based Mocon has developed a handheld analyser that detects carbon monoxide, oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in modified and control atmosphere packaging (MAP) for meat products.

With foot safety increasingly under the spotlight in the industry, the Pac Check Model 333 can carry out headspace analysis of case-ready meat packages, incorporating a number of features designed to simply use.

Firstly, the gas-drawing needle is protected within the so-called "Sticky Foot" probe, differentiating it from most headspace analysers on the market.

A septum concealed beneath the probe touches the surface of the package, with the needle prompted to pierce it by twisting the casing.

There is also password protection to safeguard against errors, and a database of the products tested can be accessed in a number of languages.

Portable in design, the device can be used for research and development, production or quality control procedures, ensuring meat packages comply with regulations for gas content.

Further information:
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63318-mocon-map-shelf-life>

Frutarom takes on fish flavour

Flavour and ingredient company Frutarom has announced the launch of a new convenience food range.

Expanding on its existing range of Food Systems products, the company is to introduce a meat and fish line, reports FoodIngredientsFirst.com.

Frutarom claims that the global savoury food market is expected to grow at an annual four to six per cent and says that the chilled and processed food sector, in particular, is growing in popularity with consumers.

It adds that with the new products, manufacturers can "simplify production procedures, logistics, and quality assurance significantly as well as ensuring compliance with hygiene regulations and saving time".

The new meat and fish product will join the existing range of food ingredients including tuna, chicken, turkey, ham, or bacon and further new developments are soon to be introduced.

Frutarom operates at fourteen worldwide locations, and its products include flavours and fine ingredients.

Further information:
http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?fSite=AR283&nw=hd&size=ld&sno=1&main_page=1&id=244

Spirits firms team up to tackle fraud

The chairman of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with two leading alcoholic drinks associations, formalising a joint effort to tackle alcohol fraud.

Most recent estimates, for the period between 2003 and 2003, suggests that black market transactions account for as much as seven per cent of the UK's total alcohol sales, with 80,000 of the 1.2 million bottles consumed on a daily basis officially classed as illicit.

Supported by £39 million of government funding over three years, the hope is that the Scotch Whiskey Association and the UK's Gin and Vodka Association will be able to use their expert knowledge of the supply chain to uncover and crack down on suspicious transactions.

The MoUs will see the three organisations share key information in their possession, prioritising certain inquiries over others to act rapidly.

There are also plans to establish a national intelligence unit for alcohol, and duty stamps are to appear on all UK bottles of spirits from April next year, according to the Scotsman.

The financial secretary to the Treasury, John Healey, commented: "The industry is uniquely placed to provide information that could have a significant impact on spirits fraud and the signing of the agreements between HMRC and the two leading drinks associations acknowledges this."

Gavin Hewitt, chief executive of the Scotch Whiskey Association, added: "All the figures show that alcohol fraud is on a downward trend.

"Today's agreement will cement action to maintain that trend."

Further information:
<http://business.scotsman.com/media.cfm?id=2116112005>

Chocolate maker offers half-portions

A new idea for the packaging and marketing of chocolate bars will tap into consumers' increasing health-awareness and concern for their weight.

Masterfoods, the UK's largest manufacturer of chocolate bars, will soon offer chocolate-lovers the opportunity to salve their consciences by breaking a big bar in two, and saving one half for later.

As from next year, king size Mars Bars and Snickers will be sold in packs specifically designed to be halved in this way without removing the chocolate from its wrapper, and will include diagrams showing consumers how to do it.

The move comes as concern mounts over "epidemic" obesity levels in the developed world, but some experts have questioned whether it will really be effective, arguing that a better solution to portion control would simply be smaller chocolate bars in the first place.

Dr David Haslem, the clinical chairman of the National Obesity Forum, said: "This will do nothing to tackle obesity in the UK," according to Metro.

Chocolate bars, along with other items of "junk food", are set to be banned from school cafeterias and vending machines from the start of the next school year in September.

Further information:
<http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/hi/news/5044722.html>>
<http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/hi/news/5044722.html>

Welsh hotel hits the big time

A remote Welsh restaurant has been propelled into the industry's premier league, crowned the country's 'restaurant of the year' by the Which? Good Food Guide.

The hotel restaurant, Ynyshir Hall, was given an eight out of ten ranking, putting it among the top 13 restaurants in the whole of the UK.

It was the only Welsh restaurant to win this distinction, with the eight other grade eights all located in England.

Four restaurants, including celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay's, were given grade nine, but there were none classified as grade 10.

The entry in the guide describes head chef Adam Simmonds's work as "innovative without being outlandish", according to the Western Mail.

Owners, Rob and Joan Reen, have run the hotel for the past 17 years, but it is only recently that the restaurant has started to attract serious recognition.

Mr Reen told the BBC that many people also came for the unique location.

"They can leave their cars and walk out into the hills. We even get people in from New York now. They are falling in love with Wales," he explained.

Mr Simmonds also paid tribute to the quality of Welsh local ingredients.

"It's a lot nicer to be using fish that is straight out of the sea," he said.

Further information:
http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm_objectid=16270132&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=ynyshir-hall-climbs-like--walnut-tree--name_page.html>
http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm_objectid=16270132&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=ynyshir-hall-climbs-like--walnut-tree--name_page.html

Chiquita bananas meet ethical criteria

US-based fruit producer, Chiquita International, has announced that its bananas have been "Rainforest Alliance" certified as compliant with environmentally sustainable and Fair Trade practices.

Rainforest Alliance certification involves a company demonstrating its farms are able to meet 200 separate criteria, ranging from protection of biodiversity to safeguarding the rights of farm workers.

Each farm is also reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure standards are being maintained.

Chris Wilie, director of the Rainforest Alliance's sustainable agriculture programs, commented: " As bananas are the No. 1-selling product in most grocery stores, to have a company like Chiquita adopt responsible cultivation practices has far-reaching benefits for the environment, farm workers and the consumer."

Farm manager, Raul Gomez, added: "We've stopped using pesticides whenever possible. We have planted hundred of trees. We are trained in environmental management and protection, and then put this education into practice so that our children can also benefit."

Chiquita also adheres to the US standard, Social Accountability 8000, in terms of workers rights.

Supplying bananas to Europe as well as North America, the Rainforest Alliance frog logo will appear on Chiquita's banana labels in supermarkets in countries including Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands.

Further information: http://www.food-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=DA0B05E2-6109-4846-AA7F-DE2D55DDB58B

Hangover drink headed for UK

The Thai firm Bite Bangkok has announced plans to export a functional anti-hangover drink to the UK from next year.

The company is reported to have trialled 'Hang', as the product is called, on the shelves of supermarkets in two UK cities, and is now in search of a distributor.

Aimed at young, party-going women, a group that have recently attracted much media attention in relation to binge-drinking in the UK, 60 million Thai baht will be invested in marketing the product in the first year following the launch.

However, Bite Bangkok insists it is not promoting heavier drinking, according to the Bangkok Post.

Nevertheless, Hang will come in two varieties, Hang 'Foreplay' and Hang 'Original', intended for use before and after a heavy drinking session respectively.

The company expects to sell around 500,000 75cl bottles each month.

Sumas Wongsunopparat, strategic consultant for Bite Bangkok, said: "The potential market for hangover drinks could be worth two billion baht in Thailand. We will take this untapped market seriously."

Further information:
http://www.bangkokpost.com/Business/20Oct2005_biz53.php

Gluten free beer brewed

One of the smallest brewers in the UK has developed a beer for those suffering from an allergy to gluten and wheat.

Sold by supermarket chain Tesco from today, the idea was born when Hambleton Ales received a string of enquiries for such a beer, but found that there was nothing of the sort on the market.

He contacted the organisation, Coeliac UK, the main body representing those with gluten intolerance, and had his suspicions confirmed.

Gluten and wheat Free Ale (or GFA) will be on sale in bottles sized 500ml, priced at £2.80. It has an ABV of 4.2 per cent, and is approved by the Society of Independent Brewers.

Tesco's beer buyer, Ian Targett, told Drinks Business Review that there was likely to "be a strong market across the UK for GFA".

Head of Hambleton Ales, Nick Stafford, added: "Celiac disease is caused by an intolerance to gluten, a substance found in wheat, barley and rye which can damage the gut and reduce absorption of nutrients and vitamins.

"Beer is the UK's leading alcoholic drink but until now gluten intolerant drinkers have been unable to enjoy a British-style gluten free ale."

It is estimated that approximately 750,000 people across the UK have the condition.

Further information:
http://www.drinks-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=789075B5-B6E6-4708-8B61-0B68240C6E34

Stop stirring with the "Agitor"

An innovative device has been developed for the "on the go" beverage market, claiming to simplify the process of stirring coffee cups for busy and tired commuters.

The Agitor stirring system from Tinkatec is installed into the bottom of a cup, allowing the consumer to stir the contents while the cup is sealed, thereby avoiding frustrating spillage on clothes or waste.

The system would be activated by pressure applied either to the side or on the bottom of the container.

Tinkatec owner, Creighton Schleich, also highlighted the increase in efficiency that would result from the reduction of customer queuing time in popular coffee shop outlets.

Customers could be handed their beverages complete and sealed, eliminating the need for wooden stirrers.

Explaining that the device could be used for paper and plastic disposable cups, commuter cups and flasks, Mr Schleich said: "The convenience of being able to collect your drink and leave the shop immediately, without waiting to stir in milk and sugar, must be obvious in today hurried world.

"The safety and hygiene of stirring a sealed cup are added benefits."

The system is being marketed in Europe by London-based AllyAllez.

Further information:
<http://www.emediawire.com/releases/2005/10/emw299947.htm>

Report reveals ignorance of trans fatty acids

UK consumers are largely ignorant of trans fatty acids (TFAs), the dangers they may pose, and the levels contained in the foods they eat, according to a new report.

Research and Markets' Global Market Review of Trans Fats examines current attitudes in a range of countries, noting the way the food industry is responding to the problem.

In Denmark, for example, legislation on the issue is stringent, and the substances have effectively been banned since January 2004, the report states.

In the UK, on the other hand, there is currently no obligation on the part of food manufacturers even to include trans fat information on nutrition labels, but this is something soon to be introduced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the US.

However, an examination of the UK's food industry highlights certain companies that are addressing TFAs, along with growing nutritional awareness generally.

These include Nestle, which has plans to introduce a standard international labelling system, dubbed Nestle Nutritional Compass.

This "will guide and encourage consumers in their nutrition, health and wellness on a daily basis", according to company spokesman, Robin Tickle.

TFA's improve shelf life and add thickness to processed food items, but have also been linked to increased risk of LDL cholesterol, type II diabetes, asthma, Alzheimer's and heart disease.

The report focuses on action being taken by the industry and regulatory bodies in Denmark, Canada, the US, the UK, Israel, Australia and France.

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/10-20-2005/0004174130&EDATE=>

"Cheeseburger" bill cheers fast food firms

The fast food industry scored a victory in the US yesterday, when the US House of Representatives passed the so-called "cheeseburger bill" by 306 votes to 120.

The bill is designed to stem the growing number of people in the US who are seeking compensation from fast food firms for allegedly contributing to their ill health, and ultimately making them obese.

The bill, officially titled the Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act, will now go before the US Senate.

Scott Vinson, vice president of government relations with the National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR), welcomed the news, saying it would end "frivolous obesity lawsuits" involving people "seeking to blame restaurants for making them overweight".

Republican chairman of the House's judiciary committee, James Sensenbrenner, echoed this, saying of obese Americans' that "it is not the place of the law to protect them from their own indulgences".

However, cases involving illness through negligence, including poor hygiene or badly prepared food, will not be blocked by the bill.

Fast food has recently become a hotly debated issue on both sides of the Atlantic, spurred by campaigns such as Morgan Spurlock's cult documentary "Super Size Me", and Jamie Oliver's campaign for better nutritional standards in UK schools.

Further information: <A href=" <http://money.cnn.com/2005/10/19/news/fortune500/obesity/> ">
<http://money.cnn.com/2005/10/19/news/fortune500/obesity/>

Wild for low fat fruit formula

The ingredients firm Wild has developed a new, low calorie soft-drinks formula with no added sweetener.

Its manufacturers claim that the formula contains between 30 and 40 per cent less sugar and calories than traditional fizzy drinks, and that the formula will enable drinks manufacturers to offer consumers a greater variety of reduced-sugar beverages.

Wild says the flavour of the liquid is not artificial, claiming that the formula makes a drink that has a "well-balanced sweet-sour ratio" with a "fruity, less sweet and pleasantly mild" taste.

Demand for diet drinks has been steadily increasing, as health-conscious consumers seek drinks that are low in sugar, reports FoodNavigator.com.

Wild spokesperson, Christina Heinbockel, said that the innovation would help food producers to attract new customers because the solution contains no artificial sweetener, a taste that is unpopular with some consumers.

She added that the top flavours trialled so far were blood orange, pink grapefruit and passion fruit.

Further information: <A href=" <http://www.beveragedaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63282-wild-diet-soft-drinks-sweeteners>">
<http://www.beveragedaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63282-wild-diet-soft-drinks-sweeteners>

Waterjet software gets slice of the action

New technology has been developed that allows food producers to use waterjet cutting tools with more accuracy and speed than is currently available.

Flow International says that its FlowMaster 6.0 software enables companies to adjust the angles of their meat-cutting water jets, and can improve cutting times by around a third.

Waterjet cutting is changing the way that foods are sliced during production. It is a more sanitary method of cutting than using blades, because no bacteria can be passed from product to knife, reports FoodProductionDaily.com.

Jets do not experience the same wear as cutting tools, and they are also less of a health and safety risk because workers can operate the waterjets from a distance, through a control panel.

Robert Peterson, waterjet market manager for Flow International, claims that with the software, machine can cut slices of "varying height and thickness" that have been "never imagined" before.

"In addition, FlowMaster 6.0 will help customers lower cost per inch on projects through the software's ability to improve cut speed and thickness," he commented.

The software calculates how thick products must be cut, so that the production line does not need to stop while workers take measurements.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63347-flow-international-waterjet-cutting>

Heineken to refresh marketing

The drinks firm Heineken is to stop advertising on UK TV from next year, as it doubts the medium's effectiveness given current media trends.

Two of the reasons cited are the proliferation of channels, and the fact that its core market of 18 to 26-year-olds are now usually engaged in other pursuits.

The UK's managing director, Rob Marijnen, also highlighted that on-demand TV, such as SkyPlus, meant viewers could opt to avoid ads.

Mr Marijnen said that, while it was not necessarily leaving the small screen forever, it intended to adopt a more creative approach to marketing, particularly given the 2003 switch to a high strength, European-style brand of beer.

The firm intends to invest more in point-of-sale store promotion, but adds that it will continue in its role as sponsor of the European Champions League, giving it some degree of TV exposure.

Further information: <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,9070-1836183,00.html>

EU project to pinpoint toxins

Scientists from across the EU are working on a project aimed at improving methods of monitoring the levels of chemical contaminants in a variety of foods.

With food safety proving a high priority with consumers and food processors alike, the Biocop project will specifically attempt to develop monitoring equipment to detect the presence of multiple contaminants, including pesticides.

Based in Belfast in Northern Ireland, the project will also extend to research centres and organisations in 15 other European countries and Canada.

One UK firm involved in the scheme is Chalex Research, who are working on developing a biosensor that will detect a number of toxins in shellfish, both in laboratory conditions and onsite at a processing plant.

Using surface plasmon resonance (SPR), it is hoped that the instrument will replace the use of rats and mice in the isolation of the diarrheic shellfish toxins known as yessotoxins, pectenotoxins, azaspiracids and gymnodimine.

Employee Mark Pullinger, who is also one of Biocop's project management leaders, commented: "Small food producers do not have the resources to monitor for a wide range of contaminants.

"We are looking to develop cheap, portable sensors that can be used in the field or on plant sites," he told FoodProductionDaily.

Further information: http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63385-biocop-food-safety-sensor

Temperature tag targets traceability

Austria-based Identec Solutions has launched a new product that uses radio frequency identification (RFID) to track variation in the internal temperature of food products along the supply chain.

The innovation will help firms to comply with EU food safety laws that came into effect on January 1st this year, and which include an obligation on the part of food processors to trace all ingredients thoroughly throughout their journey to the plant.

The wireless I-Q32T tag assists in this effort by recording as many as 13,000 temperature readings between -40 degrees C and 85 degrees C.

The recorded measurements can then be accessed within 100m of the product, enabling bulk product deliveries to be checked, and if necessary intercepted, on arrival at the unloading dock.

An optional addition to the device allows it to also be used to log food temperature in processing and cooling down stages.

Barry Allen, Identec Vice President for Engineering, explained: "We designed this product to help companies meet the strict food traceability legislations without making huge capital investments in infrastructure," according to FoodProductionDaily.

Further information: http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63387-rfid-temperature-tag

Consumer group concerned over health drink claims

Some "friendly-bacteria" probiotic drinks contain a greater concentration of sugar than some brands of cola, a consumer organisation has found.

The discovery will further fuel industry concerns over the accuracy of the health claims made by producers of functional foods and drinks in their marketing efforts.

One of the key challenges facing manufacturers in this emerging market will be to ensure that their claims of physical benefits can be substantiated.

The consumer group Which? found that four samples of probiotic beverage taken from leading supermarkets contained an amount of sugar classed as "high" by the UK's Food Standard Agency (FSA).

These included Yakult, with 18g of sugar per 100g, Danone Actimel multifruit on 14.2g, Muller Vitality strawberry, containing 12.6g, and Flora pro.activ, which contained 12.3g per 100g.

These proportions all exceeded the concentration of sugar in standard Coca-Cola, which is 10 g per 100g, according to the Sunday Times.

Which? spokeswoman, Miranda Watson, expressed misgivings about such products making claims to "control blood pressure" and "benefit overall well-being".

"If a product is high in sugar, as these products are, then they should not be making health claims - it is misleading to the consumer", she said.

Further information: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2090-1839144,00.html>

Celebrity chef opens school training kitchen

Jamie Oliver is to be present today at the official opening of the first training centre in the UK for school dinner ladies.

It follows on from the celebrity chef's TV show, Jamie's School Dinners, and the subsequent Feed Me Better campaign, which raised the profile of school meal quality as a hot political issue.

In particular, Jamie was dismayed at the lack of fresh produce that was being used in school kitchens, arguing that the kitchens and staff needed to change, as well as the meals themselves.

The new training kitchen at High Laver Hall in Essex will provide two-day courses, instructing caterers in practical skills and hands-on cooking, with demonstrations from experts.

The result of collaboration between school meals advisor Jeanette Orrey, the Michelin star chef Simon Owen, and organic food firm, Ashlyns Organics, it has also been designed to replicate as closely as possible the range of equipment available in most school kitchens.

Gary Stokes, director of Ashlyns Training Kitchen Ltd, said: "Catering staff will receive information and practical training so that they can confidently produce school dinners for children using good quality, fresh ingredients.

"We are looking forward to the official opening and then to running the courses for school catering staff from across the United Kingdom so that our children, the future of our country, are fed healthy, nutritious and above all tasty food in their school canteen."

Jeanette Orrey is a school meals policy advisor for the UK's Soil Association.

Further information:
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/schoolmeals/story/0,15643,1599500,00.html>

Calcium carbonate product contains fewer impurities

UK-based CalciTech has developed a method for producing high purity, synthetic calcium carbonate.

Following the burning of limestone, the calcium is placed into a solution with a promoter that increases solubility, leaving more impurities behind following separation.

Although CalciTech hasn't yet tested its CalciSP product in food applications, it is confident that manufacturers will express interest in a pure product with such a low concentration of heavy metals.

Undergoing tests at the Analytical Laboratory of the Geneva Institute of Technology, the CalciSP calcium was found to contain significantly lower levels of potentially harmful metals, including arsenic, lead and mercury.

While precipitated calcium carbonate (PCC) and ground calcium carbonate (GCC) had lead levels of 40 parts per billion (ppb) and 88 ppb respectively, CalciTech's product performed much better, with lead levels of just 26 ppb.

Marketing manager, Jean-Claude Masson, said: "In our discussions with producers, it has become apparent that regulations have had a strong impact on demand for super pure products."

The range of food applications envisaged by the firm includes fortification for baby food and milk, dairy products and beverages; as a source of calcium in products such as breads and cereals; and use in anti-caking agent.

Next year CalciTech will be exhibited at Vitafoods from May 9th until 11th in Geneva, Switzerland.

Further information:
http://www.genengnews.com/news/bnitem.aspx?name=1084627XSL_NEWSML_TO_NEWSML_WEB.xml">

http://www.genengnews.com/news/bnitem.aspx?name=1084627XSL_NEWSML_TO_NEWSML_WEB.xml

Topas polymer offers cheaper packaging promise

A company has produced a cheap polymer for food packaging, despite the recent rise in oil costs.

Ticona claims that its new Topas COC polymer, 8007F-100, is a cost-effective blending component that can add stiffness and better sealing to polythene films. It says that whilst it does not provide as wide a range of properties as other polymers in the Topas range, it has "proven satisfactory" in many cases.

The news comes after many packaging companies raised their prices after Hurricane Katrina and other events pushed up the cost of petroleum.

Bernd Sparenberg, global marketing manager at Ticona, said: "With Topas 8007F-100, we are targeting cost-sensitive packaging applications using COC blended into polyethylene as a performance enhancer.

"In most cases, COC is used as a minor component at a concentration of ten to 20 per cent to customise overall film properties in applications such as pouches, forming webs and coated paper."

The news came after the food companies Danone, Kraft and Cadbury announced that their quarterly profits were all affected by increased costs in packaging.

Kraft had announced last Tuesday that it was looking into "exploring additional pricing actions" to reduce the impact of the cost of oil.

Further information: http://www.jobwerx.com/news/ticona_biz-id=947611_001.html

Americans turn to tea for flavonoids

US consumers acquire more health-boosting flavonoid antioxidants from tea than any other food or beverage, according to a new study.

A group of researchers from the firm Exponet collected data that showed US flavonoid intake averaged out at 134mg per person per day.

Beverages accounted for 125mg of this amount, with tea drinking found to constitute an impressive 117mg of flavonoid consumption, around 87 per cent of the average total intake.

The data was obtained from national nutrition monitoring surveys and the American Dietetic Association's (ADA) database.

Douglas Balentine, Director of Nutrition Sciences, North America, told the ADA's annual conference: "Several studies have found that drinking tea may be good for the heart due to power of flavonoid antioxidants.

"For most Americans, drinking a cup of tea a day - hot or cold, black or green - will nearly double their current intake of flavonoid antioxidants."

Mr Balentine also highlighted research partly carried out at the University of Nottingham in the UK, showing that the flavonoids in both black and green tea were processed by the body in much the same way.

A study on 14 males used a technique known as nutritional metabonomics, and found that drinking black and green tea both increased the number of flavonoid metabolites in the participants' urine.

Tea contains approximately 125mg of flavonoids per cup.

Further information: <A href=" <http://sev.prnewswire.com/medical-pharmaceuticals/20051024/CLM03824102005-1.html>">
<http://sev.prnewswire.com/medical-pharmaceuticals/20051024/CLM03824102005-1.html>

Motion control system comes in three models

US-based Bosch subsidiary, Rexroth, has developed three versions of a new Motion Logic control system designed for the food industry.

IndraMotion for Packaging provides real-time motion control, incorporating unique technology functions to meet the specific demands of the packaging application in question, whether drive, controller or PC based.

The "Basic" hardware platform is designed for drive-based systems used for ultra-compact solutions in applications such as carton erecting or labelling.

The core component of the hardware is the firm's IndraDrive system, and the system can be used in space-to the conclusion that saving solutions with as many as six axes.

The "Enhanced" version of the platform, meanwhile, is targeted at controller-based systems for high-value solutions such as cartoners or form, fill and seal machines.

It has the ability to co-ordinate as many as 64 controllers in the operation of a complete production line comprising up to 16 axes.

Adfero Ltd, South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London E14 9SH

Tel: 0800 917 8 917 web: www.adfero.co.uk

Finally, the "Advanced" option incorporates high-level functionality such as Electronic Light Shafting (ELS) synchronisation for machines such as palletizers and top loaders.

All three versions provide the operator with offline simulation and online tools.

Further information: <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=63403-rexroth-software-synchronise>

Chromax safety confirmed

The results of a second investigation into the safety of a commercially available form of the mineral chromium picolinate has led scientists to conclude that it does not cause chromosomal aberrations in Chinese Hamster Ovary (CHO) cells.

The studies were carried out at the request of the UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA), and were instrumental in its decision last year to allow Nutrition 21's Chromax chromium picolinate health supplement to remain on the market.

Conducted by BioReliance Corporation in the US, and monitored by Environ Health Services, the two studies set out to clarify earlier tests on animal cells that did point to genetic damage.

However, unlike BioReliance's more recent experiments, the first two studies, executed in 1995 and 2002, did not comply with International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) guidelines, nor did they involve the commercially available nutritional supplement, Chromax chromium picolinate.

The first BioReliance study was published in August this year, detecting no gene mutations, and the latest study confirmed this, reporting no "statistically significant increases" at any dosage.

Ronald Slesinski, senior scientist at Environ Health Services, said: "These findings are consistent with previous studies that showed no genotoxic effects from chromium picolinate in CHO animal cell cultures, living animals or humans and should put to rest lingering safety concerns about the safety of Chromax chromium picolinate."

The findings are published in the Journal of Mutation Research, Genetic Toxicology and Environmental Mutagenesis.

Further information: http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20051024005392&newsLang=en

Danone investigates naphthalene scare

The French food and drink firm Danone has said it is investigating the circumstances that may have led to the detection of the chemical naphthalene in a bottle of its Volvic-branded bottled water in the UK.

44-year-old Londoner, Lauri Pastone, was disturbed when her daily bottle of water smelt and tasted bad.

Having spat the water out, she said she noticed that it had formed into small pools

She contacted the UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA), and subsequently appeared on the BBC programme Working Lunch, which sent samples of the water for independent scientific testing.

The tests revealed traces of naphthalene, which can result in liver damage at high levels, according to environmental toxicologist, Dr Mark Viant.

Danone has issued a statement to the effect that it is investigating the incident, and treating it seriously.

It also says it was an isolated incident, and suggests that the contamination may have taken place during storage, once the bottles had left the manufacturing site, as had occurred before.

The company also said naphthalene was not used in its bottling process.

Demand for bottled water is increasing in the UK, as consumers switch from carbonates to healthier alternatives.

Further information: http://www.just-drinks.com/news_detail.asp?art=28934

Food firms get fresh safety guidance

Food manufacturers are to benefit from a new edition of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidelines for food manufacturers.

The publication offers advice for management, supervisory staff and workers' representatives with the aim of increasing understanding of injury and ill-health avoidance.

The booklet also outlines the priority health and safety issues in need of risk assessment. They include workplace transport, machinery, falls from height and work-related stress.

Dr Roger Nourish, head of HSE's agriculture and food sector, said: "This guidance will greatly assist the food and drink industries in managing health and safety priorities. It

draws together into one book a lot of useful information from previous HSE publications and from practical industry experience.

"Although food and drink is processed in a strictly controlled environment, it would be wrong to perceive these industries as 'low risk' in terms of the health and safety of employees. Food processing operations can be very hazardous."

The guide will be issued free to delegates at the Occupational Health and Safety in the Food Industry conference or it can be ordered from the HSE website.

Further information:
<http://www.pandct.com/media/shownews.asp?ID=8773>

New taste technology patent awarded

A biotechnology company has taken strides in the race to find new taste sensations with the granting of a patent covering the use of the human sweet taste receptor.

Senomyx's patent covers new techniques for using the human sweet taste receptors as the basis for more efficient assay systems.

"The new patent covers the rapid receptor-based screening methods that allow us to screen and identify an unprecedented number of potential new sweet flavour ingredients," explained Mark Zoller, Senomyx's chief scientific officer.

He said the flavour ingredients could have application in products ranging from confectionary and bakery products to yoghurts and deserts.

Going ahead the company states it has entered into product discovery and development collaborations with five of the world's leading food and beverage companies to capitalise on the results of the new studies.

Further information:
<http://sev.prnewswire.com/health-care-hospitals/20051019/LAW02319102005-1.html>

Nutritional makeover for McDonald's packaging

The fast food chain McDonald's has announced it will include nutritional information on its packaging from next year.

The move comes as consumers are showing ever-increasing health awareness, and food manufacturers are clamouring to meet their demands for healthier foods and greater transparency.

Starting in February at the Winter Olympics in Italy, the firm said that it planned to have introduced the new packaging to two-thirds of its 30,000 restaurants worldwide by the end of 2006.

The packaging will include details of fat, protein, carbohydrate and sodium content, as well as calories, and will include graphical displays to illustrate recommended daily allowances.

In addition, the company's website will be revamped to give consumers the opportunity to create a menu based on their own personal profile.

Chief executive, Jim Skinner, said: "We thinks this is absolutely the easiest way to communicate it.

"We've given them what they asked for and then people take responsibility about whether they add it up or not add it up."

The initiative is the latest in a string of attempts on the part of the chain to tap into consumer health concerns following suggestions that it contributes to rising obesity levels.

It has already given its icon, Ronald McDonald, a healthy, sporty makeover, and introduced a range of salads, yoghurts and fruit to stores.

The most infamous attack on the chain to date was the Morgan Spurlock documentary Supersize Me, after which the largest portion size offering was largely discontinued.

Further information:
<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story.asp?guid=%7BE660AB06-FAA2-40E8-A2B3-E7EAAD5F7E99%7D&siteid=google&dist=>

Feta cheese confined to Greece

Greece has won a European Union battle to earn feta cheese "protected designation of origin" (PDO) status.

The ruling from the European Court of Justice means that non-Greek cheeses previously branded as feta, including those made by producers in the UK, will have to be renamed at no little expense.

Denmark and Germany, both of which contribute significantly to the current European feta market appealed against the argument that feta was more closely associated with a region or country than it was a generic product.

They received French and British support for their claim.

However, the court upheld the Greek claim that the majority of Greeks regard the name to have a geographic connotation, enabling it to join the likes of Parma Ham and champagne.

The case placed particular emphasis on the fact that the word feta itself does not refer to a place, but is an approximate translation of the Italian word "slice".

The court heard that feta had become so well known as a type of cheese, crumbly and soaked in brine, that it could equally apply to feta-style cheeses from other European countries.

Nevertheless, firms will now have until 2007 to rebrand their products, including Yorkshire-based Shepherd's Purse Cheeses, whose founder, Judy Bell, called the decision "ludicrous".

Further information:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/10/26/nfeta26.xml&Sheet=/news/2005/10/26/ixhome.html>

Douwe Egberts invests in ethics

Coffee roaster Douwe Experts is planning to increase the amount it purchases under an "ethical" coffee scheme, Reuters has reported.

The aim will be to launch a coffee product in the UK that can claim to meet certain environmental and social production standards.

The news follows Nestle's entry into the UK's ethical coffee market earlier in the month, with a product certified by the Fairtrade Organisation.

However, while the Fairtrade label means that coffee farmers have received a set minimum price regardless of the coffee market, the Dutch Utz Kapeh scheme only ensures farms comply with certain labour rights and environmental standards.

It means the consumer can be confident about the origin of the beans, although the price itself is still fixed by the producers and buyers.

Demand for food products that can claim to have been produced under certain "ethical" conditions is growing in the UK.

Utz Kapeh executive director, David Rosenberg, said: "There is ever more focus on transparency in food chains. Consumers expect companies to know where their products come from and how they are made.

"They trust a brand. They are buying the relationship buyers have with producers."

Douwe Egberts parent company, Sara Lee, is planning to increase its use of Utz Kapeh beans threefold this year, accounting for 10 per cent of its total purchases.

Further information: <A href="http://today.reuters.com/business/newsarticle.aspx?type=reutersEdge&storyID=2005-
<http://today.reuters.com/business/newsarticle.aspx?type=reutersEdge&storyID=2005->

[10-26T074402Z_01_MOR627797_RTRIDST_0_PICKS-FOOD-COFFEE-ETHICS-DC.XML](http://today.reuters.com/business/newsarticle.aspx?type=reutersEdge&storyID=2005-10-26T074402Z_01_MOR627797_RTRIDST_0_PICKS-FOOD-COFFEE-ETHICS-DC.XML)">
http://today.reuters.com/business/newsarticle.aspx?type=reutersEdge&storyID=2005-10-26T074402Z_01_MOR627797_RTRIDST_0_PICKS-FOOD-COFFEE-ETHICS-DC.XML

Asda lambasted for "fun" egg label

Supermarket chain Asda's attempt to sell more eggs using an innovative seasonal packaging design may have backfired, after consumers complained it will encourage anti-social behaviour.

The new colourful label describes the packets of nine eggs as "Halloween Fun", which has been taken to refer to the practice of "egging".

This popular, but illegal, Halloween prank involves throwing eggs at peoples' homes and cars, and its escalation has caused growing public anger in recent years.

The marketing has led to a particularly high number of complaints in Merseyside.

Wirral Council executive member for community safety, George Davies, told the Liverpool Daily Post: "We are trying across Merseyside to teach young people about being responsible, showing respect and understanding to other people, and here they are almost saying 'here are the eggs - go and throw them at someone.'"

The supermarket said that the packaging was simply designed as part of a drive to promote eggs, but added that it would be staying alert to young people who were buying unusually large quantities of eggs, in line with its customers' concerns.

It also urged other retailers to cooperate with the police in the monitoring of egg and flour sales over the coming fortnight.

Further information:
http://www.food-business-review.com/article_news.asp?guid=617CA0C1-2691-4443-AA36-97D2251F2E5A

Consumers see butter as better

Butter sales are on the increase in the UK, outstripping margarine and other spreads in spite of the increasing health awareness of today's consumers.

Market research firm Mintel found that butter volumes increased by eight per cent between 2002 and 2004, and are expected to rise again this year, from 107,000 to 110,000 tonnes.

In the same period butter's share of the yellow fats market increased by four per cent to 43 per cent, and the total spend for 2005 is estimated to be £375 million, up from £363 million in 2004.

The firm concludes that it is butter's image of naturalness that has proved a hit with consumers, capitalising on "concern about the implications of processed foods" and the mass of "competing health claims" that are clamouring for the public's attention.

Moreover, with the advent of spreadable butters catering for consumers' demand for convenience, margarine is being forced into becoming a "niche sector", according to Mintel analyst, Claire Birks.

Margarine and spread sales fell by five per cent between 2002 and 2004, which is "a significant change for such a relatively short amount of time", added Ms Birks.

In general, the value of the margarine and spreads market will still increase, but this will be driven largely by innovative, healthy varieties, such as soya and olive oil.

Further information:
<http://www.999today.com/foodanddrink/news/story/2167.html>>
<http://www.999today.com/foodanddrink/news/story/2167.html>

Enzyme discovery decreases dough interference

A naturally occurring enzyme preparation could increase the shelf life of bread by three days.

Researchers in Ireland have discovered that hemicellulases inhibit the optimum development of dough and could be used to increase loaf volume and crumb softness.

"Our primary goal was to find a way to improve the quality of bread without resorting to e-numbers or artificial additives that scare off consumers," Gerard Downey, of Teagasc's Ashtown Food Research Centre, told the website Bakery and Snacks.

"The enzyme preparations we are testing have been derived from microbes grown on rye and white and wholemeal flours, which allow them to be optimally developed in order to break down these raw materials," he added.

Hemicellulases act on large molecules found in bran, interrupting the formation of dough by interfering physically with dough formation when water is added to flour.

By breaking up these large molecules the enzyme preparation reduces the level of interference.

Further information:
<http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=63451-enzyme-hemicellulases-shelf-life>>
<http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=63451-enzyme-hemicellulases-shelf-life>

EU report advises amendments to ABP regulation

The European Commission has published a new report recommending some amendments to the regulation governing the handling of animal by-products (ABP) within the EU.

The current regulation came into effect in May 2003, and covers animals that die while on farms, the remains of animals slaughtered for human consumption, and other unusable leftovers from food processing.

It was drafted in response to concern over food safety issues, including the BSE and foot-and-mouth scares that affected the UK, and primarily offers guidelines for the safe disposal of ABP.

Some by-products are used in the manufacturing of non-food items, including cosmetics, and those remaining must pass through an approved rendering, incinerator, biogas or composting plant.

In general the report finds that members' compliance with the guidelines is "satisfactory", and in fact recommends changes to soften the impact of the regulation on European business.

"Some requirements may be disproportionate when it comes to very low risk products, for example processed ingredients used in cosmetics, while there is a need to insert new products under the different risk categories," it stated, according to FoodProductionDaily.

The Commission is now inviting responses to its findings, and expects to have submitted its recommended modifications by 2007.

Further information:
http://www.just-food.com/news_detail.asp?art=62231

Pot Noodle to be relaunched

Student staple the Pot Noodle is to be given a £10 million revamp including a fresh marketing campaign, in an attempt to reverse declining sales.

Seeking to attract more mature consumers, as well as a greater proportion of women, the product will dispense with artificial colours, flavourings and preservatives from 2006.

Attempts will also be made to improve the consistency of the dissolved powder by preventing lumps from forming, and the packaging will be redesigned to appeal to more discerning customers.

The infamous TV adverts, linking students and sex, will also be rethought after they led to numerous complaints from viewers.

Sales of the snack have been falling since the Sudan 1 red food dye scare earlier this year, and were down by 13 per cent overall in the 12 months to May.

Around 350 food products were recalled from major supermarket chains, when it was found that a Premier Foods Worcester sauce was manufactured with a chilli powder contaminated with the potentially carcinogenic dye.

The relaunch next year will be the biggest since the pot first hit the shelves in 1979, reports Marketing Week.

Further information:

New culture confirms salmonella presence

A UK food laboratory has developed a culture medium it believes will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of salmonella detection.

Oxoid's Xylose Lactose Tergitol 4 (XLT-4) agar is described by the laboratory as "highly selective", designed to cut the number of colonies incorrectly identified.

The selective agent in the agar is Tergitol 4, which is able to reduce the amount of "background flora and other enterobacteriaceae" that is also often found on an agar plate.

The presence of these organisms often complicates the identification of the salmonella species.

The use of XLT-4 as a medium also generates biochemical and pH changes to help distinguish salmonella species, which are seen as black colonies, from E coli or Shigella, which appear as yellow and red respectively.

Oxoid says that the additional selectivity of its medium "reduces the need for food identification procedures", saving time and money while still ensuring food safety.

Salmonella hit the headlines again this week, when supermarket chain Waitrose recalled seven different chicken products following the possible detection of salmonella in one sample.

The "precautionary measure" was the result of routine testing by supplier, Moy Park.

The six other products were recalled as they were manufactured on the same day as the suspicious sample.

Further information:
<http://www.labtechnologist.com/news/ng.asp?n=63459-salmonella>
<http://www.labtechnologist.com/news/ng.asp?n=63459-salmonella>

Zip-Pak launches leak-free seal

US-based Zip-Pak has unveiled a line of leak-proof zipper seals for plastic food packaging that may contain liquid.

Designed to further optimise the packaging of convenience foods, the firm claims its product could be used with frozen foods, ready-meals in sauces, or marinated meats in flexible packaging.

The device uses the pressure exerted by the contents of the packaging once zipped, to create an airtight seal or vacuum, which prevents leakage and extends shelf life.

Its internal opening force is greater than 20 pounds, which means the package is sufficiently robust to withstand the shipping process, and will remain in the consumer's fridge, allowing the same food to be served on a number of separate occasions.

The vacuum created by the seal when the zipper's unique profiles interlock means the food is protected from the airborne bacteria that cause it to spoil.

The zipper can be applied to packaging using horizontal form, fill and seal machines or thermoform equipment, as well as zipper-ready machines that are already in use in plants.

It can be attached to a range of laminates or polyethylene films, and was introduced at the Worldwide Food Expo in Chicago, which opened on Wednesday.

Further information: <http://www.packagingessentials.com/news.asp?id=2005-10-26-15.46.52.000000>
<http://www.packagingessentials.com/news.asp?id=2005-10-26-15.46.52.000000>

Ready roasts rapped for salt content

An investigation into ready-made Sunday roast joints has found that they can contain up to 10 times as much salt as their traditional counterparts.

The revelation comes as the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has stepped up its campaign to raise awareness of the recommended daily salt limit with a TV advertisement that focuses specifically on the salt that is "hidden" in ready-meals.

Consumers are being urged to check labels for salt content before they buy processed foods.

The FSA recommends limiting salt intake to 6g a day, but some supermarket ready roasts were found to contain as much as 25 per cent of this amount.

Products from Sainsbury's, Tesco, Iceland, Co-op, Marks & Spencer and Waitrose, were all tested by health officials in the south of the UK, and salt content varied from 0.2g to 1.4g per 100g.

This compares with the 0.13g per 100g contained by the average portion of raw meat.

The convenience food market predictably came under renewed fire, this time accused of adding unnecessary salt to improve water retention, which increases product weight.

Dr Emma Mast of the Consensus Action on Salt and Health (Cash), told Life Style Extra: " This is another example of the food industry surreptitiously adding salt unnecessarily to food."

Bupa poll highlights effects of binge drinking

Millions of UK drinkers consume over twice the recommended daily amount of alcohol on a single night, while a quarter binge drink regularly, new research shows.

A poll of 2,000 adults, conducted by Bupa Wellness, suggested that 11 million Britons binge drink regularly, although the majority are in denial over their drinking habits.

Almost half said they did not believe binge drinking would damage their health while almost 70 per cent said that they would not classify themselves as binge drinkers.

Using the government's alcohol intake guidelines, Bupa Wellness found that one in three British men and one in five women regularly drank double the recommended amount of alcohol in one sitting.

For women, binge drinking would consist of three glasses of wine or six measures of spirits, increasing to four pints of beer or eight measures of spirits for men.

According to the study, most were unaware they had been binge drinking and were "confused" by government guidelines on alcohol intake.

Bupa Wellness medical director, Dr Peter Mace, said that "almost half of drinkers are baffled by government advice on safe drinking limits" because of the varying strength of drinks.

Young men between the ages of 18 and 24 were found to binge drink the most.

Bupa said new licensing laws coming into effect in October could mean the government will face a "health time bomb".

Further information: <A href="

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/health/healthmain.html?in_article_id=366711&in_page_id=1774

UK develops taste for travel

The UK's market for foreign foods that people may have tried while on holiday is expanding, according to new research.

A survey of 2000 UK residents carried out by World Travel Market found that 42 per cent of respondents modified the contents of their weekly shopping depending on their culinary experiences abroad.

It also noted that consumers were becoming more adventurous, as increasing affluence led them to travel further afield.

Gill Smith, communications manager for supermarket chain Waitrose, said: "Flavours people have sampled on holiday are becoming more popular", adding that the chain's lines had expanded to encompass Thai, Japanese and Malaysian specialities.

"We're also finding that as people travel more, they are more knowledgeable about regional trends within countries," she continued.

"Instead of simply wanting Indian foods, we're finding that customers are aware of Goan and Keralan food and want to buy these dishes at their local supermarket."

Over half of those asked (53 per cent) said that sampling traditional foods was a key ingredient of their holiday, with 86 per cent claiming to enjoy what they tried.

A similar 83 per cent said that they would also willingly miss paid-for hotel meals to venture out and visit local restaurants.

Fiona Jeffery, World Travel Market's group exhibition director, said: "Food tourism today is where eco-tourism was 20 years ago; people are starting to take an interest."

Further information: http://i-newswire.com/pr49015.html

Scottish restaurant scarred by EU fish laws

A Scottish restaurant has been affected by new EU "First Sale of Fish" regulations requiring all fish to be bought from a wholesaler as of next year.

The five-star Turnberry resort received a delivery of langoustines, but found that the vast majority were either dead or unfit for consumption, having travelled some 900 miles.

However, on tracing the delivery back to its source, the restaurant's chefs found that the fish had originated in the same place it used to source its supplies, the local coastal town of Girvan.

Opting to adapt to the new EU legislation early, Turnberry had decided to acquire its langoustines from a wholesaler in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh, where they had already been sent from Girvan, via Billingsgate in London.

The restaurant's general manager, Stewart Selbie, explained to Scotland on Sunday: "We are very happy to comply with the regulations but these shellfish had gone all the way to Billingsgate to be processed through there, then all the way back to Edinburgh to be processed there and then across to us.

"When it got here the produce was damaged and 90 per cent of the langoustines had died."

The new EU traceability rules are a response to fishing in excess of stipulated quotas, as well as growing food health and safety concerns.

Further information: http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/scotland.cfm?id=2167762005

Spanish food website launches in UK

An online food firm that specialises in luxury Mediterranean foods has opened for business in the UK.

The Barcelona-based Delitaste website and service promotes some 150 small Spanish food and drink products, including local wines, olive oils, hams, cheeses and preserves.

The website also provides serving suggestions, and orders can be processed and delivered within 72 hours, including gift-wrapping as presents. They are shipped to consumers in the UK via UPS.

Visitors to the site can now do their online shopping in a choice of English, Spanish or Catalan, and there is also a section given over to organic food.

The website caters for a growing demand in the UK for premium, locally sourced produce from foreign countries.

Cash-rich, time-poor consumers are also increasingly opting to demonstrate their spending power by investing in the convenience of doing their shopping online.

Further information: http://i-newswire.com/pr48990.html

Coffee shop crowned "Best Beverage Experience"

A coffee shop in Leeds has been crowned the UK's "Best Beverage Experience" by the UK cafe industry body, the Beverage Service Association.

The organisation's panel of undercover judges visited The Lakeside cafe, based in Roundahay Park, along with around 1,000 similar venues nationwide.

Establishments are nominated for the award by their customers or coffee suppliers, and the Lakeside was voted top for the quality of its coffee, its new modern decor, the view of the Waterside Lake, and the service of the baristas.

The venue was recently given an image overhaul, having been bought by David Rogers at the end of 2004, and reopened for business in January this year.

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As well as refurbishments, Mr Roger's innovations included replacing an automatic espresso maker with baristas trained in the art of coffee making

Manager, Kate Fisher, said of the customers: "They can watch it being made and see that people are taking their time over it," according to Leeds Today.

Further information:
<http://www.leedstoday.net/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=39&ArticleID=1234992>

UK food industry to get academy

The UK's food and drink industry is one of four set to benefit from a new £40 million government initiative to tackle major skills shortages.

From next year, the four industry sectors, which also comprise manufacturing, construction and financial services, will have their own "National Skills Academies" as training grounds for future generations of employees.

Working alongside firms in the industries in question to develop business plans, the government will provide necessary funding, and employers will devise programmes of training to fill the skills gaps identified.

Northern Foods and Youngs Bluecrest Seafood are two of the food industry representatives to have given the scheme their backing, and the first academies will open their doors at the start of the next academic year in September.

Ruth Kelly, education secretary, said: "In the past, government has let down employers when it has tried to second guess what different sectors need.

"But equally, employers have been guilty of watching government initiatives from the sidelines and expressing disappointment when they inevitably land wide of the mark.

"National Skills Academies are an opportunity for government and employers to achieve common goals, to pursue a mutually beneficial endeavour and build a Britain of enterprise and opportunity."

Further information:
<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/92ac02b8-49b3-11da-8686-0000779e2340.html>

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