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Soft drink company switches to sucralose

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 06

Story Text

Calypso Soft Drinks, the company associated with the production of children's beverages, has said that it will replace aspartame with sucralose in a range of its drinks, according to reports.

Website just-drinks reports that from May the Clear Cups range of children's drinks will no longer contain aspartame following recent concerns that the ingredient could be a carcinogen.

"We have listened to the concerns that some parents have over aspartame in children's soft drinks and have made the decision to switch to sucralose in response," said Richard Cooke, sales and marketing director at Calypso Soft Drinks, according to just-drinks.

Mr Cooke continued by saying that although aspartame was an ingredient approved for use by the government and the Food Standards Agency, as sucralose could offer the same service to its Clear Cups drinks, it would use this.

Next week, a European Union regulatory review will ascertain whether the results of a scientific study showing aspartame to be a carcinogen are confirmed or rejected.

[Further information](http://www.just-drinks.com/article.aspx?id=86304)

New citrus lab to be global resource

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 06

Story Text

A new citrus lab has been opened in North America to develop authentic and stable citrus flavours for the beverage industry.

According to Nutrition Horizon, the Citrus Ingredient Development Lab (CIDL) has been opened by Quest International and will act as a global resource.

Scott May, global product director, told Nutrition Horizon: "Citrus makes up more than 50 per cent of the beverage flavour market and the CIDL demonstrates how focussed we are on growing the business in this sector."

Quest's Citrusense range of flavours is designed to maximise sensory impact and be as authentic as possible and the new lab will provide state-of-the-art technology to enable more ingredients and flavours to be developed.

Mr May added: "The new lab will enable us to closely collaborate with beverage customers to develop flavours that will improve consumer acceptance."

[Further information](http://www.questintl.com/home/index_01.html)

Absolut hopes for peachy sales

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 06

Story Text

The UK now has a new variant of the premium vodka range Absolut, the eighth flavoured vodka in the series.

Absolut Apeach, a peach-flavoured vodka drink, has been available to consumers in the US since May of last year, where it has been well received.

The drink, which can be drunk on ice, as part of a long drink or in a cocktail, is hoped to further boost the success of the Absolut brand, UK sales of which have been growing by 25 per cent a

year.

"I'm excited about how we, with Absolut Apeach, have developed a vodka with such a distinct smooth and sensual character," Emilie Friis, European marketing manager at V&S Absolut Spirits, told just-drinks.com.

"We are confident that the launch will ensure the continuous success the Absolut vodka brand has seen within the premium flavoured vodka category ever since Absolut Citron was introduced in 1988."

As with all of the Absolut Vodka range, the new addition to the portfolio is made entirely from natural ingredients and is said to have a smooth, mellow and sophisticated taste.

[Further information](http://www.thepublican.com/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=20606&d=32&h=24&f=23&dateformat=%25o%20%25B%20%25Y)

Viruses studied for possible Salmonella control

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 06

Story Text

Scientists have identified beneficial viruses which could be used to develop new tools to control Salmonella.

A collaboration of researchers from the US Agricultural Research Service's waste management and forage research unit and Western Kentucky University's department of biology have adapted methods to collect, isolate and identify bacteriophages, viruses that attack and kill Salmonella strains.

Bacteriophages usually attack specific species and strains of bacteria, rupturing the bacterial wall and destroying it.

Knowledge of which viruses kill certain types of bacteria allows specialists to apply specific bacteriophages to help identify, track and ultimately treat bacterial infections.

The team examined the viruses found in swine manure and identified them according to their shape and size.

Having characterised the different viruses, they now aim to use the information to develop new methods of controlling Salmonella.

Salmonella is one of the food industry's most problematic food poisoning bacteria, costing pork producers millions of pounds every year.

Transmission can occur when contaminated food, usually eggs, poultry meat and pork, is consumed, causing diarrhoea, abdominal pain, headache, nausea, vomiting and fever.

[Further information](http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2006/060428.htm)

Dairy solution could cut costs and ease maintenance

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 06

Story Text

A leading provider of solutions for dairy analysis says that a pay-per-test agreement it has entered into with a German factory could get a wider rollout soon.

FOSS Germany has entered an agreement with a leading local milk testing laboratory, Milchprüfing Bayern (MPR), which will see FOSS renewing MPR's equipment for test analysis over the next five years, compliant with an agreed amount of annual usage.

The firm has now announced that this scheme, which was formulated to meet the financial needs of both MPR and itself, could be offered to other clients outside Germany.

Trine Andersen, manager of analytical milk and dairy business at FOSS, explained: "The pay-per-sample scheme with MPR in Germany is a business example with the potential to be followed elsewhere in the world."

The agreement will see FOSS supply MPR with solutions such as its Fossomatic FC instruments for somatic cell counting, its BactoScan FC appliances for bacteria testing and its MilkoScan apparatus for compositional examination.

It is hoped that MPR, and any other companies that choose to work with FOSS along the same lines in the future, will see the costs of its raw milk analysis cut considerably, as well as making maintenance far more effective.

[Further information](http://www.foss.dk/NewsAndEvents/LatestNews.aspx?id=[565134A1-C2F2-4FF2-8EB9-9AC7E43190B4])

Meat industry to continue tallow use

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 06

Story Text

The decision of Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to allow tallow to be used as fuel in rendering plants has been met with strong approval from the meat industry.

Defra had previously opted to prohibit the usage of tallow for this purpose – a decision that was met with much protest from the meat industry, which claimed that such a ban would add between £30 million and £50 million to producers' collective annual costs.

Following the reversal by Defra, a joint statement by the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers (AIMS) and the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) pronounced it a victory for common sense.

NFU president Peter Kendall explained: "I am delighted with this outcome given the perverse environmental impact which would have resulted had government not adopted this sensible and pragmatic use of by-products.

"The use of tallow in rendering plants provides a number of benefits. It allows the beneficial re-

use of material from the rendering process and compared to alternative fossil fuels, tallow releases less carbon dioxide when burnt."

He attributed the rationality of the conclusion reached to the cooperative efforts of the NFU, the wider meat industry and Defra to ensure that "policy delivers proportionate controls in protecting the environment".

Representatives from AIMS and BMPA echoed Mr Kendall's opinions, citing the negative effect on the environment and the additional cost the meat industry would have had to face had Defra's initial decision stood.

[Further information](http://www.nfu.org.uk/x6526.xml)

New classification of shellfish harvesting areas

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 06

Story Text

Next week will see the introduction in England and Wales of the Food Standards Authority's (FSA's) new system of classifying shellfish harvesting areas.

As of May 2nd, the FSA's long-term classification (LTC) will come into effect, with the aim of making it possible to investigate at once sample results so as to manage shellfish harvesting in areas where high levels of E coli contamination have been found.

So as to allow for improved monitoring and short-term measures, the new system will see local action groups set up, with the purpose of investigating any incidents along the guidelines delineated in pre-established local action plans.

The FSA announced on its website: "The system, which has been developed in response to comments received during a review of classification in 2002 and a public consultation in 2004, aims to improve classification arrangements in a way that is practical, enforceable, legally acceptable, and which delivers improved public health protection."

In compliance with EU regulations, the LTC system sets up three different classes of acceptable E coli contamination levels (named A, B and C), with harvesting in any area with more than 46,000 E coli per 100 grams of flesh prohibited.

The FSA also hopes the system will now enable more effective marketing of live bivalve molluscs, such as oysters, mussels, cockles and clams, which tend to be found in class B areas (for example with between 230 and 4,600 E coli per 100 grams of flesh).

[Further information](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/apr/shellfishharvestingltc)

[Further information](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/apr/shellfishharvestingltc)

Trend for fruit-flavoured wines grows down under

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 06

Story Text

Australian wine drinkers are apparently going crazy over fruity wines, with several major wine

companies now infusing wines with fruit flavours.

Hardys, Southcorp and others are producing both regular and sparkling fruit-flavoured wines, according to Decanter magazine, and the idea has met with a good response.

The Nautico range, from South Australian company Kingston Estate, is the latest release and includes a berry-flavoured white Shiraz, a tropical fruit Sauvignon Blanc Semillon and a citrus-flavoured unwooded Chardonnay.

The range joins other fruit-flavoured wines on the market, including Southcorp's sparkling, strawberry-flavoured Killawarra Dusk, their ginseng and passionfruit flavoured offering and Hardys' citrus-flavoured sparkling wine.

The new trend for fruited wines is aimed at novice wine drinkers and younger consumers who normally opt for spirit and mixer combinations and is apparently one of Australia's fastest growing wine sectors.

[Further information](http://www.decanter.com/news/83829.html)

Transgenic pigs could provide a healthy human diet

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 06

Story Text

Scientists in the US have said that genetically modified, cloned pigs could one day provide a healthier diet for meat-eaters.

Nature Medicine reports that the transgenic pigs, which were born in November last year, have a gene which is normally found in algae, plankton and roundworms, and which produces beneficial fats.

The gene converts unhealthy omega-6 fats into omega-3 fatty acids which are thought to reduce the risk of heart attacks and improve brain function.

At this stage, the report claims, it is not certain whether the omega-3 fatty acids in pork will provide the same health benefits as those found in oily fish such as tuna and salmon.

Even if they do prove to be beneficial, it will be a long time before cloned pork appears in stores, probably taking years to obtain approval.

In addition, only one of the ten cloned male piglets tested positive for the gene, had unusually high levels of omega-3 and was healthy enough to survive.

[Lead: Further information](http://www.nature.com/news/2006/060424/full/nm0506-486.html)

Scottish researchers prepare to launch new raspberry

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 06

Story Text

A new raspberry cultivar from the Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI) is due to be launched later this year.

The new fruit, provisionally called Glen Doll, is bright red in colour and is the latest fruit to be bred at the institute.

The moderately-sized fruit, which is produced until mid-August, is said to be very firm and therefore has a good shelf life and is suitable for freezing.

It contains a gene which provides the plant with resistance to the large raspberry aphid, *Amphorophora ideai*, which transmits the raspberry mosaic virus and is one of the plant's most important pests.

As well as breeding new varieties of raspberries, SCRI also researches strawberries and blackberries and is currently developing new strategies for increasing vitamin C levels in blackcurrant fruit.

The latest addition to its raspberry portfolio will be introduced at the Fruit for the Future event on July 20th.

[Further information](http://www.mrsltd.com/softfruit_rasp.asp?menuID=5)

More meat substitutes needed

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 06

Story Text

A study carried out in the Netherlands has called for a change in eating habits, with lower meat consumption and an increase in vegetable protein alternatives.

The Profetas study, carried out by three Dutch universities, found that increasing intake of protein alternatives would have a positive effect in several areas, including sustainable energy production, water use, biodiversity, human health and animal welfare.

The scientists involved say that this is not a call for a collective move to vegetarianism, but simply for an increased use of good-tasting vegetable protein alternatives that are of the highest quality.

"While we don't all have to adopt a vegetarian diet, a change in production is necessary, and above all, a change in mentality," they explained.

"It is true that, in Western countries, meat substitutes are increasingly popular, but the consumption of meat remains persistently high. To achieve real change – a transition – this trend must be reversed on a global scale."

The study claims that encouraging a lesser intake of meat would impel the livestock industry to focus on producing meat that is of a higher quality and shows a lesser incidence of disease.

It also says that a lower meat intake would reduce the incidence of obesity, while also helping the EU to achieve its goals in areas such as sustainable energy production and food quality and safety, as well as assisting the UN in its fight against poverty.

[Further information](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/headlines/news/article_06_04_26_en.html)

System offers unrivalled weighing speed and accuracy

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 06

Story Text

A new portion control scale offers unrivalled weighing speed and accuracy, according to the manufacturers.

Marco Weighing Systems' LineMaster Plus portion control scale is designed for the tough environment of the food processing industry, Processing Talk has reported.

Built using stainless steel, it can withstand most GMP and wash down procedures.

The system can link up with the LineMaster software to display production status over its messaging panel – a two line, 20 character display. The unit can be used in positive or negative applications.

On-board wireless networking, using the 802.11 standard, allows the unit to call home to the LineMaster software.

Each LineMaster Plus has been rigorously tested against EC standards and can be delivered to businesses with a bespoke design stand, fully integrated production table or even a trolley, allowing firms to ensure the long-term benefit of the product.

LineMaster platforms are often used as a component part of Marco's Trac-IT Manufacturing Execution System (MES) factory optimisation software suite, allowing for factory floor data to be optimised, boosting investment returns and ensuring high equipment efficiency.

[Further information](http://www.marcoweighing.co.uk/html/product-lm-plus.htm)

Plans for a sustainable industry 'from gate to plate'

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 06

Story Text

The government today published its strategy for tackling the environmental impact of the food industry.

Margaret Beckett, secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, published the Food Industry Sustainability Strategy earlier today, in which she outlined goals for reducing the industry's impact on climate change and resources such as energy and water.

Ms Beckett said: "As an industry the food sector has a significant role to play in achieving a sustainable future for this country.

"There are many ways this can be done – whether it is by minimising packaging, making food transportation more efficient or reducing the amount of water the industry uses in its processes."

The strategy, which has been developed in partnership with the food and drink industry, aims to improve the industry's environmental, social and economic performance and addresses all sectors of the industry, "from farm gate to the consumer's plate".

Included among the aims is a request for the food manufacturing sector to reduce its food waste, including excess food and surplus packaging, by 15 to 20 per cent by 2010.

[Further information](http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/060426b.htm)

Whey butter developed as alternative to mayonnaise

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 06

Story Text

An alternative emulsion to mayonnaise has been created by researchers, using whey butter.

The University of Seville, the Instituto de la Grasa of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and Corporacion Alimentaria Penasanta have created the emulsion out of a by-product when milk is skimmed.

Due to its high protein and emulsifying properties, the buttermilk turns into a substance similar to mayonnaise once oil and water are mixed with it.

But the emulsion could turn out to be healthier than actual mayonnaise.

"This emulsion has two advantages: on the one hand, as eggs are not used, the cholesterol problems are eliminated; and on the other hand, buttermilk, a by-product of skimmed milk considered as having a low value, is used," explained Dr Jose Maria Franco of the department of chemistry engineering, physical chemistry and organic chemistry at the University of Huelva.

Each of the groups involved in the research used its own technology and emulsification techniques.

Most important for Dr Franco was the sensorial characterization of the formula, which is why a team of taste testers were trained up and given examples of the emulsion to assess which were the most similar to mayonnaise.

[Further information](http://www.nutritionhorizon.com/newsmaker_article.asp?idNewsMaker=10803&fSite=AO545&next=pr)

[Further information](http://www.nutritionhorizon.com/newsmaker_article.asp?idNewsMaker=10803&fSite=AO545&next=pr)

Scientists develop nutritious, flatulence-free beans

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 06

Story Text

Experts have found that fermenting beans with certain bacteria can prevent the undesirable side-effects associated with eating beans.

The BBC reports that a Venezuelan team have found that the process can also be used to boost

the nutritional value of the beans.

Many types of bean, including the black bean on which the team carried out their research, contain compounds which are broken down in the large intestine rather than being digested higher up in the intestinal tract.

During the process, the bacteria which break down the food produce the gases that we commonly associate with bean consumption.

The research, carried out at the Simon Bolivar University in Caracas, revealed that adding a particular type of bacteria, *Lactobacillus casei*, brings about a reduction in the amount of soluble fibre as well as an 88.6 per cent reduction in the amount of raffinose, a wind-causing substance.

More importantly, the amount of insoluble fibre, thought to help rid the digestive system of toxins, increases by 97.5 per cent.

According to the BBC, the researchers have suggested that the food industry use the bacteria to create better bean products.

[Further information](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4943486.stm)

Carbon monoxide can replace nitrite in sausages

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 06

Story Text

Researchers in Norway have been studying the use of carbon monoxide to replace nitrite in cooked or fermented meat batter products such as sausages.

Public regulations limit the use of nitrite in meat products in many countries and the meat industry and health authorities want alternative additives to be developed that can partially or fully replace nitrite.

Carbon monoxide is known to bind to the muscle pigment myoglobin, improving the heat stability of the meat and improving the colour of fresh packaged meat.

Scientists at Norwegian food research centre Matforsk have therefore been experimenting with different levels of carbon monoxide for use in pork and beef sausages as well as hot dogs and salami.

Although the use of carbon monoxide in meat products is not currently permitted in the EU, the USA recently agreed for low carbon monoxide levels to be used in case-ready meat and the researchers therefore hope that it will soon be used to replace nitrite in meat batter products.

[Further information](http://www.matforsk.no/web/wakt.nsf/506f9f2550a723f0c1256c710046553a/84ad00a4a26fe54ec125715b003cf50f?OpenDocument)

[Further information](http://www.matforsk.no/web/wakt.nsf/506f9f2550a723f0c1256c710046553a/84ad00a4a26fe54ec125715b003cf50f?OpenDocument)

Toxic beans could feed the developing world

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 06

Story Text

Scientists have discovered a way to treat toxic beans, usually used in cattle feed, so that they can be safely used in food stuffs.

According to Chemistry & Industry, scientists at the Institute of Food Science and Technology in Pakistan have found that the most effective way of removing the toxins, which can cause muscle weakness if left untreated, is steeping in hot water for several hours.

The researchers then added the flour from the treated beans to chapatti dough, producing bread that is the ideal consistency for scooping up curry.

The research, which appears in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, also found that the protein content of the bread could be increased by nearly 30 per cent by adding just 20 per cent of the flour.

The researchers have therefore suggested that the flour, which has also been used to manufacture ice creams and tofu, could be beneficial for improving the nutritional properties of many food products for use in the developing world.

[Further information](http://www.soci.org/SCI/pressoffice/2006/html/pr334.jsp)

Sandwich market now worth £2.8 billion

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 06

Story Text

The UK market for so-called "on-the-go" sandwiches is now worth £2.8 billion, according to market research by TNS Worldpanel.

The information provider found that 1.69 billion sandwiches were bought and consumed outside the home during the last 12 months in the UK at an average price of £1.66.

Strategic insight director Tim Nancholas commented: "The out-of-home snacking market is notoriously difficult to measure accurately, as people tend to buy on impulse and can forget the details of their purchases."

To get around the problem, TNS employed an innovative text message reporting system, whereby panellists texted in the bar codes of their purchases.

This enabled the researchers to measure the amount of soft drinks, sandwiches and savouries, confectionary, snacks, nuts and crisps being purchased.

Mr Nancholas added: "We are monitoring consumer snack spending across a wide range of outlets from grocery, bakeries and garages to vending machines and canteens."

According to the British Sandwich Association, 37 per cent of adults buy sandwiches every week and the growth in the sandwich industry has been fuelled by changes in consumer lifestyles and work patterns, with the demand for speed and convenience and a growing interest in healthy eating bolstering the market.

[Further information](http://www.just-food.com/article.aspx?id=94660)

Salmon market benefits from health trend

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 06

Story Text

The market for fresh salmon has shown significant improvement over the last two years, with around 1.4 million new consumers opting to buy the fish.

New research from TNS Worldpanel has revealed that young people in particular are beginning to buy salmon, boosting sales of a fish traditionally consumed by older generations.

The Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation's chief executive, Sid Patten, told fishupdate.com that advice on eating more fish has had an extremely beneficial impact.

"Encouragingly, the 17-24s are showing the greatest growth in salmon consumption," he said.

"These age groups are perhaps becoming more aware of the health benefits of the fish as well as the simplicity of cooking it," Mr Patten added.

The survey also found that consumers tend to make more frequent trips to local shops to buy fresh produce nowadays, reflecting the trend for fresh, healthy foods.

Mark Thompson, consumer insight director at TNS Worldpanel, said: "Consumers are trading up for health enhancing foods, with healthy eating now the primary reason for one in five meals that we eat within the home.

"Salmon is benefiting from this trend, as it is 52 per cent more likely to be consumed for health reasons when compared with other fish."

[Further information](http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/4381/UK:_Fresh_salmon_market_on_increase,_new_research_suggests.html)

[Further information](http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/4381/UK:_Fresh_salmon_market_on_increase,_new_research_suggests.html)

Traditional Sunday roast back on the menu

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 06

Story Text

The old-fashioned roast dinner has made a comeback as Britain's favourite meal, according to new research.

In a survey of 1,600 people the roast dinner was rated as Britain's favourite dish, while the curry "which has held the title in the recent past" was relegated further down the list, the Caterersearch website reports.

"For a long time curry has been documented as the UK's favourite food but, amazingly, Thai curry rated only fifth in this latest poll and Indian curries were relegated to number eight," said Beverly Wilson, head of marketing at Red Tractor, who commissioned the survey.

In many previous surveys, dishes such as Chicken Tikka Masala had been rated as Britain's favourite meal.

The Red Tractor assurance scheme said that the roast dinner was rated as three times more popular than the nearest rival, steak and chips.

The old favourite fast food, fish and chips, came third, completing the list of the top three traditional British dishes.

Other entries came from all around the world. Shepherd's pie and bangers and mash made an appearance, but so did lasagne, spaghetti Bolognese and sweet and sour pork.

Further information

Organic beer-drinkers to get Whitstable Bay on draught

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 06

Story Text

Whitstable Bay, the organic ale produced by Kent-based brewer Shepherd Neame, is to become available in draught format for the first time in June.

The 4.1% abv beer launch will be accompanied by new pump clips displaying the strapline "A modern ale from Britain's oldest brewer", the Morning Advertiser reports.

The beer is created using organic hops from New Zealand and traditionally farmed, English organic malted barley, producing a bittersweet flavour with floral overtones and a dry finish.

With full accreditation from the Soil Association, the leading organic authority which confirms the use of organic raw materials and brewing processes, Whitstable Bay is also approved for consumption by vegetarians.

The brewer's chief executive, Jonathan Neame, is reported to have said: "Whitstable Bay has proved hugely popular with our customers and we are delighted to be able to satisfy the demand for the ale on draught."

Further information

New pump technology gets funding boost

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 06

Story Text

A new infusion pump that has a range of applications in the food industry has received Â£250,000 funding from the Capital Fund.

Secta, the patented pump designed by PDD Innovations for the medical devices market, uses a pioneering rotary mechanism to allow liquid to flow through it continuously.

PDD says its new innovation is highly accurate and more cost-effective than existing peristaltic, syringe and diaphragm pumps.

It has one moving disposable part that is easily replaceable, unlike conventional pumps, which have several parts and are difficult and expensive to maintain.

Although Secta is intended for use in intravenous infusions, Paul Pankhurst, chief executive of PDD Innovations, insists that also has its uses in the food industry.

"It could be used to pump foodstuffs from containers, guaranteeing high standards of food hygiene and reducing wastage as suppliers could re-use the containers by fitting them with a new clean pump," he explained.

The Capital Fund praised PDD's innovation which, says its investment director Ian Cameron, will have "huge potential for applications across a range of sectors where it could generate cost savings".

[Further information](http://www.laboratorytalk.com/news/oxd/oxd112.html)

Enzyme discovery could benefit wine industry

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 06

Story Text

Researchers in Australia have discovered a new enzyme in grapes that could benefit the wine industry.

According to freshinfo.com, a lecturer and a student at the University of Adelaide's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine found that the enzyme helps to convert vitamin C into tartaric acid, which enhances the flavour of the grape.

Such a process occurs naturally as the fruit ripens but, by manipulating the enzyme, the researchers found that they were able to produce grapes with either more vitamin C or more tartaric acid.

Christopher Ford, senior lecturer at Adelaide, told freshinfo.com: "We compared the acid content of 28 grape-related species and found one that produced no tartaric acid. This particular grape lacked one of the candidate enzymes that catalyses a key intermediate step of Vitamin C conversion.

"By manipulating this enzyme, we propose that grapes may be modified in such a way that their Vitamin C content can be significantly increased."

This discovery could come as welcome news to the wine industry, which spends large amounts of money adding tartaric acid during the production process.

It plays an important role chemically, lowering the pH of fermenting must to a level where many spoilage bacteria cannot live, and acting as a preservative following fermentation. It also enhances the taste of the wine, adding a certain tartness.

<a

http://www.checkbiotech.org/root/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&doc_id=12609&start=1&control=141&page_start=1&page_nr=101&pg=1>Further information

Ethical water goes on sale in Co-op

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 06

Story Text

Ethically-minded people can now relax when they drink the Co-op's new bottled water.

According to Checkout magazine, proceeds of One will go towards building roundabout-powered wells and pumping systems in Africa.

One billion people worldwide are unable to access clean water, the product's website claims, and people in developing countries spend an average of five hours a day walking to collect water.

For every 30,000 bottles of One that are sold, enough money will be raised to build a £5,000 Roundabout PlayPump, enabling children to pump water into a storage tank for their community while they play.

Phil Ponsonby, general manager of commercial operations for Southern Co-operatives, told Checkout that the company is delighted to be supporting One water.

"By stocking this product, we and our customers can help One generate even more funds for much-needed water provision in Africa," he said.

Duncan Goose, one of the founders and brother of actress Claire Goose, described the move as a "significant step for One and the millions of people who don't have access to clean water".

"We can't change things overnight," he said, "but together we can all make a difference one day at a time, one bottle at a time."

<http://www.we-are-one.org.uk/index.html>>Further information

Sainsbury's sources locally with new sausage range

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 06

Story Text

A leading supermarket has launched a new range of sausages in all of its Northern Irish stores.

All nine Sainsbury's stores in Northern Ireland are now selling the new range of Paul Rankin sausages, which are based on traditional farmhouse recipes and contain only the finest quality meats and the celebrity chef's own selection of spices.

James Laws, Northern Ireland commercial manager for Sainsbury's, said: "We already stock a selection of the Paul Rankin breads, which have proved hugely popular with our customers and I am confident the new selection of sausages will be just as successful."

He added that the decision to stock the range supports the supermarket's policy to source locally wherever possible, as the sausages are produced by Ballymena meat company Doherty and Gray.

Paul Rankin commented: "I'm really excited that Sainsbury's are to stock the Rankin Selection sausage range.

"I hope everyone who tries the sausages will enjoy them as much as I do."

[Further information](http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/index.asp?PageID=422&subsection=&Year=2006&NewsID=672)

Low-calorie Fanta Apple unveiled

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 06

Story Text

Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) has announced it will launch Fanta Apple Z, a zero-added-sugar variant of the Fanta brand, later this month.

Orange, icy lemon and summer fruits varieties of the Fanta Z range are already on the market and CCE has suggested that, as the second most popular juice drink flavour, apple was a natural addition.

"Because of its great taste and low calorie content – only 13 calories per 330ml can – Fanta Apple Z was the best performing diet apple carbonated soft drink in consumer testing, outperforming all other tested diet drinks," said Anita Huntley, head of carbonated soft drinks at CCE.

She added: "66 per cent of consumers trying Fanta Apple Z said they would probably or definitely buy the product."

According to CCE, two litre and 500ml bottles as well as 330ml cans of Fanta Apple Z will be sold.

The Z brand has grown 94 per cent since its introduction replaced the previous incarnation, known as Fanta Light.

[Further information](http://www.just-drinks.com/article.aspx?art=30467&type=1)

Global smart packaging market set to soar

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 06

Story Text

A new report has predicted the global smart packaging market to reach \$4.8 billion by 2011 and \$14.1 billion in 2013.

The report by US market research firm NanoMarkets is the latest in a series examining emerging market opportunities that stem from innovations in materials and electronics.

It covers packaging solutions in the food and beverage sectors such as freshness systems, temperature indicators and temperature control packaging, display-based packaging and smart

dispensing systems.

According to the report, smarter packaging is being made possible by innovations in printable electronics technologies which can be used to make products healthier, more secure, longer lasting and more aesthetically appealing.

The report gives examples such as RFIDs but says that significant improvements need to be made in the ability of printing machines to create RFIDs so that they can be printed on a wide variety of materials and produced at around \$0.01 per tag.

In addition, the report suggests that smart materials will have an important part to play in smart packaging technology, including the potential use of smart labels to indicate freshness through a series of colour changes.

[Further information](http://www.nanomarkets.net/news/pr_detail.cfm?PRID=191)

Defra decision bad news for red meat processors

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 06

Story Text

The ban by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on the use of animal fats as fuel is likely to badly hit the red meat industry, critics have claimed.

Defra's decision to ban the use of tallow for this purpose has provoked outrage from producers, with the UK Renderers Association claiming that it will leave the industry facing additional costs of up to £50 million, Farmers Weekly reports.

A spokesman for Anglo Beef Processors said that Defra's decision would badly compromise UK beef producers' efforts to re-enter the export market, as well as contributing to global warming by banning the use of an environmentally friendly fuel.

Maurice McCartney, the director of the British Meat Processors Association, concurred and said: "It is unlikely farmers can fund an additional £40 million from the livestock sector.

"The meat processing sector cannot afford it either. Last year the British meat industry paid the meat hygiene service £27.5 million for inspection services and a further burden of £40 million is frankly unthinkable."

Representatives from the National Beef Association, the National Sheep Association and the National Fallen Stock Company all echoed these sentiments, noting the inflationary effect Defra's decision would have on collection costs.

Defra has issued a strong warning to abattoirs and meat processors that, should they ignore regulations on tallow usage, they will then be overlooked by government contracts like the Older Cattle Disposal Scheme.

[Further information](http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/2006/04/21/94110/Tallow+ban+will+add+%C2%A310+a+carcass+to+red+meat+costs.html)

Sprite gets a new injection of energy

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 06

Story Text

Sprite, the lemon and lime soda that has overtaken 7UP in recent years, will shortly be available in a new, energy-packed variety.

According to reports in the Morning Advertiser, Coca-Cola Enterprises is launching the new drink, Sprite 3D, later this month along with a £2 million marketing campaign.

The new variant, although still based on the original lemon and lime recipe, will also contain glucose, guarana and caffeine from green coffee beans.

A company spokesman told the Morning Advertiser: "This is a very different product to something like Red Bull because it has a distinct flavour that doesn't taste like an energy drink.

"A lot of energy drinks do not have any brand recognition with consumers but, because of the Sprite name, people will know what to expect."

Sprite 3D is being launched in 250ml "bullet cans", backed by a TV campaign which will reportedly feature the offspring of the regular cartoon sprite and will be aimed at young consumers.

[Further information](http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/news_detail.aspx?articleid=15583)

'Healthiest fruit of all' soon widely available

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 06

Story Text

The latest "healthiest fruit of all" is about to become readily available on Britain's supermarket shelves, continuing the ongoing emergence of so-called super foods.

The Brazilian acai berry, said to contain twice as many antioxidants as blueberries, will reportedly be arriving in Waitrose stores within weeks.

According to the Scotsman, scientists at the University of Florida recently found that extracts from the berries caused up to 86 per cent of cultured leukaemia cells to self-destruct, suggesting that the fruit could have potential benefits in the fight against cancer.

The fruit, which is said to be good for counteracting premature aging and might even have libido-enhancing properties, has already become popular with celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Andre Agassi and Gisele Bundchen.

Uncommonly for a fruit, the berries contain omega 6 and omega 9 fatty acids, as well as providing fibre, calcium and vitamins, and they contain few calories.

A bottled juice version, made by Happy Monkey, will go on sale in Waitrose in June.

Hamish McCall, managing director of Happy Monkey, told the Scotsman: "The acai is arguably the single most nutritionally beneficial fruit on earth."

The juice has already created a £2.5 million-a-year market for itself in the US, where it has been available for over five years.

[Further information](http://news.scotsman.com/health.cfm?id=604372006)

Infants to get nutritious new menu

Date: Fri, 21 Apr 06

Story Text

Nursery school children across the north-west are to be incorporated into the national drive for healthy eating, through the aid of one of the country's leading cookery experts.

The Asquith group, which owns four nurseries in Lancashire and supports seven David Lloyd creches across the county, has recruited Amanda Karmel, best-selling author of some key children's recipe books, to draw up a menu based upon high level nutrition.

Ms Karmel praised the "high quality" and "fresh ingredients" of the cooking found in Britain's 108 Asquith nurseries, which provide places for over 9,500 infants.

"Children these days are eating more of their meals out of the home, so it's important that they are getting food that not only looks and tastes good but also provides them with the right nutrition for their health and well being," she commented.

Olive Glass, Asquith's marketing director, commented that "educating young taste buds is a duty we take very seriously" and claimed that the independent nursery chain had "always exceeded government guidelines" in its healthy food provision.

Amanda Karmel is responsible for a series of highly regarded books including Superfoods for Babies and Children and Feeding your Baby and Toddler.

[Further information](http://www.asquithcourt.co.uk/nurseries/annabel/index.html)

New smoothies good, but not a 'direct replacement'

Date: Fri, 21 Apr 06

Story Text

Smoothies are not always a direct replacement for fresh fruit and vegetables, a dietician has warned.

According to the Western Mail, Welsh dietician Teresa Owen has branded smoothies "an expensive alternative" that "can be a problem" if people get carried away with them.

"There's nothing wrong with them per se – they have their place – but when people get carried away with them, and they have them all the time, it can be a problem," Ms Owen said,

according to the newspaper.

"They have become all the rage now but you have to be careful about what's added to them. Some are higher in calories than others."

Last week, smoothie maker Innocent announced that it was launching some new guest flavours as part of its latest promotional campaign.

And earlier this month Calypso Soft Drinks revealed it was launching a range of smoothies aimed at children, offering that it was a way to get children to consume more fruit and vegetables.

Further information

Wine industry could benefit from yield estimating system

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Story Text

Growers and processors of grapes should soon be able to better synchronise their pruning, watering, picking and juice-making operations.

Researchers at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the US Department of Agriculture's chief scientific research agency, have developed an automated system which makes estimating grape yields a much less time-consuming task.

The system works by detecting tension changes in the trellis wire used to support the vine crop, brought about by changes in the size and weight of grape clusters.

The tension is measured every ten seconds and the process should therefore be able to provide users with real-time information on the progress of the crop.

This will have a huge impact on wine producers who order expensive barrels in response to predicted yields and waste significant amounts of money whenever yield estimates are wrongly inflated.

Horticulturalist Julie Tarara told Agricultural Research magazine: "If a processor or winery has an accurate estimate in advance of harvest, they can schedule their picking times and run their operations more efficiently.

"When the technology becomes commercialised, I could envision an agricultural service or consulting company maintaining web postings for individual wineries, processors, or growers."

Further information

Conference to explore nanotechnology in food industry

Date: Fri, 21 Apr 06

Story Text

A major event is to be held this year to discuss the important and varied role that nanotechnology can play in the food and drinks sector.

The conference, entitled Nano and Microtechnologies in the Food and Healthfood Industries, will give delegates the opportunity to discuss the role nanotechnologies can play in a wide assortment of areas, such as food processing, monitoring, labelling and storage.

One major issue that is to be discussed at the conference will be that of safety and regulatory matters, as working with nanoparticles could prove a threat due to their tiny size and exposure to them could be harmful should they prove toxic.

A recent statement by the Institute of Food Science & Technology claimed: "In using nanotechnology, it is important to assess how products of nanotechnology will eventually lead to the release of nanoparticles into the environment and to estimate our subsequent levels of exposure to these materials."

However, there will be far more focus on the positive effects that nanotechnology could have on the industry, such as how they can be used to make foods more nutritious and how they can be utilised with regard to health-related issues.

The conference, which will take place in Amsterdam this October, will also look at the role new technologies and methods could play in prompt safety testing, and in preventing food-borne disease.

<http://www.nano.org.uk/newsletter/food/> Further information

Workshops on animal by-products in food production

Date: Fri, 21 Apr 06

Story Text

The European commission (EC) is financing a series of workshops across Europe which will focus on animal by-products in food production.

These workshops are being held because the EC believes that compliance with its measures for such by-products is proving problematic for some stakeholders in the food industry.

Using certain animal by-products in animal feed could spread diseases like BSE, as well as cause chemical contamination through the spread of waste such as dioxins, according to the EC.

During the workshops, the impact of these policies on the technical and disposal sectors as well as on food and producers will be highlighted.

Training will also be given on how governments and their partners can improve compliance with the EU's measures regarding animal by-products.

Workshops kick off in Athens next month, with two more being held in Milan and Warsaw in the summer.

The events will culminate in a conference due to be held in Belgium in September.

[Further information](http://www.food-control.com/ABP/index_en.html)

7UP now 100% natural

Date: Fri, 21 Apr 06

Story Text

The lemon-lime flavoured soft drink 7UP is now made from 100 per cent natural ingredients and contains almost 50 per cent less sodium than previously, its manufacturer has announced.

Cadbury Schweppes has revealed that the brand is meeting the changing needs and desires of consumers by eliminating all artificial flavours and preservatives.

"We're proud to be the first mainstream carbonated soft drink brand to address consumer demand for a great tasting lemon-lime drink made from 100 per cent natural ingredients," said Randy Gier, chief marketing officer for Cadbury Schweppes Americas Beverages.

The move coincides with the brand's 77th anniversary and ensures that only naturally-sourced ingredients will be used including filtered carbonated water, high fructose corn syrup, natural citric acid, natural flavours and natural potassium citrate, all of which are commonly found in natural food products.

Kelli Freeman, marketing vice president, said: "7UP, now 100 per cent natural, has been in the works for more than a year because we wanted to ensure that we stayed true to the crisp, refreshing 7UP taste that consumers have come to know and love."

[Further information](http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20060420005157&newsLang=en)

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[Further information](http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm_objectid=16968107%26method=full%26siteid=50082-name_page.html)

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Juice sales reflect trend for healthier products

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 06

Story Text

More than 90 per cent of Britons bought fruit juices last year, with the average annual spend reaching Â£37, according to the latest research.

Grocer magazine reports that mango and pineapple juices were the best sellers, followed by the relatively new option of pomegranate juice.

And according to website freshinfo, supermarket chain Sainsbury's has found the trend reinforced by in-store sales of juice products.

Mike Luck, the supermarket's juice buyer, said that pineapple sales grew by 61 per cent and apple sales by 30 per cent, accounting for 5.9 per cent and 11.4 per cent of the fruit juice drinks category respectively, freshinfo reports.

The current consumer focus on healthy drinks has seen recent announcements of a soya-based fruit drink range from Unilever and a number of further limited edition smoothie options from Innocent.

Britvic recently cited the trend towards healthier products as a factor behind declining sales of its full-sugar carbonated beverages.

McVitie's launch new indulgent biscuit range

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 06

Story Text

A new sub-brand of biscuits is being launched this month by United Biscuits, the UK's largest biscuit manufacturer.

McVitie's Moments are aimed at the premium end of the market and are expected to be purchased by consumers who are willing to pay extra for high quality ingredients.

The range has been created using Belgian chocolate and the finest ingredients and includes Chocolate Toffee Crunch, Chocolate Fruit & Nut Caramel Shortcake, Chocolate Viennese Melt and Triple Chocolate Cookie varieties.

The launch is being supported by a Â£2.5 million marketing campaign which is hoped to boost the McVitie's brand presence in the special treat sector.

James Mayer, grocery trading director for United Biscuits UK, said that the McVitie's brand leads the way with ongoing new product development and investment.

"The new range will reinforce its position as number one for both retailers and consumers alike, adding renewed interest and driving sales in the special treat biscuit sector," he commented.

Further information

Food manufacturers in the dark over RFID

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 06

Story Text

A survey of UK food manufacturers has found that less than a fifth of companies have introduced, or have immediate plans to introduce, radio frequency identification (RFID).

The study, which involved over 100 leading manufacturers, reveals that wider adoption of RFID is being prevented by a wide-spread lack of understanding, with 40 per cent citing this as the greatest barrier.

Just 18 per cent of food and drink manufacturers claimed to be at least fairly knowledgeable about the technology, which is increasingly being used as an alternative to the bar code, enabling products to be labelled and tracked as they move from place to place.

While 38 per cent of manufacturers claimed to be keen to improve their stock management over the next 12 months, 37 per cent admitted that they were deterred by the perceived cost of implementing RFID.

The majority of manufacturers also said that they would be attracted to RFID by the promise of improved tracking and more efficient stock operations and over a fifth said that they would be driven to implementing the technology by its potential to improve forecasting.

Peter Heath, managing director of easyFairs UK, said: "The food industry is in the mood to innovate and to invest in areas which will deliver competitive advantage.

"It is not technology shy, but it is looking for suppliers to explain the bottom line benefits of RFID before it makes the move."

Further information

Children's flavoured water launched

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 06

Story Text

Britvic has launched a new advertising and marketing campaign for the Robinsons Fruit Shoot H2O drink, according to the latest reports.

Website just-drinks said that the drinks are being backed by a Â£3.5 million marketing campaign, focusing on the "New thinking, new drinking" strapline of the television advert.

"Robinsons Fruit Shoot H2O is the first water that children will really like, from a brand that mums trust," said Robinsons brand controller Jonathan Gatward, according to just-drinks.

"The ad campaign highlights the playful nature of Robinsons Fruit Shoot H2O and encourages children to drink more water," he said.

Research carried out by Britvic suggested that children would select the Robinsons Fruit Shoot H2O brand above other water products targeted at children, with 71 per cent asking for the beverage.

The television advert features children playing in a park, one of which can only be stopped from talking by the drink. It was first aired in the UK on Easter Monday.

[Further information](http://www.just-drinks.com/article.aspx?id=86210)

Consumer demand fuels increase in UK-sourced organics

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 06

Story Text

The availability of organic UK food in supermarkets has risen as a result of increased consumer demand, a new survey has revealed.

The Soil Association's annual Supermarket Survey has found that over three quarters of key staple organic foods are sourced within the UK in five of the eight main supermarkets.

The availability of seasonal organic foods from UK sources has risen by 10 per cent in supermarkets, from 72 per cent two years ago to 82 per cent today.

Even organic apples, traditionally imported in response to consumer demand for "cosmetically-perfect", blemish-free fruit, are increasingly being sourced from within the UK, with supermarkets stocking on average 40 per cent of the fruit from UK orchards.

Peter Melchett, policy director at the Soil Association, said that the survey shows that positive consumer pressure pays off.

"This increase gives consumers greater access to good quality, fresh food, and farmers more stable outlets for their product," he commented.

Waitrose and Marks & Spencer took joint top place in the survey, with both retailers sourcing 89 per cent of the surveyed organic foods from UK farmers, while 86 per cent of Sainsbury's organic foods are UK sourced.

Sainsbury's organic brand manager, Ruth Bailey, said: "Customers are increasingly telling us that they want to know where their food comes from and that freshness is important."

[Further information](http://www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/f201148200f2e8af80256dbf005202e4/499452bb078fc0d780257156002dcd9!OpenDocument)

Bird flu fears boost pork industry

Date: Thu, 20 Apr 06

Story Text

Pork consumption is likely to receive a boost amid growing bird flu fears in Europe, a pig industry consultant claims.

Writing in Farmer's Weekly, Peter Crichton says the first confirmed case of the disease in Scotland might lead many consumers to choose pork over poultry.

Meanwhile, more outbreaks of swine fever in Germany have led to restrictions being imposed on the pig exports from the country.

Mr Crichton says that the last major European outbreak of the disease in Holland in 1997 resulted in "soaring pig prices" which benefited producers in the UK.

He adds that the latest outbreak, which occurred in the North Rhine region of Germany, is "already leading to wide fluctuations within Europe".

Meanwhile, the British Pig Executive (BPEX) says that more than 70 per cent of pork and pork products being imported into the UK have been produced under conditions which would not be legal in Britain.

"Imported pork is being sold increasingly through retail outlets and mostly at discounted prices," comments the BPEX's chief executive Mick Sloyan.

"However, consumer research indicates British consumers remain very concerned about imports of pork and pork products that fail to meet UK pig welfare legislation."

Mr Sloyan notes that more than nine in ten consumers agreed that all pork should be produced to UK welfare standards and that it should not be imported if it does not meet UK legislation standards.

Further information

Award-winning pub owners leave to open brewery

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 06

Story Text

A Huddersfield pub has received a prestigious award as its owners prepare to leave to start their own brewery.

The Field Head in Quarmby was voted pub of the season for winter by Huddersfield's branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra), the third time licensees Russell and Lorraine Beverley have won the seasonal accolade in the last ten years.

The award was presented to the couple by the Camra branch pubs officer Jonathan Smith, who said they won it for their "outstanding effort in promoting real ale".

However, Mr Beverley has been brewing his own ales in the past few years and so the owners are leaving next week to establish a new brewery in an industrial unit at Upper Mills in Slaithwaite, reports the Huddersfield Daily Examiner.

He said: "I was quite pleased to win, especially in the final part of the tenancy, because we can go out on a high.

"We leave here next Sunday and hopefully the brewery will be up and running a few weeks after that."

To begin with, the brewery will produce six beers including Mr Beverley's Empire Strikes Back creation and special brews.

[Further information](http://www.camra.fsworld.co.uk/fieldhead06.htm)

Flavoured rums unveiled in the UK

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 06

Story Text

Two new flavours of Bacardi have been launched in the UK, according to the Publican.

Bacardi Berry and Bacardi Apple have been launched into the off-trade, the website reports, although the company is planning to release them into the on-trade later this year.

The flavours are designed to appeal to 18-24 year-olds and have already produced successful trial results in the US.

The senior trade marketing manager for Bacardi rum, Fraser McGuire, told the Publican: "We've been watching the performance of these flavoured rums in Europe and across the US for the past 12 months and we have recognised huge potential in the UK market."

According to just-drinks.com, the rums will be available in 70cl bottles and will retail for around £12.49 with an ABV of 32 per cent.

The new products will increase Bacardi's growing portfolio of alcoholic beverages, which includes Bacardi carta blanca rum, Bacardi oro rum and Bacardi eight-year-old rum.

[Further information](http://www.thepublican.com/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=20521&d=32&h=24&f=23&dateformat=%25o%20%25B%20%25Y)

'Massive potential' for camel milk products

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 06

Story Text

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has said that it sees significant promise in camel milk, which has been enjoying a surge in interest.

The FAO has said that dairy products made from camel milk could provide more food to people in arid and semi-arid areas, as well as providing a significant source of income for nomadic herders.

The organisation is now hoping that donors and investors will provide financial assistance to help develop the sector, helping camel milk to move into the more lucrative Middle Eastern and Western markets.

"The potential is massive," the FAO's dairy and meat expert, Anthony Bennett, said on the organisation's website. "Milk is money."

Camel milk contains three times as much vitamin C as cow's milk and is a good source of iron, unsaturated fatty acids and vitamin B.

Vienna-based chocolatier Johann Georg Hochleitner is already planning to launch a low-fat camel milk chocolate later this year.

[Further information](http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000275/index.html)

Unilever prepares soya-based drink launch

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 06

Story Text

Unilever, the international manufacturer of food and drink, personal care and home care products, is reportedly ready to launch a new beverage onto the UK market.

According to the advertising, marketing, PR and media magazine Brand Republic, the company is to launch a soya-based fruit drink on the UK market.

The magazine said that the Adez brand range of drinks will target the consumer health and wellbeing market that is currently so popular in the UK. The drinks are currently available in Argentina under the name Ades.

The flavours offered in the South American country include apple, tropical fruits and orange, among others, but the magazine goes no further than offering that "a range of fruit and natural flavours" will be sold in the UK.

The company's previous assault on the drinks market saw the release of Lipton Ice Tea in 2002, but the Adez drinks are enriched with calcium, vitamins and minerals, suggesting they target a different market.

[Further information](http://www.brandrepublic.co.uk/login/index.cfm?fuseaction=Login&resource=BR_News&articleType=news&article=554337)

Print manufacturer announces launch success

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 06

Story Text

A manufacturing company has received a positive response after launching new products at Iplex 2006, the global technology event for print, publishing and media.

Sun Chemical claims that its new products have been well-received and there has been a significant level of interest since the show, which took place at the NEC in Birmingham from April 4th-11th.

The company showcased products for web printing along with its new series of printing inks for use with food packaging, designed to prevent the likelihood of migration into the food.

According to the company, the new printing inks, including Suncure ULM and Irocart LMQ, meet the best practices necessary for food package printing.

Felipe Mellado, corporate vice-president of marketing and technology at the company, said: "The specific requirements on food packaging are diverse and vary from country to country."

He added: "Our solid package of products launched at Ipex has been well-received within the industry and there is already strong interest in these high performance and innovative ink products that are a direct response to our customers' needs."

[Further information](http://www.printingtalk.com/news/sem/sem119.html)

Vegetarian 'chicken' pieces unveiled

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 06

Story Text

Redwood, a producer of natural plant-based foods, has launched its new vegetarian 'chicken' pieces this month, describing them as "just like the real thing".

Vegideli Cheatin' Chicken-style pieces have been named "best new faux meat product" by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) and are said to look and taste remarkably similar to chicken, while being entirely free from animal ingredients.

Lauren Bowey, a spokeswoman for Peta, commented: "Even many non-vegetarians agree that Redwood's Cheatin' Chicken-style Pieces have the 'real' thing beat by a mile."

The new product is free from lactose, cholesterol, hydrogenated fats and artificial colours and preservatives, and has been approved by both the Vegetarian Society and the Vegan Society.

According to Redwood, the succulent chicken-style pieces provide an excellent alternative to meat for both vegetarians and health-conscious consumers and are ideal for use in stir-fried dishes, fajitas, curries, sandwiches, salads and pies.

A spokeswoman for the Vegan Society, Catriona Toms, added: "We're used to Redwood bringing out tasty and healthful products, yet they continue to surprise and delight us."

[More information on Redwood's Cheatin' range](http://www.redwoodfoods.co.uk/products/cheatin/content.html)

Supermarkets offering year-round dates

Date: Tue, 18 Apr 06

Story Text

Dates have become a year-round delicacy, according to a major UK supermarket.

Originally consumed only around Christmas-time, Tesco has reported that dates have become

one of the UK's fastest growing fruits.

According to freshinfo.com, demand for dates at the supermarket giant has soared in recent months following the increasing trend for healthy snacking options.

Sales of the medjool date, a large, fleshy variety that is naturally sweeter than traditional dates, have risen by 30 per cent over the past 12 months, making it one of the fastest growing organic foods.

Kris Comerford, a dates buyer, told freshinfo.com that dates have become one of Britain's trendiest foods.

"The medjool date has emerged as a tasty but nutritious snack or dessert.

"People tend to find that three or four are enough to give them a sweet snack or after-dinner treat."

Medjool dates are a good source of protein and a variety of minerals, including copper, iron, magnesium and fluoric acid.

[Further information](http://www.freshinfo.com/index.php?s=n&css=nd&sid=38761)

Organic cod to hit UK shelves

Date: Tue, 18 Apr 06

Story Text

Retailers will soon be filling their shelves with organic cod, thanks to the world's first organic cod farm.

According to the Daily Telegraph, Johnson Seafarms will supply a number of retailers, including Tesco, with 1,500 tonnes of Shetland-farmed organic cod.

The news should please ethical retailers who have recently stopped selling cod because of depleting North Sea stocks.

The world-class cod, which will retail at around £15 per kilo, is said to be firmer and whiter than wild-caught cod as it is free from parasitic worms and has not suffered the stress caused by trawling.

Karol Rzepkowski, managing director of Johnson Seafarms, told the Daily Telegraph: "We are forging a new industry. If we set it up right, other people will have to do it this way."

The company has deliberately involved the Organic Food Federation throughout the process and aims to give the fish a good quality of life and farm using environmentally friendly methods.

The cod are kept in much lower densities than farmed salmon and handling is kept to an absolute minimum to reduce the risk of spreading disease.

The company hopes to be producing around 12,000 tonnes of organic cod annually in four years' time, a figure which would represent half of the present legal catch of wild North Sea cod.

[Further information](http://www.johnsonseafarms.com/johnson-cod.htm)

New sheep's milk ice-cream launched

Date: Tue, 18 Apr 06

Story Text

A new, healthy ice-cream made from sheep's milk was launched at a major food and drink festival earlier this month.

Slim Ewe was revealed at the Exeter Festival of South West England Food & Drink by experienced manufacturers David and Sue Baker.

The Bakers have been making ice-cream since 1988 and are now targeting the growing number of health-conscious consumers with their new product.

They have become the largest producers of sheep's milk ice-cream in the UK, producing a wide variety of products under the Styles brand.

The new product is a low fat option which is completely natural and contains only ten per cent sugar.

Mr Baker told Farmers Weekly that foods described as "low fat" often trigger an automatic response in people's brains.

"They think it's also going to be low on flavour," he explains, "but, in fact, not adding fat actually allows even more of the flavour to come through."

Mr Baker is hoping that Slim Ewe will significantly boost his sales after nearly three quarters of people who took part in a blind tasting said that they preferred the new product.

[Further information](http://www.fwi.co.uk/Articles/2006/04/18/94007/'Slim+Ewe'+finds+flavour+as+a+healthy+ice-cream.html)

Ready meals provide opportunities for fresh produce sector

Date: Tue, 18 Apr 06

Story Text

A recent report has highlighted the increasing opportunities for innovative use of fresh produce in ready meals.

The report from Research and Markets claims that the market for ready meals is growing as consumers try to "maximise their increasingly limited leisure time" by reducing the amount of time required to produce traditional meals.

However, despite the soaring popularity of convenience meals, consumers are also becoming increasingly keen to be informed about healthy eating and this is fuelling a growing trend towards authenticity and so-called home-made ready meals.

This, claims the report, should provide opportunities for the fresh produce sector to develop new and innovative products.

"Rising health concerns mean that consumers are more aware of the influence of their diet on their health and are changing their mealtime occasions accordingly," the document states.

The report also claims that the gap between attitudes to healthy eating and actual consumer behaviour is narrowing as consumers continue to discover hassle-free ways to eat healthily.

Further information

US researchers produce new grape varieties

Date: Tue, 18 Apr 06

Story Text

Researchers in the US have developed two new grapes which should be in commercial production within the next few years.

According to the April issue of Agricultural Research magazine, scientists at the Agricultural Research Service in California's San Joaquin valley have developed new seedless varieties of both red and white grapes.

The team carefully selects parent grape plants with desirable traits, such as colour, texture or flavour, and crossbreeds them to produce new vines which share the characteristics of both parent plants.

The research team's most recent white grape innovation is Autumn King, which Mr Ramming claims is "big enough to set a new gold-standard for size".

The new red seedless grapes, Scarlet Royals, are said to have raspberry-red skin and translucent pale yellow-green flesh and have already been patented.

David Ramming, who leads the grape-breeding team, told Agricultural Research magazine that the fruit is "a truly exceptional grape" which is "sweet, firm and meaty".

The Agricultural Research Service has been conducting a grape-breeding programme since 1923 and is world-renowned for its innovative grape varieties.

Further information

Fosters with a twist

Date: Tue, 18 Apr 06

Story Text

Scottish & Newcastle, the new owners of Foster's lager in Europe, has announced the launch of a new citrus-flavoured lager later this year.

Foster's Twist will represent the first major UK launch for the brand since Foster's Ice was introduced over a decade ago.

According to the Herald, the new beverage is "brewed with citrus hops for a subtle hint of lime".

The launch will be supported by a multi-million pound advertising campaign which is scheduled to kick off shortly after the World Cup.

Scottish & Newcastle, based in Edinburgh, recently acquired the Foster's trademark in a £309 million deal which will allow the company a larger degree of flexibility throughout Europe, the Russian Federation and Turkey.

The international brewer said that the acquisition would enable it to realise the brand's full potential in terms of marketing, packaging and new product development and revealed that the company is planning to develop a number of exciting brand initiatives.

Over 80 per cent of Foster's worldwide volume is sold in the UK, where the brand is the number three lager.

Further information

New malt is matured for 25 years

Date: Thurs, 13 Apr 06

Story Text

A Scottish distillery has announced the addition of a new, 25 year-old malt whisky to its portfolio.

Springbank Distillery, which claims to be the only distillery in Scotland to carry out the entire production process, from traditional floor malting to bottling, on site, is preparing to launch the new Springbank 25.

Described as having "a nose you could smell all day", the new product will join the ten year-old and 15 year-old whiskies already on offer in the Springbank range.

The 25 year-old whisky, which has 46 per cent ABV, is said to have an initial scent of sweet vanilla, malt and hazelnut with subtle tones of honey, clove oranges and apricot.

The medium bodied malt is described as being initially sweet, with an explosion of toffee, crème brulee, vanilla and milk chocolate flavours.

It is matured in refilled sherry butts which, according to the company, are vital for determining the final character of the whisky.

The release date has been set for May, when the malt will retail at £150.00 per bottle.

[Further information](#)

New Italian beer could cause confusion

Date: Thurs, 13 Apr 06

Story Text

Carlsberg UK is launching a new Italian beer onto the market in an attempt to meet consumers' demand for a more diverse range.

According to the Morning Advertiser, Birra Poretti is a northern Italian lager with five per cent ABV and is aimed at the 25 to 40 year-old age group.

Available in both draught and bottled formats, the lager is brewed with malt, hops and Carlsberg yeast and will benefit from a brand heritage that dates back to 1877.

Nick Howells, innovation manager for Carlsberg UK, told the Morning Advertiser: "Consumers are increasingly looking to explore within the beer category, and we are seeing this trend reflected in premium lager with the emergence of a number of sub-segments."

However, Heineken has apparently expressed concern that consumers will confuse the new lager with its own Italian brand which arrived in the UK a year ago and goes by the similar name of Birra Moretti.

[Further information](#)

Britvic enters new markets

Date: Thurs, 13 Apr 06

Story Text

Soft drinks manufacturer Britvic has announced it is to explore new markets in Scandinavia for its Robinsons High Juice.

According to the company, its Robinsons site in Barrow, Norwich, will manufacture the squash to be distributed to Denmark and Sweden from this month, including a new flavour of Apple and Blackcurrant.

"Scandinavia is the most attractive market for Robinsons outside of the UK, as it accounts for 12 per cent of squash sales," said Jon Evans, Britvic International marketing manager.

"We have spent significant time understanding the market, its consumers and Robinsons positioning within it and found that our UK High Juice brand was the clear winner and performed better than its Scandinavian competitors."

The focus on the Scandinavian market will begin with the launch of five flavours of High Juice squash – Apple, Orange, Peach and Apple, Cherry and Raspberry and, an exclusive for the market, Apple and Blackcurrant High Juice.

Britvic is pumping £2 million into advertising to support the launch, which will begin with a TV advertisement on May 1st.

[Further information](#)

Food industry likely to enjoy Easter boost

Date: Thurs, 13 Apr 06

Story Text

Britons will spend £2.8 billion on food and drink in the week before Easter, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) predicts.

This is £100 million more than was spent in the seven days running up to Easter Saturday last year and £486 million more than we spend on food and drink in average weeks, according to the consortium.

Easter sales of chocolate, which include an estimated 80 million Easter eggs, are expected to total around £440 million, which represents ten per cent of total annual chocolate sales.

The BRC's director general, Kevin Hawkins, says that the figures show that Easter can give a "serious boost" to the food and drink industry and the confectionery sector.

"For many retailers this could be some compensation for what has been a very disappointing few months," he continues.

"With relentlessly tough trading conditions and poor weather since the start of the year, retailers will be hoping that this Easter sees the beginning of a sustained pick-up in consumer confidence, but also some reasonable weather, so that people start spending again."

EU proposes improvements to GM regulation

Date: Thurs, 13 Apr 06

Story Text

The European Commission has given its support to practical improvements to the way the legislation on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is implemented.

In a statement, the EC said: "The measures proposed aim to bring about practical improvements which will reassure member states, stakeholders and the general public that community decisions are based on high quality scientific assessments which deliver a high level of protection of human health and the environment.

At present, there is a stringent system regulating the marketing and production of genetically modified food within the EU, ensuring that only those GMOs that are deemed to be safe for human consumption can be placed on the European market.

Clear labelling is required to enable consumers to choose whether or not to purchase products containing GMOs.

In order to improve the system, the commission now proposes to invite the European Food Safety Authority to collaborate more fully with national scientific bodies in order to resolve any differences in scientific opinion between member states.

In addition, the commission plans to address concerns by introducing additional risk management measures in draft decisions to introduce GMO products on the market.

[Further information](#)

Monitors detect, measure and display gas levels

Date: Thurs, 13 Apr 06

Story Text

A Scottish company is now manufacturing a range of versatile gas monitors that have applications in the food and beverage industries.

Edinburgh Instruments is producing low-cost, wall-mounted infrared gas monitors that continuously measure target gas concentrations.

The Guardian range consists of three series, which can be customised to meet specific customers' requirements.

The Guardian Plus, Guardian SP and Guardian FR series all provide high accuracy detection and measurement of different gases, including carbon dioxide and methane.

The wall-mounted units use an integral sampling system to detect gases from sampling points up to 30 metres away and display the readings on a four digit LCD screen.

Measuring 267x258x148mm and weighing just 2.5kg, the systems are easy to install and require little maintenance.

[Further information](#)

Equipment introduced for cleaning, drying bottles

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 06

Story Text

A new range of machines for cleaning and drying bottles has been launched which can be used with glass, plastic or ceramic bottles of all shapes and sizes.

The range of SF – SFS equipment provides rotary rinsing, sterilising and blow drying capability and is being marketed under the Kosme brand name.

The machines have been designed to meet a wide range of demands and can treat up to 60,000 bottles per hour.

Made of inox steel, the machines utilise a unique neck handling gripper which enables PET bottles to be treated without the need to adjust the handling mechanisms.

The bottles are inverted over a nozzle which rinses them with water; they can then be treated

with an injection of sterile air, nitrogen or carbon dioxide.

Following treatment, the bottles are automatically returned to an upright position and placed on a conveyor.

The range also includes machines which can be used with aggressive fluids to achieve high levels of sterilisation.

Further information: <http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/kos/kos113.html>

Study hopes to shed light on allergen removal

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 06

Story Text

Reading Scientific Services (RSSL) is currently conducting a study into the effectiveness of different cleaning techniques for the removal of allergens from catering appliances.

The study, which is being supported by the Anaphylaxis Campaign, will be of huge significance to the large number of allergy sufferers who feel at risk every time they eat out.

"The risk of cross contamination from a poorly cleaned surface or implement is something that concerns severely allergic individuals," comments Simon Flanagan, head of the routine analysis and allergens service at RSSL.

Mr Flanagan says that very little is known about the effectiveness of different cleaning techniques on the removal of highly tenacious allergenic proteins.

"If an allergen on a chopping board, for example, is not properly removed by washing up, then there is a risk of cross contamination that could leave some customers vulnerable," he explains.

The study will involve testing the tenacity of a range of allergens and should produce results by National Allergy Week, May 15th – 19th 2006.

The researchers hope that the study will help to plug the knowledge gap and provide advice and guidance for caterers on the best ways of eliminating allergens when cleaning their kitchens.

'Super model' of cartons showcased

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 06

Story Text

Elopak, the packaging system supplier, has displayed its Slim carton at Anuga FoodTec 2006, targeting the health and wellbeing market.

The company has said that the carton's design makes it automatically appear more feminine, healthy, fit and elegant, offering that it advocates a "strong emotional response among health, fitness and weight conscious consumers".

"Its elegant, slender, slim body and graceful image [is] aspired to by the weight and health

conscious individual, especially women who identify with the feminine curves combined with the slim build," said Borge Kvamme, executive vice-president of Elopak's Europe, Middle East and Africa region.

"This truly is an exceptional package and generates a new strong ambient proposition for juice, dairy and food-to-drink products – it is the super model of all cartons."

Available for packet sizes of 500ml, 750ml and one litre, the cartons can be produced at a rate of 8,000 cartons per hour, according to Elopak.

Elopak also said that the carton "creates harmony between product and lifestyle" suggesting it will be particularly useful for exploiting the current consumer trend towards healthy consumption.

Further information: <http://www.elopak.com/site/cms.jsp?node=11281>

Industry demands greater packaging innovation

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 06

Story Text

Manufacturers in the food and drinks industries are expecting greater innovation from their packaging suppliers over the next 12 months to support their own ongoing product development.

Well over a third of companies questioned at the easyFairs Process, Pack & Track Food Shows said that they are seeking greater innovation from their suppliers, with 12 per cent claiming that the industry has been too complacent.

A quarter of food and drink manufacturers also plan to make substantial investments in labelling, coding and printing equipment and 30 per cent expect to spend more on packaging machinery.

The industry itself is expecting a bumper year for innovation, with 65 per cent of food and drinks manufacturers planning to launch new products.

As a result, over a third hope to introduce new packaging formats and 30 per cent want their packaging to help make their products stand out more.

Haf Cennydd, director for the easyFairs shows, told just-food.com: "As food and drink companies grapple with the twin challenges of reducing their cost base and expanding their businesses so all aspects of supply are being scrutinised.

"Suppliers who help them respond to these challenges will be rewarded with far more mutually lucrative relationships," he added.

The Packaging Innovations South trade show, due to be held at Sandown Park in Esher on October 18th and 19th, will provide the ideal opportunity for packaging suppliers to showcase their products to the food and drink industries.

Further information: <http://www.just-food.com/article.aspx?id=94517>

New tasty sugar for low-calorie desserts

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 06

Story Text

Tate & Lyle claims that it has come up with two new sugar formulations that will enable European food processors to reduce the number of calories in their fruit desserts.

The sugar-making giant claims that the formulations are ideal for the ultra-light puddings sector, where demand is high but where sugars used previously have lacked the high quality taste and texture of its latest offerings.

The company's formulations are said to have a nutritional profile placing them in between the light and ultra-light sectors, while boasting the taste and texture of a light product, and can be used with any fruit pudding.

Tate & Lyle said in a statement: "Light and ultra-light fruit desserts have typically ticked all the boxes for nutritional content but disappointed on taste and mouth-feel.

"We have seen that irrespective of high calorie or sugar reduction, products which do not deliver on taste will not achieve mainstream success.

"Taste is king ... fruit desserts made with our products give a burst of fruit flavour and have a soft, jam-like mouth-feel."

The first formulation, the Rebalance 017, is in liquid form and makes it possible for processors to provide a pudding calorie content 40 per cent lower than equivalent full-sugar products, allowing for a nutritional content of 86 kcal/100g.

The second one, the Rebalance 018, is a dry formulation and enables processors to provide a pudding calorie content 48 per cent lower than equivalent full-sugar products, allowing for a nutritional content of 67 kcal/100g.

Further information: <http://193.35.126.50/PressReleases/PressRelease1462.asp>

Innocent announces limited edition smoothies

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 06

Story Text

Innocent Drinks, the smoothie and fruit juice maker, will be releasing a selection of limited editions later this year.

According to mad.co.uk, the company will be releasing a further range of smoothie drinks including pineapples, blueberries & ginger and cherries & strawberries.

In addition to the product launches, the beverage company will also be hitting the streets for a sampling drive as part of a £7 million marketing investment.

The promotional funds, which follow the company's marketing push in 2005, will also be invested in a television advertisement and print media advertising in publications such as BBC Good Food, the Guardian and the Observer Food Monthly.

The website also reports that the company's Fruitstock musical event will return this year.

The first weekend of August will see the music event return to London's Regents Park, with food and drinks stalls, yoga classes and a flirting tent just some of the attractions hoping to tempt crowds in excess of last year's 100,000.

Further information:

<http://www.mad.co.uk/Main/News/Articlex/96952ec2f4d64aed863a46eed4a22796/Innocent-gets-in-festival-swing.html>

Agency reports on Chernobyl sheep farms

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 06

Story text

The UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA) today published three new reports regarding sheep on farms that are affected by restrictions following the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident two decades ago.

Large amounts of radioactivity were released into the atmosphere following the accident in the former USSR in 1986, in the region now known as Ukraine.

Because some of this was deposited in farming areas in the UK, restrictions were placed on the movement and sale of sheep from areas where the contamination levels of meat exceeded certain safety limits.

These restrictions affected nearly 9,000 when they were first imposed in 1986 and 374 farms in Wales, Scotland and Cumbria remain limited by them today.

Since the start of the year, the FSA lifted the restrictions on one Scottish farm, but the agency concluded that none of the restricted farms in Cumbria and Wales should be released from these soon.

These farms' radioactivity levels will have to be assessed once again before the agency will consider lifting the restrictions.

Radioactivity contamination levels in sheep meat are not allowed to exceed 1,000 becquerels (a measure of radioactivity) per kilogramme.

The 20th anniversary of the nuclear power accident at Chernobyl will be marked on April 25th and 26th 2006.

Further information: <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/apr/chernobyl>

Deliciously healthy bison could be available within years

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 06

Story text

British meat-lovers could soon be enjoying a novel taste sensation if a businessman's plans for breeding bison continue on schedule.

According to the BBC, Lord Robert Newborough, who owns a farm near Corwen in North Wales, has imported a herd of the North American beasts and is hoping to breed enough animals to begin selling meat within the next few years.

According to the National Bison Association (NBA) of America, the bison, also known as buffalo, has been the largest land mammal in North America since the end of the Ice Age.

Lord Newborough, whose herd is thought to be the first in Wales, told the BBC that the meat is as tasty as venison and said that he hopes to build the herd size.

"Further down the line, the aim is to sell the meat, both over the counter and to top restaurants in London," he said.

Although the meat will cost twice as much as beef, Lord Newborough is confident that customers will be undeterred, commenting that people are prepared to pay more these days for quality products.

"Also," he adds, "I think the demand will increase because of the health benefits."

According to the NBA, the meat contains less fat than turkey, beef and chicken and is rich in Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA), which is reported to help reduce body fat while preserving muscle tissue.

The NBA also claims that eating a five oz serving of bison between four and five times a week can help to lower cholesterol levels and the meat is said to contain more iron and vitamin B-12 than skinless chicken.

Further information: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_east/4898616.stm

Burgers a breeze with new meat grinder

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 06

Story text

A new meat grinder, capable of meeting the most rigorous of food hygiene standards, has been launched onto the market.

The industrial grinder can process entire blocks of fresh or frozen meat and benefits from stainless construction and highly polished surfaces which are easy to clean.

The WWB 200 SuperGrinder, manufactured by Austrian food equipment company Laska, is the only grinder on the market capable of handling both fresh and frozen products.

The system has a solid feed worm which handles the preliminary chopping of frozen meat, while the machine can be switched to fresh meat simply by changing the cutting set rather than the feed worm.

The grinder can handle 1,000 x 600 x 300mm blocks of frozen produce and even larger blocks of fresh meat, mincing the product to 3mm in a single process.

Now that the barbecue season is fast approaching, the new system will be of particular benefit to manufacturers.

"Spring brings increased consumer demand for burgers and other barbecue foods," says Malcolm Burgess, managing director of food industry supplier UFM.

He adds that the SuperGrinder's high capacity will compliment food companies' tactics, regardless of which strategies they use to address seasonal demands.

Further information: <http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/uno/uno101.html>

Australian fish stocked by leading supermarket

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 06

Story Text

Fish counters are now offering a new tropical species in an attempt to slow the depletion of wild cod stocks.

According to Fish Farmer magazine, Waitrose is now selling barramundi, an Australian fish which tastes similar to sea bass or Dover sole.

Farmed in Hampshire in one of the largest indoor fish farms in Europe, the New Forest Barramundi is the first farmed barramundi to be produced in the UK.

Campbell Mitchell, director of Aquabella which runs the fish farm, told Fish Farmer magazine that he is confident the product will do well.

"We are thrilled that a leading supermarket has taken the bold step of sourcing a fish that is still little known in this country," he said.

"New Forest Barramundi is a perfect choice for the home cook – it has a delicate flavour, few bones and is extremely versatile to cook with."

According to the Times, the fish are kept in 48 tanks which are heated to 28 degrees Celsius to imitate their natural environment in Australia.

The fish is expected to retail at £15 per kilogram.

Further information: <http://www.aquab.com>

Progress on appetite-suppressing foods announced

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 06

Story Text

A leading biotechnology firm has moved a step closer to developing a new functional food product using extracts from the Hoodia gordonii plant.

Phytopharm has announced that it has completed the first stage of its Joint Development Agreement with foods group Unilever and will now progress to clinical safety studies of prototype products, which could include drinks and food bars.

The plant, a native of South Africa, is a natural appetite suppressant, containing a molecule which tricks the brain into thinking the person is full.

Extracts from the plant are being used to develop new weight management products as part of a joint five-stage research and development programme between the two companies.

It is hoped that the plant will provide a potent weapon against clinical obesity which affects at least 300 million adults worldwide and is a major contributor to chronic disease.

Kevin Povey, project leader at Unilever, said: "We are satisfied with the good progress to date and look forward to advancing this product through clinical trials."

Further information: <http://www.phytopharm.com/press/Rel11920060410.htm>

Special tomato variety could help prevent cancer

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 06

Story Text

A special tomato, bred to contain high levels of a substance thought to protect against some types of cancer, is now on sale in supermarkets.

Tesco has launched the Healthy Living Tomato on the Vine, which contains up to twice as much lycopene as other vine varieties.

According to the Food Standards Agency, lycopene, the pigment that gives tomatoes their red colour, may help protect against some cardiovascular diseases and certain types of cancer, including prostate cancer, by halting cell damage.

A study found that men who ate ten or more servings of regular tomatoes or tomato sauce in a week had a 45 per cent lower risk of developing prostate cancer.

Ian Reed, produce technical manager at Tesco, told the BBC that the health benefits of antioxidants such as lycopene have recently attracted a lot of positive attention from both the medical and culinary worlds.

Commenting on the new variety, Mr Reed said: "Functional foods such as tomatoes naturally have high levels of lycopene, however this naturally-bred variety has even higher levels than standard ones and tastes great as well."

Packs containing between four and five tomatoes are available in Tesco for £1.89.

Further information: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4896026.stm>

Chocolate 'could cut heart risk'

Date: Mon, 10 Apr 06

Story Text

Patients could soon be given dark chocolate to prevent them from getting heart disease.

Professor Roger Corder at the William Harvey Research Institute in London is seeking permission to test his theory out on 40 cardiovascular disease patients.

His idea is based on evidence which suggests that flavonoids, a type of chemical found in chocolate, red wine and tea, can cut the risk of heart disease, blood pressure and strokes.

The professor will aim to test out how the ingredients in the dark chocolate can affect vascular function in patients with severe diseases.

Despite the supposed benefits, health experts argue that these positives are outweighed by the fact that chocolate is high in fat and sugar.

Professor Corder said: "It is probably wrong to say that all dark chocolate is good for you.

"I think it is going to take at least six to 12 months before it is clear which are the best dark chocolate brands to recommend.

"The current research in this area should not be seen as an excuse to over indulge in chocolate at Easter."

Pig and poultry producers under pressure

Date: Mon, 10 Apr 06

Story Text

Pig and poultry producers are being placed under greater pressure by the growing interest in healthier eating and leaner meat.

Feed ingredients company Danisco Animal Nutrition claims that consumer trends are changing and pig and poultry producers must adapt and utilise the latest developments in livestock nutrition in order to compete.

Danisco global marketing director, Andrea Barletta, said: "A new generation of scientifically-proven specialist feed ingredients, such as betaine and enzymes, are becoming vital to optimise nutrition and exploit the full potential of today's high genetic merit pigs and poultry, producing the leaner meat which health-conscious consumers are demanding."

The company produces betaine to boost production efficiency, carcass quality and ease of processing. Danisco's Betafin form of natural betaine, which is extracted from sugar beet and highly purified, helps firm's reduce costs.

Danisco claims that Betafin has been shown to improve lean meat percentage in pigs by 1.5 per cent, boosted turkey breast yield by around three per cent and increased broiler breast yield by four per cent.

Worldwide trials conducted on Danisco Animal Nutrition's Porzyme enzyme products have shown that the product improves uniformity of growth and lean meat percentage by releasing more nutrients from feed, helping pigs to get closer to their full genetic potential.

'Scores on doors' rate food safety

Date: Mon, 10 Apr 06

Story Text

An innovative new scheme is proving popular for South Cambridgeshire District Council and is improving food safety standards in the area.

The 'scores on doors' food hygiene scheme provides star ratings for food safety for almost 150 food outlets in the district, according to Environmental Health News.

The council is adding new premises to the database each week and the website is attracting a lot of attention from consumers in south Cambridgeshire, with visitor numbers to the online resource rising tenfold since the service was launched in November last year.

The service is free of charge to the public and the information provided uses a risk and five star rating system for food safety standards that relates to data held by the council on food hygiene inspections.

South Cambridgeshire DC food control and health and safety team leader, Carol Archibald, commented: "The five-star system is easy for the public to understand and ensures a consistent standard operates across participating councils."

Originally launched by South Cambridgeshire DC, the scheme has now been implemented in Southwark, Bath and North East Somerset and inspected businesses can display a star rating sticker.

A number of other councils are considering implementing the scheme.

FSA issues vegetarian label guidance

Date: Mon, 10 Apr 06

Story Text

The UK's food watchdog has unveiled new guidance aimed at improving food labelling for vegans and vegetarians.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance has been produced following consultation with stakeholders including the Vegetarian Society and the Vegan Society.

The new guidelines provide the first criteria for the use of the terms vegetarian and vegan on food labels.

The FSA claims in a statement: "There has been a lot of confusion over the use of the terms vegetarian and vegan on food labels both in the retail and catering sectors."

There are an estimated 3.5 million vegetarians and 250,000 vegans in the UK. The guidance should make it easier for them to identify which foods are suitable and which are not by boosting consistency of labelling and preventing common mistakes.

The new proposals will also help enforcement agencies to identify misleading labelling and the use of the terms "vegetarian" and "vegan" on food labels containing animal products.

Chief executive of the Vegetarian Society, Tina Fox, said: "We all want to know what we are eating and misleading labelling makes it particularly difficult for Britain's three million plus vegetarians and vegans to make informed choices.

"In the continuing absence of a definition of these terms in law, the Vegetarian Society sincerely hopes that the FSA's guidance is widely taken up by manufacturers, caterers, retailers and local enforcement authorities."

Ice cleaning system dramatically cuts waste

Date: Mon, 10 Apr 06

Story Text

A new environmentally cleaning system powered by H2O Ice has been unveiled that provides a gentle cleaning solution for a range of applications, including food preparation.

CIPProcess claims that the new Water Ice Cleaning system is the first to use H2O Ice in the UK and can be used safely and economically for areas that come into contact with food.

The system can be used for general cleaning, industrial treatment and conservation, using less water and energy than more conventional methods and providing a gentle, non-abrasive and effective cleaning technique.

Developed by US Company, Universal IceBlast, the patented Water Ice Cleaning systems use crystalline ice particles and is chemical free, dust-free and VOC-free.

Ice Blast is a low energy technology that reduces secondary waste by up to 95 per cent and water usage by up to 80 per cent. It uses only water, electricity and compressed air and has a vast array of different uses, including the food, automotive, aerospace, power generation and pharmaceutical industries.

CIPProcess technical director, Dave Adams, explained: "Solid ice particles displace surface contaminants by imparting the energy from the impact and from the deformation of the ice particles. The ice melts on impact and the water then flushes away the debris. This very exciting technology compliments the other cleaning and treatment systems that we supply."

For further information: <http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/cip/cip104.html>

Binge-drinking trend declines, even in Britain

Date: Fri, 07 Apr 06

Story Text

Britain's reputation as a nation of boozers has been confirmed by a new study, which has found that the UK has the worst binge-drinking problem in Europe.

Research by market analyst Datamonitor has revealed that Britons down an average of 2.2 pints

every time they go to the pub.

This is well above the European average of 1.8 pints per pub visit, with only Germany and Spain approaching the UK's binge drinking levels, with drinkers in the two countries consuming an average of 1.9 pints on a night out.

Swedes are revealed to be Europe's most abstemious drinkers, supping just 1.1 pints on each bar visit.

Nevertheless, despite the worrying findings, the study shows that Britons are slowly beginning to moderate their alcohol intake in pubs and bars, with the total volume of alcohol sold on-trade - in pubs and bars - in the UK falling from 272 million litres in 2000 to 251 million litres in 2005.

The study also found that sales of non-alcoholic drinks by British pubs and bars had increased during the same period.

John Band, Datamonitor analyst and author of the report, believes that while the UK still leads the binge drinking league table, drinking behaviour is falling increasingly into line with the rest of Europe.

"Going out is becoming less and less about drinking, and alcohol consumption is becoming something that people do at home," Mr Band said.

"It's clear that the culture of binge drinking is on its way out, with British consumption per occasion falling closer in line with the levels seen on the Continent."

However, the study warned that female binge drinking is becoming an increasing problem across Europe, with women predicted to account for 38 per cent of all drinks sales in pubs, bars and clubs by 2010, up from the current level of 32 per cent.

Mr Band suggested that this trend was partially down to demographics, but also due to the increasing targeting of female drinkers by alcohol marketing campaigns.

"The growth in women's on-trade drinking has been driven partly by changing demographics: getting married or having a family restricts going-out opportunities, but women in Europe are increasingly doing this at a later age," he said.

"At the same time, pubs and drinks companies are working hard to provide attractive drinking experiences to female drinkers."

Nevertheless, British men continue to outdrink women considerably, with male drinkers in the UK consuming 2.1 times more alcohol than their female counterparts on a night out.

The report also suggested that the ban on smoking in all pubs, bars and private members clubs in the UK, which will come into effect in England in 2007, will lead to a marked decline in on-trade alcohol consumption.

Eight in ten drinks industry experts surveyed warned that anti-smoking legislation would hit sales over the next five years.

Further information:
http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-04-07T011322Z_01_L07174040_RTRUKOC_0_UK-FOOD-BRITAIN-DRINKING.xml

Wine giant brings new Chilean offering to UK

Date: Fri, 07 Apr 06

Story Text

Ernest & Julio Gallo, the leading Californian wine brand in the UK, is strengthening its portfolio with the introduction of the Chilean Vina Chilcaya range.

Derived from the Vina Bisquertt Family Vineyards in the Valle de Colchagua region of Chile, the new range will be available in the UK later this month.

According to Checkout magazine, the two-tiered launch will kick off with a varietal range retailing at Â£5.49 and a premium Reserva range at Â£6.99.

Later in the year, a 'super premium' Reserva Especial will be added to the company's extensive portfolio, retailing at Â£9.99.

Glenn Caton, European marketing director at Ernest & Julio Gallo, told Checkout magazine: "Chile is a well established and significant category in the UK, which has shown strong growth over the last three years.

"More recently, growth has slowed but we believe, by bringing consumer-focused, branded innovation to the Chilean category, we can re-energise the category for consumers and customers."

Further information:
http://www.checkoutmagazine.co.uk/product_news/product_news_story.ehtml?o=1854

Food company maintains medical innovation

Date: Fri, 07 Apr 06

Story Text

Health and medical food developer Provoxis is continuing to develop new products aimed at prolonging life.

Provoxis issued a trading update yesterday in which it claimed that trading has been in line with expectations and confirmed ongoing product development.

The company is concentrating on two particular technologies which it expects to launch over the next couple of years.

In a statement, Provoxis said: "The company continues to develop its product pipeline with two other technology platforms which are intended to underpin the new product launches in 2007 and 2008."

The first product is expected to be a functional beverage which contains a glucosinolate-enriched broccoli extract aimed at reducing the risk of some cancers.

The second technology is a medical food product containing a patented extract from plantain fruit.

The latter product is designed to extend remission time in patients suffering from Crohn's Disease.

According to Provexis, the market for so-called functional foods – products of natural origin that combine convenience with a health benefit – is expected to reach £95 billion by 2010.

Further information: <http://www.provexis.com/content/pages/default.shtml>

Low-cost dairy printer gives maximum uptime

Date: Fri, 07 Apr 06

Story Text

A new continuous ink jet printer, specifically designed for coding dairy products, claims to give maximum uptime and low cost of ownership.

The versatile Linx 4900DC can manage a range of different applications and is simple to operate.

The system is ideal for printing in small spaces, such as onto the very small plastic bottles used for probiotic drinks.

The Linx Mini Printhead provides excellent code quality while creating printed characters as small as 1.4 mm in height.

For products such as yoghurts and chilled deserts, the system's ability to produce reverse and inverted printing is ideal as the printhead can automatically reverse the direction of print on each side of a production line as it moves backwards and forwards across multiple product lanes.

The unique curved design also enables rapid washdown of the unit in-situ, allowing efficient cleaning for companies requiring the highest levels of hygiene.

Simon Powell, marketing manager at Linx, said: "Tailor-made for coding dairy products, the Linx 4900DC combines reliability, ease of use and low cost of ownership.

"With improved coder reliability and performance it ensures maximum production line uptime – a 'must have' in today's competitive environment."

Further information: <http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/lrx/lrx125.html>

Industry awake to importance of innovation

Date: Fri, 07 Apr 06

Story Text

One of the main messages promoted at the Food & Drink Expo in March was the need for constant innovation in the fresh product industry.

Companies now realise that originality is key to survival in this increasingly competitive industry and, as supermarkets continue to dominate the market, suppliers are constantly looking for innovative products to differentiate themselves from their neighbours.

Worldwide Fruit, a company known for its innovation in the apple market, is no stranger to the concept of product development.

The company's chief executive officer, Robert Mears, told freshinfo.com that, although truly ground-breaking innovations do not come along often, his company is constantly looking for exciting possibilities.

"Innovation within our sector is vitally important, but to gain the all important consumer acceptance, consumers must be able to tell that the product is demonstrably different and better than their existing purchase," Mr Mears insisted.

Bernd Schmidt of Transimpex, a successful German innovator, believes that one of the main driving forces for innovation over the next few years will be the need to tackle childhood obesity.

"The reason something will work is if end consumers are curious and open-minded and, if the product is healthy too, so much the better," he told the website.

Chris Moreman of Barfoots of Botley agreed that the fresh produce industry should embrace innovation.

"Convenience, added value and healthy eating are going to be the drivers for the future," he claimed.

Further information: <http://www.freshinfo.com/index.php?s=r&ss=fd&sid=38709>

Looney Lime certain to be fab

Date: Fri, 07 Apr 06

Story Text

The UK's number one selling ice lolly brand Fab is now available in a new, limited edition lime flavour.

The Looney Lime variety follows the original Fab format and will consist of lime flavoured water ice encased in chocolate and covered with sour sugar strands.

According to Clare McIntosh, marketing manager at Richmond Ice Cream, the new flavour will tap into the impulse-led nature of ice cream sales.

"Limited editions and brand extensions give fresh impetus and drive incremental sales," says Ms McIntosh.

The company are confident that the launch will be a success and that the new product will enjoy the same level of popularity as the original Fab Orange variety, which generated 81 per cent incremental category sales in 2004.

"During our taste tests, seven out of ten children chose lime as their preferred flavour so we are confident that Fab Looney Lime will perform well," Ms McIntosh added.

The ice cream giant first launched Fab in 1967 and has the capacity to produce 300 million lollies a year, with the brand now being worth Â£12.7 million.

Further information:
foods.plc.uk/pdf/Fab%20Goes%20Looney%20With%20Lime.PDF

<http://www.richmond->

Trend for Indian wedding cuisine grows

Date: Thu, 06 Apr 06

Story Text

British couples are following an increasing trend towards spicy, Asian food at weddings in an attempt to offer their guests something other than traditional wedding fare.

According to the 999network, event planning firm Party Offers reported that members of its services directory have noticed a marked increase in the number of couples picking both Asian food and music for their wedding receptions, even if they have no Asian ties.

Jon Stebbings, sales and marketing director at Party Offers, told 999network: "The trend is definitely more towards a mix and match approach; couples want to spend their money on 'wow factors'."

"Aromatic, spicy food, or the sort of music you don't traditionally hear at English weddings – these appeal to couples who are telling our members they are looking for something a bit different," he explained.

Members have also commented that an increase in vegetarianism is driving customers to consider an Indian menu, as many of its tasty options can be prepared without meat.

It is also ideal for buffet-style meals which are particularly popular with couples who want to keep costs low.

Further information: <http://www.999today.com/leisureandlifestyle/news/story/3003.html>

Plans to tackle obesity receive industry backing

Date: Thu, 06 Apr 06

Story Text

The confederation of the food and drink industries of the European Union, CIAA, has backed the European Commission in its plans for a public consultation regarding a strategy for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases in Europe.

It has said that the improvement of health through better diets and increased physical activity is "crucial" in the prevention of diseases and the improvement of the quality of life of Europeans.

CIAA also pledged its commitment to working "responsibly and constructively" with other stakeholders and authorities in trying to find solutions to the growing problem of obesity among the European population.

"Tackling the multifactorial aspects of the obesity issue will require multiple strategies and the sustained efforts of many players," the confederation said.

It added that policies that focus only on food and food marketing would fail to address the variety of causes and factors that play a role in people being overweight or obese or being diagnosed with chronic diseases.

"The voluntary commitments undertaken by CIAA accelerate, deepen and widen the ongoing efforts of the food and drink industry to promote healthy diets and physical activity," a statement by CIAA concluded.

Further information:
http://www.ciaa.be/documents/news_events/CIAA_commitments_on_Commission_Green_Paper_2005_637final.pdf

Supermarket puts faith in new technology

Date: Thu, 06 Apr 06

Story Text

Asda has announced some new technology in a bid to improve customer experience and allay disappointment when shoppers visit its stores.

According to Leeds Today, the supermarket chain is offering its suppliers knowledge of when shop shelves are emptying and supplies of a product dwindling through the use of IT.

The CPFR (collaboration, planning, forecasting and replenishment) project should mean that Asda stores will never run out of a product, meaning that customers can always pick up what they need in-store.

"Dynamic [the company that is training Asda in the use of the system] has made CPFR easier and faster to understand for our staff and suppliers, leading to maximisation of on-shelf availability – a win-win situation for all concerned, especially our customers, which was the whole point of the exercise," said Eileen White, training and implementation manager at Asda.

Over 4,000 suppliers have been trained with the system, which should effectively enable stock replenishment before supplies run out.

The supermarket hopes this manoeuvre will help it to strike back following the news that Sainsbury's has regained its position as the number two supermarket, usurping Asda.

Further information:
<http://thisisleeds.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=40&ArticleID=1419842>

Summer signals the arrival of the Bumbleberry

Date: Thu, 06 Apr 06

Story Text

Frobishers claim to have created the next big thing in juice – a blend of fruit flavours known as Bumbleberry juice.

The fruit juice specialists have created a new flavour that they believe epitomises English summertime, combining strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blackcurrants in a delicious blend that is entirely free from colourings, preservatives, flavourings and artificial sweeteners.

Made from premium quality 100 per cent squeezed juices, Bumbleberry juice is destined to be a sweet and refreshing summer drink and will be available in a range of pubs, clubs and food outlets across the nation.

Retailing at around £2.00 for a 250ml bottle, the juice can be enjoyed on its own or mixed with spirits or champagne for a longer, cooling summer cocktail.

The new Bumbleberry offering will join Frobisher's extensive range of juices and smoothies which are likely to become increasingly popular over the summer months as consumers seek out healthy, refreshing soft drink alternatives.

Further information: http://responsesource.com/releases/rel_display.php?relid=QLzAm and www.frobishers.com

Foreign body detector maximises food safety

Date: Thu, 06 Apr 06

Story Text

A new sorting system promises to maximise food safety by detecting tiny defects and foreign material during production.

The Optyx 6000 Raptor, the latest device from Key Technology, is a laser sorting system that sets a new standard for sorting food items at double the throughput.

The system can sort through a variety of goods including fresh, frozen and dried fruit and vegetables, nuts and raisins at rates of up to 18 tonnes per hour.

By combining Key's superior colour cameras with laser technology, the Optyx 6000 Raptor is able to analyze the size and shape of products as well as detecting millions of subtle differences in colour.

It can also detect foreign matter by analysing the structural properties of the product and the easy-to-use interface enables the operator to see exactly what the laser does.

Multiple cameras and sensors are positioned in a variety of configurations to match the needs of a range of applications and the system can be set up to perform either single-side or two-side laser scanning across a 48 inch wide scan area, ensuring that a range of products can be sorted with the maximum of efficiency.

Further information: <http://www.manufacturingtalk.com/news/kyb/kyb119.html>

Heavenly Veg gives in to convenience

Date: Thu, 06 Apr 06

Story Text

Florette's Heavenly Veg is now receiving a re-launch after consumers found that the product was simply not convenient enough.

The original product, although popular with consumers in terms of taste, required steaming in a pan, something that consumers found too much of a hassle.

According to freshinfo.com, the company has spent the last eight months redesigning the product which is now fully microwavable and should appeal to the growing number of consumers who demand convenience.

Mark Newton, managing director at Florette, told freshinfo.com that although consumers described the taste of Heavenly Veg as "fantastic" and appreciated the nutritional benefits of steaming vegetables, they simply did not want to use a saucepan to prepare the dish.

Commenting on the new product, Mr Newton said: "It retains all the properties that made the original so good, but will be coming back onto the market in a microwavable pack."

The new Heavenly Veg product should be available in May and takes between five and six minutes to prepare in the microwave.

Further information: <http://www.freshinfo.com/index.php?s=n&ss=nd&sid=38682>

Food watchdog pushes controversial folic acid plans

Date: Wed, 05 Apr 06

Story Text

White bread is set to be enriched with folic acid as food watchdog bosses look to reduce the instances of birth defects such as spina bifida.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is holding a meeting tomorrow at which it is likely to give the go-ahead to a 12-week consultation exercise.

Folic acid would be added to the nutrient mix in white flour under the proposals after experts claimed that too many British mothers do not have enough of the compound in their diets.

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) last November recommended the measure after deciding that increasing people's folate levels could cut the rate of neural tube defects in half.

But there have been concerns raised that folic acid can mask vitamin B12 deficiencies, which are common among the elderly, particularly as recent research shows that as many as ten per cent of older people already have low levels of the essential vitamin.

The FSA, however, wants to push ahead with the plans and tomorrow's meeting will see the board asked to "agree that mandatory fortification with folic acid be presented as the preferred option at this stage, subject to the finding of the consultation and further information to be collected", according to the FSA's agenda.

Wholemeal and speciality breads are to be exempt from the plans, which have already proved successful in countries such as the US, Canada and Chile, where rates of neural tube defects have gone down.

Between 500 and 600 babies with neural tube defects are born in Britain each year and many

pregnant women do not adhere to guidelines recommending they take folic acid supplements of 400 micrograms per day.

Further information:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/apr/boardmeetingapril06>

Project aims to improve hospitality

Date: Wed, 05 Apr 06

Story Text

A new two-year Skills Agenda project, currently being piloted in Yorkshire, is attempting to improve the skills levels of people working in the hospitality industry.

Focussing on small and medium-sized businesses, this programme, developed by the British Hospitality Association (BHA), has been set up to increase the quality of service in the hotel, catering and leisure sectors, including the food and drink served to the public.

With funding from the European Social Fund, the Food Standards Agency, the People 1st Sector Skills Council and the BHA, the project has modules in food safety, nutrition and diet, as well as others such as health and safety and employment law.

In Yorkshire, more than 200 caterers have already successfully completed a Safer Food Better Business workshop, with specialist follow-up support provided. It is expected that these modules will be available nationwide by the end of this year.

BHA chief executive Bob Cotton said: "This is a programme in addition to our normal independent service to members. It is part of the BHA's commitment to raising the profile of the skills agenda."

Further information: <http://www.bha-online.org.uk/pdfs/mediacentre/315.pdf>

Confectionery goes green

Date: Wed, 05 Apr 06

Story Text

Innovia Films has unveiled a new film that is targeted at the confectionery business and claims that the packaging provides excellent performance and environmental benefits.

NatureFlex NM is a new metallised biodegradable film made from renewable wood pulp that features an enhanced water vapour barrier coating and is cold-seal receptive.

The film is readily printable using both solvent, water-based and UV inks and has a natural deadfold, making it ideal for twist and bunch wraps.

The company, which specialises in biodegradable and compostable films for packaging, claims that the new product complies with European standard EN 13432 on biodegrading and composting.

Innovia has completed rigorous testing on NatureFlex NM and now predicts strong sales for the

product, particularly in light of rising costs for plastics.

"NatureFlex NM is believed to be the first metallised biodegradable film suitable even for home composting," the company said.

Further information: <http://www.innoviafilms.com/markets/biodegradable/whatsnew.htm>

Tamper-evident takeaway packaging range

Date: Wed, 05 Apr 06

Story Text

The UK convenience market is set to receive a new range of ready-to-serve plastic packaging.

According to freshinfo.com, the SquarePac range, developed by European packaging manufacturer Plus Pack, is designed to hold mixed green salads, sliced fruit and delicatessen takeaways.

There are five different sizes of square containers, ranging from 250ml to 1,000ml, which are available in clear or black versions with clear lids.

The containers have been developed with ease of stacking in mind and are therefore ideal for stacking on shop shelves and in refrigerated display arrangements.

They also have the added benefit of a tamper-evident closure system which increases food safety, something which consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about.

UK sales manager for Plus Pack, Shawn Roberts, told freshinfo.com: "Plus Pack is one of the few plastic manufacturers to have mastered the 'tamper-evident' technology within thermoforming, and we expect the market for this type of safety packaging to grow considerably as interest continues to increase in the coming years."

He added that the packaging is "attractive enough to place directly on the dinner table".

Further information: <http://www.freshinfo.com/index.php?s=n&ss=nd&sid=38674>

Portable gas detector aids sterilisation process

Date: Wed, 05 Apr 06

Story Text

The food packaging industry will benefit from a new, portable sterilisation system that measures the level of gases.

IsoMon, a new system from Analytical Technology, is a hydrogen peroxide dual channel gas detector, designed for use in the food, pharmaceutical, biological and healthcare industries.

The groundbreaking instrument, which can also be used to decontaminate aircraft cabins, is said to be the only gas detector capable of monitoring the entire decontamination process.

It uniquely measures both high and low concentrations of gas in sterilised environments, being capable of measuring samples to a maximum 2,000ppm and minimum 0ppm.

It is therefore able to prove that peroxide levels are first high enough for sanitisation and subsequently low enough to ensure safety following the sterilisation process.

Mike Strahand, general manager at Analytical Technology, says: "IsoMon is a first-of-its-kind gas detector that allows both high and low value measurements of hydrogen peroxide levels providing users with reliable validation data regarding the sterilisation of aseptic environments."

He adds that the innovative system should revolutionise the way sterilisation cycles are processed.

Further information: <http://www.laboratorytalk.com/news/ani/ani100.html>

New malt whisky launched

Date: Wed, 05 Apr 06

Story Text

One of the world's leading whisky companies has extended its range to include the Macallan Fine Oak 17 years old.

The new single malt highland Scotch whisky, available this spring, is light amber in colour and is said to have a "heady exotic floral aroma with hints of jasmine, tropical fruits and peat".

The whisky will be the latest addition to the established Macallan Fine Oak range, which also includes 10, 15, 21 and 30 year-old varieties.

According to the company's website, the popular Fine Oak range is lighter than the traditional Macallan whiskies, having matured in American oak casks that have previously held bourbon as well as the traditional European sherry casks.

Daniel Goodwin, senior brand manager for the US importer of The Macallan range, says that the lighter, more modern flavour of the Fine Oak range is popular with both whisky connoisseurs and novices.

He adds that the new Fine Oak 17 "expands upon a completely unique line of super-premium single malt Scotches".

Further information: <http://www.edringtongroup.com/media/news/pressRelease.asp?id=229>

Food industry needs debate on EU proposals

Date: Tue, 04 Apr 06

Story Text

Scientists have called for an open debate among stakeholders in the food industry about the chemicals legislation proposed by the EU.

The proposals, called Reach, suggest that all chemicals used in food production must be registered, evaluated and approved in order to curb the spread of chemicals that are potentially harmful.

However, according to EU-backed research network Cascade more than 100,000 chemicals are currently released into the environment and come into contact with humans through preservatives, computers and plastic softeners.

Of these, 80,000 are potentially dangerous as there is not a great deal known about them, according to the researchers.

The EU parliament should consider the long-term effects of exposure to such chemicals, according to Jan-Ake Gustafsson, a professor at the Karolinska Institutet and coordinator of Cascade.

He insisted that there is a need for "open discussions" with consumer organisations and the food industry about how Reach will impact on them.

"As a network of top scientists in this field we feel it is our responsibility to provide a platform for such discussions," Professor Gustafsson concludes.

Further information: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=40364>

Coke Zero heads for UK

Date: Tue, 04 Apr 06

Story Text

Coca-Cola Zero, the cola beverage that contains zero calories is coming to the UK, according to the latest reports.

Already available in the United States and Puerto Rico, Coke Zero is expected to hit shop shelves in the UK as early as September, according to Brand Republic.

The advertising, media, marketing and PR magazine said that a Coca-Cola spokesperson revealed that the no-calorie beverage, aimed at young adults, should find its way onto the UK market some time in 2006.

If Coca-Cola Zero is launched in the UK, it will become only the third 'variant' in the Coca-Cola range to be launched and the first since the introduction of the Diet Coke format more than a decade ago.

Sweetened with a blend of aspartame and acesulfame potassium (Ace K), the drink will be specifically targeted at young adult males, Brand Republic reports, an area of the market not usually associated with buying diet drinks.

Further information:
http://www.brandrepublic.co.uk/login/index.cfm?fuseaction=Login&resource=BR_News&articleType=news&article=551215

Calypso targets school kids with new smoothies

Date: Tue, 04 Apr 06

Story Text

Calypso Soft Drinks is targeting secondary school children with a new range of juice smoothies.

The new drinks take advantage of the current trend in healthy food and drink options and are aimed at 11 to 16 year-olds.

According to just-drinks.com, the smoothies are available in 200ml cartons which contain one of the five daily portions of fruit advised under the '5-a-day' recommendations.

The drinks, which have a longer shelf life than most smoothies, are available in two different varieties including strawberry and banana flavour as well as an orange, banana and mango flavoured alternative.

Richard Cooke, sales and marketing director for Calypso, told just-drinks.com: "Juice smoothies are one of the big growth areas in soft drinks, with sales jumping by 36 per cent in 2004 and continuing to climb as families become increasingly health-conscious."

Mr Cooke said that children perceive smoothies to be more fun than plain water or fruit juice and added that they are a great way to encourage children to enjoy fruit.

Further information: <http://www.just-drinks.com/article.aspx?id=86071>

Bottled water increasing in popularity

Date: Tue, 04 Apr 06

Story Text

Bottled waters are being "progressively accepted" by members of the UK public according to the latest detailed research into that sector of the soft drinks industry.

Research company Zenith International has said that according to its latest annual UK Bottled Water report, the market for the beverage grew by 5.3 per cent in 2005, according to Checkout magazine.

Zenith said that in the last five years a significant increase in the number of people drinking bottled water has been noted.

"The percentage of adults aged 15 and above drinking bottled water has jumped from 35 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2005," the report said, according to Checkout.

"The survey also highlights the growing number of male consumers, with the gender divide gradually narrowing."

Checkout also drew attention to Zenith's comments regarding market share in the report, with the research company noting a fall in the share of overall UK consumption share for Danone

and Nestle to 35 per cent of the total.

Further information:
http://www.checkoutmagazine.co.uk/market_update/market_update_story.ehtml?o=1849

Pie-maker releases seasonal treats

Date: Tue, 04 Apr 06

Story Text

A Scottish pie-maker, renowned for the quality of his home-baked pies, has created two new pies in time for Easter.

Simple Simon, the alter ego of internationally trained Bernard Alessi, has established the Perfect Pies range which contains only the finest, freshest ingredients and is free from additives and preservatives.

According to the company's website, the first new addition to the range is an Organic Easter Lamb pie which contains organic lamb from Easton farm marinated in olive oil, white wine, carrots, onions and rosemary.

The lamb is then finished with crab-apple, mint and redcurrant jelly before being baked in light puff pastry.

Simple Simon's second Easter treat is bound to appeal to those with a sweet tooth, combining fruit, nuts, heather honey, chocolate and gin.

Fresh apples are pan-fried in butter, flamed in gin and finished with lemon zest, while a combination of dates, apricots, sultanas and whole blanched almonds is simmered in orange juice with heather honey.

The two components are then combined with chunks of dark chocolate before being encased in light puff pastry and topped with flaked almonds.

Both pies are set to be popular, seasonal additions to the Perfect Pies range, which now contains some 25 varieties.

Further information: <http://www.simplesimonspies.co.uk/index.html>

The Flying Scotsman takes off

Date: Tue, 04 Apr 06

Story Text

Caledonian Brewery has released the latest in its range of seasonal ales – "The Flying Scotsman."

The ruby ale, which is available throughout April, has an ABV of 4.6 per cent and is said to have a "rich robust flavour".

According to Caledonian, the Flying Scotsman has been named after the steam train that made

the first non-stop journey from London to Scotland and has a dark ruby hue and a "distinctive, fresh, slightly citrus tang".

The company's award-winning range of beers is brewed using high quality malted barley and whole hop flowers.

The brewery, which has been producing beers in Edinburgh since 1869, is releasing nine seasonal ales throughout the year, including Dr Bob's Magic Potion, named in honour of the head brewer, and Tattoo, which is being brewed to celebrate the Edinburgh Tattoo.

Later in the year the brewery will be releasing The Full Monty in time for the Ryder Cup and the festive Santa's Little Helper.

Further information: http://www.caledonian-brewery.co.uk/news_article.php?articleid=126

New, rapid salmonella test

Date: Mon, 03 Apr 06

Story Text

A new salmonella testing kit is capable of providing an accurate result within 24 hours.

The kit will enable fast detection of the food-poisoning bacteria and could help to prevent outbreaks.

The Tecra Unique salmonella test has been developed by UK-based Biotrace International and is suitable for the testing of food and environmental samples as well as being able to process single or multiple samples.

It also has the added benefit of being able to be run manually using Biotrace's Pplus instrument.

A statement from Biotrace added: "There is only one simple enrichment step, saving on media and autoclaving costs."

Biotrace also produces kits to test for the presence of listeria, campylobacter and staphylococcal enterotoxins.

A recent report from the European commission discovered a total of 192,703 reported cases of salmonellosis during 2004 in the EU, with eggs, poultry meat and pork the most likely sources of salmonella infections.

Further information: <http://www.biotrace.co.uk/content.php?hID=1&nhID=21&nID=82>

New water quality sensor launched

Date: Mon, 03 Apr 06

Story Text

A Scottish manufacturer has extended its gas sensor range which is set to help identify the concentration of organic pollution in water samples.

Dubbed the Gascard II Plus range, the sensors are highly accurate and have low drift characteristics.

Optoelectronics, based in Edinburgh, has created the new products, which it hopes will be integrated into systems that are used for measuring total organic carbon (TOC).

It will be able to detect sub one per cent levels of carbon dioxide, which will help to identify the quality of the water.

Using proven pump-aspiration technology, the sensors will be able to analyse the water quickly and accurately.

Moving parts to the sensor will further aid in the reliability of the detection.

The sensor will operate between zero and 45 degrees Celsius, with a 24vdc power requirement.

It is hoped that the new equipment will be able to help water detection in the food, beverages, process, engineering and manufacturing industries.

Further information: <http://www.laboratorytalk.com/news/edi/edi102.html>

Consumer demand for local produce aids farmers

Date: Mon, 03 Apr 06

Story Text

Farmers from Cheshire are becoming an increasingly powerful bloc within a collective designed to trade produce directly with supermarkets, without the need to call upon professional suppliers.

The number of farmers from the county taking part in the Dairy Farmers of Britain (DFB) programme now runs up to 185, contributing to a project formed in 2004 after the takeover of processor Associated Co-operative Creameries.

With DFB now ranking as the third largest milk processor in the UK, its members claim to be capitalising on the rising levels of consumer demand for local produce.

"We have taken the view that we need to do something so we have decided to pool our resources," local farmer David Johnson told the Chester Chronicle. "It's great to be able to follow a model that is proven to work and to feel empowered by that."

DFB markets almost two billion litres of high quality milk per year from more than 3,000 member farms, with products reaching an estimated 750,000 households across England and Wales.

The collective employs more than 2,600 people, operating nine dairy processing sites and around 60 product distribution depots.

Further information:
http://iccheshireonline.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0100regionalnews/tm_objectid=16886031&method=full&siteid=50020&headline=dairy-farmers-break-away-from-the-herd--

name_page.html

Software system analyses bake quality

Date: Mon, 03 Apr 06

Story Text

A revolutionary new software system, designed to analyse product quality and consistency, is due to be showcased at bakery and manufacturing exhibitions over the coming year.

The software package, Bake3D, uses weight, height, length, width and volume data to analyse the shape, colour and texture of products, creating a 3-Dimensional virtual model.

C F Controls, a company specialising in the design of systems for the baking, cereal and biscuit industry, has developed Bake3D to assist manufacturers in identifying production problems during panning, proofing and baking processes.

The system also performs complete slice analysis including cell size, quantity, alignment and circulation.

The information is then embedded into a single file which aids traceability as well as enabling data to be emailed to customers with minimal effort required.

The software is compatible with Microsoft Windows and allows product information and report statistics to be exported in a variety of formats, including Excel.

Further information: <http://www.doubledough.co.uk/english.htm>

Raspberry is latest fruit to provide health benefits

Date: Mon, 03 Apr 06

Story Text

The food industry could soon have a new fashionable berry in the form of raspberries, the latest fruit to receive the thumbs up from researchers.

The research, published in BioFactors and conducted by scientists at Plant Research International in the Netherlands, found that raspberries contain up to ten times more antioxidants than tomatoes or broccoli.

Antioxidants are thought to have substantial health benefits and some of the compounds found in raspberries appear almost nowhere else

"Raspberries contain vitamin C and anthocyanins," says Jules Beekwilder, "but these can also be found in other products.

"However, approximately 50 per cent of the antioxidant effect of raspberries is caused by ellagitannins.

"These you find in small doses in strawberries and practically nowhere else."

The study looked at the effects of storage and processing on the antioxidant content of raspberries and found that, while freezing at -20 degrees Celcius destroys vitamin C, the antioxidants seem unaffected.

The compounds also seem to remain unaltered during the jam-making process.

Mr Beekwilder adds: "It is clear that raspberry, like several other fruits and vegetables such as tomato, strawberry, kiwi and broccoli, represents a valuable contrasting source of potentially healthy compounds and can represent an important component of a balanced diet."

Further information: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=40761>

Bacardi Breezer gains blueberry addition

Date: Mon, 03 Apr 06

Story Text

A new flavour is being added to the popular Bacardi Breezer range of ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages this week.

According to Checkout magazine, Bursting Blueberry is set to be the latest addition to the Half Sugar range, which was launched last year and already accounts for around 30 per cent of total Bacardi Breezer sales.

The drink is being launched to reflect the growing consumer demand for blueberries, which has been increasing in popularity over recent months.

"Research has shown that blueberry is the fastest growing fruit flavour and this was reflected in the excellent consumer reaction to the Bursting Blueberry flavour in initial trials," Bacardi Breezer's senior trade marketing manager, Fraser McGuire, told Checkout magazine.

The other flavours in the Half Sugar range are Zesty Lemon, Refreshing Raspberry and Crispy Apple.

The new addition will be available in single bottles, larger 700ml bottles and four-packs and will be available in selected outlets this week.

Further information:
http://www.checkoutmagazine.co.uk/product_news/product_news_story.ehtml?o=1844