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Arla to launch Cravendale One Shot milk drink

Date

03/01/2006

Article Text

Arla UK, the dairy group behind Cravendale, is to launch a One Shot milk drink to directly compete with the soft drinks market.

The product range, also to include One Shot Hint Of... flavoured drinks, signifies the increasing consumer demand for healthy convenience drinks and the receding gap between dairy goods and traditional soft drinks.

An Arla spokesperson told online journal DairyReporter.com: "Cravendale One Shot will compete with carbonated soft drinks, smoothies, water and fruit juices, and will be available in the sandwich fixtures of major multiples as well as in the dairy cabinet."

It is expected that Cravendale's reputation as a fresh milk product will give it an edge over other milk drinks that rely on ultra-high temperature (UHT) pasteurisation.

The move takes advantage of a £74.4 million investment the Arla group enjoyed in 2005.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64824-arla-one-shot-dairy-processors>

Dairy prices to remain moderate in 2006

Date

03/01/2006

Article Text

The global prices of dairy products will be moderate in the coming financial quarter, as international demand eases and supplies remain steady, according to a report by the US government's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

In the EU milk production is forecast to increase slightly, with some major producers raising quota limits by 0.5 per cent, and countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland capitalising on healthy prices by upping production.

However the FAS report expects that internal consumption by EU markets will absorb any excess produce, thus keeping exportable supplies at a stable level.

US milk production is predicted to rise at a rate of just below three per cent.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64830-dairy-fas-milk>

UK's big brand producers 'need to be wary of private label growth'

Date

03/01/2006

Article Text

Major food brands are increasingly coming under threat from private label products, according to a new report by analyst group Datamonitor.

Private label variation has allowed retailers to create value, mainstream and premier product lines under a single private label banner, managing to engage all consumer groups and building strong customer loyalty.

According to the survey, private label goods now account for 23 per cent of the consumer packaged goods market, particularly penetrating the refrigerated food and ready-meal sectors.

Research group ACNielsen commented: "From a generic offering with an aggressive price/lower quality positioning, own label brands have evolved to become almost equivalent in quality and closer on pricing in the minds of consumers, particularly the highly developed markets in Europe, the Pacific and North America.

"The rise of refrigerated food confirms a steady trend in the private label strategy of retailers worldwide - pushing private label products into premium segments that go beyond the low price-high volume commodity-driven practices of the past."

Despite the increasing prominence of private label goods, big label brands still enjoy distinct dominance in certain fields, particularly shampoo, pasta sauce and baby food.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=64827-private-label-acnielsen-datamonitor>

2006 heralds safer EU legislation

Date

03/01/2006

Article Text

The beginning of 2006 marks the instigation of a collection of updated food and feed rules for EU producers and vendors, geared ultimately towards ensuring safer food for the consumer.

In particular more stringent food and feed hygiene regulations, new microbiological criteria for foodstuffs and official food and feed controls are hoped to herald a new standardised level of safety for food products within the EU.

The legislation applies to every stage of the food production chain.

Markos Kyprianou, EU commissioner for health and consumer protection, said: "The New Year brings a new level of protection for EU citizens as these food and feed safety rules become applicable.

"Consumers can be confident that the best possible food safety practices are now being applied at every step in the production chain."

He added: "This legislation also offers benefits to food businesses and to our trading partners, by clarifying and simplifying the rules they must comply with."

The new regulations are in effect from January 1st onwards.

No further information.

Market for African plant extracts growing

Date

03/01/2006

Article Text

Extracts from African herbs and plants could be increasingly used in Western products, German firm Analyze & Realize has told internet journal NutraIngredients.com.

In the past couple of years several ingredients have emerged in European recipes. Umckaloabo, a medicinal plant used as a natural antibiotic, is becoming popular in Germany, while the baobab tree's pulp has a fresh taste and is rich in vitamin C.

Joerg Gruenwald, a spokesman for Analyze & Realize, told NutraIngredients.com that trade associations are exploring the possibilities of opening up African export markets further.

"Africa is the most undeveloped continent for this market so there are many fruits that have been eaten there for a long time but haven't made it to the mainstream food market," he said.

He emphasised the potential health-giving properties of these exports: "Research shows that often traditional botanicals are richer in chemical ingredients than the plants bred for consumption today."

The large-scale commercial importing of African plants could however be problematic. Any new food that has not been consumed in the EU prior to 1997 must be subjected to strict safety tests.

Mr Gruenwald nonetheless expressed optimism at the chances of developing the market in the coming ten years.

For further information go to <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=64808-africa-baobab-fruit>

Scientists dismiss detox products

Date

03/01/2006

Article Text

Experts have announced that traditional January products boasting purifying qualities have no proven effect.

Infuriated at the multi-million pound industry and its range of herbal extracts, infusions and liquids, scientists have produced a 16-page report to be published later this month debunking the myths surrounding detox products.

Professor Martin Wiseman of the University of Southampton said: "The detox fad - or fads, as there are many methods - is an example of the capacity of people to believe in and pay for magic despite the lack of any sound evidence.

"This is a trend that should worry us all."

Instead the Sense About Science organisation suggests a simple diet, plenty of water and a good night's sleep to refresh the body.

Detox products "waste money and sow confusion about how our bodies, nutrition and chemistry actually work", a spokesperson said.

For more information go to

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/01/03/nwater03.xml&sSheet=/news/2006/01/03/ixnewstop.html>

British farmers 'used as sacrificial lambs'

Date

04/01/2006

Article Text

The president of the National Farmer's Union will today suggest the government is using the British farmer as a "sacrificial lamb".

Tim Bennett, a beef producer from Carmarthenshire, will raise the issue during his address at the Oxford Farming Conference later today.

He will suggest to delegates that politicians present a distorted picture of the farming industry to support their own agenda.

He will allege CAP reform is being represented as a "magic wand" that can resolve the world trade talks as well as world poverty.

However he will state: "According to the recent budget deal, individual countries may opt out of funding rural development; I fear that while other EU governments continue to support their rural communities our government will not.

"A great deal is at stake, the future of a sector, the provision of public goods, the maintenance of rural communities and the very fabric of the British countryside. Surely we do not want to be so short-sighted as a nation as to forget all that?"

Food Standards Agency to hold seminar on food authenticity

Date

04/01/2006

Article Text

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is to hold a seminar on February 23rd 2006 to discuss the results of various research projects on food authenticity.

The research looked into new ways to detect blood proteins in meat products, the development of methods to verify the compulsory origin labelling of beef and the use of DNA methods for the authentication and quantification of meat products.

Speakers include professor Ellen Billet of Nottingham Trent University and professor Steve Garrett of the University of London's Royal Holloway.

For more information go to

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/jan/authenticityseminar>

German sweetener firm claims breakthrough

Date

04/01/2006

Article Text

A blend of Sunnett and sucralose could be a viable quality replacement for sugar in sauces and ketchups, German-based foodstuffs manufacturer Nutrinova has claimed.

The formula maintains a stable taste in the pH range three to nine and can withstand pasteurisation and sterilisation, which demand temperatures of between 80 and 120 degrees centigrade.

Nutrinova claims that the product has been successfully tested in aqueous solutions at 100 degrees C for up to 60 minutes.

The announcement is timely as the industry continues to witness a trend towards 'healthier' alternatives and sugars and trans fats suffer a slumping popularity.

Analyst Freedonia forecasts the sweetener market to grow by 8.3 per cent year-on-year until 2008, with low-calorie soft drinks driving demand.

The product could enjoy a muscular share of the sweetener market as aspartame has come under heavy scrutiny over claims that it causes cancer in mice.

For more information go to <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=64854-nutrinova-splenda-sucralose>

Government grants aimed at reducing waste packaging

Date

04/01/2006

Article Text

Governmental agency Wrap (Waste and Resources Action Programme) has allocated funds to several major food manufacturing firms in order to help them research ways to make their packaging less wasteful.

H J Heinz, Northern Foods and Geest Mariner Foods are among the firms selected to receive a total of about £500,000.

The initiative is part of a programme aimed at meeting the EU's new packaging recycling targets, which were doubled last year. Last month the UK raised its minimum targets on packaging waste, demanding that businesses recycle increasing amounts of tin, plastic and wood among other materials and putting major pressure on the food industry.

Mike Robey, manager for Wrap's innovation fund, said: "The projects address many of the leading product categories that contribute to household food and packaging waste as well as the technical and commercial feasibility and consumer acceptability of the innovations.

"If they are successful, we are confident that the retail supply chain will want to replicate the findings of this research, which could lead to significant reductions in household waste and cost-savings for the sector."

Current research suggests that 40 per cent of household waste originates on supermarket shelves. By funding firms such as Heinz to carry out packaging reduction research, Wrap hopes to reduce such waste by 310,000 tonnes.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64840-heinz-northern-foods-waste>

Increased packaging efficiency with electromagnetic shakers

Date

04/01/2006

Article Text

The efficiency of processing and packaging lines can be improved with the use of small electromagnetic shakers.

Key Technology's range of Impulse Compact machines can accurately measure ingredients during all stages of production.

The shakers, which are specifically designed for tight fitting packaging and processing distribution lines, start and stop quickly to measure the ingredient as it passes by.

"The efficient electromagnetic drives featured on Impulse Compact enable precise metering and gentle product handling while minimising maintenance and maximising product quality," a spokesman for Key Technology stated.

The machines are also extremely reliable as they contain no sliding parts, ball bearings or belts to fail. They are also dust and moisture resistant.

No further information.

New production methods speed up multigrain manufacturing

Date

04/01/2006

Article Text

The use of a preconditioner can allow factories to skip the precooking stage of multigrain processing, according to Swiss-based Buhler.

Instead of the usual drum precooker, an existing Buhler preconditioner was modified and integrated into the multigrain process. Whereas precooking necessitates batch jobs, the preconditioner allows continuous processing which means the process can be interrupted or modified at any time.

Christopher Rubin, who leads Buhler's product management team, told online newsgroup FoodProductionDaily.com: "A start and stop of the production can easily be done because we have a continuous process and not a batch wise process.

"Also because of the fact that the process is continuous, the tuning of the process is much easier. You quickly can see results."

A number of European companies are said to be in the process of implementing similar techniques.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64855-buhler-multigrain-cereal>

Bread could be vehicle for vitamin D

Date

05/01/2006

Article Text

Scientists investigating the fortification of foods with vitamin D have confirmed that bread could be a viable medium, saying that enriched dough increased serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels as effectively as cholecalciferol supplements, the Journal of Nutrition has reported.

Vitamin D has become a focus for the scientific community after studies suggested it could be an important factor in cutting the risks of cancer and osteoporosis.

A spokesman for the joint Finnish-Danish research group said: "Fortified bread is a safe and feasible way to improve vitamin D nutrition."

Up to 60 per cent of the British population is currently thought to be deficient in vitamin D, which is usually synthesised by the body after exposure to sunlight.

Sue Fairweather-Tait, head of nutrition at the UK's Institute of Food Research, told NutraIngredients.com in 2004: "Fortification, if done sensibly, is the only way to achieve optimum vitamin D levels."

Since test results suggesting the beneficial properties of vitamin D were released the market has seen a surge in demand for vitamin D supplements. Mintel's new product database shows the launch of 286 foods containing vitamin D in 2005, compared with 186 in 2003.

Superdrug also reported a 100 per cent increase in sales of vitamin D supplements in the few days following media coverage of the discovery.

For more information go to <http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=64871-vitamin-d-fortification-cereal>

Russian researchers develop meat freshness testing

Date

05/01/2006

Article Text

A team of Russian scientists has developed an ultra-sensitive device that tests the freshness of meat by 'weighing' its smell, it was announced.

The sensor, developed at the Voronezh Technical Academy, uses quartz plate electrodes to take a reading of the gas above the meat's surface. The electrodes are coated with thin films of various substances, including beeswax, which catch molecules evaporating from the meat.

The weight of these molecules sends a vibration through the electrodes, which then feed through to a computer that generates a diagram.

Lead researchers Yakov Korenman and Tatiana Kuchmenko explained: "Thus the weighed smell of meat acquires visual outlines – something like a flower with different petals.

"Absolutely fresh meat has one shape of a flower-pattern, stale meat has another shape, and the meat stored for a day or two has a different shape.

"The diagram of the fresh-killed meat cannot be mixed up with the diagram of cooled meat, particularly if the meat is fat."

As the team pointed out, the sensor will be far more effective in testing the freshness of meat than the human sense of smell, particularly as spices can sometimes be used to mask stale goods.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64880-sensor-oxidation-meat>

Freeze placed on international caviar trade

Date

05/01/2006

Article Text

International restrictions have been placed on the exporting of caviar in an attempt to protect levels of sturgeon fish.

Key fisheries in the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea and along the Sino-Russian border have been accused of not keeping a tight enough reign on illegal caviar trade. For every 1,000 tonnes of legal caviar exported an estimated 14,000 is currently placed on the market worldwide.

The secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) announced that quotas for key production areas have been put on hold until the fisheries produce a realistic scientific survey of stocks.

CITES secretary general Willem Wijnstekers said: "Countries wishing to export sturgeon products from shared stocks must demonstrate that their proposed catch and export quotas reflect current population trends and are sustainable."

Importantly he added: "To do this they must also make full allowance for the amount of fish caught illegally."

Importers such as the EU also have a responsibility to ensure that the caviar they receive comes from a legal source, it was decided. The UN said that many key importing countries still do not have these basic measures in place.

Rik Smith, a mammalogist who is executive director of Environmental Defence Canada in Toronto, welcomed the move but said: "It is an indication of how grim the situation is for these fish."

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64875-caviar-un-labelling>

05/01/2006

Article Text

The unchecked growth of major supermarket chains could lead to the extinction of independent retailers and wholesalers, the forthcoming parliamentary High Street Britain 2015 paper is expected to announce.

The report states that the grocery sector in particular could be "dramatically altered" in ten years' time, as the ever increasing size and buying power of the 'big four' high street chains – Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury and Morrison – pushes smaller firms out of business.

The group of 150 MPs behind the report heard that Tesco, the leading retailer of the four, was able to source the same products for ten to 20 per cent cheaper than independent chains even when ordering similar amounts.

James Lowman, a spokesman for the Association of Convenience Stores, told the Independent newspaper: "We'd like to see the Government take more responsibility for what happens in this industry."

The report is expected to be released in full at the beginning of February.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=64800-tesco-independent-retailers-supermarkets>

Soy-heavy diet 'could aggravate heart disease'

Date

05/01/2006

Article Text

Consumers are being warned about the possibility that a diet heavy in soy products could make existing heart problems significantly worse.

Scientists in the US found that mice carrying a genetic mutation that is linked to altered heart growth and function in humans have significantly worse heart problems when fed a soy diet.

The team at the University of Colorado claim to be the first to provide evidence that environmental influence, such as diet, can affect the heart.

The researchers compared male mice with the mutation for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) fed a soy diet with those fed a soy-free (milk protein-based) diet and found that the mice were severely affected by the soy diet, showing enlarged heart muscles and eventual heart failure.

When the male mice affected by the soy diet were switched to a dairy-based diet they showed a marked improvement. Female mice carrying the HCM mutation showed little effects of the soy diet.

University of Colorado professor Leslie Leinwand commented: "I don't think normal, healthy people should be alarmed by the results of this study.

"But we are seeing more cautionary reactions from the medical community in recent years regarding the ingestion of huge quantities of dietary supplements, including soy phytoestrogens."

HCM is the leading cause of death in young athletes and symptoms of the disease include shortness of breath, chest discomfort, and palpitations. It affects around one in 500 people and a total of 18 genes associated with the disease have been identified.

The study by the Boulder-based scientists is published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. Soy-rich diets have been thought to protect against heart disease for years due to the presence of plant-derived phytoestrogens.

However, the University of Colorado report concludes: "The new data provides a strong link between soy diet and the progression of cardiac disease, in mice."

No further information.

New low salt spread launched

Date

05/01/2006

Article Text

The growing salt-awareness of UK consumers has led an English butter brand to launch a new "slightly salted" product.

Country Life has announced that the product, Country Life Spreadable Slightly Salted, will be on offer in leading supermarkets including Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Waitrose and Sainsbury's as well as independent retailers.

Marketing director Richard Tolley said: "The Slightly Salted Spreadable segment is large and in strong growth but currently has limited consumer choice."

The spreadable butter product was initially developed by the English Butter Marketing Company with the new 0.8 per cent salt version expected to expand the market.

Obesity linked to Alzheimer's and kidney problems

Date

06/01/2006

Article Text

The trend for healthier eating looks set to continue, after experts announced a link between obesity and the development of diseases such as Alzheimer's and kidney failure.

Heart disease and diabetes are already known to be exacerbated by obesity.

Scientists at the University of California and the Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia studied data collected from over 32,000 people over a period of 26 years. They found that those who were obese were up to seven times more likely to develop kidney failure, or end-stage renal disease than those who were of a normal weight.

They also discovered a "strong correlation" between obesity and the tendency to develop Alzheimer's.

The fatter the patient, the higher the levels of beta-amyloid, a sticky protein that builds up in the brain as a precursor to the disease, the research found.

Dr Sam Gandy of Thomas Jefferson University announced: "Ours is one of the first attempts to try to find out on both the pathological and the molecular levels how obesity was increasing the risk of Alzheimer's."

The news will place increased strain on a food industry that is already struggling to deal with the growing obesity epidemic.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64906-obesity-kidney-failure-alzheimer-s>

CIAA objects to EU legislation

Date

06/01/2006

Article Text

A list of changes to EU proposed regulations has been put forward by the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries of the EU (CIAA).

The CIAA objected to several EU legislative proposals, such as the revision of current laws on additives and enzymes, as "unworkable".

The EU has recently been in the process of increasing the stringency of food production regulations, largely due to public concerns about safety and the growing consumer desire to know exactly what goes into food being eaten.

A CIAA spokesman said: "CIAA considers that the safety of food additives and enzymes should be re-evaluated on the basis of new evidence, as and when this becomes available, not on the basis of an arbitrary time scale."

The CIAA urged the EU regulators to improve the consistency of legislation.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64918-ciaa-regulation-safety>

Meat and agricultural matters

Date

06/01/2006

Article Text

An open meeting on meat and agricultural matters is to be held by the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) of FSA Wales.

The meeting, which will take place on January 18th in Aberystwyth, will feature presentations covering a number of key topics including new EU feed and hygiene regulations, an update on BSE in sheep and recent research into the sale of lamb and mutton with skin on.

The session is one of a number of proposed open meetings to take place around Wales, as part of the WFAC's pledge to increase accessibility.

For more information go to

<http://www.food.gov.uk/wales/pressreleases/2006/jan/wfac180106>

Scientists dismiss soft-drink cancer link

Date

06/01/2006

Article Text

The link between carbonated soft drinks and oesophageal cancer is unfounded, and diet soft drinks may actually decrease the risk of cancer, according to a new study.

Soft drink consumption has been linked to a 350 per cent increase in the number of cases of adenocarcinoma of the oesophagus since the mid-1970s, but recent studies claim this theory was picked up by the media and exaggerated and that diet soft drink consumers could in fact have a decreased risk of cancer.

"The theory that soft drinks could be causing this cancer was picked up by the media and widely disseminated," said lead author of the study Susan Mayne, professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at Yale School of Medicine in the US.

"However, there was no direct evidence to bear on this hypothesis, until we initiated our analysis," she added.

The team of researchers conducted the first direct test into the hypothesis that soft drinks contribute to an increase in the cancer.

They reported: "We found that contrary to the hypothesis put forth by other researchers, carbonated soft drink consumption was inversely associated with oesophageal adenocarcinoma risk, mainly attributable to diet soda, and that high intake did not increase risk of any oesophageal or gastric cancer subtype in men or women."

The researchers suggested that diet soft drink consumers were at a decreased risk of the cancer, as they were more likely to engage in other healthy diets and activities.

No further information.

North Sea haddock stock 'must be urgently reassessed'

Date

06/01/2006

Article Text

The North Sea haddock stock need urgent reassessment, claims a fish production organisation.

The Scottish White Fish Producers' Association has announced it will not "lie down and accept" the 13 per cent haddock cut for the year.

Association secretary George MacRae said they would be "swinging into action" to bring forward the reassessment which is scheduled for December 2006.

He also said more must be done to develop swap possibilities which would enable under-used fish to be used as currency.

Mr MacRae did, however, welcome the increase in the North Sea TAC for prawns which he said was badly-needed by fishermen.

No further information.

Cost of raw materials dampens profits

Date

06/01/2006

Article Text

Increased raw material costs have resulted in reduced pre-tax profits for one of the UK's leading liquid milk producers.

While Graham's Dairies reported record sales of £21.9 million in 2005 it states pre-tax profits were down over the same period.

The company said higher costs for raw materials pushing up the cost of packaging and distribution had led to profits falling from £905,200 to £721,138.

Managing director, Robert Graham Jr, explained these increases would also have a long-term effect on the company's profitability, a situation likely to be repeated across the industry,

He told industry website Just Food: "The year covered by these accounts has seen a 30 per cent increase in raw material costs – particularly plastic for packaging. The global increase in crude oil prices, with the resultant effect on diesel and plastic costs, will continue to have a bearing on our financial results."

However he also stressed that the company was pleased with the results and would continue to expand "organically and by acquisition".

For further information go to http://www.just-food.com/news_detail.asp?art=62923

Yorkshire firm to launch halal baby products

Date

09/01/2006

Article Text

A Yorkshire company has announced it plans to improve the health of the world's children with a range of halal baby foods.

The products were devised by Mumtaz Food Industries, thought to be the first group to make the food available on a major scale.

Many Muslim babies suffer from a lack of nutrients as their parents cannot get hold of baby food with enough protein content because of their religious requirements.

This is because meat that is not slaughtered in the correct halal way is classed as a forbidden food for a Muslim, so many babies eat a vegetable-based diet.

Mr Khan told the Yorkshire Post he was concerned about the babies' development because of this unbalanced diet and believes his product will help to improve it.

He said: "We've been researching the product with Muslims and the response has been really enthusiastic.

"Each bottle will have 20 per cent more protein so we can compete with all major brands. It's got no artificial additives or preservatives, it's a totally natural product."

Improved polyethylene resin developed for frozen food packaging

Date

09/01/2006

Article Text

A new high-performance polyethylene packaging has been developed that combines outstanding toughness with ease of use, according to its manufacturer's claims.

Nova Chemicals' Surpass FPs016-C polyethylene has been formulated for applications which require premium toughness without sacrificing processability.

Beth Eckenrode, vice president of business development at Nova, said: "Our newest Surpass resin is an optimal performer in a broad range of applications that require extra toughness, such as produce and frozen food packaging."

She added: "FPs016-C offers customers an ideal combination of toughness and high seal strength with best-in-class melt strength."

According to Nova's claims, the product outperforms competitive resins in tear tests and seals at comparable temperatures. It is also said to demonstrate superior strength during 'hot tack' tests, making it suitable for high-speed production lines.

For more information go to <http://www.packagingessentials.com/news.asp?id=2006-01-05-19.43.33.000000>

New testing kit for avian flu

Date

09/01/2006

Article Text

Applied Biosystems has developed a new kit that can test for strains of avian flu in poultry flocks in under two hours.

Testing currently takes days to complete, with European countries having to send samples to a UK lab.

The new detection kit, which is currently being tested and honed against viral samples in Hong Kong, is part of a comprehensive set of technologies developed by Applied Biosystems for public health officials and researchers involved in the surveillance of H5N1 avian outbreaks.

The system is to be distributed via the World Health Organisation (WHO) network.

Ian Barr, deputy director of the WHO's influenza centre in Australia, told FoodProductionDaily.com: "Genetic-based detection is one of the most reliable approaches for detecting the presence of harmful pathogens, including the dangerous influenza H5N1 subtype."

He continued: "We are pleased with the initiative that Applied Biosystems has demonstrated in supporting the global influenza scientific community to address this critical public health requirement and look forward to the roll-out of these new assays."

The new speed of testing will reassure consumers and poultry farmers alike.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64947-applied-biosystems-bird-flu-influenza>

Pregnant mothers apathetic about organic

Date

09/01/2006

Article Text

Few pregnant women bother to eat organic food before giving birth, according to a new survey.

Although 75 per cent of those asked believed it was important, over half did not get round to changing their eating habits.

After the baby is born, however, 80 per cent say they fully intend to wean it on non-GM, organic goods.

A Food Standards Agency Spokesman emphasised that non-organic food is still perfectly safe for pregnant mothers to consume. "Organic food contains fewer residues of pesticides, so buying organic is one way to reduce the chances that food contains pesticide residues.

"However, all pesticide residues are monitored and assessed to ensure they do not pose a risk to human health."

For more information go to

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/01/09/norganic09.xml&sheet=/news/2006/01/09/ixhome.html>

Parripak sources new mushrooms to meet demand

Date

09/01/2006

Article Text

Reacting to industry demand, vegetable shipper Parripak is to supply a new range of exotic mushrooms.

The Horse, Pied Blue and King Oyster and Almond mushrooms have been added to Parripak's more traditional lines.

James Parrish, managing director at Parripak, told website Freshinfo.com: "Early indications show that there is a definite market for this specialist product range and there is particular interest from food manufacturers looking to produce restaurant style food products including pizzas, soups, oriental cuisine and global dishes."

For more information go to

<http://www.freshinfo.com/index.php?s=n&ss=nd&sid=38044>

Ribena to launch blueberry variation

Date

09/01/2006

Article Text

GlaxoSmithKline, the company that produces Ribena, is to launch a blueberry version of its popular soft drink this summer in response to overwhelming consumer demand for the fruit.

Marking the ever-growing rise in health-conscious consumerism, the popularity of blueberries has blossomed after claims that they help protect the body from an array of illnesses.

Women between the ages of 18 and 30 are to be the key demographic for the product.

A spokesman for GlaxoSmithKline said the product should be in the shops in time for summer.

"Ribena is a British brand with a long heritage and exceptional consumer loyalty," he added.

"It has been loved by young and old alike for generations and we are confident that the plans we have for the brand's future will ensure it continues to grow."

For more information go to <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4592286.stm>

Consumer trends continue to drive food packaging

Date

10/01/2006

Article Text

Over 72 per cent of US consumers are willing to pay more for a product if its packaging guarantees freshness and quality, according to a survey conducted on behalf of Cryovac.

The increasing popularity of luxuriously or securely packaged goods indicates the growing extent to which innovation within the food packing industry is propelled by consumer demand.

Products such as Netherlands-based Templast's human-shaped sports drink bottle, Crown Holdings' book-shaped chocolate box and Kronenbourg's pearl-ink bottle have all enjoyed improved sales through responding to the demand for new packaging.

A spokesman for Crown Bevcan Europe, which owns the 1664 line, said: "The resulting effect adds a luxury appeal to the already successful Kronenbourg brand."

Packages conveying the health-giving properties of the product were also found to sell better.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64978-graham-packaging-heinz-closure>

Flatulence-free beans could encourage more protein consumption

Date

10/01/2006

Article Text

The Chilean manteca, or 'prim' bean, developed by Dr Colin Leakey in the 1960s, could prove popular with consumers put off the protein-rich food due to its well-known side effect.

The manteca bean is thought to owe its non-flatulent properties to the presence of tannins in the seed coating, and was trained to grow in the UK's climate by Dr Leakey.

Now a Cambridge-based firm, Phaseolus, has begun to process and distribute the prim bean. A spokesperson from the company expressed optimism at the bean's prospects.

"I think kids' meals would be perfect," she told NutraIngredients.com.

"But it is yet to be proven how far this will push more people into eating beans."

Phaseolus currently sells over 600 tonnes of beans to manufacturers each year. Several organic processors are believed to be interested in the product.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64979-phaseolus-prim-beans-flatulence>

New emulsifier from Palsgaard can maintain freshness

Date

10/01/2006

Article Text

Two new whipping emulsifiers are cost-effective ways of reducing drying and instability in cakes and similar products, Danish firm Palsgaard has claimed.

Emulpals 210 and Emulpals 212 are designed to help bakers and food producers increase the freshness and lightness of their goods. As a bonus both are based on non-GM ingredients, and Emulpals 212 is soy-free.

Palsgaard recently enjoyed a €7 million injection, and hopes to push its production to 30,000 tonnes a year by autumn 2006.

Emulsifiers are currently the quickest growing sector in the food ingredients industry, having boomed in market value by 5.6 per cent since 2001.

For more information go to <http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=64885-palsgaard-emulsifier-baking>

New findings link vegetables to lower blood pressure

Date

10/01/2006

Article Text

Eating a diet rich in vegetables can help lower blood pressure, new research has claimed.

Researchers from the Imperial College London suggested that magnesium and amino acids - which join to form protein - may be the keys to vegetables' effect on blood pressure.

And even though high consumption of meat is often linked to raised blood pressure, the team found that there was no strong evidence to suggest this was the case.

The researchers, who reported their findings in the Archives of Internal Medicine, concluded that more research was needed to establish exactly how vegetables helped lower blood pressure.

Lead author of the study Professor Paul Elliott wrote: "Vegetable protein intake was inversely related to blood pressure.

"This finding is consistent with recommendations that a diet high in vegetable products be part of healthy lifestyle for prevention of high blood pressure and related diseases."

During the course of the study the 4,680 volunteers, all aged 40 to 59, had their blood pressure read eight times and had to write down everything they ate and drank over the previous 24 hours.

The findings consistently showed that eating vegetables was associated with lowered blood pressure.

Oligofructose may be used to stave off hunger

Date

10/01/2006

Article Text

When incorporated into a regular diet oligofructose can help reduce hunger pangs and limit food intake, according to new research by pharmaceutical group Orafiti.

Oligofructose fermentation is thought to modulate the release of gut hormones in the blood, the latter in turn acting as signalling agents to the brain influencing appetite and consequently food intake.

Rats fed with a diet supplemented with BeneoTMP95 and BeneoTMPSynergy1 were found to have a significantly lower body fat mass after three weeks, with some showing losses of up to 30 per cent.

The tests were also repeated with human subjects aged 21 to 39. Energy intake per day for those who took the supplements was said to be "significantly reduced".

Currently, one in three EU residents is overweight, and one in ten is obese. Dr Anne Franck, executive vice president of science and technology at Orafiti, expressed hope that the discovery could play a role in reversing this pattern.

"The induction of endogenous satietogenic hormones by oligofructose offers an interesting approach to tackle the obesity problem," she said.

"This should allow food manufacturers to use Beneo™ oligofructose to increase the satiety potential of their food products, thus helping consumers not to overeat themselves."

For more information go to

http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/newsmaker_article.asp?fSite=AR283&nw=hd&size=ld&sno=1&main_page=1&id=358

Toffee vodka to be launched in UK

Date

10/01/2006

Article Text

A new toffee vodka already popular in Wales is to be rolled out in the UK.

Toffoc, a 27.5 per cent triple-distilled UK grain vodka, is a blend that is said to contain hints of vanilla, butterscotch and caramel among other things.

Even Tony Blair is said to be a fan of the new drink.

Dewi Roberts, one of Toffoc's creators, said: "We first experienced toffee-flavoured vodka in the Alps and thought it could prove just as popular in Britain.

"Hopefully Toffoc can help remind people of the apres ski even when they are at home in the UK."

The company is currently in talks over an export deal to Canada and is also said to be targeting the French Alps.

For more information go to

http://icnorthwales.icnetwork.co.uk/business/businessnews/tm_objectid=16516250&method=full&siteid=50142&headline=toffee-vodka-is-going-down-very-well--name_page.html

2005 saw record number of food innovations

Date

11/01/2006

Article Text

In a retrospective of the last year, Datamonitor has indicated that 2005 was a particularly strong year for food and drink innovation.

It has selected ten consumer products from its Productscan Online database, each one predicted to significantly shape the industry in the future.

Among the inventions were adjustable chilli sauce from US-based firm Dave's Speciality Gourmet Food Company, which allows diners to select the degree of spiciness the sauce comes out at, a Russian chewing gum (Auto Smolta) developed to fight cavities and reduce the urge to smoke, and a French cheese ketchup hybrid.

Datamonitor pointed out that product innovation over the last year has been overwhelmingly driven by customer ease of use, with 80 per cent of European and US consumers indicating that they were more likely to buy products that were time-saving or convenient.

A rise in health-consciousness has also driven market growth, with organic food in particular faring well over the last year.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65002-whisky-chewing-gum-beer>

New add-on improves dough quality

Date

11/01/2006

Article Text

APV Baker has announced the launch of an add-on vacuum and pressure mixing package for its range of Tweedy mixing machines.

The company claims that the new upgrade will improve yield and crumb quality in the dough, as well as reducing the amount of ascorbic acid consumed in the process.

Pressurising the mixing bowl then pumping air in increases the amount of oxygen in the dough, enhancing the working of ascorbic acid as an oxidising agent. A partial vacuum is used to control the crumb size of the finished product.

By adjusting the vacuum manufacturers can produce open-structure breads like baguette or closed-structure products such as pan breads.

"Pressure-vacuum mixing has made a major impact in bakeries throughout the UK and continental Europe, Africa and Australasia," an APV spokesperson pointed out.

"Retrofitting the process will enable bakeries to maintain their competitive edge without the need to replace machinery before the end of its natural life cycle."

The add-on will work with all existing mixers from the Tweedy range.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=64969-apv-tweedy-dough-mixer>

Atkins back on track with revamped range

Date

11/01/2006

Article Text

Atkins Nutritionals, the firm behind 2004's Atkins diet craze, has itself slimmed down considerably since emerging from bankruptcy last July.

The company, which suffered serious profit losses after low-carb alternatives were produced by other major food outlets and consumers switched to different diets, has cut down its product range from 340 to 60 items.

The products do however still follow the same formula, all containing high levels of protein and fibre and being low in trans fats and sugars.

Beth Neumann, chief marketing officer at Atkins Nutritionals, told NutraIngredients.com: "We've improved the taste and quality of the products but they have always had these nutritional benefits.

"We're now investing to create awareness that these products have a nutritional advantage over others in the marketplace."

The firm, which came under heavy fire for encouraging consumers to eat too many fatty foods and not enough fruit, is to spend \$40 million on a new advertising campaign to update its image.

For more information go to <http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=64999-atkins-bars-weight-loss>

Heart health foods 'will be worth \$5.7 billion by 2009'

Date

11/01/2006

Article Text

Sales of heart health foods and related products will boom by up to 60 per cent in the coming three years, possibly reaching values of \$5.7 billion by 2009, according to a report by Leatherhead Foods.

The document, Heart Benefit Foods, suggests that fruit drink products in particular are set to grow, moving from their current general health positioning to a more specific market placement.

Provexis' tomato-based juice drink Sirco - which was launched this month - is expected to be a big hit, and follows in the footsteps of highly successful products such as Pomegreat pomegranate juice.

Both are endorsed by the Heart UK charity and carry the claim 'helps to maintain a healthy heart and benefits circulation' on the label.

A research team at Dundee University is currently seeking volunteers to investigate the palatability and bloodstream effects of a new blackcurrent and blueberry juice drink.

Lead researcher Dr Dean Patterson explained his hypothesis on the success of heart health drinks to NutraIngredients.com.

"To change a person's diet is rather difficult," he said.

"People may be more inclined to take a juice product than they are to eat fruit and vegetables."

For more information go to <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=65014-provexis-sirco-heart-health-fruit-juice>

State-of-the art seaweed factory to revive industry

Date

11/01/2006

Article Text

The wilting traditional seaweed industry in the outer Hebrides is to be rekindled with a new high-tech processing plant at Arnish near Stornoway.

Malcolm MacRae and Martin McLeod, who are to build the drying facility, have already secured the rights to harvest seaweed from the Lewis seashore and neighbouring Harris.

The Hebridean Seaweed Company is looking to produce about 2.5 tonnes of dried seaweed a day, and will market the produce primarily as organic fertiliser and livestock feed.

It will also approach the alginate industry, with views to supplying ingredients for a variety of pharmaceutical products.

Mr McLeod said: "We will be looking at getting as many cutters as we can.

"If everything goes according to plan we could be looking at employing quite a lot of people."

The project has been backed by a partnership formed by the Western Isles Council, the Scottish Association of Marine Sciences and Queen's University Belfast.

No further information.

New screen frames can speed up ingredient filtering

Date

11/01/2006

Article Text

New automatic tensioning frames can speed up the manufacturing process by filtering ingredients more efficiently, Rotex claims.

The frames, designed as replacement for wooden screen frames currently used, feature spring tension clips for attaching clothing which can be removed and changed quickly by workers.

The springs also ensure a uniform tension across the entire frame.

A spokesperson for Rotex said: "With the newly designed frame, a simple, one-time adjustment of the patented roller and bumper system ensures proper location of the screen frame - even after repeated screen frame changes.

"No sieve jacks or additional adjustments are required, and no tools are needed to remove or re-install the screen frame."

Rotex emphasised that as the frames boast a one-piece design they are easily assembled, cleaned and transported.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65021-rotex-frame-filtering>

Sainsbury's presents year-round strawberries

Date

12/01/2006

Article Text

Sainsbury's is set to offer strawberries irrespective of season, with the advance of new production technologies.

Supplemented lighting and heated glasshouses engineered to simulate a Mediterranean climate, along with the use of certain varieties of strawberry, can be used to produce the fruit beyond its normal harvesting period.

Sainsbury's strawberry product technologist Peter Czarnobaj said: "Strawberries are usually associated with balmy summer days, but soon we expect them to become as popular a winter dish as Brussels sprouts.

"After extensive research, we chose the Sonata and Lambada varieties because of their ability to produce brightly coloured fruit with a sweet juicy texture during the dark days of winter."

The move is part of a wider technological trend sweeping the UK's food production industry, with more and more traditional summer goods being produced in the middle of winter.

Ealier this year Sainsbury's, in collaboration with J Baarda, announced the completion of a horticultural centre capable of growing tomatoes in the UK all year round. It is now looking into growing English avocados for the first time.

No further information.

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No further information.

New sucralose breakthrough could shake up sweetener market

Date

12/01/2006

Article Text

An India-based ingredients firm claims to have developed a new sucralose product that could break up the current market monopoly held by Tate & Lyle.

Pharmed Medicare already has plans to build a plant that could produce 1,000 metric tonnes of the sucralose a year.

"We started looking at sucralose in 2000," Pharmed president Sundeep Aurora told FoodNavigator.

"This new process is the culmination of five years of dedicated scientific research and engineering involving leading international scientific institutions and over 80 scientists."

The prospects for a new product in the sweetener market are extremely bright, as consumer trends lean towards healthier, low-calorie products and food manufacturers stay on the lookout for cheap sugar alternatives.

Current growth for the sector is forecast at 8.3 per cent year on year until 2008, compared to three or four per cent for the food industry as a whole.

For more information go to <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?id=65046>

New automation speeds up confectionary packing

Date

12/01/2006

Article Text

A new automated machine can help manufacturers speed up confectionary packing processes and can cut down on labour costs, its retailer has announced.

The Racetrack Cartoner from UK firm Bradman Lake replaces the need for the manually loaded robotic top loader and three-flap carton closer usually used for the process.

"It delivers high-speed packing line performance with lower machinery costs than robotic top load systems plus the added bonus of considerable savings of packaging materials and factory space," the company said.

Company spokesperson Paul Jeffery told FoodProductionDaily.com that he believed the market was ripe for such an invention.

"People are really looking for automation," he said.

Food manufacturing firms in South Wales and New Zealand have already placed orders for the machine.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65052-bradman-lake-carton-automation>

Time is ripe for innovative fruit labelling

Date

12/01/2006

Article Text

The 2006 Fruit Logistica Innovation awards in association with Fruchthandel magazine are set to go ahead for February 4th.

Among the ten nominees is smart label UK firm ripeSense, selected for a product which gauges the maturity of pears.

Voted one of the best innovations of 2004 by Time magazine, the ripeSense indicator changes colour depending on the freshness of the fruit, from red to show the pear is crisp, through to orange for firm and yellow for juicy.

The sensor works by reacting to aromas given off by the fruit.

The firm said: "Many types of fruit do not change colour as they ripen and visible signs of ripening can vary between the different varieties of each fruit.

"Not knowing if, or when the fruit has reached their preferred state of ripeness is frustrating for consumers and a barrier to purchase.

It announced: "ripeSense eliminates this problem by clearly showing the exact ripeness of specific fruit."

The company is now said to be working on detectors for other types of fruit, including avocado, melon and kiwi.

No further information.

Flavourings market driven by health-conscious consumerism

Date

12/01/2006

Article Text

Growing customer desire for "healthy foods" is driving demand for flavourings, a new study states.

A survey conducted by research company Frost & Sullivan found that while consumers want products that are low in fat, salt and sugar, they are not willing to compromise on taste.

The report concluded that this health-focus, combined with increased receptiveness for international food products, is motivating demand for new tastes, such as lychee and guava and novel flavour combination like strawberry and mint.

"Considering the highly progressive nature of the flavours industry, major market participants are making significant investments in research and development activities in order to differentiate their product offerings," noted research analyst Kaye Cheung.

"Hence, the development of new technologies and delivery systems that improve the application of flavourings in food products is likely to be crucial to the future development of this highly competitive market."

The global flavouring market, currently valued at \$4.8 billion is expected to grow to \$6.22 billion in 2012.

Tomato juice linked to reduced risk of emphysema

Date

12/01/2006

Article Text

As the healthy drinks sector continues to grow, tomato juice is the latest drink to reveal its medicinal properties and jump on the bandwagon.

Already known to be rich in antioxidants, experts now claim tomato juice could help protect smokers against lung cancer.

Tomato juice contains lycopene, a powerful natural antioxidant that is also associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer in men.

But after scientists gave tomato juice mixed with water to lab mice, they found that it completely prevented them from suffering emphysema triggered by tobacco smoke.

Emphysema, most commonly associated with smokers, prevents the lungs from working properly and is one of the chief causes of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which kills around 28,000 people a year in the UK.

Scientists from the Juntendo University School of Medicine in Tokyo believe that lycopene and other ingredients in the tomato juice can prevent the chemical damage caused by tobacco smoke in the lungs.

The team of researchers now wish to continue their study with human subjects, to test the possibilities of tomato juice and its effects on preventing disease.

New range of fish meals aimed at heart health

Date

13/01/2006

Article Text

Young's has unveiled a new range of chilled fish meals products entitled Young's at Heart, aimed at the health-conscious market.

The range, which has been approved by the Joint Health Claims Initiative (JHCI) to carry the label 'Help Heart Health', is rich in Omega 3, which is thought to help the heart, liver and brain function.

Young's claims that the first three products in the range contain between two thirds and 100 per cent of the recommended weekly intake of Omega 3.

Yvonne Adam, business development controller for Young's chilled, said: "We wanted to produce a range that made it easy for consumers to appreciate the specific health properties of oily fish – that's why the approved claim on the pack is so important."

She added: "Every portion of Young's at Heart will always offer at least half the recommended weekly intake of Omega 3 – although the first three products do even better than this!"

It is thought to be the first time that an entire range of products has been eligible to carry the JHCI's heart health stamp.

For more information go to

http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/3661/Young%92s_launches_first_ever_%91heart_health_approved%92_products.html

New technology could help brew perfect beer

Date

13/01/2006

Article Text

A research team in Winnipeg, Canada, has been using new technology to investigate which proteins in beer create the foaming and haze.

If identified, the proteins could be manipulated by brewers to adjust the consistency and complexion of beer when poured into a glass, thus helping to create the perfect product.

Marta Izydorczyk, lead researcher for the project, said: "If we can isolate and identify all proteins participating in foam production and haze production, then we can manipulate them, either through malting barley breeding programs or in the processing stage."

The research is also hoped to promote Canadian barley to the world market.

A separate 1.8 million project is also underway in the UK, with

scientists seeking to identify the genes in barley responsible for yield, disease, pest resistance and alcoholic content.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65082-beer-foam-research-barley>

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For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65082-beer-foam-research-barley>

Vegetarian ingredients 'could dominate market by 2016'

Date

13/01/2006

Article Text

Increasing food safety scares and consumer demand could drive the vegetarian sector to dominate half the ingredients market in ten years' time, according to leading industry analysts.

In recent years, scares such as BSE in cattle and avian flu in poultry have pushed up demand for non-meat supplements.

Lukas Christian, global product manager for beta-carotene at DSM Nutritional Products, told NutraIngredients.com that he believes the demand for vegetarian ingredients is directly driven by consumer concern over meat scares.

He predicted that in the next ten years vegetarian ingredients will grow to occupy between 30 and 50 per cent of the total ingredients market, emphasising the importance for manufacturers to keep up with demand.

"If you have a complete portfolio of vegetarian ingredients, you will be prepared for any animal health scare that breaks," he added.

Experts have also pointed out that vegetarian supplements are blessed with a healthy image, which is a headstart in the current market where demand for nutritional and beneficial foods is still growing.

According to a Datamonitor report, there are about 12 million strictly vegetarian consumers in Europe.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65085-dsm-vegetarian-food-safety-gelatine>

Efficacy of new probiotic products questioned

Date

13/01/2006

Article Text

The consumer watchdog organisation Which? has raised doubts over the efficacy and value of increasingly popular probiotic-based products.

The questions concern the exact effect of lactobacillus and bifidobacterium bacteria on the consumer's physical well-being, NutraIngredients reports.

A study conducted by Which? magazine affiliated publication Drug and Therapies Bulletin found that conclusions drawn so far were "patchy" in terms of proof and needed further work.

The research revealed that the variation between the effect of the bacteria and the impact of mass-production, transportation and storage conditions could undermine their function.

Research carried out into the benefits of probiotics in terms of gut health was said to be more convincing, but still required further investigation.

The report follows calls from industry insiders for improved self-regulation and control over where products may be labelled "probiotic".

No further information.

EU food innovation 'held back by lack of spending'

Date

13/01/2006

Article Text

The EU's food manufacturers risk losing out to global markets unless they up spending on research and development (R&D), according to the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries (CIAA).

While Europe's competitors spend on average 0.35 per cent of their budgets on R&D, the EU's investment in 2001 was about 0.24 per cent.

Japan is the world's leader at 0.8 per cent.

A spokesperson for the CIAA said: "The EU food and drink industry has registered relatively limited but stable growth over the past three years.

"International comparisons show that, contrary to the EU, other food production markets are undergoing considerable expansion."

They added: "This is particularly the case in Latin America and Asia where, for instance, the Chinese food processing industry is continuing to grow at double-digit rates."

In a policy document last year the CIAA urged European companies to up their efforts in terms of R&D, particularly pointing out that a poor rate of technology transfer from the research to application phase was stunting innovative growth.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65091-r-d-ciaa-research>

Danish firm launches lighter, stronger plastic packaging

Date

13/01/2006

Article Text

Food manufacturers could look to save money while providing thinner packaging, Denmark-based Borealis has announced.

Borealis claimed that its RJ470MO plastic provides a transparent, thin wall packaging, which will allow manufacturers to downgauge – cutting costs by using less plastic at a time when oil tariffs have sent prices soaring.

The company announced: "The RJ470MO solution offers the well-established properties of polypropylene random copolymers, such as stiffness, impact performance and low density and a new route to greater productivity."

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65081-borealis-downgauge-plastic>

Cumin could cut cancer risk

Date

16/01/2006

Article Text

A spice commonly used in curries could be effective in the treatment and prevention of prostate cancer, particularly if it is combined with broccoli and brussels sprouts, research has suggested.

Scientists found that combining the common curry ingredient curcumin with phenethyl isothiocyanate (PEITC) found in cruciferous vegetables such as cauliflower and cabbage offered protection against prostate cancer in tests on animals.

Ah-Ng Tony Knog, a professor at Rutgers University, where the tests were carried out, said: "The bottom line is that PEITC and curcumin, alone or in combination, demonstrate significant cancer-preventive qualities in laboratory mice, and the combination of PEITC and curcumin could be effective in treating established prostate cancers."

The authors of the study, which is published in the medical journal *Cancer*, said that incidence of prostate cancer in the US was much higher than in India, where a higher amount of vegetables are consumed.

Vegetables contain large amounts of phytochemicals - plant chemicals which have been proven to offer protection against disease.

In tests the researchers injected mice with curcumin or PEITC or both, beginning the injections a day before the introduction of prostate cancer cells.

They found that the injections slowed down the growth of cancerous tumours and were particularly effective when combined.

Cruciferous vegetables which contain high levels of PEITC include broccoli, kale, watercress, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and cabbage.

Cabbage has been previously linked with lowering breast cancer rates and broccoli has also been linked with fighting other cancers.

Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer in British men. Over 27,000 men are diagnosed with the disease each year.

No further information.

Dietary intake linked to mental health

Date

16/01/2006

Article Text

Rising rates of mental illness could be the result of dietary changes, researchers have claimed.

Two new reports, published by the food health group Sustain and the Mental Health Foundation, suggest that changing food production and composition over the past 50 years has exacerbated mental health problems.

The reports indicate that a diet lacking in fresh fruit and vegetables and oily fish could be linked to mental illnesses, such as depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and memory problems.

Sustain argues that the NHS' £100 billion annual bill for mental health treatment will continue to increase unless the government encourages people to change their diet.

"The good news is that the diet for a healthy mind is the same as the diet for a healthy body," said report researcher Courtney Van de Weyer.

"The bad news is that, unless there is a radical overhaul of food and farming policies there won't be healthy and nutritious foods available in the future for people to eat."

However, opinion is divided as to the extent of the link between diet and mental health.

No further information.

Pig industry growth 'relies on competitiveness'

Date

16/01/2006

Article Text

Competitiveness, cost, health and value are the pig industry's priorities for the coming year, states the British Pig Executive (BPEX).

In its updated Road to Recovery 2006-09 strategy, BPEX states these four areas must be concentrated on and improved to ensure a profitable and sustainable industry.

BPEX chairman Stewart Houston said: "The original Road to Recovery strategy laid very sound foundations and now we are building on those.

"The latest strategy, which covers 2006 to 2009 is even more focused and carefully targeted to improve returns for the industry and get the maximum value from the levy.

"We have achieved a number of successes which have helped the industry stabilise following several years of decline. The new strategy now aims to help the pig production and processing industry grow and meet the changing and challenging market."

The plan of action drawn up for the strategy will cost £10.5 million a year, of which £7.3 million comes from levy funding and the rest from subsidies.

New spectrophotometer speeds up food safety testing

Date

16/01/2006

Article Text

A new portable spectrophotometer from Hach has been developed to speed up food and safety testing by automating the process.

Spectrophotometers are used to test the contamination of liquids by measuring the amount of certain materials in the solution absorbing light.

Hach's DR 2800, which can run 240 analytical tests on water used at food and drink manufacturing plants without the need to go back to a laboratory, works by scanning barcodes on ready-to-use reagent vials.

The process reduces reagent consumption and testing time while improving accuracy, the company claimed.

Hach's range of vials is being marketed under the moniker TNTplus.

A spokesperson for Hach said: "Analysts benefit from the superior optical glassware, and convenient, flat bottoms of the new TNTplus reagent vials.

"The packaging of the TNTplus vials is useful too - it's colour-coded by parameter and range, compact, and includes easy-to-understand pictogram instructions."

The instrument works either in a lab with regular mains power or as a mobile unit with a lithium-ion battery.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65111-hach-food-safety-testing>

EU funding directed at food and drink innovation

Date

16/01/2006

Article Text

The European Commission has allocated funding to several 'blocs' to help them concentrate on researching new foods processing techniques, following claims from the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries (CIAA) that a lack of research and development (R&D) spending was stunting the growth of food and drink innovation in the EU.

A newly created body, the Food Innovation Network Europe (FINE), will oversee the development of the various blocs identified for spending.

Areas Scotland, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Italy, Spain, Denmark and Sweden have all been designated as key sites. Regions' specific traditions and tastes will be taken into account.

The project comes from a total European budget of €685 million, some of which will also go towards setting up similar studies into food safety and nutritional values.

Last week a CIAA report claimed that Europe was lagging significantly behind its competitors in terms of food and drink innovation spending, with just 0.24 per cent of total monetary output going on R&D in 2001, compared with 0.35 per cent for its main competitors.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65109-r-d-safety-network>

Wholegrain diet can ease the pain of ageing

Date

16/01/2006

Article Text

Eating three or more wholegrain servings every day could ease the development of metabolic syndrome (MetS) and cardiovascular disease (CVD) in older adults, experts from the University of Maryland have claimed.

MetS has been linked to the increased risk of both type two diabetes and CVD, and is characterised by central obesity, hypertension and unbalanced glucose and insulin metabolism.

The study, which was started in 1981, has 14 years of mortality follow-up and shows that volunteers in the highest wholegrain intake group, eating three or more servings a day, were statistically half as likely as the others to develop MetS.

Nadine Sayhoun, lead author of the Maryland study, told NutraIngredients.com: "Our results do confirm that the association between whole grains and metabolic syndrome can still be seen among an older population who may have different metabolic characteristics than a younger population."

It is believed that wholegrains have a positive effect on total blood cholesterol, and thereby improve lipid profiles.

The EU has vowed to halt the rise of MetS among member state populations. About €16 million was recently invested in the Healthgrain Integrated Project, which aims to investigate the effects of bioactive compounds in wheat and rye on metabolism.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=65047-wholegrain-cvd>

Miracle fruit tablet turns sour taste to sweet

Date

17/01/2006

Article Text

A new invention from Japan could change the way people experience taste, Food Business Review has reported.

Scientists have tried for years to emulate sweetness, producing substances like aspartame, saccharine and sucralose. Now one lowly horticulturalist has found a way to harness nature to transform the taste of food.

Mitsuharu Shimamura has developed a pill based on a fruit which turns sour things sweet. It is the first tablet of its kind to be made out of 'miracle fruit' – a berry grown in West Africa which contains a sweet tasting protein called 'miraculin'.

Mr Shimamura said: "One pink-coloured tablet is made of three miracle fruit berries. When people eat or lick the fruit's red berries, any sour thing they eat or drink a minute later tastes sweet for about two hours."

He claimed that the tablet's proteins latch onto the taste receptors which respond to sweet and sour sensations. After taking the tablet, an individual eating something sour will instead experience a sweet sensation.

Miracle fruit is a plant which can only be grown in hotter climates. When eaten, it can make sour things taste sweet for up to an hour.

No further information.

New products from Tate & Lyle

Date

17/01/2006

Article Text

Sugar maker Tate & Lyle is to launch two new products at the Bonn confectionery conference.

The manufacturer said that its Merisorb sorbitol powder has been developed with sugar-free chewing gum in mind. Tate & Lyle claims that the powder helps produce "good hard tablets" whilst maintaining an "optimum texture".

A new dextrose designed for tableting will also be shown at the conference. The manufacturer claims that the dextrose will make tablets easier to compress without needing to mix in more ingredients.

"Our consumer research has shown that there is huge and growing demand for lower calorie and reduced sugar products without compromising taste or texture," said European marketing director Rachel Moffatt.

"Products such as Splenda Sucralose offer manufacturers great opportunities here, but also the new Merisorb sorbitol powder, which brings competition to the sugar-free gum market. Our new dextrose application offers manufacturers the opportunity to simplify their production process and thereby make further cost savings."

The conference will take place on Tuesday January 31st in Bonn, Germany.

No further information.

EFSA endorses antimicrobials for cleaning chickens

Date

17/01/2006

Article Text

In a shift of policy, the European Food Standards Agency (EFSA) announced yesterday that it would OK the use of four antimicrobial chemicals for use in meat processing plants.

In the past food regulators have been reluctant to authorise the use of antimicrobials, often believed to mask unhygienic slaughter or process practices.

Against this tradition the EFSA has now approved trisodium phosphate, acidified sodium chlorite, chlorine dioxide and peroxyacid solutions to clean chicken carcasses.

An EFSA spokesperson stated: "With the adoption of the hygiene package and the introduction of the hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) principles in the entire food chain, establishments are obliged to improve their hygiene and processing procedures."

"Under such circumstances the use of antimicrobial substances on food of animal origin can be reconsidered." For more information go to <http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65144-antimicrobials-efsa-chicken>

New flavanol-rich cocoa products could benefit heart health

Date

17/01/2006

Article Text

Cocoa can 'directly' improve blood vessel relaxation, according to research conducted by Mars and the University of California.

According to the study flavanols, also found in red wine and some fruits, cause muscle to relax, in the process dilating the blood vessels and increasing blood flow.

In the tests volunteers were given a sample cocoa drink with either a high or low concentration of cocoa flavanols. Only those who consumed the high concentration product exhibited blood vessel relaxation.

Harvard Medical School's Norman Hollenberg, who co-produced the report, said: "Pinpointing specific nutrients responsible for the observed cardiovascular effects, as we are seeing here, opens up new possibilities for the development of dietary interventions for cardiovascular disease."

However, experts have been keen to stress that not all chocolate products possess the same benefits.

Professor Ian MacDonald of Nottingham University told NutraIngredients.com that the development of a low-fat, low-energy drink rich in flavanols would be the most sensible way to take advantage of the discovery.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=65154-mars-cocoa-flavanols-heart>

Beneficial soy drink could come to UK

Date

18/01/2006

Article Text

A new 100 per cent soy yoghurt could be arriving on these shores soon, if Danone Group's Senja brand proves to be a success in France.

Containing the equivalent of 15 per cent of a person's recommended daily calcium intake, the Senja yoghurts will consist of four different flavours; pineapple and passion fruit, kiwi and apple, red fruits, and chocolate dessert.

In addition to their high calcium content, the yoghurts are also an ideal alternative for health-conscious consumers in that they contain no cholesterol, while their soy content will aid the digestion process.

A study by AC Nielsen found that demand in France for completely soy-based products grew by 66 per cent between 2002 and 2004, while Danone's own research found that one in three French consumers has tried soy products before.

Danone also stated that it would be aiming the Senja yoghurts primarily at women, who it believes are more likely to consume soy products than men are.

Shoppers 'must help save domestic produce'

Date

18/01/2006

Summary Text

Shoppers are being urged to "ask for British" when buying from supermarkets to ensure the survival of domestic food producers.

Article Text

Shoppers are being urged to "ask for British" when buying from supermarkets to ensure the survival of domestic food producers.

Vice president of National Farmers Union Cymru, Dai Davies, told the annual conference shoppers must be mobilised or domestic produce would be squeezed off the shelves to be replaced with low cost imports.

And he urged supermarkets to cooperate with farmers.

"Thanks to the new Single Farm Payment system farmers have been given a certain freedom from retailers, we don't have to produce food if it doesn't pay," he stated.

"Farmers are businessmen and if supermarkets want our quality produce then they must tell us, we can then make rational business decisions about our future.

"If the message comes through clear that supermarkets are not prepared to pay premium rates for the food we produce then we will look at changing direction."

The conference was also addressed by Chris Blundell from Morrisons supermarket, who stressed his company's ongoing commitment to regionally produced foods.

New bean mix from Beacon Foods

Date

18/01/2006

Article Text

Beacon-based Beacon Foods has announced the arrival of a new range of exotic bean products.

Beacon's research and development team has been experimenting with black-eyed beans, borlotti, butterbeans, kidney beans, canellini beans and chickpeas to form new combinations and bespoke recipes.

Beacon Foods' managing director, Edward Gough, said: "We are encouraged by the positive feedback that we have received to our bean mixes and are happy to work with customers to develop new products to their specification."

One particularly popular mix contains a combination of borlotti and black-eyed beans with sweetcorn kernels, chilli jam and sundried tomato paste to make a ciabatta or wrap filling.

Established in 1993, Beacon Foods is one of the industry's leading food ingredient suppliers with a range of over 500 different vegetable and fruit products.

No further information.

UK malt accreditation scheme officially recognised

Date

18/01/2006

Article Text

Assured UK Malt (AUKM), a scheme that requires the UK's malt manufacturers to follow hygienic food safety practices, has itself received accreditation from the International Accreditation Forum.

The recognition will help to assure purchasers of the UK's malt that their goods are coming from safe supplies.

"This positive step forward comes at a difficult time for the industry in which issues include increasing energy costs, additional capacity coming online in an already oversupplied industry, particularly in Russia, and bilateral trade agreements that put UK maltsters at a disadvantage," said Euan MacPherson, chairman of the Maltsters Association of Great Britain.

The AUKM standard, which demands that all barley is traceable from farm to primary storage area and from stored bulk to final malt delivery, will be in demand as the EU's new traceability legislation came into effect on January 1st.

"Traceability has become very important in the EU," an AUKM spokesperson told FoodProductionDaily.com.

"There are other schemes for assuring grain, so we decided to create the scheme for assuring malt as the next step to help our customers."

Currently about 25,000 farms are registered in the UK under the AUKM standard.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65177-malt-brewers-grain>

Amcor announces plans for biodegradable packaging

Date

18/01/2006

Article Text

Amcor and Plantic Technologies have joined forces to take advantage of the growing industry demand for biodegradable food packaging.

The project, which will see Amcor's state-of-the-art forensic capabilities coupled with Plantic's expertise in biodegradable product technology, aims to create flexible, biodegradable confectionary packaging within the next two years.

The companies stated that the new plastic could have "the potential to change the mainstream confectionery packaging market and provide manufacturers and retailers with a cost effective, functional and environmentally sustainable packaging solution".

The product development is a response both to customer demand for biodegradable packaging and the popularity of environmentally friendly goods among consumers.

Current forecasts predict the global market for biodegradable plastics to grow by up to 20 per cent in the coming year.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65153-amcor-natureworks-biodegradable>

New texture analyser measures packaging strength

Date

18/01/2006

Article Text

A texture analyser usually used for measuring the quality of thin foods has been upgraded to test the strength of packaging.

The TA.Xtplus from Stable Micro Systems, which is deployed to gauge the structural strength of products such as leaf gelatine and rice paper, has been fitted with a new attachment allowing users to test the properties of packaging materials such as plastic film and foil.

A spokesperson for Stable Micro Systems said: "The film support rig was initially developed in response to fast growth and increased competition in the breath freshening strip sector."

"Its versatility, however, allows wide application in a number of different markets."

The company added that ultimately the device would help manufacturers "to optimise product structure and formulation".

No further information.

Global Beverages announces Kool new product

Date

19/01/2006

Article Text

Global Beverages has announced the arrival of the world's first sugar free milk-based carbonated drink.

The Kool Cow range is aimed at kids who hate milk but love soda, and is geared towards providing them with traditional dairy nutrition in a new format.

As a response to rising worries over levels of obesity in the US and the UK, the Kool Cow beverages are made from fat free skimmed milk powder and are fortified with various vitamins.

The drinks are available either in strawberry or peach-mango flavours, and are packaged either in family-sized six packs (8.5 oz cans) or single bottles of 16.9 oz, with a two year lifespan.

A Global Beverages spokesperson said that the firm "is poised to lead this new hybrid beverage category".

No further information.

New cheese flavouring taps into consumer trend

Date

19/01/2006

Article Text

Danisco has announced the launch of a new flavouring product for soft cheeses.

Choozit GCI 23, a new *Geotrichum candidum*, creates a soft fruity flavour when added to cheese, fitting with the growing consumer trend in Europe for lighter tasting dairy.

Choozit can be used in products ranging from camembert to fetta, and does not develop any bitterness or acidity as it offers high stability during the ripening process.

Danisco's speciality products have helped it towards a strong organic growth. Its special product lines reported a two per cent growth in European sales in the last quarter and a staggering 40 per cent in the Asia-Pacific region.

According to a report by Frost & Sullivan, the use of new flavourings will be an essential shaping force for the dairy market in the coming years.

For more information go to <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=65211-danisco-cheese-enzyme>

Watch out for dry rot, warn potato experts

Date

19/01/2006

Article Text

Potato bosses have urged farmers to be vigilant in the face of a dry rot epidemic.

The British Potato Council (BPC) has said that growers need to be on the lookout for new signs of the disease as they grade-out stocks.

As such the BPC has created a guide to help farmers identify the signs of dry rot and to instruct them on precautions that can minimise the threat of the disease developing.

"Dry rot is the most significant fungal rot of potatoes in Great Britain and affects around one per cent of tubers annually," said Jeff Peters, BPC plant pathologist at Sutton Bridge.

"Seed suppliers should be assessing the likelihood of rot developing in their stocks, especially susceptible varieties, such as Hermes, Estima and Maris Piper."

"Ware growers should consider the risk of rot when they source their seed," he added.

No further information

EU apple import licensing sparks controversy

Date

19/01/2006

Article Text

The decision by a European Commission committee to implement import licenses for all apples from external countries into the EU has sparked fears among several suppliers.

The licensing law, which comes into effect from February 1st, is aimed at monitoring apple import volumes in the UK, after problems with slow or inaccurate reporting in some countries last year.

Philippe Binard, delegate-general of European trade association Freshfel, said: "The introduction of import licences goes against our principle of free trade."

He added: "We believe import licences should only be a temporary measure and that it should not set a precedent."

Suppliers from the New Zealand sector in particular have objected to the legislation, saying that a large amount of information is already available to importers.

To get a licence suppliers must apply to the Rural Payments Agency in the UK on a shipment by shipment basis.

Licences are billed at €15 a tonne, although this is reimbursed once the license has expired.

No further information.

Food manufacturers outsourcing logistics to cut costs

Date

19/01/2006

Article Text

Europe's food producers are increasingly bringing in third part-logistics (3PL) providers in an effort to cut costs, according to new research from Datamonitor.

3PL firms manage supply chain logistics so that food processors can concentrate on in-plant operations.

Chris Morgan, Datamonitor logistics analyst, told FoodProductionDaily.com: "The driver for all industries looking to outsource the movement of their goods is the need to reduce costs in order to increase profitability.

"Employing an expert to maintain various stages of its logistical supply chain allows a company to focus on its core competencies and 'stick to the knitting'."

He warned, however, that drafting in 3PL services could result in typical outsourcing problems, such as decreased control over the supply chain.

According to Datamonitor, the overall logistics spend in the European market is set to increase by £10 billion by 2010.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65203-datamonitor-logistics-pl>

Dairy industry to push school milk

Date

19/01/2006

Summary Text

The dairy industry has committed to cooperating with the government to improve the effectiveness of milk subsidies for schools.

Article Text

The dairy industry has committed to cooperating with the government to improve the effectiveness of milk subsidies for schools.

Dairy UK, which represents the interests of all sectors of the dairy industry, called a meeting of industry groups to discuss its campaign to retain the subsidy.

A government commissioned report recently advised the scrapping of the subsidy, but the government announced it would not follow the suggestion.

The dairy industry has pledged not to rest on its laurels and participants at the Dairy UK summit, including the National Farmers' Union, Milk Development Council and individual dairy companies, agreed that there was potential to improve the effectiveness of the scheme, which sees a subsidy paid to 12,000 primary schools.

Edmund Proffitt of Dairy UK, said: "We are all committed to ensuring maximum efficiency in the use of these subsidies. The government's decision to retain the subsidy for primary is most welcome and a victory for common sense as it highly valued by parents, teachers and schools."

Mr Proffitt also called for the reinstatement of the discretionary subsidy for secondary school pupils.

"Re-introducing the subsidy for cheese and milk in secondary schools and for catering, provides a great opportunity for the industry to assist the government in achieving its goals of delivering improved school lunch standards and enhanced child nutrition," he said.

Israeli firm launches beneficial oat extract

Date

20/01/2006

Article Text

Frutarom, an Israeli ingredients supplier, has announced that it has developed a wild green oat extract that could help improve mental health.

The wild green oat has been traditionally used to help relieve depression and anxiety, although this is the first time it will have been mass-produced and packaged commercially.

The herb is thought to work by activating the brain's serotonin receptors, which control mood.

Ram Snir, vice president of natural products, said: "We have gone right back to the variety of the plant so future results will be related to a specific variety, which is exclusively patented by us."

A spokesman from the firm said that Frutarom was looking to move further into the mental health functional foods market, which it believes is rapidly expanding with large consumer demand.

Frutarom is currently awaiting the results of clinical trials to determine the oat's effect on the human brain more precisely before the product is fully launched, although this is expected to go a head towards the end of 2006.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65236-frutarom-wild-green-oat-mental-health>

Organic seminar encourages fresh thinking

Date

20/01/2006

Article Text

The HDRA has announced a one-day seminar entitled Fresh Thinking in the Organic Vegetable Market.

The meeting, which will take place on February 28th in Warwickshire, is to offer delegates the chance to discuss the latest developments in the organic marketplace and to hear the latest findings from the HDRA's recent Organic Vegetable Market Study.

The seminar will feature various presentations and workshops on the current organic industry.

HDRA researcher Natalie Green said: "This seminar aims to provide an accessible forum for sharing the results of new research and resources in the organic vegetable market.

"This is vital for everyone who wants to meet market demands, whilst still making a profit, in the current price climate."

She added: "The predictions of a shortage of suitable land for growing organic vegetables and dramatic increases in direct sales make this event especially important."

For more information go to <http://www.organicveg.org.uk>

New floor coating to aid manufacturing process

Date

20/01/2006

Article Text

A new concrete flooring from Rust-Oleum has been designed to minimise temperature fluctuations in food processing plants and reduce bacterial threats.

The new ThermaKrete urathene product seamlessly expands and contracts to withstand temperature variations of between -23 and +116 degrees Centigrade, and can withstand caustic washdowns, heavy traffic, abrasion, chemicals and standing water contamination.

Rust-Oleum said: "The smooth, long-lasting flooring surface provided by the Rust-Oleum ThermaKrete coating ensures the safety of facility employees.

"It also provides durability for heavy traffic, resists bacteria contamination and decreases maintenance costs."

The coating kits, which are available in either 3/16" or 1/4" thick versions, cure in 72 hours and require no primers or sealers.

The company claims that routine cleaning is the only necessity, making ThermaKrete a cost-effective hygienic solution for food manufacturing plants.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65246-concrete-floor-temperature>

Argentinean fruit exports booming

Date

20/01/2006

Article Text

Last year Argentina exported more fruits and soft fruits than ever before, according to figures released by the food and health authority Senasa.

The UK was its biggest market for raspberries, receiving 39 tonnes of a total 105 tonnes exported between January and November 2005.

The UK was also the second largest buyer of blueberries, taking 353 tonnes.

In particular Argentina's soft fruit exports blossomed, values increasing by 39.5 per cent over the 11 month period to \$31.4 million.

For fruit exports overall, Argentina's sendings increased by 24 per cent in volume and 34 per cent in value.

No further information

Scientists plan to breed 'fleshier' fish

Date

20/01/2006

Article Text

A team of US scientists have found genes in rainbow trout that could be used to breed fleshier fish.

Molecular biologists at the National Centre for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture (NCCCWA) pinpointed the gene responsible for growth and believe this could be exploited to breed fish with increased edible meat mass.

Fish Update reports that the team identified four new genes that are involved in muscle growth and development.

Following tests, they concluded the genes interact with the function involved in muscle development and this results in an increase in cell production.

"Affecting the balance of these processes presents an opportunity to dictate an increase in the number of muscle cells, which would result in more edible flesh on the fish," explained team member Scott Gahr.

"One of our goals is to improve growth characteristics for the rainbow trout farmer through genetic selection, and these genes are clearly involved in muscle growth and development," added fellow researcher Caird Rexroad.

No further information.

Wine drinkers 'opt for healthier eating'

Date

20/01/2006

Article Text

A new Danish study has found that wine quoffers enjoy a healthier, fresher diet than their beer swilling counterparts, who are more likely to munch ready meals and junk foods.

Scientists at the National Institute of Public Health in Copenhagen studied 3.5 million supermarket transactions and found that wine buyers bought more olives, fruit, vegetables, low fat cheeses and oils.

By contrast the study published in the British Medical Journal found that hungry beer drinkers select more ready meals, soft drinks, sugar, chips, sausages and butter.

The team led by Professor Morten Groenbaek suggested that the food choices of wine drinkers could explain why it has a beneficial impact on human health.

On the flip side popular stereotypes linking lager drinking with kebabs and fast food appear to have been partly born out by the research.

Although the survey was of Danish consumers over a six-month period studies in the US and France have produced similar results, the authors said.

New screw cap increases beverage convenience

Date

23/01/2006

Article Text

A new aseptic screw cap has been developed, aimed at increasing ease of opening drinks products.

SIG Combibloc announced that the new three-part cap was geared towards the growing consumer demand for convenience.

The CombiSwift cap consists of a flange with an integrated cutting ring to penetrate pre-punched packaging and a cap, of interior diameter 18mm, and can be used with liquid milk products as well as fruit juices and other non-carbonated drinks.

The company said: "A single twist is all it takes for the cutting ring to cut through the extremely thin aluminium and polyethylene layers easily and precisely.

"This handling is a decisive advantage for consumers.

"Comprehensive handling tests and consumer studies have confirmed the easy and convenient opening procedure resulting from the fact that the carton layer is already punched and only the thin aluminium and polyethylene layers need to be punched through."

Firms already using SIG's closures can upgrade their existing packages to apply the CombiSwift at a low price, the company said.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65284-sig-combibloc-screw-cap-aseptic>

American firm jumps on Romanian pork market

Date

23/01/2006

Article Text

Smithfield Foods, the world's largest hog producer and pork processor, has announced that it will invest about €703 million to develop Romania's blossoming pork industry.

Pork consumption in Romania has continued to grow at a rate of around ten per cent year-on-year as wages increase and the meat becomes affordable to a wider demographic.

Achim Irimescu, Romania's agricultural representative to the EU, expressed hope that the move would help satisfy the growing demand for pork.

He pointed out that in 2004 Romania imported 50 per cent of its nationally consumed pork from abroad, and that from seven million pigs in the country only one million are bred for commercial purposes.

Smithfield's plans to develop a chain of farms specifically orientated to producing pork centre around three counties in western Romania – Arad, Timis and Bihor.

The American firm also owns subsidiaries in France, Poland and the UK, and enjoys annual sales in excess of \$11 billion.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65271-smithfield-foods-pork-meat>

Salt 'more dangerous for certain ethnic groups'

Date

23/01/2006

Article Text

The Cash (Consensus Action on Salt and Health) group is set to focus on the UK's Afro-Caribbean population for the upcoming Salt Awareness Week.

The FSA (Food Standards Agency) has already awarded Cash with a grant to provide one-to-one salt education sessions with members of the Afro-Caribbean community.

According to a report produced by the group, 40 per cent of Afro-Caribbeans suffer from high blood pressure, compared to 33 per cent of the rest of the UK. Asians were also found to be more at risk from salt-related illnesses.

Excessive salt consumption has been linked to strokes, heart disease and kidney disease.

Although salt sales in the UK have fallen over the past five years, with table and cooking salt in particular witnessing a loss of 15 and 17 per cent respectively in revenue, UK salt

consumption is still too high, at about 11g per day on average, compared to the FSA's recommended 6g a day.

Salt Awareness Week runs from January 29th to February 4th, and will see health professionals throughout the country promoting educational events and displays.

For more information go to

<http://www.countmeincalendar.info/countme/CMICampaigns.nsf/UNIDs/1D4C935D972D30ED85256D6E00388304>

Israeli firm seeks new ingredients portfolio

Date

23/01/2006

Article Text

Israeli minerals specialist Gadot Biochemicals is looking to expand its range of ingredients, seeking an acquisition either in Europe or the US to drive forward its business.

While Chinese firms continue to dominate the minerals industry, accounting for somewhere near 50 per cent of the international market, Gadot is looking to protect its strong growth by offering additional nutritional ingredients.

Ronny Hacham, vice president of business development at Gadot, said: "We're focusing on five or six groups of ingredients such as antioxidants or fibres, although minerals that we don't currently offer like selenium or iron will be the highest priority."

He added: "Money is not a problem for the sizes we're looking for."

Gadot has outlined a 15-20 per cent sales boost expectation from the new ingredient lines.

The firm, which claims to be America's major calcium supplier, is also working on added value calcium salts, with two patented new products expected to be launched in the coming weeks.

Both new products are aimed at beverage makers looking to add low-solubility calcium salts to certain drinks such as syrup-based beverages and soymilks.

For more information go to <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=65270-gadot-calcium-mineral>

UK growers lose out on EU funding

Date

23/01/2006

Article Text

The UK's growers are to receive no funding from the EU's total food development budget of €25.5 million, as the commission distributes grants to support the promotion of agricultural products.

The only moneys directed towards the UK will be spent on meat marketing.

Producers spanning 14 member states and 25 separate projects are to receive financial support from the project. Beneficiaries include Cyprus potatoes, which will receive a €1.4 million grant, and Belgian organics and chicory which will share €1 million.

Italian horticulture organisation CSO received one of the biggest allocations - €2 million – to promote fruit consumption among the young and adolescent as part of a campaign dubbed 'Fruit is child's play'.

"This is a positive result which will allow Italy to carry out promotion abroad to contribute to boosting fruit consumption particularly among the young," said CSO director Valtiero Mazzotti.

No further information.

Beef producers get £5.5m boost

Date

23/01/2006

Article Text

Beef producers have been given another lift just days after the 30-month ban was lifted.

From Friday last week, British exporters were once again able to sell cattle over the age of 30 months for human consumption.

The ban had been in place for nine years in a bid to prevent the spread of BSE or mad cows' disease.

The English Beef and Lamb Executive is keen to take advantage of this new opportunity and has launched a £5.5 million advertising campaign.

"With the ending of OTM we have the opportunity to further increase awareness of the Quality Standard Mark, the industry's brand, sell Quality Standard beef mince on to the market and let people make positive choices about what they buy," said Andrew Garvey head of marketing for EBLEX.

"The ending of the export ban will also offer a big boost to our export opportunities to countries which love more mature beef cuts."

Part of the money will go on a new television campaign featuring cartoon versions of former England cricketers Alan Lamb and Ian "Beefy" Botham.

No further information.

Apples 'can protect the brain'

Date

24/01/2006

Article Text

Apples could protect brain cells against the damage that leads to memory loss and contributes to Alzheimer's disease, a new study has claimed.

Researchers from the University of Massachusetts found that the anti-oxidant properties found in apples and apple juice could help prevent oxidative damage to brain cells and help people stay mentally sharper in old age.

Lead author of the study, Professor Thomas B Shea, said: "This new study suggests that eating and drinking apples and apple juice, in conjunction with a balanced diet, can protect the brain from the effects of oxidative stress - and that we should eat such antioxidant-rich foods."

In tests on mice Professor Shea and his colleagues looked at the effect of diet on adult and aging mice. One group was given a standard diet while one group ate a poor diet and a third group was given a poor diet supplemented with apple juice concentrate in drinking water.

The researchers found the adult mice were not affected by the poor diet while brains of the older mice were affected by a lack of nutrients.

To test the extent of damage to the memory of the mice, they were given a maze test. The mice who were given the diet supplemented with apple juice performed better and suffered less brain cell damage than the mice in the two other groups.

No further information.

New health drink expands distribution radius

Date

24/01/2006

Article Text

Provexis, the health and medical foods developer, has said that its heart health juice drink Sirco is to be stocked in 300 further stores, according to Liverpool's Daily Post.

The drink, which contains the patented Fruitflow technology developed by Provexis to help ordinary people reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes, will now be on sale in 884 stores across the UK by the end of the month.

"We are delighted to have received this substantial increased commitment from the third major retailer prior to the date of its planned launch," said chief executive Dr Stephen Franklin.

"Our focused media campaign to consumers was scheduled to commence on January 21st and our sales support activities have been in effect since January 10th."

Sirco is currently available in 211 Sainsbury's stores across the nation and debuted at 123 Waitrose stores as of yesterday.

The drink carries an approval from Heart UK on its label, offering that it can "help maintain a healthy heart" and that it can also "benefit circulation".

No further information.

Bakery apprenticeship requirements reviewed

Date

24/01/2006

Article Text

The UK has reorganised rules regarding bakery apprenticeships in an attempt to attract more young people into the profession.

According to a survey published in 2004, a quarter of bakeries found it difficult to fill vacancies.

Under the new revised guidelines for apprenticeships, learners will spend less time in the classroom and more time on the practical side of the course.

Improve, the firm behind the changes, hopes to attract 35 per cent more applicants to its one-year apprenticeship scheme and to push up the number of youngster attempting the two-year course.

"We have consulted employers and made changes to the apprenticeships in keeping with their recommendations," said Teresa Brookes, learning frameworks manager for Improve.

"As in most food-and-drink sectors, bakery suffers from hard-to-fill vacancies, skills gaps and an aging workforce, with the majority of employees aged over 35.

"We see these revised apprenticeships as the ideal vehicle to bring more young people into the industry to help address these problems."

The UK's food and drink manufacturing industry currently employs between 500,000 and 900,000 staff, or about 1.6 per cent of the UK's total workforce.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65306-improve-bakery-training>

Beetroot tipped as next superfood

Date

24/01/2006

Article Text

Beetroot is set to become Britain's next superfood craze, following in the wake of blueberries and broccoli, according to sales statistics from Tesco.

The supermarket chain announced that beetroot sales have doubled over the past year as younger customers increasingly awaken to its trendy status and health-giving properties.

The vegetable's high fibre content is thought to help lower blood cholesterol levels, and may be helpful in treating serious illnesses.

Fiona Hunter, a professional dietician, said: "Cooked beetroot is also a great source of folate which some studies suggest may help to protect against high blood pressure, Alzheimers and dementia."

Tesco has said it is sourcing more beetroots to meet the demand, while growers who have traditionally focused on other crops have begun to plant it to cash in on the trend.

Tesco beetroot supply selector Sam Pearl said: "Beetroot was once only popular with the older generation, but now more young people are recognising it for its versatility, great taste and health benefits."

No further information.

PepsiCo moves into functional drinks market

Date

24/01/2006

Article Text

US-based soft drinks giant PepsiCo has purchased the functional drinks maker Ardea for an undisclosed sum.

It now plans to help market Ardea's Nutrisoda brand across North America using its bottling branch PepsiAmericas.

Nutrisoda, originally marketed by Ardea as "a health spa in a can", contains a variety of beneficial additives including amino acids, vitamins, minerals and herbs.

"The Nutrisoda brand complements our growing portfolio of healthier beverages, providing a unique and fashionable beverage alternative," said PepsiAmericas chief executive Robert Pohlad.

He said that the brand "has tremendous potential in the fast-growing functional beverage category".

According to Datamonitor, the US functional food and drink market was worth about \$19 billion in 2004.

The US is thought to be a more receptive market for additive-based health drinks than the UK, with about 55 per cent of Americans saying they trusted added ingredients compared to 27 per cent of Britons.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65298-pepsico-ardea-functional-drinks>

Yoghurt used to block HIV

Date

24/01/2006

Article Text

Scientists have opened up the potential for a new area of probiotic dairy development, with the discovery of live bacteria in certain yoghurts that can be used as medicine to prevent the onset of HIV.

Research teams from the US and Europe genetically modified the *Lactococcus lactis* bacteria so that it produced cyanovirin, a drug that has been proven to block HIV infection in monkeys.

Lactococcus lactis is also used in the manufacture of cheeses and dairy products, opening up the pathway for medicinal versions of the products.

Bharat Ramnatram, one of the team's researchers, did however point out that in the meantime it could be presented purely in drug form.

He accepted that more research would need to be done, specifically to examine whether the bacteria still functioned correctly after modification and whether it would release enough cyanovirin to halt HIV infection, before the drug could be released publicly.

The World Health Organisation estimated that in 2005, 40 million adults and children were living with HIV globally, with another 4.9 million estimated new infections taking place throughout the year.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65309-hiv-probiotic-dairy-scientists>

New award recognises salmon innovation

Date

25/01/2006

Article Text

A new award is to recognise the growing level of innovation within the salmon farming industry.

The Scottish Salmon Farmer Awards, launched by the Crown Estate, will have six categories aimed at focusing and promoting the best salmon farmers in the region.

The awards are free to enter and applicants for best kept farm, best environmental contribution, best community support and best entrepreneurial initiative are being asked to put their names forward as soon as possible.

"Salmon farming has moved forward a great deal in recent years, and much of the best practice and innovation has been developed here in Scotland," said Ian Pritchard, head of Scottish marine estate

"Scottish salmon still retains its reputation as a top-quality product and we hope the awards will help to celebrate this success," he added.

The shortlist of candidates is expected to be announced at the Aquaculture Today 2006 gala dinner in March and the winners of the award will be revealed at a ceremony in Inverness in June.

For more information go to

http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/3723/Awards_scheme_launched_for_salmon_farmers.html

Bottled water brand relaunched

Date

25/01/2006

Article Text

Nestle is relaunching the Vittel range of bottled waters in the UK as part of a pan-European rebirth for the brand.

Due to hit the shelves in the spring, Nestle has appointed a French design company to take control of the revitalisation, according to Brand Republic.

The industry magazine also said that the relaunch of Vittel is proof that the bulk of Nestle Waters' promotional budget is not going on the debut of the long awaited Apparel brand in the UK.

Vittel is finding the water market increasingly competitive with biggest rivals Danone commanding four of the top ten brands (including Evian and Volvic) and Britvic's Drench a new player on the market, aimed at the 18-24 year old market.

Brand Republic reports that the new Vittel relaunch, which is set for May 2006, will run across the entire product line, including the flavoured varieties.

Earlier this week, Volvic announced its involvement in a government fitness initiative, suggesting the brand was targeting a wider audience.

No further information.

Fish 'integral' to childrens' nutrition

Date

25/01/2006

Article Text

Nurseries and child minders in Scotland have been told that fish is an integral part of the diet of Scotland's under-fives.

Deputy education minister Robert Brown has prioritised fish in his new Nutritional Guidance for Early Years report, which provides nutritional information and advice on meals and snacks.

His report emphasises in particular the need for oil-rich fish such as sardines, herring and salmon to be served to under-fives at least once a week, as they are a valuable source of vitamin D as well as valuable, protective fatty acids.

Mr Brown explained: "Healthy eating is vital for all children and they're never too young to develop a taste for healthy options.

"If we can encourage them to choose healthy options from an early age, then they're more likely to stick with these as they grow up."

The report also called for young children to be served at least once a week with fresh or frozen unprocessed fish, or tinned tuna.

It said that more caution should be shown in serving children processed fish products like fish fingers, but stressed that some manufacturers of such products were showing a dedication to lowering their high salt content.

No further information.

Exotic fruit demand set to boom in 2006

Date

25/01/2006

Article Text

This could be the year of exotic fruit, according to a new report by trend research group the Centre for Culinary Development (CCD).

Also tipped for great things are white tea and small bitesize nibbles, as people opt for more 'fashionable' and health-conscious foods.

Thought to be driving the trends are the current UK consumer obsession with healthy eating and the mainstreaming of ethnic cuisine lines.

Other exotic foodstuffs set to achieve 'superfruit' status are guava, lychee, pomelo, yuzu, tamarind and berries such as acai, guarana and goji. All are thought to increase mood and energy levels.

"Exotic fruits, which combine the perceived authenticity and flavour intensity benefits of ethnic foods with the health and quality benefits of premium fruit, are set to grow in future years, driven by consumers' desire for greater healthiness, authenticity and flavour," Datamonitor's John Band told FoodNavigatorUSA.

In Europe the increasing popularity of exotic fruit has helped contribute to the overall 26 per cent growth of the organic food industry between 2001 and 2004, according to Datamonitor.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=65205-ccd-exotic-fruits-white-tea>

Healthy eating craze causes dilemma for producers

Date

25/01/2006

Article Text

Food producers are finding themselves in a quandary in the face of increasing consumer demand for healthy and nutritional foods, according to a new report from JPMorgan.

Many are unable to decide whether to swim against the tide with high-margin, lower quality 'unhealthy' products or ride the trend by delivering more nutritional foods at a lower margin, the report found.

Arnaud Langois, author of the study, said: "Moving down the value chain or seeing a reduction of its operating margin is hardly ever seen as an attractive option for industry players (except when growth prospects are too good to ignore)."

JPMorgan's survey found that the commonest three ways to tackle the problem were to price differentiated products across a range, lowering the cost of revamped or reformulated lines, and reducing package size while lowering price slightly.

Companies are also investing increasing amounts of research and development (R&D) money into proving that their products warrant a health claim or label, JPMorgan reported.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65356-jpmorgan-obesity-health-food>

Scots class haggis as junk food

Date

25/01/2006

Article Text

Haggis, the traditional Scottish delicacy, has been grouped along with chicken nuggets and turkey twizzlers as junk food in a new government report.

The paper, entitled Nutritional Guidance for Early Years, ruled that infants should only be given the meat once a week due to its high salt and fat content.

The guidelines are part of a wider movement to improve the health of schoolchildren in Scotland. Currently Scotland boasts one of the worst health records in the developed world, with men expected to live to just 69.

"We welcome the Scottish executive's healthy eating initiative," said Ronnie Hill, director of children's services regulation for the care commission.

He added: "We believe the new guidelines will help all those involved in providing day care for children to improve the quality of food that is on offer."

The government has defended its decision to class haggis as unhealthy food, in the face of protests from purveyors of the meat.

"Haggis is tasty but due to fairly high salt and fat content, young children should only indulge in moderation," a Scottish executive spokeswoman said.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65347-scotland-ingredients-healthy>

McDonald's healthy image change working

Date

26/01/2006

Article Text

McDonalds' attempts to rebrand itself as a healthy deli-style food outlet appear to be paying off, with the fast food giant announcing a significant increase in both revenues and sales in 2005.

The world's most popular burger chain saw global revenues increase by seven per cent last year, while like-for-like sales rose by 4.2 per cent in the final quarter of 2005.

McDonalds saw the most impressive sales growth in the US, while its European restaurants, which had seen a sharp downturn in custom over the previous few years, also saw sales rise by 2.6 per cent over the year.

Jim Skinner, chief executive of McDonald's, believes that the positive figures are testament to the success of the firm's rebranding efforts.

"Our customers rewarded us by visiting our contemporary, reimaged restaurants more often to enjoy our broad range of quality menu choices along with our convenience and branded affordability," he said.

He added: "We will continue to build on our momentum in this important area of the world by strengthening our connection with customers through improved communication of our product quality, brand relevance and commitment to balanced, active lifestyles."

McDonalds plans to invest \$1.8 billion in a new restaurant drive which will see 800 new outlets open worldwide this year.

No further information.

First dairy entrant into blended cheese market

Date

26/01/2006

Article Text

A leading UK dairy food company is to enter the blended cheese market.

Dairy Crest is planning a new range of blended cheeses under the branding "Over the Moon". The products are expected to be available in Waitrose stores within weeks, reports Food Business Review.

Dairy Crest's range will include standard combinations of Wensleydale and cranberry, white stilton and apricot, and double Gloucester with chive and onion, as well as more adventurous blends such as white stilton and lemon.

"This is a really exciting launch for the dairy industry as it is the first brand to enter this rapidly growing sector of the market," said Richard Tolley, Dairy Crest marketing director.

He added: "In addition to the existing winning combinations, Over the Moon is bringing new flavours into the category, which we hope will satisfy the existing blended cheese enthusiasts and attract new fans."

The Over the Moon packaging also includes serving suggestions and the brand's launch will be accompanied by a nationwide marketing campaign.

No further information.

Food firms offered environmental regulation advice

Date

26/01/2006

Article Text

The food industry can now keep abreast of environmental legislation with the help of a new, free website.

Netregs.gov.uk offers practical advice on environmental requirements as well as flagging up any changes to legislation.

Small businesses can register on the site and are then able to set up a tailored system of email alerts to deliver news on issues affecting them.

For example, the alerts can be organised to carry information only about legislation affecting the drinks industry.

The new site comes after a recent survey by SME Environment revealed that 84 per cent of small businesses in the food and drink sector could not name any environmental legislation, yet 60 per cent though that complying with environmental legislation could help cut operating costs.

For more information go to www.netregs.gov.uk.

Natural fungicide a success in Israel

Date

26/01/2006

Article Text

A naturally occurring fungicide has successfully been used to protect thousands of tonnes of crops in Israel.

Shemer, which was developed by Dr Sami Droby of the Volcani Centre in cooperation with Minrav's Agro-Green company, is currently being used by Israeli farmers to protect their European strawberry exports, an estimated 1,800 tonnes.

Amit Schwartz, marketing manager of Agro-Green, said: "The biofungicide is based on a unique yeast that controls a wide range of pathogenic fungi.

"Shemer has been shown to effectively control the rots that these fungal pathogens cause in stored grapes, strawberries, sweet potatoes and citrus, as well as the ability to control the same ingredients during the ripening period in the field."

He added: "Even the most fragile produce protected by Shemer and shipped by sea reached the shelves in Europe in perfect condition."

Agro-Green announced that Shemer has no negative effect on produce, is affected by no regulatory limitations and allows importers to claim "no chemical treatment" status for their purchased goods.

"Our product replaces chemical fungicides leaving no toxic residues on the fruit; it is compatible with natural enemies and it is a safe alternative to chemical, toxic fungicides used for the control of rot," Mr Schwartz said.

No further information.

Soft drinks firms volunteer to ban kids' advertising

Date

26/01/2006

Article Text

As a gesture of concern towards Europe's growing obesity epidemic, the Union of European Beverages Associations (Unesda) – which counts Coca-Cola and Cadbury Schweppes among its members – has voluntarily banned advertising to under-12s.

Among its pledges were the decisions to supply secondary schools with unbranded vending machines and to withdraw from any "direct commercial activity" in primary schools.

The decision to ban soft drinks advertising on any media where under-12s make up 50 per cent or more of the audience is still under debate.

Stephen Kehoe, chair of the Unesda task force, said: "This is the first time ever that the major beverage producers in Europe have come together to jointly define their commitments related to responsible sales and marketing practices, especially to children and schools."

Although PepsiCola and Coca-Cola already operate a policy of non-advertising to children aged under 12, Unesda wanted to initiate a blanket policy, Mr Kehoe explained.

Children's food and drink products currently constitute €15 billion of the total €700 billion European market.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65387-soft-drinks-obesity-ban>

New venture could transform grain development

Date

26/01/2006

Article Text

A new research programme has been looking to create a single unified crop information system for rice, wheat and maize growers.

The three crops, which together provide 60 per cent of the world's food annually, have been the subject of a collaboration between the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines.

Ultimately the research aims to reduce the timescale for developing new crop varieties and benefit other crops that have not yet received significant research attention.

Robert S. Ziegler, director general of the IRRI, said: "After several years of talking about a common platform for the development of new rice, wheat or maize varieties, we are now ready for real-world implementation.

"Because all three are cereals and so share a range of common characteristics we expect it to reduce the cost of such research."

Masa Iwanaga, director general of the CIMMYT, commented: "The efficient and effective management of information, and vitally important databases, is crucial to the ongoing development of new crop varieties."

Global cereal demand is forecasted to increase to 2,015 million tonnes in the 2005/6 growing season, up by 10 million tonnes on 2004/5's estimates.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65381-corn-wheat-maize>

Lactose free milk developed

Date

27/01/2006

Article Text

A new lactose free "superior milk alternative" is to be launched in the UK by Arla Foods.

The new beverage, the first of its kind, is described as "all the great taste of milk, but contains less than 0.05% of lactose".

Arla claims 15 per cent of the population is lactose intolerant and the product, which is made by putting semi-skimmed cows milk through a filtration process and then adding a lactase enzyme, is targeting these consumers.

Arun Prabhu from Arla Foods commented: "Lactose intolerant sufferers will no longer have to compromise on the food and drink that they consume. With Latofree's lack of

lactose we hope many more people will be able to reap the benefits of drinking a real dairy drink with all the goodness and taste of semi-skimmed milk."

The product announcement comes as an allergy pressure group calls for greater understanding of the needs of food allergy and intolerance sufferers.

Allergy UK states it will use food allergy and intolerance week to draw attention to the seriousness of the complaint.

No further information.

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No further information.

Meat preservative could cure cystic fibrosis

Date

27/01/2006

Article Text

A food preservative used in the curing of meat could be used to develop a treatment for cystic fibrosis sufferers, a new study has said.

Researchers from the University of Cincinnati say the common preservative sodium nitrate could potentially be used to neutralise the bacteria which weakens the lungs of cystic fibrosis patients.

Scientists have not previously been able find anything which has the ability to destroy the bacteria which lives in thick, sticky mucus and clogs the lungs of sufferers, causing chronic damage.

The immune system cannot kill off the bacteria because it is protected by the sticky mucus. This causes the body's white blood cells to dump harmful toxins in the airways of sufferers, which build up until the lungs are eventually destroyed.

However, the researchers say that the same genetic change that makes pseudomonas aeruginosa resistant to antibiotics also leaves it open to attack from the slightly acidified sodium nitrate, which is commonly used to cure meat, sausages and bacon.

Lead researcher Dr Daniel Hassett said: "We believe that we have discovered the Achilles' heel of the formidable mucoid form of Pseudomonas aeruginosa, which could lead to improved treatment for cystic fibrosis airway disease.

"We can essentially say that this organism, which some people thought could never be beaten, can now be destroyed by nothing more exotic than a common food preservative."

No further information.

New pastry dough contains 50 per cent vegetables

Date

27/01/2006

Article Text

An Israeli company has developed a way of making its pastry dough 50 per cent vegetable.

The other half of food manufacturing firm Tivall's dough comprises of water, wheat flour, vegetable oil and spices.

"It revolutionizes the pastry and baked products industry with new possibilities," the firm's chief executive Omri Latan told FoodProductionDaily.com.

"The vegetable dough is an exclusive development of Tivall's research and development laboratories and has been patented in Israel and around the world," he added.

It is hoped that the technology will be able to produce a variety of products, such as puff pastry and yeast dough, all of which will be aimed at consumers who enjoy the texture of pastry but are worried about fat levels.

The dough contains nine per cent fat, and can be used with no added food colourings or preservatives.

Tivall already exports products to major UK supermarket chains, including Tesco and Sainsbury.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65419-tivall-dough-vegetable>

New spray identifies pathogens

Date

27/01/2006

Article Text

A UK-based firm has developed a new spray to identify pathogens in food and drinks.

AgroMicron's Nano Bioluminescence product is designed as a low-cost system that will be able to indicate the presence of a wide range of pathogens, including Salmonella and E-coli.

Using nanotechnology, the spray lights up unwanted organisms visually using a small, luminescent protein to stick to the surface of the target bacterium.

AgroMicron announced: "Not only does this Nano Bioluminescence spray detect contamination in food to help ensure that the goods are ready for consumer consumption it also makes it possible to detect possible bioterrorist attacks."

The product will be geared towards ease of use, and the firm simply advised that products that glow upon opening should be immediately quarantined.

AgroMicron expects to begin marketing the device in the third quarter of 2006.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65424-agromicron-nanotechnology-bioluminescence>

Organic produce 'is no healthier'

Date

27/01/2006

Article Text

Organically grown vegetables have no greater health properties or mineral content than their traditionally grown counterparts, according to a new study by Dutch group Consumentenbond.

The consumer body announced that its research proved that organic vegetables cannot be claimed to have more vitamins, minerals or antioxidants than other goods.

The study, which is scheduled to be published in full early next week, investigated the comparative nutritional content of 15 vegetables, including broccoli, tomatoes and cucumber.

In all cases there was no noticeable discrepancy between the contents of organic and normal vegetables, Consumentenbond announced.

No further information.

Chocolate cookie that eases cholesterol

Date

27/01/2006

Article Text

The latest in the line of functional foods is a chocolate chip cookie that claims to lower cholesterol levels.

Containing soluble fibre and plant sterols, the biscuit carries cholesterol from the body and prevents its absorption, according to maker Right Direction Foods.

According to a study conducted by the firm, patients who ate two of the cookies a day for 30 days showed a significant decrease in cholesterol levels.

Wendy Miller, co-founder of Right Direction Foods, said: "Right Direction cookies are a great first-line option to help lower cholesterol for people with mild to moderate high cholesterol."

Currently 50 per cent of American adults are estimated to suffer from high cholesterol levels.

The cookies are set to be launched in the US this year.

For more information go to <http://www.bakeryandsnacks.com/news/ng.asp?n=65400-right-direction-foods-soluble-fiber-plant-sterols-functional-foods>

New grape punnets provide increased ventilation

Date

30/01/2006

Article Text

A new side-ventilated punnet has been developed by Infia.

The packaging, which has been created for transporting grapes, will be unveiled at the Fruit Logistica exhibition.

"This particular innovation is aimed at UK grape importers," explained Infia UK's Ian Seamark. "Excellent air flow through grapes during transit and in store is of the utmost importance."

Mr Seamark also said the differences in packaging specifications across the UK and mainland Europe were declining.

"UK customers demand quality produce presented and pre-packaged to enhance its appearance, provide protection during transit and create the optimum cost-effective environment or even the most delicate fresh produce," he said.

"As the momentum for global standardisation continues, our ability to introduce innovative designs and meet tight deadlines is a critical part of the service we provide."

No further information.

EC demands new dietary guidelines

Date

30/01/2006

Article Text

The European Commission (EC) has called for Europe-wide dietary guidelines to be introduced, FoodNavigator.com reports.

According to the website, the EC has suggested that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) introduce the dietary recommendations when it meets for a conference in March.

Such guidelines have become increasingly demanded as the food and beverage markets are experiencing a surge in the health food and drinks sectors of the industry.

Around 100 people will be invited to take part in the discussion, it has been announced, including figures from food authorities across the continent.

Any legislation passed would need to be implemented Europe-wide, a responsibility that would fall to the Commission, the EFSA said.

"We are the assessors. The EC will have to examine our results and decide how to implement them," said Alun Jones, EFSA spokesman, to FoodNavigator.com.

The health and wellbeing market is increasing in the UK, with bottled water Aquarius from Coca-Cola soon to get a renewed advertising push on the market.

No further information.

Food industry slashes salt content

Date

30/01/2006

Article Text

The food industry has slashed the salt content of billions of pounds worth of products in a bid to reduce salt consumption in the UK.

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) reports that last year, manufacturers reduced salt levels in an amazing £7.4 billion worth of foods.

In addition £2.4 billion worth of products have been created with lower salt variants.

Martin Paterson, FDF deputy director general said: "The industry recognises its responsibility and is working in partnership with the Food Standards Agency.

"Consumers are reaping the benefits of billions of pounds' worth of lower salt products. These achievements are the result of many years of committed work by industry to reduce levels at a rate acceptable to consumers."

Examples of slashed salt levels include breakfast cereals, which achieved a 33 per cent reduction in sodium over the period 1998-2005.

Soups and sauces also saw a significant level of reduction with the sector achieving its 2003 and 2004 ten per cent reduction targets and pledging the same for 2005.

No further information.

Food allergies 'being ignored'

Date

30/01/2006

Article Text

Charity group Allergy UK has called for greater time and resources to be used helping those who live with food allergies or food intolerance.

From November 25th last year, food companies have been obliged to label all pre-packaged foods that contain any of the 12 main listed allergenic foods as an ingredient, including gluten, fish, crustaceans, egg, peanut, soyabeans, nuts and lactose.

Although manufacturers have become more cautious over allergenic issues and public awareness has grown considerably over the last five years, Allergy UK maintains that not enough is being done to help sufferers.

"Too often symptoms are not taken seriously and sufferers are told that it is 'all in the mind'," the group said.

"Insufficient time for patients in busy GP surgeries, lack of training and knowledge of allergy among healthcare professionals result in sufferers being forced to turn to alternative methods for diagnosis and using expensive clinically unproven tests which in turn result in them following unnecessary diets which could be damaging to their general health."

Currently an estimated four per cent of adults and eight per cent of children suffer from food allergy in the EU.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=65348-allergy-diets-labels>

Animal welfare labelling for food and drink?

Date

30/01/2006

Article Text

The European Commission has put forward a proposal to introduce animal welfare labelling for EU produce, as part of a five-year programme to promote animal welfare.

The move would both help consumers make informed choices about what they eat and place pressure on manufacturers to buy their ingredients from approved sources, the EC said.

Markos Kyprianou, EU commissioner for health and consumer protection, explained: "The protection and welfare of animals is crucial, not least for ethical and moral reasons but also to ensure animal health and the quality of food."

He went on to say: "An EU label for animal welfare would allow for the better promotion of products which have been produced in line with animal welfare requirements, and a differentiation between those obtained with basic mandatory animal welfare standards and those with higher standards."

"It would also compensate to some extent for the competitive pressures faced by EU producers in the increasingly globalised agricultural market, where animal welfare obligations are extremely divergent."

According to an internet survey by the European Commission last year, 43 per cent of EU residents consider animal welfare when buying meat products, with 75 per cent saying they believe their choice of goods will have an effect on animal conditions.

For more information go to

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65453-animal-welfare-labelling-commission>

Extra fruit and veg reduces stroke risk

Date

30/01/2006

Article Text

People who eat more than the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables every day have greater protection from stroke than those who eat less, a study has claimed.

Researchers from the University of London found the more fruit and vegetables people ate, the more they reduced their chance of having a stroke.

They found that people who ate three to five portions of fruit and vegetables every day cut their risk by 11 per cent but those who ate more than five servings reduced their risk by 26 per cent.

The researchers said the high levels of potassium, folate, fibre and antioxidants in fruit and vegetables could all help to boost health, after looking at data from eight studies across Europe, Japan and the US.

Co-author of the study, Professor Graham MacGregor, said the finding was important because it showed that the quantity of fruit and vegetables people should really be eating is more than five a day.

Dr Feng He, who also worked on the study, said eating lots of fruit and vegetables could not just offer protection against stroke, but could cut the risk from other forms of cardiovascular disease and even some cancers.

No further information.

Adventurous cooks demanding exotic herbs

Date

31/01/2006

Article Text

British cooks are smashing their reputation as producers of bland food with record use of spices and herbs.

Tesco reports that kitchens across the country are seeing increasing use of traditional herbs like dill, rosemary and thyme as well as exotic flavours like lemongrass.

Tesco herbs buyer, Tarik Abdel-Hady, explained: "British cooking, once lamented for being plain and simple, is completely changing and is now catching up with the finesse of French and Mediterranean cuisine.

"Many foreigners still think that all there is to traditional British food is bland meat and two veg or fish and chips.

"But herbs and spices that were once considered too exotic by the average British household are now found in many UK kitchens as our cooking skills widen."

Tesco has seen a 118 per cent increase in lemon thyme sales, a 43 per cent increase in rosemary and a 30 per cent increase in lemongrass.

No further information.

Increased UK presence at Fruit Logistica

Date

31/01/2006

Article Text

UK participants at this year's Fruit Logistica are set to reach record levels.

Freshinfo reports there will be 25 UK-based exhibitors at the event, a 66 per cent increase on last year, with a massive 130 per cent increase in the area they use for exhibiting.

Sainsbury's is the first UK supermarket to join the event with a stand in hall three.

Category manager for fruit, Marcus Hoggarth, said: "This is a good opportunity for us to present a revitalised Sainsbury's to the industry, to spend some important time meeting our suppliers from around the world and draw up solid plans for the next few months."

UK visitor numbers are also expected to increase with more than 30,000 attending, representing 5.5 per cent of the total number of participants.

Fruit Logistica is the biggest fresh produce dedicated exhibition in the world.

No further information.

Consumers urged to consider product origins

Date

31/01/2006

Article Text

A leading retailer has launched a campaign to urge customers to consider how products are sourced and made.

The Marks & Spencer 'Look behind the label' campaign will feature window displays with hard hitting slogans developed to draw attention to health and environmental issues to do with their products.

"'Look behind the label' is the first time we've talked about the lengths we go to ensure everything we sell is produced in a responsible way. Our customers increasingly want to know about this, which is why we've decided to tell them what we stand for," Stuart Rose, chief executive officer of M&S, told Retail Bulletin.

A recent YouGov survey commissioned by the retailer revealed that consumers are giving increasing consideration to ethical and health issues when choosing clothes and foods.

Almost a third of respondents had decided against buying an item because they felt concerned about where it originated and a significant 72 per cent said they had specific concerns about the future of fish stocks.

No further information.

Growers to receive crop updates via text

Date

31/01/2006

Article Text

Growers of brassica vegetables in the UK will be offered crop disease warnings via SMS text messages, Syngenta has announced.

The Syngenta Brassica Disease Warning System will provide updates based on spore monitoring, in-field weather station information and predictive modelling programs.

Syngenta's agronomists will be able to use the modelling systems to calculate the risk to crops in different geographical locations and to work out necessary spray timings to avoid disease attacks.

Bruce McKenzie, vegetable crops manager for Syngenta, expressed optimism over the new service, saying it could well become an integral tool for brassica farmers.

"Our experience has shown the SMS text delivery of disease warnings is the most convenient and fastest option," he said.

No further information.

New vaccine to battle avian flu

Date

31/01/2006

Article Text

Scientists in the US announced yesterday that they had developed a new genetically engineered vaccine to combat avian flu in poultry stocks.

According to Reuters, the European Commission is considering allowing mass vaccinations of flocks across Europe, despite traditional reluctance as it can mask the occurrence of the disease, potentially delaying quarantine efforts.

Scientists from the University of Pittsburgh stated: "The vaccine can be made quickly and induced a strong immune response in the animals, making it a potentially useful tool for preventing the spread of the virus.

"The results of this animal trial are very promising, not only because our vaccine completely protected animals that otherwise would have died, but also because we found that one form of the vaccine stimulates several lines of immunity against H5N1."

Since the latest outbreak in December 2003, avian flu has claimed over 80 human casualties in south east Asian countries and has led to a total culling of about 200 million birds in Turkey and Russia.

The Turkish poultry industry is reportedly expecting losses of \$30 million a month as it continues to suffer both from culling and a 70 per cent drop in consumer confidence, after four people died of the disease.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65487-bird-flu-poultry-vaccination>

Polyester film aimed at ease of manufacturer

Date

31/01/2006

Article Text

A new polyester film geared towards easier manufacturing of stand-up pouches has been produced.

Toray Plastics, which is specifically targeting the food and drink sector with its new product, announced that the Lumirror PA30 is a tack-sealable polyester that uses symmetrical transparent film technology.

The transparent film, which is modified on both sides, has enhanced adhesion properties for both laminating and printing.

The film can be printed, laminated or vacuum metalised, and handles well on high-speed equipment, according to Toray.

Lumirror PA30 is a chlorine free environmentally friendly material, and is reportedly receiving international attention amid growing concerns over environmental issues.

For more information go to
<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/news/ng.asp?n=65490-toray-plastics-polyester-pouches>
